EN LA FRONTERA ENTRE LA VIDA Y LA MUERTE: A STUDY OF WOMEN REPORTERS ON THE U.S.–MEXICO BORDER

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In 2008 Ciudad Juarez erupted in a violent drug war. The Sinaloa Cartel and Juarez Cartel were in a battle for the lucrative drug route used to smuggle drugs into the United States, while President Felipe Calderon was waging his own war against all the drug cartels. During the height of the violence women journalists emerged on the front lines to tell the stories of Juarez. They risked their lives and dared to tell a story that others refused to. This mixed-method study examines frames used most often in the coverage of the drug war in Ciudad Juarez from 2008-2010. It examines The New York Times, the El Paso Times, and El Norte and also examines articles by the sex of the reporter. It also used in-depth interviews of both Mexican and American woman journalists who covered the drug war in Juarez to examine which themes developed about the reporter’s experiences in covering the drug war.
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INTRODUCTION

Ciudad Juarez is considered one of the most dangerous cities in the world. Between 2008 and 2010 an estimated 7,000 people were killed in Juarez due to drug violence (Nieto, 2012, p. 20). Drug violence in Mexico has dominated the headlines for the past several years. Stories of missing persons and public executions filled the news pages. Rumors of bodies being dumped in vats of acids and people being beheaded circulated through the towns. The true situation lies somewhere between the word-of-mouth fantasies and published headlines. Residents of drug cartel-controlled towns in Mexico feared for their lives. In 2009 the homicide rate in Juarez was 190 people killed to 100,000 residents (Carter & Kodrich, 2013; MOD, 2010). More than 2,500 people were killed that year. Compared to the Iraq War, in 2007, the bloodiest year in the war so far, 904 U.S. military service men and women were killed (Negron, 2009).

Juárez was in the middle of a battle between the Sinoloa and Juárez drug cartels.

Concerned about the mass number of fatalities, the then-president of Mexico, Felipe Calderon, sent 2,500 troops to Juárez to control the violence. However, the people of Juárez did not favor the idea of more men with guns power patrolling their city. In some places it is hard to distinguish who is in power, the drug cartels or the government (Negron, 2009). In many places the federal Mexican police and local police have ties to the drug cartels themselves, rendering a justice system in Mexico relatively ineffective. Of the crimes registered between 2008 and 2010 only three out of 100 cases were seen by the judicial authority, and 97% of cases go unsolved in Mexico (Nieto, 2012).

These times were especially trying for journalists reporting in Mexico, who feared for their lives along with members of the public. It is estimated that 66 reporters have been killed in Mexico since the violent outbreak (Nieto, 2012, p. 20). Some of them were killed in Juárez. In
2008 a crime reporter for *El Diario de Juárez*, Armando Rodriguez Carreon, was shot and murdered in front of his 8-year-old daughter. Two years later, Luis Carlos Santiago, a photography intern for *El Diario*, was gunned down in a parking lot at a local mall. It is not known whether these crimes were connected to their journalism or not. Fearful for their safety, crime reporters for the newspaper have now removed their bylines from the stories in the paper. For the time, it seemed the extreme outbreak in violence would never stop.

Situations like Juárez happen in other U.S. Mexico border towns as well, but not to the scale of Juárez, since it is a large city with a population of 1.6 million people. Whenever there is a shift in power between drug cartels, a high-level drug official is murdered or arrested, or a new cartel rises through the ranks looking for power, violence can erupt. It is a chaotic situation where no one is in control. Few journalists dared to travel to Juárez during the period of violence. Some still fear to travel there today although the violence has calmed for the moment. In Juárez only four U.S. newspaper reporters covered the city on a daily basis during the most recent violent period. For them the violence in Juárez was more than a statistic. It was a story they risked their lives to tell.

Just across the border from Juárez sits El Paso, Texas, one of the safest cities in the country. Years ago Juárez and El Paso were twin cities. Both and Mexicans and Americans would cross the border: Mexicans would shop in El Paso for cheaper prices, while Americans would cross to Juárez for drinks and a good time (Langton, 2011). Once the violence began, the once-twin cities became separate worlds, with few Americans daring to cross the border. For the journalists who did dare to cross, it was just a short drive or walk across the Stanton Street Bridge that separated them between life and death.
This study seeks to examine the experience of women journalists who covered the border during the drug violence/drug wars from 2008 to 2011. It uses in-depth interviews conducted with female border reporters to examine their experience reporting in a war zone. This study also examines how the violence on the border was covered by both U.S. and Mexican newspapers, and female and male reporters from 2008 to 2011 to see what frames were used most often in reporting on the violence and to compare coverage of an international issue from both the U.S. and Mexican media outlets and the female and male perspective. It uses a Latina feminist standpoint to examine these issues.
LITERATURE REVIEW

Mexican History

Mexico is a land of contrasts plagued with one violent transition of power after another. This history has set the stage for the Mexico that exists today. The current surge in violence due to drug cartels in Mexico today mirrors other periods of Mexican history. The longstanding history of lawlessness and lack of government control that has plagued Mexico since its Aztec rule has culminated into a Mexico afflicted in the 21st century by drug violence.

Mexico had been inhabited by as many as 25 million indigenous people before the Spaniards arrived in 1519. This Mexico was a multiethnic land with multiple indigenous groups who spoke several different languages (Langton, 2011, p. 18). The Aztec empire began in the early 12th century. The Aztecs settled in Central Mexico in what is now Mexico City. They spoke Nahuatl. As their empire grew, a city known as Tenochtitlan became the center of their power. Legend says the Aztecs settled here because they saw an eagle eating a snake on a prickly pear on a single piece of land surrounded by water. The Aztecs believed that was a sign that they should settle on that land. The symbol of the eagle eating the snake is pictured on the present-day Mexican flag. These Aztecs became known as Mexica. They were known as fierce and ruthless warriors. Eventually the Aztecs controlled land from Central Mexico to Guatemala (Kirkwood, 2009). By the 16th century the Mexica empire, led by Moctezuma, was the largest and most powerful Aztec empire in the region.

At this time Hernán Cortes and his group of Spanish conquistadors landed on the Yucatán Peninsula in Southern Mexico. The Mayans inhabited this area, and although Cortés and his men lived here peacefully for some time, eventually he conquered lands from the Yucatán to present day Veracruz. Word of the Spaniards inhabiting and conquering other Aztec settlements soon
spread to Tenochtitlan and the Mexica people. Moctezuma and his people appeased Cortés and his men giving Cortés gold and building Catholic statues in their temples. However, Cortés eventually launched an attack on the city, and on August 13, 1521 the Aztec emperor surrendered the city. Cortés destroyed the city and constructed what is known today as Mexico City (Kirkwood, 2009; Langton, 2011).

The history of this conquest is ingrained in modern Mexican culture. It marks the beginning of what is known as modern Mexican history, or post-colonization. Cortés conquering Mexico established a deep religious presence in the country under the Roman Catholic Church and brought a social system known as *encomienda* or parceling, in which Spanish immigrants were assigned a group of indigenous people they were responsible for. The Spaniards would receive crops and gold for protecting and teaching the indigenous people about the Catholic Church. This tradition has resulted in a harsh class system, which still exists in Mexico today (Langton, 2011, p. 24). Once the city of Tenochtilan fell to Spanish rule, Mexico became a military-run state. A new mixed race of both Aztec and Spanish blood known as Meztizos began to emerge. Slowly Aztec temples were destroyed and Catholic Churches built in their place. The colonization era of Mexico flourished (Kirkwood, 2009).

Mexico soon became the wealthiest Spanish colony. People in Mexico began to feel a sense of identity tied to their country, what they called a “mexicanidad.” Neither the elites nor the lower classes were satisfied with the Spanish rule. The elites and upper class wanted to establish a Mexican government system so they solely could be in control of their interests while the lower classes were growing tired of the power held by the elites. The distinct class system established through the *encomienda* system caused political unrest in Mexico to grow. The class system in Mexico consisted of five castes. Peninsulars were people born in Spain. Criollos were
anyone born in Mexico to Spanish parents. Mestizos were anyone born in Mexico with parents from Spain and Mexico. Indios were anyone from Indian descent. And Negros were anyone with African descent (Langton, 2011, p. 25). Turmoil in Europe caused Spain to rely on Mexico more for monetary support. Soon Spain’s demands for money affected all of Mexico, including the church and almost everyone in Mexico. The elites became increasingly angry, and once France seized control of Spain in 1801, the Criollos wanted to gain independence. Peninsulares had their own interests and were loyal to Spain while the Criollos wanted independence. Struggle for power between the Peninsulares and Criollos resulted in the Peninsulares staging a coup and seizing the government. This incident set a dangerous precedent and was the beginning of several shifts in power within the Mexican government. Several Peninsulares shifted power from one to another until Miguel Hidalgo, a Criollo priest, decided to take action (Kirkwood, 2009).

Hidalgo was the priest of a small parish in Dolores, but quickly became the leader of the revolution. The Peninsulares had arrested suspected conspirators against the government. Hidalgo rang his church bell to call his parishioners and delivered the “Gritos de Dolores” or “The Cry of Dolores.” This speech has become an icon in Mexican history and is considered as the first decree for Mexican independence. In the speech Hidalgo proclaimed, “Death to bad government,” a sentiment that frightened the Peninsulares. Hidalgo was now the leader of the revolution and quickly formed a militia of an estimated 800 men. Although Hidalgo and his men lacked military training they still managed to capture several towns in Mexico and grow their army to 50,000 men. Hidalgo’s militia began to lose support because of its lack of discipline. His men began killing mass numbers of people and raping women. Soon the tide turned and the loyalist in Guanajuato defeated the rebel army, and because Hidalgo’s men were untrained they fell to the loyalist troops. Eventually, Hidalgo was arrested and found guilty of treason. He was
beheaded and his head was placed on a spike in Guanajuato. It remained there for 10 years until Mexico gained independence (Kirkwood, 2009; Langton, 2011).

José María Morelos replaced Hidalgo. Morelos was a better leader than Hidalgo winning 22 battles as a leader of the rebel forces. He was captured and taken to Mexico City and killed by a firing squad in 1813. After the fall of these two prominent leaders the resistance movement broke into several regional skirmishes. Two leaders during this time were Guadalupe Victoria and Vicente Guerrero. Both men waged guerilla wars against the loyalist troops, but were unorganized and the next six years were plagued with uncertainty. Guerrero and Victoria joined forces with Augustín Iturbide, an officer of the royal army who helped capture and kill José Morelos. Iturbide learned that trying to capture Guerrero, the leader of the guerilla army, would be too difficult a task. The guerilla army had managed to survive for 10 years. Instead, he thought it would be wise to join forces with Guerrero, and in the name of Mexican independence, Guerrero put down his weapons and joined the movement. On February 24, 1821, Iturbide announced the Plan de Iguala or Plan of Equals. The plan had three major parts: Mexico would gain independence from Spain; everyone would receive equal treatment under the new government; and the official religion of the new state would be Catholicism. The new army was under the rule of Iturbide and Guerrero promised to uphold this plan and they became known as Ejército de las Tres Garantías, or the Army of the Three Guarantees. On September 27, 1821, Guerrero, Iturbide, and Victoria marched into Mexico City and gained Mexico’s independence from Spain (Kirkwood, 2009; Langton, 2011).

Although Mexico had gained its independence from Spain, not much changed with the transition of power. Iturbide was more concerned with preserving the elite status and did not implement many social changes to improve life for the masses as he promised. The class system
and racial discrimination that Hidalgo and Morelos died in pursuit of still existed under the new rule. From the year Mexico gained its independence, 1827 to 1857, there were an estimated 50 or more different governments in all forms--dictatorships, monarchs, constitutional republics--that controlled the country. All tried to govern the masses. All failed. Many problems made the transition into a sovereign country difficult, including the large amount of national debt Mexico had acquired from years of fighting. Mexico continued to struggle, facing wars with both Texas and the United States. Two political parties emerged, the Republicans and the Royalists, or better known as the liberals and conservatives. In 1884, Profirio Diaz and the liberal party took power in office for the second time. His rule was more like a dictatorship than a constitutional government. He brought prosperity to Mexico, but also lots of oppression. Soon, revolutionary groups led by leaders Emilio Zapata, Pancho Villa, and Francisco Madero began to mobilize. Madero ran for office in 1910 under the Progressive Constitutional Party, PCP, despite knowing that Diaz would rig the election. Diaz arrested Madero on the day of the election and announced his victory for office was a landslide. In jail, Madero wrote a plan for a new democratic government called Plan de San Luis Potosi and soon his army was fighting against the national army in the Mexican Revolution. On May 21, 1911, Madero and Diaz signed the Treaty of Ciudad Juarez, marking the end of the Diaz dictatorship. Madero called for new elections and was elected the president of the new Mexico (Kirkwood, 2009; Langton, 2011). The period that followed the revolution was plagued with political infighting against rebel forces. The treaty forced individuals to choose sides and marked a period of bloody civil war, which lasted for the next 10 years. After Madero took office his former allies became his enemies. Zapata formed a Liberationist Party known as the Zapatistas. The Zapatistas were powerful revolutionaries who had strong control of southern Mexico. Zapata was killed in 1919, and without their leader the
Zapatistas began to fade in power. Some later became peacefully involved in Mexican government. Once Zapata and other revolutionaries, including Villa, and Venustiano Carranza, were killed, General Alvarado Obregón took power under the Partido Laboristas Mexicano, Mexican Labor Party. Obregón worked hard for Mexican education and labor rights, but was assassinated in 1928 after winning a second term. A new party called the Partido Revolucionario Institucional, or Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), was formed. The PRI was a socialist party in the beginning, but it soon became corrupt. It would hold power in Mexico for the next 80 years. This long history of violence and corruption set the stage for the violent drug war that exists in Mexico today (Kirkwood, 2009; Langton, 2011).

The Birth of the Mexican Drug Cartels

Narcotics trafficking between Mexico and the United States has existed since before the 19th century. Opium, introduced to the United States by Chinese immigrants, was the first drug to be transferred across the border. In the 1960s, marijuana became the popular drug and a new younger generation took over the drug-trafficking rings in Mexico, which was largely rooted in Sinaloa (Tuckman, 2012). This drug situation in Mexico was something that both the United States and Mexico silently tolerated for many years. Then, in 1972, President Nixon declared a War on Drugs and the Mexican drug system was forever changed. Billions of dollars were poured into securing the U.S. borders to prevent drugs from entering the country. Harsher penalties for drug-related crimes were enforced and drug trade went further and further underground. The Mexican government dispatched thousands of troops to break up the drug plantations in Sinaloa, Durango, and Chihuahua, known as the Golden Triangle because of their lucrative drug activities. This did little to slow the growing drug economy, but forced traffickers
to move their bases out of Sinoloa (Tuckman, 2012). One of the biggest traffickers during this time was Miguel Angel Felix Gallardo, a former bodyguard and policeman. Gallardo was well protected by local authorities. By the 1980s many drug lords had expanded into South America and began distributing cocaine. This period was known as a golden age for the drug cartels, in which violence was only used as a last resort. In 1985, when an American Drug Enforcement Agent was tortured and murdered, the United States demanded action against the cartels. The Mexican government began arresting some of the largest traffickers for the murder, including Gallardo. Gallardo claimed that the corrupt police force divided Sinoloa into new turfs at crossing points along the United States including Ciudad Juarez, Tijuana, and Nuevo Laredo. This is known as the birth of the regional Mexican drug cartels (Tuckman, 2012). The new drug restrictions made it more dangerous for drug users, meaning people would have to pay more for a smaller amount of drugs. The potential for high profit attracted organized crime members and the drug trade became an integral part of the economy (Langton, 2011). In the 1990s the new regional drug cartels began killing for more power and control. However, these conflicts are tame in comparison to a spike in violence in 2009. Cartels during that era followed a different code of Mafia ethics in which a target’s family or innocent bystanders were not to be killed.

This new era of drug cartels still had roots in Sinaloa. Armando Carrillo Fuentes, nicknamed “Lord of the Skies” because of his use of commercial jet planes to traffic large amounts of Colombian cocaine to the Northern Mexican border, took control over the cartel based in Ciudad Juarez. Fuentes died in 1997 after botched plastic surgery and was replaced by his brother Vicente Carrillo Fuentes. Numerous siblings of the Arellano Felix family ran another notorious drug cartel based in Tijuana. In 2002, Ramón Arellano Felix was killed in a gun battle, while a month before authorities arrested his brother. By 2006, the cartel was in disarray after the
U.S. Coast Guard arrested Francisco Javier Arellano. By the mid 2000s both the Juarez- and Tijuana-based drug cartels were weak. Perhaps one of the most well-known cartel leaders is Joaquín Archivaldo Guzmán Loera, “El Chapo.” He was born in La Tuna and studied under the mentorship of Félix Gallardo. He first became famous during the turf wars of the 1990s during a shootout with the Félix brothers. All escaped unharmed and Chapo was arrested in Guatemala weeks later and returned to Mexico. Chapo spent the next several years in a maximum-security prison, although he had ample funds to buy himself special privileges. In 2001 Chapo escaped from the prison. There are different speculations on how Chapo escaped. Once Chapo was free, he organized a new alliance called The Federation made up of the top Sinaloa rooted drug cartels. This included Ismael “El Mayo” Zambada García, Juan José Esparragoza Moreno, Ignacio Coronel Villarreal, and one of the brothers of the Beltrán Leyva family. Chapo sought to control the drug scene in Mexico with this new alliance; however, expansion plans were halted once The Federation tried to invade the Gulf cartel of Nuevo Laredo. In 2000, Mexico’s two strongest drug cartels went to war. The Sinaloa organization and the Gulf organization were in a battle for business. The Sinaloa cartel wanted a part in the cocaine trade controlled by the Gulf. The Gulf, trying to protect its own interests, unleashed the Zetas to protect their interests. The Zetas were a group of former special force members from the Mexican Army, who had been trained by the U.S. military. These men were lured into the organization by bigger paychecks they couldn’t get just working for the government. “It was said the Zetas knew forty-three ways to kill a person in three minutes or less” (Corchado, 2013). In 2005, a turf war erupted in Tijuana, which included public shootouts and battles over physical territory. This marks the beginning of the drug wars in Mexico for some historians (Tuckman, 2012; Vulliamy, 2010).
The Gulf Cartel fended off the invasion and fought off over Sinaloa’s invasions of other key drug territories for their organization. The Zetas revolutionized cartel law enforcement. They were well trained and willing to kill anyone by any means necessary. Other major cartels realized they needed similar enforcement like the Zetas if they wanted to continue to be successful and, with the help of many former Mexican police commanders, new enforcement agencies were formed. Now, the peace pacts of the past that worked to pacify the cartels were no longer an option (Tuckman, 2012).

In February 2014 leader of the Sinaloa Cartel leader Joaquin “El Chapo” Guzman was captured through the work of a joint operation between Mexican authorities and U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (Shoichet, Perez, & Todd, 2014). Guzman escaped a Mexican prison nearly 13 years ago, leaving both U.S. and Mexican officials searching for the notorious kingpin. Guzman is currently in a prison in Mexico City and will first stand trial in Mexico. However, the United States wants Guzman to be tried in at least seven different federal districts (Kahn, 2014). While the capture of El Chapo was a huge victory for both the U.S. and Mexican government, drug violence in Mexico has continued to occur (Rath 2014).

Most of the marijuana consumed in the United States comes from Mexico. Mexico is also the supplier for most of the cocaine and methamphetamine that enters the United States and Canada (Tuckman, 2012). In 2005 the United States put a congressional ban on the sale of over-the-counter pseudoephedrine, one of the main ingredients in methamphetamine. This made it harder for state-operated drug makers. Mexican cartels started manufacturing the synthetic drugs themselves (Tuckman, 2012). One of the biggest hindrances in the War on Drugs is the vast U.S.–Mexico border. The border is nearly 2,000 miles long with areas of desert, forest, and mountains, making it impossible to patrol all the time (Langton, 2011).
Before the peak in drug violence in the late 2000s, women began disappearing in Juárez in record numbers. Around 1993 mass numbers of young women began disappearing in Juarez, Chihuahua. Their bodies were usually found later. Some had been raped, tortured, murdered, and left in degrading poses somewhere in the deserts, streets, or alleys of the city (Langton, 2011; Luevano, 2008; Olivera, 2006). The femicides, as coined by the women of Mexico, were happening all over Mexico. Usually women between the ages of 12 and 22 were the victims. Many of the women who were murdered worked in the maquiladoras, or factories, on the outskirts of Juárez. These women were young and poor, and worked in the factories late, leaving them heading home at late hours of the night. By 2005 more than 5,000 cases of violence against women were reported in Mexico. The North American Free Trade Agreement, NAFTA, pushed the crimes to a new level (Luevano, 2008). This agreement let U.S. companies make goods in Mexico with cheap labor and minimal taxes. Now multiple U.S. corporations including General Electric, Honeywell, Levi’s and others have factories in northern Mexico. There are currently 300 factories in Juarez (Luevano, 2008; Olivera, 2006).

Another contributor to the violence against women is the presence of narcotraffickers with limitless power (Wright, 2011). For years Mexico was a one party-ruled country, but in 2000 Vicente Fox was elected and a new party, Partido Accion Nacional (PAN), took power. Under the PRI-controlled government, drug cartels were forced to share profits with members in office. Once the new party took control, the chain of command was no longer so simple. The drug cartels took advantage of the decentralized government, destroying criminal files and making witnesses disappear. Violence soared and thousands of people have been killed in the fight for power (Corchado, 2013).
By the time President Felipe Calderon, another PAN candidate, was elected into office in 2006, four major drug trafficking organizations controlled Mexico. The Arellano-Felix organization controlling Tijuana, the Sinaloa Cartel, the Vicente Carillo Fuentes organization controlling Juarez, and the Gulf Cartel. These organizations fight for control of different trafficking routes known as la plaza, better known as territories that cartels have bribed law enforcement to control (Beittel, 2011; Campbell, 2008; Corchado, 2013). Since 2006, these cartels have broken up into different factions. Today seven different drug trafficking organizations have power over different territories in Mexico (Beittel, 2011).

The Tijuana territory belongs to the Arellano-Felix organization (AFO). In 2008 this cartel split into two factions after a series of events that left the Arellano brothers either dead or arrested. Lack of leadership made the cartel vulnerable and a bloody battle for the profitable Tijuana-San Diego border plaza ensued. When a former lieutenant for the AFO, Eduardo Teodoro Garcia Simental, aligned himself with the Sinaloa cartel, violence erupted in Tijuana. The struggle for power is believed to be the reason for a series of violent murders that occurred in the city due to corrupt police officials and the cartel in disarray. In January 2010, Garcia Simental was arrested and the violence in Tijuana decreased significantly. Government officials have claimed that the arrest of Garcia Simental is a police success that sparked greater enforcement to decrease the violence, while others believe the violence has decreased because the cartels have come to an agreement on the use of the Tijuana-based trafficking route (Biettel, 2011; Campbell, 2008). Currently, the AFO is being led by Fernando Sanchez Arellano, the nephew of founding Arellano brothers. Some reports state Sanchez Arellano pays a fee to the Sinaloa Cartel to maintain control of the lucrative Tijuana Plaza, while others believe Sanchez Arellano is trying to reduce attention from the media and Mexican government, while quietly
still moving drugs to the north. Whatever the story, the one-powerful AFO is now a diminished organization (Biettel, 2011).

In 2008, the Federation, a joint alliance between the Sinaloa and Beltrán Leyva organizations, broke apart. However, the Sinaloa, now working within a network of smaller organizations, still maintains control of a large amount of the Mexican drug trafficking ring. It is estimated that the Sinaloa Cartel controls 45% of the drug trade in Mexico today (Beittel, 2011). Another leader in this organization is Ismael Zamabada Garcia. In July 2010, Mexican officials killed Igancio Coronel Villareal (El Nacho), who was reportedly the third highest level official in the organization. Today the Sinaloa has presence in 50 countries, including North and South America, Europe, West Africa, and Southeast Asia. In 2011, the organization expanded its operation in Mexico into Mexico City, the Michoacán states, and others areas, including Tijuana and Ciudad Juarez (Beittel, 2011).

The Vicente Carillo Fuentes organization currently controls Ciudad Juarez. Vicente took control after his brother died in 1997. The Juarez Cartel began operation under the Sinaloa organization. Carillo Fuentes oversaw the Juarez for the Sinaloa Cartel before they split in 2008 (Campbell, 2008; Corchado, 2013). When the two cartels split in 2008, violence erupted. The next three years raged on with thousands of people being murdered and the two cartels waged war with one another. The Juarez Cartel took to selling drugs domestically to fund the battle with the Sinaloa Cartel, which was depleting its resources. They continue to fight with local street gangs, the Artistas Asesinos and the Mexicales, for the local drug market today. Analysts have different opinions on the declining power of the Juarez Cartel. Some believe the cartel is spent, while others believe the cartel still holds great power in certain parts of the city. La Linea, the enforcement agency for the Juarez cartel, has been a major force in the cartel’s ability to
maintain power. La Linea suffered a loss in July 2011 when Antonio Acosta Hernandez was arrested. He confessed to more than 1,500 murders and is a suspect for the murder of three U.S. consulate workers in Juarez (Beittel, 2011; Corchado 2013).

The Gulf Cartel is in power in Matamoros, a border city in the Northeastern Mexican state of Tamaulipas. This cartel arose in the 1920s during prohibition, but in the 1980s, led by Juan García Abrego, the Gulf joined forces with Columbia’s Cali cartel and the Mexican Federal Police (Beittel, 2011; Campbell 2008). Osiel Cárdenas Guillén, who commissioned the Zetas as the violent enforcement group for the cartel, succeeded García Abrego. By the beginning of the 2000s the Gulf Cartel was considered one of the most powerful drug organizations. In 2007, Cárdenas Guillen was arrested, but continued to run the Gulf successfully from prison. In 2008 the Zetas, under the leadership of Heriberto Lazcano, began doing contracted work for other drug cartels including the Beltrán Leyva and Juarez cartels. They split from the Gulf cartel in late 2008 (Corchado, 2013). Since 2010, the two cartels have been battling over territory in Tamaulipas and Nuevo Leon. In an effort to fight the powerful Zeta organization, the Gulf formed an alliance with two rival cartels, the Sinaloa and La Familia Michochan. The war between the Zetas and the allied Sinaloa-Michochan-Gulf cartels has resulted in an environment of urban warfare. Police have been murdered, journalists have been captured, and road blockades have been purposefully set up to prevent law enforcement from responding to events in the area. The Zetas have now expanded their organization into Central America and taken control of cocaine shipments from Guatemala to Mexico. They are believed to be the cartel with the largest influence in Mexico although the Sinaloa cartel is still considered to be the dominant organization in the country (Beittel, 2011).
La Familia Michoacana gained fame for the violent crimes it committed in 2006, but its origins can be traced back to the 1980s. La Familia started as a vigilante group that sought to rid the city of Michoacan of drugs. Now, La Familia is known for its production, sale, and trafficking of methamphetamines, marijuana, cocaine, and heroine. La Familia is known for its religious justification for its existence and uses extreme symbolic violence. It’s known for leaving written messages at the scene of crimes to describe or justify their actions such as “we kill for divine justice.” It is a fusion between a drug cartel and Christian evangelicals. La Familia was once linked with the Zetas, but now is opposed to them. However, members learned many of their violent tactics from the military-trained group and now La Familia has been named the most violent drug cartel by the Mexican Attorney General in 2009. In 2010, La Familia reportedly called a truce with the Mexican government and in December 2010 La Familia’s spiritual leader, Nazario Moreno González, was killed in a gun battle with the Mexican federal police. In 2011 after the leader of La Familia, José de Jesús Méndez Vargas, was arrested, a new organization, the Knights Templar, has claimed to be the replacement of the former Familia organization (Beittel, 2011). The Beltran Leyva organization was a part of the Sinaloa cartel until 2008 when Alfredo Beltrán Leyva, the leading lieutenant of the organization, was arrested. This arrest sparked animosity between the two organizations.

The conflicts between different drug cartels have been covered in both the Mexican and U.S. media. Stories portraying the violent scenes in Mexico have appeared in almost every news outlet in the United States. These news organizations have created a view of the Mexican drug war. Their stories have shaped the audience’s idea of what life is like in the border towns of Mexico.
Framing Media Coverage of the Mexican-U.S. Border

Media are powerful in creating messages about news events that happen around the world. Media organizations choose how to frame stories from the moment the story is pitched in the newsroom. Editors and other gatekeepers choose what stories get more space than others and where they land in the paper, in the newscast, or on the website. All of these decisions have an effect on the perception of a story. Ultimately, every story in a paper gets told through a particular frame or several frames. According to Reese (2009), frames are “organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world” (p. 34). This suggests that frames exist in multiple aspects of the world, and not only in the media. Entman (2007) suggests framing is the process of accumulating certain elements of an issue to create a particular narrative toward that issue. Taking it a step further, framing is based on the emphasis of a particular idea and, in turn, the exclusion of others (Weaver, 2007). This exclusion of or emphasis on certain parts of a story affects the media message. Frames exist in a larger context of our social world. They play on ideas and thoughts that exist within a person before he or she even reads a story. This is why some frames resonate with someone over others (Reese, 2009). Looking at framing this way relies heavily on the relationship between news framing and media sociology. Media sociology looks at multiple aspects that affect the media message, including journalists’ impact on the stories. Journalists often come from similar backgrounds, education, and experiences and have similar attitudes and social outlooks (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996) Although journalists are trained to be objective, the fact that their job involves making choices on story content has an effect on media messages conveyed to audiences.
Reporting on border towns is unique because it requires understanding two countries and two cultures. Frames used in these types of stories can be very influential on readers and viewers because they shape audiences’ perceptions of other countries and their people. Frames can perpetuate and reinforce racial stereotypes and other biased perceptions.

A 2011 study of frames used most often in stories on the U.S.–Mexico border by Kim, Carvalho, Davis, and Mullins on illegal immigration showed that crime was the number one issue highlighted as a negative consequence for illegal immigration. Because most news organizations are for-profit, they must appeal to their audience. According to this study, linking illegal immigration to crime is a successful way of appealing to a large audience. Crime stories play into the news quality of conflict and involve more drama in an attempt to appeal to more readers (Kim et al., 2011). Illegal immigration is one aspect of border reporting, but adding the aspect of drug violence, which had recently plagued border towns, can only increase the number of crimes reported on in these areas. However, other research suggests an opposite frame that exists in coverage of illegal immigration. Research has shown that illegal immigrants are portrayed as either criminals or victims in the mass media. Illegal immigrants are seen as victims in stories of them fleeing their country for a better life, or the racism and xenophobia they face in the new country they are trying to make home. Emotional photos of tearful immigrants reuniting with family members or emotion stirring images often accompany these stories (“Tears vs. rules”, 2012). Although victim frame seems more flattering to the Latino community, debasing immigration to these simplistic frames leaves readers with generalized stereotypes about a class of people who cannot be defined through one idea.

Another framing study examined coverage of Arizona State Bill 1070, a bill that expanded the power of local and state law enforcement to question someone who was under
suspicion of being in the United States illegally. Fryberg et al. (2012) sought to examine what frames were used most often in covering this immigration issue by comparing state vs. national media and liberal vs. conservative media. The bill was intended to reduce illegal immigration by discouraging illegal immigrants from living in Arizona for fear of being detained. However, the bill also raised concerns of racial profiling and other civil rights violations against U.S. citizens because of their appearance. This study examined the New York Times, Los Angeles Times, the Arizona Republic, Arizona Daily Star, the New York Post, the Washington Times, and the Wall Street Journal for a three-week period. The study found that national newspapers were more likely than Arizona papers to argue the main support for the bill is connected with the economy, welfare, jobs, and the public. However, national papers were more likely than Arizona papers to argue the main proponent for the bill is racism. In comparing liberal with conservative coverage there were no difference in coverage, of reasons against the bill, but conservative newspapers was more likely than liberal papers to frame the support of the bill in terms of threats (Fryberg et al., 2012).

The media not only set frames on immigration, but also other important events that happen in Mexico. A framing study on the 2006 Mexican election coverage in the U.S. media market found that certain candidates received more coverage compared to others. The study of 161 articles from April 2005 to April 2006 found candidate Andrés Manuel Lopéz received 59.6% of coverage, while Roberto Madrazo received 27.8%, and eventual winner Felipe Calderón received 29.1% of coverage. Not only did the study find that one candidate received more coverage than others, it also found particular frames about the election emerged. This study found the most dominant frame used in the election coverage was the leftist shift happening in Latin America. Using this frame usually resulted in the perspective of this change as problematic
for U.S.–Latin America relationships (Johnson, Davis, & Cronin, 2009). These studies show that U.S. media play an integral part in framing the view of both Mexican Americans within the United States, but also important topics that impact U.S.-Mexican relationships, such as border conflict and presidential elections. Frames also impact the way women are viewed in the media. They have a crucial impact on how women are perceived in the U.S. society.

Women and the Media

In the 1980s women began entering the newsroom in larger numbers after several sex discrimination lawsuits were filed against large media corporations, including the Associated Press, NBC and others. Soon female students entered colleges to study journalism and many hoped women journalists would fill the newsrooms like never before. Three decades later, two-thirds of students in journalism are women, but only one-third of newsroom employees are women (Everbach, 2013). The idea of a gender-equal newsroom has yet to become reality. Women hold even fewer positions in upper management. Only less than a quarter of women hold these types of jobs and even fewer women of color hold these positions (Creedon & Cramer, 2006). Men and women have different perceptions about why there are so few women at the top. Some believe women have not been in the management world long enough and lack the years of experience needed to hold high positions, while some believe women are not advancing because of sex discrimination (Creedon & Cramer, 2006, p. 38). A study conducted by the Pew Center for Civic Journalism for the American Press Institute showed that “sixty-four percent of women who had doubts about their ability to advance said the main reason was that managers preferred to promote men” (Creedon & Cramer, 2006). Studies have also shown that although women and men enter the newsroom at similar rates, women are more likely to leave the newsroom. These
women left the newsroom for multiple reasons, including lack of advancement and low salaries (Everbach, 2013). Gendered news is the concept that types of news are split into male and female categories. Men are often assigned to cover hard news, while women are more likely to report human-interest stories (Everbach, 2013).

Since the number of women in newsrooms is disproportionately low to men, it is unique that the daily U.S. coverage of the drug violence in Juárez was conducted primarily by women journalists, some of whom have many years of experience. In a male-dominated industry, these women stepped up and covered the story that no one else would. They risked their lives and challenged the gender ideas of the newsroom culture.

Cultural hegemony is defined as “the phenomenon of a dominant and oppressive cultural order being adopted by a majority of people because of the ubiquitous nature of the mass media and advanced capitalism” (Len-Rios, Rodgers, Thorson, & Doyle, 2005, p. 152). Male sources are used more often by the news media, with women only constituting one-third of news sources (Everbach, 2013). Since newspapers and other news media document history and underrepresent women, they contribute to the culture of masculine hegemony. Excluding women from a powerful medium symbolically excludes them from power and marginalizes them from society (Everbach, 2013; Len-Rios et al., 2005). Men dominate newsrooms, hold management positions, and tend to be the decision makers; therefore, they perpetuate the male perspective and symbolically reinforce the ideas of a patriarchal society (Everbach, 2013; Len-Rios et al., 2005).

Hegemony is achieved through both socialization and societal structures. The two concepts work to keep a group in power. Gender stereotypes, such as the notion that women are weaker emotionally than men, are used to symbolically reinforce the subordinate status of women in a patriarchal society (Len-Rios et al., 2005). Academic literature supports the notion
that women are seen as more caring and gentle than men, who are portrayed as more aggressive and assertive. Traditional gender roles also reinforce perceptions of power and status; masculinity equals high status and power, and femininity equals low status and weakness (Len-Rios et al., 2005). Cultural feminists argue that historically, men were perceived to control the intellectual realm, while women were defined by their bodies. Newspapers are considered intellectual entities and therefore it is accepted in Western society that men instead of women should dominate the news media (Len-Rios et al., 2005).

Studies have found that women are underrepresented in media. Media also reinforce common gender stereotypes about women. Women who appear in the media often tend to appear as victims of crimes, or as wives or mothers of important men (Everbach, 2013). Women who hold political power or run for office usually face stories that focus on their appearance instead of the job they hold. Coverage of Hilary Clinton and Sarah Palin in the 2008 election featured stories about their wardrobes. Coverage on Palin focused heavily on her physical appearance and portrayed her as a mother. In stories about women as victims of sex crimes, they are stereotyped into either the “virgin” or “vamp” role. The virgin role features a women being attacked by a man of a lower class, who is usually a person of color, while the vamp role features a woman who due to her physical appearance or way of dress caused a man to rape her (Wilson, Gutierrez, & Chao, 2013). It is unfortunate that news media have debased coverage of these crimes to common gender stereotypes. The so-called “women’s issues” include stories about health, children, an domestic violence. This phrasing makes these issues seem like they are of no interest to men and cause the reader to create a distinction between the two gender groups. Female news sources are more likely to be featured in more entertainment stories than hard news stories like politics, and few female sources are used as experts for a story (Everbach, 2013).
A study of the portrayal of Latinas in both Spanish-language and English U.S. media found that in both markets, Latinas are often characterized through common stereotypes. Common stereotypes of Latinas in the media reflect the image of Latinas of being more homogenous than they actually are. A typical image of the Latin women characterizes her with dark hair, olive skin, and a Spanish accent. Media also characterize the Latin women as both overly sensual but also socially conservative (Correa, 2010). One of the most common stereotypes of Latinas is the female harlot: A Latin woman who dresses provocatively, has a Spanish accent, and is hot-tempered (Mastro & Marowitz, 2005). A study of both the Miami Herald and El Nuevo Herald found that both papers, despite El Nuevo Herald’s greater identification with Latinas, characterized the women as devoted to family and sensual. The lack of difference between papers can be due to the fact that although the Spanish language staff has greater identification with Latinas, a majority of the staff was still trained in the United States and therefore reinforce U.S. stereotypes (Correa, 2010). Therefore, media coverage, in both English and Spanish language media, often perpetuates and reinforces stereotypes and assumptions about women that conform to the masculine hegemony. News is present from a male perspective and focuses largely on men and their activities and concerns. Also missing from much media coverage is the perspective of non-white women. Women of color are faced with a second layer of discrimination because of their cultural background. These women not only face the hardships of being women in a patriarchal society, but also the hardships of being a minority in a predominately white society.

Latina Feminism

Liberal feminists believe in freeing women from oppressive gender roles, which have
given justifications for a woman’s place being less significant in society. Liberal feminism argues that in a patriarchal society, the ideas of sex and gender are combined to define what role someone has in the society (Tong, 2013). One of the crucial concepts in any feminist theory is power. Power can be seen as a social good whereas the resources between men and women are currently unequal in distribution. In other words, men have more social power over women because of the unequal distribution of certain resources such as wages or jobs. Power structures between men and women can also be seen as a relation between the two sexes, where men are viewed as dominant and women as subordinate (Allen, 1999). In the United States, pushing women toward traditional gender roles tends to place them in jobs traditionally considered “feminine,” like nursing, caretaking, or teaching instead of jobs in other industries such as science, business, or technology. In the past, legislation barring women from being able to work in “masculine” jobs, such as firefighting and coal mining, was standard form of gender discrimination against women. Although these forms of discrimination are rare today, de facto discrimination still affects women in the workplace (Tong, 2013). Faced with the choice of hiring male or female employees, many employers still opt to hire men under the justification that women are more likely than men to succumb to family responsibilities. Men have argued that they, too, have been subject to discrimination in the workplace, claiming men are less likely to be hired for jobs that are traditionally feminine such as babysitting. Although this may be true, liberal feminists argue that the type of systematic discrimination against women is nowhere near the same experienced by men. In fact, in 2012 women still earned only 78 percent of the average male income (BLS Reports, 2013).

Liberal feminism has been criticized for representing mainly the perspectives of white, middle-class women. This branch of feminism has been critiqued for viewing sexism as the
ultimate oppression and excluding race and social class as factors (Thompson, 2002). In recent decades, feminist movements centered on race and ethnicity have emerged, including Black feminism, Chicana/Hispana feminism, Asian feminism, and Native-American feminism. Women-of-color feminisms addresses with the idea of double consciousness: the struggle between how a woman sees herself and how the view society has imposed on her because of racial prejudice (Madsen, 2000). Racism is a different experience for each group; however, multiracial feminist theory has three major principles that apply no matter which racial group. First, the relationship between a woman’s self-identification and her level of importance toward feminism differs for women of different racial groups. Second, factors that influence women to embrace or reject feminism are different for different racial groups. Third, what women believe about feminism, ideologically, is different across different racial and ethnic groups (Harnois, 2005).

The Latina ethnic group is diverse, including women with origins from Mexico, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Cuba, and Central and South America. Although they are categorized in the same ethnic group, these women may differ in the way they look, the language they speak, whether or not they were born in the United States, and overall cultural identity. The Mexican-American, or “Chicana” group, is the largest subgroup under the Latina organization (Josselson & Harraway, 2012). The Chicana feminist movement emerged as Mexican-American women wanted to gain a larger role in the Chicano political movement during the 1960s. The United Farm Workers, formed by Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta, had many female members. Another organization, Las Hijas de Cuahtemoc, formed by Ana Nieto Gomez, was a major advocate for the Chicano movement (Clawson, 2008). Once Chicanas began becoming more involved in political organizations they fought back against the “machismo” of Mexican culture.
that subjected women to lesser roles. They asserted that Chicana women were supportive of families and wanted an equal partnership with men. Chicanas have struggled with the domestic subordinate role thrust upon them because of the traditional beliefs in Latin culture (Clawson, 2008).

The Latino cultural renaissance, which occurred in the 1960s, sparked Latina writers to create a discourse about their place in society. It can be argued that Latina feminists are fighting the oppression they feel from the U.S. culture, but they are also fighting patriarchal control that exists within their culture (McCracken, Ellen, 1999).

In *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, author Gloria Anzaldúa describes how Chicanos straddle the border, living in two worlds. She says Chicanos experience a push and pull between the United States and Mexico. On one side they are exposed to the Spanish language of Mexicans, while on the other side, Anglos are pushing them to lose their accents. Anzaldúa states that Chicanos don’t say “we are American,” “we are Spanish,” or “we are Hispanic.” They say, “we are Mexican,” although they do make the distinction between Mexicans who live in the United States and Mexicans who live in Mexico. Anzaldúa describes being Mexican as more of a feeling than a place of origin. “Deep in our hearts we believe that being Mexican is not with which country one lives in. Being Mexican is a state of soul – not one of mind, not one of citizenship. Neither eagle nor serpent, but both. And like the ocean, neither animal respects borders” (1999, p. 84).

Place and identity are linked for most people. However, the idea of place becomes more complex for women of color because imperialistic practices make some women of color exist in two places, crossing borders, immigrating to new countries, or exiling from old ones. The women exist in two cultures, acá ya allá or, here and there as they say (Gillman, 2010).
As children growing up in the United States, many Latinas have had to find ways to survive in a transitional world. In *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (2002), women speak of the “trying to pass for white” aspect that plagued their childhood. These women are usually born in multicolored homes, where a mother, sister, father, or brother could have a lighter or darker skin tone of different texture of hair than oneself. These different variations on appearance have had different implications on women. Although some women, due to lighter skin and smoother hair, are easier to pass as white and perhaps are less susceptible to racism or violence toward them, these women still battle with an internal struggle of identity. The forced assimilation placed on them creates insecurity within them for fear of their cultural obliteration (Moraga & Anzaldúa, 2002). This childhood experience is extremely important to the idea of feminism that develops in Latin women. It ingrains what they value and fight for as feminists. Cherrie Moraga (2002) writes that growing up a light-skinned Chicana she knew her lighter skin gave her privilege. Although she didn’t realize it until later in her life, she believes most of her upbringing washed her of what culture and color she had. In her home she rarely spoke Spanish and her mother would refer to herself and other working-class Chicanos as “wetbacks,” creating the idea that being a Chicano meant being some who is less than. Moraga writes that because her mother wanted her and her siblings to be educated and not have to live in poverty, she Anglocized” them. Ultimately, she understood where she came from as far as heritage came to be very different from where she ended (Moraga & Anzaldúa, 2002). Anzaldúa describes similar experiences as a child, where she was hit on the knuckles with a rule for speaking Spanish or when she was told not to speak back to a teacher for trying to tell her how to pronounce her name correctly. She asserts that Chicanos have a conflict of identity because they do not completely align with Anglo-American cultural values, nor do they align with Mexican
cultural values. Instead, they are a mixture between the two cultures with varying degrees of Mexican-ness or Anglo-ness. She describes this feeling. “I have so internalized the borderland conflict that sometimes I feel like one cancels out the other and we are zero, nothing no one. A veces no soy nada ni nadia. Pero hasta cuando no lo soy, lo soy” (1999, p. 85).

This feeling, shared by Chicanos, created the development of a Chicano language. This dialect borrows words from English and archaic Spanish to create a regional language under the Chicano subculture. Similar things have happened from different Latin subgroups, such as the emergence of a NuyoRican culture in New York by Puerto Ricans. An ethnographic study in 2008 by Mónica Russel y Rodríguez of Mexican-American women on the meaning of womanhood found that Mexican-American women use strategies to reinvent the traditional role of a woman in Mexican culture. By interviewing Chicana women, Rodriguez found that although Mexican women tend to believe in the traditional role culturally set for them (a woman is a mother and wife and subservient to those roles), they usually act in some ways different from that typical ideal. This is important because it shows a unique discourse in which women may invoke the dominant ideas of race, gender, and sexuality, but in other ways still undermine those dominant ideas (Rodriguez, 2008).
METHODOLOGY

Sampling

The qualitative study used articles from three daily newspapers, the New York Times, El Paso Times, and El Norte, a Mexican daily in Monterrey, Nuevo León. These papers were selected to compare the regional perspectives on the drug violence in Mexico. This analysis included articles published between January 1, 2008 and December 31, 2010, the first three years Mexican President Felipe Calderon declared a war on drugs cartels in Mexico. It was also the height of the period of violence in Ciudad Juárez. the New York Times and El Norte articles were accumulated using the Lexis Nexis online database and the El Paso Times articles were accumulated using the Access World News online Database. All articles were found under a search of keywords “drug violence and Mexico.” El Norte articles were found under same keywords in Spanish. the New York Times search retrieved 71 articles. The El Paso Times search retrieved 1,186. Those articles were reduced systematically by selecting articles from six alternating months in the year that were 500 or more words in length. This left 123 articles for analysis. The search for articles in El Norte from 2008 to 2009 retrieved 85 articles. For 2010, 108 were retrieved from the same search terms. The number of articles was reduced by using articles from six alternating months in the year. In total, 110 articles were used from El Norte for analysis.

In total, 304 articles were selected for a framing analysis of the drug war in Mexico. El Norte, the New York Times, and El Paso Times were compared with one another to see which frames were used more often in terms of region. El Paso Times and the New York Times stories also were analyzed by reporter’s sex. El Norte could not be analyzed by male or female bylines because many Mexican newspapers have removed bylines from stories about drug violence to
protect their reporters’ identities. The following research questions were sought to be answered by this portion of the study.

1. What frames are used most often by the *New York Times*, *El Paso Times*, and *El Norte* newspapers in covering the drug war in Mexico?

2. What are the differences between the frames used most often by the *New York Times*, *El Paso Times*, and *El Norte* newspapers in covering the drug war in Mexico?

3. What frames are used most often by male reporters at the *New York Times* and *El Paso Times* newspapers in covering the drug war in Mexico?

4. What frames are used most often by female reporters at the *New York Times* and *El Paso Times* newspapers in covering the drug war in Mexico?

5. What are the differences between frames used in stories on the drug war in Mexico written by female and male reporters?

**Frames**

Articles in this study were divided into two main frames: war and government/policy. Mexico’s drug war is two-fold. It is both a war between drug cartels fighting for territory and also a war between the president’s administration and the drug cartels. Stories under the war frame tell the stories of the impact of these two wars. Under the war frame, three major subframes were developed from stories: casualties of war, attack/battle/arrest, and war overview. Countries in wartime experience effects much larger than just deaths and violence. The war in Mexico has affected tourism, the economy, the image of Mexico, the daily way of life, and other things that are not typically shown with war. Stories centered on these ideas fall under the casualties of war frame. The Mexican drug war has had high rates of death and days with massacres. Because leaders of the drug war have become high profile celebrities, arrests of these high-ranking officials have made national headlines. Stories under the battle/attack/arrest frame feature stories that give the numbers of such incidents. They describe the war in basic phrases.
(i.e., “this many died,” “this leader was arrested”). They give details in the way someone was killed, arrested, or attacked and give times, dates, and places. The final subframe, war overview, gives a more in-depth picture of the Mexican drug war and does not simplify the drug war to only deaths like the battle/attack/arrest subframe. These stories use words like “troops,” “war,” and “bloodshed,” and give a more complete picture of the war and even compare the war to other wars like the current war in Iraq.

The government and policy frame features stories that focus on the government perspective on the situation in Mexico. These include stories about speeches by governmental officials on the drug violence, trips by government officials, and governmental strategies thought up to solve the problems in Mexico. Under this frame, two main subframes were developed: policy and U.S.–Mexico relationship. Multiple policies have been proposed in hopes to help curtail the violence, for example, the decriminalization of drugs. Stories that focus on policies, either proposed or implemented, fall under the policy frame. The drug war in Mexico has strong ties to the United States. It has been argued that both gun regulation and drug policy in the United States contributed to the violent situation in Mexico. Since these two countries share a border, they also share some responsibility for keeping both countries secure. Stories that focus on the relationship between these two countries, which at times is strained, fall under the U.S.-Mexico relationship frame.

Interview Sampling

To examine the experiences of female reporters during the violence, this study interviewed seven woman journalists in person in El Paso and Juárez. The interview subjects were promised anonymity and their place of work would not be revealed so they could speak
freely about their experiences. The interviews were approved by university Institutional Review Board. All interview subjects were asked the same questions developed from the literature review. The interview subject were asked open-ended questions so the subject were free to expand on certain points that they felt were important and the interviewer was able to ask follow up questions. The interview subjects consisted of three women journalists who live in Juárez and report for Mexican media outlets, and four women journalists who live in El Paso and report for U.S. media outlets. The interview subjects worked for print newspapers and television stations. The women ranged in age from 28 to 50 and had worked in the journalism industry from a range of three to 20 years. All women were Hispanic, spoke Spanish fluently, and had some personal history with the city of Juárez. All in-depth interviews were conducted in person and lasted between 50 and 120 minutes. The interview subjects were recruited through postings on e-mail listservs for professional journalism organizations. Some interview subjects were recruited by using a snowball method from other participants in the study.

Interviews were both recorded on video and audio. The researcher transcribed all the interviews. After the interviews data was collected and answers were divided into categories based on interview questions. The interview transcripts were examined to see what themes developed in the experiences by the women journalists. The results were intended to better understand the women journalists’ experiences of reporting during a drug war.
RESULTS

Framing Study

Of the 304 articles examined, 71 were from the New York Times from 2008 to 2010. Of the 71 articles 57% of those articles told stories through the war frame in general. Also, 24% of the articles used the battle/attack/arrest frame, 16% used the casualties of war frame, and 16 percent used the war overview frame. Of the 71 articles 38% were told stories through the government and policy frame in general. Only six articles in total (8%) did not fall under any subframes, while 12% of the articles fell under the policy frame, and 19% fell under the U.S – Mexico relationship frame. Only 5% of articles examined did not fit any frames used in this study.

Figure 1. Frames overview: New York Times.
In total 123 articles were examined from the *El Paso Times*. This study found 52% of the articles fell under the war frame. Under the subframes 25% of the articles fell under the battle/attack/arrest frame, 15% fell under the casualties of war frame, and 13% fell under the war overview frame. Of all the articles 38% were categorized under the government and policy frame. About 16% of articles fell under the main frame, while 14% fell under the policy frame, and 7% fell under the U.S.–Mexico relationship frame. Only 10% of articles were not categorized under the frames used in this study.
Figure 3. Frames overview: El Paso Times.

Figure 4. Frames used by the El Paso Times.
In total 110 articles were examined from *El Norte*. About 39% of articles fell under the war frame. 15% of articles were categorized under the battle/attack/arrest frame, 14% fell under the casualties of war frame, and 10% fell under the war overview frame. About 56% of articles fell under the government and policy frame. About 32% of the articles fell under the main frame, while 14% fell under the policy frame, and 10% fell under the U.S. – Mexico relationship frame. Only 5% of articles did not fit into any frame.

*Figure 5.* Frames overview: *El Norte.*

*Figure 6.* Frames used by *El Norte.*
RQ1: The *New York Times* used the war frame (57%) in more articles than the government and policy frame (38%). For further analysis of the articles several subframes were used. The *New York Times* used the battle/attack/arrest (24%) frame on the most amount of articles and the policy frame (12%) on the least amount of articles. The *El Paso Times* used the war frame (52%) in more articles than the government policy frame (38%). Of the *El Paso Times* articles the battle/attack/arrest frame (25%) was used the most and the U.S. – Mexico relationship frame (7%) was used the least. *El Norte* used the government and policy frame (56%) more than the war frame (39%). *El Norte* used the main government and policy frame (32%) the most and used both the war overview frame (10%) and U.S. – Mexico relationship frame (10%) the least.

![Frames Comparison](image)

*Figure 7. Frames comparison for RQ1.*

RQ2: This study found the *New York Times* and *El Paso Times* framed the drug situation in Mexico most through the war frame, while *El Norte* framed the drug war most through the government and policy frame.
Of all the articles that fell under the war frame all three newspapers used the battle/attack/arrest frame the most in their articles. The *New York Times* used the casualties of war frame and war overview frame the same amount, while the *El Paso Times* used the casualties of war frame (15%) slightly more times than the war overview frame (13%) and *El Norte* used the casualties of war (14%) more than the war overview frame (10%) Of the articles that fell under the government and policy frame *El Norte* had the most articles under the main frame with 32% of the articles, the *El Paso Times* had 16% of its articles under this frame, and the *New York Times* had the least with 8% of the articles. The *New York Times* had the most articles under the U.S.–Mexico relationship frame with 19%, while the *El Norte* had 10%, and *El Paso Times* had 7%. *El Norte* and *El Paso Times* had more articles under the policy frame than the *New York Times*. In

*Figure 8. Frames comparison for RQ2.*
all, the *New York Times* was more likely to frame the drug war in Mexico under the war frame and when using the war frame it was more likely to use the attack/battle/arrest frame. However, if the *New York Times* were to use the government and policy frame, it was most likely to use the U.S.–Mexico relationship frame in an article. The *El Paso Times* was more likely to use the drug war in Mexico under the war frame as well and like the *New York Times* was more likely to use the attack/battle/arrest frame more than any other frame. If the *El Paso Times* were to use the government and policy frame, they would most likely use the main frame. *El Norte* was more likely to frame a story through the government and policy frame and used the main frame for most of their articles. When it did use the war frame, they used the battle/attack/arrest frame.

RQ3: Of the articles by the *El Paso Times* about 43% of articles were written by a male reporter. Male reporters used the war frame (25%) more often than the government and policy frame (18%). Male reporters used the battle/attack/arrest frames the most on 30% of the articles, 21% with the war overview frame, and 8% with the casualties of war frame. The policy frame (17%) was used most often under the government and policy frame. The main frame was used on 15% of articles by male reporters. The U.S.–Mexico relationship frame was used the least with only 9% of the articles written by male reporters falling under this category. Of the *New York Times* male reporters wrote about 63% of the articles. Male reporters used the war frame (44%) more often than the government and policy frame (20%). Male reporters at the *New York Times* used the battle/attack/arrest frame most often with 26%. The U.S.–Mexico relationship frame was used 18%, the policy frame was used 7%, war overview was used 24%, the casualties of war was used 18%, and the main government and policy frame was used the least with 7%.
Figure 9. Frames used by *El Paso Times* male reporters.

Figure 10. Frames used by *New York Times* male reporters.
This analysis found that both the *El Paso Times* and *New York Times* male reporters used the battle/attack/arrest frame most often. However, the *El Paso Times* male reporters used the casualties of war frame the least, while the *New York Times* used the main government and policy frame the least.

RQ4: Female reporters wrote of the *El Paso Times* articles in total about 43%. Female reporters used the government policy frame on 20% of the articles and the war frame on 24%. The frames used most often by female reporters was the casualties of war frame (26%). The battle/attack/arrest frame was used on 19% of articles. Female reporters used the main government and policy frame on 23% of the articles, the policy frame on 15% of the articles, the war overview on 9% of the articles, and the U.S.–Mexico relationship frame on 8% of the articles.

![Figure 11. Frames used by female reporters of *El Paso Times*](image)

*Figure 11.* Frames used by *El Paso Times* female reporters.
Female reporters wrote 24% of the *New York Times* articles. Female reporters wrote more government and policy framed (13%) stories than war framed (11%) stories. This study found female *New York Times* reporters used the policy frame on most stories with 24%. The U.S.–Mexico relationship frame, casualties of war, and battle/attack/arrest frame were all used on 18% of the articles, the main government and policy frame and war overview frame were used on 11% of the articles.

![Figure 12. Frames use by New York Times female reporters.](image)

This study found that female reporters at the *El Paso Times* used the battle/attack/arrest and casualties of war frame on most articles in comparison to female reporters at the *New York*
Times used the U.S.–Mexico relationship on most articles. Female reporters at both the El Paso Times and the New York Times used the war-overview frame on the least amount of articles.

RQ5: In total female and male reporters wrote an equal amount of stories for the El Paso Times. Female reporters wrote 43% of stories, while male reporters wrote 43% of stories.

Figure 13. Gender overview, El Paso Times.

Of the El Paso Times articles the largest difference under a frame between articles written by male and female reporters was under the casualties of war frame. Male reporters only wrote 4 articles (8%), while female reporters wrote 14 articles (26%). Male reporters wrote 30% of the battle/attack/arrest articles compared to 19% written by female reporters. Of the government and policy framed stories 20% were written by female reporters and 18% were written by male reporters. Under the war frame male reporters wrote 25% of the stories and female reporters wrote 24% of the stories.
In total much more male reporters wrote stories for the *New York Times* than female reporters. Male reporters wrote 63% of the articles, while female reporters only wrote 24%. Of the *New York Times* articles, the largest difference under a frame between articles written by male and female reporters was the war overview frame with male reporters writing 24% of those articles and female reporters writing 11% of those articles. Male reporters wrote 20% of the articles under the government and policy frame compared to female reporters who wrote about 13%. Male reporters wrote 44% of the articles under the war frame compared to female reporters who only wrote 11%. This study found that *El Paso Times* female reporters were more likely to use the casualties of war frame than male reporters, while male reporters were more likely to use the battle/attack/arrest frame than female reporters. The *New York Times* male reporters were
more likely to frame a story using the war overview frame than female reporters, while more articles written by female reporters used the battle/attack/arrest frame than those written by male reporters. However, since the number of female and male reporters at the *New York Times* was not equal, the gender examination of the *New York Times* articles is skewed.

![Gender Overview: The New York Times](image)

*Figure 15. Gender overview, New York Times.*

![Female vs. Male Frames: The New York Times](image)

*Figure 16. Male vs. female frames, New York Times.*
In-Depth Interview Results

The data showed that women journalists had stories that provided a different perspective that focused on the impact of the drug war on Mexico past the number of lives lost. Women journalists covering Ciudad Juarez on a day-to-day basis said they felt a sense of responsibility in covering an extremely important story that affected many people’s lives. They said they had a duty to tell the story beyond just simply stating the number of deaths. (For descriptions of journalists interview, please see Appendix A on p.70).

J1 said covering this story was different than other drug-violence stories she had covered in other cities because it was happening so close to her home. “It’s a story where, yes, you are technically covering a foreign country, but it’s not foreign to me.” Because so few reporters traveled to Juarez, this reporter felt a strong sense of responsibility toward the story.

Many, many U.S. reporters would not go in, period, during the worst violence and many still don’t. I felt a responsibility to tell these stories that needed to be told. I felt like we were getting more news out of Iraq and Afghanistan than we were out of what was the war next door that was taking a heavy, heavy toll on so many people and it wasn’t just Mexico’s problem. It’s an international multibillion dollar business.

J2, who had only worked as a journalist for a few years out of college, moved back to her hometown of El Paso just before the violence erupted in Juarez. Not affiliated or backed by any news organization, she decided to cross into Juarez and cover the violence on her own because of this same sentiment.

There were people in my situation that chose to ignore it and shame on them. Mexico was very near and dear to me and the responsibility as a reporter, you’re supposed to bear witness especially in times like this. All of that came together to push me to go cover that and also the lack of coverage.

Woman journalists based in Juarez said they felt a similar sense of responsibility for telling the story of violence erupting in the city. These journalists actually lived in the city during the violence and were faced with different hardships than American reporters.
We were one of the few companies that covered the entire period of violence publishing what was happening. For me it was a challenge to work here because I felt in the city many media outlets became quiet because of fear but it was necessary to inform. I understood the promise our channel made to inform the public. It was a period very complicated here during the violence, but it was a personal decision for me to stay. I felt if I left things how they were I was I was ignoring what was happening in the city. (J5)

Mexican reporters had to face constant threats from drug cartels. J5 said she would receive phone calls where drug cartel members would threaten to kill her. “For a long time I would think that they were going to come into my house and kill me because those things would happen.” During the violence, two male reporters for El Diario, a daily paper in Juarez, were killed. Armando Rodriguez Carreon or “El Choco” was a crime reporter at El Diario, who was killed outside his home one morning. A few years later a photography intern, Luis Carlos Santiago, from the same paper was gunned down in front of a local mall. Despite these two killings involving male reporters, a female reporter from a Juarez paper with 19 years experience said that mostly women were doing the day-to-day reporting covering the violence. They experienced the same threats as male reporters.

Something very peculiar that happened, in the middle of violence were a lot of women covering the story. There were more women covering stories, in the streets. For me as an editor, I would sometimes give a story to a man and a man would be more cautious. They would worry and say “that’s a dangerous story, I think of my family, I wouldn’t like to do this.” I would give the story to a woman and the woman would be running out the door and would bring back the story. It could sound like a general statement or like I’m biased as a woman, but it was the reality. They were married women, women with children, different ages who were scared too, but they would do it. (J7)

J5 said she also experienced a difference between herself and a male reporter when they both received an email death threat.

We are a city that assumes that we don’t have them, but we know that we have machos. They threatened me and they threatened a male coworker and my male coworker said nothing is wrong with me, she is the one who is scared, but I am very brave and I can keep on living my life. She is weak. I was offended. I was frustrated. I thought he was a coward because I saw him almost crying and he was scared.
U.S. media coverage of the situation in Juarez was mainly done by local female reporters as well. Women journalists did the day-to-day coverage of the drug war.

The men would come in and out. They would be at these high-profile papers even within Mexican media. They’d come in and do these big giant stories and then they’d leave the next day. And the woman, and maybe this shows the way it works on both sides of the border, but most of the people in this area are just your day-to-day, day in and day out do the story reporters. A lot of those people on the ground doing the heavy lifting if you will are women, often young women, entry level, and some are very experienced woman. The women are out in the field and the ones calling the shots are often the men in management. (J1)

Other reporters agreed that men held positions of power, while the women were facing the violence daily while doing their jobs. “All the men were in Mexico City, all the male reporters. They all had the posh foreign correspondent jobs so they got to live in Mexico City and they would come up here and cover the worst of it, but it was us that were here 24/7” (J2, personal interview, 9/16/2013). J3 agrees with this sentiment. “I was one of a few women, one of two women because as you may know newsrooms are still men, a lot of men and even in positions of power, just men” (J3, personal interview, 9/18/2013).

However, reporters from both sides of the border believe the “femicides” that occurred in Juarez in the 1990s motivated women to be interested in crime reporting. Veteran women reporters who covered the drug violence in the 2000s also reported on the violence against women in the 1990s.

In this city woman have also played a big role. In the case of the femicides, the ones who spoke out were the mothers. In the case of the disappearance, the ones who spoke out were the mothers, in the massacres, the ones who spoke out were women. The person who confronted the president was a woman. So I think historically, the women have had a predominant role in the history of Juarez. I don’t see why in journalism it wouldn’t be the same way. (J3)

U.S. women reporters in El Paso also covered the femicides happening in Juarez. “I think that very early on the women’s murders for the most part have been viewed as a woman’s issue.
Editors, certain media outlets, publishers have viewed it as instead of let’s look at this as a serious crime and let’s find out what we can about it. It was always a woman’s thing” (J4, personal interview, 9/18/2013). J3 believes veteran crime reporters had covered the femicides in the past and happened to continue their jobs as crime reporters when the violence erupted. “We were reporting already so I don’t think that it was just oh well all of a sudden a female reporter wants to cover crime. We were already doing it” (J3, personal interview, 9/19/2013). Although the femicides began in the 1990s, women are still continuing to disappear today.

You can’t cover that story enough. They continue to disappear. That’s a very serious and sad problem. If I was able to prioritize what problems I went after in Juarez, I would prioritize that because these are girls that are being used and forgotten and discarded. It’s very easy to ignore them and pretend that’s not happening and these girls don’t deserve it. No one deserves it. (J2)

Because the coverage of the drug war in Juarez was done primarily by women, the journalists who covered this believe they brought a different perspective toward the story as a whole. “We all wanted to cover that story. No one was forcing us to cover that story. I think it brought a lot to the coverage because we didn’t just do the gun each other down in the middle of the street and this cartel is in charge and this and that. We tried to go beyond that and show that human impact on families and on victims” (J1, personal interview, 9/20/2013). J4 agrees that male reporters saw the story in a different light than their female counterparts.

The drug trafficking and the violence it’s all sexy, it’s guns, and death and the male editors tended to be very interested in that. I could tell. You couldn’t get them past the violence. Like okay well what’s going on with drug use? Who is using drugs? How are drugs affecting the community? Do we have enough rehabilitation centers? I think I did one story that dealt with this whole drug wars ordeal that dealt with how many addicts do we have here that rely on the drug trade? I think every other story was about the body count and who’s who in the cartel. It was almost like covering sports. And I really believe that’s a male viewpoint. (J4)

Juarez female reporters also tried to peruse stories that went beyond the numbers. Feeling a deeper tie to the community they lived in, they felt a great responsibility toward the people of
Juarez. “We act because we believe journalism is a pillar for society, for a democracy” (J7, personal interview, 9/18/2013).

Reporting in Juarez was dangerous. During the height of the violence in 2010 nearly 3,000 people were killed in one year. Reporters had to cover breaking news and would sometimes be the first on a scene.

We would arrive at crimes scenes and the families would be there waiting for me with the microphone to hear what I was going to say about the victim, who he was, who killed him? They were waiting for the details. For them it was sometimes official information about who was killed, but also sometimes there were young children that cried out when I would say they killed a person with seven bullets and they would cry, “why did this happen to my dad?” That would impact me a lot. (J5)

Drug organizations began committing murders around times nightly news programs would air on purpose to receive more coverage. In some cases they would wait around for first responders were attacked. It was difficult for journalists to navigate through these tricky situations. “A lot of times in the U.S. you want to be first on the scene. Not there. If you’re first on the scene the hit men are still probably roving around trying to see if anyone is alive or dead. Even the cops at that point were afraid of getting there too quickly” (J1, personal interview, 9/20/2013). U.S. reporters covering Juarez developed ways to ensure their safety. “I’d put my hair back. I wouldn’t wear anything that would call attention to me. I made sure I’d carry my passport and extra money in a secure place in case my bag got stolen” (J2, personal interview, 9/16/2013). J1 had a different method of ensuring her safety.

We did take precautions. Unfortunately at that time we had what the photographer and I would call a narco vehicle. We had a giant Ford Expedition with tinted windows so we looked suspicious. We would roll down the windows no matter what the temperature because at that point we wanted people to see who we were because mistakes were very common. A lot of the hit men didn’t know what they were doing, they were just out there killing. And for the photographer we decided since his tripod looked like someone you might mount a gun on we put a lot of reflective tape around his tripod and even on his camera so it would stand out so people could see what it was, the authorities in particular. (J1)
Although the situation in Juarez was at times overwhelming, U.S. reporters agreed they took comfort in being able to come home to the United States after a day’s work. “We had the humongous privilege of coming home to El Paso every night and I think honestly that’s what kept me, at least me I can’t speak for the others, but that’s what kept me safe, that I knew I could come home to safety” (J2, personal interview, 9/16/2013). U.S. reporters agreed that Juarez-based reporters faced a more difficult situation because they lived in the city where violence was erupting.

I think that for female reporters in Juarez or in Mexico it’s tougher and I applaud them and I applaud their job. I commend whatever they are doing in Juarez right now during this difficult situation. What they have done and a few of them have been very, very courageous in dealing with the military, in dealing with police, federal police, questioning them, questioning government, just being courageous to stand up and say what is going on? Why does this not match what you are saying? Just questioning things because that is very courageous. It’s very easy, for example, for someone living in another country to come there questioning and then come back. But what about the people that actually live there? And not all women reporters are married, they live alone, which is tougher. It is just tougher. (J3)

However, living in El Paso does not bring a sense of safety for all reporters. J4 has installed security cameras in her home and taken other precautions in her daily life although she has stopped crossing the border into Juarez. “I do not go out to a lot of public events here in my community anymore. I stay home a lot. And I do not try not to be out a lot with family members either” (J4, personal interview, 9/19/2013).

Covering the drug war has had an impact not only on the security of the reporters, it has also taken a toll on these women both emotional and psychologically.

It was difficult because I would come home with a heavy emotional feeling. My ex-husband said that I would get home with lots of adrenaline after a crime. In the divorce he would say it was like I liked the crimes. I couldn’t explain to him that it was all the adrenaline from seeing a crime scene and it’s eleven at night and you know they just killed all these people and you get home and I would see my kids, they were babies, sleeping. I think my kids are here, my family is here, but they were moments with a lot of fear. (J5)
J2 said seeing the violence affected her in other ways. “When I would see movies where there was a lot of violence and things like that, I couldn’t see them. I would watch a little bit. I remember I was at a friend’s house and I had to go to the bathroom and sob. That was my reaction for a while, where I couldn’t take in scenes of extreme violence” (J2). J3 tried to separate her work from her personal life to try and cope. “I think that you just disconnect. When I go to my house I just watch the most frivolous things on the T.V. I don’t watch any news” (J3).

J1 said she tried to keep the two worlds separate, but eventually the work caught up with her.

I think for a while I live in denial and would just try and not think about it. You couldn’t help but think about it. I would compartmentalize them and just say well I have a job to do and it’s a story that needs to be told, but yes you would feel sad. You would feel empathy and you would feel worried about some of the people. You can’t forget and yet I knew that if I ever really sat down and thought to hard I may not get up and go do it again.

J6 said she still hasn’t understood completely what impact the violence has had on her, but keeping busy helps her cope.

I think there are moments of depression. There are moments of when you think this is not worth all the trouble. There are moments when the situation frustrates you. But there is always a reason to keep going. I get involved in many things. For example I recycle here in the newsroom. I began to recycle with everyone to raise money for a charity that helps kids with cancer. I have lots of activities. I’m always busy. This violence that we saw has made us look at life differently. It makes you thank god for waking up another day.

To find ways to help themselves and others cope with violence, J6 and J7, along with other Mexican journalists, formed an online organization, RED, as a forum to bring border reporters together. The online blog was a way for reporters to get information on how to report in a dangerous drug war. “We are a bridge for people.” J5 was struggling for her coworkers and bosses to understand the fear she was feeling about her job and said the RED helped her by giving her someone to talk to. “They were the only people who were taking me serious.” J5 was able to received training from an organization called Article 19 with the help of the RED. The
training taught her how to survive if she was kidnapped and helped her develop a safe route to leave Mexico if she was threatened. “The fear doesn’t go away. It will always be there, but I’ve calmed down and it gave me a way to cope.”

Today the violence in Juarez has calmed down. However, the possibility of another outbreak still remains in the city. “As long as there are drugs being trafficked across the border. As long as there is a market for them here in the states. There is going to be someone who wants to sell them, and there is going to be more than one someone who wants to sell them and so it’s like business and instead of competition they are going to do it with violence” (J2). However, J1 is optimistic about Mexico’s future.

I do have hope for Mexico. I see improvements over the past twenty years. Things are getting better. It’s a slow process. If you think about the U.S. we had lots of corruption within our police forces. We had problems around prohibition, but what finally happened when you were able to get people prosecuted in courts of law, even if it was for tax evasion, it was a way to establish rules that went beyond individuals.
DISCUSSION

As discussed earlier during the height of violence, Juárez was considered one of the most dangerous cities in the world. Few newspapers were willing to send reporters to Juárez and when they did, reporters were only sent to cover the situation in a short time period and not stationed in the area during the entire drug war. Local newspapers, both in El Paso and in Juárez, had the ability to be in the middle of the violence. For reporters in Juárez, the violence was happening in their own community. For reporters in El Paso, the violence was happening just next door.

Because the *El Paso Times* and *El Norte* were actually near the violence and had multiple reporters focusing on the drug war they had far more stories about the drug war than the *New York Times*. The *New York Times* search of articles retrieved fewer than 100 articles, while the *El Paso Times* articles had to be systematically reduced because the search retrieved more than 1,000 articles. The framing analysis found that both the *El Paso Times* and the *New York Times* used the war frame more than the government and policy frame, while *El Norte* used the government and policy more than the war frame. However, the *El Paso Times* used the war frame on slightly smaller percentage of stories than the *New York Times*, while still having the same percentage of stories under the government and policy frame. The *El Paso Times* also had a higher percentage of stories that did not fit into the frames used in this study. The *New York Times* being a national newspaper covers a broader range of foreign stories. News editors have to decide what foreign stories are more important and where to send reporters. Because of this the *New York Times* has to prioritize stories, and conflict is considered one of the news values used by media. Therefore, the Times is likely chose to run more stories that frame the situation in Mexico as a war as opposed to covering the role of government and policy on the drug war. In contrast, *El Norte* overwhelmingly used the government and policy frame. The United States and
Mexico differ in cultural terms. Latin American countries tend to center around traditional values and have a high obedience toward religion and the family, while the United States believes in more secular authority (Schawrz, 2006). Mexico has had a long history with the Catholic Church. When the Spaniards conquered Mexico, Native Americans living in the country were forced to convert to Catholicism. Catholic churches were erected across the country. Mexico has had deep-rooted ties to religion for centuries (Kirkwood, 2009). Many articles examined in *El Norte* featured speeches given by both political leaders and leaders of the Catholic Church. These articles were placed under the government and policy frame. During the violent drug war, many Mexican newspapers began censoring themselves for fear of retaliation. The use of the government and policy frame more than the war frame by *El Norte* can be due to the censorships that spread across newspapers during this period. It may have been easier for Mexican reporters to write stories that focused on the government’s role in the drug war, or the policies that affected the drug war, than report of attacks by certain drug cartels. Reporters had to balance between fighting drug cartels, and writing a story about one cartel could leave the other cartel angry. Trying to avoid conflict, Mexican reporters most likely thought twice before writing these stories. Therefore, more stories were written about government and policy.

The analysis of the frames used by this paper in terms of region did not show much difference between frames used by each paper, besides the differences with *El Norte*. However, *El Norte’s* use of different frames was due in part to cultural differences and the threat of violence. In terms of gender, there were large differences in the stories written by female and male reporters. The United States is a patriarchal society. Specific gender roles exist for men and women. Men, needing to be masculine, are viewed as strong. Little boys are taught to play with toy race cars and play sports. Women, pushed to be more feminine, are viewed as weak. Little
girls are taught to play with dolls and toys that simulate housework. These ideas reinforce the woman as a caretaker role. Jobs that are traditional seen as for women reinforce this caretaker role. Nurses and nannies, for example, are two jobs that are traditional seen as jobs only for women (D'Angelo & Kuypers, 2009). These gender ideas affect the way men and women view the world. The framing analysis found that female reporters at the *El Paso Times* used the casualties of war frame more than any other frame. Male reporters at both the *New York Times* and *El Paso Times* used the battle/attack/arrest frame most. Women reporters saw the war from a human-interest perspective. They wanted to show how the war was affecting daily life and understand why the drug war with extreme violence was happening. In contrast, men were more likely to view the war from a purely numbers standpoint. They focused on deaths and how people were killed. Viewing these stories through these particular frames reinforces traditional gender roles: Men focusing on violence, and women focusing on taking care of the situation.

Newsrooms are still dominated by men. Moreover, men are in positions of power. Although women wrote stories from a different frames than men when looking at the papers overall, they look relatively similar. For The *New York Times* more men were writing stories about the drug war. For the *El Paso Times* men were in positions of power and made decisions on story content. These two factors influenced the frame used by the newspapers as a whole (battle/attack/arrest) despite female reporters writing more stories under the casualties of war frame.

Not only did sex have and impact, but also ethnicity played a role in the women coverage of the violence in Juárez. Feminist theory for women of color asserts that women differ in multiple ways including but not limited to class and ethnicity. Third wave feminism has focused on the intersectionality of different forms of oppression and how together these oppressions are intricate to one another (Wood, 2015). In the case of women journalists in Juárez, all women
shared the same sex and ethnicity. Therefore, the intersectionality of these two traits shows that not only women, but women of color, specifically Latin women, were able to successfully report in Juárez.

It is interesting that these women were both challenging these traditional gender roles and reinforcing them. Violence and action are typically seen as ideas that apply to men. The fact that these women were reporting on a violent Mexican drug war challenges that idea. Women are typically seen as weaker than men. Men are not to fear things, while women are. These women overcame their fears and reported on a story that their male counterparts, in many cases out of fear, refused to. Men and women were being killed in the violence. Men and women were being threatened. The risk was great for both sexes; however one sex took the risk, while the other watched from the sidelines. Although, these women did break the traditional gender roles in these aspects, being a woman still affected the way they told their stories in a traditional sense. Caring about the story as a woman is traditionally a caretaker. The women looked at the stories from a human point of view: how the community was affected and what would happen to the families and children. The men wrote stories about the action and numbers, but many didn’t even cross into Juarez. It’s unique that both men and women reporters straddled the gender line. Not only did the women provide coverage, but they also provided readers with a different way of looking at the story.

Because the war was primarily covered by women and the framing analysis shows women reporters wrote more stories under the casualties of war frame, the women reporting in Juarez provided a different record of the drug war than could have been provided by solely male reporters. Female reporters faced the same challenges that male reporters did during the violence. They were threatened, they witnessed death and crime, and some lost friends or coworkers.
Despite the hardships, they chose to report anyway. Reporting under these conditions has had different psychological effects on each of the women. Some have moved on in ways, while others have not begun to understand how the drug war has impacted them.

The framing portion of this study has some limitations because it did not account for stories that possibly could have fit in multiple frames and did not use codes for analysis. In using a qualitative text analysis approach there may be some preconceived bias in the study due to the researchers background.
CONCLUSION

The situation in Juarez was an unforgettable experience for all the women reporters interviewed in this study. The challenges they faced helped develop new methods to ensure their own protection, find ways to cope with witnessing human suffering, and how to operate in a war zone. Documenting their experience advances the field of journalism by giving journalists a record of how to report in a country during wartime. It also sheds light on particular biases both female and male reporters bring to telling stories. In hopes, journalists will strive to view stories from alternative perspectives. This study also advances framing theory by examining frames by male and female reporters. Much research has been done on the portrayal of women in the media; however, this research examines how men and women see a news story. Further framing research could examine how male and female reporters frame a story that is more gender specific, such as a highly publicized rape case. This research also advances Latina feminism and challenges the traditional gender roles in a patriarchal society. Latina feminist scholars have written about the push and pull Latin women feel between the United States and their Latin country. These women had to understand both the United States and Mexico to cover this story. They all agree that would have been impossible if not for their heritage. It also challenges the traditional ideas of women because these women put themselves in extremely violent situations to cover a story, while their male counterparts refused to do the same. Further research could examine other wars that are being covered primarily by female reporters. A recent article, states that female reporters, both Syrian and foreign, are leading the coverage in Syria (Beals & Hilsman, 2013). This situation is similar to Juarez, and further research can examine why this is happening in another country during another war. Because few reporters were sent to cover the drug war in Juarez, further research could examine how newspapers decide what conflicts to
cover around the world. Further research could also be done in Juarez to understand different perspectives on the drug war such as the government, everyday people living in Juarez, or law enforcement.

The coverage of Juarez by woman reporters was milestone for journalism. In a field that is still predominantly male-driven, it is important that women stepped up and covered the story. They reported under great risk and pushed forward past gender stereotypes. They are and will be inspiration for female reporters in the future.
APPENDIX A

CODES FOR WOMEN JOURNALISTS INTERVIEWS
J1: A U.S. reporter based in El Paso with more than 25 years of journalism experience who works in television news and covers the entire U.S.–Mexico Border.

J2: A U.S. reporter who grew up in El Paso with less than 8 years of journalism experience who works in radio news.

J3: A U.S. reporter who is now based in El Paso, but has worked for news outlets in Juarez and El Paso. She has more than 20 years in journalism experience and works in print media.

J4: An U.S. reporter based in El Paso with more than 25 years in journalism experience who works in print media.

J5: A Juarez-based reporter who works in television news with 15 years of journalism experience.

J6: A Juarez-based reporter who works in print media with more than 20 years of journalism experience.

J7: A Juarez-based editor who works in print media more than 20 years of journalism experience.
APPENDIX B
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
1) Tell me a little bit about your background. Where are you from? How did you get into journalism?

2) When did you begin working on the border?

3) What was it like working in a place with conflict and extreme violence?

4) Were you ever afraid to do your job or threatened not to continue reporting?

5) How did you/do you cope with seeing violence?

6) What do you think about the general coverage about the violence in Mexico?

7) What perspective do you try to bring to the stories you cover about this area?

8) How much of the reporting in this area was being done by women?

9) What difference, if any, do you think women reporters brought to the stories in Mexico in comparison to men?

10) Why do you think spikes in violence happen in Mexico?

11) What do you think about the self-censorship that happens at some Mexican newspapers?

12) Have you lost anyone and know anyone who has lost someone due to the drug violence?

13) Have things gotten better or worse in this part of Mexico?

14) Was there ever a moment when you thought you couldn’t do this job anymore?

15) What do you see for the future of Mexico?

16) What do you see in the future for yourself?

17) What things do you hope to see change in Mexico?

18) Is there anything else you think I should know?
REFERENCES


