

A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE COVERAGE OF GUN TRAFFICKING ALONG
THE U.S.-MEXICO BORDER

A Dissertation

by

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation analyzed how the media on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border portrayed the issue of gun trafficking's into Mexico and its impact on Mexico's border violence. National newspapers from both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border were analyzed from January 2009 through January 2012, *The New York Times* for the U.S. and *El Universal* for Mexico, which resulted in a sample of 602 newspaper articles. Qualitative research methods were utilized to collect and analyze the data, specifically content analysis. Drawing on a theoretical framework of social problems and framing this study addressed how gun trafficking along the U.S.-Mexico border impacted the drug related violence that is ongoing in Mexico, how gun trafficking was portrayed as a social problem by the media, and how the media depicted the victims of drug related violence.

This study revealed six framing devices, "the blame game," "worthy and unworthy victims," "positive aspects of gun trafficking," "negative aspects of gun trafficking," "indirect mention of gun trafficking," and "direct mention of gun trafficking" that were utilized by *The New York Times* and *El Universal* to discuss and frame the issue gun trafficking into Mexico and its impact on Mexico's border violence. Gun trafficking into Mexico was found to have met all three of Jamrozik and Nocella's criteria for a social problem. It had a societal origin in the media of 2008, constituted a threat toward the freedoms and values of the citizens of Mexico, and was found to be amendable to solution through cooperation between the U.S-Mexican governments. In

the end, this dissertation understands that gun trafficking into Mexico along with the supply and demand of drugs are social problems that needs to be addressed by both the American and Mexican governments in order to prevent further drug related violence.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate my dissertation to my parents, Greg and Guadalupe Camarillo, and my dog, Darwin, for always being there for me especially throughout these past several years of graduate school at Texas A&M University.

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NOMENCLATURE

AECA	Arms Export Control Act
ATF	Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
BORSTAR	Border Patrol Search, Trauma, and Rescue
CBP	Customs and Border Protection
DEA	Drug Enforcement Agency
DOJ	Department of Justice
DTO	Drug Trafficking Organizations
FFL	Federal Firearms License
FCC	Federal Communications Commission
FOPA	Firearms Owners Protection Act of 1986
GAO	Government Accountability Office
GCA	Gun Control Act of 1968
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NFA	National Firearms Act of 1934
NRA	National Rifle Association

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Drugs, violence, and corruption are all problems that have been synonymous with Mexico for the last few decades. It is speculated that drug cartels started fighting amongst each other for control following the arrest of Miguel Angel Felix Gallardo in the late 1980s. “The current drug war violence in Mexico was triggered by the capture of Benjamin Arellano Felix head of the Tijuana cartel and Osiel Cardenas head of the Gulf cartel in the early 2000s” (Cook 2007: 11). Additionally, it has been speculated that another cause of the current drug war violence was the dissolution of the deal between the drug cartels and the Mexico’s government. The drug war violence, especially along the U.S.-Mexico border, has steadily been getting worse since the fall of Miguel Angel Felix Gallardo. Since Gallardo’s capture rival drug cartels have been fighting to control the lucrative drug routes into the United States. President Vicente Fox had attempted to take on some of the drug cartels back in early 2000s, but his efforts have failed. “President Vicente Fox’s operations lead to the suspension of an entire police force, for working with the cartels, of which less than one half returned back to work” (Cook 2007: 10).

It is no secret that most of the Presidents of Mexico have taken a lax approach to combating the drug war and its accompanying violence; all that changed once Felipe Calderon stepped into office in December 2006. Since then, he has cracked down on the drug cartels by going after the top ranked leaders of these organizations. He has targeted the border areas as the focal point of attack. President Calderon had gone after these

areas for the main fact that drug cartels such as the Gulf Cartel, the Tijuana Cartel, Los Zetas, the Sinaloa Cartel, and so on have the most influence in these border areas because they are used as their main drug routes into the United States of America. Since he has gone after the top officials of these drug cartels, there has been an increased level of violence against Mexico's law enforcement officials. The disruption in the leadership of the cartels that has been caused by new government actions has also led there to be an all out confrontation amongst the drug cartels for control over these profitable and established drug trafficking paths to the United States of America.

These drug turf wars have led to an escalation of violence along the Texas-Mexico border area, mainly on the Mexican side. The Mexican areas where these drug turf wars are concentrated include Nuevo Ciudad Guerrero, Ciudad Miguel Aleman, Ciudad Camargo, Reynosa, Ciudad Rio Bravo, Nuevo Laredo, Juarez, Matamoros, and so on. Figure 1 demonstrates the territories that each drug trafficking organization owns and the drug routes that the drug trafficking organizations are fighting over. The types of violence that has been consistently associated with the Mexico's drug related violence includes assassinations, kidnappings, and shoot outs. In recent years there have been an increased number of assassinations, kidnappings, and shoot outs along Mexico's border towns. Most of those who have been the victims of this escalated border violence have been individuals who were in some way or form involved in the drug business. However, among the numerous victims of Mexico's border violence over the last seven years it has also included law enforcement, innocent bystanders, journalists, and city officials such as mayors and police chiefs.

Figure 1: Cartel Territories and Drug Routes (Reprinted with permission from Stratfor. Stratfor Global Intelligence, 2008. Cartel Territories and Drug Routes. Retrieved from www.stratfor.com on January 7, 2014.)



According to the Government Accountability Office (GAO) (2009: 7), “during the 2007 fiscal year there were 2,700 drug-related murders and in 2008 there were 6,200 drug related murders.” Currently the United States government is monitoring the ever growing violence in Mexico. The reason why the United States government is monitoring the violence occurring in Mexico is that they are concerned that the drug related violence will eventually spillover to the U.S. side. According to the Department

of Justice's Annual National Drug Threat Assessment, "the Mexican Drug Trafficking Organizations present the greatest organizational threat to the United States" (GAO 2009: 8). It has long been speculated that the Mexican drug war has been fueled by the illegal trafficking of firearms from the United States. "Mexican officials have regarded the illegal trafficking of firearms as being the number one crime problem which is affecting their nation's security" (GAO 2009:10). Over the last several years (2008-2012) the news coverage in the Rio Grande Valley regarding the number of drug violence cases in Mexico involving illegally trafficked firearms has increased.

Gun trafficking became a huge issue along the Southwestern border of the United States that the Alcohol Tobacco Firearms and Explosives (ATF) initiated a program in 2006 to determine where these trafficked firearms were coming from and where they were going. "The ATF is the head federal agency responsible for stopping the illegal flow of firearms, gun trafficking, from the United States into Mexico" (Chu and Krouse 2009: 8). The first pilot project that the ATF launched was Project Gunrunner which was started in Laredo, Texas, after a few months into project gunrunner it was implemented nationally, but was concentrated specifically along the Southwestern border of the United States. Project Gunrunner's main focus was to curtail the illegal supply of firearms to Mexican drug cartels, with the hopes of reducing the deadly violence that was occurring in Mexico's border towns. One of the initiatives launched under Project Gunrunner by the ATF was Operation Fast and Furious. Operation Fast and Furious was initiated in 2009 and lasted until 2010.

The ATF's Operation Fast and Furious was built around the notion of letting suspected straw purchasers to successfully acquire the merchandise (firearms), transport these newly acquired firearms into Mexico and ultimately to their final destination (the cartels). The whole reasoning behind Operation Fast and Furious was that ATF agents would be able to build up greater evidence against the drug trafficking organizations (cartels) and shut down their operation for good. It sounded like a good idea to follow the guns to the cartels but ultimately this operation by the ATF ended up backfiring on them. One of the weapons that were allowed to be sold and transferred to the cartels ended up killing a U.S. federal agent and once the media got hold of this information all hell broke loose for the ATF. Since that tragic day, Congress has been questioning the ATF for undertaking such an irrational operation and attempting to determine who should ultimately be held accountable for the consequences of the operation. Operation Fast and Furious ended up putting the spot light once again on the issue of gun trafficking and the United States role in Mexico's drug war. So now that it is out in the media that gun trafficking is vital key in keeping the drug war (border violence) going, more scrutiny will be put on the definition of gun trafficking, how it should be handled and whose job it is to prevent it from happening.

With such an intense spot light on international law enforcement, we need to answer the question, what exactly is gun trafficking? According to the Department of Treasury and Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms (2000: 3), "gun trafficking is the illegal diversion of legally owned firearms from a lawful commerce into unlawful commerce, often for profit." Gun running is a phenomenon that is known to occur in the

United States and at the international level. There are several ways for gun runners or traffickers to acquire their firearms/merchandise. According to previous research, the three most common methods for acquiring firearms to traffic are by: 1) going through a Federal Firearm License dealer; 2) purchasing them at gun shows; and 3) stealing them. For my research study I am interested in examining gun trafficking along the U.S.-Mexico border and its impact on Mexico's border violence which is occurring between the drug trafficking organizations (cartels) and the Mexican government. My specific interest in this topic came from my own personal experience viewing some of the illegal activities that have occurred at Rio Grande Valley gun shows. Some of the illegal activities that I have witnessed at the gun shows have been blatant straw purchases, selling of firearms to underage individuals and selling to individuals under the influence of narcotics. After noticing these blatant sales I started to wonder how often do these instances of straw purchases occur at Rio Grande Valley gun shows, and if it was linked to something bigger like gun trafficking and the drug war in Mexico?

My overall question for my research was to determine how the United States and Mexico's print media portrayed gun trafficking along the U.S.-Mexico border. This question was accompanied by four additional related questions regarding gun trafficking along the U.S.-Mexico border. The reason why I decided to focus my attention on print media rather than televised media was for the mere fact that I would have encountered some problems in regards to finding news stories covering gun trafficking and its impact on border violence in the national level. I would more than likely have found those types of news stories in border towns along the U.S.-Mexico border since they were more

likely to be impacted by those stories directly. Case in point, before I decided what news medium I was going to investigate for my research, while living in College Station, TX, I would scan the television for news stories regarding gun trafficking into Mexico and border violence and found few news stories, most that came up were about Operation Fast and Furious.

Another reason why I chose print media was because of the whole self censorship of the media in Mexico, it would be a whole lot easier to print a news article under the listing of anonymous or transfer that story to a fellow colleague than physically go to a site and reporting the news from there or trying to get interviews in these “border violence hot spots.” The first related question took into consideration whether *The New York Times* was more likely to portray gun trafficking along the U.S.-Mexico border and its impact on border violence as Mexico’s problem compared to *El Universal*. The second related question took into consideration whether *El Universal* was more likely to have coverage of gun trafficking into Mexico than *The New York Times*. The third related question differed somewhat from the others since it investigated whether coverage from both *The New York Times* and *El Universal* in regards to gun trafficking intersected with stories of smuggling, be it human and drug smuggling, and border violence. The fourth related question investigated whether gun trafficking into Mexico could be considered a social problem.

The main reason why I asked these specific questions regarding the print media coverage of gun trafficking along the U.S.-Mexico border was because there has been little to none scholarly work in terms of gun trafficking along the U.S.-Mexico border

and its impact on border violence. The little work that has been done has mainly been carried out by federal agencies such as the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Congressional Research Service, the United States Department of Justice and the United States Government Accountability Office but the research that these agencies were able to accomplish did not investigate how and why gun trafficking might have come to be seen as a social problem. Additionally and most importantly there has not been any research in terms of national discourse on gun trafficking along the U.S.-Mexico border and its impact on border violence, much less looking at national discourses in two different languages. My research investigated how the national discourse from the United States and Mexico were framed within *The New York Times* and *El Universal* and did so in two different languages, English and Spanish. It was important to look at these two national newspapers in order to get a better understanding of how and whether gun trafficking could be considered a social problem. From a media theory perspective I utilized framing and agenda setting along with Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model and their work on worthy and unworthy victims to evaluate the data from *The New York Times* and *El Universal* in regards to national discourse.

Theoretical Framing

Before I begin discussing whether gun trafficking fits the circumstances to be classified a social problem, I wanted to discuss my personal bias regarding the issue of 2nd amendment, American's right to bear arms. I have always supported our 2nd amendment and agreed with the National Rifle Association regarding our right to bear

arms. I believed that we should be able to have semi-automatic assault rifles and had no problem with the assault weapons ban that was implemented in 1994. I do not have a problem with gun shows being an avenue for individuals to purchase firearms but I have always felt that gun shows need to be regulated in terms of conducting background checks for all firearms sold. Mandatory background checks for all firearms sold would be a great way to close the gun show loophole and make sure that weapons do not get into the hands of those with criminal or mental health records. My bias regarding the 2nd amendment of the U.S. constitution should not be an issue since I was able to be objective when it came to conducting the research and analyzing the data.

I became even more interested in the issue of gun trafficking once I noticed that one of the news channels local to the Rio Grande Valley found that local gun runners liked to utilize gun shows to acquire their firearms. I utilized symbolic interaction theory, more specifically labeling theory and literature on social problems to theorize gun trafficking and border violence as social problems. One way to understand the current issue of gun trafficking which helps fuel the border violence that is occurring along the Southwest border of the United States, is through the lens of social problems. Kitsuse and Spector (1973: 415) stated that “social problems can be thought of as the actions of groups making statements of grievances and claims in reference to some alleged conditions.” From this perspective, “a sociologist’s responsibility lays within recording the materialization and preservation of claim-making and responding activities” (Kitsuse and Spector 1973: 415). So what makes an issue a social problem rather than just a social phenomenon? According to Jamrozik and Nocella (1998: 1),

A social problem can be a social condition, process, societal arrangements or attitudes that are commonly perceived to be undesirable, negative and threatening certain values or interests such as social cohesion, maintenance of law and order, moral standards, stability of social institutions, economic prosperity or individual freedoms.

From this definition of a social problem it is not very difficult to understand why gun trafficking and border violence are social problems rather than just a being phenomena.

Gun trafficking from the United States into Mexico and its impact on border violence are definitely threatening social cohesion, maintenance of law and order, stability of social institutions, economic prosperity, and individual freedoms. Jamrozik and Nocella (1998: 2),

Mentioned that before an issue can be regarded as a social problem, social phenomenon or condition it must have the three minimum following characteristics: 1) the condition must have an identifiable societal origin; 2) the condition must constitute a threat or be perceived to be constitute a threat to certain values or interests; and 3) the condition must be amendable to removal or at least attenuation or solution.

Gun trafficking did meet these three criteria laid out by Jamrozik and Nocella, but there were some discrepancies when it comes to the source of origin and whose job it is to amend and clean up these two social problems. An important issue when it comes to social problems as well as social phenomenon is that they are socially constructed. By socially constructed I mean that society creates and adds meaning to situations, phenomenon, objects, symbols, behaviors and so on through social interaction with others. Symbolic interactionists argue that “an individual’s social essence lies in a continual process of personal definition and interpersonal negotiations about the social situation” (Levine 1995: 30). These same personal and interpersonal negotiations about the social situation can also apply to the meaning of crime in regards to society.

Criminologists and sociologists have taken into account human behaviors and their meanings when attempting to understand crime. Howard Becker (1963: 9) stated that “a deviant is one whom the label has successfully been applied to and deviant behavior is behavior that people have labeled as so.” “The main point is that behaviors are not fully recognized as deviant or criminal until other people react to them as criminal or deviant” (Hagan 1985: 46). Labeling theory has borrowed the meaning aspect from the social interactionists’ perspective in order to better understand and explain crime and deviance. According to Bernard, Snipes and Gerould (2010: 227),

Labeling theorists have made five theoretical arguments with human purposes and meaning as a key to understanding the phenomenon of crime: 1) the meaning of the label criminal in relation to the criminal’s self image; 2) the meaning of crime to criminals; 3) examining the situational meaning of crime; 4) the meaning of crime to the larger society; and 5) the meaning of crime within the context of power.

The understanding of the implication of crime to the American public plays a vital role in the creation of gun trafficking as a crime and social problem. Bernard et al. (2010: 235) stated that “when it comes to defining an act as criminal or deviant it all comes down to the issue of the meaning that the act is given by agents of the larger society.” These agents of the larger society include the government (courts and the police); it could also very well include the media and researchers. Bernard et al. (2010: 235) argued that “social reaction theorists view societies as defining deviance by declaring (formally or informally) certain human behaviors to be “bad” and then by attempting to minimize or eliminate these behaviors.”

Jamrozik and Nocella (1998: 7) argued that “social problems are social constructs which are social conditions, activities, attitudes which at some point in time

may be perceived as problems, although they might have existed in society for some time without being seen this way.” A society tends to interpret and construct phenomenons, activities, and attitudes as problems if they go against the values which predominate members of society hold so dearly. In the context of the social construction of terrorism, Turk (2004: 557) stated,

That contrary to the impression fostered by the official incidence counts and media reports, terrorism is not a given in the real world but is instead an interpretation of events and their presumed causes; and these interpretations are not unbiased attempts to depict truth but rather conscious efforts to manipulate perceptions to promote certain interests at the expense of others.

Turk’s point not only applies to terrorism but as well to gun trafficking since phenomena like these are also not a given in society but their existence depends on the crucial interpretations of events and causes. In terms of interpreting events and their causes some countries have more authority, such as the United States, in determining which groups or their activities in violent struggles will be deemed either as terrorist, border violence or gun trafficking (Turk 2004: 558). When it comes to the issue of gun trafficking and border violence, the media plays a key and pivotal role in the interpretation and construction of whether an issue is considered to be a social problem. “Marx understood that the press was not merely a mechanic but a structure for discourse which omits and insists upon certain kinds of content and inevitably, a plus a certain kind of audience” (Postman 2005: 43). One way that society interprets and constructs social problems is through the media. According to Mead (1934: 257),

The vast importance of media of communication such as those involved in journalism is seen at once, since they report situations through which one can enter into the attitude and experiences of other persons; the drama has served this function in presenting what has been felt to be important situations.

From this point of view the print media serves a key function of presenting important issues to its readers. By presenting readers with these important situations the print media takes on the role of interpreting which situations warrant enough merit to become social problems. An important aspect in the creation of social problems revolves around the issue of viability. According to Schneider (1985: 224-225),

Viability is apparent when participants give credibility to claims and definitions basically when they treat them as valid; viability is often produced by media coverage, this occurs when officials and professionals warrant definitions, implement them, and accept responsibility for problematic conditions.

The media's intentions are to give out the facts about what is happening and who is being affected by the issue/story at hand. At the same time there are some who wish to censor the media when it comes to various heinous acts such as terrorism. According to Turk (2004: 563),

Arguments for censorship include terrorists use of the medias as propaganda to help gain new recruits; publicity is a major goal of terrorism; detailed reporting of incidents gives potential terrorists suggestions and models for action; reporting terrorists acts can lead to imitation; and negative news is demoralizing; Arguments against censorship include not reporting terrorist atrocities might lead people to have less negative judgments of terrorists; censorship might cause terrorist to raise the level of violence; not reporting terrorist events can lead to rumors which might be worse; media credibility would decline; lack of news might result in a false sense of security, leaving the public unprepared to deal with terrorist acts; and lack of awareness would keep the public from understanding the political situation.

These could very well be key reasons why or why not the United States and Mexico's print media chose to cover gun trafficking and border violence that is occurring along the U.S.-Mexico border. Previous research has demonstrated that "the media does not function simply as mirrors that claimants can use to reflect "what is really going on," but

they can ultimately shape the images they convey” (Schneider 1985: 221). For example, “the representation of crime and justice in the media has constantly demonstrated that the media helps to construct, rather than simply just represent, the interconnected realities of crime and justice” (Barlow 1998: 149). Just like real people the media can use its power to impose their view on the reader to see things from their point of view. This can be a problem when there are different media outlets which showcase different views about what is going on rather than trying to remain objective in their reporting they are being subjective. When different versions of crime and justice are being show cased in the media of the same incident or story which one is the correct one.

For example, some news stations and newspapers might take a more liberal approach while others might take a more conservative approach to the way they report their news resulting in selective hearing and reporting when it comes to a story or incident. This an important aspect when it comes to deciding whether an issue fulfils the three minimum requirements for a social problem that Jamrozik and Nocella have laid forth. It should be interesting to see how the print media from the United States and Mexico portrayed gun trafficking and its impact on border violence. Additionally, gun trafficking could also fall under the heading of a moral panic. When one thinks about the interconnectedness of gun trafficking and border violence it is not too farfetched to consider them as starting off as moral panics before they bloomed into social problems. According Chambliss (1995: 245), “a moral panic can raise a crime up to the level of a major social problem with the proper help from politicians, law enforcement officials,

and the news media.” A moral panic is similar to a social problem, primarily in the way that the issue at hand is considered to be a threat to societal values and interests.

Recently the media has started to focus its attention towards gun running due to the ever growing drug war violence that is occurring in Mexico. The media has started to speculate that most of the firearms that have been involved in the drug war violence in Mexico have come from the United States and are being supplied by Americans. The media was quick to point out that drug cartels are utilizing gun runners who used gun shows to acquire their firearms. Therefore I will investigate print media from the both the United States and Mexico to determine how common it is to read news stories about: 1) gun trafficking into Mexico from the United States; 2) the connection between gun trafficking and border violence; and 3) tougher measures to control and prevent gun trafficking and border violence from occurring.

Definitions

According to the Department of Treasury and Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms (2000: 3), the term firearm trafficking refers “to the illegal diversion of legally owned firearms from a lawful commerce into unlawful commerce, often for profit.” According to Cook, Molliconi and Cole (1995: 68), the term primary market refers “to the sale of firearms by Federal Firearms License dealers” and a secondary market refers “to the sale of firearms by non-licensed individuals.” According to the U.S. Department of Justice (2007: i), the term gun show is used to refer to “an exhibition or gathering where guns, gun parts, ammunition, gun accessories, and literature are displayed, bought, sold, traded, and discussed.” According to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco,

Firearms and Explosives (2000: 1) and the Bureau of Justice Assistance (2000: 24), the term straw purchase refers to “a situation in which a person (“straw”) lawfully purchases one or more firearms from a federally licensed firearms dealer for another individual in order to hide the true identity of the intended receiver of the firearm/s.”

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW I

Drug Cartels

Within the country of Mexico there are several drug cartels at work. According to Cook (2007:1) “there are roughly about seven drug cartels operating in Mexico, with the three main cartels being the Gulf Cartel, Sinaloa Cartel and Juarez Cartel.” “The arrests of Benjamin Arellano Felix (head of Tijuana Cartel) and Osiel Cardenas (head of Gulf Cartel) led to a realignment of the Mexican Cartels and increased the turf wars” (Cook 2007: 11). Felix and Cardenas created an alliance between the Tijuana and Gulf Cartels with the purpose of going after their competition the Sinaloa and Juarez Cartels. Drug trafficking is not the only trade that the cartels engage in. “In addition to drug trafficking, Mexican Drug Trafficking Organizations [DTOs] have been tied to both human and arms trafficking, auto theft, and kidnapping” (Cook 2007: 6). Drugs and humans head north to the United States while firearms and money head south into Mexico from the United States.

According to Goodman and Marizco, “Mexican Drug Trafficking Organizations [or drug cartels] use firearms primarily for securing their drug routes and access points into the United States” (Feinstein et al. 2011: 7). Today drug trafficking organizations are using firearms to fight other drug trafficking organizations in turf wars to secure their coveted drug routes but they are also targeting the police and whoever gets in their cross hairs. According to ATF reports, “Mexican drug cartels are sending their enforcers across the border to seek out straw purchasers who will acquire for them “military style”

firearms from FFLs” (Finklea et al. 2010: 28; Chu and Krouse 2009: 13). Besides “military style” firearms drug cartels also ask their enforcers to acquire large capacity handguns. Large capacity handguns are popularly sought after by the cartels for their ability to hold the most rounds of ammunition. “Drug trafficking organizations favor pistols that are meant to accept high capacity magazines and which can be chambered to accommodate large rounds capable of going through armor vests worn by law enforcement” (Finklea et al. 2010: 28).

Drug trafficking organizations are not going after your run of the mill firearms rather they are looking to get the most bang for their buck and are demanding their enforcers to seek out “light weapons.” According to the Associated Press, “on April 30, 2011 Mexican Federal Police found three anti-aircraft guns, dozens of grenades, a grenade launcher, AK-47s, several machine guns, and over 26,000 rounds of ammunition” (Feinstein et al. 2011: 8). With access to destructive “light weapons” and “small arms,” the turf wars between Mexican cartels have resulted in numerous deaths of Mexican citizens and Mexican law enforcement officials. “In 2007 during the first nine months roughly about 1,800-1,900 Mexican citizens were killed in drug trafficking organization related violence” (Cook 2007: 13). According to the Mexican media, “the number of drug trafficking related deaths for 2009 was over 6,500” (Finklea et al. 2010: 1). The violence in Mexico is not only directed at competing cartels and Mexican law enforcement but it is also directed at U.S. law enforcement agents that operate in Mexico. “On February 15, 2011 Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Special

Agents Jaime Zapata and Victor Avila were ambushed on a highway in San Luis Potosi, Mexico” (Feinstein et al. 2011: 7).

The main problem that helps to fuel these bloody drug turf wars, besides the obvious drug demand from the U.S., is the influx of firearms coming from the United States into Mexico. Mexico’s Attorney General Eduardo Medina Mora, stated that “the only way Mexico can successfully defeat the drug cartels would be by getting more cooperation from the United States in combating arms trafficking and money laundering (U.S.-Mexico bound)” (Cook 2007: 13). Law enforcement officials on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border are currently confronting what is referred as the Southwest Border Paradigm. “The Southwest Border Paradigm states that drugs and illegal immigrants go north while guns and money goes south” (Chu and Krouse 2009: 2; Becera 2008). Mexico’s Attorney General is not completely alone in calling for more cooperation from the United States in order to reduce the flow of firearms into Mexico. The Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA)

Has called for increasing background checks on all firearms purchases in the U.S. and putting a limit on weapons and ammunition purchases in order to prevent gun from being trafficked from the United States into Mexico and into the hands of drug trafficking organizations (Cook 2007: 15).

One probable reason why individuals tend to get involved as firearm traffickers/gun runners for drug cartels is that it is a very lucrative business if one is crafty enough to not get caught. “The price of a firearm can go for as much as five to six times its original value when trafficked to criminals in major cities” (Bureau of Justice Assistance 2000: 2). In the end Mexico’s police and military can only do so much against the drug cartels in the battle to stop the drug war. “It will be very difficult to

successfully reduce drug-related violence in Mexico without starving the drug trafficking organizations of their military style weapons” (Feinstein et al. 2011: 17). As stated by Finklea et al. (2010: 34),

The escalation of drug cartel related violence in Mexico along with the concern that this violence might spillover into the United States has led to enhanced U.S. inspections of conveyances (cars, trucks and trains) from the U.S. to Mexico with the focus being to slow the flow of guns and money into Mexico.

As previously mentioned, in order to starve drug cartels of all their weapons would require greater cooperation between the U.S. and Mexico but more specifically it will require increased cooperation between law enforcement agencies on both sides of the border. In order for increased cooperation between law enforcement agencies on both sides of the border several issues must first be addressed such as trust and access.

According to the Bureau of Justice Assistance (2000: xi),

In order to increase productivity and cooperation between the different levels of law enforcement, all program staff is to be assigned the same type of work rather than separate tasks by agency; which allows for there to be differences in information access and work styles.

Gun Running/Firearms Trafficking

One of the issues that have been plaguing the United States and other nations for a long time has been gun running or arms trafficking. The term gun running or arms trafficking are used by the media and researchers to refer to the act of smuggling of firearms and ammunition into a country. The ATF’s (2000: 3) official definition of firearm trafficking refers “to the illegal diversion of legally owned firearms from a lawful commerce into unlawful commerce, often for profit.” Gun running is usually linked with other notorious types of criminal activity such as drug dealing. Some

governments have taken notice that criminals within their country are being supplied with weapons by gun runners or arms brokers. According to the ATF,

Many of the firearms that have been fueling the Mexican drug violence have come from the United States and many of these firearms have come from gun shops and gun shows from Southwestern border states such as Texas, California, and Arizona (GAO 2009: 3).

“The Mexican government has taken notice that a majority of the Mexican drug cartels weapons have come from places such as the United States” (Lumpe 1997; Cook et al. 2009: 11-12).

Gun running ranks among one of the top illegal businesses. Preliminary evidence suggests that “the illicit trafficking of firearms tends to generate about one billion dollars a year and accounts for 20% of the total small arms trade” (Naim 2003: 31). The money that’s generated by the illegal arms trade business helps to attract and recruit people who are willing to ignore the risks. For an individual who is daring enough to ignore the risks, gun trafficking provides an excellent opportunity for an individual to make some quick cash. For example, “the going rate for smuggling a firearm into Mexico can vary from one hundred dollars to upwards of a thousand dollars depending on whether it is classified as a small or light arm weapon” (Lumpe 1997: 39-46). In recent years there has been a great demand for firearms in Mexico, with a majority of this demand of firearms coming from various drug trafficking organizations.

What is the reason for the demand side of gun trafficking into Mexico? “The main reason for the increased demand for firearms in Mexico has to do with the Mexican government’s constitution prohibiting its citizens from owning firearms bigger than a .22 caliber” (Cook et al. 2009: 7; Lumpe 1997). “About 90% of the firearms that have been

seized in Mexico in over the last three years (2004-2008) have come from the United States” (GAO 2009: 15). Going over data from the GAO one conclusion can be easily detected, that there have been fluctuations within the number of firearms traced back to the United States from crime scenes in Mexico. According to the GAO (2009: 15),

The estimated number of firearms trafficked into Mexico that have been traced back to the United States in 2004 was 3,090; in 2005 there were 5,260 firearms traced back to the US; in 2006 there were 1,950 firearms traced back to the US; in 2007 there were 3,060 firearms traced back to the US; and in 2008 there were 6,700 firearms traced back to the US.

What was the cause for the fluctuations in the number of firearms traced back to the United States from Mexico? On the one hand, the fluctuation in the number of firearms traced back to the United States was largely due to the number of firearms that were submitted for tracing to the ATF by the Mexican Attorney General’s office. On the other hand, “not all the guns which are seized within the United States are submitted to the ATF for tracing” (GAO 2009: 16).

Currently the types of firearms that have been found and seized in Mexico have been more powerful and deadly than those of previous years. “About 25% of the firearms that have been seized in Mexico and traced during the 2008 fiscal year have been high caliber and high powered firearms such as AK-47 and AR-15 type semiautomatic weapons which are capable of firing armor piercing rounds” (GAO 2009: 17). The United States government has compiled a list of the ten most common firearms in Mexico. As stated by the GAO (2009: 17),

The top ten firearms that have been most frequently recovered in Mexico and traced back to the United States between 2004-2008 have been: 9mm pistols, .38 caliber revolvers, .22 caliber pistols, .380 caliber pistols, 7.62 mm AK-47 type

semiautomatic rifles, .22 caliber rifles, .223 caliber AR-15 type semiautomatic rifles, .45 caliber pistols, .38 caliber pistols, and 12 gauge shotguns.

Most of these weapons on the GAO's list tend to rival and even overpower that of the Mexican military and police. A huge problem with these AK-47 and AR-15 type semiautomatic weapons is that they can be easily modified to make them fully automatic. The worse part of converting these weapons from semiautomatic to fully automatic is that no real expertise is needed. According to an ATF report, "70 machineguns (.30%) out of 23,159 (100%) firearms were submitted for tracing" (GAO 2009: 18).

Firearms are not only acquired from the United States but they are also acquired from Mexico as well. According to the GAO (2009: 19),

From 2004 to 2008, 1.74% or 403 firearms were traced back to the Mexican Government which included about 70 .223 AR-15 style semiautomatic rifles and one machinegun.

One viable source for semiautomatic rifles and machineguns would be the military. Some of the firearms that were confiscated in Mexico and provided to the ATF for tracing were found to be from the United States Military. "From 2004 to 2008 about 160 or .70% of the 23,159 guns were traced back to the United States Military" (GAO 2009: 19). Two interesting questions that come into play when firearms recovered in Mexico are traced back to the United States is: how many were manufactured in the U.S.; and how many were imported into the U.S? As stated by Feinstein et al. (2009: 6),

In 2009, of the 21,313 firearms recovered in Mexico, 10,945 were manufactured in the U.S., 3,268 were imported into the U.S. and 7,100 were undetermined in origin; In 2010, of the 7,971 firearms were recovered in Mexico, 4,186 were manufactured in the U.S., 2015 were imported into the U.S., and 1,680 were undetermined in origin.

By what means do gun traffickers acquire firearms? “The illicit purchase of firearms in the United States can occur in various ways it all just depends on where the purchase takes place” (GAO 2009: 21).

There are several viable sources that gun traffickers can utilize to acquire their inventory from. For example, gun traffickers can steal firearms or they can buy them through the primary and secondary markets. “A primary market refers to sales of firearms that are conducted by FFL licensed dealer, while secondary market refers to the sale of firearms that are carried out by non-licensed individuals” (Cook et al. 1995: 68). When it comes to dealing with the primary markets, gun traffickers have an abundance ways to get around all the red tape and paper work that is involved with purchasing a firearm. “The three most popular methods that gun traffickers utilize are straw purchases, lying and buying, and buying from an FFL licensed dealer who is willing to look the other way” (Braga et al. 2002: 326).

One method that is very popular by some gun traffickers is the use of a straw purchase. A straw purchase is an innovative way to get around the Gun Control Act of 1968 prohibited firearms owners list. A straw purchase refers to the use of another individual to fill out the required paper work needed to purchase a firearm. It is well documented that straw purchasers tend to be somewhat related to the intended owner of the firearm, either as family, a friend or a significant other. “Evidence suggests that most straw purchases utilized a family member or a friend to buy a firearm” (Braga et al. 2002: 326). According to the National Institute of Justice, “17% of the respondents stated that they acquired their firearm through a family member while about 12% stated

that acquired their firearm through a friend or acquaintance” (Cook and Ludwig 1997: 6).

One of the most common relationships that are utilized by individuals orchestrating straw purchases is that of the significant other, especially the girlfriend. Koper and Shelley’s (2007: 5) Maryland study on handgun sales and recoveries indicated that “female buyers purchased roughly 12%-16% of guns used in crimes and the risk of recovery was up to 57% when handguns were purchased by females.” In the fiscal year of 2000, the ATF found that “45% of the straw purchasers were friends, 23% were relatives, and 18% were spouses or girlfriends” (Department of the Treasury, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms 2000: 18). Koper’s findings along with those of the ATF add proof that females are more than likely to be used as straw purchasers. According to the United States federal government, if a person buys a firearm for someone else they would have just committed a federal offense. As stated by Chu and Krouse (2009: 10),

If a purchaser or dealer falsifies information on Form 4473 it is a Federal offense which is punishable by 10 years and a fine; additionally it is illegal for an individual to sponsor the straw purchase, since it falls under aiding, abetting, counseling a criminal act and defrauding the United States.

Straw purchases are not contained to one single aspect of the primary or secondary market. For example, straw purchases can occur basically at any gun store, pawnshop, sporting goods store or gun show. According to Cole (2008: 640), “many of these “straw purchases” occur at gun shows, where collectors, gun vendors, and purchasers gather at sites rented for the weekend to exchange money for guns.” It is no secret to government agencies, such as the ATF and GAO, that gun shows are an avenue

for the trafficking of weapons from the legal to the illegal market. “The main problem with straw purchases is that gun dealers are not supposed to sell firearms to a straw purchaser but the dealer is at a disadvantage because they usually do not know if the sale is legitimate or illegitimate transaction” (Cook et al. 1995: 79). In secondary markets such as gun shows it can be extremely rare to see a FFL dealer or a non FFL dealer turn down a paying customer for buying a firearm since they might not know if customers are actually buying it for themselves or for someone else.

Overall, straw purchases are not very easy to tell apart from a regular legal sale, unless one pays close attention to the details of the sale. The main aspects of the sale that one needs to pay close attention to include the interaction between the dealer, the firearm buyer, and those around them. By looking at some of Garen J. Wintemute’s gun show photos, Cole was able to break down the anatomy of a straw purchase. An example given by Cole (2008: 641),

An FFL dealer conducts a background check for the intended buyer in this case a women who is accompanied by a man; She passes the background check, pays in cash and then proceeds to fill out the necessary paperwork; The man accompanying her takes possession of the firearm and later returns to buy a case for the weapon and asks the same vendor how to breakdown the weapon.

As difficult as it can be to tell apart a straw purchase from a regular sale, there are some retailers and FFLs who will refuse to let a straw purchaser buy a firearm. For example, “one gun dealer at a gun show did not let an obvious straw purchase from occurring” (Wintemute 2007: 154).

Previous research on straw purchases has investigated the anatomy of a straw purchase, the difficulty in differentiating a straw purchase from a regular firearm sale,

and how it violates the Gun Control Act of 1968. One question that remained unanswered revolved around the issue of how do firearms acquired through a straw purchase reach their intended destination? According to Finklea et al. (2010: 29-30), Chu and Krouse (2009: 10 and Koper (2005: 751),

Recent government findings pin point that routine small-scale smuggling of guns across the border, involves small-scale actors who make one time or occasional series of straw purchases in which guns are bought from an FFL and then sold to a middleman who takes large number of firearms across the border through systematic, repetitive operations.

One known method of trafficking weapons from the United States into Mexico is the “hormiga” (ant) run. “The “hormiga” run is a common method used by gun traffickers of smuggling firearms into Mexico; the process involves repeated trips across the border involving one to three guns” (Chu and Krouse 2009: 10; Finklea et al. 2010: 28).

The reason why those who participate in the “hormiga” run only attempt to smuggle one to three firearms at a time is that they can easily come up with a quick and believable excuse if they are caught at the border. The trafficker can easily state that the firearms in their vehicle are from their personal collection and that they forgot that they were in their vehicle. Additionally, a couple of weapons in the trafficker’s vehicle might come off to be slightly more believable as forgotten personal weapons to U.S. Customs agents. Straw purchases result in about several thousand firearms being trafficked to Mexican drug cartels a year. According to the ATF (2000: 18), “federal gun trafficking investigations from July 1996 to December 1998 involved straw purchasers who diverted an average of 37 guns per case and with a total of nearly 26,000 guns.” Straw

purchasers are finding more innovative ways to conceal their interactions with their conspirators in order to determine that they are purchasing the right firearms.

Some individuals who make straw purchases for other individuals have started to use technology to their advantage to better conceal the straw purchase. Some individuals have been spotted taking pictures of particular firearms at secondary markets like gun shows. At the same time by embracing and using technology straw purchasers do not need the other individual to go to the gun show, the sporting goods store or pawn shop to point out what firearm they wish to acquire. Preliminary findings suggest that “some individuals have started to use cell phones to communicate with their partner or friend about what guns are available for purchase and to make sure that they are buying the right weapon” (Wintemute 2007: 151). By using such technology as camera phones gun traffickers and straw purchasers are able to stay one step ahead of law enforcement by making it harder to detect a straw purchase.

The second way that gun runners can purchase firearms is through the technique of lying and buying. The technique of lying and buying is closely related to that of the straw purchase, with one key difference. “The lying and buying method requires the purchaser to fill out paper work using false documents such as fake identification and social security numbers in order to complete the transaction” (Braga et al. 2002: 327). Research has found that “some prohibited buyers obtain guns directly from FFL dealers by using false identification” (Koper 2005: 751). It would not be a complete surprise if identity theft is a key component in lying and buying process. The third way that gun runners can purchase firearms is through the use of corrupt FFL dealers. “In 2005, there

were about 54,000 FFL dealers in the United States, which is a 78% decline since 1994” (Vernick et al. 2006: 765).

If there were about 54,000 FFL dealers in the United States in 2005, how many reside in the Southwest border? According to the ATF, “the Southwest border region has about 6,647 FFLs operating throughout Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California” (Finklea et al. 2010: 29; Chu and Krouse 2009: 13). With about 54,000 FFLs selling firearms in the United States and 6,647 FFLs in the Southwest border region it is no wonder that they are a legitimate source for law-bidding citizens and criminals in acquiring weapons. “There are some FFL dealers who are willing to sell firearms to individuals with no questions asked and no paper work to be filled out” (Cook et al. 1995: 72). FFL dealers who sell firearms to individuals without paper work and questions are only looking to make a quick buck. In order to crack down on corrupt FFLs, they are warranted to checks by the government. The problem with checking FFL dealers is that the federal government, mainly the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) only checks them out about once a year.

FFLs sales records are checked once during the year in order to make sure they are compliant with the Gun Control Act of 1968. “By going through the FFL records, the ATF is able to discover evidence of illegal off the book sales, straw purchases, and so on” (Chu and Krouse 2009: 9). According to Sorenson and Vittes (2003: 149), “a national phone survey of retail gun dealers discovered that more than half of the dealers were willing to make a straw sale.” When it comes to FFLs a majority of the dealers are not corrupt rather it is only a small fraction of FFLs that are corrupt. It only takes a few

rotten apples to spoil the whole bunch and give the rest a bad reputation and question their business practices. As stated by the Department of the Treasury, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (2000:12),

FFL dealers accounted for the smallest amount of trafficking investigations around 10% but at the same time they had the highest average 350 in terms of number of firearms that were illegally diverted per investigation compared to the other channels of gun trafficking.

One way to determine an FFL dealer's importance as a source of crime guns is to trace the number of guns recovered at crimes scenes back to the point of purchase. The linking of crime guns to a retailer is accomplished through the process of gun tracing. "Gun tracing refers to the reconstructing of a gun's chain of ownership from manufacture to the first retail sale" (Wintemute et al. 2005: 357). When it comes to conducting gun traces they are sole responsibility of the ATF. "During the 1998 fiscal year 1020 (1.2%) FFLs out of 83,272 FFLs accounted for 57.4% of all firearms traced by the ATF" (Wintemute et al. 2005: 357). Some organizations have argued that these figures from firearm trace data do not really reflect anything but the FFLs sale figures. Some researchers, such as Wintemute, argue that the opposite, that gun trace data can be used to predict FFLs sales of guns used in crime. According to Wintemute et al. (2005: 361), "there is a strong relationship between the sales of crime guns and prospective sales that are denied following a background check." Basically Wintemute found that California FFLs who were found to have sold greater number of crime guns also had more interaction with customers who are not allowed to own a gun. Additionally, Koper and Shelley (2007: 5) found that "a FFLs time in the business, type of establishment, and having a pawnbrokers license did not really matter when predicting sales of crime guns

consistently.” When gun runners cannot get their firearm inventory through the primary market they tend to move on to the secondary market.

Secondary markets tend to include places like gun shows and flea markets where individuals can freely sell their used firearms to an individual without the need of paperwork. Gun shows are an interesting form of secondary markets, mainly because they allow individuals to purchase firearms from a licensed FFL dealer or from a private collector. As stated by the United States Department of Justice (2007: i),

A gun show is an exhibition or gathering where guns, gun parts, ammunition, gun accessories and literature are displayed, bought, sold, traded and discussed; gun shows are also a venue for private sellers who buy and sell firearms for their personal collection or as a hobby.

Gun shows can be considered a thorn in the side of the ATF. The reason why gun shows are seen as a problem for the ATF is that it is impossible for them to figure out how many firearms are trafficked into Mexico from private sales, thanks in part to the “gun show loophole.”

According to preliminary findings, “during a gun show straw purchasers are more likely to buy multiple firearms in one single transaction” (Wintemute 2007: 153). What is the “gun show loophole?” “The “gun show loophole” allows an individual to purchase a firearm without conducting a criminal background check” (Cole 2008: 640). “Individuals who engage in occasional sales or private sales at gun shows are not required by the federal government to conduct criminal background checks” (Cole 2008). An interesting fact about secondary markets is that although the transactions are not documented they are seen as legitimate sales in the eyes of the law. “The only rule that applies to secondary markets is that the gun cannot be transferred over to someone

who is a known felon, mentally ill or underage” (Cook and Leitzel 1996: 94). The reality is that most ordinary people who are selling firearms at secondary markets are not going to ask the individual wanting to buy a firearm from them if they are a felon or mentally ill because it can impede the sale and insult the individual.

In terms of the amount of firearms trafficked per federal investigation, gun shows accounted for the second largest trafficking channel. According to the ATF, “gun shows accounted for 130.6 firearms per investigation, and 40% of the investigations” (Department of the Treasury, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms 2000: 13). A problem with private firearms sales at gun shows and flea markets is that they are harder for the ATF to trace due to the “gun show loophole.” “Evidence suggests that secondary markets may have some draw backs for gun runners like the fact that they are buying used guns and that there is a limited selection of firearms but they are preferred because no paperwork is involved which means that there is no paper trail” (Cook et al. 1995). “The ATF has estimated that about 25% of the individuals who sell firearms at gun shows might be unlicensed sellers” (Cole 2008: 641).

As gun policies start getting tougher more gun runners will eventually revert to buying from secondary markets than from primary markets due to the fact that sales remain anonymous and discrete. “Consequently there is likely to be a premium for such firearms in illegal markets on both sides of the border in part to there being no paper trail” (Finklea et al. 2010: 30; Chu and Krouse 2009:11). Overall, the “gun show loophole” allows criminals and traffickers to buy and acquire firearms anonymously. “Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California are states which allow private firearm

transfers at gun shows but only California has tougher restrictions on all private transfers” (Finklea et al. 2010: 30). Prior efforts to regulate the sales of firearms at gun shows have been met with no avail. The Mayors Against Illegal Guns conducted a survey on gun control and gun violence, “they discovered that 87% and 89% of respondents favored requiring background checks on all firearm purchases at gun shows” (Cole 2008: 641). The survey had one glimmer of hope which was that “the support for requiring background checks on all firearms purchases at gun shows came regardless of party affiliation and gun ownership status” (Cole 2008: 641). Law makers can regulate the primary and secondary market all they want but criminals and gun traffickers will always find other avenues to acquire firearms.

Besides the primary and secondary markets, criminals and gun traffickers also access the underground markets to acquire firearms. What does the underground market refer to? An underground market can be thought of as a place where goods and services are sold and exchanged away from prying eyes that regulate the sale and taxes of merchandise and services. Activity that occurs in the underground markets are hardly ever reported to the government and much less recorded for sale records. The question then turns to why do these underground markets exist? The answer to this question is quite obvious; In terms of underground gun markets it provides a way for people to bypass federal gun laws. According to Cook et al. (2007: 588), “underground gun markets have developed in the United States in response to federal regulations that seek to prohibit ownership and possession by that sub-set of the population deemed to be at unacceptably high risk of misusing guns.”

This sub-set of the population includes those individuals with criminal records, history of mental illness, and so on. As previously mentioned stolen guns are a source of acquiring weapons for gun traffickers but at the same time stolen guns help to fuel the underground gun market. Another source of firearms for the underground gun market happens to be secondary markets such as gun shows along with sales between friends and family. Usually when one thinks about underground economy you might expect to pay less for these goods and services. The same might be expected when it comes to firearms, knowing that there is a good chance that these items might be “hot” (stolen). Venkatesh discovered that “gun owning non-gang affiliated youths (18-21) paid about \$250-\$400 for a firearm while local gun brokers sold them about \$150-\$350” (Cook et al. 2007: 594). Overall, Venkatesh found that residents of Chicago who purchased firearms through the underground markets paid above retail price which was due in part to Chicago’s strict gun laws. Now that the avenues for gun trafficking have been discussed what, if any, are the indicators of firearms trafficking?

According to previous research, one possible indicator of firearms trafficking would be the multiple purchases of firearms. Multiple sales of firearms are used as leads for gun trafficking investigations by the ATF. “The multiple sales of firearms usually translate into large-scale gun trafficking operations by straw purchasers which is why the federal authorities, such as the ATF, monitor them and why they are outlawed in a couple of states” (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms 2000; 2008). So what is a multiple firearm sale? “The federal definition of a multiple sale is the purchase of more than one handgun from the same dealer within five business days” (Koper 2005: 757).

The use of multiple firearm purchases has an added benefit for gun traffickers it allows them to acquire their stockpile of firearms quickly. According to Koper (2005: 750),

The simultaneous or rapid purchase of multiple firearms by an individual (a multiple sale) provides an obvious means for illegal gun traffickers, working alone or with other buyers, to accumulate many firearms in a short period of time to move into illegal markets.

Previous research indicates that multiple purchases of firearms are likely to be used in trafficking. “Handguns linked to multiple sales were over twice as common (51%) among handguns with obliterated serial numbers, a dead giveaway for potential trafficking” (Koper 2005: 753). So are all individuals who buy multiple firearms using them for criminal activity? When it comes to multiple firearm purchases there could be various valid reasons for individuals buying firearms in multiple sales, could be they bought one firearm one day and saw another one that they wanted but were not sure so they bought it the next day after thinking it through or maybe a gun show dealer offered discount if they bought two firearms.

When it comes to guns, there are a range of people who buy them for various reasons such as hunting, collecting, law enforcement, sport shooting, and protection. For example, “some individuals who purchase guns in multiple sales are likely to be low-risk buyers such as hunters or gun collectors; so the risk that guns sold in multiple sales are used in crime is likely to vary across different groups of buyers” (Koper 2005: 753). Koper conducted a study on the multiple sales of firearms in the primary market and their recovery by police in Maryland. The study’s findings suggested that “handguns sold in multiple sales were roughly 4% to 12% more likely to be used in crime than other

guns during the first two years after the sale, but the pattern reversed thereafter” (Koper 2005: 761). “After controlling for factors such as age, race, and sex of the buyer, handguns sold in multiple sales had survival times 22% shorter than those of other handguns” (Koper 2005: 763). Koper’s results provide some support for a correlation between multiple sales in the primary market of handguns and interstate gun trafficking but caution should be used due to the discrepancies in state gun laws.

International Arms Trafficking

As previously mentioned arms trafficking is not just an issue that occurs in the United States but rather it is a worldwide issue that reaches vast areas of the world such as Africa and Europe. Firearm trafficking is one serious problem that reaches across U.S. borders affecting other countries and U.S citizens living abroad (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms 2001). According to Greene (2000: 151), “since 1997 illicit international arms trafficking has been the focus of several regional organizations such as European Union (EU), Organization of American States (OAS), Mercosur and Organization of African Unity (OAU).” With all the attention that illicit-arms trafficking have been generating from regional organizations as the EU, OAS, and OAU, it is safe to say that illicit-arms trafficking is not a regional crime but rather a transnational crime. Illicit-arms trafficking is considered a transnational crime due to the fact that it has potential effects across various national borders. Stohl (2005: 59) found that “illicit black markets encompass illicit trafficking in small arms, the exchange of weapons for money, drugs, and other commodities across national borders and even spans the globe.”

When it comes to the issue of illicit-arms trafficking, “states and nations have agreed that international arms trafficking is a “bad thing” and that all states and nations must do their best to prevent it” (Greene 2000: 151). Before states and nations can prevent illicit-arms trafficking they must be first able to define what is to be included under the act of illicit-arms trafficking. “Illicit-arms trafficking includes all forms of illicit transfers of arms, ammunition, and associated material but as of late it also includes illicit manufacture, acquisition, possession, use, and storage of arms and materials” (Greene 2000: 153). What makes firearm and ammunition transfers illicit or legal? “A transfer is deemed legal if it fully conforms to international law and national laws of both importing and exporting states while illicit transfers breaks either international or nationals of either State” (Stohl 2005: 61).

Usually when states, nations, and countries discuss illicit-arms trafficking they are mainly concerned with the trafficking of small arms and light weapons. What constitutes a firearm as small arms and light weapons? “Small arms mainly refers to conventional weapons produced (if not used) for military purposes that can be carried by an individual such as pistols, rifles, sub-machine guns, assault rifles, and grenades” (Greene 2000: 154). “Light arms refers to weapons which can be carried on a vehicle and operated by a small crew this includes heavy machine guns, motors, rocket propelled grenades, anti-tank and anti-aircraft missiles” (Greene 2000: 154; Stohl 2005: 60). Small arms and light weapons seem to be more prone to being trafficked by arms dealers than are heavy weapons, which is due in part mainly to their weight, portability, and ease of concealment. According to Stohl (2005: 60-61), “small arms have several advantages

compared to heavy weapons; they are cheap, widely available, lethal, simple to use, durable, portable, concealable, and easy to get across borders due to legitimate military and police use.”

The one main notable difference between small arms and light weapons trafficking with that of heavy weapons trafficking comes down mainly to dollar value. For obvious reasons small arms and light weapons do not command the same dollar amount as that of a tank or helicopter. Possibly due to the fact that it might take more resources to secure getting a tank or a helicopter across borders, such as paper work or fake documents. “Regardless the dollar value of the small arms trade still results in big business; the legal global small arms market is estimated to rake in \$4 billion a year and with the illegal market estimated at \$1 billion a year” (Stohl 2005: 61). So now that it has been established that small arms and light weapons trafficking is a profitable business; How do international arms traffickers get their products to their intended destination? Previous research indicates that there are three main ways for international traffickers to get their product across national and international boundaries.

“The first method of international firearms trafficking is carried out through small-scale transactions by individuals or small companies who ship weapons to barred countries or parties” (Greene 2000: 154; Stohl 2005: 62). The second method of international firearms trafficking relies on using a middle man or broker to get their shipments to their intended destination. “Arms brokers are mainly motivated by profit and are able to operate because they can circumvent national arms control and international embargoes and some are under the official government protection” (Greene

2000: 154; Stohl 2005: 62). Arms brokers are known to use a variety of methods to get their shipments of contraband into the waiting arms of their buyers. As stated by Stohl (2005: 65),

Arms brokers have been known to use fake documents and legitimate documents acquired through corrupt officials; often disguising their weapon shipments as humanitarian aid with fake documents, bills of lading, fake end-use certificates, incomplete manifestos and circuitous routes through “friendly” trans-shipment countries.

Arms brokers are commonly referred to as “merchants of death” due to the products they peddle to people, warlords, tyrants, armies, and organizations for their own private wars. “An interesting fact about arms brokers is that they seldom ever posse or own the arms supplies themselves and they neither live in the country where the weapons are supplied or in the one where they are received” (Austin 2002: 204). One of the most famous and notorious arms brokers was Victor Bout. Bout has been in the arms trafficking and brokering business since the 1990s. “Victor Bout’s companies from Texas and Florida have sold to various countries and been known by the United States government to have violated numerous U.S. arms statutes” (Austin 2002: 203-204). The third method of international firearms trafficking occurs through government involvement. According to Greene (2000: 154), “not only does the government turn a blind eye to the two previous types of trafficking mentioned but they also deliberately facilitate covert flows of arms to their proxies or allies and to embargoed destinations for profit.” Governments that work with gun traffickers and arms brokers have reached a mutual agreement of some sort to make it worthwhile for both parties involved. Austin (2002: 209) brought up an

interesting fact that “arms brokers/arms traffickers who enjoy government protection are used by the government as informants, sting operators, and errand boys.”

Now that the avenues for international trafficking of small arms have been discussed, where do international arms traffickers get their arsenal from? International arms traffickers have several options available to them when it comes to acquiring their stockpile of weapons, such as war zones and surplus government stockpiles to name a few. Greene (2000: 153) mentioned that the illicit-arms trade is (wittingly and unwittingly) sourced from government arsenals, legal producers and gun holders, and war booty, arms caches in areas of conflict and illicit manufactures. For example, it is a well known fact that after the Cold War the Soviet Union went through some military restructuring which made them a great source for arms dealers looking to acquire stockpiles of weapons. Unauthorized sales and thefts from government storage facilities and armed forces [each year about 1 million light weapons are stolen] have become vast supplies for arms dealers thanks in part to corruption, poor monitoring, record keeping and inadequately paid personal (Greene 2000: 168; Stohl 2005: 62).

Globalization and NAFTA

One factor that has helped in the growth and spread of firearms at the international level has been the spread and implementation of globalization. Globalization can be defined as “the process of increasing economic, political and social interdependence and global integration that takes place as capital, traded goods, persons, concepts, images and values diffused across state boundaries” (Cukier et al. 2000: 3). As previously mentioned “the end of the Cold War allocated vast stockpiles of weapons into

the global black markets.” According to Cukier et al. (2000: 11), “the end of the Cold War is related to globalization by the fact that there are more firearms suppliers coupled with an increased global demand for firearms which led to reduced prices and wider availability to a greater population.” Globalizations main effect on arms trafficking meant that there were less trade barriers which led to less check points that arms traffickers had to worry getting around. According to Cukier et al. (2000: 11), “the erosion of borders in the interests of free trade has contributed to the proliferation of firearms.” The proliferation of firearms, due in part to globalization, does not go unwarranted without consequences.

The one policy that was passed by Canada, Mexico, and the United States in order to make globalization work effectively was the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Cottam and Marenin (2005: 5),

NAFTA created a free trade area that required the relatively unrestricted movement of people, goods and services across international borders, leading to increased political, social and cultural interdependence among Canada, Mexico and the United States.

According to Richardson and Resendiz (2006: 6), “the creation of a product and taking it to where it can be sold for the greatest profit requires free movement across international boundaries.” One unforeseen problem with NAFTA that seemed to be overlooked was the unrestricted movement of people, goods, and services which ultimately meant that there would be more opportunities for transnational crime to occur. “Positive economic outcomes for the three countries relied on the concept of open borders which increased prospects for transnational crime such as drug trafficking, smuggling of contraband, (weapons, tobacco and cultural heritage) and possible terrorist infiltration” (Cottam and

Marenin 2005: 5). In order for NAFTA to work properly it would mean implementing less control at border crossings in order for products and people to flow naturally. An example of less control at border crossings would include asking a series of questions such as is one an American citizen, where are they heading, is anybody with them, and so on.

At the same time in order to prevent contraband such as drugs and weapons from entering and leaving a country borders would require tighter security (more screenings and checks). For example, “while CBP agents ask a series of questions they have a K-9 unit sniffing the vehicles for contraband and some checkpoints have x-ray scanners.” Cottam and Marenin (2005: 6) stated that “border control is stuck between a rock and a hard place; control must be exercised to prevent illegal trans-border acts all while legal commercial and people traffic are not brought to a complete halt.” The U.S.-Mexico border is one of the busiest borders in the world. “The border stretches for about 2,000 miles and has about 50 official border check points along it” (Cottam and Marenin 2005: 9). “During 2002, 252 million passengers, 86 million cars, 4.4 million trucks, and about 600,000 trains passed through the U.S.-Mexico border” (U.S. Customs 2002; Cottam and Marenin 2005: 9). With all this constant traffic passing through these 50 official border check points it is highly unlikely that all vehicles get properly searched for contraband heading into Mexico.

When it comes to the issue of drugs and arms trafficking on the U.S.-Mexico border there are two sides of the story. “Mexican officials see themselves as struggling valiantly with the problems of corruption, violence and organized groups involved in

drug trafficking only to be threatened by the United States with possible decertification” (Cottam and Marenin 2005: 17). The Mexican government has been arguing that the United States does not seriously address drugs as a domestic problem. Additionally, Mexico makes an interesting and valid point that the illegal flow of firearms from the United States helps to fuel the Mexican drug wars and keep them going. According to Cottam and Marenin (2005: 17-18), “Mexican officials have argued that a central problem in controlling narcotics is controlling the supply of firearms smuggled into Mexico from the United States.” Weiner and Thompson (2001: A3) “estimated that up to 80% of firearms used as tools of mass destruction by drug trafficking organizations have been smuggled into Mexico from the United States.” Mexico has brought the issue of the role of firearms in drug related violence up to the attention of the U.S. government. “Mexico has asked the United States to develop stronger gun laws to combat the problem” (Cottam and Marenin 2005: 18).

The United States response to Mexico’s claims about gun trafficking and its impact on the drug war has been quite an interesting one. The United States argue that gun trafficking is not really a supply issue but rather one of demand. Since gun trafficking is more of a demand issue the U.S. government does not see it as problem that should be dealt solely by the United States. “Rather gun trafficking is really a Mexican demand problem which should be dealt with by Mexican authorities, rather than a supply problem (reverses the drug problem perception)” (Cottam and Marenin 2005: 18). The United States response to stricter gun laws in order to suppress the illicit-

arms trade, deals directly with the National Rifle Association's (NRA) influence on gun policies.

When it comes to tightening the regulations on firearms, most bills in Congress and the Senate have been met with much resistance by the NRA. "The United States government argued that changing laws to require tighter control would be politically difficult [to carry out]" (Cottam and Marenin 2005: 18). "Without tighter gun controls, the continued availability of weapons often produces lasting consequences such as the breakdown of civil order and dramatic increases in lawlessness, banditry, and illicit drug trafficking" (Cukier et al. 2000: 5). All of these consequences can be found occurring along the Texas-Mexico border where these Mexican drug turf wars take place. It is no kept secret that firearms can help to swing the balance of power in one's favor which is why drug trafficking organizations seek military-style firearms out. Not only does arms trafficking increase the chances of violence but it also brings with it secondary victimization effects. "Secondary victimization effects impact an individual's quality of life, costs of services, the economic value of lost productivity, impact property values, disrupts basic human services, undermines the government, and impacts business and tourism" (Cukier et al. 2000: 5). As of lately in the Rio Grande Valley, the local news stations have started covering stories on the impact of the drug war violence on local businesses on both sides of the U.S-Mexico border.

United States Gun Policies

When it comes to firearms regulations the main role of the United States government has been to make sure that gun laws are not too lenient in one state and that

they contradict stricter gun laws in other states. One of the first federal gun laws that was enacted was The National Firearms Act of 1934 (NFA). The “NFA’s purpose was to make it difficult to obtain firearms deemed to be lethal” (Chu and Krouse 2009: 4). As stated by Chu and Krouse (2009: 4),

Firearms that fell under the NFA prohibited list were machine guns, and short barreled shotguns; The NFA also regulated firearms, other than pistols and revolvers, which could be concealed such as pen, cane and belt buckle guns along with destructive devices such as grenades, mines, bazookas, rockets and missiles.

The second federal gun law that was enacted was The Gun Control Act of 1968 (GCA). “The GCA helped to establish a federal licensing program for gun dealers, which required that any individual that was engaged in the business of selling guns to have a Federal Firearms License (FFL)” (Braga et al. 2002: 321). The GCA also restricted the flow of shipping guns only to FFL licensed dealers and prohibited the sales of firearms to out-of-state residents. “The GCA also paved the way for the current regulations that are imposed on gun transfers” (Cook et al. 1995: 66). The GCA was also meant to prevent particular types of individuals from gaining access to firearms. For example, “the GCA established that no firearms should be sold to an individual, who has been convicted of a felony or domestic violence, is under indictment, is an illegal alien, an illicit drug user, a fugitive from the law, and who has mental problems” (Braga et al. 2002: 322).

When it comes to the issue of possession, importing and exporting of fully automatic machine guns they are heavily regulated in the United States. Additionally, “it is a federal offense to convert a semi-automatic firearm to “full-auto” without proper

authorization from the Attorney General” (Chu and Krouse 2009: 4). In 1976 the Arms Export Control Act (AECA) was created. The AECA main purpose was to give the President of the United States control of the exportation of firearms. “Section 38 of the AECA authorized the President to control export and import of “defense articles” and “defense services”; it also gave him the power to designate defense articles and services and to issue regulations governing the import and export of these items” (Chu and Krouse 2009: 5). Some of the weapons which previous U.S. President’s have deemed as “defense articles” and “defense services” have been large caliber firearms like the .50 caliber, fully automatic guns, and combat shotguns.

Several years later after the AECA, The McClure-Volkmer Firearms Owners Protection Act of 1986 (FOPA) was passed by Congress. “The FOPA was crucial in removing the ban on out-of-state gun purchases as long as the transfer was in accordance with the laws from the buyer’s and seller’s states of residence” (Braga et al. 2002: 321). The FOPA also allowed FFL dealers to sell their firearms at local gun shows, as long as it was in the same state that they had their FFL license from. For example, a FFL licensed gun dealer can sell at any of the Texas gun shows as long as they got their FFL license from the state of Texas. Additionally, the FOPA made some minor changes to the GCA provision in regards to who can own a firearm. “According to the revisions made by the FOPA a felon whose civil liberties had been restored, had their conviction pardoned, or their record expunged could now be allowed to possess a gun” (Braga et al. 2002: 321). “A problem with the FOPA was that it made it difficult for the federal government to prosecute any gun runners who sold firearms without a FFL license, since

they were able to state that they were selling firearms from their private collection” (Braga et al. 2002: 324).

In 1994 the Assault Weapons Ban was created and implemented, which technically falls under the GCA’s prohibition of non-sporting rifles. “Through the Assault Weapons Ban Congress banned the possession, transfer, or further domestic manufacture of semi-automatic assault weapons and large capacity magazines that hold more than ten rounds” (Chu and Krouse 2009: 12). “In order to get around the semi-automatic assault weapons bans, manufactures changed the design of their firearms so that post ban models did not include the number of characteristics that would have qualified them as semi-automatic assault weapons” (Chu and Krouse 2009: 12). Under the Assault Weapons Ban a post ban firearm could not have more than two military style features. Military features included items such as detachable magazines, collapsible stock, pistol grip, a bayonet lug, flash suppressor or a grenade launcher. In 2004 the assault weapons ban expired. The assault weapons ban was in effect for 10 years from 1994-2004. Since President Clinton’s administration efforts, “the GCA prohibition against non-sporting firearms has not been aggressively enforced and many military-style, non-sporting rifles have flowed into the United States civilian market” (Feinstein et al. 2011: 13). The most recent gun law that Congress passed was the Brady Handgun Violence Protection Act of 1994 or otherwise known as the Brady Bill. As stated by Cook et al. (1995: 66),

The main purpose of the Brady Bill was to require FFL licensed dealers to conduct a criminal background check on would be buyers, additionally in states that did not have their own screening process buyers would have to wait a minimum of five business days before they could receive their handgun.

Besides the U.S. gun policies there are also international gun policies which have somewhat influenced amendments to existing U.S. gun policies.

In terms of international gun trafficking regulations, most international policies deal with the issue of violating trade embargos to conflict zones. Evidence suggest that the best starting point for an international regulations on gun running/arms dealing has to be the 1996 United States amendment to the Arms Export Control Act 1976. “The 1996 amendment to the Arms Export Control Act required that any United States and foreign nationals that live and conduct business in the U.S. must register and obtain a license that allows them to conduct arms transactions on or off American territory” (Austin 2002: 206). What was the purpose of the amendment to the Arms Export Control Act of 1976? “The purpose of the 1996 amendment, the arms brokering statute, to the Arms Export Control Act of 1976 was to put an end to the loophole on offshore arms trafficking” (Austin 2002: 206). One problem with international gun running/arms dealing policies is that most nations and countries have failed to uphold them, including the United States, which has caused the business of arms dealing to continue. “Evidence suggests that not one single gun runner or arms dealer has ever been prosecuted for arms dealing or gun trafficking, despite having an enormous amount of evidence against them” (Austin 2002: 207).

Mexican Gun Policies

When it comes to gun restrictions, Mexico has had relatively more restrictive measures in place compared to those of the United States of America. According to the Small Arms Survey (2007) and Cook et al. (2009: 7), “Mexico has about 4.5 million

registered firearms and about an estimated 10 million unregistered firearms.” “The previous figure transitions to about 15 firearms for every 100 people, a relatively lower rate of ownership compared to that of Canada and the United States of America” (Cook et al. 2009: 7). These numbers might indicate that firearms are somewhat common in Mexico for probably the same reasons they are in the U.S. such as hunting and protection. “According to Article 10 of the Mexican Constitution, Mexican residents are allowed the right to possess firearms in their homes for personal defense and security” (Cook et al. 2009: 7). The only exception to Article 10 of the Mexican Constitution is that the Mexican residents cannot possess firearms which are prohibited and any firearms that are deemed for military use.

Additionally, “Mexican residents are generally constrained to owning small caliber handguns such as .38 or .380, shotguns 12, 20, and 410 gauge, bolt action or semi-automatic rifles, mainly the .22 caliber” (Cook et al. 2009: 7). Firearms are not easily bought, sold or obtained in Mexico due to the fact that Mexico does not have private gun shops, pawn stores or gun shows where their residents can go to buy their firearms of choice. One interesting thing about Mexico is the fact that “their residents have to buy their weapons from the Arms and Ammunition Marketing Division of the Mexican Armed forces and they can only buy firearms brand new” (Burton and Stewart 2007; Cook et al. 2009: 7). Another reason for the difficulty in obtaining weapons in Mexico deals with the notion that Mexico does not produce weapons domestically unlike the United States of America. For example, the United States has private firearm manufacturing companies such as Remington, Colt, and Sturm Ruger. Klare and

Andersen (1996: 21) found that “Mexico has a limited capacity to produce small arms and light weapons for its own military.” As previously mentioned, Mexico is known to have stricter gun laws than the United States which is something that U.S. citizens have to remember when traveling into Mexico. “U.S. citizens have been warned not to take their firearms or ammunition when heading into Mexico, unless they have a permit from the Mexican Embassy” (U.S. Department of State Bureau of Consular Affairs 2007; Chu and Krouse 2009: 2). Mexico does not take smuggling of firearms lightly and has been known to give those who knowingly and unknowingly violate their firearms laws jail time.

Enforcement of U.S. Gun Laws

When it comes to the issue of punishing and charging an arms trafficker there are no specific laws written in the books in terms of trafficking arms. So what ends up occurring is that “prosecutors need to work within the existing federal statutes to tackle illegal gun trafficking” (Chu and Krouse 2009: 17). For example, on February 2008 ATF agents arrested four men in the McAllen, TX area and they were charged with a total of twenty-six counts of violations of federal firearms statutes. As stated by Chu and Krouse (2009: 18),

The four men basically violated various statutes of the GCA. Statutes violated include: 18 U.S.C. §924(c)(1)(B)(i)-(ii), possession of a firearm with a short barreled rifle, short barreled shotgun, machine gun, destructive device or has a silencer on the firearm; 18 U.S.C. §922(0), unlawful transfer or possession of a machine gun; and 18 U.S.C. §922(g)(1), which makes it unlawful for an individual who has been convicted in any court of a crime punishable by more than one year of imprisonment, “to ship or transport in interstate or foreign commerce or possess in or affecting commerce, any firearm or ammunition or receive any firearm or ammunition which has been shipped or transported in interstate or foreign commerce.

Additionally, the four McAllen area men also violated a couple of statutes under the NFA. According to Chu and Krouse (2009: 18),

The NFA statutes violated by the four men included: 26 U.S.C.§5861(d) which makes it unlawful for any person to receive or possess a firearm that is not registered to them in the National Firearms Registration and Transfer Records; and 26 U.S.C.§5861(e) which makes it unlawful to transfer a firearm in violation of the requirements of the NFA.

ATF Operations

In 2006, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives launched Project Gunrunner. Project Gunrunner originated and was implemented in Laredo, Texas and its primary focus was to curtail gun trafficking along the Southwest border of the United States. According to the ATF (2008: 4), “firearms that originated from the United States have been used to murder U.S. citizens and foreign officials and are used in the drug trade, terrorism, and other illegal activities.” ATF agents know that arms traffickers not only have a knack for buying high-end military-style firearms (AR-15 and AK-47) but that they also target cheap and inexpensive weapons. Through Project Gunrunner the ATF took a more proactive approach to combating gun trafficking.

In order to be more proactive, the ATF came up with a list of 10 key indicators for identifying firearms trafficking. According to the ATF (2008: 2),

The 10 indicators are: 1) traffickers want to buy a large number of the same model firearm or similar firearms; 2) choose only military style semiautomatic rifles (.223 or 7.62x39) and large frame semiautomatic pistols (.38 Super, 9mm, .45 and 5.7mm); 3) order more of the same firearms; 4) structure their purchases to avoid ATF reporting requirements; 5) attempt to conceal their conversations with each other; 6) do not haggle or question the price of the firearms and money is not an issue; 7) pay in cash (no checks) with the same denomination, they may use credit cards; 8) have little or no knowledge of the firearms they are purchasing; 9) lack physical stature to handle the firearm being purchased; and

10) avoid entering into conversation or are evasive towards any questions posed to them.

Although the ATF provided these ten key indicators of arms trafficking to FFLs, they made it quite clear that FFLs would have to do their part to prevent arms trafficking from occurring. FFLs were reminded to make sure that customers have proper identification when applying for a firearm and not to sell to criminals. According to the ATF (2008: 2), “one’s own instinct is the best tool that an FFL dealer could use to identify possible illegal transactions.” Project Gunrunner has led to numerous investigations, individuals serving time, and weapons off the streets of Mexico. “Since Project Gunrunner got started the ATF has seized over 10,000 firearms, and 1.1 million rounds of ammunition; it has resulted in 809 defendants serving time and with an additional 260 under court supervision” (Feinstein et al. 2011: 9).

Following the success of Project Gunrunner, the Department of Justice (DOJ) developed a follow up operation, Operation Fast and Furious. Operation Fast and Furious was an initiative that was designed in 2009 to better combat gun trafficking along the U.S.-Mexico border. Under Operation Fast and Furious, “ATF agents were ordered to shift their attention and priority from seizing firearms from criminals as soon as possible to one of identifying members of gun trafficking networks” (United States Congress 2011: 4). Operation Fast and Furious was considered to be a risky strategy but one that was considered to be worth the risk since it had the potential to led to the disruption and dismantling of drug trafficking organizations. “The ATF utilized a technique called “gun walking” which allowed suspected straw purchasers to walk away with illegally purchased guns in order to identify other members of the trafficking ring in

order to build a bigger and more complex conspiracy case” (United States Congress 2011: 4).

Within the ATF’s Phoenix field division Group VII was assigned to head Operation Fast and Furious. “The main objective of Operation Fast and Furious was to establish a connection between straw purchasers of assault-style weapons in the United States and Mexican drug trafficking organizations operating on both sides of the U.S-Mexico border” (United States Congress 2011: 4). Knowing the dangers and risks involved in carrying out these objectives, Operation Fast and Furious was still passed by the highest levels of the DOJ without hesitation. The main reason why the DOJ and ATF leadership allowed Operation Fast and Furious to proceed regardless of the risks was to discover where the trafficked firearms would end up. The ATF took a unique approach in trying to establish the trail of the illegally purchased firearms and in order to figure out where the guns ended up the ATF needed the firearms serial numbers. “A key component of the ATF’s Operation Fast and Furious was working with FFLs to track down known straw purchasers through the unique serial number of each firearm sold; Agents then entered these serial numbers into the ATF’s Suspect Gun Database” (United States Congress 2011: 4).

The ATF also kept a close eye on the straw purchasers in order to determine where the weapons would go after being bought. “ATF surveillance from Operation Fast and Furious revealed that straw purchasers would usually take their newly bought weapons to stash houses or would transfer them to third parties” (United States Congress 2011: 4-5). With the implementation of Operation Fast and Furious ATF agents were

basically being asked to go against all their training. According to Congress (2011: 9), “ATF agents are trained to “follow the gun” and interdict weapons whenever possible but Operation Fast and Furious required agents to abandon their training and avoid contact with the straw purchasers.” Not all ATF field agents were happy with strategies implemented under Operation Fast and Furious and they made damn sure their concerns were heard by their supervisors. ATF field agent’s complaints fell on deaf ears. “When the ATF agents complained about the strategies that were being used, ATF leadership just ignored their concerns and told their agents to “get with the program” because the operation had been sanctioned by Senior ATF officials” (United States Congress 2011: 9). The ATF was taking a chain of command approach to dealing with complaints.

ATF field agents who had complained about the strategies of Operation Fast and Furious knew all too well that by allowing these firearms to walk, that tragic results were almost certain and it was only a matter of time before their fears became reality. “On December 14, 2010 their worst fears became a reality, Border Patrol Agent Brian Terry a member of the Border Patrol’s Search, Trauma, and Rescue Team (BORSTAR) was shot by armed bandits” (United States Congress 2011). Two of the weapons which were recovered at the crime scene were traced back to Operation Fast and Furious. “After U.S. Border Patrol Agent Brian Terry’s tragic death, Operation Fast and Furious finally came to a complete halt and only then did ATF leadership decide to indict and prosecute straw purchasers, which resulted in the indictment of 20 straw purchasers” (United States Congress 2011: 5-6). Once the whistle was blown on Operation Fast and Furious, ATF

and DOJ leadership denied all allegations that “gun walking” had occurred or was allowed under their watch. According to the United States Congress (2011: 6),

The ATF and DOJ leadership argued that gun walking only occurs when the ATF supplies the guns directly [to criminals] but according to ATF field agents “gun walking” occurs in situations in which the ATF had contemporaneous knowledge of illegal gun purchases and purposely decide not to attempt any interdiction.

In the end Operation Fast and Furious ended up adding to the violence and deaths occurring in Mexico rather than preventing firearms from crossing the U.S.-Mexico border.

Possible Solutions to Gun Running

Overall, gun policies have not had much luck in stopping gun traffickers from purchasing an arsenal of firearms. If the United States is serious about preventing firearms getting into the wrong hands, some changes will have to be made in terms of how firearms transactions occur. One possible solution that was mentioned by researchers to prevent gun traffickers from getting access to weapons would be to increase the amount of regulation that surrounds the secondary market. According to Cook et al. (1995: 90) “if the secondary market was forced to necessitate all transactions of firearms through a certified FFL licensed dealer, it would help in establishing a paper trail for secondary firearms and help in spotting illegal transactions.” Preliminary evidence suggests that “if stricter actions are enforced on US gun shows it could help to reduce the amount of violence that occurs in other countries like Mexico and Columbia” (Wintemute 2007: 154). A second possible solution that was mentioned by researchers to prevent gun traffickers from getting access to weapons revolves around setting up a specific limit on the number of firearms an individual can purchase within a single

month. Preliminary data from Virginia found that “establishing a law that limited a person to buying one firearm per month helped to reduce the number of guns being smuggled into nearby states” (Braga et al. 2002: 343).

A third possible solution that was mentioned by researchers to prevent gun traffickers from gaining access to weapons revolves around the international community making an effort to prosecute known gun runners. “Since no gun runner has ever been prosecuted and convicted of illicit-arms dealing there is no deterrent to prevent them from committing these crimes” (Austin 2002: 212). In the United States it is very hard to prosecute and convict any gun runner of arms trafficking thanks in part to the FOPA act loophole. The FOPA loophole is usually referred to as the safe passage provision.

According to Braga et al. (2002: 347),

This aspect of the FOPA basically allows an individual who is allowed to possess a firearm to transport that firearm across state lines as long as the place where they are going allows them to lawfully possess a firearm, with the stipulation that the firearm and the ammunition are not instantaneously accessible.

“Evidence suggests that when the federal government has prosecuted gun traffickers it usually has been on different charges such as a felon in possession of a firearm” (Braga et al. 2002: 347).

CHAPTER III

LITERATURE REVIEW II

Media Theory: Framing

According to McQuail (1994: 327), “the study of mass media is based on the notion that the media has a significant effect on its audience.” In regards to studying media’s effects on its audience, researchers examine media discourse through framing, agenda setting, and priming. “Media discourse refers to the method that individuals (the audience) use to construct meaning and public opinion which is part of the process that journalists use to develop and cement meaning in public discourse” (Gamson and Modigliani 1989: 2). When it comes to interpreting and characterizing media coverage of issues, such as gun trafficking from the U.S. into Mexico, Mexico’s border violence or presidential election, different theoretical approaches could be utilized such as framing or agenda setting. For this research I utilize both framing and agenda setting.

So what is framing? According to Entman (2007: 16), “framing is defined as the process of culling few elements of a perceived reality and assembling a narrative that highlights connections among them to promote a particular interpretation.” Gamson and Modigliani (1987: 143), “defined framing as a central organizing idea or story line that offers meaning to some news breaking event or issue while suggesting what the controversy is about.” Overall in regards to mass media and journalism,

The concept of framing could best be thought of as choosing something from reality and bringing it forth into the realm of the public eye, thus magnifying its visibility and importance while in the process promoting a particular viewpoint of that issue, phenomenon or object” (Entman 1993: 52).

For example, this could be done when news reporters focus on the issue of corruption within police departments along the U.S.-Mexico border area and discuss and expose whether there is a link between drug cartels and police corruption (the amount of drugs that make it safely across the U.S. border and county lines to its destination).

Two concepts that are synonymous with framing are agenda setting and priming. Agenda setting is at times included under the heading of framing by some researchers while other researchers state it to be completely separate from framing. So what is agenda setting? According to Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007: 11) and McCombs and Shaw (1972) “agenda setting is the idea that there is a strong correlation between the emphasis that mass media places on certain issues (based on relative placement or amount of coverage) and the importance attributed to these issues by mass media audiences.” Agenda setting tends to use selective placement and extended coverage as ways to place greater emphasis on specific issues and events. On the one hand, issues that are deemed important are more than likely to be found on the front page of the newspaper or the leading story in news broadcast such as the presidential elections. On the other hand, issues such as corruption within local politics might be found within the pages of the local and state section of the newspaper or in a segment later on in the news broadcast.

The more coverage an issue receives the more likely that the audience is made aware of the importance of the issue at hand, such as school shootings and the accessibility of firearms to children. Closely related to agenda setting is priming. Iyengar and Kinder (1987: 63) noted that “priming refers to alterations in the principles that

people use to make political assessment.” Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007: 11) stated that “priming occurs when news content suggests to a news audience that they ought to use specific issues as benchmarks for evaluating the performance of our leaders and government.” Some researchers believe there to be some overlap between these concepts of framing and agenda setting while others believe that there some slight conceptual differences among them. Entman (2007: 164) argued that “agenda setting was just another name for the successful performance of the first function of framing: defining problems worthy of public and government attention”. Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007: 15) and Price and Tewksbury (1997) stated that

The conceptual difference for framing and agenda setting revolves around the notion of accessibility and applicability. Agenda setting is centered on accessibility effects (memory based models of information processing) while framing is centered on applicability effects (outcome of the message).

Framing can be viewed as being important since it provides us with the capacity to understand the world around us. What is the function of framing? According to Entman (1993; 2004; and 2007), “framing has four main functions: 1) problem definition; 2) casual analysis; 3) moral judgments; and 4) remedy promotion.” Additionally, Gitlin (1980: 7) “understood the function of framing as being important because it provided journalists with a way to organize the world in order to report on it and to a slight degree for us [the audience] who rely on their reports.” It seems that Scheufele would agree with Gitlin in regards to the important function of framing for journalists. Scheufele (1999: 115) stated that “journalists actively construct frames to structure and make sense of incoming information.” In the end, framing is considered

important for the reasons that it allows us to present and comprehend the issues and events that are occurring around us.

“The functions of framing are important because they help to create and establish frames of reference that individuals can utilize to interpret and discuss public events” (Tuchman 1978: ix). Entman found five traits that help the mass media to establish frames of reference which impact how an individual processes information. Those five traits are: “1) importance of judgment; 2) agency; 3) identification with potential victims; 4) categorization of incidents; and 5) generalizations to a national context” (Entman 1993; Scheufele 1999: 111). How does the audience process information from the news media? There are three methods for processing information from the news media: 1) active processing; 2) reflective integrators; and 3) selective scanners.

According to Kosicki and McLeod (1990) and Scheufele (1999: 105),

Individuals who are active processors utilize information from the media as additional sources since they believe that the information provided by the media is incomplete or biased. Reflective integrators are individuals who read or listen to what the media says about an issue and ponders they information that they have gathered in order to fully grasp the issue. Selective scanners are individuals who utilize the media for the sole purpose of looking for information that is pertinent to them.

Some researchers have stated that there is a relationship between power and framing. In general, the upper class has somewhat cared about what the masses think about because they would prefer for them to act accordingly to their views. Entman (2007: 165) mentioned that “elites presumably do care about what people think because they want them to behave in certain ways, supporting or at least tolerating elite activities.”

Power refers to the ability to get someone to do something that they might not want to do (Nagel 1975). Nagel (1975) argued that “influencing and telling people what to think about was a way to wield power over them” (Entman 2007:165). How does power come into play within the media’s framing? According to Nagel (1975) and Entman (2007: 165) “power and framing intertwine because of the way that mass media frames issues and events helps to set the agendas that influence what people think and talk about.” Thussu (2006: 4) noted that “the mass media plays a crucial ideological role by promoting the values and interests of the dominant group, thus implanting beliefs and representations that sustain and legitimize the domination [of the masses].” It would seem that Thussu’s views would be in line with that of Nagel and Entman in regards to the relationship between framing and power. Some researchers go a step further in the media framing and power relationship and thus argued that the media has a powerful influence on issues such as politics, the economy, etc. According to Jamrozik and Nocella (2000:71), “in the age of mass communication, the media plays an important and powerful role in identifying social problems and bringing them into the public sphere.” Fraley and Roushanzamir (2006: 126) stated that “as the media saturate contemporary societies, they become influential consciousness industries and thus having the power to influence politics, culture, and as well the economy.”

Moral Panic

One type of framing that can be found within the confines of mass media is that of the moral panic. Cohen (1972) and Flores-Yeffal et al. (2011: 568) noted that “a moral panic was based on the societal reaction against some folk devil (specific issue or

group) that was founded on the notion that these folk devils represent a huge threat to our society.” “Moral panics are spread by individuals and organizations known as moral entrepreneurs” (Becker 1963). These moral entrepreneurs tend to fabricate threatening situations by utilizing embellished wording and examples in order to build up a sense of fear and resentment against a particular group or issue such as immigrants, marijuana, Obama care, school shootings (the lack of gun control), etc. Flores-Yeffal et al. (2011: 569) stated that “this type of inflated rhetoric tends to be spread through the use of popular and mass media such as newspaper headlines, radio shows, television programs, web-sites [social media sites], weblogs, and or discussion forums.”

What are the stages involved in creating a moral panic? Adler and Adler (2009: 148-150) indicated that “there are three main stages in the moral campaign process: 1) awareness; 2) moral conversion; and 3) moral panic.” “In the first stage, awareness spreads and brings attention to the message about a specific issue (folk devils) by utilizing statistics, experts who back up their claims, and through embellished wording and examples” (Flores-Yeffal et al. 2011: 570). Adler and Adler (2009: 149) noted that,

In the awareness stage, moral entrepreneurs use these danger messages to create a sense that specific conditions are problematic and pose a present or future potential danger to society but they also have specific solutions that they recommend to resolve the issue at hand.

Statistics are commonly utilized for the reason that they can depict the increase and decrease of the issue at hand, such as school shootings or drug use. One way that moral entrepreneurs spread awareness of their message is by utilizing the media to their advantage. Castells (2008) and Flores-Yeffal et al. (2011: 573) noted that “moral entrepreneurs have penetrated the mass media by utilizing alarmist’s claims that are

often cited by major newspapers and news stations.” There seems to be a relationship between moral entrepreneurs and the mass media which is profit. For example, by citing these alarmist claims in their news reports, it ultimately helps mass media corporations to sell more newspapers and attract more viewers while spreading awareness of the issue. In the second stage, moral conversion, “moral entrepreneurs utilize rudiments of drama, novelty, and cultural myths to gain the visibility that they need and to convey their message to the masses” (Adler and Adler 2009: 150).

The best way for moral entrepreneurs to get their message out and convince the masses of their views is by enlisting the help of famous actors, athletes, musicians, religious figures, and political officials. Flores-Yeffal et al. (2011: 571) and Adler and Adler (2009: 150), argue that “by using celebrities and public officials, moral entrepreneurs are able to legitimize their claims and convince the public to join the movement.” For example, “former Democratic presidential candidate Al Gore helped bring global warming to the forefront while actor Michael J. Fox has campaigned for Democratic candidates to endorse stem cell research” (Adler and Adler 2009: 150). In the third stage, moral panic, the moral entrepreneurs have successfully created a moral panic in eyes of the masses. “The moral panic stage is characterized by a prevalent and momentary general concern about the problematic issue that was promoted by both the media and the government” (Flores-Yeffal et al. 2011: 571).

What elements are needed to make a successful moral panic? According to Adler and Adler (2009: 151),

In order for a moral panic to be successful it has to be triggered by a specific event, occur during a ripe historical period, draw attention to a specific individual

or group as a target, have meaty content that gets revealed, and becomes heightened by the spread of the panic through the mass media, grassroots communication, Internet warning, and/or public presentations.

Chambliss (1995: 245) noted that “a moral panic can raise a crime, such as a school shooting, up to the level of a major social problem with the proper help from politicians, law enforcement officials and the news media.” Flores-Yeffal et al. (2011), argue that “there should be one more step in Adler and Adler’s moral campaign process, the call for action stage.” This new call for action stage which comes before the moral panic stage has two individual components, a civil, and political call for action. According to Flores-Yeffal et al. (2011: 583),

The call for civil action includes different ways in which individuals can participate in the cause by doing direct public service while the call for political action is an efficient way for individuals to participate directly in politics and support legislation against the subgroup, mainly through the use of online technologies.

During the call for civil action stage, moral entrepreneurs are able to collect donations from the general public (those who bought into the moral panic) in order to help fund their propaganda and further spread their message. In their research on the Latino cyber moral panic, Flores-Yeffal et al. (2011: 583) discovered that “individuals could participate in the call for action by becoming minutemen, supporting boycotts of companies who aid illegal immigration, or donate to organizations in order to help with the movement.” In the end, moral panics do not last long since they are usually created by exaggerated rhetoric and thrive on inflated fears. “Moral panics tend to founder on their own accord or eventually come to be replaced with new panics and in their demise they tend to leave some residual effects” (Adler and Adler 2009: 151).

Media as a Medium

Mass media has also been thought as a medium. McLuhan (1964) argued that the medium is the message. McLuhan (1964: 7) stated,

That the medium is the message referred to the personal and social consequences of any medium- that is, of any extension of ourselves-result from the new scale that is introduced into our affairs by each extension of ourselves or by any new technology.

The mass media is considered to be a medium since it provides individuals with an alternative mode of thought. According to Postman (2006: 10), “each medium, like language itself, makes possible for a unique mode of discourse by providing a new orientation for thought, for expression and for sensibility.” Postman brought up the notion that McLuhan’s idea of the medium being the message is in need of revision. Postman (2006: 10) felt that “a revision was warranted in order for people not to confuse a message with a metaphor.” In order for the media to be seen as a message it would be required to focus on hard facts about what is going on in the world. Postman (2006: 10) noted that “the media seems to be more of a metaphor, since they work by unobtrusive but powerful implications to spread their special definitions of reality.” Postman (2006: 10) argues,

That whether we experience the world through the lens of speech or the printed word or the television camera, our media-metaphor classify the world for us, [they] sequence it, frame it, enlarge it, reduce it, color it, and argue a case for what the world is like.

In order to truly understand the media-metaphorical function several factors must be taken into careful consideration. Postman (2006: 14) states that “in order to understand the metaphorical function, we need to take into account the symbolic forms of their

information, information source, quantity, and speed of their information and the context in which their information is experienced.”

Propaganda Model

It is a common perception that the media are an autonomous entity that is devoted to finding and presenting the objective truth. People tend to believe that the media presents what is happening in the world and are in no way influenced by powerful groups. “Leaders of the media have stated that their news choices rest on unbiased, professional, and objective criteria” (Herman and Chomsky 2002: lix). According to Herman and Chomsky (2002: 1), “the media’s function is to amuse, entertain, inform, and inculcate individuals with the values, beliefs, and codes of behavior that will integrate them into the institutional structures of the larger society.” Herman and Chomsky were not the only ones who viewed the media’s function as entertaining, amusing, and informing Postman took it one step further and argued that media used entertainment to arrange depictions of experiences. Postman (2006: 80) claimed that “television had made entertainment its focal point when it came to formatting the representation of all experiences.”

The problem arises with the fact that not all news and subject matter should be considered entertainment, rather news is meant to inform rather than entertain but this fact is lost when the medium is television. Postman (2006: 87) “pointed out that no matter what is depicted or from what point of view, the bottom line is that television is there for amusement and pleasure.” Additionally, Postman (2006: 9) believed that “the media of communication available to a culture are a dominant influence on the formation

of a culture's intellectual and social preoccupation." How does the media go about accomplishing this? The answer is through systematic propaganda. One needs to remember that the media whether it be printed or televised is nothing more than a philosophy of rhetoric. The rhetoric that is being referred to is that of epistemology. According to Postman (2006: 17), "epistemology is primarily concerned with the origin and nature of knowledge; the key issue is with that of the definition of truth and the sources from which definitions come from."

"The propaganda model aims to explain how the media functions within the institutional structures and relationships within which they operate" (Herman and Chomsky 2002: xi). It is believed that the media operate in part of those who control and finance them. There are a few ways in which the media are controlled to adhere to the interests and agendas of those who control them. According to Herman and Chomsky (2002: xi),

Some of the methods include the selection of high ranking personal and by the editor's and journalists internalization of priorities and definitions of newsworthiness that conform to the institutions policy; additionally, structural factors include ownership and control, dependence on other major sources (advertisers), mutual interests and relationships between the media and those who make the news and have the power to define it and explain what it means.

The systematic propaganda model refers to the notion of how money and power act as key players when it comes to deciding the news and what messages the audience receives. Herman and Chomsky (2002: 2), have identified five filters of the propaganda model: "1) size, ownership, and profit orientation of the mass media; 2) advertising license to do business; 3) sourcing mass media news; 4) flak and the enforcers; and 5) anticommunism as control mechanism."

The first filter, size, ownership, and profit orientation of the mass media comes down to the issue of being able to stay afloat and making a profit. Smaller newspapers were more susceptible to getting eradicated due to the fact that they were not able to break even. “Breaking even was calculated by the outreach of the newspaper compared to the investment” (Herman and Chomsky 2002: 4). Smaller businesses had to deal with issues as start up costs and increased capital costs which impacted their bottom line (profit). Currently media firms are the ones in charge of the ownership of most newspapers, television networks, magazines, book publishing, and cable-TV systems. An issue with media companies is that their overall bottom line tends to come down to profitability. According to Herman and Chomsky (2002: 5), “many of the large media companies which are completely integrated into the market have to deal with the pressures from stockholders, directors, and banks to focus on profit.”

Max Frankel, former New York Times editor, was quoted as saying that “the more newspapers pursue internet audiences, the more likely sex, sports, violence, and comedy appear on the pages pushing aside stories of foreign war or welfare reform” (Herman and Chomsky 2002: xvi). According to Jamrozik and Nocella (2000: 71), “newspaper headlines are rarely created by pleasant news, but rather by unpleasant news: catastrophes, accidents, war, crimes, violent actions, and problems looming on the horizon.” This is reminiscent of the old newspaper adage of it bleeds red, it sells. Some researchers such as Ben Bagdikian (1987: xvi) have argued that “large media firms have the power to set the national agenda by controlling the output of the media” (Herman and Chomsky 2002: 4). When one examines the media closely there is a hierarchy,

which takes into account factors such as prestige, outreach, and resources. According to Herman and Chomsky (2002: 4-5), “the top of the hierarchy along with the government and wire services define the news agenda and supply much of the national and international news to organizations lower on the hierarchy which pass the information to the public.” Media firms also have a common interest with the government as well. The media, mainly TV and radio, must have an FCC license and adhere to FCC regulations which binds them to federal guidelines (Herman and Chomsky 2002). Herman and Chomsky (2002: 13) have noted that “this legal dependency has been used by the government as a club to discipline, perceived threats, media who stray too much from the establishment orientation.”

The second filter, the advertising license to do business impacted the media’s profitability and survival. Advertising had a great impact on the newspapers overall cost of production. Prior to advertising in newspapers, the overall price of the newspaper included the cost of production but once advertising came into play the overall cost of production was reduced which helped to increase the profitability of the newspapers. Advertising became an issue for those newspapers that lacked advertisement. According to Herman and Chomsky (2002: 14), “newspapers lacking advertising were at a serious disadvantage since their prices ended up being higher which hurt their sales numbers and impacted their chances to improve the salability of their paper (features, attractive format, etc).”

Advertisement served as a form of regulation and control for the media. As previously mentioned, those most affected by the immergence of advertisement were the

smaller press. In the end advertisement accomplished what state taxes and harassment could not do, weaken the working class press (Herman and Chomsky 2002). It did so by destroying their chances of survival by not including advertisement to offset the cost of production. Herman and Chomsky (2002: 14) noted,

That with advertising the free market did not produce a neutral system in which the buyer's choice decided which newspaper and magazines prospered and survived rather this decision was in the hands of the advertisers, thanks in part to their advertising subsidy.

On the one hand, this advertising subsidy allowed the media firms to actively promote their product and become more competitive. On the other hand, an advertisement subsidy impacted what news stories and programs get printed and shown. According Herman and Chomsky (2002: 17),

Large corporate advertisers on TV will rarely sponsor programs that engage in serious criticisms of corporate activities, such as environmental degradation, the workings of the military-industrial complex or corporate support and benefits of Third World tyrannies.

When choosing their programs and the layout of their publications, media firms avoid offending current and potential advertisers. "Advertisers tend to avoid programs [and stories] with serious complexities and disturbing controversies which can impact the consumers buying mood and generally seek programs which are more entertaining" (Herman and Chomsky 2002: 17).

The third filter is the sourcing of the mass media which impacts the types of news stories that get covered. When it comes to deciding which news stories to cover, the media takes into account that they cannot cover every story that they hear about.

"The media cannot afford to have reporters and cameras at all locations where stories may

break out” (Herman and Chomsky 2002: 18). One way to remedy this problem is for the media to focus on areas where news is more likely to occur. Herman and Chomsky (2002: 18) stated that “economics dictate that media firms concentrate their resources where significant news occurs, where rumors and leaks abound and where regular press conferences are held.”

According to Rodriguez (1995: 131) “in the U.S., the day to day news making process centers on a triangle of government officials, business leaders, and powerful institutions.” Some regular areas where news is more likely to occur are the Whitehouse, Pentagon, courthouses, police departments, and Wall Street. These are considered to be reliable, credible, recognizable, and consistent. Sacco (1995: 144) mentioned that “news stories (about crime) are most useful to news organizations when they are gathered from credible sources; for this reason, law enforcement agencies have become the primary sources of information when it comes to news regarding criminal activity.” “These bureaucracies turn out large volumes of material which meet the news organizations criteria for reliability and scheduled flows” (Herman and Chomsky 2002: 19). The relationship between the media and how they gather their information (sources) play a role in which issues are seen as vital social problems. Sacco (1995: 141) mentioned that “the social construction of crime problems can best be understood as the relationship between the media to their sources and the organizational constraints that structure the news-gathering process.”

The relationship between these bureaucracies and the mass media are not without issues. These bureaucracies can influence and manipulate which news stories are covered. According to Herman and Chomsky (2002: 22),

Because of their services, continuous contact on the beat and mutual dependency, the powerful can use personal relationships, threats and rewards to further influence and coerce the media and the media might feel obligated to carry extremely dubious stories and mute criticism in order to not offend their sources.

At times the media can be manipulated to follow particular agendas. “This occurs by inundating the media with stories which at times serve to impose a particular line and frame on the media (Nicaragua illicitly supplying arms to Salvador rebels) and help chase unwanted stories off the front pages or out of the media” (Herman and Chomsky 2002: 23). A problem that can arise from sourcing the media with information is that disinformation becomes a possibility. According to Postman (2006: 107),

Disinformation refers to misleading information that which is misplaced, irrelevant, fragmented or superficial, this type of information tends to create the illusion of knowing something but actually leads one away from actually knowing what is going on.

Disinformation becomes one of the main ways in which bureaucracies tend to manipulate the media and how the media can then mislead the public about what is really going on.

The fourth filter, flak and the enforcers, served as methods to silence or censor the media. According to Herman and Chomsky (2002: 26), “flak refers to negative responses to a media statement or program; It can take the form of letters, phone calls, petitions, lawsuits, speeches, bills to Congress, threats or punitive action.” Flak censors the media since it hits them where it hurts in their pocket books, by impacting

advertising and what programs are shown. “Advertisers have been known to withdraw their sponsorship from television and radio programming” (Herman and Chomsky 2002: 26). In order to avoid flak from viewers, government or FCC, the advertisers call for suitable programming from the media which will not raise any eyebrows.

Thus advertisers fear the boycotting of their products and flak serves as important deterrents to controversial media programming, views, and critiques. “The creators of flak tend to reinstall the command of political authority in its news management activities” (Herman and Chomsky 2002: 28). They utilize flak as a means to discredit any reporters/journalists or media firms who deviate from preexisting guidelines. The fifth filter, anticommunism as a control mechanism utilizes fear and hatred of groups to keep the media in check. “This filter helps to mobilize the people against an enemy and because the concept of communism is fuzzy it can be used against anybody advocating policies that threaten property interests or support accommodations with Communist states and radicalism” (Herman and Chomsky 2002: 29).

Worthy and Unworthy Victims

Besides these five filters, the propaganda model tends to have a different view for victims of violence. When it comes to violence or violent acts, the propaganda model tends to classify individuals into one of two categories, worthy or unworthy victims. According to Herman and Chomsky (2002: 37), “worthy victims are classified as individuals who are abused or killed in enemy states while unworthy victims are classified as individuals who are treated with equal or greater severity by its own government or clients.” What is the difference in coverage of worthy and unworthy

victims by the mass media? The main difference revolves around the notion of details and emotions.

Articles that cover instances in which worthy victims are the focus tend to mention lots of details of the event as it unfolded. Additionally, coverage regarding instances in which unworthy victims are the center of the piece tend to skip or ignore specific details of the event and tend to rely on just the facts. Herman and Chomsky (2002: 39) noted,

Coverage of worthy victims tends to bring up gory details of the event such as those which might evoke powerful emotions, expressions of outrage and demands for justice while the coverage of unworthy victims tends to be low keyed, keeps a lid on emotions and evoking regretful and philosophical generalities on the omnipresence of violence and inherent regard of human life.

Sacco would agree with Herman and Chomsky on the treatment of unworthy victims by the news media. Sacco (1995: 152) confirms that “the typical media crime story is stripped of much of its emotional character and is likely to involve victims about whom the viewer or reader has no personal knowledge of.” It has been argued that the coverage of unworthy victims could be due to the fact that these victims have been abused or killed in distant countries. Herman and Chomsky (2002: 39) brought up the fact that “unworthy victims are treated the way they are by the U.S. mass media because they were killed at a great distance and unlike us they are easy to disregard.” Sacco brings up an interesting point regarding the treatment of unworthy victims of crime. According to Sacco (1995: 152), “most crime news tends to be nonlocal and therefore far removed from judgments that must be made regarding the safety of one’s immediate environment.”

Summary

Overall most of the articles discussed the topic of gun running and the common methods that gun runners utilized to acquire their inventory of firearms through the primary and secondary markets. The literature discussed to some extent the relationship between gun running and the drug trafficking organizations but there was not much within these articles in terms of how this relationship between gun trafficking and drug cartels was affecting the border region of South Texas and Mexico (Chu and Krouse 2009; Cook 2007; Cook et al. 2009; Cottam and Marenin 2005; Feinstein et al. 2011; and GAO 2009). The majority of these articles and government documents focused on how the illicit trafficking of firearms from the United States into Mexico helped to fuel the drug violence that is currently on going. These same articles and government documents also shed some light on the number of deaths that had been caused by drug cartels due to their increased access to “small” and “light weapons.” Although these articles did a good job of covering the issue that guns from the U.S. are a huge part of the equation when it comes to help fuel the drug war in Mexico, there was no mention about the relationship between drug trafficking organizations increased access to “small” and “light weapons” and the impact of border violence on economics, individual freedom, and the maintenance of law and order within the drug cartel, gun trafficking, and border security literature (Chu and Krouse 2009; Cook 2007; Cook et al. 2009; Cottam and Marenin 2005; Feinstein et al. 2011; and GAO 2009).

The only article that slightly touched on the issue of the relationship between drug cartels increased access to “small” and “light weapons” and border violence impact

on economical interests, individual freedom, and the maintenance of law and order was Finklea et al.'s 2010 Congressional Research Service document on Southwest Border Violence. Finklea et al.'s 2010 document revolved around the notion of how does one define and measure spillover violence, but they failed to mention how spillover violence could impact U.S. citizen's individual freedoms, the maintenance of law and order on the U.S. side of the border and the local economy. Also Finklea et al. (2010) did not completely cover how the border violence on the Mexican side had impacted the Mexican citizen's individual freedoms, the economy of their border towns, and the problems associated with the maintenance of law and order. It would have been important for them to have completely discussed these points since the border violence in Mexico not only impacts those directly involved in the drug war but also those who live in the surrounding areas and the local businesses, plus it would have also clarified the specific dimensions of spillover violence. Finklea et al. (2010) briefly touched on the issue that the border violence that is currently ongoing in Mexico had led to intimidation and attacks on others that are not directly involved in the drug trade. It was bit surprising that the current identification of spillover violence did not include trafficker on trafficker violence, even though this makes up a predominantly huge portion of the violence that is happening in Mexico. Finklea et al. (2010) did not include how spillover violence could be considered a social phenomenon or social problem. They slightly skimmed the issue when they discussed how the non official definition of spillover violence was constructed by the DEA.

Research Problem

This study attempts to address the issues of gun trafficking and its impact on border violence from a social problems perspective. It looks to fill the gap on how gun trafficking and the ongoing border violence that is occurring in Mexico have come to be seen as social problems within the last few years compared to its actual length of occurrence. It also looks to fill the gap in regards to whether the formation of gun trafficking and its impact on border violence as a social problem in the media has corresponded with its actual rise in presence or occurrence. It builds on the research done by Finklea et al., by filling the gaps which include issues such as how border violence on the Mexican side has impacted Mexican citizen's individual freedoms, the economy of their border towns, and the problems associated with the maintenance of law and order and the role they play in measuring the effects of border violence. Overall, the main focus of this study was to portray how the United States and Mexico's print media viewed gun trafficking and its impact on border violence. For example, whether there are differences in the types of stories that are being covered, how often stories about border violence and gun trafficking are being written about, etc.

Almost none of the articles or government documents mentioned anything about the characteristics of gun traffickers. Rather most of the articles and government documents focused mainly on the characteristics of a straw purchaser. Various literature articles have noted that straw purchasers tended to be related in some way to the individual they intend to buy the firearm for (ATF 2000; 2001; 2008; Braga et al. 2002; Cook and Ludwig 1997; and Koper and Shelley 2007). Additionally, Cole (2008) went a

step further than previous researchers when doing research on straw purchasers. Cole (2008) looked past the characteristics of the individual and focused on the anatomy of a straw purchase and shed some much needed light on something that is considered to be hard to spot while in action.

The literature has discussed that gun policies have been enacted to prevent firearms from falling into the wrong hands, such as the GCA, FOPA, and the Brady Bill (Austin 2002; Braga et al. 2002; Chu and Krouse 2009; and Cook et al. 1995). The reality is that some of these bills are preventing the federal government from prosecuting and convicting gun runners on the charges of arms trafficking. As previously mentioned, these bills have created loopholes such as the safe passage act which has made it difficult to arrest someone for unlawful possession of a firearm if they are in a state with tougher gun laws if they are only there momentarily and on their way to state that allows firearms. Additionally, Chu and Krouse's 2009 article indicated that known traffickers and straw purchasers have never been arrested and charged with firearms trafficking since there are no laws written in the books *per se*, rather these individuals have been prosecuted under various firearms statues. Austin's 2002 article discussed the fact that the United States government and the international community need to prosecute some gun runners in order to serve as a deterrent for the others.

Various researchers have mentioned possible solutions for stopping and curbing gun running and straw purchases (Austin 2002; Braga et al. 2002; Cook et al. 1995; and Wintemute 2007). The various articles by these researchers mainly called for action to be brought forth by the United States in order to stop the flow of illicit-firearms into

Mexico. Overall they came up with three solutions: 1) increase the amount of regulation that surrounds the secondary gun market; 2) setting up a specific limit on the number of firearms an individual can purchase within a single month; and 3) the international community (including the U.S.) needs to make an effort to prosecute known gun runners. It appears that researchers are only taking on one aspect – gun trafficking demand by the drug trafficking organizations – as the causes of border violence and are neglecting the other aspect – the drug demand by the United States. The Department of the Treasury, and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives provided some statistics of the number of investigations per gun trafficking channel and the amount of firearms trafficked per case. The only problem with their statistics was that some of the cases could fall under various categories which could end up skewing the results of the data.

In terms of the existing body of literature on gun trafficking there is very little is scholarly information regarding gun shows and straw purchases along the Texas-Mexico border. This is one area that needs more research especially due to the ease of access to high capacity firearms, ammunition, military-style firearms, and high capacity magazines for gun traffickers and straw purchasers working for drug cartels.

Wintemute's 2007 article was the only one that discussed the topic of gun shows and straw purchases and it utilized a cross sectional observational study of several states that have gun shows. The one drawback to Wintemute's 2007 article was that it did not mention anything about whether gun shows create opportunities for gun running to occur. Wintemute (2007) discussed the issue of the occurrences of straw purchases at

gun shows but he did note that investigations involving gun trafficking usually take into account gun shows.

According to Wintemute (2007), less than 2% of incarcerated felons acquired their firearms from gun shows. Wintemute (2007) sets aside the issue of gun trafficking and gun shows, and makes straw purchases the focal point of his research. The reason for this could have been the fact that one would not know the definitive purpose of the straw purchaser's motive for buying firearms. Additionally, articles like Wintemute's (2007) have been based on onsite observations at gun shows or interviews with criminals who bought firearms illegally at gun shows. The one problem with doing observations at gun shows is that it can be very difficult to distinguish between an actual sale and straw purchase which could impact the number of incidents that the researcher sees and they would have to go down in the record books as probable straw purchases.

Additional research on gun shows needs to be conducted in order to shed some light on the amount of straw purchases that occur at gun shows along the Southwestern border region of the United States. The results of studies like this can help to explain whether gun shows provide more opportunities for gun traffickers operating in the Southwestern border of the United States to acquire firearms or if they are more prone to acquiring their supply of firearms from multiple sources. Another important aspect of gun shows that has not yet been investigated is the Federal Firearm License dealer's views of the impact that gun trafficking are having on the border violence occurring in Mexico. Previous research has mainly focused on what U.S. federal agents have said about the occurrences of illegal activity occurring at secondary markets such as gun

shows. Most of the articles that are written on gun shows have not attempted to interview FFL dealers which could be due to various difficulties in trying to get access to this group of individuals. Gaining access to FFLs that operate at gun shows along the Southwestern border of the United States can be especially tough with the news stories that some local television stations were running around the South Texas border region when all the cartel violence in Mexico was grabbing national headlines.

Also the existing scholarly body of literature that is out on gun trafficking tends to be more concentrated on the interstate trafficking of firearms within the United States and on the international trafficking of firearms to places such as Africa and the Middle East. A few articles, such as those by Feinstein et al. (2011) and Finklea et al. (2010), concentrated on gun trafficking of firearms from the United States into Mexico and were mainly focused on the type of firearms (military-style) that drug cartels were interested in acquiring. Additionally, Chu and Krouse (2009) did bring up a pretty interesting scenario that is going on between the United States and Mexico, the Southwest Border Paradigm. In this paradigm by Chu and Krouse (2009), drugs and illegal immigrants head up North while money and guns head back down South. The Southwest Border Paradigm highlights the fact that these problems (drugs, illegal immigrants, guns, and money) arise out of supply and demand on both sides of the border.

Research Objectives and Hypotheses

The 1st objective of my research was to see how the national media from the United States and Mexico portrayed the violence that is happening in Mexico. Specifically this objective aimed to discover to what extent did national newspaper

articles on gun trafficking portray it primarily as Mexico's problem. Additionally, this objective aimed to determine whether the perception that gun trafficking and border violence were primarily Mexico's problems changed between the periods of 2009 through 2012. Question 1: The first research question examined whether the United States print media was more likely to portray gun trafficking along the U.S.-Mexico border and its impact on border violence as Mexico's problem compared to Mexico's print media. The 2nd objective of my research was to determine how often the print media from the United States and Mexico had reported on the issues of gun trafficking. Question 2: The second research question examined whether the Mexican print media had a higher number of articles covering gun trafficking than the United States print media. The 3rd objective of my research was to determine how gun trafficking was built as a social problem. An additional aim of this objective was to analyze if the linkage between gun trafficking and border violence does exist at a certain point, do later newspaper articles assume this relationship rather than explicitly stating it. Question 3: The third research question examined whether print media articles from both the United States and Mexico regarding gun trafficking intersected with stories of smuggling and border violence.

CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY

This chapter will examine the methodology that was utilized to carry out the research. It will discuss in detail how qualitative methodology was utilized and why it was utilized. It will focus on how the data for the research project was collected and what programs were utilized to run qualitative analysis. It will also discuss which national newspapers from Mexico and the United States were examined and why they were chosen. An examination of national newspapers from the United States and Mexico allowed for a national comparative investigation of media representations from both countries regarding their symbolic significance on issues of gun trafficking along the Southwestern border of the United States and its impact on Mexico's border violence.

This research study investigated how gun trafficking and its impact on Mexico's border violence was covered and represented in the United States as well as in Mexico. This portion of the research utilized the method of content analysis. The strength of content analysis was in examining artifacts of social communication such as written documents, photographs, video, or any items that can be made into text (Berg 2009). Content analysis was used to determine what common themes appeared in national newspaper articles from both sides of the U.S-Mexico border. These themes were used to compare media coverage that was allocated by national newspapers on the issues of gun trafficking and its impact on Mexico's border violence. Thus allowing me to determine whether gun trafficking's impact on Mexico's drug related violence was

considered an important issue around other portions of the United States and Mexico besides the impacted areas along the U.S.-Mexico border.

By combing through news articles at the national level from both countries it allowed me the opportunity to see how the print media constructed social problems out of important emerging issues. The national newspapers that were utilized for this study were *The New York Times* for the American national newspaper and *El Universal* for the Mexican national newspaper. These national newspapers were chosen due to their prestige and history. *The New York Times* is considered prestigious since it has been in publication since 1851 and has won various Pulitzer Prizes for their news stories. *The New York Times* not only brings news coverage to Americans about what is happening in the United States at the national level but also brings them coverage of international news.

The New York Times remains one of the top three national newspapers in the United States along with *The Wall Street Journal* and *USA Today*. *El Universal* is considered prestigious since it has been in publication since 1916. *El Universal* is considered to be a leader with up to the minute news from Mexico and the world with various news sections such as the Federal District, Mexican States, finance, and so on. Additionally, *El Universal* is considered to be one of the most influential newspapers in Mexico along with being one of the most read. A main issue that came to mind when doing a content analysis of the media was choosing a time frame to focus on. The main thing I kept in mind when deciding on the time period was that it had to be both manageable and theoretically important.

Thus this study focused on the last three years of these two prestigious newspapers, *The New York Times* and *El Universal*. The timeline covered newspaper articles dating from January 2009 through January 2012. This was a manageable and theoretical important time frame. This time frame was considered manageable for the fact that it looked at two national newspapers for three straight years, which equaled to 1,095 newspaper issues that were analyzed per newspaper with a total of 2,190 issues. In addition to reading them I also had to translate the articles of *El Universal* from Spanish to English when I found specific articles discussing gun trafficking, border violence and spillover violence.

Also by looking at the last three years of *The New York Times* and *El Universal* there was a better chance that there would be electronic copies of these articles and back issues of the newspapers on the internet. Additionally, articles from 2009-2012 were more likely to be in online newspaper archives which eliminated having to travel to the newspapers headquarters. In terms of theoretical importance the last three years of *The New York Times* and *El Universal* played an important role deciphering whether gun trafficking along the U.S.-Mexico border and its impact on Mexico's border violence were deemed social problems. The reason for focusing on the last three years of these two national newspapers was that this happened to be the time frame when gun trafficking and border violence were gaining headlines in the newspapers along the Texas-Mexico border especially on the Texas side. Prior to January 2007 there was hardly any news coverage on the issue of gun trafficking along the Southwestern border of the United States and its impact on Mexico's border violence. By hardly any news

coverage, I mean that there were no consistent news articles or news reports from the United States media regarding the problems of gun trafficking from the United States into Mexico and the presence of border violence. I know there was not that much news coverage in the United States regarding the issues of gun trafficking along the Southwestern border of the United States into Mexico and border violence in Mexico because I conducted a preliminary research on gun trafficking's impact on Mexico's border violence in 2008 in the Rio Grande Valley. I monitored and scanned the news media for previous news stories regarding gun trafficking into Mexico from the United States and border violence in Mexico and found very little information, it was not until the drug trafficking organizations started to fight amongst themselves for control of the drug routes that the media started to focus on where the drug trafficking organizations were getting their firearms from. In Spring of 2008, the local newspaper, *The Monitor*, and television stations, *KRGV* and *KGBT*, from the Rio Grande Valley started to run investigative stories a couple of weeks prior to me conducting my research at local gun shows.

It was not until things started getting out of hand in Mexico between the drug trafficking organizations that the media on the United States side started paying attention to what was occurring along the U.S.-Mexico border, mainly on the Mexican side of the border. What I meant by the phrase getting out of hand was the notion that violence in Mexico was starting to become a daily occurrence. For example, if you tuned into the local news stations in the Rio Grande Valley you found at least one news report about the fighting breaking out between the drug trafficking organizations in Mexico along the

U.S.-Mexico border. Mexico has always seemed to have this stigma of being a dangerous place according to the U.S. media, you would read articles and watch news reports about various kidnappings, and other sorts of violence that occurred throughout the country but the current situation differs for the fact that drug cartels were having firefights out in the street during various times of the day and did not really care who was caught in the crossfire. Another difference was the fact that it was just not one cartel fighting against another cartel rather it was various cartels fighting against each other for control of the lucrative drug routes and the Mexican government going after the drug cartels as well. The thought of the danger of the ongoing violence in Mexico spilling over into the United States is a very important aspect in regards to how the framing of Mexico as a dangerous place by the U.S. media has evolved.

Another factor that made this framing of the violence in Mexico different was the notion that the violence could eventually slip over the border and into the United States due to the close proximity where the violence was occurring, places like Nuevo Laredo, Ciudad Juarez, and Reynosa. Additionally, it was not until a few years ago that the media started mentioning the concern about spillover violence from Mexico seeping into the United States. It made perfect sense to comb through these national newspapers, *The New York Times* and *El Universal*, to fully understand how gun trafficking along the Southwestern border of the United States and its impact on Mexico's border violence have come to be seen as social problems and moral panics with the help of the media. Now that a time frame has firmly been established, access to back issues of *The New York Times* and *El Universal* occurred through one main source, Texas A&M's library

database. Past issues of *The New York Times* and *El Universal* required access to Lexis-Nexis Academic database. Access to the database was granted through Texas A&M's library.

In order to find articles that met the criteria of border violence, gun trafficking, and spillover violence I utilized key words, type of newspaper (*The New York Times* and *El Universal*) and date (2009-2012). Since not much research has been conducted on national discourse in two different languages, one interesting and important contribution of my research was that I was examining two different national newspapers in two different languages for articles regarding gun trafficking into Mexico and its impact on Mexico's border violence. The main issue that came up in the data process was deciding on what key words were to be used for choosing the newspaper articles. This required me to come up with two sets of key words one in English for *The New York Times* and one in Spanish for *El Universal*. In regards to the key words that were used for *El Universal* they originated from the same key words that were used to find the articles for *The New York Times*. In order to translate these key words from English into Spanish I relied on my fluency of the Spanish language, at least in regards to writing and translating, to come up with the proper translations.

I doubled checked my translations of the key words by asking friends and family who are fluent in the Spanish language to check them out, and after they had gone over the key words I utilized Google translate to double check that my translations of these Spanish key words were accurate. Overall, the English version of the key words did differ a bit from the Spanish key words for the mere fact that the words "in Mexico" had

to be added to specifically target articles from Mexico rather than gathering articles from various countries. Key words that were used for *El Universal* were trafico de armas (gun trafficking), contraband de drogas (drug smuggling), disborde la violencia (spillover violence), carteles (cartels), and violencia fronteriza (border violence). Key word searches generated 783 articles on carteles, 156 articles on controbando de drogas, 715 articles on trafico de armas, 0 articles on disborde la violencia and 386 articles on violencia fronteriza. *El Universal* section resulted in a total of 2,040 articles but after taking out duplicate articles and articles that were irrelevant in terms about television shows and movie reviews regarding issues on drug and firearms trafficking, the section dwindled down to 1,569 articles.

Once all the back issues of *El Universal* had been allocated, I went through and translated them from Spanish into English for easier comparison during the coding stage, in order to do this I copied and pasted the articles from *El Universal* one by one into Google translate to help with translating process to make sure that no possible code was left out. When it came to translating the article quotes that I selected from *El Universal* for the results section, I hired a fellow co-worker of mine who is originally from Mexico and is very fluent in the Spanish language. I divided the article quotes among the two of us; we each ended up with about ten pages of quotes to translate. After we both finished translating our half of the quotes from *El Universal*, inter-coder reliability was established by having a meeting and going over each other's quotes and discussing words that had multiple meanings, depending on the way they were used or the context of the situation. When we came across these types of words we went over the various

translations and went with the one which best fit the context of the original quote and article. Once we agreed that we had translated the Spanish quotes word by word into English without losing the original meaning they were used. Key words that were used for *The New York Times* were gun trafficking into Mexico, drug cartels in Mexico, spillover violence and Mexico's drug violence. The key word search ended up generating 440 articles on cartels, 12 articles on spillover violence, 373 articles on Mexico's drug violence and 112 articles on gun trafficking.

The New York Times resulted in a total of 937 articles, but after taking out duplicate articles and irrelevant articles that focused on television shows and movie reviews regarding issues on drug and firearms trafficking, the final sample size was 506 articles. Overall there were a combined total of 2,075 articles in my database; before any qualitative analysis could be conducted I had to decide on a proper sample size. To select a random sample from the population, systematic random sampling was utilized. According to Berg (2009: 49),

Systematic random sampling entitles that every n^{th} article would be selected from the list; the interval from one article selected into the sample till the next would be determined by the number of articles desired to be in the sample by the population.

A list of the newspaper articles was compiled from two sections, *El Universal* and *The New York Times*. In terms of choosing a sample from the population, since I was willing to accept a 5% margin of error 600.25 articles had to be randomly selected from 2,075 articles. Six hundred point twenty-five was rounded up to the nearest whole number which resulted in a sample 601 articles, since there is no practical way to get one fourth of an article. The sample of was divided into two groups U.S print media (*The New York*

Times) and Mexico's print media (*El Universal*), so 601 was divided by 2 which equaled into 300.50 articles into each group.

Three hundred point fifty was rounded up to the nearest whole number which transitions into 301 articles per group. In order to randomly pick articles from *El Universal* the number of articles (1569) had to be divided by 301 which gave me the number 5.212, this number was rounded to the nearest whole number in this case 6. So every 6th article from *El Universal* would be included into the sample. Prior to selecting every 6th article, the number 13 was selected as the starting point by drawing a number (1-100) from a box. Random selection began from the 13th article and every 6th article was selected into the sample, until there were 301 articles from *El Universal* in the sample group. In order to randomly pick articles from *The New York Times* the number of articles (506) had to be divided by 301 which gave me the number 1.681, this number was rounded to the nearest whole number in this case 2. So every 2nd article from *The New York Times* would be included into the sample. Prior to selecting every 2nd article, the number 13 was selected as the starting point by drawing a number (1-100) from a box. Random selection began from the 13th article and every 2nd article was selected into the sample, until there were 301 articles from *The New York Times* in the sample group.

The unit of analysis for this research study was social artifacts which consisted of national newspapers from the United States and Mexico. As I previously mentioned, this study is a content analysis of the last three years of *The New York Times* and *El Universal*. Content analysis can be summarized as a coding process and interpretation of data in order to locate common themes and meanings. When conducting content analysis

there are seven stages that the researcher has to keep in mind. The starting point for content analysis began with deciding on a research question or questions. For this study there are three research questions that would be examined using content analysis. The first research question examined to what extent national newspaper articles on gun trafficking along the U.S.-Mexico border is portrayed as Mexico's problems. Research Question 1: Is the United States print media more likely to portray gun trafficking along the U.S.-Mexico border and its impact on border violence as Mexico's problem compared to Mexico's print media?

The second research question asked whether the perception that gun trafficking and border violence were primarily Mexico's problems changed between the period of 2009 through 2012 and how national newspapers reported on issue of gun trafficking and border violence. Research Question 2: Does the Mexican print media have a higher number of articles covering gun trafficking than the United States print media? The third research question investigated if it was possible to identify a moment in time when gun trafficking along the U.S.-Mexico border and border violence in Mexico were created in the media. Additionally, this question investigated if the linkage between gun trafficking along the U.S.-Mexico border and border violence in Mexico did exist at a certain point, do later national newspaper articles assume this relationship rather than explicitly stating it. Research Question 3: Do the print media articles from both the United States and Mexico regarding gun trafficking intersect with stories of smuggling and border violence?

The second stage of content analysis began with establishing analytic construct categories. According to Berg (2009: 363), “these analytic categories come from the reading of the literature, links to the research question and when possible from interview questions.” Some of the analytic construct categories that were used for this research study, based on the literature, included small arms, light weapons, smuggling/trafficking of firearms, border violence, and spillover violence. The third stage of content analysis required establishing grounded categories using open coding. Open coding was used by the researcher to identify, name, categorize, and describe trends that were found throughout the data. According to Strauss (1987: 30),

Open coding there are four guidelines to keep in mind: 1) ask the data specific and consistent set of questions; 2) analyze the data minutely; 3) interrupt the coding process to make notes; and 4) do not assume the analytic relevance of any traditional variable till the data demonstrates it to be relevant.

This phase of the research study was done by going through the 602 articles of *The New York Times* and *El Universal* in order to look for emerging themes and codes. Once all the articles were in *Atlas.ti*, I started the process of open coding. I coded the articles for various types of content including instances of events, themes, ideas, and any other patterns that I came across. The coding process went on until saturation was achieved. The fourth stage of content analysis required developing guidelines for selecting data into coding categories. These guidelines for selecting data into coding categories revolved around specific words and phrases that represented activity and behaviors of gun trafficking, smuggling of firearms and ammunitions, light weapons, small arms, border violence, and spillover violence. “The main aspect of this stage was for the

researcher to offer up some explicit definition or coding rules for each category they have” (Berg 2009: 363).

The code Mexico blames the U.S. for border violence and gun trafficking took into consideration things such as accusing the United States of doing little to control the flow of firearms into Mexico, bringing up the point of origin of the firearms which had been confiscated, and by bringing up the issue of supply and demand. The code U.S. blames Mexico for border violence and gun trafficking took into consideration criticism of Mexico’s gun laws, reporting of the United States views on Mexico’s authorities, and by noting that drug cartels were able to acquire their arsenal of weapons from other countries besides the United States. The way in which positive aspects of gun trafficking was coded took into consideration any article piece that discussed the issues of co-operation between the U.S. and Mexican governments, protest against border violence, weapons possession/gun trafficking arrest, and weapons seizures. The way that negative aspects of gun trafficking was coded took into consideration any article piece that discussed the issues such as the attack on Mexican agents/officials, attack on Mexican citizens, attack on migrants, attack on U.S. agents, attack on U.S. citizens, attack and threats on journalists and reporters, border and drug war violence, botched U.S. operations, cartel on cartel violence, consequences of Fast and Furious, corruption, gun walking, gun trafficking, number of American drug related deaths in Mexico, number of Mexican drug related deaths, recruitment of young Americans, recruitment of young Mexicans, shooting, small and light arm attacks, Southwest Border Paradigm, spillover violence, and supply and demand. The way that the National Rifle Association’s (NRA)

influence was coded took into consideration how the NRA's influence impacted U.S. gun reform.

The way that consequences of U.S. operations was coded took into consideration tactics that were used by the ATF, the amount of firearms that were allowed to "walk," and the threat of lost firearms being utilized in spillover violence. The way that gun trafficking was coded took into consideration if an article indicated an instance of gun trafficking or gun trafficking aspects, such as indicated weapon seizures, possession or arrest, multiple gun purchases, gun walking, and the Southwest Border Paradigm. The way that small and light arm firefights was coded took into consideration reports of small and light arm firefights and shootings. The way that the U.S. provides fuel for border violence was coded referred to any discussion that the United States was fueling border violence by providing weapons to the drug trafficking organizations. The way that U.S. border violence stance was coded took into consideration whether the U.S. provided money, weapons, training, and so on. The way that U.S. drug cartel stance was coded took into consideration how the U.S. reacted in regards to the actions of drug trafficking organizations towards U.S. citizens and joint law enforcements operations.

The way that U.S. gun trafficking stance was coded referred to whether the U.S. increased border inspections or utilized U.S. operations to prevent the flow of guns into Mexico. The way that Mexico's border violence stance was coded took into account whether Mexico was sending more troops to secure areas. The way that Mexico's drug cartel stance was coded took into consideration any discussion about engaging the cartels or cutting off the head of the organizations. The way that Mexico's gun

trafficking stance was coded took into consideration discussions about reasoning with the U.S. to reinstate the assault weapon ban. The way that fear of violence towards bystanders was coded took into consideration whether people were afraid of becoming an innocent bystander. The way that social cohesion was coded took into account whether threats to social cohesion, such as individual freedoms and group disruption occurred. The way that threat to law and order was coded revolved around the reports of corruption, ambushes, etc. The way that unexpected consequences were coded referred to instances of people fleeing the city or country. The way that drug and money seizures were coded took into consideration instances that mentioned drug or money seizures. The way that firearm seizure was coded took into account whether instances of firearm seizures had occurred.

The way that an attack on U.S. citizens was coded took into account whether there was a report of an attack on U.S. citizens or U.S. agents. Attacks on Mexican citizens were coded in reference to whether there was a report of an attack on Mexican citizens, Mexican agents, officials, and Mexican journalists. Attacks on migrants were coded in reference to whether there was a report of an attack on migrants. The way that cartel on cartel violence was coded took into account whether there was a report of a battle amongst drug trafficking organizations. Drug smuggling arrest was coded in reference to whether there was a report of a drug smuggler being arrested. Gun smuggling arrest was coded in reference to whether there was a report of a gun smuggler being arrested. Money laundering arrest was coded in reference to whether there was a

report of a money launderer being arrested. Cartel arrest or kill was coded in reference to whether there was an account of a drug cartel member(s) being arrested or killed.

When such activity and behaviors were found in the articles they were sorted into the particular category they belong. The fifth stage of content analysis involved sorting data into the appropriate categories. The term axial coding is used to refer “to concentrated coding of themes around one category” (Strauss 1987: 32). Sorting of data into the appropriate categories could be done by hand, either by keeping a track of where categories appeared in the text (issue, page number, and line) or by using computer software such as *ATLAS.ti*. In order to help with the coding process for this research study the computer software program of *ATLAS.ti* was utilized to help speed up the process of coding for concepts and categories throughout the articles from *The New York Times* and *El Universal*. Once saturation was achieved from open coding I moved on to “axial coding which concentrated the coding of themes (codes) around a category of conceptual similarity” (Strauss 1987: 32). In this phase of the data analysis, I grouped related codes into cohesive code families such as elements of gun trafficking, positive aspects of gun trafficking, negative aspects of gun trafficking, and so on. These code families served as the foundation for my frames.

The sixth stage of content analysis was counting the number of entries of each category and looking for patterns among categories. “A rule of thumb is that a minimum of three occurrences of something can be considered a pattern; the rationale behind this being that one is an accident, two is a coincidence, and three goes beyond mere chance to a pattern” (Berg 2009: 364). My initial list of codes from open and axial coding

contained 110 codes which represented 5,483 quotations. The technique that was used in this study for counting the number of entries of each category is conceptual analysis. What is conceptual analysis? Conceptual analysis refers to the process of identifying concepts for examination, quantifying, and tallying the presence of those concepts during analysis (Busch et al 2005). *ATLAS.ti* was most helpful when it came to conducting content analysis due to its ability to find and code concepts and categories along with the ability to consider and evaluate their importance. For example, *ATLAS.ti* was utilized to run a co-occurrence query, which would look for the two indicated codes and compile a list of all the quotes that had those two codes in the phrase. Additionally, *ATLAS.ti* comes in handy when trying to visualize the intricate relations between concepts and categories.

Conceptual analysis is a useful tool when trying to understand how media coverage of such issues as gun trafficking along the Southwest border of the United States and border violence are used to paint a picture of a social problem. For example, the more articles that are written in *The New York Times* and *El Universal* about gun trafficking along the Southwestern border of the United States, border violence, and spillover violence, the more likely the media's influence about these problems and issues have an impact people's perceptions about them and are likely to side with the media's views. Also conceptual analysis allowed for the measurement of *The New York Times* and *El Universal's* fascination with gun trafficking, border violence, and spillover violence. By utilizing conceptual analysis this research study not only coded for the frequency of these categories but it also coded for their existence throughout the three

year span (2009-2012) of these two national newspapers for descriptive statistics purposes. Some of the statistics that can be utilized by conducting conceptual analysis are frequencies, proportions, and cross tabulations. Utilizing descriptive statistics is very helpful when a researcher needs to discuss the magnitude of the observations from the patterns found within the text. Frequencies were utilized to create several bar graphs to help answer the research questions. According to Berg (2009: 345),

Researchers must keep in mind that descriptive statistics, namely proportions and frequency distributions, do not necessarily reflect the nature of the data or variables; rather the magnitude for certain observations is presented to demonstrate more fully the overall analysis.

The technique that was utilized in this study in order to help seek patterns among the categories was relational analysis, which is a technique that seeks to identify concepts for identification and seeks to explore the relationships between these identified concepts (Busch et al. 2005). Relational analysis starts off similar to conceptual analysis but it differs by examining the relationships of the identified concepts rather than just counting how often these concepts appear (Busch et al. 2005). Relational analysis is a useful tool for trying to establish meaningful relationships among concepts within a text. Relational analysis of *The New York Times* and *El Universal* provided insight into how the media portrayed gun trafficking, border violence, and spillover violence. By insight, I meant the strength, sign and direction of the relationships of these key concepts. For example, were the articles talking about the relationship between gun trafficking, border violence, and spillover violence in a positive or negative light and what direction do they impact each other.

Relational analysis was important for trying to establish the ways in which the United States and Mexico's national newspapers viewed the issues of gun trafficking and border violence. For this part of the research I investigated the connection between gun trafficking, border violence, human smuggling, and drug smuggling to determine if and how these issues interconnected. As previously mentioned, the views of the media, especially prestigious media, can impact societies views of particular issues thus making the relationships between concepts an integral part of constructing social problems. The seventh stage of content analysis was the analysis of data and patterns. This was accomplished by comparing this research study's findings with those of previous research which have been discussed in the literature review section and by using theories to put the findings into perspective. According to Berg (2009: 364),

When one consults the literature and consider their pattern findings in light of previous research and existing theory, they must consider how their findings confirm previous similar research? Do they contradict previous studies? How can one explain these differences or similarities?

There are several advantages and disadvantages associated with using content analysis as research method. The first advantage of utilizing content analysis as a research method is that it is considered to be unobtrusive. What is meant by unobtrusive is that no participants are required to fill out lengthy questionnaires or surveys, no interviews needed, and no participation in experiments. Content analysis does not infringe and impede on participant's time and privacy. "This holds true when one uses content analysis to study social artifacts such as newspapers, television shows, books, texts, and documents, non-reactively because one is working with secondary data" (Berg 2009: 364).

A second advantage of utilizing content analysis as a research method revolves around the notion that it is very cost effective compared to other research methodologies. “Materials that are needed for conducting content analysis are easily and inexpensively accessible” (Berg 2009: 364). When it comes to carrying out experiments and surveys it usually comes down to two main issues, money and time. It costs money to hire a research team or a company to conduct national and local surveys. Content analysis can usually be carried out by a single researcher compared to conducting a local or national survey and experiments which require research teams to make sure they are conducted within a certain time frame. Time plays a factor in cost effectiveness for the mere reason that the longer that a research project (survey or experiment) takes to get done the more money it can end up costing the researcher.

A third advantage of utilizing content analysis as a research method was that it provided me an opportunity to examine social artifacts over a particular time frame in history which allowed for observance of societal trends. A fourth advantage of utilizing content analysis as a research method was that it allowed a safe avenue for the carrying out gun trafficking and border violence research. Other methods such as interviews with gun traffickers, active and non-active in the business, would have been considered a risk to the researcher due obvious reasons. By conducting a content analysis on national newspaper articles from the United States and Mexico no risk was involved for the researcher, plus it added to the literature on drug trafficking organizations and gun trafficking. Alongside the advantages of content analysis there are a couple of disadvantages as well. One disadvantage of utilizing content analysis as a research

method dealt with “locating unobtrusive messages relevant to particular research questions” (Berg 2009: 365). What Berg is trying to say is that content analysis deals with investigating social artifacts which have already been recorded compared to collecting one’s own data and analyzing it. The second disadvantage of utilizing content analysis as a research method is related to the issue that “it cannot test causal relationships between variables” (Berg 2009: 365). Content analysis may not be able to determine causal relationships between variables but it can determine the strength and magnitude of these categories and concepts.

Overall, the time frame that was needed to complete the research study was about one year. It took four months to collect all the newspaper articles from *The New York Times* and *El Universal*. The reason for the four months was for the translation of the newspaper’s articles from Spanish to English. After the data collection process another four months were needed to analyze the data. A fraction of this time, roughly four weeks, was used to get familiar with *ATLAS.ti* before commencing the data analysis. Once the data analysis had been conducted an additional two months were needed to write the last three chapters (The Impact of Gun Trafficking, Is Gun Trafficking a Social Problem? and conclusion). The last couple of months were utilized to make revisions to the final product.

CHAPTER V

THE IMPACT OF GUN TRAFFICKING

In this chapter, I detail the configuration and importance of four of the six frames that I found in my sample of news articles from *The New York Times* and *El Universal*. These four frames are: “who is to blame,” “worthy and unworthy victims,” “positive aspects of gun trafficking,” and “negative aspects of gun trafficking.” I begin with a summary of each frame which includes the frame itself, keywords that illustrate the frame, framing procedures (metaphors, selection of sources, etc.), reasoning devices (defining the problem, assigning responsibility, passing moral judgment, and possible solutions), and cultural resonance. According to Gamson and Modigliani (1982: 5) and Gamson (1992: 135), “cultural resonance helps to make frames appear and feel natural and familiar by connecting symbols on a specific issue with more enduring cultural themes.” The chapter also focuses on the chronological telling of the narrative (national discourse) of gun trafficking into Mexico from 2009-2012. I discuss whether or not the “blame game” frame has changed.

Before proceeding to discuss the objectives of this chapter, I must first properly define gun trafficking and border violence. So what is gun trafficking? As I previously mentioned, the Department of Treasury and Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms (2000: 3) defined gun trafficking as “the illegal diversion of legally owned firearms from a lawful commerce into unlawful commerce, often for the sole purpose of profit.” Before we can proceed to discuss the impact of gun trafficking on Mexico’s border violence, border violence also needs to be defined. So what is meant by border violence? In order

to properly answer this question two things must be kept in mind: 1) the types of crimes and 2) victims. Border violence is a term that is used to refer to the problems that Mexico is currently facing while confronting the drug cartels. Border violence tends to be very prominent in border towns along the U.S.-Mexico border but instances of border violence have been known to occur all over Mexico. A few of the Mexican border towns where border violence is prominent include Nuevo Ciudad Guerrero, Ciudad Miguel Aleman, Ciudad Camargo, Reynosa, Ciudad Rio Bravo and Matamoros and so on. In order to better understand and define what border violence is one must look at the types of crimes that fall under the heading of border violence. So what crimes comprise border violence? Border violence tends to be comprised of various crimes such as homicides, shootings (small-light arm attacks), arson, kidnapping, extortion, decapitations, mutilations and pozole (human stew in a broth of acid).

The second part of the definition of border violence revolves around who the victims are. So who does border violence target? The victims of border violence have primarily been those involved in the drug trade or those who are combating the problem but the violence is not limited just to them it also targets Mexican and American citizens, journalists and migrants. Border violence can best be thought of being any violent and threatening act towards those involved in the drug trade, those who are combating and confronting the problem, and those who get caught in the crossfire (Mexican and American citizens), those who report on the incidents in Mexico (journalists), and migrants; these crimes occur near and around the United States-Mexico border area. Now that border violence has been defined there are other important issues that surround

the phenomena of gun trafficking along the U.S.-Mexico border. This chapter of the content analysis on the coverage of gun trafficking along the U.S.-Mexico border will touch on all three research objectives. The 1st objective focuses on how *The New York Times* and *El Universal* portray the violence that is currently happening in Mexico. Specifically this chapter looks to explain to what extent do these national newspapers portray gun trafficking as primarily Mexico's problem and if this perception changes between the periods of 2009 through 2012.

The main question from the 1st objective that I examined was question 1. The first research question investigated whether the United States print media portrayed gun trafficking along the U.S.-Mexico border and its impact on border violence as Mexico's problem compared to Mexico's print media. Special attention was given to a few of the negative aspects of gun trafficking, such as the U.S. blames Mexico for border violence and gun trafficking, and Mexico blames the U.S. for border violence and gun trafficking since they allow for the monitoring of changes of the attitudes regarding who is to blame for the problems of gun trafficking and border violence. In this chapter the focus will only be on the issue of gun trafficking and its impact on border violence. Table 1 depicts the six frames and their components such as key words, framing device, reasoning device, and cultural resonance, which were discovered throughout *The New York Times* and *El Universal*.

Table 1: Frames and Their Components

Frame	Keywords	Framing Device(s)	Reasoning Device(s)	Cultural Resonance(s)
Blame Game	Supply and demand, country of origin, and lack of responsibility	“Military grade,” “number of deaths,” “competence,” “international black market”	Assigning responsibility for the influx of firearms into Mexico	Guns are dangerous; trust your government; supply and demand; irresponsibility; two sides to each story
Worthy and Unworthy Victims	U.S. federal agent, American citizen, number of dead, migrants, state police, mayor, Mexican citizens	“Mass graves,” “vulnerable population,” “no law,” “self-censorship,” “travel warnings,” “last remaining,” “baffling massacre”	Who is an innocent and worthy victim and who is an dangerous and unworthy victim	Cautious of one’s surroundings; safety; collateral damage; no one is immune to crime; dangers of illegal immigration; unpredictability of law enforcement; no honor among criminals; intimidation and harassment
Positive Aspects of Gun Trafficking	Arrest, seizures, cooperation, protests	“Tons,” “seized,” “approved resources,” “multinational investigation,” “cancellation”	Preventing the illegal diversion of firearms into Mexico	Sense of security; cooperation; guns are dangerous; making a difference
Negative Aspects of Gun Trafficking	Shootings, consequences of U.S. operations, number of deaths, corruption, elements of gun trafficking and recruitment	“Pro gun,” “illegal arsenal,” “bulk sales,” “killers,” guns in “circulation,” “gun walking,” “bigger guns,” “fuel warfare,”	The impact of gun trafficking on border violence; who is to blame for gun trafficking	Gun regulation; supply and demand; technological advantage; guns are dangerous; gun culture; unethical tactics; accountability
Indirect Mention of Gun Trafficking	Small and light arms attacks, caliber, AR-15, AK-47, military grade	“Shell casings,” “.223,” “7.62x39,” “battle,” fierce fighting,” “coordinated attacks,” “semiautomatic,” automatic,” “gunmen”	Who is to blame for gun trafficking; impact of gun trafficking	Guns are dangerous; guns impact on border violence; no one is immune from crime

Table 1: Frames and Their Components Continued

Frame	Keywords	Framing Device(s)	Reasoning Device(s)	Cultural Resonance(s)
Direct Mention of Gun Trafficking	Possession, gun walking, seizures, trafficking arrest, Southwest Border Paradigm	“Inability,” “prevent,” “smuggling,” “guns recovered,” “traced back,” “illegal American dealers,” “loopholes,” “cache of weapons,” “joint operations,” “distributed,” suspected smugglers,” “gun walking”	The impact of gun trafficking on border violence; who is to blame for gun trafficking	Supply and demand; guns are dangerous; gun reform; activism; sense of security; consequences of unethical tactics

Frame 1: Blame Game

The “blame game” frame can best be summed up as each country, the United States and Mexico, pointing the finger at each other and stating that it was the others fault for the influx of firearms that entered into Mexico. The “blame game” framing procedure is characterized by its dependence on selection of sources, metaphors, stereotypes, and dramatic characters and was mainly indicated by keywords such as “supply and demand,” “country of origin,” and “lack of responsibility.” There were a couple of reasoning devices that accompanied the “blame game” frame. The first reasoning device was assigning responsibility. This reasoning device allows the media, in this case the newspaper journalists, to write up the article in the context of who is to blame for the influx of illegal firearm into Mexico and the damage they cause.

For example, is the flow of illegal firearms into Mexico a problem for the United States, Mexico or is it one of shared responsibility? The second reasoning device was

defining the problem. This reasoning device is utilized by the newspaper journalists to bring exposure to the issue of gun trafficking along the U.S.-Mexico border. These journalists bring exposure to the issue of gun trafficking by discussing what constitutes as international gun trafficking and what impact these illegal firearms have in Mexico's border violence. This reasoning device is closely tied to the first one, assigning responsibility, since you cannot define a problem without assigning responsibility to a particular individual, group, or in this case a country.

In regards to the codes that were associated with the "blame game" frame, there were only two in the code family: 1) the United States blames Mexico for gun trafficking and border violence and 2) Mexico blames the United States for gun trafficking and border violence. These two codes ended up being the two main themes that categorized the "blame game" frame throughout *The New York Times* and *El Universal*. The "blame game" frame was found to be interconnected with the "worthy and unworthy victims," "negative aspects of gun trafficking," and the "direct mention of gun trafficking" frame.

One theme that frequently came up in the "blame game" frame was that of Mexico blaming the U.S. for border violence and gun trafficking. When all 602 primary documents were scanned for a co-occurrence between the codes "negative aspects" and "Mexico blames U.S. for border violence and gun trafficking," *Atlas.ti7* was utilized to perform a query and came up with a list of 34 quotes. One way in which *The New York Times* and *El Universal* reported Mexico blaming the United States for gun trafficking was to accuse the United States of doing too little to control the flow of firearms into Mexico. In order to get the point across *The New York Times* and *El Universal* both

focused on reporting the amount of weapons that were confiscated in Mexico and by reporting the number of deaths that were attributed to the use of trafficked firearms in instances of border violence. For example, an article excerpt from *The New York Times* (2010) stated,

Mexico has been pleading with President Obama and Congress to do more to control the American supply of battlefield weapons to the drug cartels. Three-quarters of the 80,000 firearms confiscated by Mexican authorities came from the United States in a recent four-year period that saw 28,000 killed in the drug wars, according to a study by the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.¹

By utilizing statistics and reports from notable sources such as the Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars as a framing procedure, in this case the number of deaths (28,000) and the amount of firearms that were seized (3/4 of 80,000), *The New York Times* was able to show that the United States was not really doing all that they could do to really stop the flow of firearms into Mexico. The cultural resonance of the story was that guns are dangerous and need to be regulated. This message was echoed by the call for the U.S. to do more on their part to curb the flow of firearms into Mexico and thus helping to bring stop to the countless deaths occurring in the region. A sense of desperation could be felt when Mexico's President was pleading with the President of the United States of America (Obama) to commit more personal and tighten up loopholes in existing gun laws in order to stem the flow of guns into the hands of drug trafficking organizations.

A second way that *The New York Times* and *El Universal* reported Mexico blaming the United States for gun trafficking was by bringing up the point of origin of the confiscated firearms. As previously mentioned, most of the firearms that had been

recovered at crime scenes in Mexico had come from the Southwest Border States along the United States-Mexico border. An article excerpt from Charlie Savage (2011) stated,

The new report describes how agency officials in Mexico noticed, starting in late 2009, that a disproportionate number of the guns that were being recovered at Mexican crime scenes were linked to Phoenix stores. It portrays them as raising questions, and later alarms, about what was happening, only to be told that it was “under control.”²

Savage’s article utilized the framing procedure of selective sources in this case a government report, which demonstrated that Mexico’s government had raised questions about the influx of firearms trafficked from the United States but was basically left out in the dark when given an answer to their questions. In this case weapons from an Arizona gun shop that was connected to the Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearm and Explosives (ATF’s) Operation Fast and Furious and Operation Wide Receiver were being found at various crime scenes in and around Mexico. The cultural resonance of the article was that the U.S. government was working in the best interests of its people and they should be trusted since they know what best for them. The American news media was not the only one who depicted that the firearms were coming from the United States, the Mexican news media also brought up the point of origin of the firearms and hinted that U.S. organizations might have a hand in the process. An article excerpt from *El Universal* (2010) reported,

El secretario de Seguridad Pública estatal, Daniel de la Rosa Anaya, sostuvo que muchas de las armas que circulan en el país de forma clandestina son introducidas por las garitas de Arizona. Aunque dijo desconocer qué porcentaje del armamento que se trafica a territorio nacional es introducido por aquella entidad estadounidense, sostuvo que incluso los arsenales decomisados en Baja California han sido introducidos por aquel estado de la Unión Americana. Las facilidades para la adquisición de este tipo de artefactos en Arizona podrían ser la explicación del contrabando ilegal hacia México, dijo el secretario de Seguridad

Pública.³

The State Public Safety Secretary, Daniel de la Rosa Anaya, said that many of the weapons circulating in the country clandestinely are introduced by the checkpoints of Arizona. Although he said he was unaware how much of the weaponry that is trafficked into the country is introduced by United States organizations, said that even the arsenals seized in Baja California have been introduced by that state (Arizona) of the American Union. The facilities for the acquisition of such artifacts in Arizona could be the explanation for the illegal smuggling to Mexico, said the Secretary of Public Safety.

This article from *El Universal* utilizes the framing procedure of selective sources, mainly the State Public Safety Secretary, Daniel de la Rosa Anaya, to provide some credibility and expert knowledge on gun trafficking. Overall, this excerpt stated that the Secretary of Public Safety had a hunch that a majority of the guns circulating in Mexico had come from the mess in Arizona. Although Mexican authorities knew that something suspicious was going on in Arizona, they felt like they were kept out of the loop about the operation and felt they had a right to know since the effects were impacting their country directly. The cultural resonance of this article reflects the notion of trust your government. For example, the U.S. government through Operation Fast and Furious was working in the best interests of its people and Mexico's people by working to reduce the flow of firearms into Mexico via building a case against drug trafficking organizations and their actions and decision should be trusted. Both of these excerpts depict how the national media utilizes the point of origin of the firearms to make a statement that the U.S. is to blame for the influx of the firearms that are trafficked into Mexico.

The third way that *The New York Times* and *El Universal* reported Mexico blaming the United States for gun trafficking was by bringing up the issue of supply and demand. Mexico acknowledged that if the United States did not have a demand for drugs

the drug cartels would not be supplying Americans with drugs. Also if there was no demand for drugs, there would probably be little to zero accounts of border violence which would reduce the demand for semiautomatic and automatic weapons from the United States. Randal C. Archibold (2010) journalist for *The New York Times* stated,

At the same time, Mexicans chafe at the guns flowing in from the States, the nearly 30,000 people killed in drug-related violence here in the past four years and the American demand and consumption that largely sustain the drug trade.⁴

The framing procedure that was used in *The New York Times* article was the selective sources of statistics. In this case the main statistic that was utilized was the number of deaths due to border violence, 30,000 people so far which have been impacted by the illegal trafficking of firearms. The demand for drugs has caused drug trafficking organizations to demand more powerful weapons in order to secure the lucrative drug routes into the United States. The cultural resonance of this article reflects the notions that firearms are dangerous, especially in the hands of criminals who use them as a means to the end to gain control over smuggling corridors and turf, and do not care who is in their line of sight when they open fire. The cultural resonance of supply and demand was also detected. As long as there is an increase in the American demand for drugs there will be a steady supply of drugs coming from Mexico's drug trafficking organizations and as long as there is demand of firearms by drug trafficking organizations there will be a supply of firearms coming from the United States. This vicious circle of supply and demand between the United States and Mexico translates into a continuation of Mexico's drug related violence. An article excerpt from *El Universal* (2011) reported,

No son agujas que se pierden en los pajares las AK-47 y R-15, o los poderosos "matapolicias" de calibre 50, ni las granadas expansivas y lanzacohetes que en gran escala han sido metidos a México, a partir de la "guerra" declarada al narcotráfico.⁵

No these are not needles in haystacks that get lost, the AK-47 and AR-15, or the powerful "cop killer" 50 caliber or flash bang grenades and rocket launchers on a large scale have gotten into Mexico, in part from the "war" declared on drug trafficking.

El Universal has noted from government and police reports (framing procedure: selective source), that powerful weapons such as AK-47, AR-15, grenades, .50 caliber rifles and rocket launchers are on the loose in Mexico. This information builds on the perception that drug trafficking organizations are getting their supply of high-powered and military style weapons from somewhere else other than Mexico, due in part to Mexico's strict gun laws and the lack of firearm manufacturing companies in Mexico. The cultural resonance of this article reflects the idea that guns are dangerous and the vicious cycle of supply and demand. It just goes to show that drug trafficking organizations are demanding very powerful and dangerous military grade weapons, such as AR-15, grenades, and rocket launchers, for their bloody turf wars and this demand has to be supplied by someone and the easiest access for most of Mexico's drug trafficking organizations has been the United States, due in part to the close proximity of both countries to each other.

Now that we have examined how *The New York Times* and *El Universal* have depicted how Mexico goes about blaming the United States for the problem of gun trafficking into their country, now it is time to examine how the United States goes about blaming Mexico for gun trafficking. The other main theme from the "blame game"

frame was the U.S. blames Mexico for border violence and gun trafficking. When all 602 primary documents were scanned for a co-occurrence between the codes “negative aspects” and “U.S. blames Mexico for border violence and gun trafficking,” *Atlas.ti*⁷ was utilized to perform a query and came up with a list of 9 quotes. One way *The New York Times* and *El Universal* reported that the United States blamed Mexico for border violence and gun trafficking occurred through the criticism of Mexico’s gun laws. One of Mexico’s gun laws that have come under fire revolves around U.S. federal agents. Mexico has a policy that explicitly states that U.S. agents cannot be armed while in Mexico. An article excerpt from Damien Cave (2011) reported,

The recent shooting has led some members of Congress to question Mexico's standard policy of refusing to allow American agents to be armed, while Mexico's president, Felipe Calderon, has responded bitterly to leaked diplomatic cables in which American officials criticized the competence of Mexican authorities in the fight against cartels.⁶

The article framing procedure utilizes the dramatic character, in this case some of the members of Congress. A few members of the U.S. Congress have not hidden the fact about the way they felt about Mexico’s gun laws and Mexico’s authorities. According to these members of the U.S. Congress, the recent shooting of ICE agents in Mexico has led to a form of protest to allow American government agents to be armed while on duty in foreign countries like Mexico. The cultural resonance that this article tried to get across was one of irresponsibility and strict gun regulations. A few of the U.S. Congressmen felt that Mexico’s officials were utterly irresponsible by not allowing U.S. I.C.E. agents to be armed while in Mexico during hostile times and thus preventing them from properly carrying out their job. The United States has pointed out that Mexico’s

strict gun laws hindered U.S. agents who were serving in Mexico by not allowing them to carry a firearm thus hindering them from protecting themselves in a firefight.

A second way that *The New York Times* and *El Universal* reported that the United States blamed Mexico for border violence and gun trafficking was through the reporting of the United States perception and views on Mexico's authorities and politicians. *The New York Times* and *El Universal* usually printed news stories where the United States government questioned the competence and ethics of Mexican officials and their police. By running articles that questioned the competence of Mexico's officials, the media was able to set a national discourse that Mexico's government was to blame for the influx of firearms into their own country regardless of the weapons country of origin. By focusing on the competence of Mexican officials the United States could technically blame Mexico for biting off more than they could chew by taking on all the drug cartels and wearing themselves thin in the process. Additionally, one of the common ethical problems of Mexico's police force has been corruption. An article excerpt from *The New York Times* (2011) reported "the chief organizations responsible for the violence are the sociopathic cartels themselves and the corrupt Mexican government."⁷

The framing procedure that was used by *The New York Times* in this article was the stereotype that all police officers in Mexico are corrupt. This stereotype is one that has been well documented in various media outlets such as movies, television shows, etc. By focusing on the issue of corruption the United States government was able to question how tasks could get done if some of the police are secretly working for the drug

cartels without undermining the Mexican government's overall mission. The cultural resonance of the news piece was that anyone can be corrupt and it can happen anywhere. It has been well documented that police officers have served as informants for the drug trafficking organizations and as escorts for their contraband whether it be drugs, guns and ammunition, money or illegal immigrants. It just goes to show that some people can be bought to turn a blind eye to illegal activities if the price is right.

The third way that *The New York Times* and *El Universal* reported that the United States blamed Mexico for border violence and gun trafficking was by noting that drug trafficking organizations are able to acquire their arsenal of weapons from other countries besides the United States. Drug cartels are able to acquire weapons from various other countries such as China and Russia or they could also grab them through the black market by hiring gun runners. An article excerpt from *El Universal* (2011) stated,

Las más mortales La tercera categoría de armas que incluye el reporte es la más mortífera.<cr> Se trata de artillería que no está disponible para su venta a civiles ni en México ni en Estados Unidos, y que tiene que ser adquirida por los cárteles de la droga en el mercado negro internacional.<cr>En este rubro se incluye la artillería de tipo militar que ostentan algunos cárteles de la droga, tal como las granadas de fragmentación, las granadas de 40mm, las granadas propulsadas por cohete, los rifles de asalto automáticos, los fusiles de combate y las ametralladoras ligeras.<cr>La firma Stratfor señala que este tipo de armamento es extremadamente difícil de obtener en Estados Unidos -especialmente en las cantidades que posee el crimen organizado-, por lo que la artillería de tipo militar en manos de los cárteles proviene de fuentes como el mercado negro internacional, donde China juega un papel preponderante; de elementos corruptos en las filas del Ejército mexicano, e incluso desertores de las Fuerzas Armadas que se llevan el armamento consigo cuando cambian de bando.⁸

The Deadliest, are the third category of weapons that are included in the report. The most deadly artillery is not available for sale to civilians in Mexico or in the U.S., and it has to be acquired by drug cartels in the international black market.

This type of military artillery, who some drug cartels carry, such as fragmentation grenades, 40mm grenades, rocket-propelled grenades, Automatic assault rifles, battle rifles and light machine guns. The Stratfor firm hints that these weaponry is extremely difficult to obtain in the United States, especially in the amounts that organized-crime possesses, so the military-style artillery in the hands of the cartels come from sources such as the international black market, in which China plays a leading role; corrupt elements in the ranks of the Mexican Army and even the deserters of the armed forces who carry the weapons over with them when they change sides.

This article piece from *El Universal* utilized Stratfor as a selective source for its framing procedure in order to build their emphasis that weapons are able to come from other countries besides the United States. Stratfor is well known for their ability to gather global intelligence on a diverse number of issues such as drug trafficking and border violence. Stratfor stated that the artillery which is being used by drug trafficking organizations can only be acquired through the international black market and not the civilian markets in the United States or Mexico. This type of military artillery includes weapons such as fragmenting grenades, 40mm grenades, automatic rifles etc... and are extremely hard to get a hold of in the United States but are a bit easier to find in the international black market. The cultural resonance that was built into this article was that there are two sides to every story and we (the U.S.) are not fully to blame for the influx of firearms into Mexico.

Overall, the United States took the approach that yes, weapons are coming from the United States but not all of the weapons that are being used in Mexico's border violence come from us. Additionally, the United States brought up the notion that drug cartels could also have gotten some of their weapons from within Mexico as well. An article excerpt from *El Universal* (2011) stated,

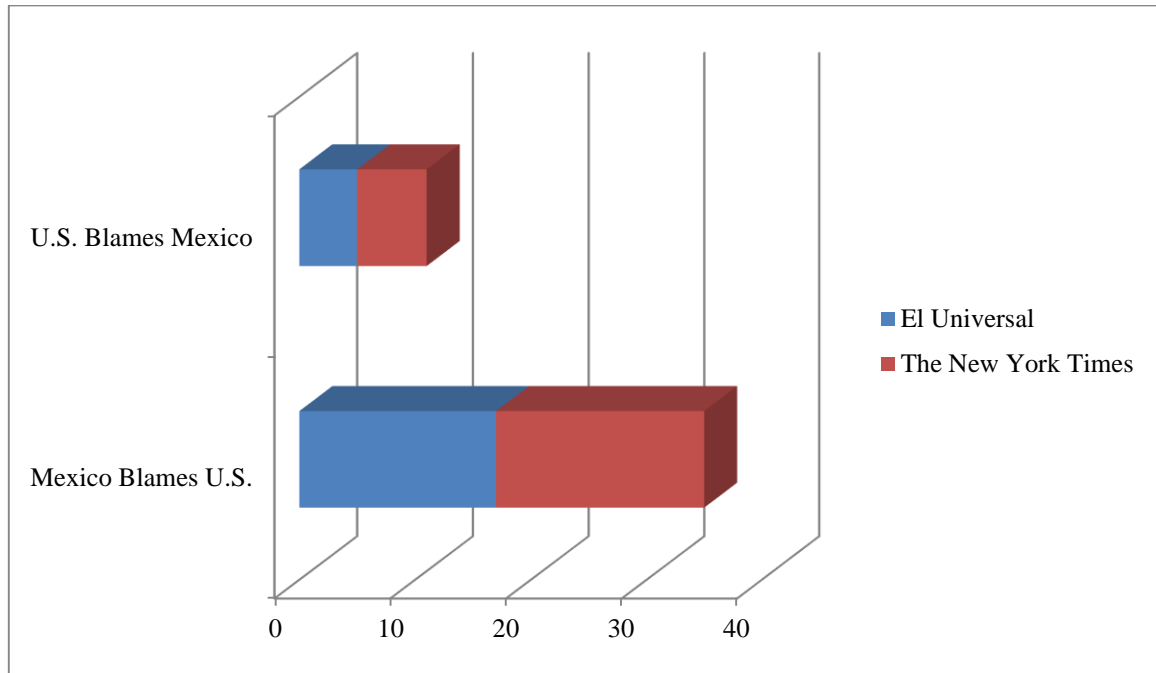
Dentro del primer campo, de las que se pueden adquirir de manera legal en México, el informe destaca las pistolas más pequeñas que la Magnum .357, tales como las calibres .380 y la .38 especial. "Un alto porcentaje de este tipo de pistolas empleadas por los criminales son compradas en México, o robadas a sus propietarios legítimos. Pese a que la Unidad de Comercialización de Armamento y Municiones (UCAM) de la Secretaría de la Defensa (Sedena) cuenta con regulaciones bastante estrictas en caso de que los civiles quieran comprar armas, los delincuentes a menudo utilizan testaferros para obtener estas armas o, en su caso, las obtienen de oficiales corruptos", alerta el reporte. Agrega además que los sicarios del crimen organizado utilizan comúnmente pistolas calibre .380 con silenciadores en sus ejecuciones, mismas que, en muchos casos, son adquiridas en el país, aunque advierte que por las dificultades para adquirirlas también suelen ser compradas en Estados Unidos e ingresadas al país de contraband.⁹

In the first field of which weapons can be legally purchased in Mexico, the report highlights that those smaller than .357 caliber Magnum pistols, calibers such as .380 and .38 special. "A high percentage of this type of guns used by criminals are purchased in Mexico, or stolen from their rightful owners. Though the Marketing Unit of Armaments and Munitions (UCAM) of the Ministry of Defense (SEDENA) has regulations rather strict if civilians want to buy weapons, criminals often use indirect means to get these weapons or, in some cases from the corrupt officials" the report warns. Furthermore, the killers of organized crime commonly use .380 caliber pistols with silencers on their executions, those same weapons that in many cases are acquired in the country, however the report, warns that due difficulties to acquire them, they are usually purchased in the United States and enter the country as contraband.

The framing procedure for this article relied on reports from Stratfor to setup the story that weapons can also be acquired from within Mexico in various ways. According to *El Universal*, those who can legally acquire firearms can choose from several small calibers such as the .357 magnum, .380, and the .38 super. A high percentage of these calibers (weapons) are used and favored by criminals in Mexico, some are stolen from legitimate sources and others are obtained from corrupt police officers. The cultural resonance of this story sort of revolves around the notion that as long as there is a will there is a way and that every story has two sides to it.

In regards to acquiring a firearm, there are legal and illegal means for drug trafficking organizations and civilians to attain one. If one wants to legally own a weapon in Mexico they would abide by the strict regulations that the Mexican government has set up, if not they could always resort to stealing them from other individuals. Keeping with the whole argument that drug cartels get their weapons from other avenues besides the United States, two interesting but not too surprising sources were that of corrupt officials and those stolen from businesses since some people tend to believe that Mexican citizens can not legally own firearms and thus jump to conclusions where criminals get there firearms. There were news reports that mentioned that some corrupt officers would rent out firearms to criminals if they were willing to pay the right fee.

Figure 2: Who is to Blame for Mexico’s Border Violence and Gun Trafficking Problem



In order to address research question 1 which investigates whether the United States print media is more likely to portray gun trafficking along the U.S.-Mexico border and its impact on border violence as Mexico’s problem compared to Mexico’s print media, frequencies were utilized to determine how many articles were written in regards to who is to blame for Mexico’s border violence and gun trafficking problems.

According to figure 2, in the 35 articles that mentioned Mexico blames the U.S. for border violence and gun trafficking, 17 (48.57%) were published by *El Universal* and 18 (51.43%) were published by *The New York Times*. In the 11 articles that mentioned the U.S. blames the Mexico for border violence and gun trafficking, 5 (45.45%) were published by *El Universal* and 6 (54.55%) were published by *The New York Times*.

Frame 2: Worthy and Unworthy Victims

The frame “worthy and unworthy victims” sticks closely to Herman and Chomsky’s definition. According to Herman and Chomsky (2002: 37) stated that “worthy victims are classified as individuals who are abused or killed in enemy states while unworthy victims are classified as individuals who are treated with equal or greater severity by its own government or clients.” The “worthy and unworthy victims” framing procedure is characterized by its dependence on selection of sources and stereotypes and was mainly indicated by keywords such as “U.S. federal agent,” “American citizen,” “number of dead,” “migrants,” “state police,” and “mayor.” The only reasoning device that was associated with the “worthy and unworthy victim” frame was that of passing moral judgment. In regards to passing moral judgment, the journalist had to make a call on whether or not the details of the victims of Mexico’s border violence were to be fully discussed in the news article.

By giving the full details, such as including the victim’s name, age, gender, and details that bring about emotions the newspaper journalist makes a moral judgment of whether the victim is considered to be a “worthy or unworthy victim.” Herman and Chomsky pointed out that the media tends to provide more details about the deaths of “worthy victims” and fewer details about the deaths of “unworthy victims.” The code family for the “worthy and unworthy victims” frame had seven codes: 1) U.S. Agents; 2) U.S. citizens; 3) Mexican Agents; 4) Mexican citizens; 5) journalists; 6) migrants; and 7) cartel on cartel. These seven codes were broken down into two main themes. The first them was that of the worthy victim and the second theme was that of the unworthy

victim. The “worthy and unworthy victims” frame was found to be interconnected with the “blame game,” “negative aspects of gun trafficking,” “indirect mention of gun trafficking,” and the “direct mention of gun trafficking” frame.

“Worthy Victims”

A key issue of the impact of gun trafficking on border violence dealt with who have been the targets of the ongoing violence in Mexico. In general there have been various types of victims of Mexico’s border violence. The data showed that the most common victims were Mexican citizens and agents, cartel members, journalists, migrants, and U.S. citizens and agents. The category of “worthy victims” of Mexico’s border violence was made of five groups. These five groups consisted of journalists, U.S. citizens, U.S. agents, Mexican citizens, and Mexican agents and officials. In the end there were some slight discrepancies between *The New York Times* and *El Universal* in regards to who is viewed and portrayed as a “worthy victim.” Overall U.S. citizens, Mexican citizens, U.S. agents, Mexican agents and officials, and journalists were classified as worthy victims because they are targeted and killed by drug trafficking organizations, which can best be described as threat to society by striking fear and terror into the hearts of people. For example, people are afraid to even go out into the streets of Mexico, especially during holidays, for the fear that something bad might happen. News stories regarding the death of innocent bystanders, especially those of children, those involved in combating the drug trafficking problem head on, and those who report on Mexico’s drug related violence are more likely to resonate with the readers of *The New York Times* and *El Universal*.

American readers are more likely to have an emotional stake when they come across an article that includes details about an American who was either injured or killed as the result of the drug related violence in Mexico. Mexican readers are more likely to have an emotional stake in the story when they come across an article that includes details about a Mexican who was either injured or killed as a direct result of the drug related violence in their home country. Herman and Chomsky (2002) and Sacco (1995) both brought up the fact that distance tends to play a pivotal role in determining who is depicted as a “worthy and unworthy victim.” On the one hand, if one were to take this information from Herman and Chomsky and Sacco into consideration then one would only expect *The New York Times* to declare U.S. agents and U.S. citizens as being “worthy victims” while Mexican citizens, journalists, Mexican agents and officials would be depicted as “unworthy victims.” On the other hand, one would expect *El Universal* to declare Mexican citizens, journalists, Mexican agents and officials as “worthy victims” while declaring U.S. agents and U.S. citizens as “unworthy victims.” As a matter of fact both *The New York Times* and *El Universal* depicted journalists, U.S. citizens, U.S. agents, Mexican citizens, Mexican agents and officials as “worthy victims” because of the close proximity of the United States to Mexico. Since there are numerous border towns along the U.S.-Mexico border it makes it hard to neglect the violence that is occurring and affecting our neighbors to the south, at least for the border towns of the United States.

One theme that came up in the “worthy and unworthy victims” frame was attacks on journalists. The first group of “worthy victims” that appeared throughout the data was

journalists. When all 602 primary documents were scanned for a co-occurrence between the codes “attacks on journalists” and “border violence,” *Atlas.ti7* was utilized to perform a query and came up with a list of 34 quotes. In regards to journalists being depicted as “worthy victims” by both *The New York Times* and *El Universal* had a lot to do with the fact that journalists had a special stake in these types of stories because they could sympathize with the victims and know the dangers that come with the job. An additional reason why journalists from *The New York Times* and *El Universal* had a vested interest was because they understood the death of the journalists was a method by the Mexican drug trafficking organizations to give the media flak about their coverage of the events that were transpiring in Mexico.

The deaths of the journalists were meant to be taken as a sign of intimidation by drug trafficking organizations. The result of this targeting of journalists by drug trafficking organizations has led to an interesting case of self censorship among the Mexican media. Some of the journalists reporting on the violence in Mexico got smart and used various tactics, such as giving their stories to their American counterparts, in order to attempt to get the news out as best they could. The reason for the self-censorship has been due to fear of retaliation by drug trafficking organizations for printing the truth about what is really going on in Mexico’s border towns. Julian Aguilar (2011) reported that,

The State Department's 2010 country report on Mexico catalogs a long list of human rights abuses, in addition to the widespread violence caused by the cartels and the drug trade generally: "unlawful killings by security forces; kidnappings; physical abuse; poor and overcrowded prison conditions; arbitrary arrests and detention; corruption, inefficiency and lack of transparency that engendered impunity within the judicial system; confessions coerced through torture;

violence and threats against journalists leading to self-censorship.¹⁰

The framing procedure that was utilized in this article was selective sources, in this case *The New York Times* relied on government reports from The State Department to depict that drug trafficking organizations were devious and cynical enough to go after those who report the news on Mexico's border violence, journalists. The cultural resonance of the article was one of collateral damage and that no one is immune from crime.

Border violence in Mexico is not prejudice it targets anyone and everyone who gets in the way of drug trafficking organizations. So it was no surprise that drug trafficking organizations would eventually turn their focus on those who report on the matter at hand (border violence). Journalists have been singled out for the fact that they have been covering the drug related violence from the beginning and brought the issue of border violence in Mexico to the world stage. At times journalists have just been caught being at the right place at the wrong time which has led to them becoming an innocent bystander caught in the crossfire. According to *El Universal* (2010),

Los dos reporteros ejecutados pertenecían a la plantilla de trabajadores de El Diario.<cr>Con pancartas e imágenes de cámaras fotográficas y de los periodistas juarenses asesinados, y señalamientos por las poco más de 2 mil 400 ejecuciones cometidas en el año en esa frontera, se desarrolló la Sexta Kaminata contra la muerte, que se realiza como una medida de presión tras el asesinato de la activista social Josefina Reyes.<cr>En la protesta se congregaron líderes de colonias, estudiantes y trabajadores de los medios de comunicación.<cr>Luis Carlos Santiago fue asesinado la tarde del pasado 16 de septiembre por un grupo de desconocidos, que le dispararon desde un carro en movimiento, en tanto que su compañero Carlos Manuel Sánchez, herido de bala, pudo escapar de los agresores.¹¹

The two reporters executed, belonged to the newspaper "El Diario". With banners and pictures of cameras and journalists killed in Juarez, and remarks by just over 2,400 executions that the year on that border, the Sixth walk against death was conducted as a measure of pressure after the assassination of the social

activist Josefina Reyes. At the protest, neighborhood leaders, students and workers of the media congregated. Luis Carlos Santiago was killed the afternoon of September 16 by a group of strangers, he was shot dead from a moving car, while teammate Carlos Manuel Sanchez, was wounded and able to escape the attackers.

El Universal utilized police reports (selective sources) as their framing procedure to state that two reporters from *El Diario* and social activist Josefina Reyes were executed while attending and covering the protest. It depicted that the journalists were at the right place covering the protest but it was just the wrong time because gunmen opened fire on the crowd of protesters. The cultural resonance of the article is self-censorship and harassment. The whole self-censorship of the media has impacted the way that journalists go about doing their job. For example, journalists from Mexico have to publish articles under anonymous names or hand over stories to their American counterparts in order to get the word out about what is occurring in Mexico in regards to the drug trafficking organizations, border violence, and gun trafficking. The reason for all the secrecy involved in getting a news article published has to do with the harassment and threats that journalists have received from drug trafficking organizations if they continue to tell the truth about what is going on in cities of Mexico. Additionally, local residents of Mexico's border towns have adapted to using social media, such as twitter, to stay in touch and informed about what is going on in their town. *The New York Times* reporter J. David Goodman (2011) stated that,

Borderland Beat, a blog that tracks the Mexican drug war, posted photos of the notes as well as a disturbing image of the two bodies as they appeared to motorists before being cut down by the authorities. The two were killed, CNN reported, for messages they had posted on well-known Internet sites that collect reports of drug violence in areas of the country where professional journalists are no longer able to safely do their jobs.¹²

According to Randal C. Archibold, intimidation by drug traffickers has silenced many news organizations, especially along the border. As a result, local residents have tried to fill the information gap by using social media and a few bold news sites that cover the drug war like Frontera al Rojo Vivo and Blog Del Narco.

This excerpt uses information from blogs and websites, which serve as selective sources in the articles framing procedure, to showcase that residents want to know what is going on in their area and are looking for new ways to get their news since the local media has been censored by drug trafficking organizations. The cultural resonance of this article is one of being and staying informed about the world around us. If the local and national media cannot deliver Mexican citizens the information they crave about their town and country they will find other alternative sources to get their information from. Mexican citizens have turned to various internet sources such as websites, Frontera al Rojo Vivo and Blog Del Narco, and social media sites, such as Twitter, to get the information that they crave in order to stay informed about the ongoing drug related violence in their country.

The second group of “worthy victims” that appeared throughout the data was U.S. citizens. When all 602 primary documents were scanned for a co-occurrence between the codes “attacks on U.S. citizens” and “border violence,” *Atlas.ti7* was utilized to perform a query and came up with a list of 38 quotes. Overall in the last few years there have been several attacks by drug trafficking organizations that involved or targeted U.S. citizens. At times U.S. citizens have just been caught in the crossfire between rival drug cartels and have become part of the innocent bystanders killed by stray bullets. According to *The New York Times* (2009),

When drug suppliers compete for American market share or try to collect bad debts, violence is the inevitable result. All too often, Americans uninvolved in the drug trade are victims. The war on drugs has failed.¹³

At times some of the attacks on U.S. citizens have been warranted since they had some sort of connections to drug trafficking organizations. This is a stereotype that the media uses for their framing procedure because it tries to make sense of why American citizens might be on the wrong end of a gun while in the country of Mexico. It is easy to say that only those who are involved in illegal activity or those combating the issue of gun trafficking and border violence would be at risk for becoming a victim of border violence. Being connected (directly or indirectly) to a drug trafficking organization tends to make one a marked man, especially if they find themselves on the wrong side of the tracks. According to James C. McKinley Jr. (2009),

In a deal with prosecutors, Mr. Cardona eventually pleaded guilty to kidnapping two American teenagers -- one of whom had drug-gang connections -- in March 2006 at a Mexican nightclub, taking them to a cartel safe house and stabbing them to death with a broken bottle.¹⁴

Just like the previous article, this one from McKinley Jr. utilizes the stereotype of guilty by association as it premises for its framing procedure. Just being associated with an individual who is involved in the drug trade is enough for most drug trafficking organizations to go after them, since they are seen as fair game. It creates a sense of fear that one needs to be careful who they associate with. Both of these article excerpts from *The New York Times* have a cultural resonance that crime does not care who you are because it can affect anyone. In other words crime does not discriminate based on your social status, friends, family, occupation, gender, or race.

At times some U.S. citizens tend to be singled out for their connections to

various U.S. agencies. Drug trafficking organizations might single them out in order to send a message to the United States government, that it is not safe for their people to be in Mexico and they need to think twice why they are really there. *El Universal* (2010) stated,

El asesinato del sábado en Ciudad Juárez de una funcionaria del consulado norteamericano y su esposo, ambos estadounidenses; así como el de un mexicano casado con otra empleada de la representación diplomática, y que dio lugar a la indignación del presidente Barack Obama y a la ruda declaración de su secretaria de Seguridad Interior, Janet Napolitano de que el despliegue del Ejército mexicano en la ciudad fronteriza de nada ha servido, es una coyuntura similar a aquella de hace 25 años.¹⁵

The murder on Saturday in Ciudad Juárez of an official of the U.S. consulate and her husband, both U.S. citizens as well as a Mexican married to another employee of the diplomatic representation, and which led to outrage from President Barack Obama and the rough statement from his secretary of Homeland Security, Janet Napolitano that the deployment of the Mexican Army to the border town has not worked is similar to that of 25 years ago juncture.

The framing procedure that was used in this article was that of a dramatic character, in this case there were two, President Obama and Janet Napolitano. Both of these individuals were outraged at the events that transpired that one of their own officials and their spouse from the U.S. consulate in Mexico was murdered in cold blood. This brought the issue of border violence and gun trafficking to the forefront for the United States government. This excerpt goes to show that just being affiliated and married to a U.S. Consulate employee put a couple at risk for becoming victims of border violence. The cultural resonance of this article was the notion that anyone can become a victim of crime, border violence. The couple was murdered and targeted for their association with the United States Consulate since a drug trafficking organization did not like the fact that they had helped some members of a rival drug trafficking organization.

The third group of “worthy victims” that appeared throughout the data was U.S. agents. When all 602 primary documents were scanned for a co-occurrence between the codes “attacks on U.S. agents” and “border violence,” *Atlas.ti7* was utilized to perform a query and came up with a list of 85 quotes. Overall there were two main attacks on U.S. agents that kept appearing over and over again throughout *The New York Times* and *El Universal*. The first involved an attack on a U.S. Consulate employee and her husband while the second attack involved Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents. Both of these attacks brought the issue of border violence close to home for the United States government. It also showed that drug trafficking organizations were not afraid to go after U.S. agents. Damien Cave (2011) stated,

That cooperation is currently being tested in another high-profile investigation: American and Mexican authorities are pursuing the killers of a United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement agent, Jaime J. Zapata, and the wounding of a second agent last month in a shooting outside Mexico City.¹⁶

The framing procedure that was used for this article was based on selective sources, information from police and government reports. These reports were used to set up the framing process of the story that U.S. agents are risking their lives to combat the issue of gun trafficking and border violence in Mexico. The cultural resonance of the article revolved around the notion that law enforcement officers put their life on the line every time they go out on patrol. It goes to show the unpredictability of a job in law enforcement and the need for a society to have proper law and order.

These two attacks did not signal the first time a U.S. agent had been singled out for execution by drug trafficking organizations. There was one incident that occurred back in the 1980’s that involved a Drug Enforcement Agency agent. *El Universal* (2010)

reported that,

Hace 25 años, el 5 de marzo de 1985 para ser exactos, fue encontrado en Michoacán el cadáver con huellas de tortura del agente especial de la DEA Enrique Kiki Camarena. Había sido secuestrado el 7 de febrero anterior, torturado y finalmente asesinado por el narcotraficante Rafael Caro Quintero, uno de los responsables de la espiral de violencia que sacudía entonces a Guadalajara conforme se asentaba el ilegal negocio de las drogas.¹⁷

25 years ago, on March 5, 1985 to be exact, a body was found in Michoacan with signs of torture that belonged to Special Agent Enrique Kiki Camarena from the DEA. He had been abducted on the 7th of February earlier, tortured and finally killed by the drug lord Rafael Caro Quintero, one of the leaders of the spiral of violence that shook Guadalajara where the illegal drug business was based.

The article utilized information from police and government reports as its framing procedure in order to stress the point that there have been previous U.S. agents who have been the targets of drug trafficking organizations. *El Universal* reported that 25 years ago in the state of Michoacan the tortured body of DEA agent Kiki Camarena was discovered. He was tortured and killed by drug trafficker Rafael Caro Quintero. Once again the cultural resonance that police officers put their life on the line when they go out on patrol came up. The details about Kiki Camarena's death were vital in setting up the story that U.S. agents put their life on the line every time when they go out on duty, especially in a hostile environment. As previously mentioned, these couple of incidents had caused the United States to question Mexico's competence and gun policies. Especially, Mexico's policy that does not allow U.S. agents to carry a firearm while in Mexico which hinders an agent's right to defend themselves in dangerous situations.

One big impact of the ongoing border violence had been the constant fear that it produces for U.S. agents and U.S. citizens living and traveling in Mexico. When all 602 primary documents were scanned for a co-occurrence between the codes "fear of

violence towards U.S. agents and U.S. citizens” and “number of deaths in Mexico,” *Atlas.ti7* was utilized to perform a query and came up with a list of 6 quotes. When attacks or altercations break out between rival drug trafficking organizations or between the drug trafficking organizations and the military, warnings seem to come up immediately afterwards warning U.S. citizens to be vigilant and avoid traveling to Mexico until things calm down. Also when the head of a drug trafficking organization had been captured or killed warnings pop up advising U.S. agents and U.S. citizens to be alert of their surroundings and to avoid the city (in which the altercation occurred). One interesting theme that showed up in the data was that of Mexican citizens giving warnings to foreigners to avoid certain specific areas, especially after nightfall. Julian Aguilar (2011) reported that,

The Zeta and Gulf cartels, former allies that split more than a year ago, have instead made Nuevo Leon the latest staging ground in their grisly battle for control of drug routes, resulting in some of the most gruesome scenes in Mexico's violent decade. In August, gunmen torched a famous casino in Monterrey, killing more than 50 guests, mainly women. These days, locals give friendly warnings to foreigners: do not go downtown after dark.¹⁸

The framing procedure that was used by this article was statistics from police reports. The number of deaths (50) attributed to a casino fire in an incident of border violence was used to stress the point that tourists need to be careful of their surroundings. The cultural resonance of the story was one of being aware of one's surroundings and to be careful while traveling, since you never know what might be lurking around the corner. It goes to show that the residents of Mexico are looking out for tourists. Some of the local residents were taking upon themselves to give a fair warning to those tourists who are still willing to travel to Mexico's border towns, perhaps in order to prevent them

from becoming another border violence statistic.

A second theme that appeared in the data was that of official travel warnings. Official travel warnings from the United States government tended to have a negative impact on one's travel plans to head into Mexico. For example, U.S. citizens tended to think twice about their safety in and around the country of Mexico when an official travel warning was issued. Travel warnings have a way of being applied to other areas of the country by people (U.S. citizens) even though it was given out for just a specific city. The United States government and its citizens have been known to generalize the travel warnings for a specific border town, such as Nuevo Leon, and apply it to the whole country of Mexico. According to Marc Lacey (2010),

The University of Kansas had 18 students ready to fine-tune their Spanish skills this summer in Puebla, southeast of Mexico City. Then multiple killings in distant Ciudad Juarez in March prompted the State Department to issue a travel warning for northern Mexico. The university canceled its Puebla program, geography aside. As a matter of policy, the University of Kansas bans study abroad anywhere in a country with an official travel warning, even if the danger being cited is nowhere near where the program will be.¹⁹

This excerpt demonstrated the use of the stereotype, framing procedure, that Mexico is a dangerous place to travel to basically implying that one needs to be cautious while going out and about in the country for the fear of being a victim of crime. The article showcased how a travel warning for a particular Mexican city could be generalized to the rest of the country even if there was no immediate danger to the rest of Mexico's cities. The cultural resonance of the article is one of safety and paying attention to travel warnings. It is better to be safe than sorry when it comes to safety in regards to traveling, especially to another country. The cancelation of the study abroad program by the

University of Kansas could have been just a precautionary measure that they took to ensure the safety of their students or it could have been that they believed all the hype that surrounds Mexico's being a dangerous place due to the ongoing border violence that is depicted in the media. That resulted in the conclusion that Mexico is an unsafe place to visit at the time until further notice. A third theme that appeared in the data involved the notion that the border violence that is occurring in Mexico could eventually spillover into the United States. It is not just the American public who thinks that this scenario may occur; it also includes some American politicians as well. *El Universal* (2011) reported that,

El senador republicano por Arizona, John McCain, consideró este jueves que la escalada de "violencia mortal" que padece México y la aparición de un nuevo episodio de multihomicidios, que han causado la muerte de 59 personas en Tamaulipas, sólo demuestra la necesidad de reforzar la seguridad fronteriza.<cr>"El nivel de la violencia sigue escalando al otro lado de la frontera.<cr> Y hoy el trabajo de nuestros cuerpos de seguridad en la franja fronteriza es más arriesgado y más peligroso que nunca", aseguró McCain en el inicio de una audiencia en el que, la muerte de 59 personas, le permitió reafirmarse en su vieja propuesta para el envío de 6 mil efectivos de la Guardia Nacional a la frontera.²⁰

On Thursday, The Republican Senator of Arizona, John McCain considered an escalating "deadly violence" suffered by Mexico and the onset of new episodes of multiple homicides, who had taken the lives of 59 people in Tamaulipas, only demonstrates the need to enhance border security. "The level of violence escalates across the border. And today the work of our security forces along the border is riskier and more dangerous than ever," said McCain, at the start of a hearing in which the death of 59 people enabled him to reassert his old proposal to send 6,000 National Guard troops to the border.

El Universal used John McCain as a dramatic character in their framing procedure in order to stress the point that border violence could creep across the border from Mexico into the United States. The article excerpt stated that Senator John McCain demonstrated

the need to reinforce the border. He stated that the U.S.-Mexico border is more violent than ever and wanted to strengthen the border by mobilizing the U.S. National Guard troops along the U.S.-Mexico border. The overall cultural resonance of the article is one of safety and security of the border. The article goes to show that politicians are taking the fear and threat of spillover violence serious and are bearing in mind options on how to prevent it from happening.

The fourth group of “worthy victims” that appeared throughout the data was Mexican citizens. When all 602 primary documents were scanned for a co-occurrence between the codes “attack on Mexico’s citizens” and “border violence,” *Atlas.ti7* was utilized to perform a query and came up with a list of 369 quotes. Mexican citizens were often attacked by drug trafficking organizations for various possible reasons such as being involved in the drug trade either as a member of a drug trafficking organization or an associate of them, they could be an innocent bystander or a case of mistaken identity. One of the most common reasons for attacks on Mexican citizens has been being an innocent bystander at the right place at the wrong time. Usually when fire fights breakout there tends to be no real warning for Mexico’s citizens. Sometimes there might be an advance warning but that is normally not the case.

Other times attacks on Mexican citizens seem to be the result of mistaken identity or bad information. Bad information such as where a suspected target might be staying, dining or what make and model of vehicle they drive can lead to an innocent Mexican citizen being injured or killed. According to *El Universal* (2010)

La disputa de los cárteles del narcotráfico por el dominio del territorio morelense no sólo ha causado la muerte de 16 menores en lo que va del año, sino que ha

expuesto una realidad que genera alarma social: reclutamiento de niños y adolescentes por organizaciones del crimen organizado y del narcotráfico.²¹

The dispute of the drug cartels for control of the territory Morelos has not only caused the deaths of 16 children so far this year, but has exposed a reality that generates social alarm the recruitment of children and adolescents by organized crime syndicates and drug trafficking.

This excerpt utilized figures, the number of children dead, in its framing procedure to get the point across that children are also being targeted by drug trafficking organizations. *El Universal* stated that in their pursuit for control of territory, drug trafficking organizations have killed 16 teenagers so far this year. Additionally, the article discusses the issue of the recruitment of young children by drug trafficking organizations. The article hinted at the fact that someone out those 16 children who were murdered might have been mistaken as a member of rival drug trafficking organization. James C. McKinley (2010) reported that,

Mexico reeled Monday from another bloody weekend of drug-related killings that was made even more horrible by the baffling massacre of 10 young people and children traveling in a pickup truck in Durango State. A man in military garb waved the pickup to a stop, the authorities said. Then he and an unknown number of other attackers riddled the truck with bullets and threw grenades at the occupants.²²

This article from *The New York Times* uses the figure of the number of children who were killed to present the bottom line that innocent children are being targeted by drug trafficking organization for what seems to be no apparent reason. There was no real motive given for the attack of these young people. Thus the incident appeared to be a case of possibly of being at the right place at the wrong time or mistaken identity. The cultural resonance for both of these article excerpts is one that children are a precious and extremely vulnerable population. Nothing upsets the general public more than a

child being the victim of a heinous crime since children are not easily able to defend themselves like adults. It is no surprise that people would find it appalling that children were being caught in the midst of Mexico's border violence either as a victim or as a member of a drug trafficking organization.

At times Mexican citizens are targeted by drug trafficking organizations because in some way, shape or form they are connected or involved in the drug trade. The Mexican government has argued that most of those who have been killed in border violence incidents have been involved in the drug trade and others have been agents or officers in Mexico's offensive against the drug trafficking organizations. *The New York Times* (2011) reported that,

In Coahuila State, across the border from Texas, nine men died late Saturday when gunmen opened fire inside two bars in separate attacks, state prosecutors said in a statement. Eleven others were wounded. Five other men were killed the same night in a bar in Ciudad Juarez, which is across the Rio Grande from El Paso and is notorious for its drug cartels, said Arturo Sandoval, a spokesman for the Chihuahua State prosecutors' office. In three of Mexico's Pacific Coast states, at least 14 more people were killed in drug-related violence. The police in Acapulco found the bodies of four men inside a trash container; all had been shot, and three of their throats had been slit. The body of a fifth man was found along a highway, said prosecutors in Guerrero State, where Acapulco is located.²³

In this article *The New York Times* employed Arturo Sandoval, dramatic character, and a few figures, selective sources, as their framing devices to outline the issue that Mexico's citizens were being targeted in various incidents of border violence and it also depicted the impact that firearms have had in Mexico's border violence as a tool to wreak havoc. It provides some of the gruesome detail on how the individuals were executed. Furthermore, the excerpt and the data depicted that these attacks on Mexican citizens

have not only been concentrated along the U.S.-Mexico border but have also made their way all across Mexico. The cultural resonance of the excerpt echoed the point that no one is safe in a hostile environment and that no one is immune from crime. It depicts that crime can relatively happen anywhere and the victim can be anyone and everyone. They might be associated with the drug trafficking organization or they might have just been an innocent bystander that was at the right place at the wrong time. The type of death that the people had might give off some preliminary clue as to whether or not they might have been a primary target or innocent bystander. Even those who sing narcocorridos about the drug trade and cartel bosses are not immune from attacks from drug trafficking organizations. *El Universal* (2010) reported,

Como le puede pasar a cualquiera, y donde quiera hay inocentes, ahí todos éramos inocentes", declaró esa vez "El halcón".<cr>El martes Fabián Ortega Piñón, "El Halcón de la sierra", fue encontrado muerto en Chihuahua, en una carretera entre los municipios de La Junta y Tomochi de Guerrero.<cr> Según información de la policía estatal, el cuerpo del cantante presentaba varios impactos de bala.<cr> En el lugar había más de 80 casquillos de varios calibres.<cr>La muerte de "El halcón de la sierra" se suma a la lista de intérpretes gruperos asesinados, como Sergio Vega, "El shaka", acribillado en junio pasado cuando viajaba a una presentación en Sinaloa.<cr>En noviembre de 2006 fue asesinado Valentín Elizalde, "El gallo de oro", en Tamaulipas, frente a cientos de personas que habían acudido a un concierto.<cr>En diciembre de 2007, fue baleada Zayda Peña.²⁴

“It can happen to anyone, and wherever there are innocent, we were all innocent this time,” stated “El Halcon” (The Hawk). Tuesday, Fabian Ortega Pinon, “El Halcon De la Sierra” (the Hawk of the Mountain) was found in the state of Chihuahua, on a road between the towns of La Junta and Tomochi de Guerrero. According to information from state police, the singer's body presented multiple gunshot wounds. Locally there were over 80 casings of weapons various calibers. Death of "El Halcon De La Sierra" adds to the list of folkloric (Mexican traditional Music) artists killed, such as Sergio Vega "El Shaka" assassinated this past June when traveling to a presentation in Sinaloa. In November 2006, Valentín Elizalde, "El gallo de oro" (the golden rooster) was killed in

Tamaulipas, in front of hundreds of people who had gone to his concert. In December 2007, Zayda Pena was shot down.

El Universal used “El Halcon” (dramatic character) and police reports depicting the number of rounds that were fired off by the criminals (selective source) to resonate the message that safety is not guaranteed (cultural resonance) even at a public place such as concert venue. This article excerpt quoted “El Halcon” that being a victim of border could happen to anyone regardless if there are innocent bystanders nearby. The article depicted the shooting of narcocorridor singer “El Halcon de la Sierra” and how he was fatally shot multiple times at one of his concerts. The police stated that they found 80 shell casings at the crime scene. The article discusses that “El Halcon” was not the only narcocorridor singer to have been publicly gunned down by drug trafficking organizations. It goes to show that no one is really safe from the drug related violence in Mexico not even famous singers. These narcocorridor singers might have possibly been targeted for the fact that they sang songs about specific drug trafficking organizations which associated them with that specific drug trafficking organization in the eyes of their rivals.

The fifth group of “worthy victims” which appeared in the data was Mexico’s agents and officials. When all 602 primary documents were scanned for a co-occurrence between the codes “attack on Mexico’s agents” and “border violence,” *Atlas.ti7* was utilized to perform a query and came up with a list of 223 quotes. Mexico’s agents, police officers, and officials are more likely to be singled out by drug trafficking organizations because they are viewed as the face of the offensive attacks and the ones who are going after their livelihood. Mexican police and military tend to come under fire

from drug trafficking organizations, especially when they stumble upon a shipment of drugs, firearms, or illegal immigrants. At other times, the police and the military personal would come under fire when they acted on information and attempted to bring down a top drug cartel boss. Randal C. Archibold (2010) reported that,

The seizure of the big marijuana haul, which occurred Sunday and was announced Monday, came about after the local police happened upon a convoy and were fired upon. They, along with the state police and the military, eventually found three tractor-trailers and a smaller truck in an industrial neighborhood near the border, raising the question of how such a large load could have eluded police and military checkpoints leading into Tijuana from the interior, where most of the marijuana is grown.²⁵

The framing procedure that was used for this article was one of selective sources, in this case Archibold used announcements from the government and police which were used to set up the cultural resonance of the dangers of law enforcement. It depicts that the Mexican police and the military are definitely putting their lives on the line when they go out and patrol the streets of Mexico. For example, they come under direct fire from drug trafficking organizations and suffer injuries. These injuries for the police officers and the military can be both physical and mental. The pressure from the drug trafficking organizations can sometimes be too much for those involved in remedying the situation.

Sometimes the violence and the pressure associated with the drug related violence is too much for Mexico's police department, which has resulted in some officers just giving up and quitting their jobs while others are killed in the line of duty. Drug trafficking organizations have never been shy about targeting top ranking officials such as police chiefs, mayors, and other government officials in order to demonstrate their power and their ability to disrupt the flow of law and order and the social cohesion

of the Mexican government. According to Randal C. Archibold (2011),

Her uncle (Mayor Tomas Archuleta), the mayor who gave her (Ms. Gandara) the job nobody else wanted, warned her to keep a low profile, to not make too much of being the last remaining police officer in a town where the rest of the force had quit or been killed. Then, two days before Christmas, a group of armed men took her from her home, residents say, and she has not been seen since.²⁶

In this article *The New York Times* utilized details from a police investigation of the kidnapping of a police chief in Mexico to give a sense that even the police can become victims of border violence. This article stresses the key point that no one is immune from crime, not even the police. Drug trafficking organizations do not pay attention to one's title or occupation, they are equal opportunity offenders. It discusses that the mayor had to appoint someone to a job that no one really wanted due to pressure from drug trafficking organizations.

The police and military have also been attacked by drug trafficking organizations utilizing urban warfare techniques such as those which have been used in Afghanistan and Iraq. Drug trafficking organizations have adapted to their environment and started utilizing some new techniques such as improvised explosive devices (I.E.D's) in their attacks against the military, police, and rival drug trafficking organizations. *El Universal* (2010) reported that,

Porque al coche bomba de Juárez, le siguió el fin de semana dos hechos que nos tienen temblando: por un lado la rebelión y connato de enfrentamiento de buena parte de la tropa de la Policía Federal en la frontera con sus mandos operativos, a quienes acusan de ligas con los narcos y ser los operadores directos de las extorsiones que sufren muchos juarenses y, por otro lado, una persecución entre sicarios por en medio de la ciudad de Chihuahua que culminó cuando de una camioneta a la otra, se lanzaron granadas de fragmentación que hicieron explotar el vehículo, que ardió en llamas con dos personas dentro.²⁷

Since the car bombing of Juarez was followed by two events that left us

shuddering: first the rebellion and confrontation of many of the federal police troops at the border with their operational commander, who are accused of links with drug traffickers and be direct operators of extortion suffered by many in Juarez and on the other hand, a chase between gunmen in the midst of the city of Chihuahua, which culminated when a truck was hit with a fragmentation grenade that detonated the vehicle, which burst into flames with two people inside.

The framing procedure for this article was selective sources, details about criminal events. The details about the criminal events were used to bring attention to the fact that the federal police were facing unorthodox techniques from drug trafficking organizations. This excerpt depicted that drug trafficking organizations have started to utilize techniques that are common in the war on terror, such as car bombs and improvised explosive devices. The cultural resonance of the article is one of adaptation by drug trafficking organizations. The utilization of these types of techniques, such as improvised explosive devices, makes it even more dangerous for police and military personal to patrol the city since they are able to stay one step ahead of law enforcement. Additionally, the drug trafficking organizations are getting smarter and incorporating techniques from war zones.

Border violence is a way bigger threat for Mexican citizens and agents for the mere fact that they are exposed to these hazardous conditions on a constant basis compared to their U.S. counterparts. When all 602 primary documents were scanned for a co-occurrence between the codes “fear of violence towards Mexican agents and Mexican citizens” and “number of deaths in Mexico,” *Atlas.ti7* was utilized to perform a query and came up with a list of 10 quotes. United States citizens are not the only ones who received travel warnings to avoid traveling in and around Mexico. The Mexican government has also issued travel warnings for their own citizens, usually for the same

exact reasons as the United States government to ensure the safety of their citizens. Additionally, the Mexican government had issued travel warnings when a top leader of a drug trafficking organization had been taken down, due to the instability within these criminal organizations, especially the fighting for control of who will replace the fallen leader. According to *El Universal* (2009) “autoridades de Baja California se encuentran en alerta ante un eventual aumento de la violencia tras la muerte de Arturo Beltrán Leyva en Morelos.”²⁸ This excerpt states that Mexican authorities have issued an alert in fear of an escalation of violence following the death of drug cartel leader Arturo Beltrán Leyva. *El Universal* utilizes the framing procedure of government reports and briefs, selective sources, to stress the fact that travel warnings are in effect for a few days following the death of a top drug trafficking organization boss. The cultural resonance is one of safety and security for the people of Mexico. It restates the fact that caution needs to be taken when one goes out in order not to become another statistic of border violence due to the fear of retaliation from Arturo Beltrán Leyva’s drug trafficking organization for his untimely death.

Another time when travel warnings have gone out was during the holidays. Travel warnings during the holidays occurred to prevent Mexican citizens traveling in and around Mexico or from Mexico to the United States or vice versa from becoming more susceptible to being a victim of border violence while traveling up and down the highways. According to Julian Aguilar (2010) “despite travel advisories from both governments and a death toll that has exceeded 30,000 in Mexico since 2006, the ties that bind families appear, at least during the holidays, to be stronger than the fear that

circulates on the border.”²⁹ The framing procedure that was used in this story was that of selective sources in this case statistics about the number of deaths attributed to border violence in Mexico. The number of deaths was used as “shock and awe” to depict the dangers that the citizens of Mexico have had to face on a daily basis since 2006. The cultural resonance of the article was one of traveling to see family. It stressed the point that we are willing to take risks for our family members, especially to see them during the holidays.

At times the violence in Mexico has gotten so bad that people avoided going out and about during national holidays. There could have been various reasons for the low turnout at a national holiday celebration, such as citizens feeling that they are not safe being out in large crowds or that a peaceful moment could turn into war zone in an instant if rival drug trafficking organizations are in the same area. Archibold, Malkin and Betancourt (2010) reported that,

In Mexico's drug wars, it is hard to pinpoint new lows as the atrocities and frustrations mount. But Ciudad Juarez belongs in its own category, with thousands killed each year, the exodus often of thousands of residents, the spectacle of the biggest national holiday last week observed in a square virtually devoid of anybody but the police and soldiers, and the ever-present fear of random death.³⁰

The framing procedure that *The New York Times* utilized for this article was the dramatic character of the reporter discussing the startling sight of an empty town square, minus the soldiers and police officers, during one of Mexico’s biggest national holiday. This article keeps with the cultural resonance that safety and security are essential during hostile times in Mexico. People do not want to risk going out to celebrate their country’s biggest holiday for the fear that they might get caught in a firefight between rival drug

trafficking organizations or drug trafficking organizations and Mexico's military.

Besides the fear of traveling in and around their own country some Mexican citizens have started to flee the country due to the constant threat of drug related violence.

Mexico's border violence has had such an impact on people's way of life that it threatens the social cohesion of the community, threatens the economy and tourism industry, and threatens law and order.

The only thing that is left for some people, mainly those who can afford it, is to flee the area by heading to another city or even into another country, such as the United States, in order to escape the dangers of the fighting among the drug trafficking organizations, the Mexican government and the cartels. According to *El Universal* (2011),

La matriarca, Sara Salazar, al ser entrevistada para un programa de radio también se refirió a la posibilidad de abandonar el país, luego de que cuatro de sus 10 hijos han sido asesinados.<cr> "(Juárez) es una ciudad violenta, aquí ya no hay ley, aquí matan a las personas y las dejan tiradas en la calle, no hay quién investigue.³¹

The matriarch, Sara Salazar, being interviewed for a radio program also referred to the possibility of leaving the country after four of her 10 children have been killed. "(Juárez) is a violent town here there is no law here kill people and leave them lying in the street, there is no one investigated.

El Universal utilized Sara Salazar as a dramatic character for their framing procedure in order to depict the impact that gun trafficking and border violence is having on people in Mexico. It stresses Sara Salazar's life story to get the point across that gun trafficking is having a negative impact on the way people live their lives. This article mentioned that Sara Salazar had thought of the possibility of leaving the city of Juarez following the death of four of her ten children. The cultural resonance of this story comes down to the

issue of safety (fearing for ones life) and survival. It depicts that sometimes leaving the city might be the only way to truly escape the dangers of becoming a victim of border violence.

“Unworthy Victims”

When it came to the category of “unworthy victims” there were only two groups that both *The New York Times* and *El Universal* agreed on. The first group of “unworthy victims” consisted of migrants (illegal immigrants) and the second group of “unworthy victims” was made up of drug trafficking organization members. These “unworthy victims” deaths were usually not fully discussed in too much detail in order to prevent and invoke emotion amongst the readers. A migrant as an “unworthy victim” presents an interesting situation since they are not from Mexico or the United States and they tend to be depicted as originating from Central America from places such as El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala. The reader of *The New York Times* and *El Universal* have no vested interest, personal knowledge, or connection to these migrants except for the fact that have been found dead in Mexico, usually at the hands of drug trafficking organizations, while trying to make into the United States to have a better life. Distance comes in to the equation since the death of these migrants might not have happened locally, since they are usually found in mass graves outside the cities, thus their deaths do not impact people’s (Mexican and American citizens) decision regarding their safety in and around Mexico. This could be for the fact that migrants might be more susceptible to becoming a victim than normal residents due to their illegal status which makes it easier to be taken advantage of.

In regards to members of drug trafficking organizations their deaths are deemed to be “unworthy” because they are the ones who have brought forth the violence upon themselves. There is no love lost between the readers of *The New York Times* and *El Universal* and drug trafficking organizations because of all the deaths that are attributed at the hands of drug trafficking organizations. The only ones who might have a vested and emotional interest in the deaths of these criminals would be their fellow drug cartel members and their family. The one exception might be a drug trafficking organization boss who was revered and beloved by the people because they helped out the community. It seems that the only time some emotion did come up in the news articles was when a top drug trafficking organization boss was arrested or killed. In the end most readers tend to have no real emotional connection to these two groups, migrants and drug trafficking organizations, thus their deaths are mainly just depicted as numbers, figures, and statistics in the ongoing drug related border violence in Mexico.

The first group of “unworthy victims” that appeared throughout the data was migrants. When all 602 primary documents were scanned for a co-occurrence between the codes “attack on migrants” and “border violence,” *Atlas.ti7* was utilized to perform a query and came up with a list of 49 quotes. Migrants are probably the most susceptible to attacks from drug trafficking organizations since they tend to be the most vulnerable due to their illegal status. Migrants who are attempting to cross into the United States not only have to worry about getting caught by U.S. Border Patrol but now they also have to worry about drug trafficking organizations and “coyotes” (smugglers) taking advantage of them. The demands of the drug trafficking organizations could be anything from

asking for additional money to get them across the border or even transporting drugs for them, usually against their will. According to Archibold and Betancourt (2010),

The bullet-pocked bodies of 72 people, believed to be migrants heading to the United States who resisted demands for money, have been found in a large room on a ranch in an area of northeast Mexico with surging violence. But if the victims, found after a raid on a ranch in Tamaulipas State by Mexican naval units, are confirmed as migrants, their killings would provide a sharp reminder of the violence in human smuggling as well.³²

The use of figures by *The New York Times*, the number of bodies found, as a selective source helps to showcase the dangers that migrants face on their journey through Mexico into the United States. It also depicted that drug trafficking organizations have a zero tolerance for migrants who resist their demands for money. The cultural resonance of this article is tied to the notion of the dangers of illegal immigration. Illegal immigrants not only have to face the dangers of traveling through harsh and rough terrain but they now have to worry that they might get swindled by those (coyotes and drug trafficking organizations) who they contracted to get them into the United States. These illegal immigrants face the dangers of being executed if they do not comply with the demands of these ruthless individuals, just like the 72 people believed to be migrants who were gunned down in the State of Tamaulipas. These dangers serve as a reminder of the unnecessary risks that illegal immigrants are willing to take in order to get to the United States so they can pursue the “American Dream.”

It has been noted that migrants have been extorted for money, kidnapped, and even killed if they do not comply with the demands of drug trafficking organizations. Migrants who have not cooperated with drug trafficking organizations have ended up dead and buried in unmarked graves. *El Universal* (2011) reported,

A ello se agregan las matanzas de centenares de personas, atribuidas al crimen organizado y a los cárteles del narcotráfico contra civiles en su intento de aumentar sus redes de apoyo para el trasiego de drogas y la trata de personas, principalmente indocumentados, como sucedió en Tamaulipas y Durango, donde los criminales crearon cementerios clandestinos para depositar a sus víctimas.<cr> El pasado 26 de abril en Tamaulipas se reveló el hallazgo de predios rurales utilizados como cementerios en los que, luego de excavar varias semanas, las autoridades encontraron 183 cuerpos en fosas clandestinas en el municipio de San Fernando.<cr>Casi de manera paralela se encontraron numerosas fosas en varios predios de la ciudad de Durango y en el municipio de Santiago Papasquiario, en las que se localizaron 249 cadáveres.<cr> La mayoría de esos muertos eran centroamericanos que habían ingresado al país por la ruta hacia Estados Unidos en busca de trabajo y que fueron ultimados al negarse.³³

Adding onto this is the slaughter of hundreds of people, attributed to organized crime and drug cartels against civilians in their attempt to increase their support networks for drug smuggling and human trafficking, mainly undocumented, just like in Tamaulipas and Durango, where criminals created clandestine cemeteries to deposit their victim's corpses. On April 26, Tamaulipas revealed the finding of rural land used as cemeteries, after several weeks of digging, the authorities found 183 bodies in mass graves in the town of San Fernando. In an almost parallel situation multiple graves were found in several properties in the city of Durango and in the town of Santiago Papasquiario, in which 249 corpses were located. Most of the dead were Central Americans who had entered the country on route to the United States in search of work and were killed for refusing (to cooperate with organized crime).

This excerpt utilized figures, the number of bodies found, as its framing procedure in order to garner attention to the problem that Mexico is facing, the discovery of hundreds of migrant bodies that were being dumped into unmarked grave sites on rural property. *El Universal* goes on to mention that 183 bodies had been recovered in the town of San Fernando and 249 more bodies were discovered in Durango and Santiago Papasquiario and most of the bodies were those of Central Americans. The bodies of migrants have turned up in volumes in mass grave sites. The cultural resonance of the article goes back to the dangers of illegal immigration. These mass grave sites are a stark reminder of the dangers that illegal immigrants and migrants face on their trek to the United States and

the role of mass graves in Mexico's border violence as a tool to conceal those who did not cooperate and resisted the drug trafficking organizations. *El Universal* (2011) reported that,

Efraín Rodríguez León, director jurídico del Comité de Derechos Humanos de Tabasco (Codehutab), afirmó que "lamentablemente" se ha incrementado la presencia de bandas delictivas que secuestran, violan y asesinan a migrantes.<cr> "La situación está bastante delicada en toda la ruta del tren. El coordinador de la Casa del Migrante Jesucristo Resucitado de Tenosique, Tomás González Castillo, afirmó que las rutas utilizadas por migrantes en la frontera sur de Tabasco son assoladas por la delincuencia común que roba, asalta, viola y asesina a este grupo de población vulnerable.³⁴

Efraín Rodríguez León, legal director of the Human Rights Committee of Tabasco (CODEHUTAB) affirmed that, "unfortunately" the presence of criminal gangs who kidnap, rape, and murder migrants has increased. "The situation is quite sensitive across the entire train route. The coordinator of migrant shelter "Casa del Migrante de Jesucristo Resucitado de Tenosique", Tomas Gonzalez Castillo said that the routes used by migrants in the southern border of Tabasco are plagued by common criminals that steal, assault, rapes and murders this vulnerable population group.

This excerpt from *El Universal* uses the dramatic characters of Efrain Rodriguez Leon and Tomas Gonzalez Castillo to stress the issue that migrants are a very vulnerable population that have been targeted by criminal organizations along train routes for various crimes such as assault, rape, and murder. This article also pointed out that it is not just the drug trafficking organizations that are going after these migrants (illegal immigrants) but that your common criminals are also targeting them. The cultural resonance is similar to the two previous article excerpts, in that is resonates the dangers of illegal immigration and the unnecessary risks that these people are willing to take to make it to the United States in order to have a better life. As previously mentioned, these migrants not only face dangers from the environment but they also have to deal with

dangers from other humans, such as being assaulted, raped, propositioned to be a drug mule or even murdered.

Why are migrants (illegal immigrants) being targeted by criminals and criminal organizations? A reason why migrants are seen as an easy target for drug trafficking organizations has to do with their illegal status in the country of Mexico. If they are assaulted, extorted, kidnapped, or shot at whom are they going to turn to? It is not like they can just stroll into the police department and report the incident since they face the possibility of being deported back to their home country and having to make the long trek back to Mexico. So these migrants are mainly left with the options of taking the abuse and hoping they survive or cooperating with the drug trafficking organizations and beckoning to their every will. According to Malkin, Luce and Betancourt (2011),

Migrants crossing through Mexico have long been vulnerable to kidnapping because they are fearful of going to the authorities. But now, the bus kidnappings suggest that the gangs operating in Tamaulipas, which has become a battleground between the Zetas and their former bosses in the Gulf Cartel, have begun to target Mexicans.³⁵

The article excerpt depicted through the use of media interviews with government officials and witness accounts (selective sources) that the migrants who tended to be attacked were more likely to be from other countries but there has been a slight shift to target migrants from Mexico who are traveling into the United States. The cultural resonance for this article was one of vulnerability and the dangers of illegal immigration. Vulnerability comes through the article piece due the nature of the migrant's illegal status and their fear of reporting crimes to the police. They make a connection that if one were to talk to the police they might get sent back to their home country and thus do not

reporting the crime. By not reporting the crimes that happen to them, these migrants give off a signal that they are fair and easy game for criminals.

The second group of “unworthy victims” which appeared in the data was drug cartel members. When all 602 primary documents were scanned for a co-occurrence between the codes “cartel on cartel violence” and “border violence,” *Atlas.ti*⁷ was utilized to perform a query and came up with a list of 195 quotes. Cartel on cartel violence was cited by the Mexican government as being some of the main victims of border violence. According to *El Universal* (2011),

Según un análisis de su firma, el número de muertes relacionadas con el narcotráfico en los últimos tres años indica que aproximadamente 90% son atribuidas a miembros de los cárteles, 7% a miembros de fuerzas federales y 3% a civiles.<cr>Esperan la victoriaPor ello, Braun consideró que México debe ganar la guerra contra los cárteles o la vida cambiará en el lado de México y de Estados Unidos, tal y como se conoce hasta ahora.³⁶

According to an analysis of its signature, the number of drug-related deaths in the past three years indicates that approximately 90% are attributed to cartel members, 7% members of federal forces and 3% civilians. They await the victory for this; Braun felt that Mexico must win the war against the cartels or life change on the side of Mexico and the United States, as is known so far.

This excerpt provides support for the fact that drug cartel members are making up a good amount of the border violence deaths by utilizing government reports and statistics (selective sources) to frame their story. It states that 90% of the deaths are attributed to drug cartels members, 7% of deaths are attributed to members of the federal forces, and 3% of deaths are attributed to civilians. The cultural resonance of the story was one of victims of crime and the impact of gun trafficking on border violence. The death toll that is associated with border violence is a sign of the direct impact that gun trafficking is having in Mexico. It also depicts the fact that anyone can become a victim of border

crime.

Drug trafficking organizations who were once allies are now currently fighting each other; they view each other as competition now and as a threat to their empire.

According to Julian Aguilar (2011),

The Zeta and Gulf Cartels, former allies that split more than a year ago, have instead made Nuevo Leon the latest staging ground in their grisly battle for control of drug routes, resulting in some of the most gruesome scenes in Mexico's violent decade.³⁷

The framing procedure of the article was one selective sources mainly facts about the split between former drug cartel allies. The cultural resonance of the article is one that there is no honor among criminals. This is depicted by the split between The Zetas and the Gulf Cartel and the year long deadly fighting for the same lucrative drug routes. The fighting between these two former allies has turned up some of the most gruesome crime scenes in Mexico since they view the other as cutting into their hustle.

The drug related violence does not seem to have an end in sight; it seems that these rival drug trafficking organizations will keep on fighting to the bitter end. *El Universal* (2011) reported,

En las últimas 24 horas se han registrado 22 asesinatos violentos en Nuevo León, producto de la narcoguerra entre carteles rivales, la cual se agudizó desde el arranque del año.<cr>El último evento de la violenta jornada se registró en el municipio rural de Montemorelos, ubicado a más de 75 kilómetros al sur de esta ciudad. Los peritos forenses de la Procuraduría de Justicia de Nuevo León levantaron los cuerpos en seis bolsas blancas, para trasladarlos a la morgue del Hospital Universitario.<cr>El saldo de una violenta jornada que se registró durante la madrugada de este martes incluyó además tres enfrentamientos entre pistoleros y contra el ejército y dos atentados con armas largas contra corporaciones estatales.<cr>El primer enfrentamiento se registró en la a colonia La Alianza, del norte de Monterrey, entre dos grupos de pistoleros de la delincuencia organizada.³⁸

In the last 24 hours there have been 22 violent murders in Nuevo Leon, a product of drug war between rival cartels, which escalated since the start of the year. The last event of the violent day was recorded in the rural municipality of Montemorelos, located more than 75 kilometers south of this city. Forensic experts of the Office of Justice of Nuevo León picked up six bodies in white bags, to transfer them to the morgue of Hospital Universitario (University Hospital). The outcome of a violent day that occurred during the early hours of Tuesday also included three clashes between gunmen and against the army and two attacks with long rifles against state corporate offices. The first clash occurred in the neighborhood of "la Alianza", north of Monterrey, between gunmen of two groups of organized crime.

El Universal utilized the selective sources of government reports and figures, the number of dead, to discuss the fact that drug trafficking organizations really do not have respect for each other organizations since they are all competing for a few lucrative drug routes into the United States. It also depicts the fact that the Mexican government was going after drug trafficking organizations. The article only touches on the number of people who have been killed in incidents of border violence and how they were killed, by armed gunmen. This excerpt goes on to state that in the last 24 hours there have been 22 murders in Nuevo Leon, a product of the drug turf wars between rival drug trafficking organizations.

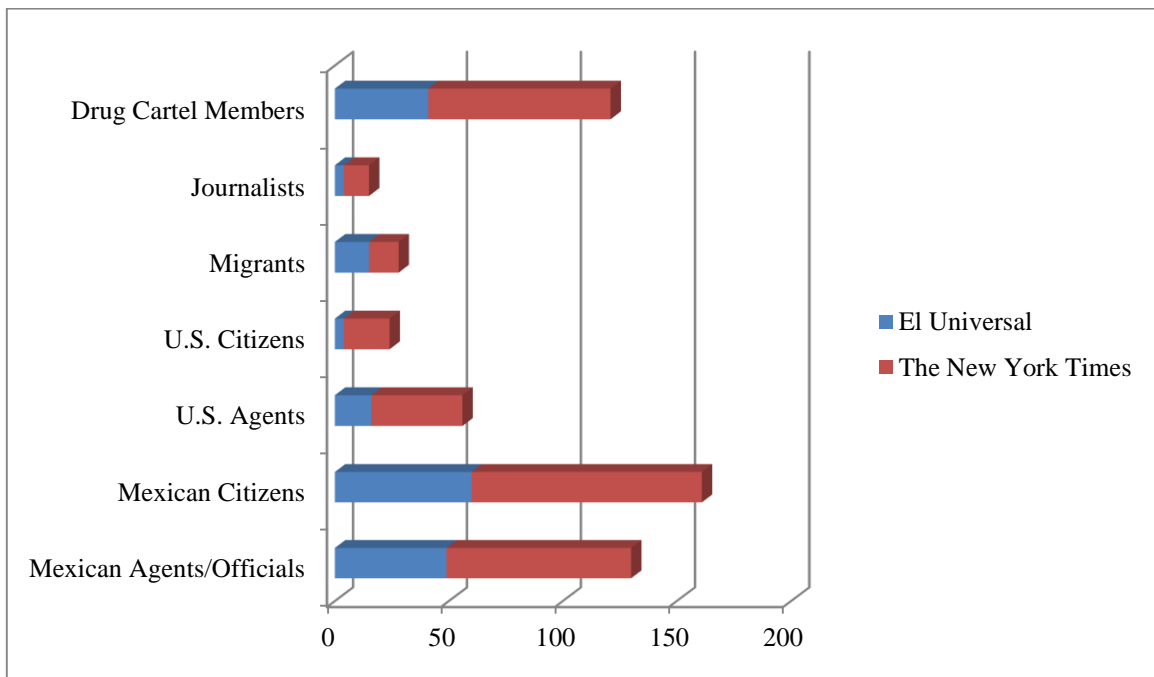
As previously mentioned, the main cause of border violence had to do with the fighting for the control of the drug corridors into the United States. Drug cartels have left no stone unturned while looking for their rivals and have opened fire at suspecting targets with extreme prejudice. Marc Lacey (2009) reported that,

The upsurge of violence in Juarez, where rival gangs have been battling for the lucrative smuggling route to the United States, seems an open challenge to Mr. Calderon's government, which has sent 10,000 troops and federal police officers to patrol the streets and retake control of the city from the traffickers... In the past two years, gunmen suspected of ties with drug gangs have barged into rehab clinics in Juarez four times and started shooting. The death toll from these attacks

on clinics is now about 32.³⁹

This article utilizes selective sources, the number of deaths, in order to frame the message that drug trafficking organizations really do not care for each other when they are competing for the same location (no honor and respect among criminals). The article discusses that armed gunmen have gone to drug rehab centers looking for members of rival drug trafficking organizations who are looking to take over their turf. This article only discusses the number of victims, 32, and how they were executed, they were gunned down by hitmen but not much more details were given out about the individuals. It has also been recorded that cartel on cartel violence can increase after a major drug boss has been taken down. This could be due in part that it provides a perfect opportunity for a rival drug cartel to move in and claim the turf as theirs since the other drug cartel is without proper leadership.

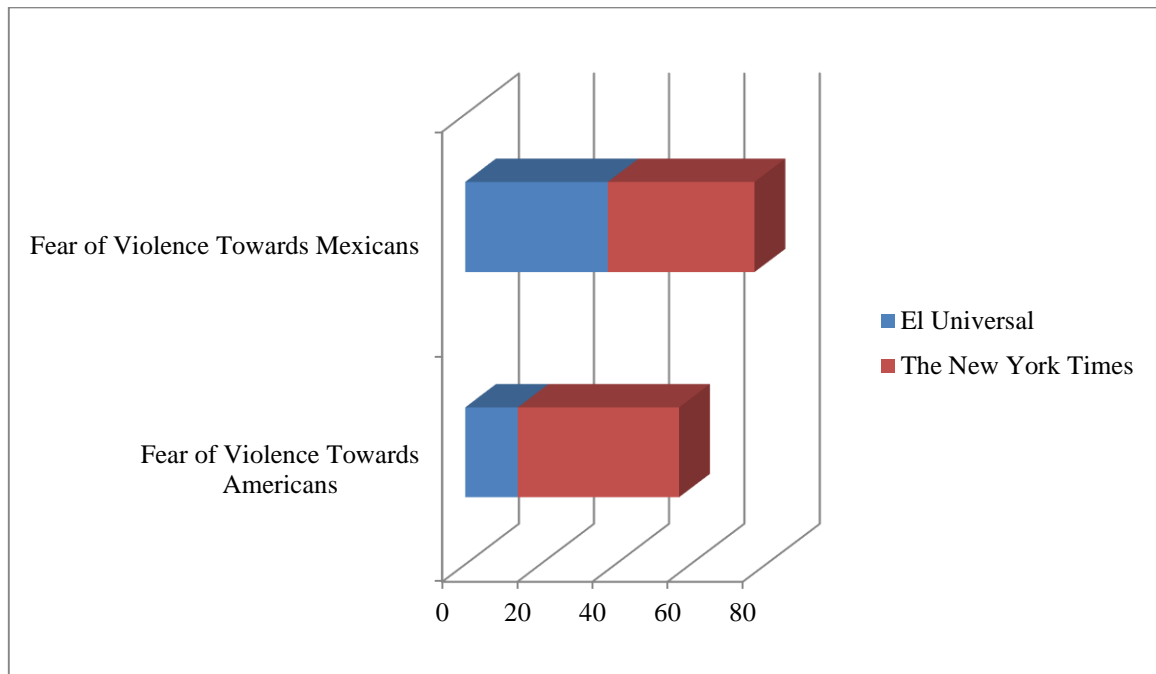
Figure 3: Victims of Mexico’s Border Violence



In order to address research question 2 which investigates whether the Mexican print media has a higher number of articles covering gun trafficking than the United States print media, frequencies were utilized to determine how many articles were written in terms of the victims of border violence. According to figure 3, in the 130 articles that mentioned attacks on Mexican agents and officials, 49 (37.69%) were published by *El Universal* and 81 (62.31%) were published by *The New York Times*. In the 161 articles that mentioned attacks on Mexican citizens, 60 (37.27%) were published by *El Universal* and 101 (62.73%) were published by *The New York Times*. In the 56 articles that mentioned attacks on U.S. agents, 16 (28.57%) were published by *El Universal* and 40 (71.43%) were published by *The New York Times*. In the 24 articles that mentioned attacks on U.S. citizens, 4 (16.67%) were published by *El Universal* and

20 (83.33%) were published by *The New York Times*. In the 28 articles that mentioned attacks on migrants, 15 (53.57%) were published by *El Universal* and 13 (46.43%) were published by *The New York Times*. In the 15 articles that mentioned attacks on journalists, 4 (26.67%) were published by *El Universal* and 11 (73.33%) were published by *The New York Times*. In the 121 articles that mentioned attacks on drug cartel members, 41 (33.88%) were published by *El Universal* and 80 (66.12%) were published by *The New York Times*.

Figure 4: Fear of Violence



In order to address research question 2 which investigates whether the Mexican print media has a higher number of articles covering gun trafficking than the United

States print media, frequencies were utilized to determine how many articles were written in terms of the fear of being a victim of border violence. According to figure 4, in the 57 articles that mentioned fear of violence towards Americans, 14 (24.56%) were published by *El Universal* and 43 (75.44%) were published by *The New York Times*. In the 77 articles that mentioned fear of violence towards Mexicans, 38 (49.35%) were published by *El Universal* and 39 (50.65%) were published by *The New York Times*.

Frame 3: Positive Aspects of Gun Trafficking

The “positive aspects of gun trafficking” frame refers to any article that discusses the problem of gun trafficking into Mexico and its impact on Mexico’s border violence in a positive light such as seizures and arrests. The “positive aspects of gun trafficking” framing procedure is characterized by its dependence on the selection of sources, metaphors, and dramatic characters, and was mainly indicated by keywords such as “arrest,” “seizures,” “co-operation,” and “protests.” The “positive aspects of gun trafficking” only had one reasoning device, solutions to problems. The solutions to problems reasoning device was utilized by newspaper journalists to discuss how the illegal diversion of firearms into Mexico could be prevented and stopped. This reasoning device took things such as gun control and co-operation between U.S. and Mexico’s government in account as methods to stem the flow of firearms from the U.S. into Mexico.

The code family for “positive aspects of gun trafficking” frame had four codes assigned to it: 1) gun trafficking arrest; 2) weapons seizures; 3) co-operation between the governments of the U.S. and Mexico; and 4) protests. These four codes transitioned into

three main themes. The first theme was that of weapons seizures and arrest. The second theme was that of co-operation between the U.S. and Mexican governments. The third theme was protesting against border violence and gun trafficking. The “positive aspects of gun trafficking” frame was interconnected to the “direct mention of gun trafficking” frame.

The 2nd objective focuses on how often *The New York Times* and *El Universal* reported on the issues of gun trafficking, and its impact on border violence. Only research question 2 from the 2nd objective will be examined. The second research question investigates whether the Mexican print media has a higher percentage of articles covering gun trafficking and its impact on Mexico’s border violence than the United States print media. What aspects of gun trafficking were reported by national newspapers? When it came to the issue of reporting gun trafficking, *The New York Times* and *El Universal* concentrated on several key issues that pertained to the problem of gun trafficking. The issues that were covered in *The New York Times* and *El Universal* article pieces were gun walking, gun trafficking, multiple gun purchases, shooting, small and light arm attacks, Southwest Border Paradigm, straw purchasing, U.S. providing fuel for border violence, weapons possession/gun trafficking arrest, and weapons seizures. These issues of gun trafficking could easily be broken down into two categories: 1) positive; and 2) negative aspects. Positive aspects referred to any article piece that discussed the issues of co-operation between the U.S. and Mexican governments, protest against border violence, weapons possession/gun trafficking arrest, and weapons seizures.

When all 602 primary documents were scanned for a co-occurrence between the

codes “gun trafficking” and “positive aspects,” *Atlas.ti7* was utilized to perform a query and came up with a list of 87 quotes. There were several positive aspects relative to gun trafficking. One of the positive aspects theme that *The New York Times* and *El Universal* reported in regards to gun trafficking was that of weapon seizures, specifically small and light arms. As previously mentioned weapons seizures can occur before or after entering the country of Mexico. Weapons seizures were considered a positive aspect of gun trafficking for the mere fact that those weapons which were seized were no longer on the streets of Mexico reaping havoc. An article excerpt from *The New York Times* (2011) stated that “after the shooting, the soldiers seized a car, 12 weapons, 12 grenades and radio communication equipment.”⁴⁰ This article from *The New York Times* used the framing procedure of selective sources, in this case the number of weapons and items seized to demonstrate the cultural resonance that weapons are dangerous. The article stated that the Mexican military seized firearms and grenades all which could have caused some serious damage since they would have fallen under the category of military grade equipment.

Additionally, another way the article resonates with people is by indirectly implying that getting these weapons off the streets of Mexico helps to make the border towns a bit safer and deals a small blow to drug trafficking organizations by taking away their tools of terror and destruction. *El Universal* also ran article pieces in which weapon seizures were part of the positive aspects of the bloody and gruesome drug war. An article excerpt from *El Universal* (2010) reported,

Según el balance de los operativos en 2008 de la Secretaría de Seguridad Pública del DF, hubo 107 operativos principalmente en la zona de Tepito, en los que se

aseguraron más de mil 300 toneladas de productos apócrifos y de contrabando, 5 armas, 206 cartuchos, 278 motocicletas, 90 kilos de marihuana y 3.2 de cocaína contrabando.⁴¹

According to the report of the operations in 2008 of the Secretary of Public Safety of the Federal District, were 107 operations primarily in the area of Tepito, where more than 300 thousand tons of apocryphal products and contraband, five guns, 206 cartridges is assured, 278 motorcycles, 90 kilos of marijuana and 3.2 kilos of cocaine smuggling.

This article utilizes the selective source of a government report from the Secretary of Public Safety and statistics to demonstrate the cultural theme that a firearm of the streets of Mexico creates a sense of security, even if it just a temporary fix. According to the Secretary of Public Safety, in 2008 there were 107 operations which confiscated 300 thousand tons of counterfeit products and contraband, 5 guns, 206 cartridges (magazines), 278 motorcycles, 90 kilos of marijuana and 3.2 kilos of cocaine. Both of these examples showcase that more than just firearms have been confiscated during seizures, such as grenades, ammunition, magazines, and other types of artillery. If not for these seizures there would be numerous small and light arms floating around Mexico and any time a weapon can be taken off the street in Mexico or the United States the better chance people have of not getting stuck in the crossfire and becoming victim of border violence.

A second positive aspect theme that *The New York Times* and *El Universal* reported in regard to gun trafficking would be the cooperation between the United States and Mexico. For instance, *The New York Times* and *El Universal* noted several types of cooperation between the United States and Mexico. Cooperation could come in the form of initiatives, such as the United States deploying more Border Patrol agents and U.S.

troops to the U.S.-Mexico border. Mark Landler (2009) a reporter for *The New York Times* reported that “Hillary Clinton came bearing a new White House initiative, announced Tuesday, to deploy 450 more law enforcement officers at the border, and crack down on the smuggling of guns and drug money into Mexico.”⁴² In this article the framing procedure was one of a dramatic character, in this case Hillary Clinton who stressed the cultural theme of cooperation and statistics, the number of law enforcement officials to be deployed to the U.S.-Mexico border. The article portrayed Clinton as bearing a new deal that ups the U.S. involvement in preventing the flow of firearms from crossing the border and entering into Mexico. The cultural resonance that was implied in the article was cooperation. Mainly the fact that it takes both countries, the United States and Mexico, being fully committed to preventing border violence and curbing the flow of illegal firearms into Mexico. It demonstrates that without cooperation there is no real chance of solving the issues of border violence and gun trafficking.

Another form of cooperation that frequently showed up in the articles was that of the United States government sending aid to Mexico. The aid could come in various forms, such as in the form of money or equipment (drones, vehicles, weapons, etc). An article excerpt from *El Universal* (2011) reported,

El gobierno de Estados Unidos sólo ha entregado 27.<cr>7% de los recursos aprobados por el Congreso de ese país para la Iniciativa Mérida, pues hasta la fecha la erogación asciende a 416 millones de dólares, que se han destinado a la compra de equipo, aeronaves y capacitación, de acuerdo con un reporte de la embajada estadounidense en México sobre los avances en la aplicación de esa estrategia hasta mayo de este año.<cr>Fue en diciembre de 2008 cuando México y Estados Unidos firmaron la primera Carta de Acuerdo -Letter of Agreement (LOA)- de la Iniciativa Mérida, lo que marcó una nueva etapa de colaboración binacional "para detener el flujo de armas, de dinero y la demanda de drogas."⁴³

The U.S. government has only delivered 27.7% of the resources approved by the U.S. Congress for the Mérida Initiative, the expenditure to date amounts to \$ 416 million that has been allocated for the purchase of equipment, aircraft and training, according to a report from the U.S. Embassy in Mexico on the progress of the implementation of this strategy as in May of this year. It was during December 2008 when Mexico and the United States signed the first Letter of Agreement (LOA) - of the Merida Initiative, which marked a new phase of bi-national collaboration "to stop the flow of weapons, money and the demand for drugs.

This article from *El Universal* went on to discuss how the United States has provided 7% of the promised money under the Merida Initiative and how the money has gone to buy equipment by utilizing the framing procedure of government reports and statistics, percentages of resources approved, as their selective sources. The report was used to indicate the cooperation, cultural resonance, between the United States and Mexico, by discussing the amount of money that the United States has provided to Mexico in order to help them combat drug trafficking organizations. It also discussed how the Merida Initiative was created to be a bi-national collaboration to help stem the flow of firearms, money, and the demand for drugs. Cooperation between the United States and Mexico is an important and positive aspect of gun trafficking since it goes on to acknowledge that the problem of gun trafficking is just not Mexico's fight but actually a responsibility of both countries. It is also important since it depicted a shift from each countries national discourse of trying to blame each other with the whole supply and demand argument to one of bi-national responsibility which started around mid 2010.

A third positive aspect them that *The New York Times* and *El Universal* reported in regards to gun trafficking would be that of gun trafficking/smuggling arrest. Keeping with the whole cooperation between the United States and Mexico, this cooperation also

extends to each of country's cases and building them up as a multinational investigation which can lead to stronger cases and ultimately lead to gun trafficking arrest and weapon seizures. Ginger Thompson (2011) from the *New York Times* stated that,

The authorities said sweeps were conducted in nearly every major American city; involved more than 3,000 federal, state and local law enforcement agents; and resulted in the seizure of an estimated 300 kilograms of cocaine, 150,000 pounds of marijuana and 190 weapons. Derek Maltz, a special agent at the Drug Enforcement Administration, said the sweeps were part of a multinational investigation that could lead to more arrests and seizures in the United States, Mexico, Colombia and Brazil.⁴⁴

For this article the framing procedure that was used was one of selective sources, they mainly used statistics and figures from federal news briefings. These statistics and numbers of seized drugs and firearms was used to relay a cultural resonance of cleaning up the streets (getting weapons and drugs off the street) and that firearms are dangerous. By seizing 150,000 pounds of marijuana, 300 kilos of cocaine, and 190 weapons the U.S. government helps to make the streets of Mexico and the United States a bit safer by making a small dent in the amount of dangerous firearms available to drug trafficking organizations and possible revenue.

Additionally, federal agents from both countries, Mexico and the U.S., sometimes work together when it comes down to arresting a gun trafficker and will be present when a trafficker is brought down. An article excerpt from *El Universal* (2011) reported, "la embajada de Estados Unidos en México mencionó que incluso agentes mexicanos estuvieron presentes durante los arrestos de 19 presuntos traficantes de armas el pasado 25 de enero en Phoenix."⁴⁵ The framing procedure for this article uses reports and accounts in order to set up the message that cooperation is an important key factor

when it comes to dismantling gun trafficking organizations who supply drug trafficking organizations with weapons. According to *El Universal*, when U.S agents arrested nineteen gun traffickers in Phoenix, AZ, Mexican agents were also on hand during the arrest. This goes to show that law enforcement agencies from both the United States and Mexico are working together to build stronger cases and attacking the issue of gun trafficking jointly. Overall, gun trafficking arrests were categorized as positive aspects because it went to show that both the governments from the United States and Mexico are serious about stemming the flow of firearms into Mexico and preventing any further acts of border violence and spillover violence.

A fourth positive aspect theme that *The New York Times* and *El Universal* reported in regards to gun trafficking would be protesting against border violence which took into consideration calling and end to the flow of firearms into Mexico. An article excerpt from *El Universal* (2011) reported,

El poeta y escritor que encabeza un movimiento nacional que busca frenar la violencia en México, hace un balance tras finalizar la Caravana por la Paz y la firma del Pacto Ciudadano Nacional. Ciudad Juárez verdaderamente es la herida abierta: está muerta, dice. "Ve, las casas se venden, se fue la gente, los comercios están cerrados". Una tarde después de finalizar la Caravana por la Paz, a su regreso de El Paso, Texas, donde pidió la cancelación de la Iniciativa Mérida - porque dice sólo manda armas y no resuelve problemas sociales- y reiteró el llamado a los ciudadanos de EU para que pidan a su gobierno detener el tráfico de armas y el lavado de dinero, además de escuchar testimonios de mexicanos desplazados por la violencia, Sicilia enumera con sus manos uno a uno todo lo que lleva colgado en su cuello y en sus prendas y que poblado por poblado le fueron regalando.⁴⁶

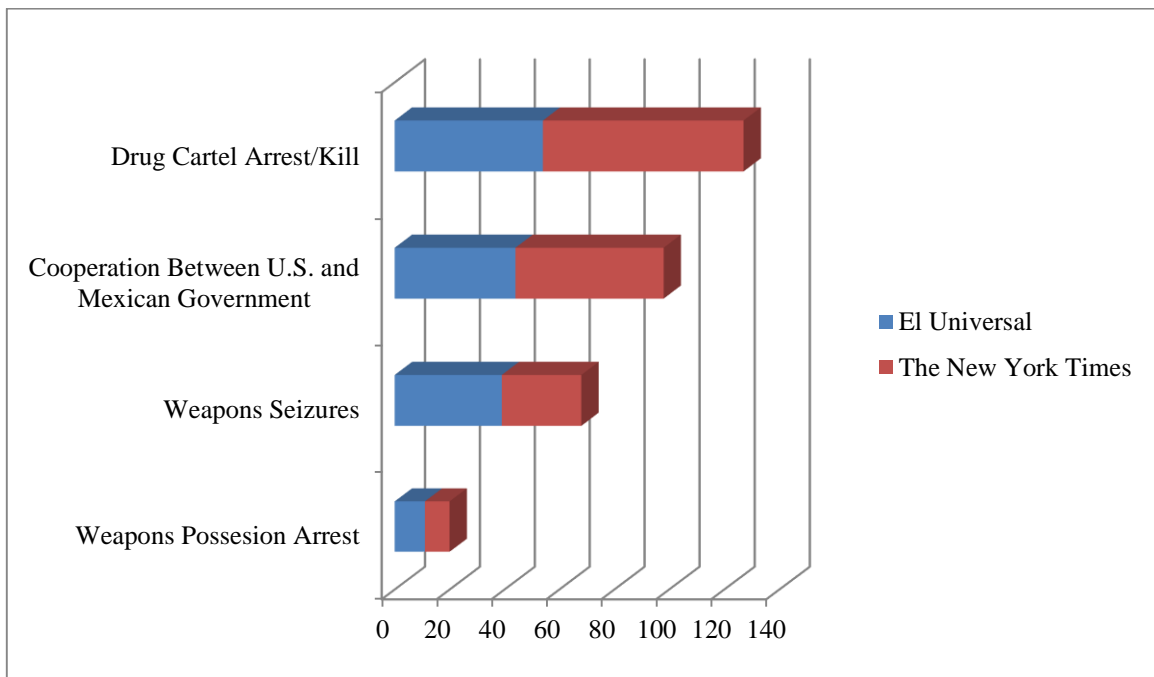
The poet and writer who leads a national movement to curb violence in Mexico, makes a remark after finishing the Caravan for Peace and Citizen's signing of the National Covenant. "Ciudad Juarez is the truly open wound: is dead", he says. "Look at the homes being sold, the people left, the stores are closed." One afternoon after completing the Caravan for Peace, on his return from El Paso,

Texas, where he requested the cancellation of the initiative called Merida, because it only sends weapons and does not solve social problems, he reiterated a call to U.S. citizens to ask their government to stop arms trafficking and money laundering, in addition to hearing testimonies of Mexicans displaced by violence, Sicilia lists with hands one to one leading all the things hung around his neck and clothes and talks about each of the villages that gave them to him.

This excerpt utilizes the framing procedure of the dramatic character, the organizer (poet and writer) behind the Caravan for Peace, to bring attention to atrocities that are taking place on the Mexican side of the U.S. Mexico border. It has a cultural resonance that protesting can make a difference and bring about change. *El Universal* discussed how the Caravan for Peace has called for the cancelation of the Merida Initiative. The Caravan for Peace believes that the United States was only sending firearms into Mexico and was not really helping the situation.

The Caravan for Peace went on to discuss that they want U.S. President Obama to stop the flow of guns and money and to listen to testimony of Mexicans who have been impacted by the violence. The protesting of Mexico's border violence and gun trafficking into Mexico was viewed as a positive aspect for the fact that it showed that the people of Mexico have had enough of the drug related violence and wanted their voice to be heard by both the United States and Mexico's government.

Figure 5: Positive Aspects of Gun Trafficking



In order to address research question 2 which investigates whether the Mexican print media has a higher number of articles covering gun trafficking than the United States print media, frequencies were utilized to determine how many articles were written in terms of the positive aspects of gun trafficking. According to figure 5, in the 20 articles that mentioned weapons possession arrest, 11 (55%) were published by *El Universal* and 9 (45%) were published by *The New York Times*. In the 68 articles that mentioned weapons seizures, 39 (57.35%) were published by *El Universal* and 29 (42.65%) were published by *The New York Times*. In the 98 articles that mentioned cooperation between the U.S. and Mexican governments, 44 (44.90%) were published by *El Universal* and 54 (55.10%) were published by *The New York Times*. In the 127

articles that mentioned drug cartel arrest/kill, 54(45.52%) were published by *El Universal* and 73 (57.48%) were published by *The New York Times*.

Frame 4: Negative Aspects of Gun Trafficking

The “negative aspects of gun trafficking” frame refers to any article that discusses the problem of gun trafficking into Mexico and its impact on Mexico’s border violence in a negative light. The “negative aspects of gun trafficking” framing procedure is characterized by its dependence on selection of sources, metaphors, stereotypes, and dramatic characters and was mainly indicated by keywords such as “shootings,” “consequences of Operation Fast and Furious,” “number of deaths,” “corruption,” “elements of gun trafficking” and “recruitment.” There was a couple of reasoning devices that accompanied the “negative aspects of gun trafficking” frame. The first reasoning device was assigning responsibility. As previously mentioned, this reasoning device allows the media to write up an article in the context of which country is to blame for the entry of illegal firearm into Mexico and the havoc they wreak on the citizens of Mexico.

The second reasoning device was that of defining the problem which is utilized to discuss the problem of gun trafficking along the U.S.-Mexico border. The third reasoning device was that of passing moral judgments. This reasoning device was utilized to depict the atrocities that accompany the utilization of weapons (which were trafficked into Mexico) by drug trafficking organizations. Within the code family of the “negative aspects of gun trafficking” frame there were nineteen codes: 1) attack on Mexican agents; 2) attack on Mexican citizens; 3) attack on U.S. citizens; 4) attack on

U.S. agents; 5) threats and attacks to journalists/reporters; 6) border and drug war violence; 7) botched U.S. operations; 8) cartel on cartel violence; 9) cartel on cartel violence; 10) consequences of Fast and Furious; 11) corruption; 12) gun walking; 13) gun trafficking; 14) number of drug related deaths; recruitment of adolescents; 15) shootings; 16) small and light arm attacks; 17) Southwest Border Paradigm; 18) spillover violence; and 19) supply and demand. These nineteen codes developed into five main themes under the “negative aspects of gun trafficking” frame.

The first theme was the origin of firearms. The second theme was the role of firearms in Mexico’s border violence. The third theme was the recruitment of young children by drug trafficking organizations. The fourth theme was the National Rifle Association’s (NRA) influence. The fifth theme was the consequences of U.S. operations. Overall the “negative aspects of gun trafficking” frame was interconnected to the frames “the blame game,” “worthy and unworthy victims,” “indirect mention of gun trafficking,” and the “direct mention of gun trafficking.”

Negative aspects of gun trafficking referred to any article piece that discussed the issues such as the attack on Mexican agents/officials, attack on Mexican citizens, attack on migrants, attack on U.S. agents, attack on U.S. citizens, attack and threats on journalists and reporters, border and drug war violence, botched U.S. operations, cartel on cartel violence, consequences of Fast and Furious, corruption, gun walking, gun trafficking, number of American drug related deaths in Mexico, number of Mexican drug related deaths, recruitment of young Americans, recruitment of young Mexicans, shooting, small and light arm attacks, Southwest Border Paradigm, spillover violence,

and supply and demand. Negative aspects were a good way for *The New York Times* and *El Universal* to depict the horror and problems that are currently occurring in Mexico. There are some negative aspects which are directly related to the issue of gun trafficking. When all 602 primary documents were scanned for a co-occurrence between the codes “gun trafficking” and “negative aspects,” *Atlas.ti7* was utilized to perform a query and came up with a list of 390 quotes. There are five main negative aspects which are directly related to the issue of gun trafficking. The first negative aspect theme that *The New York Times* and *El Universal* reported in regard to gun trafficking was the origin of the firearms.

The fact of the matter is that most firearms recovered in Mexico seem to have come from the United States. A majority of these articles tended to mention the amount or the percentage of firearms that have been smuggled into Mexico from the United States. According to an article excerpt from *El Universal* (2010),

Organismos como Amnistía Internacional, Oxfam Internacional y el Colectivo por la Seguridad con Democracia y Derechos Humanos, estiman que en México circulan 15 millones de armas y coinciden que la mayor parte de ellas se introducen al país en pequeñas cantidades por la frontera con Estados Unidos.⁴⁷

Organizations such as Amnesty International, Oxfam International and Security Collective for Democracy and Human Rights in Mexico estimate that 15 million guns are circulating and agree that most of them are introduced to the country in small quantities through the U.S. border.

The framing procedure for this article is one of selective sources consisting of estimates (the circulation of firearms) from nonprofit organizations in order to spread the message that these weapons have to come from somewhere besides Mexico. The cultural resonance is one of gun regulations and supply and demand. The article does not directly

state Mexico's gun laws but it is common knowledge that Mexico has tougher and stricter gun laws compared to those from the United States. Due to the close proximity of the United States to Mexico and their (U.S.) lax gun laws, it makes the United States a prime suspect as the supplier of firearms for drug trafficking organizations.

According to *El Universal*, several organizations have estimated that about 15 million firearms are currently circulating in Mexico and have been introduced into Mexico through the U.S.-Mexico border. Additionally, another factor that was closely related to the amount of smuggled firearms was that of, which U.S. states do these firearms come from? An article excerpt from *The New York Times* (2009) reported that "according to the Government Accountability Office (G.A.O.) report, 70 percent of 20,000 weapons recovered were traced to legal gun shops and unregulated gun shows in Texas, California and Arizona."⁴⁸ This article utilized the G.A.O.'s report to frame their story culturally in the theme of supply and demand. The article noted that a good amount of the guns, 70%, which were being recovered in Mexico were coming from U.S. gun shops located along the Southwest border thanks in part to gun trace data from the United States government.

The second negative aspect theme that *The New York Times* and *El Universal* reported in regard to gun trafficking would be the role that the firearms play in border violence. Firearms have generally been reported as fueling the border violence that Mexico is currently experiencing. The firearms that are being used to cause havoc have put Mexico's law enforcement at a disadvantage. The firearms smuggled into Mexico have caused huge problems and headaches for the Mexican police and military. The

main problem with the weapons trafficked into Mexico revolves around the fact that the drug cartels tend to have bigger guns than Mexico's police and military. An excerpt from Thomas L. Friedman's (2010) article reported,

The Narcos are the drug cartels who are now brazenly attacking each other in turf wars and challenging the state for control of towns. The success of U.S. and Colombian efforts to interdict drug trafficking through the Caribbean and north from Colombia have pushed the cartels to relocate their main smuggling up through the spine of Mexico. President Felipe Calderon is bravely trying to take them on, but the Narcos have bigger guns than the Mexican Army -- most smuggled in from U.S. gun stores.⁴⁹

This article used intelligence from reports, selective sources, to discuss and bring up the cultural resonance that drug trafficking organizations have a technological advantage over the Mexican military and police. For example, if the police have semi automatic handguns (9mm or 40mm) and drug trafficking organizations have semi and fully automatic military assault rifles (AK-47 or AR-15), it is sort like bringing a knife to a gun fight.

The firearms that are being smuggled into Mexico biggest impact can be seen by the sheer number of deaths that they have caused. An excerpt from James C. McKinley Jr.'s (2009) article reported,

Now, the owner, George Iknadosian, will go on trial on charges he sold hundreds of weapons, mostly AK-47 rifles, to smugglers, knowing they would send them to a drug cartel in the western state of Sinaloa. The guns helped fuel the gang warfare in which more than 6,000 Mexicans died last year.⁵⁰

This article from *The New York Times* uses the selective source of figures, the number of Mexican deaths attributed to border violence, in order to bring up the cultural resonance point that firearms are dangerous. Within this article, it discusses how firearms that are bought in gun shops from the United States and trafficked into Mexico have impacted

border violence through the sheer number of deaths, 6,000 plus in the last year alone. If drug trafficking organizations were not hell bent on destroying each other for these few drug routes into the United States there would probably not be so many countless deaths (collateral damage) attributed to firearms.

Both *The New York Times* and *El Universal* have gone as far to state that the smuggling of weapons into Mexico from the United States have led to countless deaths of Mexican citizens. An article excerpt from *El Universal* (2011) reported,

El procurador destacó que de las cerca de 94 mil armas que han sido recuperadas y rastreadas en México en los últimos cinco años, más de 64 mil provenían de Estados Unidos.<cr> "Durante este tiempo, el tráfico de armas de fuego a través de nuestra frontera sudoeste ha contribuido a más de 40 mil muertes.⁵¹

The prosecutor noted that of the nearly 94,000 weapons have been recovered and traced in Mexico in the last five years; more than 64,000 came from the United States. "During this time, traffic in firearms through our southwest border has contributed to more than 40 thousand deaths.

This article used two different types of framing procedures, selective sources (the number of firearms recovered and the number of deaths) and the prosecutor as a dramatic character in order to spread the cultural message of the dangers of firearms and the impact they have on Mexico's border violence. According to *El Universal* close to 94 thousand firearms have been recovered in Mexico in the last five years and 64 thousand of these firearms came from the United States and have contributed to over 40,000 deaths. By discussing the number of deaths attributed to the trafficked firearms, it helps to bring the issue of gun trafficking to the forefront of social problems that need to be addressed by both the governments of the United States and Mexico.

A third negative aspect theme that *The New York Times* and *El Universal*

reported in regards to gun trafficking revolved around the notion of the recruitment of young children and using them to help smuggle and transport firearms for the drug trafficking organizations. An article excerpt from *El Universal* (2012) reported,

A los 16 años, se detalla, los niños son convertidos en sicarios y las niñas se involucran con la vigilancia de cargamentos de droga, armas, empaçado de droga, como espías de las organizaciones e, incluso, como ganchos para atraer a miembros de las agencias de la ley para ser asesinados.⁵²

At 16 years old, it is detailed, children are turned into killers and girls are involved with monitoring shipments of drugs, weapons, packing drug, as spies for the organizations and even as hooks to attract members law enforcement agencies to be killed.

This article utilized stories and accounts as its selective source to frame and set up the cultural resonance that children are being targeted as recruits by criminal organizations, specifically drug trafficking organizations. This is something that is somewhat common on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border, every now and then you see a young kid being recruited to join their local gang, and the only exception is that they are being approached to join a drug cartel. According to *El Universal*, at the age of 16 boys are converted into Sicarios while girls are turned into carriers of drugs and guns, and as lookouts for the cartels. The trafficking of firearms hits a new low when children are utilized as mules, also known as carriers for these drug trafficking organizations. The recruitment of young children into the transportation of firearms and as lookouts for the shipments only adds to social impact that gun trafficking has had in Mexico.

The fourth negative aspect theme that *The New York Times* and *El Universal* reported in regard to gun trafficking revolves around the National Rifle Association's (NRA) influence. The NRA has made it difficult for the U.S. government to pass any

new gun laws or make amendments to existing gun laws. If the United States government did not have any opposition from the NRA they would easily be able to create and instill new gun laws that would make it harder for people buy guns at gun shows and to traffic firearms into countries such as Mexico. According to an article excerpt from *The New York Times* (2009),

The drug wars in Mexico have claimed more than 30,000 lives since 2006. That violence is fueled by gun-smuggling operations and the fact that American dealers can make bulk sales of military-style rifles favored by cartel gunmen without having to report those sales to federal authorities.⁵³

This article uses figures and facts, the number of lives lost to border violence since 2006, to frame the cultural resonance of the story that there needs to be reform in American gun laws and gun culture. This article piece from *The New York Times* hits the nail right on the head when discussing the type of amendment to existing laws that are being blocked by the NRA and fellow gun lobbyist. Additionally, it is these very same loopholes in our gun regulation laws that make it harder for the ATF to track down potential straw purchasers and gun traffickers. It argues that if American gun dealers were required to report bulk sales of military-style rifles it could have saved countless Mexican lives. It hints at the idea that it would take a slight change in American gun culture to get law makers to pass new amendment to existing gun laws.

Additional aspects of gun trafficking that were covered by *The New York Times* and *El Universal* were the NRA's influence on gun reform, consequences of U.S. operations on gun trafficking, the connection between human smuggling and gun trafficking, and the connection between drug smuggling and gun trafficking. When all 602 primary documents were scanned for a co-occurrence between the codes "U.S. gun

reform” and “NRA’s influence,” *Atlas.ti7* was utilized to perform a query and came up with a list of 10 quotes. As previously mentioned, the NRA and fellow gun lobbyists influence on U.S. gun law reform was part of the negative aspects of gun trafficking. The NRA and fellow gun lobbyists have been depicted as the biggest road blocks that stand in the way of increasing the power of the ATF and U.S. gun reform by *The New York Times* and *El Universal*. For example, ever since the ban on assault weapons expired in 2004 it has been very difficult for the U.S. Congress to reinstate the assault weapons ban. An article excerpt from Brian Knowlton (2010) stated that,

Drug-related killings are estimated to have approached 23,000 since that year. Mr. Calderon's call for a new weapons ban drew some applause, but many lawmakers remained seated. Indeed, in the largely pro-gun Congress, there seemed to be little chance of passing a fresh ban, and the notion raised some Republican ire.⁵⁴

This article uses President Calderon as a dramatic character and statistics as a selective source, number of drug related killings, as its framing procedures for the cultural resonance of gun law reform. The resonance of gun law reform is something that has constantly been brought up in the U.S. media after a school shooting occurred. President Calderon speech to the U.S. Congress stressed the issue of the U.S. taking a more proactive approach to combating gun trafficking into Mexico by calling for a new weapons ban to curtail the number of deaths attributed to border violence.

In regards to the Department of Justice, the NRA has stood in the way of the proposed amendment that would have required the reporting of multiple sales of semiautomatic rifles by federal firearm license gun dealers. The NRA and gun lobbyists have argued tooth and nail that this new amendment would be an infringement of the 2nd

Amendment, an individual's right to bear arms. An article excerpt from *The New York Times* (2011) stated,

The National Rifle Association, of course, is greeting the new regulation as an unconstitutional outrage against the right to bear arms. But the reporting of multiple sales of handguns is already required of dealers in all 50 states. Gathering information on a buyer of two or more semiautomatic rifles within five days is logical and overdue in the four Border States. The rule, issued by the Justice Department, even provides that a report will be destroyed after two years if it produces no criminal cases.⁵⁵

For this article the NRA was utilized as a dramatic character due to their tough stance on gun control in order to echo the cultural sentiment that new tougher gun laws would infringe on one's constitutional rights to bear arms. The article paints a picture that the NRA gets a bit sentimental when it comes to defending all Americans right to bear arms and that any new regulation on the 2nd Amendment would be seen as being unconstitutional and un-American. For example, even if there was a similar law in place that required FFL dealers to report multiple handgun sales and the U.S. government just wanted to extend that law to long guns (military-style rifles) the NRA makes their voice heard just enough to impede the law from passing.

In order to get around the NRA and gun lobbyist drastic measures had to be taken such as utilizing executive measures. The utilization of an executive order was the only option that was available for President Obama in order to get the amendment passed in a pro-gun congress. An article excerpt from *The New York Times* (2011) reported,

The Obama administration has had to resort to executive directive to circumvent the gun lobby and require border gun shops to begin reporting multiple-sale buyers of battlefield weapons. It is also important to note that for more than six years, the Senate has failed to confirm a permanent ATF director as the gun lobby keeps the screws turned on the agency.⁵⁶

This excerpt used facts from government officials and agencies to illustrate the difficulty that the United States government had to go through in order to pass an amendment to a gun law. The cultural resonance of the piece was one of gun culture and the 2nd Amendment. It depicts how much the NRA (Americans) loves and protects their right to bear arms and any challenge to this gun culture of theirs is seen as threat to the American way of life. Additionally, the ATF has had a real difficult time trying to find a permanent director in a pro-gun congress, which can easily be swayed by gun lobbyists who want to make sure that the new director meets their standards and does not infringe on the second amendment.

Another element of gun trafficking that needed to be investigated further was the consequences of U.S. operations. The fifth negative aspect them that *The New York Times* and *El Universal* reported on was the consequences of U.S. operations. When all 602 primary documents were scanned for a co-occurrence between the codes “gun trafficking” and “consequences of U.S. operations,” *Atlas.ti7* was utilized to perform a query and came up with a list of 81 quotes. The biggest fiasco that the United States has had to date has been the ATF’s Operation Fast and Furious. As previously mentioned, this operation allowed guns to be “walked” into Mexico in order to build bigger cases against gun traffickers and the drug cartels who they worked for. Overall, Operation Fast and Furious left the United States government in quite the predicament and with several major problems.

One problem that *The New York Times* and *El Universal* picked up revolved around the tactics that were used by the ATF and the denial by senior officials knowing

that guns were “walked” into Mexico. An article excerpt from *El Universal* (2011) stated,

El procurador general de Estados Unidos, Eric Holder, reconoció que en la lucha por detener el tráfico de armas se adoptaron tácticas inaceptables como parte de la "Operación Rápido y Furioso", en la que agentes estadounidenses permitieron el ingreso de arsenal de forma ilegal a México.<cr>El funcionario aceptó que "armas perdidas durante esta operación continuarán apareciendo en la escena del crimen en ambos lados de la frontera".<cr>Admitió además que en los últimos cinco años, de las 94 mil armas aseguradas en México, 64 mil provenían de Estados Unidos, que han contribuido a los episodios de violencia y casi a 40 mil muertes en territorio mexicano.⁵⁷

Eric Holder, the U.S. attorney general, recognized that in the struggle to stop arms trafficking, unacceptable tactics were adopted as part of "Operation Fast and Furious," in which U.S. agents allowed the entry of illegal arsenal to México. The government official accepted that "weapons lost during this operation still appear in the crime scenes on both sides of the border." He also admitted that in the past five years, from 94,000 weapons seized in Mexico, 64,000 came from the United States, which has contributed to the violence and almost 40 thousand deaths in Mexico.

This article used U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder as a dramatic character and a few statistics and numbers as selective sources, firearms seized and Mexican deaths, to get his point of view across of the ATF's unethical tactics in Operation Fast and Furious. *El Universal* reported that Attorney General Eric Holder recognized that in order combat the trafficking of firearms unacceptable tactics, “gun walking,” needed to be adopted by the ATF in Operation Fast and Furious. The cultural resonance of the article was one of accountability for one's actions. Basically the article went on to state that as a result of these tactics firearms that were lost in the tracking process started to slowly begin showing up at crime scenes on both side of the U.S-Mexico border. The overall message of the article can be summed up as we (the ATF) messed up and employed unethical tactics that caused firearms to enter into Mexico.

The second problem that *The New York Times* and *El Universal* picked up on took into account the amount of firearms that were allowed to “walk” and the chances of them being found at crime scenes and contributing to the ongoing violence in Mexico. According to *El Universal* (2011),

Lo que tenemos documentado es que muchas de estas armas, en este caso bajo esta operación, hasta como 800 armas unos de alta potencia y para uso militar, llegaron a manos de bandas organizadas de delincuentes y eso es lo que vimos según estos documentos donde hablan los mismos agentes y supervisores".
Reconoció que "lo malo es la cantidad de armas que cruzaron la frontera, cómo pueden rastrear esa cantidad que son mil 700 armas que cruzaron la frontera bajo este operativo, y la duda que entra es el control que tienen en este operativo, asegurar que estas armas no están creando mayores problemas al otro lado de la frontera."⁵⁸

What we have documented is that many of these weapons, in this case under this operation, even as 800 weapons some of high power for military use, came into the hands of organized criminal gangs and that's what we saw as these documents which speak the same agents and supervisors "acknowledged that" what is evil is the amount of weapons crossing the border, how much you can track the weapons there are 700 thousand firearms crossing the border under this operation, and is definitely doubt that enters in the control they have on this operation, ensuring that these weapons are not creating major problems across the border.

This article used the selective sources of government documents and a few figures, such as the number of weapons that “walked” into Mexico, to demonstrate the cultural sentiment of being accountable for one’s actions, in this case the unethical tactics that let guns “walk” into the hands of Mexico’s drug trafficking organizations. This excerpt from *El Universal* showcased that about 800 firearms under Operation Fast and Furious had entered into Mexico and found their way into the hands of drug trafficking organizations. The United States government assured that these firearms were not creating problems on the other side of the border (Mexico). Examining newspaper

articles from both *The New York Times* and *El Universal* it was easy to tell that this was clearly not the case at hand rather the opposite was true. The firearms that had “walked” from Operation Fast and Furious were ending up at crime scenes on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border.

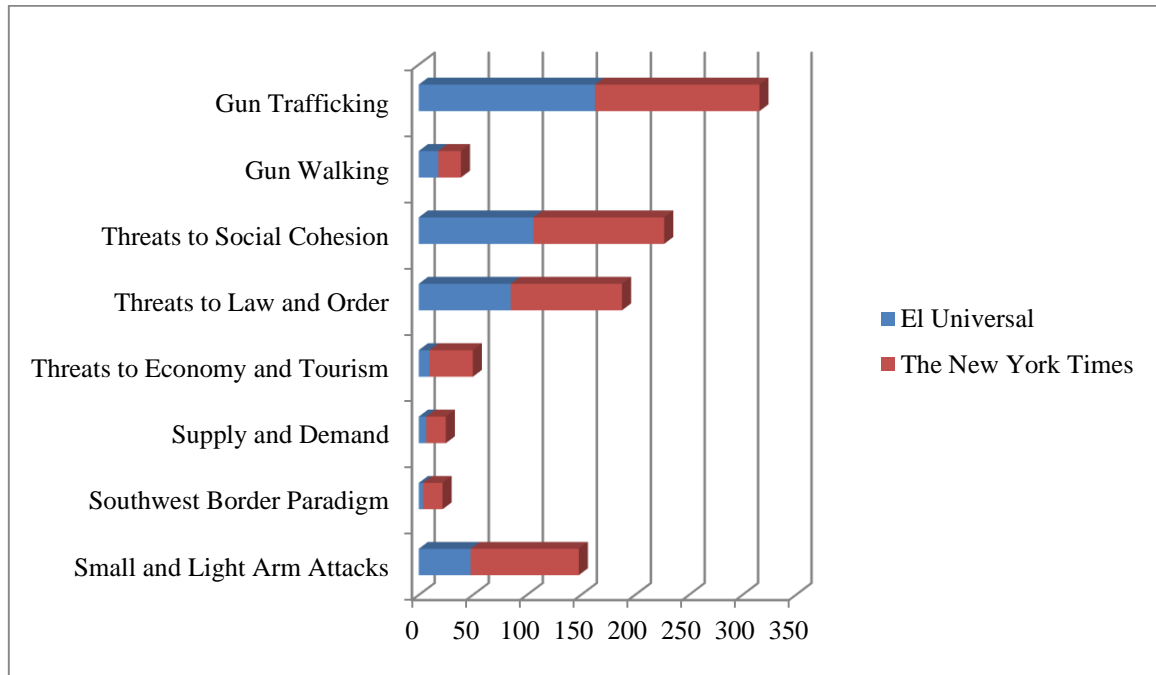
The consequences of Operation Fast and Furious became a reality when the violence finally hit home for the United States. The third problem that *The New York Times* and *El Universal* picked up revolved around the threat of lost firearms being utilized in spillover violence. Right before the whistle was blown on the illegitimate tactics used by the ATF, the death of Border Patrol Agent Brian Terry had made waves across the United States. An article excerpt from Ginger Thompson (2011) stated,

Those are precisely the kinds of concerns members of Congress have raised about a gun-smuggling operation known as Fast and Furious, in which agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives allowed people suspected of being low-level smugglers to buy and transport guns across the border in the hope that they would lead to higher-level operatives working for Mexican cartels. After the agency lost track of hundreds of weapons, some later turned up in Mexico; two were found on the United States side of the border where an American Border Patrol agent had been shot to death.⁵⁹

This article used information from a government report, selective sources, to shed light on the impact that the missing guns from Operation Fast and Furious were having on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border. The cultural resonance of the excerpt echoed the point that risky and unethical practices come with a high price. According to Thompson’s article, one of the weapons from Operation Fast and Furious which was allowed to “walk” into Mexico was found at a crime scene on the United States side of the border. The death of Border Patrol Agent Brian Terry ended up being an official statistic of spillover violence. The media had a field day with this incident especially

once they found out that the firearm was linked to a big ATF operation.

Figure 6: Negative Aspects of Gun Trafficking



In order to address research question 2 which investigates whether the Mexican print media has a higher number of articles covering gun trafficking than the United States print media, frequencies were utilized to determine how many articles were written in terms of the negative aspects of gun trafficking. According to figure 6, in the 148 articles that mentioned small and light arm attacks, 48 (32.43%) were published by *El Universal* and 100 (67.57%) were published by *The New York Times*. In the 22 articles that mentioned Southwest Border Paradigm, 4 (18.18%) were published by *El Universal* and 18 (81.82%) were published by *The New York Times*. In the 25 articles that mentioned supply and demand, 7 (28%) were published by *El Universal* and 18

(72%) were published by *The New York Times*. In the 50 articles that mentioned threats to economy and tourism, 10 (20%) were published by *El Universal* and 40 (80%) were published by *The New York Times*. In the 188 articles that mentioned threats to law and order, 85 (45.21%) were published by *El Universal* and 103 (54.79%) were published by *The New York Times*. In the 227 articles that mentioned threats to social cohesion, 106 (46.70%) were published by *El Universal* and 121 (53.30%) were published by *The New York Times*. In the 39 articles that mentioned gun walking, 18 (46.15%) were published by *El Universal* and 21 (53.85%) were published by *The New York Times*. In the 316 articles that mentioned gun trafficking, 163 (51.58%) were published by *El Universal* and 153 (48.42%) were published by *The New York Times*.

Summary

In this chapter my 1st objective was to analyze the national media from both the United States and Mexico in order to investigate how they portrayed the drug related violence that is happening in Mexico. The aim was to discover to what extent the United States print media more likely to portray gun trafficking along the U.S.-Mexico border and its impact on border violence as Mexico's problem compared to Mexico's print media? Additionally, this objective aimed to determine whether the perception that gun trafficking was primarily Mexico problems changes between the periods of 2009 through 2012. When it came to the problem of gun trafficking, the first research question which stated that the United States print media would more than likely portray gun trafficking along the U.S.-Mexico border and border violence as Mexico's problem compared to Mexico's print media was supported by the data to a slight degree. Both *The New York*

Times and *El Universal* portrayed and framed gun trafficking into Mexico as a problem of the United States due to their country supplying Mexican drug trafficking organizations with firearms. At the same time both *The New York Times* and *El Universal* printed news articles that portrayed gun trafficking into Mexico as a problem of Mexico because of their strict gun laws which causes people and criminals to seek out firearms elsewhere.

For the first research question two main frames were detected in the data: 1) “blame game”; and 2) “worthy and unworthy victims. The “blame game” frame helped to structure the message of who was to blame for the influx of firearms that were entering into Mexico. As previously mentioned, this focus was on why the U.S. and Mexico were to blame for the problem of gun trafficking into Mexico. Additionally, the data depicted a change in the whole who is to blame argument, around late 2010 and early 2011 the United States realized they were to blame for not taking enough precautions to stop the flow of firearms into Mexico. The “worthy and unworthy victims” frame was used by *The New York Times* and *El Universal* to depict the real impact of gun trafficking by focusing on who are the victims involved in Mexico’s border violence. Overall, *The New York Times* and *El Universal* came up with seven main groups: 1) journalists; 2) U.S. citizens; 3) U.S. agents; 4) Mexican citizens; 5) Mexican agents; 6) migrants; and 7) drug cartel members. The “worthy victims” was made up of journalists, U.S. citizens, U.S. agents, Mexican citizens and Mexican agents since their deaths were discussed in detail because they were more likely to have and create an emotional connection with the readers. The “unworthy victims” was made up

of migrants and drug cartel members because these individuals did not have an emotional connection with the readers and thus their deaths did not go into to much detail.

The 2nd objective of my research was to determine how often the national print media from the United States and Mexico had reported on the issue of gun trafficking. In regards to the second research question which stated that the Mexican print media would have a higher number of articles covering gun trafficking than the United States print media, in general the research question was supported. To answer this research question, two frames were discovered in the data: 1) “positive aspects of gun trafficking;” and 2) “negative aspects of gun trafficking.” The “positive aspects of gun trafficking” frame was found to have three main themes. The first theme was that of weapons seizures and arrest, it sent a message that a weapon of the streets helps to ensure a sense of security because it is weapon out of the hands of criminals.

The second theme took into account the cooperation between the American and Mexican governments to combat the problems of gun trafficking and border violence. The third theme was that of protesting, this took into account that activism could help bring attention to the crisis on the U.S.-Mexico border and hopefully changes to the current bleak situation. The “negative aspects of gun trafficking” frame had five themes. The first theme was the origin of the firearms, through this theme *The New York Times* and *El Universal* were able to stress the issue that a majority of the firearms that were being used by drug trafficking organizations and had been recovered came from the United States. The second theme was the role of firearms in border violence; this theme

stressed the issue that firearms were a dangerous tool used by drug cartels to secure their precious and lucrative drug routes. The third theme was the recruitment of young children. This theme took on the issue that drug trafficking organizations are having a social impact on the children from the United States and Mexico by taking them into the dark and dangerous world of the cartels.

The fourth theme that showed up in the data was the National Rifle Association's influence on politics and how they weaken and block gun law reform. The fifth theme that appeared in the data revolved around the consequences of U.S. operations. In this theme *The New York Times* and *El Universal* addressed the problems of allowing guns to "walk" into Mexico in order to follow the gun and build a strong case against Mexico's drug trafficking organizations. They depicted how the risks such as the number of deaths and weapons showing up at crime scene, were greater than the reward of bring down a gun trafficking operation. In terms of articles regarding the U.S stance on gun trafficking *The New York Times* had more articles than *El Universal* but when it came to Mexico's stance on gun trafficking, *El Universal* had more articles than *The New York Times*. In terms of articles about gun trafficking *El Universal* had more articles compared to *The New York Times*. When it came to the issue of reporting on the instances of gun trafficking *El Universal* had more articles compared to those of *The New York Times*.

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CHAPTER VI

IS GUN TRAFFICKING INTO MEXICO A SOCIAL PROBLEM?

In this chapter, I focus on whether or not gun trafficking into Mexico and its impact on border violence can be described as a social problem. I utilize the three criteria from Jamrozik and Nocella definition of a social problem to determine if gun trafficking into Mexico falls into the category of a social problem. I discuss how all six of the frames are interconnected and how they fit into Jamrozik and Nocella's three main criteria of a social problem. I also discuss how Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model is related to the issue of gun trafficking into Mexico and which filters apply to *The New York Times* and *El Universal*. I detail the configuration and importance of the two frames that I found in my sample of news articles from *The New York Times* and *El Universal*. These two frames are: "direct mention of gun trafficking" and "indirect mention of gun trafficking." I begin with a summary of each frame which includes the frame itself, keywords that illustrate the frame, framing procedures (metaphors, selection of sources, etc.), reasoning devices (defining the problem, assigning responsibility, passing moral judgment, and possible solutions), and cultural resonance.

The 3rd objective of this research examines how gun trafficking and its impact on border violence is built as social problem. Before gun trafficking along the U.S.-Mexico border can be examined whether it is a social problem or not, a social problem must first be defined. So what is a social problem? According to Jamrozik and Nocella (1998: 18),

A social problem is a social phenomenon or condition that is perceived to potentially or directly threaten the social order; it is perceived to threaten society's interests or to threaten or offend moral standards and values perhaps offending aesthetic values or sensibilities and possibly injecting a feeling of guilt.

Merton had a different approach in regards to figuring out whether a social problem did or did not exist. According to Merton and Nisbet (1976: 7), “a social problem tends to exist when there is a sizeable discrepancy between what is and what people think ought to be.” Merton’s approach could definitely be applied to the issues of gun trafficking and border violence.

When it comes to the issue of gun trafficking into Mexico some U.S. citizens have the perception that the firearms that are being utilized by drug trafficking organizations to secure their drug routes from rival drug trafficking organizations come from various sources and other countries besides the United States. The reality is that a good majority of the firearms that are being used by drug trafficking organizations to fight off rival drug trafficking organizations, Mexico’s military and the police, have come from various gun shops predominately along the Southwestern U.S. border. There is concrete evidence that depicts that these illicit firearms have come from the United States and the strongest evidence that is out there is based on firearm trace data. These firearm traces are conducted by the United States government; usually Mexico’s police recover the weapons from a crime scene and send them off to their U.S. counterparts to have the firearm traced to figure out where the weapon came from. Brian Knowlton (2010) reported,

That of 75,000 guns and assault weapons seized in Mexico in the past three years, 'more than 80 percent of those we have been able to trace came from the United States.' Violence in Mexico began to increase in 2006, he said, just two years after the American assault-weapons ban expired.¹

This article utilized selective sources, firearm trace data from U.S. government agencies,

to stress the origin of firearms in order to frame the cultural sentiment of weak U.S. gun laws. The article stated that 80% of the firearms which had been traced came from the United States. It implies that the high number of assault weapons and the increase in border violence can be linked to the expiration of the assault weapons ban. This excerpt seems to echo the call for U.S. gun law reform with regards to assault weapons.

How does an issue or phenomenon go about being perceived as a social problem?

According to Jamrozik and Nocella (1998: 2),

In order for a social condition to be accepted as a social problem the condition must first be perceived as such. Before a condition or phenomenon can be considered a social problem it must meet three criteria: 1) have an identifiable societal origin; 2) the condition must constitute a threat or be perceived to constitute a threat to certain values or interests; and 3) the condition must be amenable to removal, reduction or solution.

Now that the concept of social problems has been clearly defined we can proceed to discuss whether gun trafficking could be considered a social problem. So there are three main questions that must be taken into careful consideration when it comes to determining if gun trafficking into Mexico and its impact on border violence is a social problem. The first criterion aims to discover if gun trafficking into Mexico has an identifiable societal origin. The drug war related violence in Mexico started in 2006 and it was not until a few years later around 2008 that the news media started to focus on the impact that gun trafficking had on Mexico's border violence.

Around 2008 the issue of illicit firearms trafficking into Mexico started to gain exposure especially with the increase in the number of deaths attributed to border violence. The issue of gun trafficking into Mexico became so prevalent that it garnered the attention of the United States government and in 2009 the Government

Accountability Office (GAO) released their research findings on firearms trafficking. The societal origin of the phenomenon of gun trafficking into Mexico can best be thought of as starting in 2008 but having caught fire from 2009 on. This research focused on *The New York Times* and *El Universal* articles within the years of 2009-2012 and found that from these years the issue of gun trafficking was directly and indirectly being discussed by both national newspapers. Direct discussion of gun trafficking referred to instances in which gun trafficking, weapons possession/gun trafficking arrest or weapons seizure were brought up in an article piece. Indirect discussion of gun trafficking referred to instances in article pieces that did not directly bring up aspects of gun trafficking but rather implied the issue of gun trafficking by discussing small and light arm attacks, gun battles, or the types of weapons used by drug trafficking organizations. So the phenomenon of gun trafficking into Mexico met Jamrozik and Nocella's first criteria for becoming a social problem.

The second criterion aims to see if gun trafficking into Mexico constitutes a threat or a perceived threat to certain values and interests. Gun trafficking can be viewed as a social problem due to the impact that the trafficking of illicit firearms into Mexico has had on individual freedoms, threats to social cohesion, and economic prosperity. How does the illicit trafficking of firearms impact and threaten social cohesion among social institutions and law and order, individual freedoms, and economic prosperity? It does so by contributing to the ongoing border violence and by providing the actual instruments of death that drug trafficking organizations utilize to secure their precious and lucrative drug routes. The utilization of these trafficked firearms have led to

numerous deaths of Mexican citizens, law enforcement officials, military and drug trafficking organization members. As previously mentioned about 94,000 firearms have been recovered in Mexico in the last five years and nearly 64,000 of those firearms came from the United States and have contributed to over 40,000 deaths. An article excerpt from *El Universal* (2010) reported,

Se trata de Jesús Alberto Ángeles Nava, de 42 años; Rubén Rodríguez Cruz, de 39; José Alberto Álvarez Mejía, de 34; José Cortés Cornejo, de 27; María de los Ángeles Escamilla Ziranda, de 26 años, esposa de José Cortés Cornejo, y José Bulmaro Trujillo López, de 21 años, todos ellos con domicilio en la capital del estado.- Atacan a asistentes a una fiesta Un grupo atacó con fusiles AK-47 y AR-15 a los asistentes a una fiesta de tambora en el campo Plata, municipio de Angostura, asesinó a cuatro personas y dejó a otra lesionada.²

It is Jesus Alberto Angeles Nava, 42; Ruben Rodriguez Cruz, 39; José Alberto Alvarez Mejia, 34; José Cortés Cornejo, 27; Maria de los Angeles Ziranda Escamilla, 26, wife of José Cortés Cornejo, José López Trujillo Bulmaro, 21, all residing in the state capital - Attacked attending a party. A group attacked with AK-47 and AR-15 the attendees of a party in the drum Plata, town of Angostura, that killed four people and left another injured.

This article uses details from police reports, number of people injured and killed, as selective sources to frame the issue in a cultural sentiment that firearms are dangerous. The article discusses that five people were attacked a party by some armed gunmen that left four dead and one wounded. It depicts how gun trafficking has impacted the violence in Mexico, for example, the gunmen were using military grade assault rifles to carry out their vicious attacks on their victims. It also implies that these weapons might have been smuggled into the country since Mexico does not allow their citizens to own an assault rifle. The sheer numbers of death that have been attributed to border violence at the hands of armed gunmen have led to people being afraid to go out in public for the fear of being caught in the cross fire which tends to impede on one's individual freedoms.

The fear of shootouts between rival drug trafficking organizations or between the military and drug trafficking organizations has led to a decline in economic prosperity, especially for cities that rely heavily on tourism. Additionally, the impact of gun trafficking on Mexico's border violence can definitely be felt and seen threatening social cohesion. Social cohesion can be thought as a group working in unity towards a goal or to satisfy the emotional needs of its members. There are various groups such as military, law enforcement, government, and education which are negatively impacted by the illicit trafficking of firearms into Mexico. The unity of the majority of these groups working towards a common goal is disrupted and halted when fire fights break out.

For example, the government's goal of working to make the border towns safer and rounding up members of drug trafficking organizations is disrupted or comes to a halt when the military and law enforcement officers are being outgunned by drug trafficking organizations with bigger and deadlier firearms. As previously mentioned by *El Universal*, powerful weapons such as Ak-47, AR-15, grenades, .50 caliber rifles, and rocket launchers are on the loose in Mexico. The influx of illicit trafficked firearms (heavy and light arms) has definitely lead to the police and military being out gunned by drug trafficking organizations, they have gotten hold of semi-automatic, automatic firearms, and artillery, has lead the police and military to think twice about their safety while patrolling. These firearms that drug trafficking organizations use in their deadly turf battles have been trafficked into Mexico from other countries such as the United States, South America, China, and Russia. The phenomenon of gun trafficking into Mexico met Jamrozik and Nocella's second criteria for becoming a social problem.

Overall, the trafficking of firearms into Mexico directly impacts border violence which causes threats to individual freedoms, social cohesion and economic prosperity.

The third criterion aims to see if gun trafficking can be amendable to removal, reduction or solution. So can the problem of gun trafficking into Mexico be solved or reduced? This question is a pretty interesting and tricky one. In order to meet Jamrozik and Nocella's third criteria, gun trafficking needs to be addressed not only as Mexico's problem but one of shared responsibility between the United States and Mexico. When the issue of gun trafficking into Mexico started to pick up steam around 2008 there was no real consensus of shared responsibility rather it was a case of the blame game.

On one hand, Mexico stated that the firearms from the United States were fueling the border violence in their country. Mexico's stance revolved on the notion that the United States would supply Mexico's drug trafficking organizations with firearms. Cottam and Marenin (2005: 18) stated that "Mexican officials have noted that the issue with controlling narcotics, such as marijuana and cocaine, has been controlling the supply of firearms smuggled into Mexico from the United States." On the other hand, the United States would blame Mexico for their (Mexico) problem with the influx of illicit firearms. The United States stance revolved on the notion that Mexico's drug trafficking organizations had a high demand for firearms. "Rather gun trafficking was viewed as a Mexican demand problem which meant that it should be dealt by the Mexican authorities, rather than a supply problem (reverses the drug problem perception)" (Cottam and Marenin, 2005: 18).

After a while, around the late half of 2010 and early 2011, the problem of gun trafficking into Mexico came to be viewed as a shared responsibility by both the United States and Mexico. It has not been a perfect international relationship in trying to combat the problem of gun trafficking into Mexico. There have been a few hiccups along the way such as the debacle of the ATF's Operation Fast and Furious. Mexico has called for the United States to reinstate the assault weapons ban which expired in 2004. As previously mentioned by *The New York Times* and *El Universal*, it is not an easy task for the United States to pass new gun laws or to reinstate an assault weapons ban. For example, after several tragedies, high profile school shootings such as the Sandy Hook Elementary shooting have occurred in the United States which has involved assault weapons, not much progress has been made in terms of trying to regulate the sale of weapons like AR-15s, AK-47s, and high capacity magazines.

One of the organizations that stand in the way getting new gun laws enacted is the NRA. Charlie Savage (2011) reported,

They also accused Republicans of trying to weaken and block gun-control measures aimed at diminishing firearms violence and trafficking across the border. "For those of you keeping score at home, one side is using this horrible screw-up to justify a policy," said Representative Mike Quigley, Democrat of Illinois. "The other side is using this horrible screw-up to justify" keeping the ATF weak and "extraordinarily lax" gun-control laws.³

This article utilized Illinois Representative Mike Quigley as a dramatic character to discuss the influence that the NRA has on politics and how they ultimately impact U.S. gun law reform. The cultural resonance of this article is one of the influences of special interests groups. For example, Illinois Representative Mike Quigley stated that the NRA plays and influences both the democratic and republican parties when it comes to issues

such as gun law reform and keeping the ATF weak by bringing up Operation Fast and Furious. The article implies that if the NRA would allow politicians to do their job we might have some stricter gun law measures in place that could help to reduce the flow of firearms into Mexico and stem violence in Mexico.

In order for the problem of illicit trafficking of firearms into Mexico to be fully resolved changes need to be made regarding current U.S. gun policies and the amount of influence that the NRA has over politicians. There has been cooperation between the United States and Mexico in combating the flow of illicit firearms into Mexico. The governments of both the United States and Mexico have stepped up their vehicle inspections at the U.S.-Mexico border in order to prevent the flow of firearms, money, drugs, and illegal immigrants from entering the country. Additionally, the United States has made it a point to provide aid to help Mexico combat the growing drug violence and to help stop the flow of contraband from crossing the U.S.-Mexico border. An article excerpt from *El Universal* (2011) reported,

En el reporte sobre Entrenamiento Militar Extranjero que se envió al Congreso de Estados Unidos se indica que bajo la sección 1004, que es asistencia contranarcóticos del gobierno de EU a México, se proporcionaron 103 cursos, incluyendo sobre derechos humanos; y 425 sesiones por un total de 2 millones 435 mil 692 dólares, de los 4 millones 565 mil 466 dólares que en total se destinaron para entrenamiento de México.<cr>"La asistencia técnica abarca un amplio rango de capacidades y activos de contraterrorismo y contranarcóticos, además de realzar las habilidades de México para cooperar más con los esfuerzos de Estados Unidos", señala el reporte.⁴

In the report on Foreign Military Training that was sent to Congress indicated that under section 1004, which is counternarcotics assistance from the U.S. government to Mexico, 103 were provided courses, including on human rights; and 425 sessions for a total of \$2,435,692.00, of the \$4,565,466.00 in total allocated for the training of Mexico. "Technical assistance covers a wide range of capabilities and assets counterterrorism and counternarcotics, in addition to

enhancing the skills of Mexico to increase its cooperation with U.S. efforts," the report stated.

El Universal utilized the framing procedure of government reports as their selective source in order to send out the cultural sentiment of cooperation among the United States and Mexico. According to this excerpt the United States has provided Mexico with trainings for their military and police to be better prepared to handle confrontations with drug trafficking organizations. These trainings have come with a price tag of \$2,435,692.00. It is a step in the right direction since the United States cannot send in their troops into Mexico without being seen as an act of aggression.

Besides providing Mexico's military and law enforcement with training, the United States has also provided aid in the form of money so they could buy equipment in order to better confront these drug trafficking organizations who are wreaking havoc. For example, the Merida Initiative was a bi-national collaboration to help stem the flow of firearms, money, and the demand for drugs. The Merida Initiative and other operations by the American and Mexican governments demonstrate that the problem of gun trafficking into Mexico can be reduced and eventually solved if the whole supply and demand for firearms and drugs can be addressed properly. Gun trafficking into Mexico met Jamrozik and Nocella's third criteria of the problem being amendable to removal, reduction or solution. Overall, gun trafficking could be considered a social problem since it did meet all three of Jamrozik and Nocella's criteria.

In the end the frames of "blame game," "worthy and unworthy victims," "positive aspects of gun trafficking," "negative aspects of gun trafficking," "indirect mention of gun trafficking," and "direct mention of gun trafficking" were all used by

The New York Times and *El Universal* to create a national discourse of gun trafficking into Mexico and its impact on Mexico's border violence as a national discourse. These frames were used basically to create a media spectacle of the border region as being this lawless land where criminals run rampant on the streets doing as they please. The "blame game" frame interconnected with the "negative aspects of gun trafficking," "worthy and unworthy victims," and "direct mention of gun trafficking" frames to address the responsibility issue of the gun trafficking into Mexico narrative. For example, was the United States also responsible for the firearms that were making their way into Mexico and the impact they were having on Mexico's drug related violence or was Mexico solely responsible for the firearms that were making their way into their country and the impact they were having on drug related violence? On the one hand, these frames were used in various combinations to indicate that the United States was to blame for the firearms that were entering Mexico and partially responsible for the countless death and destruction they were causing due the lax gun laws in the United States.

On the other hand, these frames were also used to depict that Mexico was to blame for the number of firearms that were entering into their own country and the impact they were having on border violence due in part to Mexico's strict gun laws which created a supply and demand for firearms by drug trafficking organizations. The "worthy and unworthy victims" frame was used to portray the true and deadly impact the trafficking of military-grade weapons have had on Mexico's drug related violence. By creating and adding an emotional connection between the reader and the "worthy

victims” of Mexico’s border violence, *The New York Times* and *El Universal* were able to bring some awareness to what is going on in Mexico and how citizens and tourists alike are being impacted and targeted by the senseless violence for control over drug routes. Also by discussing and including those “unworthy victims” of the Mexico’s border violence, *The New York Times* and *El Universal* were able to paint a picture of those who are really the prime targets of the drug related violence in Mexico, mainly the members of drug trafficking organizations and migrants (illegal immigrants). The use of the “worthy and unworthy victims” frame coupled with the threats to social cohesion, economy and law and order helped to support the second criteria of Jamrozik and Nocella’s requirements of a social problem.

The interconnectedness of the “positive aspect of gun trafficking” frame with the “direct mention of gun trafficking frame” were utilized to showcase the cooperation between the American and Mexican governments. This new found cooperation between the American and Mexican governments was an indicator that the social problem of gun trafficking into Mexico was amendable to removal as long as it continued to be addressed as a bi-national problem, thus supporting the third criteria of Jamrozik and Nocella’s requirements of a social problem. The interconnectedness of the “negative aspects of gun trafficking” frame along with those of the “blame game frame,” “worthy and unworthy victims,” “indirect aspects of gun trafficking,” and “direct aspects of gun trafficking” were utilized to discuss the elements of gun trafficking, the origin of gun trafficking into Mexico, those affected by the impact of gun trafficking on border violence, and the dangers of firearms.

The interconnectedness of these frames were used by *The New York Times* and *El Universal* to constitute gun trafficking into Mexico as an overall threat to Mexico's social cohesion, economy, and law and order. These frames helped to support the first and third criteria's of Jamrozik and Nocella's requirements of a social problem. The "indirect mention of gun trafficking" frame's interconnectedness with the "blame game," "worthy and unworthy victims," and "negative aspects of gun trafficking" were used to describe how *The New York Times* and *El Universal* indirectly implied gun trafficking into Mexico in articles about Mexico's border violence. This indirect mention of gun trafficking into Mexico occurred by focusing on the various attacks (on victims), threats, number of deaths and destruction that resulted from the use of firearms, by drug trafficking organizations, that were smuggled into Mexico. It also built on the notion that impact of gun trafficking into Mexico constituted a threat to Mexico's values and interests, especially their economic and law enforcement interests thus supporting the third criteria's of Jamrozik and Nocella's requirements of a social problem. The interconnectedness of the "direct mention of gun trafficking" frame with the "blame game," "worthy and unworthy," "positive aspects of gun trafficking," and "negative aspects of gun trafficking" frames were used to reinforce the notion of who was to be held responsible for gun trafficking into Mexico and its overall impact on border violence, whose job is it to resolve the issue of gun trafficking into Mexico, the consequences of allowing guns to be "walked" across the U.S.-Mexico border, and cooperation between the American and Mexican governments to solve the social problem of gun trafficking into Mexico. The interconnectedness of the last frame

touched on all three criteria of Jamrozik and Nocella's (1998) requirements of a social problem: 1) social origin, 2) threat to values and interests, and 3) amendable to removal. Overall, the interconnectedness of these frames, "blame game," "worthy and unworthy victims," "positive aspects of gun trafficking," "negative aspects of gun trafficking," "indirect mention of gun trafficking," and "direct mention of gun trafficking," helped to depict and set the national discourse of gun trafficking into Mexico as a social problem.

Now that I have discussed the interconnectedness of the frames, I shall discuss how the propaganda model impacted the types of news articles that were published. Herman and Chomsky's (2002) propaganda model stated that the size, ownership and profit orientation of the mass media, advertising license to do business, sourcing mass media news, flak, and anticommunism as control mechanism could all impact on the type of stories that the media aired or printed. *The New York Times* and *El Universal* only had to deal with two of the five filters of Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model. The first filter that both *The New York Times* and *El Universal* had to deal with was the sourcing of mass media news. The sourcing of mass media news filter takes into account that the news media cannot really be at all locations trying to cover each and every news breaking story that comes up rather the news media has to rely on concentrating their resources where significant news tends to occur. This is usually why you tend to find news reporters hovering around areas such as police stations, the government offices, and officials when there is a press conference since this is where leaks, rumors, and news occurs. According to Rodriguez (1995: 131) "in the U.S., the

day to day news making process centers on a triangle of government officials, business leaders, and powerful institutions.”

As previously mentioned, the news media tends to use sources like government and police briefs and reports for the main reason that they are viewed as credible, reliable and recognizable sources. According to Barlow (1998: 149) “the representation of crime and justice in the media has constantly demonstrated that the media helps to construct (through sources), rather than simply just represent, the interconnected realities of crime and justice.” That is why *The New York Times* and *El Universal* tended to have a government and police documents and reports as a majority of the selective sources and government officials as dramatic characters for their articles framing devices. These types of media sources for one’s news piece helps to get the message across to the general public of the dangers of the trafficking of firearms into Mexico from the United States. This is where sources like Stratford global intelligence and the Woodrow Wilson research center are utilized to give their expert opinion on the impact that guns are having on the drug related violence in Mexico and whether all firearms which are recovered from crime scenes are from the United States. Postman (2006: 10) argues,

That whether we experience the world through the lens of speech or the printed word or the television camera, our media-metaphor classify the world for us, [they] sequence it, frame it, enlarge it, reduce it, color it, and argue a case for what the world is like.

The New York Times and *El Universal* utilize these selective sources and dramatic characters to frame and argue what is really and truly going on along the U.S.-Mexico border in regards to gun trafficking, border violence, and spillover violence. This could be seen in articles that discussed which country was to blame for the influx of

firearms into Mexico, the number of countless deaths that resulted from them, and which country was responsible for remedying the situation. In the end, the sourcing of the mass media plays a huge part in *The New York Times* and *El Universal*'s decision on deciding which issues are to be considered social problems. Sacco (1995: 141) argues that “the social construction of crime problems could best be understood as the relationship between the media to their sources and the organizational constraints that structure the news-gathering process.”

On a side note, the relationship between bureaucracies, such as the government, and the mass media are not without issues. These bureaucracies can influence and manipulate which news stories are covered. According to Herman and Chomsky (2002: 22),

Because of their services, continuous contact on the beat and mutual dependency, the powerful can use personal relationships, threats and rewards to further influence and coerce the media and the media might feel obligated to carry extremely dubious stories and mute criticism in order to not offend their sources.

A problem that can arise from sourcing the media with information is that disinformation becomes a possibility. Disinformation basically refers to the misleading of the news media. This process of disinformation could be seen in articles from *The New York Times* and *El Universal* that discussed the early consequences of Operation Fast and Furious, in which the U.S. government (ATF) stated that nothing was wrong and that they knew nothing of the tactics that were being used by the local office in Arizona. Eventually the truth came out when a whistle blower decided to step forward and discuss all the unethical tactics the ATF was using including high ranking officials lying about their knowledge on what was really going on with Operation Fast and Furious.

The second filter of the propaganda model that applied to *The New York Times* and *El Universal* was that of flak. According to Herman and Chomsky (2002: 26), “flak refers to negative responses to a media statement or program; can take the form of letters, phone calls, petitions, lawsuits, speeches, bills to Congress, and threats or punitive action.” In regards to how the flak filter could influence the types of news stories that *The New York Times* and *El Universal* would be able to publish, it was mainly through self-censorship. This issue of self-censorship was only applicable to *El Universal* and not *The New York Times*. The main reason for the difference in the impact of the flak filter was because the Mexican news media had to directly deal with threats and attacks from Mexican drug trafficking organizations while American news media were pretty much out of the reach of Mexican drug trafficking organizations. These threats and attacks against news journalists served as a form of flak since they were intended to prevent the media from reporting on what was really going on in Mexico’s border towns and other areas affected by the fighting among drug trafficking organizations.

Both *The New York Times* and *El Universal* wrote article pieces that discussed the issue of self-censorship by the news media in Mexico due to external pressures from the Mexican drug trafficking organizations. It was mainly a way for drug trafficking organizations to control what aspects of the news the media could ultimately present to its viewers and the world without bringing too much attention from the Mexican and American governments. These threats and attacks from Mexico’s drug trafficking organizations were so severe that most of the Mexico’s media corporations ended up

censoring themselves in order to protect their reporters and crew. This led to Mexican citizens seeking alternative sources, such as social media sites and websites, to gather information about what was going on in the world around them which hurts the overall sales numbers for Mexican media corporations. In the end, the Mexican media had a few ways to cope with the flak they were receiving from the Mexican drug trafficking organizations.

The Mexican media could either decide not to publish news stories about incidents of gun trafficking and border violence (drug related violence), they could publish them by assuming pseudonyms or by making their news pieces anonymous or they could hand over their stories to their American counterparts to publish. The main coping mechanism that was depicted in the data was that of making their articles anonymous. All 301 of the news articles from *El Universal* had no reporter names or any type of identification besides the newspaper name, date and year they were published which goes to show how afraid they were of being targeted by the various Mexican drug trafficking organizations. Thus two of the filters, sourcing of the mass media and flak, of the propaganda model had an impact on the type of news articles that were covered by *The New York Times* and *El Universal* in regards to the social problem of gun trafficking into Mexico and its impact on border violence. Now that it has been established that gun trafficking into Mexico is a social problem we can turn to the issue of the relationship among gun trafficking, human smuggling, drug smuggling, and border violence.

The third research question also investigated whether the United States and Mexico's print media's articles regarding gun trafficking would intersect with stories of

smuggling (human and drug smuggling) and border violence. This section will examine to see if there is an intersection between gun trafficking and human smuggling. When all 602 primary documents were scanned for a co-occurrence between the codes “gun trafficking” and “human smuggling,” *Atlas.ti*7 was utilized to perform a query and came up with a list of 26 quotes. One way that *The New York Times* and *El Universal* discussed the intersection of gun trafficking and human smuggling was by bringing up the Southwest Border Paradigm. There were a few articles that brought up the issue of the Southwest Border Paradigm. Just to reiterate, the Southwest border paradigm states that drugs and illegal immigrants head north to the U.S. while money and guns head south to Mexico. An article excerpt from Arnold C. Archibold’s (2009) interview with Mr. Paton stated that “they [Mexico] send us drugs and people, and we [the U.S.] send them guns and cash.”⁵ *The New York Times* used Mr. Paton as a dramatic character to discuss the premise and different elements of the Southwest Border Paradigm. The cultural resonance of this article revolved around lucrative criminal enterprises and supply and demand. For example, the article indicated that drug trafficking organizations do not just deal with narcotics but they have various business ventures that they also engage in things such as human smuggling, gun trafficking, and money laundering. Mr. Paton mentioned that drug trafficking organizations send us drugs and people while we send them guns and cash. So basically he was stating that drug trafficking organizations supply the U.S. with drugs and illegal immigrants because we have a demand for them and we supply them with guns and money since they have a demand for those items.

The second way that *The New York Times* and *El Universal* discussed the intersection of gun trafficking and human smuggling was by discussing the different types of lucrative businesses that drug trafficking organizations partake in. An article excerpt from *El Universal* (2010) stated,

México se ubica en los primeros lugares en tráfico de personas debido a su cercanía con Estados Unidos que es el mayor mercado de consumo, según información del Centro de Estudios e Investigación en Desarrollo y Asistencia Social (CEIDAS), el cual resalta que ese fenómeno es el tercer delito que mayores ganancias deja al crimen organizado a nivel mundial, con 32 mil millones de dólares anuales, después del tráfico de drogas y de armas.⁶

Mexico is at the top in human trafficking due to its proximity to the United States which is the largest consumer market, according to information from the Center for Studies and Research in Development and Social Assistance (CEIDAS), which highlights that this phenomenon is the third offense which moves higher profits to organized crime worldwide, with 32 billion dollars annually, after drug trafficking and weapons.

El Universal used reports from CEIDAS and statistics, selective sources, to depict and frame the issue about the amount of money, 32 billion dollars, that drug trafficking organizations roughly make in a year. The cultural resonance of the article is one of the different lucrative criminal businesses. This report by the Center for Studies and Research in Development and Social Assistance highlights that Mexico is first in terms of human trafficking due to its close proximity to the United States. Additionally, human smuggling is the third biggest business for criminal organizations, such as drug trafficking organizations, right behind drug smuggling and gun trafficking.

The third way that *The New York Times* and *El Universal* discussed the intersection of gun trafficking and human smuggling was by reporting on plans for cooperation between the United States and Mexico. Most of the cooperation plans called

for bi-national help in regards to curtailing the smuggling of drugs, firearms and illegal immigrants. In order for cooperation between the U.S. and Mexico to work, each country must be willing to approach the situations at hand as equal partners, which means sharing responsibility for the problems at hand. An article excerpt from Jackie Calmes and Alexei Barrionuevo (2011) stated that,

In pledging that the United States would be an equal partner in its relations with Latin America, Mr. Obama said that would, in turn, demand "a sense of shared responsibility" by the countries of Latin America. He cited several areas to improve cooperation: in fighting criminal gangs and traffickers in drugs, guns and illegal immigrants; improving education and cultural exchange programs; ending trade barriers; developing clean-energy projects; and combating climate change, which, as both presidents noted, has increased the melting of glaciers in the Andes Mountains.⁷

The framing procedure for this article used President Obama to stress the cultural sentiment of cooperation among the United States and Mexico. President Obama stated that shared responsibility and improved cooperation between the Americas was the key to combating criminal gangs and traffickers of guns, drugs, and humans. This article implies the message that if we work together we can tackle these big problems which are impacting each of our countries.

Now that I have discussed the intersection among human smuggling and gun trafficking, the focus now shifts to the intersection of drug smuggling and gun trafficking. This section looks to investigate whether articles of gun trafficking intersect with stories of drug smuggling. When all 602 primary documents were scanned for a co-occurrence between the codes of "gun trafficking" and "drug smuggling," *Atlas.ti*⁷ was utilized to perform a query and came up with a list of 67 quotes. One way that *The New York Times* and *El Universal* discussed the intersection of gun trafficking and drug

smuggling was by reporting on seizures (drug, money, and firearm). Articles that would report on the issue of drug seizures usually would end up being tied to weapon and money seizures as well or vice versa. An article excerpt from *The New York Times* (2011) reported that,

Smugglers were shipping drugs to Detroit from El Cajon, the authorities said. El Cajon and the federal police say they have seized 18 pounds of methamphetamine, narcotics, cocaine and other drugs; more than 3,500 pounds of marijuana; \$630,000 in cash; four improvised explosive devices; and more than 30 guns, including assault rifles.⁸

For this article police reports along with statistics, selective sources, were utilized to discuss the link between drug smuggling and gun trafficking were used to touch on the various aspects of drug trafficking organizations and seizures. It stated that smugglers from Mexico were sending drugs to the United States and during a raid by federal police they seized drugs, money, firearms, and improvised explosive devices. It sends the message that there seems to be some sort of a relationship between guns and drugs in Mexico, mainly where you find one you are more than likely to find the other nearby. It was common to read excerpts from both *The New York Times* and *El Universal* that discussed how firearms, drugs, and at times money were confiscated after an altercation between Mexico's military and drug trafficking organizations. It was interesting to read news stories that involved the United States raiding stash houses and confiscating drugs, weapons, vehicles, and other equipment since it showed that the United States views on Mexico's border violence and gun trafficking had changed and wanted to do their part.

A second way that *The New York Times* and *El Universal* discussed the intersection of gun trafficking and drug smuggling was by reporting on the reason why

the drug trafficking organizations were fighting a turf battle. The main reason why drug trafficking organizations were fighting against each other was for the very lucrative drug routes into the United States. These smuggling routes closely tied into the Southwestern Border Paradigm. These routes are linked to the Southwestern Border Paradigm because drug trafficking organizations do not only transport drugs to the north but are also utilized to smuggle guns and money back into Mexico from the U.S. and into the hands of the drug trafficking organizations. An additional function of these drug routes has been to transport illegal immigrants into the United States. Elisabeth Malkin (2009) a reporter for *The New York Times* stated that,

Gunfire and grenade explosions rang out across streets that were almost deserted. A battle for control between the Gulf gang and its onetime enforcement arm, the Zetas, has unleashed fierce fighting this year, and the Mexican authorities have stepped up their search for the leaders of both. Mr. Cardenas, controlled the Matamoros-Brownsville smuggling corridor for the Gulf gang and was responsible for shipping large cargos of marijuana and cocaine to the United States, the State Department said.⁹

The framing procedure for this article was the selective source of a government report.

The facts from the report were used to depict the cultural sentiment that there is no honor among criminals because drug trafficking organizations are fighting each other basically to the death for these smuggling corridors since that is how they make their living. These corridors are important to the drug trafficking organizations because this is how they ship drugs and humans across into the United States and it is also how they receive their shipments of money and firearms.

This example does not directly discuss gun trafficking but it indirectly implies the notion by covering the details of a small and light firearm attack between the vying

drug cartels, Los Zetas and the Gulf Cartel. It also depicts how far the drug cartels are willing to go to acquire one of these smuggling routes. A reason why drug cartels are willing to risk it all for these smuggling routes has to do with the amount of money that can be made. According to *El Universal* (2010),

Los cálculos del negocio internacional del crimen -que abarca desde el tráfico de drogas, la piratería y el tráfico de armas, hasta el secuestro, la extorsión y el tráfico de personas-, se estiman en más de 800 mil millones de dólares.¹⁰

The calculations of business for international crime-ranging from drug trafficking, piracy and arms trafficking, to kidnapping, extortion and human trafficking, are estimated at over 800 billion dollars.

El Universal utilized reports and statistics as its selective sources to frame and stress the cultural issue that crime does pay and it is easy “dirty” money. This excerpt makes its point by including the calculated amount for international crime which includes gun trafficking, drug trafficking, kidnapping, extortion, and human smuggling, at an estimated 800 billion dollars. This only goes to show that those involved in crime can get an easy pay day if they are not caught or killed in the process of Mexico’s enduring border violence. Earlier I mentioned that the top three grossing illegal businesses were drug smuggling, gun smuggling, and human smuggling for criminal organizations, the previous excerpt actually demonstrated that all three of these crimes are some of the most profitable business for criminal organizations. In the end it all comes down to the almighty dollar and these drug trafficking organizations do not care what or who is caught in the crossfire as long as their drug cartel reigns supreme and ultimately controls these corridors and routes.

A third way that *The New York Times* and *El Universal* discussed the intersection

of gun trafficking and drug smuggling was by reporting on the need for cooperation between the United States and Mexico. This link was previously discussed, it basically calls for cooperation and responsibility from both sides, the consumer and the supplier, in order to solve the issue of border violence, gun trafficking, and drug trafficking. An article excerpt from *El Universal* (2010) stated,

Durante una visita formal a invitación del gobierno de Zacatecas, Samper dejó claro que la lucha integral significa atacar a los demás eslabones que vienen con el tráfico de drogas, como el contrabando, las armas, la piratería y otros mercados ilícitos, además dijo que se requiere la corresponsabilidad de los países productores y consumidores.¹¹

During a formal visit at the invitation of the government of Zacatecas, Samper made clear that the comprehensive fight means attacking the other links that come with the drug trade, including smuggling, weapons, piracy and other illegal markets, also said that requires the responsibility of the producer and consumer countries.

For this article Samper was used as a dramatic character who discussed what needed to be done in order to stop the ongoing border violence in Mexico and bring down the various drug trafficking organizations. This article sent out the cultural sentiment that cooperation is really needed from the United States and Mexico to tackle all the business ventures of drug trafficking organizations in order to bring a form of peace to Mexico.

The excerpt stated that in order to successfully combat the problem of drug trafficking head on, steps need to be made to take on the various elements that come with it, such as the trafficking of firearms. Samper made a great point when he mentioned that we needed a comprehensive approach to taking on criminal organizations because if we only tackle the issue of guns and drugs drug trafficking organizations will still be in business since they have other outlets to bring in the money such as human

trafficking and piracy. In order to make sure that the problem is addressed properly both sides of the supply and demand issue must be addressed and both countries, Mexico and the U.S., must take responsibility to combat the issue. *The New York Times* and *El Universal* were accurate in reporting that it will take the responsibility and cooperation of both the United States and Mexico to combat the social problems of gun trafficking and border violence. In the end, one country cannot successfully fight the war on drugs and expect to come out winning in the end without the help of the other country.

Now that the intersection among human trafficking and gun trafficking has been investigated, now the focus shifts to the intersection of border violence and gun trafficking. This section investigates whether articles of gun trafficking intersect with stories about border violence. When all 602 primary documents were scanned for a co-occurrence between the codes of “gun trafficking” and “border violence,” *Atlas.ti7* was utilized to perform a query and came up with a list of 313 quotes. There were two main frames that were associated with the intersection of gun trafficking and border violence, indirectly mention and direct mention of gun trafficking. The first frame that *The New York Times* and *El Universal* used to discuss the intersection of gun trafficking and border violence was by indirectly mentioning gun trafficking and its impact on Mexico’s border violence in their articles.

One way that *The New York Times* and *El Universal* discussed the intersection of gun trafficking and border violence was by reporting on shootings and small and light arm attacks. A second way that *The New York Times* and *El Universal* discussed the intersection of gun trafficking and border violence was by including the number of

deaths. The second frame that *The New York Times* and *El Universal* used to discuss the intersection of gun trafficking and border violence was by directly mentioning gun trafficking and its impact on Mexico's border violence in their articles. One method that *The New York Times* and *El Universal* used to discuss the intersection of gun trafficking and border violence was by discussing the various aspects and elements of gun trafficking such as the Southwest Border Paradigm. A second method that *The New York Times* and *El Universal* used to discuss the intersection of gun trafficking and border violence was by focusing on the issue of supply and demand. A third method *The New York Times* and *El Universal* used to discuss the intersection of gun trafficking and border violence was by focusing on weapons seizures and gun trafficking arrests. The fourth method that *The New York Times* and *El Universal* used to discuss the intersection of gun trafficking and border violence was by focusing on botched U.S. operations such as the ATF's Operation Fast and Furious.

Frame 5: Indirect Mention of Gun Trafficking

The "indirect mentioning of gun trafficking" frame referred to any time an article piece by *The New York Times* and *El Universal* that did not directly bring up gun trafficking, weapons possession/gun trafficking arrest, or weapons seizures but implied it by discussing the types of weapons used, small and light arm attacks, shootings, ambush or gun battles. The "indirect mention gun trafficking" framing procedure is characterized by its dependence on selection of sources, metaphors, and dramatic characters and was mainly indicated by keywords such as "small and light arm attacks," "caliber," "AR-15," "AK-47," and "military grade." The "indirect mention of gun trafficking" shares similar

reasoning devices with those from the “blame game” “worthy and unworthy victims,” and “negative aspects of gun trafficking” frames. The first reasoning device was assigning responsibility which was primary used to document which country was to blame for the entry of illegal firearm into Mexico and the destruction they caused. The second reasoning device was defining the problem which allowed the media to discuss the problem of gun trafficking along the U.S.-Mexico border and the negative impacts it was having on the war on drugs.

The third reasoning device revolved around the passing of moral judgments. In regards to passing moral judgments, the media had to decide whether or not the details of the victims of Mexico’s border violence were to be fully included in the article. This meant that *The New York Times* and *El Universal* had to make decide who fell under the classification of a “worthy and unworthy victim.” The code family for the “indirect mention gun trafficking” frame had four codes: 1) types of weapons used; 2) small and light arm attacks (shootings); 3) ambush and gun battles; and 4) number of deaths. These four codes produced two main themes. The first theme was that of shootings and attacks and the second theme was the number of deaths attributed to Mexico’s border violence. The “indirect mention of gun trafficking” frame was interconnected to the “blame game,” “worthy and unworthy victims,” and “negative aspects of gun trafficking” frames.

An additional function of the third objective was to analyze the linkage between gun trafficking and border violence and whether the later articles from *The New York Times* and *El Universal* assumed this relationship rather than explicitly stating it. This

part of the 3rd objective was analyzed utilizing the question: How do national newspapers go about discussing gun trafficking? The data depicted that there were two main methods that national newspapers from the U.S. and Mexico (*The New York Times* and *El Universal*) utilized to go about discussing gun trafficking in their articles. The first method that *The New York Times* and *El Universal* utilized was that of direct mentioning of gun trafficking. The direct mention of gun trafficking referred to any time that the key words gun trafficking, weapons possession/gun trafficking arrest, or weapons seizure was brought up in an article piece.

The second method that *The New York Times* and *El Universal* utilized was that of indirect mentioning of gun trafficking. Indirect mentioning of gun trafficking referred to any time an article piece that did not directly bring up gun trafficking, weapons possession/gun trafficking arrest or weapons seizures but implied it by discussing the types of weapons used, small and light arm attacks, shootings, ambush or gun battles. When all 602 primary documents were scanned for a co-occurrence between the codes “gun trafficking” and “border violence,” *Atlas.ti7* was utilized to perform a query and came up with a list of 313 quotes. Overall, the data showcased that there were more article pieces which had indirectly mentioned gun trafficking regardless of which national newspaper, *The New York Times* and *El Universal*, was examined. In regards to indirect mentioning of gun trafficking, *The New York Times* had more article quotes that indirectly mentioned gun trafficking compared to *El Universal*. There were some huge differences in terms of the indirect mentioning of gun trafficking among national newspapers. *The New York Times* had 186 quotes which indirectly discussed gun

trafficking compared to the *El Universal's* 80 indirect quotes of gun trafficking. When it came to the indirect discussion of gun trafficking, the national newspapers tended to imply that the incidents of border violence which involved firearms had been acquired by the drug cartels through the process of gun trafficking. The first theme that *The New York Times* and *El Universal* utilized to indirectly imply gun trafficking in their news stories about Mexico's border violence was through the mentioning of small and light arm attacks (armed gunmen).

By discussing the use of small and light arm attacks in their news pieces, reporters were able to draw attention to the issue of gun trafficking and its impact on border violence. An excerpt from Elisabeth Malkin's (2010) piece from *The New York Times* stated,

On one video posted on YouTube, gunfire and grenade explosions rang out across streets that were almost deserted. A battle for control between the Gulf gang and its onetime enforcement arm, the Zetas, has unleashed fierce fighting this year, and the Mexican authorities have stepped up their search for the leaders of both. Mr. Cardenas, 48, controlled the Matamoros-Brownsville smuggling corridor for the Gulf gang and was responsible for shipping large cargos of marijuana and cocaine to the United States.¹²

This excerpt from *The New York Times* used a YouTube video as its selective source to depict the turmoil that is occurring in the streets of Mexico. The video and the article both had a cultural resonance that guns are dangerous. For example, the cultural theme that guns are dangerous is depicted by the way they are immensely impacting the drug violence in Mexico usually through shootouts occurring right in the middle of the street between rival drug trafficking organizations involving military grade firearms and grenades. Newspaper articles from Mexico also utilized the tactic of discussing small

and light arm attacks in order to indirectly bring up gun trafficking in their news pieces.

At times the newspaper articles from Mexico would not directly state that there were gunmen but it was easy to tell that what they were reporting about since they would discuss the various types of firearm calibers and shell casings used and the damage left in the wake of the attack. An article excerpt from *El Universal* (2011) stated,

El temor y la desconfianza eran patentes entre vendedores, peatones y curiosos en los alrededores del Centro Comunitario, ubicado al sur-poniente de esta ciudad fronteriza, que se acercaron a ver las huellas del acribillamiento.<cr>Las paredes de la cancha guardaban los impactos de bala y las manchas de sangre.<cr> De acuerdo con la fiscalía se encontraron 128 casquillos de calibres .40, .223 y 7.62x39 milímetros.¹³

Fear and suspicion were evident between vendors, pedestrians and onlookers around the Community Center, located south-west of this border town, who came to see the traces of strafing. <cr> The walls of the court kept the bullet holes and bloodstains. According to the prosecution they found 128 shell casings calibers .40, .223 and 7.62x39 millimeters.

Selective sources were used for the framing procedure; in this case the article used testimony from the prosecutor and some figures from police reports such as the amount of shell casings. These two selective sources were used to set up the cultural sentiment of the dangerous impact that guns have on border violence. The prosecution stated that one hundred and twenty-eight shell casings from various calibers were found at the crime scene along with several bullet holes and bloodstains. The article depicts the type of fire power drug trafficking organizations are utilizing, .223 and 7.62x39 millimeters which are commonly used in AR-15 (.223) and AK-47 (7.62x39). It also depicts that these types of firearms are used by drug trafficking organization with the intention of unleashing the most damage (rounds per second). These types of weapons, AR-15 and AK-47, are viewed by some people as being dangerous and having no real place in the

civilian market. An indirect question that the article hints at is why do people need weapons with high capacity magazines and high rate of fire?; Both article excerpts showcased that firearms were utilized by drug trafficking organizations in order to get an upper hand on the drug turf war over their rivals. The one difference that was seen when comparing these two excerpts was the fact that Mexico's articles tended to be more detailed when discussing the types of firearms that were utilized. These small and light arm attacks were used by *The New York Times* and *El Universal* to bring attention to the way that firearms, especially military grade weapons were changing the tactics that drug trafficking organizations used to engage each other in combat. Small and light arm attacks were also used to depict the fact that the citizens of Mexico and tourists were afraid to go out in the street because they were afraid they might get struck by a stray bullet or get caught in the middle of a war zone.

In another piece from *The New York Times*, the way that gun trafficking was brought indirectly into the story at hand was through the mentioning of coordinated attacks. Coordinated attacks took into account things such as the use small and light arm attacks and where the attack occurred. For example, utilizing the framing procedure of the details from government officials they were able to stress the cultural issue that guns are dangerous. Marc Lacey and Ginger Thompson (2010) stated,

The coordinated nature of the attacks, the automatic weapons used and the location in a city [Ciudad Juarez] where drug cartels control virtually all illicit activity point toward traffickers as the suspects, said Mexican and American officials, declining to be identified.¹⁴

Coordinated attacks were also utilized to indirectly discuss the impact that gun trafficking was having on border violence. For example, the case when a U.S. Consulate

employee and her husband were killed in Mexico by armed gunmen with automatic weapons outside a social gathering in Ciudad Juarez was used to depict a picture of how dangerous these smuggled automatic firearms can be in the hands of criminals. Overall, the aspects of the coordinated attack in this article could be broken down in terms as to where the attack occurred, in this case the city of Ciudad Juarez, and the how it went down, as multiple shooting with automatic weapons outside a social gathering.

El Universal had also employed the indirect link between coordinated attacks and gun trafficking in their articles. The same U.S. Consulate attack that *The New York Times* had reported on had been printed by Mexico's national newspaper as well, but there had been other news articles that revolved around this link. An article excerpt from *El Universal* (2009) stated,

Un comando de presuntos sicarios de la organización criminal La Familia atacó este sábado con fusiles semiautomáticos y granadas de fragmentación instalaciones de la Policía Federal en Uruapan. La agresión se suma a otras nueve registradas en los últimos siete días en ciudades michoacanas contra instalaciones civiles y policiales. En el último semestre Chihuahua, Sinaloa, Sonora, Guanajuato, Aguascalientes, Nuevo León, Guerrero, Durango, estado de México y Michoacán han sido blanco de la embestida del crimen organizado. En la entidad gobernada por el perredista Leonel Godoy, el recrudecimiento de las agresiones dejó en estos días seis agentes muertos, tres más desaparecidos y al menos 20 heridos.¹⁵

This Saturday a commando of suspected gunmen of the criminal organization "La Familia" attacked the facilities of the Federal Police in Uruapan with semi-automatic rifles and fragmentation grenades. This aggression joins nine other recorded in the last seven days in Michoacán's cities against civilians and police facilities. In the last semester, Chihuahua, Sinaloa, Sonora, Guanajuato, Aguascalientes, Nuevo Leon, Guerrero, Durango, Mexico (state) and Michoacán have been targeted by the onslaught of organized crime. In the entity governed by PRD's, Leonel Godoy, the upsurge of attacks these days left six dead, three missing and at least 20 wounded agents.

This article excerpt utilizes information from accounts of an altercation between the

police and drug trafficking organizations, such as the number of dead, where the attacks happen, and how it went down, to discuss how criminals do not discriminate against individuals in regards to who will be their victim and the impact that gun trafficking is having on border violence. As previously mentioned, the coordination of attacks revolved around two things, the first being where the attack occurred and the second how it occurred.

In this case the where was at the Uruapan federal police department and the how referred to Sicarios from La Familia with semiautomatic firearms and fragmenting grenades (small and light arms attack). According to the article, the federal police department in Uruapan was attacked by Sicarios (cartel hitmen), from the drug cartel La Familia, utilizing semiautomatic weapons and fragmenting grenades. The aftermath several days of conflict left six agents dead, three missing and at least 20 injured. The sheer impact of gun trafficking could be seen in the article by the type of weapons that these Sicarios were utilizing such as grenades and semiautomatic weapons which seems to indicate that the police are being outmatched in regards to fire power by drug trafficking organizations. The article did not once indicate whether the weapons were smuggled into the country, Mexico, and from where they originated from.

A second theme that appeared in the "indirect mention of gun trafficking" frame was the number of deaths attributed to Mexico's border violence. In order for *The New York Times* and *El Universal* to indirectly bring gun trafficking into the picture, the number of deaths attributed to Mexico's border violence had to be linked to small and light arm attacks. This link between the number of border violence deaths and small and

light arm attacks was taken as an indirect discussion of gun trafficking since these firearms had to come from somewhere other than Mexico due in part to their strict gun laws. For example Marc Lacey (2010) reported,

On Monday, as television and radio commentators analyzed the president's statement, authorities announced another bad day, with 10 federal police officers killed and more than a dozen others wounded in a clash with traffickers in Zitacuaro, a town in the central state of Michoacan. The gunmen, some of whom died as well, used buses to close off major highways and obstruct reinforcements by the authorities, an increasingly common tactic employed by Mexico's drug cartels.¹⁶

The Mexican President's speech along with some figures, the number of dead, was used to frame the issue of the dangers and impact that guns are having on Mexico's drug related violence. For example, the excerpt depicted how dangerous firearms can be when coupled with urban warfare tactics: the gunmen set up roadblocks along the highway to cutoff reinforcements which resulted in the shooting and killing of ten police officers. Additionally, discussing the number of border violence deaths attributed to gunfire sheds light on the problem that firearms are a tool utilized by drug cartels to reach their respective ends, which was gaining control of the drug routes into the United States. It also brings to light that these firearms are part of a bigger problem, mainly border violence.

The following excerpt from *El Universal* showcases the link between Mexico's border violence deaths and small and light arm attacks. An article excerpt from *El Universal* (2009) stated,

Seis hombres fueron fusilados por un grupo de sicarios en las afueras de la ciudad.<cr>Según las primeras versiones, el comando cerró el tráfico vehicular de la autopista a Ciudad Cuauhtémoc mientras mataban a sus víctimas, por lo que decenas de automovilistas tuvieron que esperar en sus unidades presas del pánico

por lo que ocurría a unos metros.<cr>Aparentemente, a los hombres se les llevó todavía con vida hasta la altura del kilómetro 10 de dicha vía, ahí -en medio de algunos establecimientos comerciales y casas- los colocaron frente a una pared y después los acribillaron con armas de grueso calibre.<cr>Peritos de la Fiscalía General del Estado recabaron entre 60 y 70 casquillos percutidos calibre .<cr>223, usados por los rifles conocidos como cuerno de chivo.¹⁷

Six men were shot by a group of gunmen on the outskirts of the city. According to earlier versions, the commandos closed off vehicular traffic from the highway to Ciudad Cuauhtémoc as they killed their victims, making dozens of motorists wait in their units, panicked by what occurred a few meters from them. Apparently, men still alive, were led until the kilometer 10 of such road there, in the middle of some commercial establishments and homes – were placed against a wall and then slaughtered with heavy weapons. Officers in the state's Attorney General's Office had collected between 60 and 70, .223 caliber casings, used by rifles known as goat horn (because of their high capacity magazines).

Basically the excerpt uses police reports, selective sources, to indicate that six men were shot and killed by Sicarios inside the city to imply how dangerous firearms can be in the hands of criminals. The article also made use of police information to describe the number and types of shell casings found at the crime scene as an indirect indicator of gun trafficking and its impact on border violence. About 60 to 70, .223 shell casings were found at the scenes which were used by rifles known as goat horns. These examples were utilized by *The New York Times* and *El Universal* to depict the amount of deaths that have been caused by the smuggling of firearms into Mexico. Gun trafficking was never mentioned once in these articles but the reporters still got their intended message across to the reader by providing examples of the violence and chaos that is occurring on the streets of Mexico.

So why was there no direct mention in most of the articles from *The New York Times* and *El Universal*? It could be that there was no specific mention of gun trafficking or firearm smuggling in *The New York Times* and *El Universal* articles because the

reporters might have relied on fact that the reader has a bit of general knowledge about Mexico's gun laws. Just to reiterate Mexico has a stricter gun laws than the United States. According Cook et al. (2009), under Article 10 of the Mexican Constitution, Mexican residents are allowed the right to possess firearms in their homes for personal defense and security. The only exception to Article 10 is the fact that Mexican residents cannot possess' firearms which are deemed to be prohibited such as those firearms intended for military use. By having to reiterate the point that firearms were being trafficked into Mexico on a consistent basis would become redundant after a while. Also *The New York Times* and *El Universal* may have not directly mentioned gun trafficking because they did not know specifically where these firearms came from but they probably had a pretty good idea though. For example, where the firearms which were being smuggled into Mexico from the United States, Russia, or China? Where these firearms stolen from Mexico's police and military by drug cartel members? There are several scenarios that could apply to how the drug trafficking organizations could have acquired their arsenal of weapons from and could have been saving this information for standalone piece on gun trafficking.

Frame 6: Direct Mention of Gun Trafficking

The "direct mention of gun trafficking" frame referred to any time that the key words gun trafficking, weapons possession/gun trafficking arrest, or weapons seizure was brought up in an article piece by *The New York Times* and *El Universal*. The "direct mention gun trafficking" framing procedure is characterized by its dependence on selection of sources, metaphors, stereotypes, and dramatic characters and was mainly

indicated by keywords such as “possession,” “gun walking,” “seizures,” “trafficking arrest,” and “Southwest Border Paradigm.” The “direct mention of gun trafficking” frame shares similar reasoning devices with the “negative aspects of gun trafficking,” “blame game,” and “positive aspects of gun trafficking” frames. The first reasoning device was assigning responsibility which allowed the media to write an article in regards to which country was responsible for the flow of illegal firearms into Mexico and the devastation they wreak on Mexico’s citizens. The second reasoning device was defining the problem which was utilized to confer the problem of gun trafficking along the U.S.-Mexico border.

It was the media’s responsibility to depict a picture of the impact that the illicit flow of firearms into Mexico has had on border violence in order to send a message to both the U.S. and Mexican governments that the supply and demand of these weapons was an issue and something had to be done. That is where the third reasoning device, solutions to the problem, comes in. In this case the solutions revolved around how to stem the flow of illicit firearms into Mexico in order to decrease border violence in Mexico. The code family for the “direct mention gun trafficking” frame had four codes: 1) gun trafficking; 2) gun walking; 3) weapons possession/gun trafficking arrest; and 4) weapons seizures. These four codes translated into four themes. The first them was that of the Southwest Border Paradigm. The second theme was that of supply and demand. The third theme was that of weapons seizures. The fourth theme was botched U.S. operations. The “direct mention of gun trafficking” frame was interconnected to the

“blame game,” “worthy and unworthy victims,” “positive aspects of gun trafficking,” and “negative aspects of gun trafficking” frames.

Overall, there were slight differences in terms of the direct mention of gun trafficking, *El Universal* had slightly fewer more article pieces directly mentioning gun trafficking compared to that of *The New York Times*. In terms of directly discussing gun trafficking, *The New York Times* had 22 quotes on the subject matter while *El Universal* had 25 quotes total. One way for *The New York Times* and *El Universal* to go about directly discussing gun trafficking and border violence was by utilizing the theme of the Southwest Border Paradigm. Essentially the Southwest Border Paradigm states that drugs and illegal immigrants head north while guns and money head south. According to *The New York Times* reporter Mark Landler (2009),

Our insatiable demand for illegal drugs fuels the drug trade," Mrs. Clinton said, using unusually blunt language. "Our inability to prevent weapons from being illegally smuggled across the border to arm these criminals causes the deaths of police officers, soldiers and civilians.¹⁸

This article used Hillary Clinton as a dramatic character to directly discuss the issue of the gun trafficking, the Southwest Border Paradigm (our demand for drugs and our inability to prevent weapons from entering Mexico) and to express the cultural sentiment that something must be done in regards to the whole supply and demand of drugs and guns. In the end Lander was basically discussing the Southwest Border Paradigm, even though he only touched on two aspects of the paradigm drugs and guns. He did mention that drugs were going north into the United States while guns were heading south into Mexico.

The following excerpt from *El Universal* goes a step further and covers three out of the four aspects of the Southwest Border Paradigm. It uses events from previous newspaper articles and reports as its framing procedure to directly bring gun trafficking into Mexico into the spotlight. An article excerpt from *El Universal* (2011) reported, “Ambos mantienen una lucha por el control de las rutas para el trasiego de drogas, contrabando de armas y dinero, así como para efectuar tareas conexas como secuestros y extorsiones, entre otros.”¹⁹ This excerpt basically stated that they (drug cartels) maintain a fight for the control of routes for smuggling drugs, firearms and money. The cultural resonance of the article is one of supply and demand, basically that the whole issue of supply and demand is a two way street when it comes to drug trafficking organizations.

Drug trafficking organizations supply the U.S. demand for drugs and the U.S. supplies Mexico’s demand for weapons and American cash. This short excerpt does not specifically state the direction which the money, firearms, and money were heading but it is indirectly implied that the money and guns would be heading south into Mexico and the drugs would be heading north into the United States, which is why these trafficking routes are very important to the drug cartels and are willing to fight to the death for them. Both of these articles hint at the fact that in order to combat the whole supply and demand issue it is going to take cooperation from both countries. These excerpts can be considered examples of gun trafficking, the Southwest Border Paradigm, since they discuss and provide evidence that money and guns move south into Mexico and drugs and illegal immigrants move north into the United States, even though neither article

discussed illegal immigrants. The Southwest Border Paradigm is very close to the issue of supply and demand.

A second way for *The New York Times* and *El Universal* to directly discuss gun trafficking and border violence was through the inclusion of the supply and demand theme in their articles. *The New York Times* and *El Universal* articles tended to point out that the drug trafficking organizations had a demand for firearms and the gun dealers from United States were considered to be the suppliers. To be perfectly clear it was not really gun dealers from the United States that were suppliers but rather straw purchasers who lied to the gun dealer and the United States government when filling out paper work for the firearm. More specifically, the straw purchaser lied about whom the firearm really was for but federal firearm licensed dealers get the blame as well since they did not do a good enough job of screening the buyer. Gun dealers get blamed for the guns that end up in Mexico because some gun dealers are corrupt and sell weapons under the table to anyone if the price is right. Gun dealers also get blamed since some of the guns that show up at crime scenes came from gun shows where background checks are not really required if the seller is selling from their private collection.

One method for incorporating the issue of supply and demand of firearms into an article occurred by noting the percentage of firearms that were traced back to the United States. An article excerpt from *The New York Times* (2009) stated,

Drug-related murders in Mexico doubled last year, to 6,200, as cartels fight for the American addict's dollar while relying on American gun dealers for their weapons. A new report to Congress traces over 90 percent of guns recovered in Mexican drug crimes in the last three years back across the border, where legal and illegal American dealers flout federal laws rife with loopholes.²⁰

This article uses selective sources, mainly government reports by Congress and a few statistics, as its framing procedure to depict that the United States is supplying Mexico's drug trafficking organizations with guns. The inclusion of the percentage of firearms traced back to the United States (90%) helps to draw a better picture of which country is supplying the firearms to drug trafficking organizations. The cultural sentiment of the article refers to the dangers of firearms and U.S. gun law reform. The article implies that 90% of the firearms which have been recovered in Mexico have been traced back to the United States and have accounted for countless deaths. It even makes a direct connection between drug trafficking organizations and their reliance on American gun dealers as a source for guns due to loopholes in U.S. gun laws. The traced firearm information helps to bring cultural awareness to the issues of border violence and gun trafficking as being bi-national social problems that requires the cooperation of both the American and Mexican governments to solve, possibly through gun law reform and joint operations.

Besides discussing the percentage of guns traced back to the United States, *The New York Times* brought up a very good reason why firearms go from the legal market into the illegal market, the reason being loopholes in the United States gun laws. The main loophole that got brought up was the gun show loophole, which was talked about previously, it allows firearms to be sold at gun shows by private collectors without paperwork such as background check and as long as the buyer has the money the firearm is theirs. *El Universal* not only tackled the problem of supply and demand of guns through the use of the percentage of traced weapons and loopholes in U.S. gun laws but also by reporting on the protest against border violence and all the problems which come

with it. An article excerpt from *El Universal* (2011) reported,

Una tarde después de finalizar la Caravana por la Paz, a su regreso de El Paso, Texas, donde pidió la cancelación de la Iniciativa Mérida -porque dice sólo manda armas y no resuelve problemas sociales- y reiteró el llamado a los ciudadanos de EU para que pidan a su gobierno detener el tráfico de armas y el lavado de dinero, además de escuchar testimonios de mexicanos desplazados por la violencia, Sicilia enumera con sus manos uno a uno todo lo que lleva colgado en su cuello y en sus prendas y que poblado por poblado le fueron regalando.²¹

One evening after finishing the Caravan for Peace, on his return from El Paso, Texas, where he asked for the cancellation of the Merida Initiative because it says only send weapons and does not solve social problems-and reiterated the call to U.S. citizens to you ask your government to stop arms trafficking and money laundering, in addition to hearing testimony Mexicans displaced by violence, Sicily lists with their hands one to one leading all hung around his neck and his clothes and populated per village were giving him.

This article used the Caravan for Peace as a dramatic character who is calling forth change in U.S. policies such as the Merida Initiative. The cultural resonance of the article was that change can be brought forth through protesting. The protesting was meant to bring awareness to various social issues that are affecting Mexico. The excerpt stated that the Caravan for Peace asked for the cancelation of the Merida Initiative since it only sent firearms into Mexico and did not really focus on resolving any of the social problems. The caravan also asked U.S. citizens to ask their president (President Obama) to stop the flow of firearms and money laundering into Mexico.

A third way for *The New York Times* and *El Universal* to directly bring gun trafficking and border violence into the discussion was by bringing up weapon seizures, either before they are crossed into Mexico or after a confrontation between the Mexican police and drug cartels. An excerpt from Marc Lacey's (2009) piece from *The New York Times* stated,

After the shooting stopped, soldiers recovered a huge cache of weaponry -- 49 guns, two rocket launchers, 13 grenades and 3,525 bullets of various calibers, the army said. Handcuffed and shirtless inside the drug hide-out were four men who said they were Guerrero State police officers who had been kidnapped. The army said it was investigating the claim.²²

The excerpt from *The New York Times* was an example of the latter, since various types of weapons and ammunition were confiscated after a confrontation between drug cartel members and the Mexican police officers. The framing procedure of this article used government briefs and reports along with some statistics, number of small and light arms confiscated, to imply a cultural theme that guns are dangerous. The article stated that forty-nine guns, two rocket launchers, thirteen grenades and ammunition were confiscated after an altercation with Mexican officials. It goes to show how much fire power drug trafficking organizations have at their disposal and one can only imagine the amounts of damage that could be caused with these types of military grade weapons. They definitely pose a huge danger and risk to the citizens of Mexico if they are unlucky enough to be in the middle of a scuffle amongst drug trafficking organizations.

As mentioned earlier, weapon seizures do not only occur after a confrontation but have been known to occur on the United States side of the border as well. A great example of a weapons seizure on the United States side of the border came from an article excerpt from *El Universal* (2011) which reported that,

Este viernes, la División Houston del Servicio de Marshalls, reportó que se unió a la campaña Operación Héroe Caído .<cr>Thomas Hinojosa, agente especial encargado de la División de Houston, destacó que la reciente tragedia ocurrida en México -en alusión al asesinato del agente Zapata-, "hace necesario que todas las fuerzas del orden hagan un frente para combatir a los violentos cárteles de la droga mexicanos"El Servicio de Marshalls en un comunicado, dijo que incautaron en el área de Houston alrededor de 750 mil dólares en efectivo, 150 kilogramos de marihuana, 13 kilogramos de cocaína, 37 armas, diez vehículos y

detuvieron a 33 individuos.²³

This Friday, the Houston Division Marshalls Service reported that joint Operation Fallen Hero campaign. Thomas Hinojosa, special agent in charge of the Houston Division, noted that the recent tragedy in Mexico-an allusion to the murder Zapata-agent "is necessary that all the police create a front to fight the violent Mexican drug cartels" the service Marshalls in a statement, said it seized in the Houston area about 750 thousand dollars cash, 150 kilograms of marijuana, 13 kilograms of cocaine, 37 guns, ten vehicles and arrested 33 individuals.

This excerpt utilizes government reports and briefs and a few figures, seized assets, to discuss how the U.S. Marshalls from the Houston division found and seized \$150,000, 150 kilos of marijuana, 13 kilos of cocaine, 10 vehicles, 37 firearms, and captured 33 people. By including the amount of weapons and ammunition that was seized by the U.S. Marshalls, *El Universal* was able to imply a cultural sentiment that a weapon off the street is a weapon out of the hands of criminals thus creating a sense of security. By discussing the amount of firearms and ammunition confiscated *The New York Times* and *El Universal* were able to show and portray the magnitude of the problem of gun trafficking and its overall impact on Mexico's border violence and the steps the U.S. and Mexico are taking to stem the flow of firearms.

The final way in which *The New York Times* and *El Universal* directly brought gun trafficking and border violence into the article was through the theme of botched operations by the United States and their consequences. One of the main U.S. operations that kept receiving lots of attention by *The New York Times* and *El Universal* was the ATF's Operation Fast and Furious. Articles that reported on Operation Fast and Furious tended to focus on the amount of weapons that were allowed to "walk" into Mexico and directly into the hands of drug cartels. Additionally there were several articles that

mentioned how firearms from Operation Fast and Furious had been turning up at crime scenes on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border. Some articles pointed out that it was not possible to definitely prove that the weapons were coming from the ATF's Operation Fast and Furious. Charlie Savage (2011) reported,

The report also gives details of the murder of the brother of a Mexican law enforcement official and several shootouts involving Mexican police helicopters, alleging a tie to Fast and Furious guns because some were found among larger weapons caches connected to cartels. However, it offers no direct evidence that guns linked to the operation were used in those cases.²⁴

The New York Times used a government report to provide only suspicion that guns from Operation Fast and Furious might have been used in several crimes in Mexico. The cultural resonance of the article was one of it is not our fault and you cannot prove it. It echoes the sentiment that if you cannot directly provide evidence to support your claim it must not have happened and it is only heresy.

On the contrary, articles from *El Universal* were quick to point out that firearms from the failed ATF Operation Fast and Furious have been recovered at various crime scenes in Mexico compared to a few pieces from *The New York Times* which stated that there was no direct evidence linking these firearms to the Operation Fast and Furious.

According to *El Universal* (2011),

Muchas de estas armas se han distribuido a lo largo del territorio mexicano, especialmente en los estados con mayor índice de violencia.<cr> Por lo menos 195 de éstas han sido vinculadas a delitos en el país, según datos del Centro para la Integridad Pública de Estados Unidos.<cr>Reportes de la ATF revelan que unas mil 765 armas fueron vendidas a presuntos contrabandistas en un lapso de 15 meses como parte de la investigación, de las cuales 797 fueron recuperadas en ambos lados de la frontera México-EU, incluyendo las 195 que fueron ligadas a crímenes en suelo mexicano.<cr>"Con el número de armas que permitimos contrabandear nunca sabremos cómo mucha gente fue asesinada o asaltada.<cr> No hay nada que podamos hacer para recuperar esas armas.<cr> Están perdidas",

dijo John Dodson, un agente de la ATF que participó en la operación.²⁵

Many of these weapons have been distributed throughout the Mexican territory, especially in states with the highest violence. At least 195 of these have been linked to crimes in the country, according to the Center for Public Government Integrity of the United States. Reports from ATF reveal that some 1,765 guns were sold to suspected smugglers in a span of 15 months as part of the investigation, of which 797 were recovered on both sides of the Mexico- U.S. border, including 195 that were linked to crimes on Mexican soil. "With the number of weapons that we allow to smuggle, we will never know how many people were killed or assaulted. There is nothing we can do to recover these weapons. "They are missing" said John Dodson, the ATF agent who participated in the operation.

Reports from the ATF were used by *El Universal* to indicate the amount of weapons which were being recovered and traced back to the ATF's failed operation. The article rings a cultural resonance of the consequences of using unethical practices. It suggests that using unethical practices can and will back fire. This excerpt goes on to discuss how a majority of the firearms from Operation Fast and Furious have made their way into Mexico. Seven hundred and ninety-seven firearms have been recovered on the both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border and one hundred and ninety-five of those firearms had been used in crimes against Mexicans. Both of these article excerpts along with a few others go on to depict how even operations with the best of intentions can have consequences if they go completely wrong and follow unethical protocols.

Summary

The 3rd objective of my research was to determine how gun trafficking and its impact on border violence was built as a social problem. An additional aim of this objective was to analyze if the linkage between gun trafficking and border violence did exist at a certain point, did the later newspaper articles assume the relationship rather

than explicitly stating it. When it came down to verifying if gun trafficking into Mexico could be a social problem it had to meet three main criteria first. The first criterion aimed to discover if gun trafficking into Mexico has an identifiable societal origin. The drug war related violence in Mexico started in 2006 and it was not until a few years later around 2008 that the news media started to focus on the impact that gun trafficking had on Mexico's border violence.

Around 2008 the issue of illicit firearms trafficking into Mexico gained exposure especially with the increase in the number of deaths attributed to border violence. The issue of gun trafficking into Mexico became so prevalent that it garnered the attention of the United States government and in 2009 the GAO released their research findings on firearms trafficking. The societal origin of the phenomenon of gun trafficking into Mexico can best be thought of as starting in 2008 but having caught fire from 2009 on. This research focused on *The New York Times* and *El Universal* articles within the years of 2009-2012 and found that from these years the issue of gun trafficking was directly and indirectly being discussed by both national newspapers. Direct discussion of gun trafficking referred to instances in which gun trafficking, weapons possession/gun trafficking arrest, or weapons seizure were brought up in an article piece. Indirect discussion of gun trafficking referred to instances in article pieces that did not directly bring up aspects of gun trafficking but rather implied the issue of gun trafficking by discussing the, small and light arm attacks, gun battles, or the types of weapons used. The phenomenon of gun trafficking into Mexico met Jamrozik and Nocella's first criteria for becoming a social problem.

The second criterion aimed to see if gun trafficking into Mexico constituted a threat or a perceived threat to certain values and interests. Gun trafficking could be viewed as a social problem due to the impact that the trafficking of illicit firearms into Mexico had on individual freedoms, threats to social cohesion, and economic prosperity. The sheer numbers of deaths that have been attributed to border violence at the hands of armed gunmen have caused people to be afraid of being out in public. In regards to the fear of shootouts it has caused a decline in economic prosperity for cities which rely on tourism. Also the impact of gun trafficking on Mexico's border violence could be felt and seen threatening to social cohesion. The Mexican government's goal for stabilizing border towns and making them safer by rounding up drug cartel members gets disrupted when law enforcement officers are outgunned by the drug cartels. The phenomenon of gun trafficking into Mexico met Jamrozik and Nocella's second criteria for becoming a social problem.

The third criterion aimed to see if gun trafficking could be amendable to removal, reduction or solution. When the issue of gun trafficking into Mexico started to pick up steam around 2008 there was no real consensus of shared responsibility rather it was a case of the blame game. Mexico argued that firearms from the United States were fueling the border violence in their country. The United States argued that Mexico was to blame for its problem regarding the influx of illicit firearms. After a while the problem of gun trafficking into Mexico was viewed as a shared responsibility by both the United States and Mexico.

It has not been a perfect international relationship in trying to combat the problem of gun trafficking into Mexico; there have been a few hiccups along the way such as the ATF's Operation Fast and Furious. Mexico has called for the United States to reinstate the assault weapons ban which expired in 2004. There has been cooperation between the United States and Mexico in regards to combating the flow of illicit firearms into Mexico. The United States and Mexico have both stepped up their vehicle inspections at the U.S.-Mexico border in order to prevent the flow of firearms, drugs and illegal immigrants. Also the United States has provided monetary aid to Mexico to help them combat the growing drug violence and to stem the flow of contraband from crossing the U.S.-Mexico border. The Merida Initiative and operations by the United States and Mexico have demonstrated that the problem of illicit trafficking of firearms into Mexico could be reduced and eventually solved if the whole supply and demand for firearms and drugs could be properly addressed.

Gun trafficking into Mexico met Jamrozik and Nocella's third criteria regarding the problem being amendable to removal, reduction or solution. Overall, gun trafficking could be considered a social problem since it met all three of Jamrozik and Nocella's criteria. All six frames that were used by *The New York Times* and *El Universal* were important in establishing gun trafficking into Mexico as a social problem. It was interesting to see that these six frames, "blame game," "worthy and unworthy victims," "positive aspects of gun trafficking," "negative aspects of gun trafficking," "indirect mention of gun trafficking," and "direct mention of gun trafficking," were in some way or form interconnected with each other and helped to support and reinforce all three of

Jamrozik and Nocella's criteria of a social problem. Elements of Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model were also found in data, mainly two of their filters: 1) sourcing mass media; and 2) flak. Both of these filters played a part in the type of stories *The New York Times* and *El Universal* published in their newspapers since their overall message depended on the type of credible source they could get their hands on.

The two main sources that showed up in *The New York Times* and *El Universal's* articles was that of selective sources (government and police reports) along with dramatic characters such as the U.S. President or Mexico's President. Flak had a role in the way that Mexico's newspapers and news media were being silenced by Mexican drug trafficking organizations. The type of flak they received was mainly threats and attacks on journalists for garnering too much attention from the American and Mexican governments for the drug related violence that is occurring. In the end, the third research question was confirmed. Articles about gun trafficking were more likely to intersect with stories of smuggling and border violence.

The only exception was in the intersection of human smuggling. Human smuggling did intersect with the occurrence of gun trafficking but not as much when compared to news stories of human smuggling and border violence. The relationship of gun trafficking and border violence was interconnected in various ways and two main frames came about in the data: 1) "indirect mention of gun trafficking;" and 2) "direct mention of gun trafficking." In regards to the direct relationship between gun trafficking and border violence, this relationship usually occurred in variety of ways usually through the discussion of the Southwest Border Paradigm, supply and demand and weapon

seizures. As for the indirect relationship between gun trafficking and border violence, this relationship occurred in couple of ways mainly through the discussion of shootings and attacks and the number of deaths attributed to Mexico's drug related violence.

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CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

When one thinks of gun trafficking, border violence, spillover violence or terrorism, one of the first things that pops into one's head is that these are evil acts or incidents, they do not necessarily think that these are social constructs whose framing is defined by the media. Rather the media plays a big role in the way that gun trafficking, border violence, spillover violence, and terrorism are socially constructed. "The impression that is fostered by terrorism comes from official incident counts and media reports, terrorism is not a given in the real world but rather it is an interpretation of events and their personal causes" (Turk 2004: 557-558). In regards to terrorists and the use of violence the media tends to illustrate the point that violence is unacceptable to justify one's objections. According to Turk (2004: 561), "the general message is that violence expresses hate, which only leads to reciprocal violence in destructive escalations of hostilities."

When it comes down to what is a terrorist act or who is to blame for terrorists acts it all comes down to which media outlets one examines. The same goes for who is to blame for the guns that are trafficked into Mexico and their impact on Mexico's drug related violence, and the drugs that are trafficked into the United States. It all comes down to which media outlet you are examining, the American or Mexican media, in regards to who is held responsible for the increased flow of firearms into Mexico and the flow of drugs into the United States. The media helps to makes sense of the world for us and provide us with up to the minute information about the most pressing issues going

on in the world. One way that the media accomplishes this is by the type of news stories they cover. Turk (2004: 562) stated that “counterterrorism policymaking looks to deny legitimacy to oppositional violence and to discourage the media from granting too public of a voice to those who resort to or sympathize with terrorism.”

There are several reasons in favor for suppressing the mass media when it comes to reporting on sensitive issues such as terrorism. According to Turk (2004: 563),

Arguments for censorship include terrorists use of the medias as propaganda to help gain new recruits; publicity is a major goal of terrorism; detailed reporting of incidents gives potential terrorists suggestions and models for action; reporting terrorists acts can lead to imitation; and negative news is demoralizing; Arguments against censorship include not reporting terrorist atrocities might lead people to have less negative judgments of terrorists; censorship might cause terrorist to raise the level of violence; not reporting terrorist events can lead to rumors which might be worse; media credibility would decline; lack of news might result in a false sense of security, leaving the public unprepared to deal with terrorist acts; and lack of awareness would keep the public from understanding the political situation.

These same arguments could also apply and account for the number of news stories on gun trafficking into Mexico and Mexico’s border violence that *The New York Times* and *El Universal* published. For example, some of the arguments for censorship of the media such as thorough coverage of events giving would-be terrorists ideas and prototypes for action and reporting of terrorists acts leading to imitation could directly apply to drug trafficking organizations, especially in regards to methods of smuggling firearms into Mexico from the United States. Reporting on the various cases of Mexico’s border violence such as kidnappings and decapitations could lead to copycat criminals such as those who call and harass people that their loved ones have been kidnapped and if they do not pay up their loved ones will be executed. The demoralizing aspect of negative

news definitely applies to Mexico's border towns, especially in the way that all the negative news coverage has impacted their tourism numbers which affects their economy.

Some of the arguments for not censoring the media that can be applied to news stories about gun trafficking into Mexico and Mexico's border violence includes that media credibility would decline, lack of news would create a false sense of security, and lack of awareness averts the public from understanding the political situation. If *The New York Times* and *El Universal* were censored in regards to writing news stories about gun trafficking into Mexico and Mexico's border violence, the general public would more than likely lose some trust in the media for not really reporting the important stories and from hiding the truth. To a slight degree this has happened in Mexico with their media outlets, they have not really lost credibility but people have had to turn to various other sources to find out what is occurring in their country in regards to drug related violence since the media self-censored themselves due to threats from drug trafficking organizations. Also by not reporting what is going on in Mexico the public could get a sense of false security thinking that their country is safe and operating like it should thus potentially leading to more innocent bystanders getting caught in the crossfire. Hence why it was important to investigate how the media portrayed gun trafficking into Mexico and its impact on Mexico's border violence.

Over the last seven years the media focused its attention towards the problem of gun running and its impact on Mexico's drug war violence. The media had their reasons to speculate that most of the firearms that were being utilized in Mexico's drug related

violence had originated from the United States. The media pointed out that drug trafficking organizations were utilizing gun traffickers who used various avenues such as gun shops and gun shows to acquire firearms. My research investigated national print media from the both the United States and Mexico to determine how common it was to read news articles concerning: 1) the issue that border violence was occurring in Mexico; 2) the issue that firearms were trafficked into Mexico from the United States; 3) the connection between gun trafficking and border violence; and 4) the need for tougher laws to control and prevent the instances of gun trafficking and border violence from happening. This study attempted to address the issues of gun trafficking and its impact on border violence from a social problems perspective. It looked to fill the gap regarding how gun trafficking and its impact on border violence in Mexico has come to be seen as a social problem within the last few years. Building on research conducted by Finklea et al. on spillover violence and border violence, I addressed thus gaps that were not covered by Finklea et al.'s 2010 and Chu and Krouse's 2009 research. These gaps included how gun trafficking's impact on border violence has impacted Mexican citizen's individual freedoms, the economy of Mexico's border towns, the problems associated with the maintenance of law and order, and the role the media play in measuring the effects of border violence.

The main focus of the study was to portray how the United States and Mexico's national print media viewed gun trafficking and its impact on border violence. In order to achieve the main focus of the research several objectives and research questions were laid out. The first objective was meant to see how the national media from the United

States and Mexico portrayed the violence that was ongoing in Mexico. I aimed to discover whether national newspaper articles from the U.S. and Mexico regarding the issues of gun trafficking, border violence, and spillover violence were portrayed primarily as Mexico's problem. An additional aim was to determine whether the perception that gun trafficking and border violence were primarily Mexico's problem changed between the periods of 2009 through 2012.

The first research question investigated whether the United States national print media would portray gun trafficking along the U.S-Mexico border and its impact on border violence primarily as Mexico's problem compared to Mexico's national print media. The second objective was to determine how often the national print media from the United States and Mexico had reported on the issues of gun trafficking and its impact on border violence. The second research question investigated whether Mexico's national print media would have more articles covering gun trafficking and its impact on border violence than the national print media of United States. The third objective was meant to determine how gun trafficking was built as a social problem. An additional aim of this objective was to analyze if the linkage between gun trafficking and border violence did exist at a certain point, do later newspaper articles just assume this relationship rather than explicitly stating it. The third research question investigated whether national print media articles regarding gun trafficking would intersect with stories of smuggling and border violence.

My research study built on the Finklea et al.'s 2010 and Chu and Krouse's 2009 research on border violence and spillover violence by filling in the gap regarding how

the print media from both the United States and Mexico portrayed the problem of gun trafficking and whose responsibility it was. When it came to the problem of gun trafficking, the first research question stated that the United States print media would more than likely portray gun trafficking along the U.S.-Mexico border and its impact on Mexico's border violence as Mexico's problem compared to Mexico's print media was supported by the data to a slight degree. Both *The New York Times* and *El Universal* portrayed and framed gun trafficking into Mexico as a problem of the United States due to their country supplying Mexican drug trafficking organizations with firearms. At the same time both *The New York Times* and *El Universal* printed news articles that portrayed gun trafficking into Mexico as a problem of Mexico because of their strict gun laws which caused people and criminals to seek out firearms elsewhere.

For the first research question I detected two main frames in the data: 1) the "blame game"; and 2) "worthy and unworthy victims. The "blame game" frame helped to structure the message of who was to blame for the influx of firearms that were entering into Mexico. As previously mentioned, this focus was on why the U.S. and Mexico were to blame for the problem of gun trafficking into Mexico. Additionally, the data depicted a change in the whole who is to blame argument, around late 2010 and early 2011 the United States realized they were to blame for not taking enough precautions to stop the flow of firearms into Mexico. When it came to articles that depicted that the United States was to blame for Mexico's border violence and gun trafficking into the country, *The New York Times* had more articles than *El Universal*. This was interesting because I expected *El Universal* to have more articles detailing that

the United States was solely to blame for the ongoing border violence in Mexico and the influx of firearms that were entering the country. The data also depicted that *The New York Times* had more articles than *El Universal* when it came to articles that portrayed Mexico was to blame for Mexico's border violence and gun trafficking into the country.

The "worthy and unworthy victims" frame was used by *The New York Times* and *El Universal* to depict the real impact of gun trafficking by focusing on who are the victims involved in Mexico's border violence. My research extends Herman and Chomsky's work on worthy and unworthy victims by examining how the victims of Mexico's drug related violence were portrayed by *The New York Times* and *El Universal* from January 2009 through January 2012. It took the definitions that Herman and Chomsky created for worthy and unworthy victims and utilized them to see if they could be applied to the victims of Mexico's border violence. Overall, *The New York Times* and *El Universal* came up with seven main groups of Mexico's border violence: 1) journalists; 2) U.S. citizens; 3) U.S. agents; 4) Mexican citizens; 5) Mexican agents; 6) migrants; and 7) drug cartel members. The "worthy victims" was made up of journalists, U.S. citizens, U.S. agents, Mexican citizens, and Mexican agents since their deaths were discussed in detail because they were more likely to have created an emotional connection with the readers. The "unworthy victims" was made up of migrants and drug cartel members because these individuals did not have an emotional connection with the readers and thus their deaths did not go into to much detail. The data illustrated that *The New York Times* had more articles that depicted Mexican agents, Mexican citizens, U.S.

agents, U.S. citizens, journalists, and drug cartel members as being “worthy and unworthy victims” of border violence than *El Universal*.

The data also illustrated that *El Universal* had more articles that portrayed migrants as being “unworthy victims” of border violence than *The New York Times*. In regards to the fear of violence, *The New York Times* had more articles that incorporated the fear of violence towards Americans and fear of violence towards Mexicans than *El Universal*. The results in the discrepancies among *The New York Times* and *El Universal* in regards to “worthy and unworthy victims” of Mexico’s border violence was an interesting one. I originally expected to find that *The New York Times* would have more articles that illustrated U.S. citizens and U.S. agents as being “worthy victims” of Mexico’s border violence while *El Universal* would have more articles that illustrated Mexican citizens, agents, and officials due to the fact that these victims would create an emotional response from their respected readers. This was not the case, rather *The New York Times* had more articles than *El Universal* for all victims except migrants. One explanation could be that fact that journalists and reporters from Mexico’s newspapers and news stations were forced into state of self-censorship by Mexico’s drug trafficking organizations and breaking this self-censorship could result in one’s death. Thus creating the perception that *The New York Times* had a greater concern for the victims of Mexico’s border violence.

A second explanation for *The New York Times* having more news articles covering “worthy victims” than *El Universal* could be due to the close proximity of U.S. border towns next to Mexico’s border towns. This close proximity between American

and Mexican border towns helps to create an emotional bond between the readers and those deemed “worthy victims” of Mexico’s border violence because their deaths did not occur several thousand miles away rather their tragic and untimely deaths happened just mere miles away from the U.S.-Mexican border. A reason why migrants were portrayed as “unworthy victims” revolved around the notion that their deaths were not relateable to most readers of *The New York Times* and *El Universal* because they were not from their home country and their deaths occurred far away, at least for American readers, thus creating a lack of emotional ties to the victim. Most of *The New York Times* and *El Universal* readers have probably never trekked long distance across different countries in search for a better life or to get away from drug related violence but if these reasons were to have been stressed in the news articles it could have helped to bridge and emotional tie between the reader and the victim. A reason for drug cartel members being classified as “unworthy victims” has to do with the notion that they are the ones who are behind the ongoing drug related violence in Mexico thus creating and fueling an “us vs them” mentality for the readers. There was no love lost for drug trafficking organizations and their members by American and Mexican readers due in part to all the horrible things the cartels have done. So the readers of *The New York Times* and *El Universal* really do not have an emotional stake in the deaths of drug cartel members, they might have an emotional response of joy or excitement but that would be short lived due to the fear of retaliation for the death of a high ranking drug cartel figure.

In regards to the second research question which stated that the Mexican print media would have a higher number of articles covering gun trafficking than the United

States print media, in general the research question was supported. To answer this research question, two frames were discovered in the data: 1) “positive aspects of gun trafficking;” and 2) “negative aspects of gun trafficking.” I found the “positive aspects of gun trafficking” frame had three main themes. The first theme was that of weapons seizures and arrest, it sent a message that a weapon off the streets helps to ensure a sense of security because it is a weapon out of the hands of criminals. The second theme took into account the cooperation between the American and Mexican governments to combat the problems of gun trafficking and border violence.

The third theme was that of protesting; this took into account that activism could help bring attention to the crisis on the U.S.-Mexico border and hopefully positive changes to the current bleak situation in Mexico. The data illustrated that *El Universal* had more articles that concentrated on the positive aspects of gun trafficking, weapons possession arrest and weapon seizures, than *The New York Times*. Originally, I had expected to find that *El Universal* would have more news articles regarding weapons possession arrests and weapons seizures since these types of positive activities have a greater impact for Mexico’s government and citizens as opposed to Americans. A weapon off the streets of Mexico means that residents can breathe a sigh of relief knowing that there is one less gun in the hand of criminals. Additionally, the arrest of a gun trafficker means that there is one less supplier for Mexico’s drug trafficking organizations. The data also illustrated that *The New York Times* had more articles that showcased cooperation between the American and Mexican government and drug cartel kill/arrest than *El Universal*. A reason for *The New York Times* running more news

articles about the cooperation between the American and Mexican governments was to signal a shift in paradigms by the U.S. government. The reporting of the U.S. government's shift in paradigm regarding the handling of gun trafficking into Mexico and its impact on border violence served as means to stress the point that the U.S. government was taking responsibility to curb the flow of guns into Mexico and out of the hands of drug trafficking organizations. I originally expected *El Universal* to have a bit more articles on cooperation between the American and Mexican government as a way to reassure its readers that the U.S. government was doing their part to help prevent future acts of border violence and put an end to the drug trafficking organizations reign of terror.

I found the “negative aspects of gun trafficking” frame to have had five themes. The first theme was the origin of the firearms, through this theme *The New York Times* and *El Universal* were able to stress the issue that a majority of the firearms that were being used by drug trafficking organizations and those that had been recovered at Mexican crime scenes came from the United States. The second theme was the role of firearms in border violence; this theme stressed the issue that firearms were a dangerous tool used by drug trafficking organizations to secure their precious and lucrative drug routes. The third theme was the recruitment of young children. This theme took on the issue that drug trafficking organizations are having a social impact on the vulnerable children and teenagers from the United States and Mexico by taking them into the dark and dangerous world of the drug trafficking organizations and using them as mules, “sicarios,” and lookouts.

The fourth theme that showed up in the data was the National Rifle Association's influence on politics and how they weaken and block gun law reform. The fifth theme that appeared in the data revolved around the consequences of U.S. operations. In this theme *The New York Times* and *El Universal* addressed the problems of allowing guns to "walk" into Mexico in order to follow the gun and build a strong case against Mexico's drug trafficking organizations. They depicted how the risks, such as the number of deaths and weapons showing up at crime scene, were greater than the reward of bringing down a gun trafficking operation. In terms of articles about gun trafficking, the data showed that *El Universal* had more articles compared to *The New York Times*.

When it came to the issue of reporting on small and light arm attacks, the Southwest Border Paradigm, supply and demand, threats to social cohesion, threats to law and order, threats to economy and tourism, and "gun walking," the data illustrated that *The New York Times* had more articles compared to *El Universal*. I was surprised to find that *The New York Times* had more articles regarding specific elements of gun trafficking than *El Universal* due to the fact that Mexico was the sole country being impacted by the ongoing drug related violence in Mexico. A reason why *The New York Times* might have had more articles regarding small and light arm attacks, the Southwest Border Paradigm, supply and demand, threats to social cohesion, threats to law and order, threats to economy and tourism, and "gun walking" could have been to stress to the issue of the dangerous impact that firearms are having on Mexico's citizens and the country's economy and tourism to their American readers. Maybe *The New York Times* had the idea of trying to create an emotional bridge between the reader and the issue of

gun trafficking into Mexico so that the American public might be open to new gun law reform and have a vested interest towards our neighbors to the south. Thus bringing awareness to the social problems that are currently occurring in Mexico mainly border violence and gun trafficking which have gotten out of hand due in large part to drug trafficking organizations.

My research study built on Finklea et al.'s 2010 and Chu and Krouse's 2009 research on border violence and spillover violence by filling in the gap regarding the connection between gun trafficking, border violence, drug smuggling, and human smuggling. Overall, the third research question which stated that national print media articles regarding gun trafficking would intersect with stories of smuggling (human and drug) and border violence was confirmed. All six frames that were used by *The New York Times* and *El Universal* were important in establishing gun trafficking into Mexico as a social problem. It was interesting to see that these six frame, "blame game," "worthy and unworthy victims," "positive aspects of gun trafficking," "negative aspects of gun trafficking," "indirect mention of gun trafficking," and "direct mention of gun trafficking" were in some way or form interconnected with each other and helped to support and reinforce all three of Jamrozik and Nocella's criteria of a social problem. Elements of Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model were also found in data, mainly two of their filters: 1) sourcing mass media; and 2) flak. Both of these filters played a part in the type of stories *The New York Times* and *El Universal* published in their newspapers since their overall message depended on the type of credible source they could get their hands on.

The two main sources that I discovered to have shown up in *The New York Times* and *El Universal's* articles were those of selective sources (government and police reports) along with dramatic characters such as the U.S. President or Mexico's President. Flak had a role in the way that Mexico's newspapers and news media were being silenced by Mexican drug trafficking organizations. The type of flak they received was mainly threats and attacks on journalists for garnering too much attention from the American and Mexican governments for the drug related violence that is occurring. In the end, the third research question was confirmed. Articles about gun trafficking were more likely to intersect with stories of smuggling and border violence.

The only exception was in the intersection of human smuggling. Human smuggling did intersect with the occurrence of gun trafficking but not enough when compared to border violence and drug smuggling. Overall, there were less articles of human smuggling intersecting with gun trafficking. I found that the relationship of gun trafficking and border violence was interconnected in various ways and two main frames came about in the data: 1) "indirect mention of gun trafficking;" and 2) "direct mention of gun trafficking." In regards to the direct relationship between gun trafficking and border violence, this relationship occurred in variety of ways usually through the discussion of the Southwest Border Paradigm, supply and demand, and weapon seizures. As for the indirect relationship between gun trafficking and border violence, this relationship occurred in couple of ways mainly through the discussion of shootings and attacks and the number of deaths attributed to Mexico's drug related violence.

As previously mentioned, this research study looked to build on Finklea et al.'s 2010 research on border violence and spillover violence by filling the gap regarding how gun trafficking into Mexico had come to be seen as a social problem within the last few years. Finklea et al.'s research focused on gun trafficking and its role in border violence but it did not address whether this issue could be classified as a social problem. My research extends the theory of social problems by examining how it applies to the social constructs of gun trafficking and border violence. More specifically, I added to the theory of social problems by discussing how the print media went about framing and constructing the issues of gun trafficking and border violence as social problems by examining who or what was being utilized by the media to make claims about gun trafficking into Mexico and the severity of border violence (drug related violence). Previous research has demonstrated that "the media does not function simply as mirrors that claimants can use to reflect "what is really going on," but they can ultimately shape the images they convey" (Schneider 1985: 221). According to Jamrozik and Nocella (1998: 71),

The presentation of issues as social problems in mass media is usually much more effective in convincing the public than scholarly research because the news is immediate and widely disseminated, written in a language that readers can understand, and the intended effect is achieved by headlines, with emphasis achieved through judicious editing.

I was able to decipher whether gun trafficking into Mexico was simply just a moral panic or an emerging social problem.

In order to verify if gun trafficking into Mexico could be a social problem it had to meet three main criteria first. The first criterion aimed to discover if gun trafficking

into Mexico had an identifiable societal origin. The drug war related violence in Mexico started in 2006 and it was not until a few years later around 2008 that the news media started to focus on the impact that gun trafficking had on Mexico's border violence. Around 2008 the issue of illicit firearms trafficking into Mexico gained exposure especially with the increase in the number of deaths attributed to border violence. The issue of gun trafficking into Mexico became so prevalent that it garnered the attention of the United States government and in 2009 the GAO released their research findings on firearms trafficking.

Overall, the societal origin of the phenomenon of gun trafficking into Mexico can best be thought of as starting in 2008 but have garnered media attention from 2009 on. This research focused on *The New York Times* and *El Universal* articles within the years of 2009-2012. I found that from these years the issue of gun trafficking was directly and indirectly being discussed by both national newspapers. Direct discussion of gun trafficking referred to instances in which gun trafficking, weapons possession/gun trafficking arrest, or weapons seizure were brought up in an article piece. Indirect discussion of gun trafficking referred to instances in article pieces that did not directly bring up aspects of gun trafficking but rather implied the issue of gun trafficking by discussing the small and light arm attacks, gun battles, or the types of weapons used. The phenomenon of gun trafficking into Mexico met Jamrozik and Nocella's first criteria for becoming a social problem.

The second criterion aimed to see if gun trafficking into Mexico constituted a threat or a perceived threat to certain values and interests. Another way I built on the

2010 work by Finklea et al. was by trying to figure out if Mexican citizen's individual freedoms were hampered by the drug related violence and whether there were threats to social cohesion and economic prosperity. I added to the previous body of literature by showcasing that Mexican citizen's individual freedoms, threats to social cohesion and economic prosperity were all impacted by the border violence that is ongoing in Mexico. Gun trafficking could be viewed as a social problem due to the impact that the trafficking of illicit firearms into Mexico had on individual freedoms, threats to social cohesion, and economic prosperity. The sheer numbers of deaths that have been attributed to border violence at the hands of armed gunmen have caused people to be afraid of being out in public. In regards to the fear of shootouts, it has caused a decline in economic prosperity for cities which rely on tourism. The impact of gun trafficking on Mexico's border violence can be felt and seen as being threatening to social cohesion. The Mexican government's goal for stabilizing border towns and making them safer was by rounding up drug cartel members but this goal tends to get disrupted when law enforcement officers are outgunned by the drug cartels. The phenomenon of gun trafficking into Mexico met Jamrozik and Nocella's second criteria for becoming a social problem.

The third criterion aimed to see if gun trafficking could be amendable to removal, reduction, or solution. When the issue of gun trafficking into Mexico started to pick up steam around 2008 there was no real consensus of shared responsibility rather it was a case of the blame game. Mexico argued that firearms from the United States were fueling the border violence in their country. The United States argued that Mexico was to blame for its problem regarding the influx of illicit firearms. I found that after awhile,

around mid 2010 through early 2011, the problem of gun trafficking into Mexico was viewed as a shared responsibility by both the United States and Mexico.

It has not been a perfect international relationship in trying to combat the problem of gun trafficking into Mexico; there have been a few hiccups along the way such as the ATF's Operation Fast and Furious. I did find that Mexican government had called for the United States government to reinstate the assault weapons ban which expired in 2004 which builds on Austin 2002, Barga et al. 2002, Cook et al. 1995, and Witemute's 2007 research that called for the United States to increase the amount of regulation that surrounds the secondary gun market by calling for tougher gun laws. The data showed that there has been cooperation between the United States and Mexico in regards to combating the flow of illicit firearms into Mexico and both countries have shown a sense of shared responsibility. For example, the United States and Mexico have both stepped up their vehicle inspections at the U.S.-Mexico border in order to prevent the flow of firearms, drugs and illegal immigrants. Also the United States has provided monetary aid to Mexico to help them combat the growing drug violence and to stem the flow of contraband from crossing the U.S.-Mexico border. The Merida Initiative and similar operations by the United States and Mexico have demonstrated that the problem of illicit trafficking of firearms into Mexico could be reduced and eventually solved if the whole supply and demand for firearms and drugs could be properly addressed. Gun trafficking into Mexico met Jamrozik and Nocella's third criteria regarding the problem being amendable to removal, reduction, or solution.

Overall, gun trafficking could be considered a social problem since it met all three of Jamrozik and Nocella's criteria. Gun trafficking into Mexico was found to have a societal origin, constituted a threat or a perceived threat to certain values and interests, and amendable to removal, reduction, or solution. I found that gun trafficking into Mexico was ultimately a social problem and not a moral panic as some lobbying groups might want us to believe. Knowing that gun trafficking into Mexico has now been established as a social problem, it becomes a bit easier to get the public's attention about the severity of the issue. In the end, the origin of the reporters could have affected the results by the type of stories that they covered. On the one hand, reporters from the Mexico might have had a more vested interest in covering the injustices that were brought forth by the drug related violence due to them having a more personal stake in the story as compared to their American counterparts. On the other hand, reporters from the United States might have had a more vested interest in covering the consequences of U.S. operations like Operation Fast and Furious as a way to keep the public informed about what the U.S. government was doing to prevent the flow of illegal firearms into the hands of criminals. This could have accounted for why there was more articles that were written by *El Universal* than *The New York Times* in regards to gun trafficking into Mexico, border violence, drug trafficking, human trafficking and spillover violence.

In the end, one limitation of my research was that it did not address whether gender was an issue regarding the fear of violence. One reason why I did not address this issue in my research was that most articles did not mention the gender of the victims but only provided the number of casualties with the exception of some high profile cases.

The general pattern of *The New York Times* and *El Universal* was to list the number of victims of border violence and at times, if permitted, they would provide their names as well. A second limitation of my research was that I only discussed small and light arm firefights when it came to border violence. I did find that there was mention of other types of border violence such as decapitations, kidnappings, arson, and extortion throughout the research but I only scratched the surface since I was investigating the impact of gun trafficking on border violence. These types of border violence are going to be addressed in future research in more in-depth detail. A third limitation of my study was that content analysis may not have been able to determine causal relationships between variables. The main strength of my study was that I attempted to address the issue of gun trafficking and border violence along the United States-Mexico border since there was little scholarly work on these issues. These issues are important to understand since they do not only affect Mexico, our neighbors to the south, but has the potential to impact the United States as well through spillover violence. A second strength of my study was that I could determine the strength and magnitude of these categories and concepts. I was able to accomplish this by utilizing some descriptive statistics such as frequencies in order to figure out whether *The New York Times* or *El Universal* had more articles regarding victims of border violence, negative and positive aspects of gun trafficking, fear of violence, and who is to blame for Mexico's border violence and gun trafficking problems.

Future research will need to investigate how gender impacts the fear of becoming a victim of violence and whether it is associated more with males than females. Some

additional areas for future research include conducting a content analysis of local newspapers in close proximity to the border from both the United States and Mexico to see if the findings regarding gun trafficking and its impact on border violence are similar to those of national newspapers from the United States and Mexico. It would be good to investigate other means of mass media as well to see how much attention is given to this social problem. Another aspect that needs to be researched in regards to gun trafficking from the United States into Mexico revolves around the notion of why do individuals get involved in the illicit trafficking of firearms and what are some of the techniques that are utilized by gun runners to cross firearms and ammunition into Mexico from the United States. Of course there will be some big concerns with trying to carry out the later research such as safety issues for those involved in the research but maybe someone will find a safer alternative to conducting these interviews such as talking to gun runners who are in prison.

Moving on to the issue of border violence, future research needs to be conducted in terms of interviewing citizens, law enforcement, and political officials from Mexico's border regions and other areas which have been afflicted by the drug related violence in order to get a real understanding of how the ongoing violence amongst the drug trafficking organizations has impacted their daily lives, the social cohesion of the city, police, the military, and businesses. It would be great to get the view point of those individuals living in the chaos of the drug related violence in regards to what they feel should be done to help end the violence between rival drug trafficking organizations and Mexico's law enforcement agencies. Plus it would be good to collect information

regarding who they think is to blame for the ongoing violence in their country.

Additionally, research needs to be done to determine whether the media portrays Mexico's border violence as a social problem or as a moral panic. Research also needs to be carried out to see how the media goes about framing Mexico's border violence. For example, who is at fault for the violence that is happening in Mexico? Would the results be similar to those found for who was to blame for gun trafficking into Mexico or would the results differ.

Research would also be needed on how the media frames spillover violence and what constitutes as spillover violence. Could the threat of spillover violence from Mexico's drug related violence be the reason why *The New York Times* printed more articles regarding various elements of gun trafficking such as small and light arm attacks, the Southwest Border Paradigm, supply and demand, threats to social cohesion, threats to law and order, threats to economy and tourism, and "gun walking" than *El Universal*. In order to get to the bottom of this question further research is needed especially in regards to talking with journalists and editors to get their side of the story. Most importantly, the media, through their influence, has a great impact on what issues are conveyed as important to their audience. In the end, more research needs to be conducted regarding gun trafficking into Mexico, border violence, and spillover violence since these issues are bi-national problems that need to be addressed and not just brushed aside.

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- Agencia el Universal. 2010. "ejército-chihuahua" *El Universal* (Mexico), January 14.
2010. "El dilema de legalizar las drogas" *El Universal* (Mexico), August 11.
2011. "El Ejército captura a "El Águila" en Zapopan" *El Universal* (Mexico), May 13.
2011. "El gran fracaso electoral" *El Universal* (Mexico), July 5.
2011. "Eligen Juárez como escenario de videojuego sobre narco" *El Universal* (Mexico), February 9.
2009. "Elogian que México militarice frontera" *El Universal* (Mexico), May 7.
2012. "Emiten alerta en Tamaulipas por violencia en Texas" *El Universal* (Mexico), January 9.
2010. "Empresa cancela venta de cosméticos sobre muertas de Juárez en México" *El Universal* (Mexico), August 10l.
2011. "En la línea" *El Universal* (Mexico), January 26.

2010. "En la línea" *El Universal* (Mexico), July 27.
2011. "En operativo "fallido", EU pasó miles de armas a México" *El Universal* (Mexico), March 4.
2010. "Encarcelan a "El Grande" con tres cargos" *El Universal* (Mexico), December 8.
2011. "Escenarios de Guerra" *El Universal* (Mexico), March 30.
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2011. "EU alerta de posibilidad de ataques en Juárez" *El Universal* (Mexico), July 15.
2011. "EU capacita a militares mexicanos en el país" *El Universal* (Mexico), February 26.
2011. "EU: crece envío de droga bajo el mar" *El Universal* (Mexico), April 3.
2010. "EU decomisa arsenal que venía a México" *El Universal* (Mexico), December 21.
2011. "EU endurece revisión aduanal para evitar el tráfico de armas" *El Universal* (Mexico), March 29.
2011. "EU ha dado sólo 27% de la Iniciativa Mérida" *El Universal* (Mexico), June 14.
2011. "EU: narco controla tráfico de ilegales" *El Universal* (Mexico), December 7.
2010. "EU ofrece recompensa por narcos" *El Universal* (Mexico), November 6.
2011. "EU ordena combate sin tregua contra "Zetas"" *El Universal* (Mexico), July 25.
2011. "EU ordena fin de operativos como "Rápido y Furioso": CBS News" *El Universal* (Mexico), March 15.
2011. "EU suma 130 aviones para vigilar frontera" *El Universal* (Mexico), March 31.
2011. "Exigen a EU castigar a asesino de connacional" *El Universal* (Mexico), June 22.
2010. "Exigen cambios a la política migratoria" *El Universal* (Mexico), September 22.
2010. "Expedientes Abiertos" *El Universal* (Mexico), July 11.
2010. "Expedientes Abiertos" *El Universal* (Mexico), October 24.

2010. "Experto italiano sugiere Policía Única contra narco" *El Universal* (Mexico), September 9.
2011. "Extraditan a EU a presunto homicida de agente fronterizo" *El Universal* (Mexico), March 17.
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2011. "Familia Reyes analiza migrar a España por ola de violencia" *El Universal* (Mexico), February 28.
2010. "FBI: Pueden cruzar armas nucleares" *El Universal* (Mexico), August 5.
2011. "FCH pide mayor cooperación a EU contra el narco" *El Universal* (Mexico), September 19.
- Agencia el Universal. 2009. "Feria-libro-guadalajara" *El Universal* (Mexico), November 27.
2011. "Firman Pacto Ciudadano y anuncian Resistencia" *El Universal* (Mexico), June 11.
- Agencia el Universal. 2010. "foro-seguridad" *El Universal* (Mexico), March 19.
2011. "Fracaso y entreguismo en seguridad" *El Universal* (Mexico), April 12.
2010. "Frontera-tráfico" *El Universal* (Mexico), April 15.
2010. "Fuerzas Federales abaten al líder de "La Familia"" *El Universal* (Mexico), June 10.
2011. "Funcionario de EU sugiere rebautizar a cárteles" *El Universal* (Mexico), June 28.
- Agencia el Universal. 2009. "Futbol-Indios-Violencia" *El Universal* (Mexico), December 18.
2010. "Gobernador de Nuevo León se reúne con funcionario de EU" *El Universal* (Mexico), October 28.
2011. "Gobiernos sin vergüenza" *El Universal* (Mexico), March 4.
2011. "Gran Angular" *El Universal* (Mexico), June 5.
2011. "Guanajuato creará primer módulo de mando único" *El Universal* (Mexico), March 30.

2010. "Iglesia advierte mayor tensión en la frontera México-EU" *El Universal* (Mexico), July 20.
2011. "IMSS pide a la OCDE apoyo anticorrupción" *El Universal* (Mexico), January 13.
2010. "Increpan a Poiré en el ITAM" *El Universal* (Mexico), September 3.
- Agencia el Universal 27. "Iniciativa-Mérida" *El Universal* (Mexico), May 27.
2010. "INM regularizará a trabajadores agrícolas centroamericanos rescatados" *El Universal* (Mexico), November 25.
2011. "Inscripciones abiertas" *El Universal* (Mexico), September 2.
2010. "Instala México Unido contra Delincuencia exposición sobre inseguridad" *El Universal* (Mexico), July 22.
2011. "Instalan cámaras en escuelas de Tamaulipas" *El Universal* (Mexico), June 4.
2011. "Insuficiente, apoyo a México: McCaffrey" *El Universal* (Mexico), October 5.
2010. "Interjet y Volaris van por Mazatlán" *El Universal* (Mexico), November 14.
2010. "Interparlamentaria-PRI" *El Universal* (Mexico), June 13.
2011. "'Invaden' narcos el sur de EU, alertan" *El Universal* (Mexico), April 10.
2010. "Juarenses crean movimiento de héroes ciudadanos" *El Universal* (Mexico), December 22.
2011. "Juarenses no se sienten seguros" *El Universal* (Mexico), May 6.
2010. "Juez absuelve a Vicente Carrillo Leyva por delincuencia organizada" *El Universal* (Mexico), October 29.
2010. "'La Bonita', otra de las 'reinas' del narcotráfico mexicano" *El Universal* (Mexico), December 12.
2010. "'La Familia' llenó vacío que dejó Estado: senador del PRD" *El Universal* (Mexico), December 13.
2010. "La fiesta de las balas" *El Universal* (Mexico), November 17.
2010. "La mayoría de policías, infiltradas por el narco: Sergio Aponte" *El Universal*

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2009. “La negación del narco en El Paso” *El Universal* (Mexico), October 22.
2010. “La reforma judicial, otra víctima del crimen” *El Universal* (Mexico), July 18.
2012. “Legisladores de EU reconocen lucha anticrimen” *El Universal* (Mexico), January 13.
2011. “Limpia en ATF por "Rápido y furioso"” *El Universal* (Mexico), May 17.
2011. “Localizan cuerpo de alcalde plagiado en Zacatecas” *El Universal* (Mexico), July 28.
2010. “Los escuadrones de la muerte” *El Universal* (Mexico), October 23.
2010. “"Los Zetas" crean imperio en Guatemala” *El Universal* (Mexico), December 23.
2011. “Lucha encarnizada por plazas” *El Universal* (Mexico), July 11.
2010. “Marchan por destrucción de cerros en Guanajuato” *El Universal* (Mexico), October 31.
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2011. “Más que indignación” *El Universal* (Mexico), April 9.
2011. “Masacres, marca de los cárteles” *El Universal* (Mexico), December 30.
2011. “Matan a 16 jóvenes en tres ciudades” *El Universal* (Mexico), July 13.
2011. “McCain urge a mayor seguridad fronteriza” *El Universal* (Mexico), April 7.
2010. “México, en los primeros lugares en trata: CEIDAS” *El Universal* (Mexico), July 27.
2011. “México a la defensiva” *El Universal* (Mexico), September 16.
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2010. “México ignora tráfico de personas, dice experta” *El Universal* (Mexico), December, 3.
2011. “"México pasa por días duros, pero saldrá fuerte": Davidow” *El Universal*

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2011. “México y Colombia acuerdan reunión” *El Universal* (Mexico), April 4.
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2011. “Militares de CA van contra cárteles mexicanos: Colom” *El Universal* (Mexico), January 27.
2011. “Militares rescatan a 61 secuestrados en Coahuila” *El Universal* (Mexico), October 16.
2011. “Moreira evade hablar de Carlos Pascual” *El Universal* (Mexico), March 9.
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- Agencia el Universal. 2010. “Morelos-Violencia” *El Universal* (Mexico), April 1.
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2011. “Napolitano ignoraba paso de armas a México” *El Universal* (Mexico), March 9.

2011. "Narco casi derroca a gobierno mexicano: Sheriff en Arizona" *El Universal* (Mexico), February 9.
2011. "Narco extorsiona a mexicanos en EU, afirma la DEA" *El Universal* (Mexico), December 23.
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2011. "'Narcocorridos', 40 años de espectáculo y controversia" *El Universal* (Mexico), May 29.
2010. "Narcodelitos crecen con complicidad oficial" *El Universal* (Mexico), December 23.
2011. "Narcos y sicarios ya viven en El Paso, afirma agente" *El Universal* (Mexico), May 3.
2010. "Narcotraficantes "escalán" su capacidad de fuego" *El Universal* (Mexico), September 26.
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2011. "Necesaria participación social para recuperar estabilidad: Diputados" *El Universal* (Mexico), January 21.
2010. "Niegan que en América haya santuarios de narco" *El Universal* (Mexico), October 8.
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2010. "NL-Reformas" *El Universal* (Mexico), June 21.
2011. "No arriesgar la vida, pide "zar fronterizo" de EU a indocumentados" *El Universal* (Mexico), September 1.

2009. "No hay muertos buenos ni malos, dice visitador" *El Universal* (Mexico), September 17.
2010. "Nuevos tambores de Guerra" *El Universal* (Mexico), August 24.
2010. "Obligados al exilio por defender los bosques" *El Universal* (Mexico), August 15.
2011. "'Ocultan' nombres en padrón de Procampo" *El Universal* (Mexico), August 7.
2010. "ONU pide a México acciones urgentes tras asesinato de 72 migrantes" *El Universal* (Mexico), August 27.
2011. "Operativo "Rápido y Furioso" se aprobó en Washington: ex agente de EU" *El Universal* (Mexico), March 25.
2010. "Ordena EU a sus empleados consulares sacar a sus hijos de Monterrey" *El Universal* (Mexico), August 27.
2010. "Panorama norteamericano" *El Universal* (Mexico), August 20.
2011. "Pedirá Calderón respeto y confianza a Obama en reunión bilateral" *El Universal* (Mexico), March 2.
2011. "Peña: DF y Edomex, gran mercado para cárteles" *El Universal* (Mexico), February 15.
2012. "Peña ofrece frenar la violencia" *El Universal* (Mexico), January 8.
2010. "Periodistas de Chiapas demandan garantías para informar" *El Universal* (Mexico), September 25.
2011. "PF incauta 82 paquetes de cocaína en Chiapas" *El Universal* (Mexico), May 17.
2011. "PGR ha pagado 38 mdp por concepto de recompensas" *El Universal* (Mexico), September 17.
2011. "PGR pide coordinación a procuradurías" *El Universal* (Mexico), November 18.
2010. "Piden a PGR "trabajar más" en zona triqui de Oaxaca tras ataque" *El Universal* (Mexico), August 23.
2011. "Piden fiscal para investigar a Holder por "Rápido y Furioso"" *El Universal* (Mexico), October 4.

2011. "Policías fronterizos entrenarán en Chicago" *El Universal* (Mexico), December 13.
2011. "Policías hallan túnel clandestino en Nogales, Sonora" *El Universal* (Mexico), November 22.
2010. "Polimunicipales reportan 1.3% de los delitos federales: INEGI" *El Universal* (Mexico), September 22.
2010. "Por conflictos de cárteles, 80% de ejecuciones: gobierno federal" *El Universal* (Mexico), August 27.
2009. "PRD: narco infiltró sistema financiero" *El Universal* (Mexico), July 22.
2010. "Preocupan a EU "tácticas terroristas" de cárteles de la droga" *El Universal* (Mexico), August 5.
2011. "Priístas buscan desaparecer la PGR" *El Universal* (Mexico), January 25.
2011. "Procurador de EU condena operación "Rápido y Furioso"" *El Universal* (Mexico), March 10.
2011. "Profeco investiga a "cárteles" de la tortilla" *El Universal* (Mexico), April 17.
2012. "Profepa decomisa 43 aves en mercado de Colima" *El Universal* (Mexico), January 2.
2011. "Proyectar estabilidad económica y social de México, clave para FCH" *El Universal* (Mexico), January 27.
2011. "Rápidos, furiosos y asesinos" *El Universal* (Mexico), August 2.
2011. "Rechaza AMLO ir en coalición a 2012" *El Universal* (Mexico), October 11.
2011. "Rechaza gobierno de Obama fracaso de Iniciativa Mérida" *El Universal* (Mexico), September 14.
2011. "Recibe Poiré a secretario de Seguridad de Rusia" *El Universal* (Mexico), November 28.
2011. "Recuerdan masacre de Villas de Salvárcar" *El Universal* (Mexico), January 29.
2010. "Reforzarán seguridad en hospitales: Ssa" *El Universal* (Mexico), December 14.

2009. "Refuerzan seguridad fronteriza México-EU" *El Universal* (Mexico), June 16.
2011. "Replican Marcha por la Paz frente a Casa Blanca en EU" *El Universal* (Mexico), May 8.
2011. "Revelan otro "Rápido y furioso"; piden indagar a fiscal" *El Universal* (Mexico), October 5.
2011. "Sandoval Íñiguez culpa a los gobiernos de engrosar al narco" *El Universal* (Mexico), February 18.
2010. "Segob y Tamaulipas indagan matanza de forma conjunta" *El Universal* (Mexico), August 26.
2011. "Seguridad, prioridad de reunión Clinton-Espinosa" *El Universal* (Mexico), January 23.
2010. "Seis días, tres masacres, 42 jóvenes muertos" *El Universal* (Mexico), October 27.
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2011. "Senadores del PRD solicitan prueba a detector molecular" *El Universal* (Mexico), September 13.
2010. "Senadores rechazan semejanza México-Colombia" *El Universal* (Mexico), September 8.
2010. "SEP planea expandir "Escuela Segura" a más estados" *El Universal* (Mexico), July 13.
2010. "Sicarios fusilan a seis hombres en Chihuahua" *El Universal* (Mexico), December 9.
- Agencia el Universal. 2010. "Sinaloa-Seguridad" *El Universal* (Mexico), February 10.
2010. "Sólo mafias china y rusa superan a narco" *El Universal* (Mexico), July 27.
- Agencia el Universal. 2010. "Sonora-violencia" *El Universal* (Mexico), February 9.
- Agencia el Universal. 2010. "Sonora-Violencia" *El Universal* (Mexico), March 16.
2011. "SRE niega liga cárteles-extremistas" *El Universal* (Mexico), December 15.
2011. "SRE pide relación bilateral sin sumisión" *El Universal* (Mexico), March 15.

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2011. "Suman 6 asesinatos en las últimas horas en Ciudad Juárez" *El Universal* (Mexico), July 4.
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- Agencia el Universal. 2010. "Tamaulipas-Violencia" *El Universal* (Mexico), May 26.
2011. "Tenosique, Tabasco, ruta de terror para migrantes" *El Universal* (Mexico), February 4.
2010. "'Times' pide a EU frenar venta de armas" *El Universal* (Mexico), December 16.
- Agencia el Universal. 2010. "Tlaxcala-Seguridad" *El Universal* (Mexico), February 24.
2011. "'Todos somos Juárez', con avances insuficientes" *El Universal* (Mexico), February 17.
2011. "Trabe colapsó por desbalanceo: GEM" *El Universal* (Mexico), July 27.
2011. "Trasladan a EU a agente herido en San Luis Potosí" *El Universal* (Mexico), February 16.
2010. "Trata desplazará a tráfico de drogas en ganancias, señalan" *El Universal* (Mexico), October 8.
2011. "Ultiman a policía en Monterrey" *El Universal* (Mexico), January 13.
2012. "Usan en EU a niños para tráfico de droga" *El Universal* (Mexico), January 7.
2011. "Ven a 'El Chapo' como el nuevo más buscado del mundo" *El Universal* (Mexico), May 6.
- Agencia el Universal. 2010. "Veracruz-migrantes" *El Universal* (Mexico), April 14.
2011. "Violencia ahuyenta a firmas: Coparmex" *El Universal* (Mexico), May 9.
2010. "Violencia en Juárez, problema de salud: Reyes Ferriz" *El Universal* (Mexico), July 20.
2011. "Violencia en México impide inversión de empresas de EU" *El Universal* (Mexico), June 8.

2011. "Violencia en México puede agravarse: EU" *El Universal* (Mexico), June 18.
2010. "Violencia reducirá regreso de migrantes al país" *El Universal* (Mexico) October 10.
2010. "Violencia rompe récord en 2010" *El Universal* (Mexico), December 17.
- Agencia el Universal. 2010. "Violencia-niños" *El Universal* (Mexico), January 1.
2011. "Visitador ubica zonas de exterminio en Juárez" *El Universal* (Mexico), February 23.
2011. "Vitril Político" *El Universal* (Mexico), May 8.
2011. "Vulneran soberanía de México" *El Universal* (Mexico), December 4.
2011. "Wayne buscaría evitar otro operativo "Rápido y Furioso"" *El Universal* (Mexico), July 20.
2011. "Zacatecas: matan a 6 policías y 3 civiles" *El Universal* (Mexico), October 9.
2011. "'Zonas de riesgo" en 8 entidades de México: España" *El Universal* (Mexico), April 20.