


2015

Media Narratives and Drug Prohibition: A Content Analysis of Themes and Strategies Promoted in Network News Coverage, 2000-2013

Maria M. Orsini
morsini@marshall.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <http://mds.marshall.edu/etd>

 Part of the [Film and Media Studies Commons](#), and the [Social Control, Law, Crime, and Deviance Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Orsini, Maria M., "Media Narratives and Drug Prohibition: A Content Analysis of Themes and Strategies Promoted in Network News Coverage, 2000-2013" (2015). *Theses, Dissertations and Capstones*. Paper 913.

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by Marshall Digital Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses, Dissertations and Capstones by an authorized administrator of Marshall Digital Scholar. For more information, please contact zhangj@marshall.edu.

MEDIA NARRATIVES AND DRUG PROHIBITION:
A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THEMES AND STRATEGIES PROMOTED IN NETWORK
NEWS COVERAGE, 2000-2013

A thesis submitted to
the Graduate College of
Marshall University

In partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

in

Sociology

by

Maria M. Orsini

Approved by
Dr. Kristi Fondren, Committee Chairperson
Dr. Frederick Roth
Dr. Donna Sullivan

Marshall University
May 2015

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express sincere appreciation to everyone who supported and guided me through the writing of this thesis. I thank Dr. Kristi Fondren, the chair of my thesis committee, for her constructive guidance throughout the completion of this project.

I will always be profoundly grateful to Dr. Frederick Roth for years of inspiration and academic support. Dr. Roth has been an indispensable and wonderful mentor prior to and throughout my graduate education. He was also instrumental during the inception of this thesis.

I also appreciate Dr. Donna Sullivan for her role as part of my committee. Additionally, I fondly thank the Marshall University Department of Sociology and Anthropology for the welcoming environment and memorable opportunities afforded to me during my graduate study. Finally, I thank my parents for their constant love, encouragement, and support.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables	vi
List of Figures	vii
Abstract	viii
Chapter	
I. Introduction	1
II. Historical Background and Literature Review	4
Legislation.....	4
Profile and View of Addiction.....	6
Anti-Drug Campaigns and Narratives	7
Drugs, Racism, and Media.....	11
Depictions of Drugs in News Media.....	13
Depictions of Drugs in Entertainment Media	17
Presidential Administrations and the Politicization of Drug Issues.....	18
Drugs, Media, and Public Policy	26
Drugs, Media, and Public Opinion	31
Normalization of Marijuana.....	33
III. Theoretical Framework.....	35
Social Constructionism	35
Agenda Setting.....	36
Framing	39
Moral Panics	43
IV. Methodology.....	49

Data Collection Activities.....	49
Data Analysis Procedures	50
V. Results.....	55
Heroin Themes.....	55
International Concerns and Drug-Related Violence.....	55
Law Enforcement Successes and Challenges	59
Concern about Drug Addiction.....	61
Drug Use or Involvement of Public Figures.....	63
Strategies and Responses to Heroin.....	63
Interdiction Efforts and Security Measures	64
Drug Rehabilitation or Services.....	67
Financial and Military Resources to Other Countries.....	69
Other Strategies.....	70
Cocaine Themes.....	71
Law Enforcement Successes and Challenges	71
International Concerns and Drug-Related Violence.....	78
Drug Use or Involvement of Public Figures.....	82
Concern about Drug Addiction.....	84
Research or Policy Changes.....	85
Strategies and Responses to Cocaine.....	88
Interdiction Efforts and Security Measures	88
Financial and Military Resources to Other Countries.....	94
Drug Rehabilitation or Services.....	97

Sentencing Reform.....	98
Other Strategies.....	98
VI. Discussion and Conclusion.....	100
Predominant Themes and Strategies.....	100
Enduring Rhetoric and Emergent Narratives.....	104
Ideology and Moral Judgment.....	110
Contradictory Assertions.....	111
Limitations.....	112
Implications.....	115
Directions for Future Research.....	116
References.....	119
Appendices.....	127
Appendix A: IRB Exemption Letter.....	127
Appendix B: List of Broadcast Transcripts.....	128
Appendix C: News Transcript Coding Sheet.....	134

LIST OF TABLES

5.1. Frequencies of Themes in Network News Reports about Heroin, 2000-2013	56
5.2. Frequencies of Strategies in Network News Reports about Heroin, 2000-2013	65
5.3. Frequencies of Themes in Network News Reports about Cocaine, 2000-2013	73
5.4. Frequencies of Strategies in Network News Reports about Cocaine, 2000-2013	89

LIST OF FIGURES

5.1. Themes in Network News Coverage of Heroin and Cocaine, 2000-2013.....	73
5.2. Strategies Promoted in News Coverage of Heroin and Cocaine, 2000-2013	89

ABSTRACT

Illicit drugs and drug users have been criminalized and stigmatized in social life and in mass media for more than a century in the United States. Researchers have reasoned that media accounts have contributed to the social construction of drug use as deviant behavior. Depictions of drugs and drug users which utilize alarmist rhetoric have been prevalent in media discourse and have targeted allegedly disreputable populations. The ideology which underpins drug prohibition, punitive public attitudes, and media sensationalism has contributed to the tendency of American society to disallow alternative approaches. This study examines the contribution of televised news broadcasts in advancing particular narratives regarding heroin and cocaine. Informed by a social constructionist theoretical framework, as well as concepts of framing, agenda setting, and moral panics, a content analysis is employed to identify recurring themes and strategies promoted in network news reports focusing on heroin and cocaine from the year 2000 to 2013. Findings indicate predominant themes of law enforcement successes and challenges, international concerns and drug-related violence, concern about addiction, and the drug use or involvement of public figures. Reports largely promoted interdiction efforts and neglected policy analysis or alternatives to extant strategies. Implications of prevailing themes and policies are discussed.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Psychoactive drugs have been used throughout human history in virtually all cultures for a variety of medicinal, recreational, and spiritual purposes (Goode, 1999). In the United States since the early twentieth century, however, there have been recurring periods of alarm regarding the use and sale of certain drugs. Media accounts have intensified concern by conveying messages about addictive narcotics which purportedly cause violence, crime, financial problems, and personal turmoil (Speaker, 2004). Media propaganda and the framing of drug use and distribution as criminal or moral issues have contributed to the public consistently ranking drugs among the nation's most significant problems (McGaw, 1991). Furthermore, illicit drug users and dealers have been criminalized and stigmatized as immoral, irresponsible, and inherently prone to criminal behavior.

The media are a pervasive part of contemporary culture, and they typically reflect and promote hegemonic ideologies and discourses (Beckett, 1995; Gitlin, 1979). Mainstream televised and print news media present a limited range of viewpoints, often citing government officials and law enforcement figures while marginalizing other potential sources such as social scientists, health professionals, and drug users (Beckett, 1995). Sociologists and criminologists are infrequently cited (Chermak, 1997), and crime coverage is sensationalized in order to increase and maintain viewership and readership.

Many individuals have limited practical experience with prohibited drugs, and are likely to rely on the media for information about the topic (Blendon & Young, 1998). The media are agents of socialization and an integral part of "the context in which opinions are formed and expressed" (Beckett, 1995, p. 178). Mass media sources disseminate extensive amounts of

information and have reinforced a punitive approach to illicit drugs over the last century. Therefore, it is plausible that the media framing of drugs as a criminal issue has played a crucial role in public “acceptance of this definition of the drug problem” (p. 178).

The consequences of this framing of proscribed drugs have been vast. Media representations of illegal drugs have affected perceptions of risk, restricted the possibility of a deeper understanding of the issues, and limited support for drug policy reform (Lancaster, Hughes, Spicer, Matthew-Simmons, & Dillon, 2011). News media have also been shown to normalize and facilitate the adoption of “stigmatized language,” or language which advances particular notions of deviance, among the general public (Altheide & DeVriese, 2007). Once dominant discourses are internalized by individuals and broadly accepted, they become “self-perpetuating” due to their power and pervasiveness in society (Bright, Marsh, Smith, & Bishop, 2008, p. 136). Rhetoric and misinformation pervading drug discourse helped generate support for ill-advised drug laws in the United States which were notoriously harsh compared to other developed countries.

Draconian criminal justice policies failed to decrease drug sales and consumption, and have also produced serious social problems such as mass incarceration (Alexander, 2010). Moreover, drug laws have been discriminatorily enforced, such that racial minorities are more frequently incarcerated and receive harsher penalties than white drug offenders, with impoverished communities suffering the most (Alexander, 2010; Chermak, 1997; Sirin, 2011). The drug war has also resulted in an erosion of civil liberties, increased violence, property crime, drug contamination, overdoses, the spread of AIDS, the punishment of nonviolent individuals, and exorbitant financial expenditures (Benavie, 2009). In recent years, an increasing number of public figures and individuals have unequivocally acknowledged that the War on Drugs in the

United States was extremely misguided (Benavie, 2009). However, a transition to an alternative policy framework such as harm minimization, decriminalization, or legalization has not occurred.

Given the history of drug coverage and its ramifications, critical examinations of media messages regarding illicit drugs are essential. The media have agenda-setting power and can thus set the parameters of debate and shape national discourse. Furthermore, analyzing the current framing of and attitudes toward prohibited drugs present in the media can identify the existence or lack of progress. Additionally, the media have the power to disseminate viewpoints in such a way that more effective policies could be presented as viable alternatives. Through an examination of past mistakes, American society may be able to view drug issues in a more pragmatic way to facilitate an evolution in drug policies.

This study examines the ways in which illegal drugs and drug use have been represented in network news programs in recent years while placing the discourse in a historical context. A content analysis was conducted of televised news broadcast transcripts to investigate the following research question: What are the dominant themes and strategies promoted in ABC and NBC evening news reports regarding heroin and cocaine from the year 2000 to 2013?

The following chapter examines the role of drugs in American society, and discusses dominant narratives, social control efforts, media portrayals, and relevant literature.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will provide a summary of the historical context and social control of drug use in the United States, as well as a review of existing literature. The contribution of media in advancing narratives and attitudes about drugs is discussed. Drug-related legislation beginning in the 19th century is delineated, along with political discourse, social control efforts, and trends in public opinion.

Specific drugs that are now illegal and stigmatized in the United States were not always viewed negatively. In the U.S. in the late 19th century, opiates were frequently self-administered, widely available, praised for their medicinal value, and utilized in a variety of ways. Remedial syrups and concoctions known as “patent medicines,” which contained morphine and opium, were sold over the counter and used to treat an assortment of mental and physical ailments, including toothaches, headaches, depression, anxiety, coughing, insomnia, and the common cold (Goode, 1999). Heroin was used in patent medicines as an effective cough suppressant (Mosher & Akins, 2007), and initially was considered a miraculous cure for morphine addiction (Bellis, 1981). Additionally, retailer Sears, Roebuck and Company sold sets of injecting paraphernalia in its catalog (Bellis, 1981). Cocaine was originally praised and widely used as an anesthetic, a remedy for sinus problems, and as a treatment for habitual use of alcohol and opiates. Scholarly medical journals recommended its use, and it was also a common ingredient in wine, medicine, soda, sprays, and alcoholic mixtures (Musto, 1987).

Legislation

The origin of the criminalization of drugs in the United States can be traced back to key pieces of legislation in the early twentieth century. Restrictions on patent medicines began in

1906 when Congress passed the Pure Food and Drug Act, which required manufacturers to list the content of products, thus informing consumers of any habit-forming ingredients (Helmer, 1975; Hoffmann, 1990; McGaw, 1991; Mosher & Akins, 2007; Musto, 1987). The Opium Exclusion Act of 1909 criminalized the importation and use of opium (Gieringer, 2009). However, this prohibitive drug law failed to halt the opium trade and effectively created criminal traffickers.

The Harrison Act of 1914 is arguably the most significant piece of legislation in the history of drug interdiction in America, as it made all nonprescription opiates illegal (McGaw, 1991; Musto, 1987). Moreover, it “marked the point at which *all* narcotic addicts came to be defined by society as criminal deviants, even though many of them had been respectable citizens” (Bellis, 1981, p. 9). After the passage of the Harrison Act on December 17, 1914, patients could still receive opiates from doctors, but only for “legitimate” medical purposes. In the case of *Webb v. United States* in 1919, the Supreme Court decided that it was illegal and not legitimate medical practice to maintain a person on opiates. It was this legislation and interpretation that served to redefine a medical issue into a moral and legal problem. Physicians who administered narcotics to drug-addicted individuals risked sanctions such as license revocation or even arrest. As a result, a black market was created, which increased drug prices, and consequently property crime, as many people who used drugs began to resort to criminal activity to sustain their habits. In 1919, maintenance clinics began to operate in response to the problems that surfaced as a result of the Harrison Act (Bellis, 1981). Their goal was to provide opiates in order to diminish the black market, decrease the prevalence of addiction, and reduce crime. Many clinics were successful and greatly benefited their communities; however, because of media attention given to a badly operated New York facility, these programs were

discontinued in 1922. Physicians closed the clinics due to pressure from the media, the government, and the public. Those who were addicted were impelled to resort to criminal behavior to support their habits, which reinforced the public's stance on addiction as an individual, criminal problem (Bellis, 1981).

Profile and View of Addiction

The profile of the stereotypical drug addict has changed drastically from its original description. Near the beginning of the 20th century, many middle-class women used opiates to alleviate boredom because temperance-minded people considered it “unseemly” for women to drink. As such, those addicted to drugs were likely to be white, middle-aged, and female (Hoffmann, 1990). Soothing syrups were principally used by middle-class, educated citizens, and at this time, there was no link between addiction and crime. Drug-addicted individuals were not viewed as immoral or irresponsible; instead, addiction was viewed as a medical problem, and they were considered to be in need of help (Goode, 1999).

As recreational opium smoking increased in cities, addiction became associated with urban life and “shady” characters (Bellis, 1981). It was in the 1920s that the typical profile of an addict shifted and became connected with young males of low socioeconomic status (Bellis, 1981; Hoffmann, 1990). In addition, after the Harrison Act, addiction came to be seen as a purely pleasure-seeking behavior rather than a medical need, so respectable citizens who used drugs were redefined as deviants and criminals. Hoffmann (1990) explained the link between the profile of typical opiate users and the transition to the opinion that opiates are hazardous. After opiates became associated with lower-class males in cities, individuals with an addiction to drugs or alcohol came to be viewed as immoral and weak. The attitude that drug use is wrong has since prevailed, and the media, politicians, and the general public have all perpetuated the belief that

persons who use or are addicted to drugs are inherently criminal and harmful to society (Bellis, 1981).

Anti-Drug Campaigns and Narratives

There is a long history of fear-based communication campaigns regarding drugs and alcohol. Goode (1999) aptly described a substantial portion of the discourse regarding drug use as “*demonology* – the effort to demonstrate that drug use is inherently evil, *by its very nature* inevitably dangerous and damaging” (p. 12).

At the beginning of the 20th century, a punitive spirit emerged in America as the public became aware of increased alcoholism and heroin use (Bellis, 1981). There was a national antinarcotics campaign and notable public hysteria between 1905 and 1920 (Helmer, 1975) as newspapers wrote disparagingly about “dope fiends” (Bellis, 1981). Prior to the 1919 Volstead Act, the implementation of the Eighteenth Amendment, and the inception of alcohol Prohibition in 1920, moral entrepreneurs were on what Reinerman and Duskin (1992) called a “Temperance crusade.” Moral entrepreneurs are those who initiate the production of new rules (Becker, 1963), or individuals or groups, such as activists or organizations, who promote a specific agenda (Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 1994). The view that alcohol was to blame for many social problems was advanced by magazines and newspapers, which were the prominent mainstream media sources at the time (Reinerman & Duskin, 1992). Alcohol was used as a scapegoat for a variety of society’s ills, including violence, immorality, family disintegration, mental illness, poverty, and criminal behavior (Levine & Reinerman, 1987). The ideological basis of prohibition policy was “the belief that it is morally bad to be dependent on or...enslaved by drugs or alcohol; it is *good* to fight any form of dependency or weakness” (Bellis, 1981, p. 15).

Toward the end of alcohol Prohibition, many Prohibition agents began to work for the Federal Bureau of Narcotics (FBN), formed in 1930. When Prohibition ended in 1933, prohibition ideology and rhetoric were transferred to anti-drug discourses and campaigns (Bellis, 1981; Boyd, 2010). The FBN began a “hysterical campaign of anti-dope propaganda within the United States” (Bellis, 1981, p. 15), and addiction was described as a plague or epidemic (Speaker, 2004). Many newspapers and magazines published articles dubbing marijuana the “‘killer weed,’ the ‘weed of madness,’ a ‘sex-crazing drug menace,’ the ‘burning weed of hell,’ [and] a ‘gloomy monster of destruction’” (Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 1994, p. 153).

Harry Anslinger, the FBN’s first Commissioner of Narcotics and leader from 1932 to 1962, contributed heavily to anti-drug narratives (Gerber, 2004). Anslinger encouraged federal restrictions on marijuana and an increase in criminal justice approaches. He sought to sway public opinion, so he utilized media to disseminate his messages (Boyd, 2010). Throughout this effort, Anslinger conveyed unsubstantiated horror stories about drug addiction and crime in his books and writing. He also supported films which depicted marijuana among themes of immorality, depravity, and criminality. Produced with Anslinger’s support, the 1936 film *Reefer Madness*, initially titled *Tell Your Children*, was originally intended to inform parents about the perils of marijuana. The film depicted “middle-class white, small-town youth being lured into marijuana addiction, sexual depravity, insanity, and murder” (Boyd, 2010, p. 12). The film identified marijuana as “Public Enemy Number One,” and advocated punitive solutions and an increase in law enforcement approaches for coping with the “epidemic” (p. 12). Anslinger also interfered with publications and scholarly research on the subject of drug use (Boyd, 2010; Gerber, 2004). In 1944, the New York Academy of Medicine produced a report indicating that marijuana did not cause violent behavior or addiction. However, Anslinger insisted that the

researchers were “dangerous and strange,” and continued his campaign to convince the public that marijuana caused violent behavior (Gerber, 2004, p. 4).

Prior to the FBN campaign in the 1930s, recreational marijuana use was rare, and the public was largely unfamiliar with the drug. Doctors used it for medicinal purposes in a liquid form (Boyd, 2010), and most states did not have criminal laws prohibiting the possession and sale of marijuana (Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 1994). Moreover, enforcement of any existing marijuana laws was lax, and most of the public was apathetic or indifferent toward its use (Becker, 1963; Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 1994).

The criminalization of marijuana was not due to objective facts or an actual threat of harm, but rather a crusade involving moral entrepreneurs and the press. The Federal Bureau of Narcotics was successful in purposefully fabricating a crisis, changing the perception of marijuana, and facilitating the enactment of marijuana laws (Becker, 1963; Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 1994). The FBN supplied the news media with specific information, and worked with state governments to draft anti-marijuana legislation. A 1931 report from the U.S. Treasury Department illuminated the fact that the media were overstating the issue:

A great deal of public interest has been aroused by newspaper articles appearing from time to time on the evils of abuse of marihuana [*sic*], or Indian hemp, and more attention has been focused on specific cases reported of the abuse of the drug than would otherwise have been the case. This publicity tends to magnify the extent of the evil and lends color to an inference that there is an alarming spread of the improper use of the drug, whereas the actual increase in such use may not have been inordinately large. (as cited in Becker, 1963, p. 138)

After the extensive campaign against marijuana in the 1930s, all states outlawed possession (Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 1994). Subsequently, the Marijuana Tax Act of 1937 “established federal control over marijuana...by requiring possessors to pay a tax of \$100 an ounce” in order to arrest people for tax evasion upon failure to pay (Baum, 1996, p. 22). After criminalization, many states implemented mandatory minimum sentencing practices, and by 1951, all marijuana offenses carried mandatory minimum penalties. By 1956, traffickers could even be sentenced to life imprisonment or the death penalty. The LaGuardia Committee Report, a scientific report which recommended decriminalization of marijuana, was ignored by lawmakers (Boyd, 2010).

Propaganda in the 1960s continued to carry unfavorable messages about marijuana, such as the idea that it was a “drop-out drug” which supposedly destroyed users’ motivation and patriotism (Levine & Reinerman, 1987, p. 388; Reinerman & Duskin, 1992). During the same decade, LSD was a target of unrealistic claims as reports circulated that it was the new “menace” (Goode, 1999) and “broke chromosomes and yielded two-headed babies” (Reinerman & Duskin, 1992, p. 81).

During the 1970s, President Richard Nixon’s desire to eradicate the opium poppy received significant attention. Other prominent drug issues included the prescription sedative methaqualone, colloquially referred to as “ludes” due to the brand name “Quaalude,” about which many articles were published in newspapers and magazines (Goode, 1999). Phencyclidine (PCP) also received attention, as the press incorrectly reported that PCP gave users “superhuman strength,” causing police officers to require “new stun guns to subdue them” (Reinerman & Duskin, 1992, p. 81).

In the 1980s, crack cocaine was infamous and received extensive media coverage, and in the 1990s, methamphetamine became widely discussed and demonized (Goode, 1999; Murakawa, 2011).

Drugs, Racism, and Media

Drug historians have noted that the origin of American drug laws is strongly linked to racism, xenophobia, sexism, classism, and oppression (Levine & Reinerman, 1987; Musto, 1987; Sirin, 2011). Drugs were maligned as they became linked to supposedly disreputable populations, and these connections were reflected in media accounts. For example, in the 1890s, the association of opium with the Chinese immigrant population altered the social context of opiate use (Hoffmann, 1990; Levine & Reinerman, 1987; Murakawa, 2011; Musto, 1987; Sirin, 2011). Initially, Chinese immigrants were recognized as hard-working and law-abiding, and their opium smoking was ignored. However, due to economic issues and competition with white workers, Chinese immigrants increasingly became targets of hostility (Hoffmann, 1990; McGaw, 1991; Musto, 1987). Print media disseminated sensational reports about “yellow fiends” in opium dens coercing white women to become enslaved to the drug, and stories circulated about “Chinese men drugging white women into sexual slavery” (Levine & Reinerman, 1987, p. 388). As a result, the first laws against opium smoking were implemented in California (Hoffmann, 1990; Levine & Reinerman, 1987), and these prohibitory laws caused Chinese immigrants who smoked opium to be criminalized (Hoffmann, 1990).

A drug scare in the 1910s focused on African-American men and cocaine as there were exaggerated stories about “Negro cocaine madness” (Murakawa, 2011). The notion was circulated that cocaine transformed ordinary, peaceful individuals into dangerous criminals (Helmer, 1975). Law enforcement officials claimed that “coke-crazed” black men had an

unnatural amount of strength and that an upgrade from .32-caliber to .38-caliber pistols was necessary (Levine & Reinerman, 1987, p. 388). Additionally, there were assertions that cocaine led directly to rape, exacerbating racial conflict at a time when accusations of black men raping white women were already prevalent. Media depictions added to this image; for example, the *New York Times* published a story in 1914 which claimed that an unidentified man “went insane from cocaine poisoning in Battery Park...and ran about like a madman. He seized several women...and soon the park resounded with their screams” (Helmer, 1975, p. 48). These types of reports facilitated more violence and race riots in many locations (Helmer, 1975).

The fear of black men using cocaine came at the height of “lynchings, legal segregation, and voting laws all designed to remove political and social power” from black residents in southern states (Musto, 1987, p. 7). Despite the fact that there was no evidence of cocaine spurring criminal activity, white people feared black rebellion, defiance, and retribution (Musto, 1987). Furthermore, contrary to public opinion, it was questionable whether black people were even using cocaine and to what extent (Helmer, 1975; Musto, 1987). In an examination of Georgia State Sanitarium admissions between 1909 and 1914, E.M. Green discovered “only three cases of narcotic addiction among black patients, in contrast to 142 ‘drug psychoses’ among whites” (Helmer, 1975, p. 48). Thus, the alarm during that period was not a legitimate response to a credible threat; it was a manifestation of white fear and a tool of oppression against black people (Musto, 1987).

In the 1930s, media sources reported that marijuana caused violent behavior, with Mexican immigrant laborers identified as the disreputable demographic (Levine & Reinerman, 1987; Reinerman & Duskin, 1992). They were demonized in print media sources and linked

unjustifiably to marijuana use and violent crime (Musto, 1987). The Federal Bureau of Narcotics was instrumental in galvanizing this drug scare (Levine & Reinerman, 1987).

In the 1980s, panic about crack cocaine was directed toward African-American residents of inner cities (Reinerman & Duskin, 1992; Sirin, 2011). Stereotypes emerged as the media depicted “black ‘crack whores,’ ‘crack dealers,’ and ‘crack babies’—images that seemed to confirm the worst negative racial stereotypes about impoverished inner-city residents” (Alexander, 2010, p. 5). News coverage in the 1990s also “otherized” drug issues by concentrating on African Americans and Latin Americans and continuing the “pattern of drug wars as a means of social control over racial and ethnic minorities” (Jernigan & Dorfman, 1996, p. 192).

The social construction of the methamphetamine “epidemic” beginning in the 1990s was unique as it focused on white users (Murakawa, 2011). Murakawa (2011) observed a socioeconomic dimension as accounts portrayed white users as victims who were in danger of inhabiting or descending into “‘white trash’ status” (p. 219). Furthermore, in contrast to previous drug scares which demonized users along with dealers and manufacturers, the construction of the methamphetamine epidemic granted “users a more contextualized victim status, emphasizing... fear *for* White drug users” (p. 220). Murakawa (2011) also posited that this construction, which emphasizes harm to users’ health and socioeconomic status rather than harm to others, “preserves the default assumption that Whites deserve their White privilege” (p. 225).¹

Depictions of Drugs in News Media

Numerous studies have examined the representation of illegal drugs and drug users in news media. Media coverage of illegal drugs has involved the “routinization of caricature”

¹ See Baldwin (2001) for an analysis of hegemony and linguistic manifestations of race and class privilege in news reporting of crime.

(Reinarman, 1994, p. 96; Reinarman & Duskin, 1992, p. 81), a process whereby news sources present extreme and episodic cases as typical and frequently occurring. Reinarman (1994) has defined this practice as a rhetorical crafting of “worst cases into typical cases and the episodic into the epidemic” (p. 96). Through this process, drug stories have been profoundly exaggerated and distorted, and have contained misguided underlying assumptions as well as entirely false information (Reinarman, 1994; Reinarman & Duskin, 1992). Media reports have habitually demonized and “othered” drug dealers, amplified threats, and supported a punitive approach to drug issues. Events have been sensationalized in the news as reporters used misleading phrases, strategically added dramatic language, and frequently interviewed distraught witnesses. Tragic cases have been heavily publicized, and reporters have often asked questions about witnesses’ and interviewees’ feelings instead of actual events (Radford, 2003).

Reporters foster concern and suggest that isolated incidents are indicative of a common, widespread problem by including phrases such as “another in a recent trend” and “an all-too-familiar story” (Burns & Crawford, 1999, p. 158). Altheide (1997) explained that the entertainment-oriented requirements and format of news media has resulted in the proliferation of the “problem frame,” a narrative structure which has promoted danger and fear. He also observed that mainstream news media have linked drugs with crime, violence, and danger. Likewise, Radford (2003) posited that dialogue involving practical policy measures would make less compelling news coverage than large drug busts and predawn crack-house raids. Altheide (2003) also suggested that the nature of crime news had enabled a “discourse of fear” to become “taken for granted as a description of reality” (p. 20).

In 1970, for example, a study by the University of Michigan found that the prevalence of drug use among children and teenagers was low, and that if they used drugs, they used primarily

marijuana, not heroin. The same year, *Time* magazine published a story titled “Kids and Heroin: The Adolescent Epidemic,” after finding just one twelve-year-old addict. The article claimed that the child was not unusual and that heroin was “increasingly attacking America’s children” (Baum, 1996, p. 33). It warned that “something frightening [was] sweeping into the corridors of U.S. schools and onto the pavements of America’s playgrounds,” and stated, “It has not yet cropped up everywhere, but many experts believe that disaster looms large” (p. 33). The article also promoted the “gateway theory” that marijuana inevitably leads to harder drugs, which was designed to increase concern about marijuana at a time when much of the public considered it relatively harmless (Baum, 1996).

In September of 1980, reporter Janet Cooke published a completely fabricated story in the *Washington Post* about an eight-year-old heroin addict named Jimmy. After a public outcry and unsuccessful citywide hunt for Jimmy (or any children addicted to heroin) by law enforcement officers and social workers, the *Post* maintained that heroin-addicted children were common (Reinarman & Duskin, 1992). After Cooke won a Pulitzer Prize in Feature Writing, it was discovered that she had not actually met any children who were addicted to heroin and that all of the interviews and quotes in the story were fictitious. After the truth was revealed, the *Post* attributed the fabricated story to one unethical reporter under immense pressure to produce sensational stories.

One explanation for why Cooke’s story was published without scrutiny is that media narratives have often involved faulty assumptions about drug users (Reinarman & Duskin, 1992). Ideology, moral judgments, and a lack of firsthand knowledge about drug use all contributed to the failure of the publishers to challenge Cooke’s sensational claims. Reinarman and Duskin (1992) argued that the media’s legacy of misinformation, a century-long tradition of

“scapegoating chemical bogeymen,” played an integral role in creating a climate in which people tend to easily believe the worst of drug users and addicted individuals, especially in the inner city (p. 80). They pointed out that in the many subsequent articles discussing the scandal, “no one...critically examined the ideology that allowed her bizarre claim that such child addicts are common to pass unnoticed into publication and on to a Pulitzer” (Reinarman & Duskin, 1992, p. 80).

Similarly, in March of 1986, *Newsweek* published a story called “Kids and Cocaine: An Epidemic Strikes Middle America” which stated, “In cities and suburbs all across the nation, a generation of American children [is] increasingly at risk to the nightmare of cocaine addiction” (Orcutt & Turner, 1993, p. 192). *Newsweek’s* editor-in-chief had consciously implemented a plan to report drugs as a crisis, stating that the goal was to report it “as aggressively...as we did the struggle for civil rights, the war in Vietnam and the fall of the Nixon presidency” (p. 196). Orcutt and Turner (1993) showed how media personnel distorted drug survey data collected by the University of Michigan Institute for Social Research. By constructing misleading graphic representations, as well as using the word “epidemic” and phrases such as “cocaine in all its forms is seeping into the nation’s schools,” print media workers made cocaine-related data appear to reflect a sharp rise in use in the mid-1980s. After the cocaine scare diminished, *Newsweek* again misrepresented statistical data, this time to make it appear as though there had been an “alarming rise” in LSD use. In 1992, the magazine reported that LSD was “turning on a new generation of American teenagers” (p. 201). *Newsweek’s* drug coverage helped define the social problems of the period, and by calling drug use a “national epidemic,” set the agenda for its future news coverage and that of its competitors (Orcutt & Turner, 1993; see also Reinarman & Levine, 1997).

Depictions of Drugs in Entertainment Media

Entertainment programs on television have also been used to reinforce ideology regarding drugs. During the Nixon administration, television executives were explicitly asked to push the president's agenda in entertainment programming in an attempt to amplify the perceived threat of illegal drugs and garner middle-class concern and support for the drug war (Baum, 1996). Nixon's advisers met with prominent television producers in order to ensure that in addition to the anti-drug commercials already on television, sitcoms and other prime-time programming would be embedded with messages about the unlawful and hazardous nature of drug abuse. Criminals associated with drug use subsequently became common villains portrayed in American mass media (Baum, 1996; Speaker, 2004). By 1970, some of the most popular shows (e.g., *General Hospital*, *Mod Squad*, and *Mannix*) featured storylines of troubled teenagers abusing drugs, and drug pushers as villains. In addition, protagonists were often involved with agencies such as the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs (Baum, 1996).

Film representations can also perpetuate stigma, make political statements, reflect and influence culture, and contribute to public discourse and ideas about drugs (Boyd, 2010). Early films contained racist messages about drugs and users which corresponded with those that were prevalent in news media in early communication campaigns. Lidz and Walker (1980) argued that fictional accounts of drug issues in the media are just as influential as news media because they personalize anti-drug narratives. They stated:

While the news media portrayed increases in crime, drug overdoses, and addictions and other statistical pictures of a crisis, the fictional portrayals turned the crisis into personal tragedies. The heroic policeman fighting the Mafia heroin connection in the movies, the T.V. doctor saving the junkie from certain death and reuniting him with his desperately

concerned family, and the comic book superhero who fights the monstrous conspiracy to destroy the country by putting drugs in the drinking water all make personal and direct the tragedy of drug use. The moral communications through fictional media seem to result from secondary elaborations of the news media, but they are just as important. (p. 77)

Presidential Administrations and the Politicization of Drug Issues

Each presidential administration in the United States, especially since that of Richard Nixon, has adopted a particular stance and tone regarding illegal drugs. Rhetoric employed during the Nixon administration laid the groundwork for the American War on Drugs that would escalate in subsequent decades (Bellis, 1981). Demonizing drugs was a major component of Nixon's law and order campaign platform. In 1968, two months prior to the election, he stated, "As I look over the problems in this country, I see one that stands out particularly: the problem of narcotics" (Baum, 1996, p. 12; Hill, Oliver, & Marion, 2012, p. 90). Nixon stated that drugs were "among the modern curse of the youth, just like the plagues and epidemics of former years," and that narcotics were "decimating a generation of Americans" (Baum, 1996, p. 12). His assertion that drugs were a primary national problem came at a time when the public health consequences of illegal drug use were actually not significant (Baum, 1996). Between 1965 and 1970, the number of individuals addicted to heroin in the United States did increase from approximately 68,000 to 500,000 (Bellis, 1981). However, more Americans in 1969 "choked to death on food or died falling down stairs as died from illegal drugs" (Baum, 1996, p. 21). Nevertheless, when Nixon and his advisers schemed on how to fulfill campaign promises and maintain consistency with his law and order message, drug use was a convenient focus (Baum, 1996).

Richard Nixon's war on heroin is a prime example of a politician inciting public concern in order to achieve political success. One of his assertions was that narcotics addiction was an "infectious disease" which was spreading to suburbia (Bellis, 1981). Public concern and the desire for action were spurred by phrases such as "heroin epidemic" and "Public Enemy Number One" to describe heroin addiction (p. 19). Despite the fact that people who use drugs typically do so voluntarily, the media gave the impression that drug users were initially coerced. The message that suburban kids were in danger of being pressured into using hard drugs was designed to exploit the concern of middle-class parents, who feared that their children would be preyed upon by drug "pushers." Nixon's efforts were not successful in improving or resolving the drug "problem," but they were successful in exacerbating public fear and concern. Richard Nixon declared a "war on heroin" in 1969; in 1971, polls indicated that heroin addiction was rated third as a serious public concern, preceded only by the war in Vietnam and the economy (Bellis, 1981).

Since Nixon's original declaration, drug issues in the United States have been discussed using a war metaphor, which has significantly affected how the issue has been approached by politicians, law enforcement, and the general public (Elwood, 1995; McGaw, 1991). Politicians have used harsh rhetoric and proposed punitive "solutions" in order to avoid accusations of being weak on crime and drugs, because retaliatory strategies, although ineffective, were politically beneficial. Promoting drug treatment and education gained a reputation as a "wimp activity," and toughness became a necessity for successful political careers (Courtwright, 2001). Certain voters feared the danger that drugs posed to their children, and perceived tougher policies as only affecting a class of people who were immoral and deserving of punishment.

Declarations of a symbolic war on drugs have aided politicians in constructing leadership identities, and have been successful in policy discourse for numerous reasons (McGaw, 1991). First, the war metaphor provides the speaker with a vocabulary and coherent set of symbols when giving a speech. Second, it allows the leader to appear strong and decisive. Third, usage of the war metaphor constructs the issue in such a way that it positions those who are against it as enemies. Therefore, if a person promotes a different perspective on the drug issue or opposes the war, that person can be dismissed or deemed unpatriotic. Fourth, it reinforces the seriousness of the issue, so the president or other politician can appear to be actively attempting to ameliorate the problem even if efforts fail. Fifth, it helps justify the usage of more resources and the creation of bureaucratic entities designed to address the problem. Finally, declaring war on drugs “provides a simple solution to a complex problem” (McGaw, 1991, p. 58).

There is also a gender bias inherent in the war metaphor and language used therein. Similar to sports metaphors (e.g., boxing and football) which invoke masculine imagery and are pervasive in political rhetoric, “the war metaphor highlights a masculine voice and hides, if not excludes, feminine voices from the discourse on drugs” (McGaw, 1991, p. 57). Due to the traditionally male-dominated nature of sports and war, these types of metaphors construct both political leaders and the political realm as masculine. Therefore, the war metaphor served to legitimize stereotypically “masculine” solutions such as prohibition and punishment, while positioning stereotypically “feminine” solutions, such as treatment and education, outside the discussion (McGaw, 1991). Bellis (1981) mentioned a gendered dimension of resistance to drug addiction when, in his discussion of the ideology embedded in prohibition policy, he stated:

It is masculine, and thus admirable, not to be drug-dependent. It is a sign of weakness, it is effete, contemptible and shameful to be dependent. Very simply, narcotics addiction

was...a full-blown symbol of dependence that could arouse the same scorn as other forms of so-called passive-dependent behavior such as...effeminacy in men, or cowardice. (p. 15)

Ronald Reagan's administration escalated the drug war drastically compared to his predecessors. Beginning in 1982, Reagan increased efforts for the War on Drugs and embarked on a huge campaign at a time when illegal drug use was actually declining (Alexander, 2010). Reagan stated in 1982 that his administration would "do what was necessary to end the drug menace," and he and Nancy Reagan called drug abuse "a crime against the country" (McGaw, 1991, p. 56). However, it was only after his declarations of war that crack became more widely used in cities and the media became saturated with anti-drug messages, sensational stories, and stereotypes (Alexander, 2010). Reagan made many speeches in 1986 in which he promoted a "nationwide crusade against drugs, a sustained, relentless effort to rid America of this scourge" (Goode, 1999, p. 71). Nancy Reagan equated drug users to "accomplice[s] to murder," and stated that drug use "is a repudiation of everything that America is" (p. 11).

The media in the 1980s was consistent with the conservative political climate, and carried an inordinate amount of anti-drug and fear-based messages (Goode, 1999). "Just Say No" campaigns and a few high-profile overdose deaths in the mid-1980s helped focus public attention on drug use (Shoemaker, 1989). For example, media coverage intensified in 1986 due to the highly publicized death of basketball star Len Bias (Baum, 1996; Goode, 1999). Bias died of heart failure which was attributed to cocaine poisoning. He had recently signed a contract with the Boston Celtics, and due to the promising athletic future and clean-cut image of Bias, the tragedy shocked the American public (Baum, 1996). After Bias' death, cocaine and crack received an immense amount of coverage on network evening news, and stories often mistakenly

interchanged the two drugs and claimed that Bias was using crack. In addition, “the advertising industry donated a billion dollars’ worth of ads and TV time to the antidrug cause” (Baum, 1996, p. 226). Network news also regularly aired footage of drug raids so viewers could see police breaking down doors to bust “crack-houses.” Crack was called “the hottest combat-reporting story to come along since the end of the Vietnam War” (p. 226).

After the death of Len Bias, politicians were even more convinced that they needed to create tougher penalties for drug offenses. His death was exceedingly upsetting to members of Congress not only because Bias was from Maryland but because “Congress is predominantly male and very sports-oriented” (Goode, 1999, p. 73). Following this tragedy, House Speaker Tip O’Neill urgently organized a meeting and demanded “dramatic new initiatives for dealing with crack and other drugs” (Baum, 1996, p. 225). During this time, politicians proposed some of the harshest penalties for drug use including life sentences and even the death penalty for drug dealers (Baum, 1996; Goode, 1999). Congress added twenty-nine new mandatory minimum sentences, twenty-six of which were for drug offenses, including mandatory minimums for a first offense of selling a small quantity of drugs (Baum, 1996).

During the Reagan administration, two pieces of national legislation were passed that had tremendous ramifications: the 1986 and 1988 Anti-Drug Abuse Acts (Sirin, 2011). These acts established the 100:1 sentencing disparity between crack cocaine and powder cocaine, “which mandated the same five-year prison sentence for five grams of crack cocaine as for 500 grams of powder cocaine, despite the gram-for-gram pharmacological equivalence of the two drugs” (Sirin, 2011, p. 91). After the Reagan administration’s drug policies were implemented, the prison population skyrocketed and the United States became the country with the highest incarceration rate in the world. Since 1980, the U.S. prison population has increased from

300,000 to 2 million inmates (Alexander, 2010), while the number of people incarcerated just for drug offenses grew from 40,000 to 500,000. Thus, the number of people imprisoned for drug offenses by 2009 was greater than the entire prison population of thirty years prior (Sirin, 2011).

President George H. W. Bush continued the drug war wholeheartedly and seamlessly after Reagan. In 1989, he identified drug use as “the most pressing problem facing the nation” (Alexander, 2010, p. 54). In his first national address, Bush stated, “the gravest domestic threat facing our nation today is drugs...Our most serious problem today is cocaine, and in particular crack” (McGaw, 1991, p. 59). Bush even identified the demographic that was supposedly responsible for the social ills associated with drugs, as he declared, “look only to urban areas and public housing complexes to find the enemies in ‘The Drug War’” (Elwood, 1995, p. 104). In a televised speech in September 1989, Bush used an actual bag of crack cocaine as a visual aid, claimed that it was seized by Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) agents in a park near the White House, and stated, “It’s as innocent looking as candy, but it is...murdering our children” (McGaw, 1991, p. 61; Radford, 2003, p. 216). It was later revealed that because Bush’s speech was written to include the prop, DEA agents bought crack from a dealer specifically for the President to use on television in order to encourage support for the drug war (Radford, 2003; Reinerman & Levine, 1997). As McGaw (1991) explained, “What was offered as proof of the enemy...was a prop in the construction of a drug spectacle” (p. 62).

In 1989, drug czar William Bennett was featured on a *Newsweek* cover that read, “The Drug Warrior: He’s Ambitious, Abrasive, and Tough” (McGaw, 1991, p. 57). This stereotypically masculine identity construction of George H. W. Bush’s drug czar was deemed politically necessary to bolster Bush’s image as a tough, powerful leader, and combat the

“wimp” accusations he had faced during his 1988 campaign. This representation also established the tone for how drug issues would be approached during his administration (McGaw, 1991).

The law and order, punitive perspective continued to be hegemonic in mid-1990s political discourse. Democratic President Bill Clinton escalated the War on Drugs and proceeded with “get tough” policies that even surpassed his predecessors because he did not want to face accusations of being weak on crime². In fact, his administration saw greater increases of state and federal inmates than any other American president. He advocated laws such as “Three Strikes and You’re Out,” which sentenced some offenders to life in prison for a third offense. Under his administration, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) permanently banned anyone with a felony drug conviction from receiving welfare or food stamps. Clinton also promoted “One Strike and You’re Out,” which allowed public housing to exclude or evict residents with any drug offense or criminal history (Alexander, 2010).

The George W. Bush administration was dominated by terrorism-related rhetoric as a result of the tragedies on September 11, 2001, so drug war ideology was incorporated into the discourse of terror. Bush made statements such as, “it’s important for Americans to know that trafficking of drugs finances the world of terror, sustaining terrorists” (Altheide, 2003, p. 21). Drug use was framed as unpatriotic, as he stated, “If you quit drugs, you join the fight against terror in America” (p. 24). Ten million dollars was spent on an advertising campaign in 2002 to link drug use to terrorism (Altheide, 2003).

President Barack Obama and members of the Obama administration have employed a different narrative regarding illegal drugs compared to the presidential rhetoric of previous

² Clinton was committed to being even tougher on crime than his Republican counterparts. In 1992, at a crucial phase in his presidential campaign, he returned to Arkansas to oversee the execution of a mentally impaired black man. Subsequently, Clinton was quoted as saying, “I can be nicked a lot, but no one can say I’m soft on crime” (Alexander, 2010).

decades (Fields, 2009; Sirin, 2011). The Obama administration released statements about drug policy reform that used treatment-oriented language and emphasized the word “smart” instead of “tough” (see Kerlikowske, 2013). Gil Kerlikowske, who served as the Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) from 2009 to 2013, stated, “Outdated policies like the mass incarceration of nonviolent drug offenders are relics of the past that ignore the need for a balanced public health and safety approach to our drug problem” (ONDCP, 2012). He also stated that the administration’s strategy for reform was “based on the proven facts that drug addiction is a disease of the brain that can be prevented and treated and that we cannot simply arrest our way out of the drug problem” (ONDCP, 2012). These articulations, which promote prevention and treatment, diverge from the previous punitive and ideological statements made by drug czars and presidents. Nevertheless, the explanation of drug abuse is individualistic and adheres to a medical model or disease model of addiction (Goode, 1999). As such, the proposed solution falls under what McGaw (1991) has referred to as the liberal construction: the idea that “drug users are not evil, immoral people; rather, they are ill, and it may be possible to ‘cure’ them by appropriate medical treatment” (p. 63). However, the concept of addiction as a disease is potentially problematic as it has paradoxically helped move discourse in the direction of public health while also serving as a “legitimation of repressive drug policies” (Reinarman, 2005). Additionally, researchers have noted that defining and framing addictive behavior or the use of particular drugs as “uncontrollable” may function as a self-fulfilling prophecy (McSweeney & Turnbull, 2007; Peele, 1990, as cited in Boaz, 1990).

Some noteworthy policy changes have occurred during the Obama administration. For example, President Obama signed the Fair Sentencing Act in 2010, which overturned Reagan-era drug legislation and reduced the crack versus powder cocaine sentencing disparity from 100:1 to

18:1 (Sirin, 2011). The law also “eliminated the mandatory minimum sentence for simple possession of crack cocaine” (ONDCP, 2012). The Office of National Drug Control Policy established its first Recovery branch, with the goals of removing barriers to recovery and alleviating the stigma of drug addiction. In addition, the Affordable Care Act required that insurers cover substance abuse treatment beginning in 2014. The Obama administration also expanded access and allocated increased funds for treatment and prevention. Concomitantly, however, the Obama administration increased interdiction efforts on the U.S. southwest border (ONDCP, 2012). In August of 2013, the Department of Justice, as part of a “Smart on Crime” initiative, altered its policies with regard to mandatory minimum sentencing. Attorney General Eric Holder instructed prosecutors not to “pursue charges that would trigger a mandatory minimum sentence in the case of certain low-level, non-violent drug offenses” (Lemaitre, 2013).

Regarding the international drug war, there have been some recent shifts in U.S. rhetoric. In October 2014, William Brownfield, Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, encouraged acceptance of other countries’ attempts to enact drug policy reform, stating, “How could I, a representative of the government of the United States of America, be intolerant of a government that permits any experimentation with legalization of marijuana if two of the 50 states of the United States of America have chosen to walk down that road?” (Collins, 2014). Collins (2014) noted that this type of statement would have been “unthinkable” just two years ago.

Drugs, Media, and Public Policy

Researchers have noted that the media can influence the formation of public policy in various ways (Chermak & Weiss, 1997). News media outlets are able to catalyze reform by providing consistent and substantial focus on an issue and elevating the interest of elected

officials and the public. Media can also sensationalize and exploit notable events, revisit stories frequently, and “influence public and political opinion by linking the event to a policy issue” (p. 336). Furthermore, the media can control which policy alternatives are granted genuine consideration, and assist policy entrepreneurs in advancing and sustaining their interests. Moral judgments and the belief that drugs are culpable for numerous societal problems have been widely accepted, and anti-drug narratives have been a barrier to more effective and enlightened drug policies.

Media campaigns against drugs have promoted abstinence, and responsible drug use has not been presented as a legitimate or respectable possibility. Although Americans acknowledge that a substantial portion of the population drinks alcohol moderately with minimal negative effects, it is a common view that moderate and controlled use is not possible with certain drugs. Recreational and judicious drug use continues to remain hidden from public discourse despite the ability of individuals to responsibly use illicit drugs (Duncan, White, & Nicholson, 2003; McSweeney & Turnbull, 2007). Some opiate users are able to engage in moderate use and circumvent the problems typically associated with addiction (Goode, 1999; McSweeney & Turnbull, 2007; Taylor, 2008; Warburton, Turnbull, & Hough, 2005). As Cheung (2000) explained, one’s ability to use drugs “in a controlled, nonabusive manner lies on a continuum” (p. 1697). There are various practices and factors which allow individuals to successfully use heroin for prolonged periods without disrupting their lives or general productivity (Goode, 1999; Warburton et al., 2005). Furthermore, there is evidence that pure, pharmaceutically prepared heroin is no more dangerous than tobacco or alcohol, so many health problems that afflict addicted individuals could be remedied by drug regulation and maintenance programs (Bellis, 1981). After extensive experience and research, Bellis (1981) found that “the symptoms so often

noted in heroin addicts” were less a result of heroin use and more related to “the drug’s illegality and subsequent lifestyle forced on the user through criminalization” (p. 11). In other words, “their ‘diseased’ state is related to difficulties in obtaining heroin, not to taking it” (p. 11). These declarations have important implications for treatment and policy formation. The false dichotomy between alcohol and other drugs has heightened “the illusion of difference” between the users of such substances, and drug prohibition has created a social context that is not conducive to “humane responses” to drug issues (Levine & Reinerman, 2010, p. 807).

Despite subtle changes in rhetoric regarding illegal drugs and drug use, the United States has not yet fully adopted an alternative framework such as harm reduction, decriminalization, or legalization of drugs. Harm reduction as a doctrine was initiated in the Netherlands and operates under the principle that it is impossible to eradicate all drug use, so the government’s role should be “to reduce the harm that drugs do individuals and society” (Baum, 1996, p. 95). The concept of harm is broadly defined in this context, and includes harm caused by harsh penalties, excessive law enforcement, and moral judgments (Baum, 1996). Harm reduction embraces a “value-neutral view of drug use” and “does not insist on abstinence” (Cheung, 2000, p. 1698). The philosophy of harm reduction also includes the idea that “any drug can be used successfully, no matter how bad its reputation, and any drug can be abused, no matter how accepted it is. There are no good or bad drugs; there are only good and bad relationships with drugs” (Weil & Rosen, 1993, p. 27). McSweeney and Turnbull (2007) described a primary tenet of harm reduction as the ability to “enable and empower drug users to make rational choices” regarding their behavior. Baum (1996) further articulated the argument as follows: “leave people alone and most of them will use drugs in a way that harms nobody. The few that fall off the cliff into addiction can be gently nursed back to health” (p. 96).

Proponents of harm reduction advocate services such as needle exchanges, maintenance treatment, prescriptions for illicit drugs, outreach, tolerance zones, and the cooperation of law enforcement (Cheung, 2000). Needle exchange programs, in addition to reducing the spread of disease and infections, facilitate access to a hard-to-reach population. Through these services, many users can receive health care not ordinarily accessible to them, and this contact also encourages more users to enter drug treatment programs (Baum, 1996). Although many addicted individuals suffer from financial problems and commit property crimes, this is due to an expensive black market, not a consequence or effect of the drugs themselves. Therefore, approaching addiction from a harm reduction perspective could also help reduce drug-related crime (Baum, 1996).

Baum (1996) stated that the closest the U.S. has come to a harm reduction approach was during the Ford and Carter administrations. According to Baum (1996), the drug strategy during the Carter administration read:

Drugs cannot be forced out of existence; they will be with us for as long as people find in them the relief or satisfaction they desire. But the harm caused by drug abuse can be reduced. We cannot talk in absolutes—that drug abuse will cease, that no more illegal drugs will cross our borders—because if we are honest with ourselves we know that is beyond our power. But we can bring together the resources of the Federal Government intelligently to protect our society and those who suffer. (p. 96)

However, no innovative, progressive, or substantial drug policies were implemented during the Carter administration (Sharp, 1992), and the rhetorical foray into a harm reduction framework was short-lived (Baum, 1996). Part of the reason a harm reduction strategy has not been instituted in the United States is arguably because it precludes punitive moral judgments

and is politically unappealing. Reinerman (1994) posited that drug policy reform efforts have repeatedly failed because anti-drug sentiment is so deeply “woven into the very fabric of American culture” (p. 92). He pointed out that “drug scares have been *far* less common in other societies, and never as virulent as they have been in the U.S.” (p. 98). Carter’s drug czar, Peter Bourne, advanced a knowledgeable, scientific, and unemotional approach to illegal drug use. However, despite the intellectual and practical nature of the strategy, it proved to be politically naïve, and Ronald Reagan exploited it to defeat Carter. Following that era, harm reduction discourse was supplanted by the war metaphor; contrary to Bourne’s proposed strategy, “talking in absolutes about drugs was the American way before Jimmy Carter and it has been that way ever since” (Baum, 1996, p. 97).

Opponents of harm reduction have claimed that providing clean needles sends the wrong message and increases the likelihood that young people will experiment with drugs (Courtwright, 2001). For example, during George H. W. Bush’s administration, drug czar Robert Martinez insisted that providing clean needles “undercuts the credibility of society’s message that drug use is...morally wrong” (Benavie, 2009, p. 46). He also stated they could not allow “concern for AIDS to undermine [their] determination to win the War on Drugs” (Baum, 1996, p. 316; Benavie, 2009, p. 46). However, studies have repeatedly shown that needle exchange programs significantly reduce the spread of HIV and hepatitis, and do not increase or promote drug use (Baum, 1996; Sharon, 2009).

Another policy solution is the legalization of drugs. Advocates of legalization have explicated that criminalizing drugs makes them more expensive, increases profits for sellers, leads to wars over territory, and increases murder rates. Nadelmann (1997) has illuminated the futility of drug prohibition by explaining the “push down, pop up” effect; when eradication or

interdiction efforts diminish supply in one area, drug production and sales will inevitably emerge elsewhere. Due to the enormous financial incentives created by prohibition, drug traffickers and dealers are continually innovative and adaptive in order to transport and sell their product (Boaz, 1990). Proponents of legalization have also argued that interdiction especially harms inner cities as residents sell drugs because it is the most economically viable occupational choice (McGaw, 1991). Those in favor of drug legalization have posited that if drugs were legal, the murder rate would decrease and other drug-related problems would be eliminated (Boaz, 1990; McGaw, 1991; Nadelmann, 1997). Legalization would remove the black market, allow for regulation of psychoactive drugs, and enable spending on prevention and treatment instead of prohibition (Cheung, 2000). Moreover, some have argued that choosing which substances to ingest is among the most basic of human rights (Boaz, 1990). However, this model has so far been considered too “drastic” and “untested” to gain widespread mainstream support (Cheung, 2000).

Drugs, Media, and Public Opinion

Evidence of media impact on public opinion is compelling in studies which have examined concern about drugs in relation to official data about drug use. A legacy of sensational media coverage and demonization of drug users has had implications for public opinion, and studies have analyzed the effects of drug reporting on audience perception (Lancaster et al., 2011). The public has identified drug use as the United States’ most important problem in different periods throughout history, but this has not been logical or based on empirical data. For example, while drug use was increasing throughout the 1970s, Gallup polls between 1979 and 1984 reflected that it was not an area of concern among the public. Conversely, while drug use was declining in the 1980s, public concern peaked (Beckett, 1994; Goode, 1999). The rise in

public concern when there were no significant shifts in drug statistics has been attributed to excessive media coverage, and political campaigns and initiatives.

Public concern and the importance of a crisis in society can be detected by the quantity of articles published in newspapers and magazines during a given time frame, proposed legislation, and the rating of the issue in opinion polls (Goode, 1999). Based on these measures, concern about drugs was significantly elevated in the 1980s. Between 1983 and 1986, newspaper and magazine articles covering drug abuse increased dramatically, and illegal drugs received an inordinate amount of media coverage in 1986 when drug use was not actually increasing. Although media outlets prioritized cocaine and crack, the attention likely encouraged hostility toward all drugs and drug users. In a 1989 New York Times/CBS poll, 64 percent of respondents identified drugs as the most important problem (Alexander, 2010; Goode, 1999).

Research has determined that televised network news content can account for notable changes in the policy preferences of U.S. citizens. Page, Shapiro, and Dempsey (1987) found that merely one commentary by a news anchor, reporter, or other professional supporting a policy position was “associated with more than four percentage points of opinion change” (p. 31). Blendon and Young (1998) analyzed public opinion regarding illicit drugs by studying national survey data compiled between 1978 and 1997. Findings indicated that 68 percent of Americans relied primarily on television for information about drugs, and 82 percent of people considered drug use to be a serious societal issue. A majority of respondents felt that drug use was morally wrong. Seventy-eight percent of the public believed that the War on Drugs had failed, but did not necessarily desire a change in policy efforts. Seventy-six percent stated they would not favor legalization of heroin or cocaine even if it would minimize crime, and 66 percent stated that they were in favor of paying more taxes to increase spending for anti-drug

efforts (Blendon & Young, 1998). In addition, a majority of Americans believed that when an individual first used drugs, it was because of predatory drug dealers, peer pressure, inadequate parenting, or family disintegration. However, according to Radford (2003), less than one percent of users are introduced to drugs through a professional drug dealer. More often, individuals are exposed to drugs through their parents or friends.

Normalization of Marijuana

Marijuana became more widely used after its criminalization, and by the 1960s it became the “drug of choice for white middle-class youth and adults” (Boyd, 2010, p. 15). As marijuana became increasingly used and accepted, discourse and media representations of the drug also evolved. In the 1960s, some films depicted a more normalized and less negative view of marijuana (Boyd, 2010). For example, the 1969 film *Easy Rider* featured appealing characters who regularly smoked marijuana recreationally.

Currently, marijuana is normalized in many television shows and films, with comedies featuring sympathetic main characters who frequently smoke, or short scenes of drug use that are not integral to the plot. *Reefer Madness* was rediscovered and is now viewed as a comedy. Some films convey mixed messages and portray marijuana as a drug which ultimately leads to problems with dangerous drug dealers, crime, and violence (Boyd, 2010). However, media portrayals of marijuana users have generally changed progressively. This evolution of imagery is consistent with public opinion, as the majority of the population now favors legalization (Angus Reid, 2012). Marijuana policy is also quickly evolving, as at least sixteen states have passed laws decriminalizing possession of small amounts for personal use (NORML, 2013), 23 states have medical marijuana programs (ProCon.org, 2015) and the states of Washington and Colorado

legalized marijuana for recreational use in 2012 (Smith, 2012). Public support for legalization continues to grow and progressive discourse pertaining to this issue has become mainstream.

Although public opinion has evolved to become more permissive regarding marijuana, the vast majority of the population still disapproves of other illegal drugs. According to a 2012 Angus Reid Public Opinion survey, 68 percent of Americans believed that the United States has a serious drug problem; 66 percent of respondents agreed that the War on Drugs had failed; and 52 percent supported marijuana legalization. However, support for the legalization of other drugs was incredibly low, at 10 percent or less for ecstasy, heroin, cocaine, crack, and methamphetamine (Angus Reid, 2012).

This chapter has reviewed the historical background and extant research regarding representations of drugs in the media, as well as the influence on public opinion and policy. The next chapter provides the theoretical framework that informs this study.

CHAPTER III

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter describes relevant theoretical perspectives and instructive concepts for examining the role of media in defining and constructing social problems. This study is informed by social constructionist and agenda-setting perspectives, as well as the concepts of framing and moral panics.

Social Constructionism

The attitude toward and response to drug issues in American society can be thoroughly understood from a social constructionist perspective, which holds that social problems are not objective phenomena, they are “constructed by the human mind” (Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 1994, p. 151). Many researchers have explored the social construction of crime (Lombardo, 2010; Sacco, 1995), deviance (Dotter, 2002), and drug problems (Beckett, 1994; Brownstein, 1991; Chermak, 1997; Fan, 1996; Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 1994; Hoffmann, 1990; Jensen, Gerber, & Babcock, 1991; Levine & Reinerman, 1987; Murakawa, 2011; Reinerman, 1994; Reinerman & Duskin, 1992). Within the theoretical framework of social constructionism, a social problem is defined by the level of concern about an issue or occurrence, and the “‘collective definition’ of that condition as a problem” (Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 1994, p. 151). Scholars who have utilized this framework to examine drug issues have highlighted that drugs have been considered a problem at numerous times when empirical evidence did not corroborate that they were a significant problem. Murakawa (2011) explained that the “history of American drug scares reveals that epidemics and diagnoses are created, not discovered” (p. 221). Objectivists, on the other hand, would argue that social problems are defined objectively by the damage that they cause.

Berger and Luckmann's (1966) seminal work explored the social construction of reality, of which power is an important aspect. Specifically, they explained that in the case of an intrasocietal conflict, those with more power are able to impose their definition of reality. They also stated that "power in society includes the power to determine decisive socialization processes and, therefore, the power to *produce* reality" (p. 119).

Integral to a "constructionist analysis is the view that the media play an important role in producing hegemony in society. The hegemonic discourse is one that attempts to legitimize a particular narrative over all others" (Lombardo, 2010, p. 265). Researchers have concluded that "state elites and the mass media play a prominent role in the construction of social issues, and, as a result, in the generation and shaping of public concern around those issues" (Beckett, 1994, p. 426). Power is exercised in the ability to select and frame events in the media because these frames shape discourse, political debate, policy formation, and public opinion (Beckett, 1994). Dominant narratives are linked to social structure and dictate the way a topic is discussed. Reality construction is "intimately related to the interests of particular institutions that occupy positions of power within society" (Bright et al., 2008, p. 136).

Agenda Setting

Agenda setting refers to the ability of the media to decide what to report and therefore set the agenda for what the population will consider. In *The Press and Foreign Policy* (1963), Bernard Cohen described agenda-setting power when he explained that the press "may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think *about*" (p. 13). In their influential study of the agenda-setting function of mass media, McCombs and Shaw (1972) found strong correlations between media coverage and the perceived salience of issues. Their results supported the power of the mass

media to shape political reality; specifically, the media had a substantial impact on participants' impressions of the importance of certain political issues. Additional studies have found that the amount of media attention placed on an issue is directly related to the level of public concern and importance placed on the issue (Shoemaker, 1989). Furthermore, media outlets are integral in creating public support for social control measures (Becker, 1963). Lancaster et al. (2011) stated that "the more strongly media push an issue the more likely it is that politicians and policy makers will take notice and that media coverage will influence policy decisions" (p. 399). With regard to illicit drugs, Beckett (1994) found support for the constructionist and agenda-setting perspectives, stating that "the definitional activities of state actors and the mass media have played a crucial role in generating public concern about 'street crime' and drug use" (p. 426). Likewise, Sharp's (1992) analysis of agenda setting and drug policy initiatives indicated that politicians' stances precede and impact popular concern.

Information travels through many filters before it is allowed to reach the public through news outlets. News coverage is often distorted to favor government and corporate interests, and the primary goal is profitability (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). Brownstein (1991) also discussed American news media as both an institution of information dissemination and a business. He explained:

[News] reporting is as likely to sensationalize events as it is to report them, as likely to serve as an instrument of propaganda as it is to be a source of information, and as likely to be a creator of myth as it is to be a purveyor of truth. (p. 86)

Corporations that own media outlets "seek to harvest audiences by promoting fear as entertainment throughout popular culture and news" (Altheide, 2004, p. 295). In addition to being shaped by "various commercial and political constraints," by the time information reaches

the public it has “been subject to alternative definitions of what constitutes ‘news’ and how it should be gathered and presented” (Cohen, 1972, p. 16). Furthermore, the news-making process has been described as “value-based” (Brownstein, 1991). The news displays “obedience to the relevant enduring values” and is “generally supportive of governments and their agencies, private enterprise, the prestigious professions, and a variety of other national institutions” (Gans, 1979, p. 61). It generally focuses more on people than groups, and “pays less attention to the institutionalized social order, except as reflected in its leaders” (p. 61). Because the news mirrors the assumed values of its audience and is therefore directed toward the middle class, it supports “the social order of public, business and professional, upper-middle-class, middle-aged, and white male sectors of society” (p. 61).

Altheide (2004) suggested that in addition to agenda setting, “the format and logic of newsworthy information shape the nature of discourse itself” (p. 295). The pervasive application of “media logic” has produced a “media culture” wherein the “infotainment” news style has become expected and taken for granted. The entertainment-oriented nature of the news and limitations such as time constraints affect the style, format, content, rhythm, and grammar of news presentation. Events are packaged “for media attention, including visuals, urgency, language, and drama” (Altheide, 2004, p. 295). Therefore, an in-depth interview providing referential information without “visual, dramatic action” would “violate the media logic canon” (p. 294). As such, “journalistic interviewing—especially among TV reporters—has changed from what was primarily a ‘discovering’ or ‘information-gathering’ enterprise into an aspect of entertainment” (Altheide, 2004, p. 294). Moreover, journalists organize interviews in accordance with their desired messages. These emphases foster audience support for particular “domestic

policies on crime and control as well as foreign interventions,” and have also “led to an immense simplification of politics and world events” (p. 295).

Framing

Frame analysis has been an important focus in media studies, as framing influences the way viewers conceptualize issues by setting parameters for discussion and typically including recurring themes. Originally coined by Erving Goffman (1974), the concept of frame analysis has been utilized and expanded by numerous scholars. Gitlin (1980) described frames as “principles of selection, emphasis, and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters” (p. 6). He explained, “Media frames, largely unspoken and unacknowledged, organize the world both for journalists who report it and, in some important degree, for us who rely on their reports” (p. 7). Frames are important in examinations of media discourse as they constitute a “central organizing idea” (Gamson, 1988, p. 165) or organizing principles which assign “coherence and meaning to a diverse array of symbols” (Gamson, Croteau, Hoynes, & Sasson, 1992, p. 384). Framing refers to the process by which some aspects of an issue are made more salient, thus including a “particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation” (Lancaster et al., 2011, p. 399). Frames “entail a way of discussing the problem and the kind of discourse that will follow. Frames focus on what will be discussed, how it will be discussed, and above all, how it will *not* be discussed” (Altheide & Schneider, 2013, p. 52).

The impact of television news framing has been described as “proestablishment” (Iyengar, 1991) as media coverage “tends to follow and reproduce a narrative composed of traditional, system-legitimizing assumptions and assertions” (Lombardo, 2010, p. 265). Entman (2007) described how framing, priming (the intended effect of framing), and agenda setting fit

together as “critical tools in the exercise of political power” (p. 165). Through framing, “political actors shape the texts that influence or prime the agendas and considerations that people think about” (p. 165). Functions of framing include defining and highlighting the sources of problems, advancing moral judgments, and promoting preferred policies (Entman, 2007).

Two examples of identified frames for discussing illegal drug use are the criminal justice frame and the public health frame. A criminal justice frame involves punitive discourse and therefore excludes the themes of health care, treatment, and education, which would be present in a public health frame (Altheide & Schneider, 2013). Beckett (1995) utilized frame analysis to study news media depictions of drug abuse in the 1980s, and examined the capacity of news sources to shape content. She found that the “presence of state officials was strongly associated with the appearance of issue frames which depict drugs as a ‘law and order’ problem” (p. 161). Building on William Gamson’s conception of “interpretive packages,” Beckett (1995) identified three main “Drug Issue Packages”: “Get Tough,” “Need More Resources,” and “War Fails.” She found overwhelmingly that “stories which relied on state sources were more likely to depict social control frames” (p. 175). As such, television news portrayed the drug issue predominantly through the lens of “Get Tough” or its subpackage, “Zero Tolerance.” Specifically, 88 percent of state-sponsored stories carried “Get Tough” and “Zero Tolerance” messages, while “War Fails” was largely absent from news coverage.

In McGaw’s (1991) discussion of the implications of framing drug issues using a war metaphor, he stated, “Metaphors appearing in policy discourses are more than literary devices; they are also acts of power” (p. 54). He further explained:

By framing the drug problem as a war, the president directs our attention to the solutions of law enforcement and punishment. At the same time, he directs our attention away from

seeing the drug problem as an illness or disease and therefore away from seeing treatment and prevention as solutions. Such a framing marginalizes, if not excludes, alternative policies. (p. 54)

Mainstream news media have typically ignored sociological approaches or social context when presenting drug issues, and there has been a failure to capture any complexity or to present nuanced policy discussion. Law enforcement or government sources provide most of the information while alternative sources are marginalized (Beckett, 1995; Chermak, 1997). As such, “news media and criminal justice policy seemingly mirror each other’s beliefs” (Taylor, 2008, p. 381). Sacco (1995) concluded that the effects of media constructions of crime are “broadly ideological” (p. 153). News stories typically “maintain and reinforce dominant and stereotypical images of drugs, drug users and drug-related crime” which has led to “generalized assumptions around specific drugs” (Taylor, 2008, p. 382). Drug stories have been framed simplistically with “‘villain’ and ‘victim’ personas,” and media portrayals of drug use have been laden with moral judgments, depicting use as a “scourge” or “public enemy” to be defeated through law enforcement tactics (Lancaster et al., 2011). Furthermore, the presentation of drug users as “outsiders” encourages marginalization and misunderstandings of drug issues and alternative policies (Taylor, 2008).

Pan and Kosicki (1993) discussed the importance of systematically examining political language in the context of framing analysis. They affirmed:

Choices of words and their organization into news stories are not trivial matters. They hold great power in setting the context for debate, defining issues under consideration, summoning a variety of mental representations, and providing the basic tools to discuss the issues at hand. (p. 70)

News reports can also be analyzed according to Iyengar's (1991) dichotomous approach and classified as episodic or thematic. Episodic framing can be influential as a means of social control. Stories framed this way concentrate on a single event or incident, whereas thematic stories provide a broader context for an event or issue. In his exploration of how televised news frames political issues, Iyengar (1991) found that the majority of crime stories are reported episodically, and he explained the specific consequences on viewers' attributions of responsibility as follows:

Following exposure to episodic framing, Americans describe chronic problems such as poverty and crime not in terms of deep-seated social or economic conditions, but as mere idiosyncratic outcomes...viewers focus on individual and group characteristics rather than historical, social, political, or other such structural forces. (p. 137)

Conversely, when exposed to more "general or analytic" framing, "the public's reasoning about causal and treatment responsibility shifts accordingly" (Iyengar, 1991, p. 137). Furthermore, Iyengar (1991) found that the stories pertaining to illegal drugs in his sample "evoked individualistic attributions of responsibility" regardless of frame (as cited in Jernigan & Dorfman, 1996, p. 192). Therefore, it is inferential that the presentation of drug stories by the media has affected viewers' attributions of responsibility and contributed to the tendency of Americans to individualize drug problems instead of considering systemic issues.

Jernigan and Dorfman (1996) expanded on this finding in a content analysis of the visual portrayal of drugs on nightly network news during 1990, a year in which television news played an integral role in intensifying public opinion of drugs and the drug war. Their results showed that most drug stories (71 percent of their sample) were framed episodically rather than thematically. Framing news episodically, along with television's tendency "to fragment social

problems from their contexts, leads to news stories that place the blame primarily on individuals rather than on social or structural causes such as poverty, unemployment, or...economic development” (Jernigan & Dorfman, 1996, p. 191). Regarding its effect specifically on opinions about drugs, Jernigan and Dorfman (1996) argued that television coverage of the drug war “supported the nation’s single-minded reliance on punitive approaches to the illegal drug problem,” and “may have fueled public support” for ineffective responses to illicit drug use (p. 193).

Moral Panics

A moral panic exists when there is a general consensus about a perceived threat, excessive public alarm, sensationalism in the media, a demonized group, and an overreaction in social control measures. Periodically, a portion of the public becomes concerned about a specific perceived threat which, if examined and assessed empirically, would not merit the extant level of concern (Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 1994). During a moral panic, “reactions of the media, law enforcement, politicians, action groups, and the general public are out of proportion to the real and present danger a given threat poses to the society” and “fear and heightened concern are...above and beyond what a sober empirical assessment of its concrete danger would sustain” (p. 156). Thus, moral panics are characterized by concern, hostility, consensus, disproportionality, and volatility. They are based on socially constructed threats, and arise as a result of particular social dynamics and conditions.

In his classic work *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of Mods and Rockers* (1972), Stanley Cohen defined a moral panic as follows:

A condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests; its nature is presented in a stylized and stereotypical

fashion by the mass media; the moral barricades are manned by editors, bishops, politicians and other right-thinking people; socially accredited experts pronounce their diagnoses and solutions; ways of coping are evolved or (more often) resorted to; the condition then disappears, submerges, or deteriorates and becomes more visible.

Sometimes the object of the panic is quite novel and at other times it is something which has been in existence long enough, but suddenly appears in the limelight. Sometimes the panic passes over and is forgotten, except in folklore and collective memory; at other times it has more serious and long-lasting repercussions and might produce such changes as those in legal and social policy or even in the way the society conceives itself. (p. 9)

There are various theoretical frameworks for understanding moral panics. The elite-engineered model holds that the elites in society manufacture a panic about something that does not pose a significant threat and about which they are not particularly concerned. By generating fear and keeping the public concentrated on one issue, they attempt to obscure other more significant issues. This focus helps to maintain ideological hegemony and distract the public from issues which, if noticed, could undermine the interests of the ruling class. Elites' power is exercised by the fact that "they dominate the media, determine the content of legislation and the direction of law enforcement, and control much of the resources on which action groups and social movements depend" (Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 1994, p. 164). Elites usually control moral crusades, and the media are an important tool in this scheme as they disseminate messages that serve elite interests and perpetuate moral panics. One criticism of the elite model, however, is that it assumes a passive and gullible public (Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 1994).

The grassroots model rests on the assumption that the origin of the panic lies within the general public. Proponents of this approach argue that in order for a panic to occur, a latent fear

must be already present in the public consciousness. In this view, there cannot be a moral panic without the public already having a legitimate concern. The media are necessary to galvanize public fear, as fear itself is not sufficient to spur a moral panic; however, media are not the primary agents of responsibility. One flaw with this approach is that it cannot explain the timing of moral panics (Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 1994).

Interest group theory posits that there are special interest groups or moral entrepreneurs (e.g., police departments, professional associations, the media, and religious groups) who bring attention to an issue through a moral crusade. According to Goode and Ben-Yehuda (1994), this is the most common approach with which to examine moral panics. However, the simultaneous consideration of the elite, grassroots, and interest group models can more thoroughly explain moral panics, as powerful interest groups are able to effectively exploit extant public fear and “grassroots morality and ideology” (p. 168).

Media outlets are the principal architects of moral panics as they have far-reaching power to define and construct social problems. The media spend an inordinate amount of time reporting on deviant behavior, scandals, and sensational criminal acts, so people receive ideas from the media about what constitutes deviance (Cohen, 1972). As such, news of deviance is a primary “source of information about the normative contours of a society” (p. 17). The commitment to reporting disorder and deviant behavior helps explain past “dominance of illegal-drug stories, in terms of both numbers and placement in the newscast” (Jernigan & Dorfman, 1996, p. 189). Furthermore, even if media sources are not consciously engaging in a moral crusade, “their very reporting of certain ‘facts’ can be sufficient to generate concern, anxiety, indignation or panic” (Cohen, 1972, p. 16). As Cohen (1972) explained:

[The] media might leave behind a diffuse feeling of anxiety about the situation:

‘something should be done about it’, ‘where will it end?’ or ‘this sort of thing can’t go on for ever [*sic*]’. Such vague feelings are crucial in laying the ground for further enterprise, and...in the case of drug-taking, the media play on the normative concerns of the public and by thrusting certain moral directives into the universe of discourse, can create social problems suddenly and dramatically. This potential is consciously exploited by those whom Becker calls ‘moral entrepreneurs’ to aid them in their attempt to win public support. (p. 17)

Media coverage has contributed significantly to recurring “drug scares” (Reinarman & Duskin, 1992), which are a type of moral panic (Reinarman, 1994). A drug scare is defined as a period of time during which “a number of antidrug individuals, groups, and media outlets...identify and denounce a particular drug as a new social problem requiring increased attention and regulation” (Boyd, 2010, p. 6). Through the communication campaigns of many decades, public concern has been heightened and drug problems have been inflated (Alexander, 2010; Baum, 1996). As such, panic is “the foundation stone to an understanding of how the reality of drugs is socially constructed or regarded, seen, thought about, and dealt with” (Goode, 1999, p. 11).

Some have criticized the use of a moral panic framework with regard to drugs and the media. Murji (1998) asserted that the term is overused, pejorative, and dismissive of phenomena. He also pointed out the subjective nature of differentiating a disproportionate from a proportionate reaction to a perceived threat. He further contended that a moral panic model assumes collective consensus, a “monolithic media and control culture,” and an impressionable public (p. 81). However, drug scares and media coverage in the United States have had far-

reaching effects, and there is value in utilizing a moral panic framework to contextualize and understand these phenomena.

The repercussions of moral panics mentioned by Cohen (1972) can be significant, such as in social control efforts and the stigmatization of drug use in the United States. Despite the volatility and transitory nature of moral panics, they can leave a long-lasting “cultural and institutional legacy” as law enforcement officials escalate their efforts and new social control mechanisms are created (Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 1994, p. 159). For example, after Richard Nixon’s declaration of a War on Drugs, the federal budget to address illicit drug use was greatly expanded and several new agencies were created (Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 1994), including the Office of Drug Abuse Law Enforcement and the Office of National Narcotics Intelligence (McGaw, 1991). Similarly, the drug panic of the 1980s resulted in two significant pieces of federal legislation, budget expansion, the creation of social movement organizations, and public bombardment with anti-drug messages (Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 1994).

Panics that do not leave a formal institutional legacy can leave “informal traces that prepare us for later panics or other events” (Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 1994, p. 169). Thus, institutional legacies persist such that during times without panic, ideology is still embedded in the public consciousness, which includes societal attitudes, folklore, and boundaries. Therefore, a moral panic can be seen as a “long-term social process rather than as separate, discrete, time-bound episodes” (p. 170). Young (1981) stated that moral panics have engendered hostility toward drug users, and that uncompromising attitudes have precluded rational discourse and reasonable approaches to drug policy (as cited in Shoemaker, Wanta, & Leggett, 1989). Definitions of drug use as deviant, criminal, and immoral have persisted since the inception of

drug prohibition and have strengthened through the waxing and waning of moral panics in the United States (Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 1994). As Goode and Ben-Yehuda (1994) explained:

The earliest, nineteenth century, drug panics defined drug use as deviant and, eventually, criminal; in this sense, they generated social change. The later drug panics, in contrast, reaffirmed the deviant and criminal status of drug abuse after a period of drift toward normalization, and thus they prevented social change. (p. 169)

Given the agenda-setting power of media, the tendency of media to confine discourse to strict parameters, and the effect this has had on the public's outlook toward drug use in the past, it is important to examine more recent news media depictions of illegal drugs. Having reviewed the literature and provided the theoretical concepts that inform this study, methodology will now be discussed.

CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY

Content analysis, a research method often used in communication studies, historical studies, and media studies, is a useful tool for examining existing information and cultural texts in order to gain insight and understanding about the society in which they are produced (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). This method was suitable to systematically identify the dominant themes, strategies, and other characteristics of media reports about prohibited drugs.

News media broadcasts were examined because of their responsibility to be objective sources of information for the public. Although entertainment media contribute to cultural discourse and can reflect social norms and dominant attitudes (see Boyd, 2010), entertainment media do not have the same responsibility or expectation of objectivity as official news outlets.

The decision to focus this study on news reports featuring heroin and cocaine is due to public perception and their reputation among the “harder” drugs (i.e., they are generally considered to be the most harmful³). Furthermore, it is evident that public opinion and media messages regarding other drugs such as marijuana are evolving toward acceptance. An increase in public support for cannabis legalization is also reflected in the recent policy changes throughout the United States. Therefore, the analysis of news broadcasts about heroin and cocaine was selected to facilitate an understanding of recent trends in the national discourse regarding society’s most vilified drugs.

Data Collection Activities

In order to identify the dominant themes and strategies promoted in news reports about heroin and cocaine, transcripts of televised network news broadcasts were obtained and

³ Fifty-two percent of Americans support marijuana legalization, but this figure remains at less than 9 percent for heroin and cocaine (Angus Reid, 2012).

individual news segments were identified as the units of analysis. Because the nature of drug reporting in the final decades of the twentieth century has been documented, the chosen time period for this study was January 1, 2000, through December 31, 2013.

Nightly news programs on NBC and ABC were selected because they were the two most watched evening news programs (Ariens, 2013). Complete broadcast transcripts were retrieved from the LexisNexis Academic database with searches conducted of the network, program, and the subjects “heroin” and “cocaine.” The final data sets consisted of the results of four separate searches based on the drug and network (i.e., NBC/Heroin, NBC/Cocaine, ABC/Heroin, and ABC/Cocaine). The search for the subject *heroin*, the network *NBC*, and the show *NBC Nightly News* produced 77 results. The search for *cocaine*, the network *NBC*, and the show *NBC Nightly News* yielded 127 results. The search for *heroin*, the network *ABC*, and the show *news* provided 89 results. Finally, a search for the subject *cocaine*, the network *ABC*, and the show *news* located 250 results. For ABC, the word “news” was entered instead of the current title of the program because the name of ABC’s evening news program changed in 2006 from “World News Tonight” to “ABC World News.” As a result, the ABC searches generated many stories from the afternoon or nighttime instead of the evening news. After non-evening news stories were removed in order to maintain consistency, the ABC/heroin set consisted of 66 reports, and the ABC/cocaine set consisted of 147 reports.

Data Analysis Procedures

A total of 417 news reports were reviewed to determine the centrality of heroin or cocaine in the report. As a result, data from some newscasts were not analyzed because they were not as relevant to the goals of this study. Specifically, if the primary drug discussed in a news segment was another drug (e.g., ecstasy, marijuana, prescription drugs), then no further

coding or analysis was performed. These decisions were guided by the detailed coding instrument of Hughes, Spicer, Lancaster, Matthew-Simmons, and Dillon (2010), who analyzed depictions of illicit drugs in Australian print news media.

Reports were only included in the analysis if heroin, cocaine, or related consequences were a primary focus (coded “1”), or if heroin or cocaine was referenced as a significant contributory factor or related issue (coded “2”). Reports were excluded if heroin or cocaine was mentioned only “in passing” or “incidentally or briefly in the context of another issue and not focused upon” (coded “3”) (Hughes et al., 2010, p. 123). One example of this was when news segments only contained one sentence previewing an upcoming story, such as the following: “When NBC Nightly News continues, heroin use spreading across the United States” (NBC, January 7, 2001). In other cases, there was only one mention of the drug or it was not related to the primary reason the story was in the news. For example, one segment regarded an actor from “The Sopranos” allegedly shooting a police officer, and the only mention of drugs was to state that the actor “also had a recent heroin arrest” (NBC, December 10, 2005). Heroin was not focused upon and was unrelated to the incident that was being reported. Finally, stories were occasionally classified in an “other” category (coded “4”) when they were completely unrelated and search terms were included by mistake, such as a story about Nancy Drew writer Millie Benson which was present in the transcripts due to a misspelling of “heroine” which read “heroin” (NBC, April 20, 2002).

After the transcripts were sorted by focus, the final sample totaled 172 news segments (see Appendix B). For the duration of the analysis, reports were kept in their original groups, separated by network and drug. For each news story, the same coding sheet template was completed in a separate Microsoft Word document, where codes, characteristics, and details for

each category were typed (see Appendix C). Altheide and Schneider's (2013) suggestions for developing a protocol for qualitative media analysis were incorporated, and the following basic information was recorded for each broadcast: *Network, Document number, Date of broadcast, Length of news segment, News anchor, Reporter, Title of story, Theme, Persons quoted directly, and Persons/organizations referenced*. To initially establish categories for coding other characteristics, I utilized the scheme set forth by Hughes et al. (2010), which included *Focus, Level, Topic, Crisis/Emergency issue, Youth issue, Overall tone, Consequences of drug use, and Moral evaluation*. Coding these categories was a valuable practice to elucidate the framing of each report.

Categories of *Policy Suggestion, Strategy, or Response; Statistics cited; and Location* were added, as well as a *Miscellaneous* section which was reserved for the documentation of any notable information which did not fit into one of the above-mentioned categories. *Phrasing of introduction* and *Notable vocabulary* were also added and phrases were transcribed verbatim for later analysis.

An emergent themes technique was utilized to identify the predominant *Theme* of each news report. Themes were initially coded using synthesizing concepts, which later became definitive concepts. Codes for the topic and tone of each report, as well as the setting and notable language, helped identify a predominant theme for each story. For example, if a broadcast primarily discussed law enforcement efforts to stop drug trafficking, as well as challenges which can arise during these efforts, and also included language indicating goals such as "fighting the drug trade" and "destroying this deadly trade," this was identified as predominantly a "Law Enforcement" theme. Subthemes were also noted; in the above-described example, the subtheme was identified as "Challenges in Fighting Drug Trafficking." Ultimately, the following themes

were found to be recurring: *Law Enforcement Successes and Challenges, International Concerns and Drug-Related Violence, Drug Use or Involvement of Public Figures, Concern about Drug Addiction, and Research or Policy Changes.*

For the category of *Policy Suggestion, Strategy, or Response*, an emergent themes technique was also utilized to identify which policies or strategies were included most often in the news. For each report, if any response to a drug issue was discussed, such as a law enforcement strategy, treatment option, a potential national policy, or a reaction to another country's handling of drug issues, it was summarized on the data collection sheet. All of these summaries were compiled into a list, and similar ideas were then grouped together to identify themes. For example, responses to cocaine production or trafficking such as "aerial spray," "interdiction teams," "crop eradication," and "DEA surveillance" were grouped together in the category of "Interdiction efforts." Similarly, responses such as "vetting thousands of airport workers" or "tougher drug testing for truck drivers" were merged to form the category "Tougher security or rules for specific agencies." Ultimately, five overarching themes emerged: *Interdiction Efforts and Security Measures, Financial and Military Resources to Other Countries, Drug Rehabilitation or Services, Sentencing Reform, and Other Strategies.* It was also recorded if a report did not include a policy suggestion, strategy, or response.

Upon completion of the coding sheets for each set of transcripts, a chart was constructed to summarize the results for that set. The charts displayed key identifiers and the most salient features from each report's coding sheet (i.e., Document Number, Date, Primary Drug Mentioned, Focus, Title, Topic, Theme and Subtheme, Crisis, Youth, Tone, Consequences, Moral Evaluation, Strategy, and Location). Finally, results were tallied by making a handwritten

list, adding the frequencies of each code, and calculating percentages. The themes and strategies found throughout the reports are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS

This chapter will summarize the results from the analysis of four sets of news transcripts pertaining to heroin and cocaine. Overall, 61 of the 172 relevant reports dealt primarily with heroin, and 111 discussed cocaine. Predominant themes and strategies were identified throughout the reports covering each drug.

Heroin Themes

Four overarching themes were discovered in the stories regarding heroin: *International Concerns and Drug-Related Violence*, *Law Enforcement Successes and Challenges*, *Concern about Drug Addiction*, and *Drug Use or Involvement of Public Figures*. The prevalence of each theme for both networks' heroin-related stories is displayed in Table 5.1.

International Concerns and Drug-Related Violence. The relative majority of reports pertaining to heroin discussed how other countries managed related issues, and typically included the potential impact on and reactions of the United States. Most of the stories in this category focused on Afghanistan, while the remainder discussed Mexico and Colombia.

Almost all of these reports strongly conveyed a connection between drugs and violence by associating the drug trade with murder, terrorism, or foreign drug wars. Afghanistan was identified as a “trouble spot” because of its heroin production, and NBC stated that “the number of poppy fields tripled” in the previous year (NBC, May 23, 2005). ABC news also noted the sharp increase in poppy production (ABC, September 26, 2002). Another broadcast asserted that “misery” was “one of Afghanistan’s chief exports” and described how the “heroin explosion” from Afghanistan was negatively affecting neighboring country Pakistan (ABC, September 30, 2001).

Table 5.1. Frequencies of Themes in Network News Reports about Heroin, 2000-2013

Theme	NBC	ABC	Total
International Concerns and Drug-Related Violence	14	7	21 (34%)
Law Enforcement Successes and Challenges	10	8	18 (30%)
Concern about Drug Addiction	8	9	17 (28%)
Drug Use or Involvement of Public Figures	0	5	5 (8%)
Number of Reports	32	29	61

Reports often discussed drugs in the context of the War on Terror. For example, one story identified Afghanistan’s poppy fields as a “target in the war on terror,” stating that profits from heroin go “to al-Qaeda and maybe to other terrorist organizations” and that “stamping out the poppies of Afghanistan has...become a global priority” (NBC, April 27, 2003). An additional broadcast stated that the resurgence of the poppy as a cash crop “could undermine [the] war on terror,” and that Afghanistan was in danger of becoming a “narcotics state” due to the large contribution of opium to its economy and the resulting empowerment of “the warlords, the Taliban and al-Qaeda” (NBC, March 17, 2005). Opium production was discussed as a “crisis,” a “problem,” and a “long-term fight.” In one instance, NBC reported that in Afghanistan, “a country that produces most of the world’s heroin, drug lords give money and guns to the Taliban in exchange for protection” (NBC, June 22, 2006). In addition, NBC News Terror Analyst Roger Cressey asserted, “The Taliban and their sympathizers are taking advantage of...drug production, using the profits from it to support their insurgency.” In another example, NBC described a distinct effort by U.S. and Afghan forces to attack the Taliban by targeting the illegal

drug trade, and reinforced the fact that profits from the drug trade help “finance insurgent attacks” (NBC, May 4, 2009).

In 2007, NBC news reiterated that “90 percent of the world’s heroin supply” comes from poppies and that poppies largely finance the Taliban (NBC, February 10, 2007). Similarly, a 2008 report stated that “Afghanistan’s illegal drug trade may pose the most serious threat” (NBC, February 16, 2008). The news cited a United Nations report which predicted a record poppy crop for that year, and U.S. Army General Dan McNeill reminded viewers that opium and heroin profits help purchase weapons for the Taliban, stating that “what shoots up in place of poppy plants are Kalashnikovs, PKs, [and] RPGs.” In 2009, ABC reported a new plan by the U.S. military to “capture or kill” a “hit list” of drug lords in Afghanistan (ABC, August 10, 2009).

Additional stories with this theme involved the United States’ collaboration with the Colombian government to fight drug trafficking and terrorism (ABC, September 30, 2003). NBC referred to Colombia, South America, as “ground zero in the war on drugs” before discussing President Bill Clinton’s arrival and a bomb found in Cartagena, which NBC called “a dramatic reminder of the violence that ravages Colombia, and one more reason for the \$1.3 billion in US military aid” (NBC, August 30, 2000). The story emphasized the violent actions of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), describing FARC as “well-armed leftist guerillas” who controlled the drug trade in Colombia. The story stated that “Colombia’s drug traffickers and guerrillas are one in the same [*sic*],” reinforcing the link between drugs and violence.

Remaining reports dealt with the violence of the drug war in Mexico. In one story which focused on “drug-related violence,” NBC reported the “growing and violent drug war that’s

spilling into the US,” with special attention focused on “public enemy number one in Mexico, Joaquín Guzmán” (NBC, March 24, 2009). The newscast communicated that Guzmán headed “Mexico’s biggest and most violent illegal drug cartel,” and described him as “brutal,” “violent,” and “very hard to catch.” Another report discussed a “fierce battle” between Mexico’s government and “heavily-armed drug traffickers,” a “vicious war between drug cartels and police” during which more than 4,000 people were killed in the preceding year and a half (NBC, June 19, 2008). In another instance, NBC expressed concern that the “drug violence” was spreading from Mexico to the United States (NBC, January 13, 2009). The news cited “horrific” and “extreme violence” by the drug cartels, “brutally tortured” victims, and a U.S. Justice Department report which described Mexican drug trafficking organizations as “the greatest organized crime threat to the United States.”

In one segment which noted U.S. “outrage” at a proposed Mexican law, NBC reported that the Mexican government was attempting to “do a better job in the war on drugs” by toughening laws against drug traffickers, but not prosecuting individuals for possession of small amounts of heroin, cocaine, marijuana, LSD, and methamphetamine (NBC, May 3, 2006). The primary view conveyed was bewilderment and skepticism at how legalization of “dangerous narcotics” could accomplish an improvement. The report focused on potential negative consequences and included vehement anti-legalization sentiments. John Walters, Director of the ONDCP during George W. Bush’s presidency, stated, “If we are talking about legalizing drug use, that’s bad for everybody.” General Barry McCaffrey, retired U.S. Army General and ONDCP Director under President Bill Clinton, stated that the Mexican law would “have a huge impact on cross-border drug tourism” especially for college students who “will go to Mexico, buy and consume.” An addiction counselor from the San Diego Drug Clinic conveyed concern

regarding the ability of the clinic to provide services based on the assumption that addiction would increase in the United States. Luis Cabrera, Mexican Consul General in San Diego, gave the following statement in an apparent effort to clarify and reassure: “We have to be very clear that doesn’t mean at all that we are legalizing drugs in any form.” Finally, a 2011 report stated that despite Mexico’s five-year war against drugs, production of heroin, marijuana, and methamphetamine was increasing, and more drugs were being smuggled into the United States (NBC, September 24, 2011).

Law Enforcement Successes and Challenges. Reports with this theme chronicled the strategies and tactics of U.S. law enforcement. The majority reported successful operations and the remainder discussed the strategic challenges of dealing with particular situations.

The success stories focused on topics such as drug seizures, purported dismantling of smuggling rings, and deaths or arrests of drug traffickers or distributors. For example, both networks reported when federal agents arrested at least 200 people and disrupted a major heroin smuggling ring, which ABC described as the largest in the U.S. (ABC, June 15, 2000; NBC, June 15, 2000). In another newscast, NBC reported that more than 400 people were arrested for drug trafficking as part of a two-year operation which ultimately resulted in the apprehension of more than 2,000 people (NBC, June 10, 2010). A “major bust” was also reported when the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) broke up a “drug dealing ring with a sophisticated website” known as Silk Road (NBC, October 2, 2013). The website sold heroin, cocaine, LSD, and methamphetamine, and had generated around 1.2 billion dollars in sales in under three years. Prosecutors described the website as “an international marketplace” which was “the internet’s biggest bazaar for illegal drugs.” FBI agents had worked for two years to terminate the operation. Similarly, ABC reported the bust of Colombia’s “largest heroin ring” (ABC, April 12, 2000), as

well as the breakup of “an extensive drug trafficking ring in the U.S. and in Asia” by American and Chinese authorities, during which 25 people were indicted for smuggling heroin from Southeast Asia (ABC, May 16, 2003). Other examples included the seizure of 85 pounds of heroin by American-led naval forces (ABC, December 20, 2003), and a drug raid by federal officials termed “one of the largest drug busts ever” in which over 300 suspected La Familia members were arrested and 11 tons of cocaine, methamphetamine, heroin, and marijuana were seized (ABC, October 22, 2009). ABC also reported raids in Afghanistan of a “trafficker’s compound,” which was termed a “partial victory” for the DEA agents, U.S. military personnel, and Afghan forces who conducted the operation (ABC, May 2, 2010).

Several reports involved the arrest or death of a high-profile trafficker. When Mexican drug lord Benjamín Arellano Félix was apprehended, the occurrence was called “a great victory for law enforcement” and was touted as a possible deterrent for other kingpins (NBC, March 9, 2002). The report was introduced with the phrase, “Now to the war on drugs,” and claimed that as a result of Arellano Félix’s arrest, the “most violent and prolific organization engaged in drug trafficking from Mexico to the United States in decades” was disrupted. Another example was when the DEA arrested Bashir Noorzai, described as “one of the world’s most notorious drug lords” and a “top supplier of heroin [and] supplier of money to al-Qaeda” (NBC, April 25, 2005). One story described three men “caught in an FBI sting operation” who were “trying to sell large amounts of heroin and hashish” in the U.S. in order to finance al-Qaeda (NBC, November 6, 2002). Finally, when Mexican drug lord Arturo Beltrán Leyva was killed in a shootout with Mexican forces who were assisted by U.S. intelligence experts, NBC referred to his death as “a major victory for Mexican President Felipe Calderón” (NBC, December 17, 2009). Leyva was identified as “the boss of bosses” who shipped tons of drugs to the U.S. and was also “infamous

for his extreme levels of violence...and for corrupting Mexican officials.” These reports conveyed that arrests or deaths of kingpins were considered progress in the fight against drugs.

Several reports focused on the challenges faced by law enforcement officials who endeavor to fight drug trafficking, and discussed the problems and obstacles which can arise during attempts to implement anti-drug strategies. One example was the story which discussed “lax security at ports and shipyards” as “soft spots in America’s security” which allow drugs to enter the United States (NBC, December 23, 2000). The story began by presenting a “look at one front in the war on drugs where the traffickers are winning,” and lamented that drugs are “pouring into this country” and that U.S. Customs inspectors are on the “front lines of a losing battle.” The report described the difficulty of maintaining security on the docks due to internal drug smuggling. “Tougher rules” and the implementation of sufficient employee monitoring and surveillance were suggested to combat these challenges. Another reported incident was a “security breach” involving drug smuggling by American airport employees (ABC, August 22, 2010).

Concern about Drug Addiction. All of the reports with this theme expressed concern about drug use, and discussed related harms such as death, overdose, addiction, mental health issues, and the negative experiences of individuals addicted to drugs. These stories usually provided information about drug use trends or patterns, use among a certain demographic, or the availability of a new drug. They conveyed a dismal outlook and did not offer any solutions; typically there was only an implication that something should be done. Moreover, anecdotes of individual success were more likely to be promoted than systemic changes. All of the reports with this theme were framed as a crisis, had an overall negative tone, and specifically mentioned youth demographics.

Increases in heroin use by young people in American suburbs were reported (NBC, June 19, 2012; NBC, June 20, 2012). Accounts often communicated concern and surprise that heroin addiction was occurring in suburbia, with statements such as “This is so hard to believe this is happening in America’s suburbs” (ABC, March 29, 2010), and “A growing group found mostly in *of all places* suburbia” [emphasis added] (ABC, July 31, 2013). A similar statement professing that this was the “wrong” place for heroin addiction came from ABC reporter Chris Cuomo, who said to a 21-year-old suburban female addicted to heroin, “This is not supposed to happen to you. Too smart, too many people who love you, too much money and potential” (ABC, October 29, 2010). The reports included sensational language and phrases such as “skyrocketing threat” (ABC, March 29, 2010), “Across Middle America, heroin is taking hold” (ABC, March 30, 2010), “America’s new suburban epidemic,” and “in the grip of a killer” (ABC, October 29, 2010). Misinformation was also imparted, such as the claim that heroin users become addicted or “hooked” after only one use (ABC, March 29, 2010; March 30, 2010; October 19, 2010).

Stories were also included which conveyed concern about new forms of heroin triggering increases in overdoses. One example was “the bomb,” about which NBC stated, “a more potent and lethal form of heroin is now creating a trail of death...from the Midwest to the East Coast” (NBC, June 15, 2006). NBC called it “a killer” and a “threat,” and stated, “Supercharged heroin, mixed with a powerful painkiller fentanyl, up to 100 times stronger than morphine, is rampaging through drug communities.” In another example, NBC reported that “cheese heroin” was “the new face of a deadly drug” (NBC, December 26, 2007). The mixture was determined to consist of “heroin and over-the-counter pain and sleep medication,” and the report stated that the drug had “swept through one part of the country, taking many lives in the process.” An additional story discussed a new anti-drug media campaign in response to the notion that America’s youth

were “on the front line of the war on drugs” and “at risk at an alarmingly young age” (NBC, September 16, 2000).

Stories with this theme sometimes focused on treatment and individual experiences with addiction. One discussed a specific treatment-oriented school for teenagers who were recovering from addiction, and included students’ statements about their previous struggles and the benefits of the school (ABC, March 1, 2007). A 2001 report on a UCLA drug study conveyed the difficulties of addiction and barriers to successful treatment, and discussed unemployment rates, death rates, and relapse statistics. The report included quotes from currently and formerly addicted individuals recounting their personal experiences and the challenges of stopping heroin use. One interviewee stated, “If I felt good, I wanted to feel better. If I was an inch away from death, I wanted to get a quarter inch. I wanted to get just as loaded as I could get so as not to feel, not to think,” and another stated, “I love drugs more than life itself” (ABC, July 21, 2001).

Drug Use or Involvement of Public Figures. The evening news regularly reported events related to the drug use of famous musicians, actors, or other public figures. For example, ABC reported the death of singer Amy Winehouse (ABC, July 25, 2011), which occurred as a result of accidental alcohol poisoning, although the news mentioned her general struggle with addiction and previous use of cocaine and heroin. Several stories aired regarding the death of actor Cory Monteith (ABC, July 16, 2013; ABC, July 18, 2013; ABC, August 12, 2013), which resulted from a mixture of heroin and alcohol. The cocaine use of model Kate Moss was also reported, with attention given to the negative impact on her career (ABC, September 21, 2005).

Strategies and Responses to Heroin

The following categories were identified which summarize the responses and strategies promoted on the news for dealing with heroin: *Interdiction Efforts and Security Measures, Drug*

Rehabilitation or Services, Financial and Military Resources to Other Countries, and Other Strategies. Reports which did not include a discussion of strategies or policies were also noted. Table 5.2 displays the prevalence of these categories in heroin-related stories for both networks.

Interdiction Efforts and Security Measures. A relative majority of reports conveyed direct or implicit support of interdiction efforts, which included law enforcement tactics, border security, and military actions. Some broadcasts did not explicitly articulate a strategy or provide specific details about an existing effort, but they were noted as reinforcing the merits of current practices by simply reporting law enforcement “success” stories. Other reports in this category promoted “tougher rules” and stricter security procedures at specific locations.

Descriptions of existing efforts included bolstering border security because of the “growing and violent drug war” in Mexico. One story also mentioned that the Justice Department was offering 5 million dollars for the capture of Joaquín Guzmán (NBC, March 24, 2009). Likewise, NBC stated that there was an increasing challenge to “stem the flow of illegal drugs from Mexico” but that the numerous seizures by border patrol agents had been ineffective in decreasing the availability of drugs (NBC, September 24, 2011). Nevertheless, in response to fears that a “growing drug supply...could lead to more addiction with huge costs to American families and communities,” U.S. officials insisted they were “addressing the threat” by significantly increasing “law enforcement capabilities along the border.” Drug raids which targeted Mexican drug cartels were also reported (ABC, October 22, 2009). One report stated that President George W. Bush was meeting with President Calderón and that drug violence was “topic number one” (NBC, January 13, 2009). The news offered no substantive indication of the possible solutions but was coded as supporting interdiction efforts due to the framing of the story and the inclusion of language such as “horrific violence” and “extreme violence.”

Table 5.2. Frequencies of Strategies in Network News Reports about Heroin, 2000-2013

Strategy	NBC	ABC	Total
Interdiction Efforts and Security Measures	16	9	25 (41%)
No strategy mentioned	5	11	16 (26%)
Drug Rehabilitation or Services	4	5	9 (15%)
Financial and Military Resources to Other Countries	3	3	6 (10%)
Other Strategies	4	1	5 (8%)
Number of Reports	32	29	61

In a report detailing the arrest of a Mexican drug lord, NBC noted the futility of past efforts by acknowledging that Mexican drug rings had previously been disrupted without lasting improvements (NBC, March 9, 2002). However, the story subsequently reinforced the appropriateness of such efforts and conveyed the DEA’s hope that the action would serve as a deterrent for other traffickers. Similarly, in a story regarding heroin use in suburbia, the push down, pop up phenomenon was acknowledged with the statement that “no matter how many arrests they make...a new dealer always seems to pop up” (NBC, June 19, 2012). However, no alternatives were suggested.

Poppy eradication was discussed as a strategy with regard to narcotics in Afghanistan. For example, a British poppy eradication program was included in a segment which described poppies as a “growing problem,” and as a cash crop which “provides 90 percent of the world’s heroin supply” and “largely finances the Taliban” (NBC, February 10, 2007). The account provided commentary from a farmer who stated it was “cruel” that his fields are devastated by eradication efforts; however, no alternative operations were suggested. An additional story

described a newly created “joint narcotics interdiction team” comprised of U.S. and Afghan forces as well as veteran DEA agents and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) troops (NBC, May 4, 2009). The goal of the team was to find and destroy narcotics, and the report depicted the discovery and destruction of tons of dry morphine base. An additional newscast described a new U.S. military plan to capture or kill drug traffickers in Afghanistan (ABC, August 10, 2009). Raids in Afghanistan were reported when U.S. and Afghan forces decided to leave farmers alone and target traffickers (ABC, May 2, 2010). Support for interdiction despite the absence of a delineated strategy was also found in another report which called poppy fields a “target in the war on terror” and stated that “stamping out” Afghanistan’s poppies was a “global priority” (NBC, April 27, 2003).

Many reports promoted interdiction through law enforcement efforts by reporting events such as the bust of a heroin smuggling ring in Colombia (ABC, April 12, 2000), the breakup of a trafficking ring in the U.S. and Asia (ABC, May 16, 2003), and a raid of two ships in the North Arabian sea which was described as “the second major drug interception by coalition forces in five days, part of a sweep designed to prevent smugglers and terrorists from using the seas” (ABC, December 20, 2003). ABC explicitly described it as “good news” when federal agents broke up what they called the “largest heroin smuggling ring operating in the United States” and arrested 235 people (ABC, June 15, 2000). Furthermore, a DEA source declared that heroin had “re-emerged in our society...with a vengeance,” and Attorney General Janet Reno stated that those involved in “peddling” the drug displayed an immense “disregard for human life.”

Some stories promoted the implementation of additional security measures in specific settings such as shipyards and airports. For example, NBC reported that a significant amount of drug smuggling occurs through U.S. seaports (NBC, December 23, 2000). In response to the

concern about “tons of drugs pouring into this country,” some officials favored “tougher rules” and overall tighter security at ports and shipyards. Jim McDonough, of the Florida Office of Drug Control, stated it was necessary to have cameras, fences, identification cards, and employee background checks to combat internal drug smuggling. However, one DEA informant countered that because of the lucrative nature of the drug business and the fact that there are always dealers to take the place of the ones who were busted, smuggling would continue indefinitely. A similar story pertained to airport security (ABC, August 22, 2010). Specifically, in response to a “security breach” of airport employees smuggling drugs, the solution of screening the thousands of airline workers at international airports was discussed. However, it was noted that this extensive inspection “remains a huge challenge.”

Drug Rehabilitation or Services. Reports which expressed concern about drug use, addiction, or overdoses typically discussed solutions such as individual drug treatment programs, antidotes, or services such as needle exchanges.

For example, one broadcast concerned with overdose deaths focused on individual treatment and discussed a Dallas rehabilitation center (NBC, December 26, 2007). Mariela Torres, a teenager who was successful in stopping heroin use, stated that she wanted to show her friends that because she “made it, they could make it, too.” Similarly, one report discussed growing heroin abuse in suburbia and focused on two teenagers: one who had died of an overdose, and another who had successfully stopped using (NBC, June 20, 2012). The newscast promoted the gateway theory previously found in narratives of drugs by stating that the deceased individual “started experimenting with pot” and then eventually used cocaine and heroin. The story briefly mentioned individual counseling and support groups as a form of treatment. It had a negative tone, ending with the phrase “It really is a new generation for this drug, sadly.” In

another report about “the heroin epidemic” in American suburbs, which ABC called an “unlikely” place for the phenomenon, individual treatment was again identified as a primary solution (ABC, July 31, 2013). Following Cory Monteith’s death in 2013, a report provided advice about recognizing drug addiction, and an addiction specialist stated that it is the “patient’s responsibility to get help” (ABC, August 12, 2013). An ABC broadcast featured a special school in Minnesota for addicted teenagers called “Sobriety High School” where group therapy was required along with a regular curriculum, and students signed a pledge to report any relapses (ABC, March 1, 2007). The rationale provided was that 80 percent of addicted students who received drug or alcohol treatment would relapse within one year if they returned to their previous schools.

One story discussed findings of State Department researchers who hoped for “more money to develop rehabilitation centers” after they uncovered a “staggering picture” of children addicted to heroin in Afghanistan (ABC, April 24, 2010). A former DEA agent stated that many children and babies had become addicted to heroin and opium from second-hand exposure to smoke and residue. According to the report, the children had levels of opium in their systems comparable to “American adult street junkies” and treatment centers there were scarce.

Antidotes and needle exchanges were additional services mentioned in response to drug-related deaths and overdoses. A report which discussed a rise in overdoses as a “trail of death” stretching from the Midwest to the East Coast mentioned these measures for treating individuals (NBC, June 15, 2006). NBC stated that emergency rooms had the antidote for a new form of heroin taped to the walls because so many overdose victims were being admitted. The story also stated that “the Chicago Recovery Alliance supplies clean needles and other services to addicts.”

An additional report mentioned that Portland, Oregon, supported “a controversial program to provide addicts with a needle exchange” in order to reduce the spread of AIDS and Hepatitis C (NBC, March 31, 2001). However, the assertion that “Oregon’s open-minded attitude has allowed both drug use and street life to thrive,” the description of a needle exchange as “controversial,” and the use of the term “addicts” suggested a bias against such programs and harm reduction strategies. Furthermore, the segment called Portland “the heroin capitol [*sic*] of the West Coast” and stated that they have more deaths per capita than almost any other city on the West Coast. Therefore, although services were mentioned, in this case, they were not fully supported. Finally, one report noted that in response to teenage overdoses, a number of cities were considering amnesty programs which would ensure freedom from prosecution for those calling for help (ABC, March 30, 2010).

Financial and Military Resources to Other Countries. Reports in this category discussed strategies such as providing military equipment, training, advisers, and monetary assistance to other countries such as Colombia, Afghanistan, and Mexico, for the purpose of fighting drugs.

One broadcast discussed giving Colombia 1.3 billion dollars in aid, along with military advisers and combat helicopters to assist “in its fight against drug traffickers and rebel insurgents” (NBC, August 30, 2000). The story mentioned critics’ concerns that the involvement would cause the United States to be pulled further into Colombia’s civil war, then added that “US officials believe military aid now could put off the need for American troops later.” An ABC story stated that the U.S. embassy in Bogotá was the biggest in the world and disbursed one billion dollars annually in aid (ABC, September 30, 2003). The U.S. provided equipment and training to Colombian troops and worked closely with the Colombian government to combat

narcotics trafficking. Furthermore, U.S. contractors were employed to perform aerial sprayings of coca fields. ABC reported that the United States was “making a difference,” and a political scientist stated that the U.S. could “stand up and say, what we’re doing is working.” An additional story involving Colombia pointed out that the U.S. had “spent billions there to fight the drug trade” and that George W. Bush was planning to ask Congress for more aid (ABC, November 22, 2004).

In 2005, ABC reported that the United States had “contributed \$73 million” toward poppy eradication programs in Afghanistan, and that American troops had also assisted in destroying drug labs and fields (ABC, March 4, 2005). The broadcast stated that U.S. officials favored an even more aggressive approach, and Afghan President Hamid Karzai declared, “We must rid this country of poppies.” On March 17, 2005, NBC reported that the U.S. had “proposed giving Afghanistan \$780 million in aid to fight the opium problem” and was also training an Afghan counternarcotics team.

News reports also indicated that the U.S. needed to assist Mexico in its fight against drug cartels. A 2008 broadcast stated that Congress was “debating a proposed \$1.5 billion law enforcement aid package for Mexico, amid fears the violence and corruption” would spread to the United States (NBC, June 19, 2008).

Other Strategies. Remaining reports mentioned additional strategies for dealing with drug issues, the most prevalent of which was the investment in alternative crops for poppy farmers. For example, reports stated that opium sales could be reduced or ended by providing Afghan farmers with “a decent alternative” (NBC, December 29, 2001) or assisting them in finding a replacement crop (NBC, May 23, 2005). These stories proposed giving poppy farmers jobs building roads and as carpenters in an attempt to enable them to cease poppy production.

NBC presented “long-term investment in other crops and livelihoods” as “the only solution” (NBC, June 8, 2008). ABC also cited long-term rebuilding of the economy as a necessity (ABC, July 11, 2006). However, the same ABC report discussed the destruction of poppy fields, stated that “fighting” the drug trade is important, and included the phrases “the war on drugs meets the war on terror” and “the US is losing this war on drugs.”

Finally, anti-drug advertising campaigns were discussed as an additional strategy to decrease drug use. One report indicated that a new anti-drug campaign aimed at the nation’s youth had been launched by federal officials in response to “frightening” club drugs. Dr. Alan Leshner, then-director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse, stated that making the public understand the “science of drug abuse” would be more beneficial than engaging in “simple scare tactics” (NBC, September 16, 2000). The report also included public service announcements previously disseminated by Partnership for a Drug-free America which emphasized the “danger” of heroin. The news segment concluded with a clip of an anti-heroin commercial and the reporter’s closing phrase: “America’s war on drugs being fought at the borders, on the streets and in millions of homes.”

Cocaine Themes

Five overarching themes were identified in the news reports pertaining to cocaine: *Law Enforcement Successes and Challenges*, *International Concerns and Drug-Related Violence*, *Drug Use or Involvement of Public Figures*, *Concern about Drug Addiction*, and *Research or Policy Changes*. The frequencies of these themes are presented in Table 5.3. Predominant themes for both drugs are displayed in Figure 5.1.

Law Enforcement Successes and Challenges. Most of the reports with a law enforcement theme described successful law enforcement operations such as drug seizures,

arrests, and discoveries of smuggling equipment. Others emphasized the challenges faced by law enforcement in efforts to combat drug trafficking.

Many reports focused on the dismantling of drug smuggling rings or drug dealing operations (NBC, August 26, 2000; NBC, June 10, 2010; NBC, October 2, 2013). For example, both networks covered what ABC referred to as a “Big Mexican Drug Bust” (ABC, June 20, 2001; NBC, June 20, 2001). An additional story broadcast by both networks was a “massive drug bust” in San Diego, California, of several campus fraternities engaged in “organized” dealing of cocaine (ABC, May 6, 2008).

Other news segments reported the seizure of large amounts of cocaine, such as when the Coast Guard discovered 13 tons of the drug on a fishing boat in what NBC called “the biggest cocaine bust ever” and ABC identified as “the largest cocaine bust ever at sea” (ABC, May 14, 2001; NBC, May 14, 2001). Both networks also reported a drug confiscation off the coast of Panama when U.S. officials discovered 21 tons of cocaine, which NBC termed “a record drug bust” and ABC called a “record maritime cocaine seizure” (ABC, March 21, 2007; NBC, March 21, 2007). In another report regarding the “largest national dragnet ever targeting Mexican drug cartels,” ABC noted that more than 300 people in 19 states had been arrested, and that over many months, “more than 1,000 people [had] been charged and \$32 million in cash seized, along with 11 tons of cocaine, meth, heroin, and marijuana” (ABC, October 22, 2009). Federal officials announced the operation as “one of the largest drug busts ever,” and the report stated that U.S. authorities were racing “to stop the cartel’s expansion.” The “depravity” of the cartels was emphasized as the report focused on violence and “brazen attacks.” An additional newscast reported a “huge drug bust in the Caribbean” as well as actions by Australian police which resulted in “the biggest haul in Australia’s history” (ABC, July 28, 2001).

Table 5.3. Frequencies of Themes in Network News Reports about Cocaine, 2000-2013

Theme	NBC	ABC	Total
Law Enforcement Successes and Challenges	26	20	46 (41%)
International Concerns and Drug-Related Violence	13	14	27 (24%)
Drug Use or Involvement of Public Figures	6	18	24 (22%)
Concern about Drug Addiction	5	2	7 (6%)
Research or Policy Changes	3	4	7 (6%)
Number of Reports	53	58	111

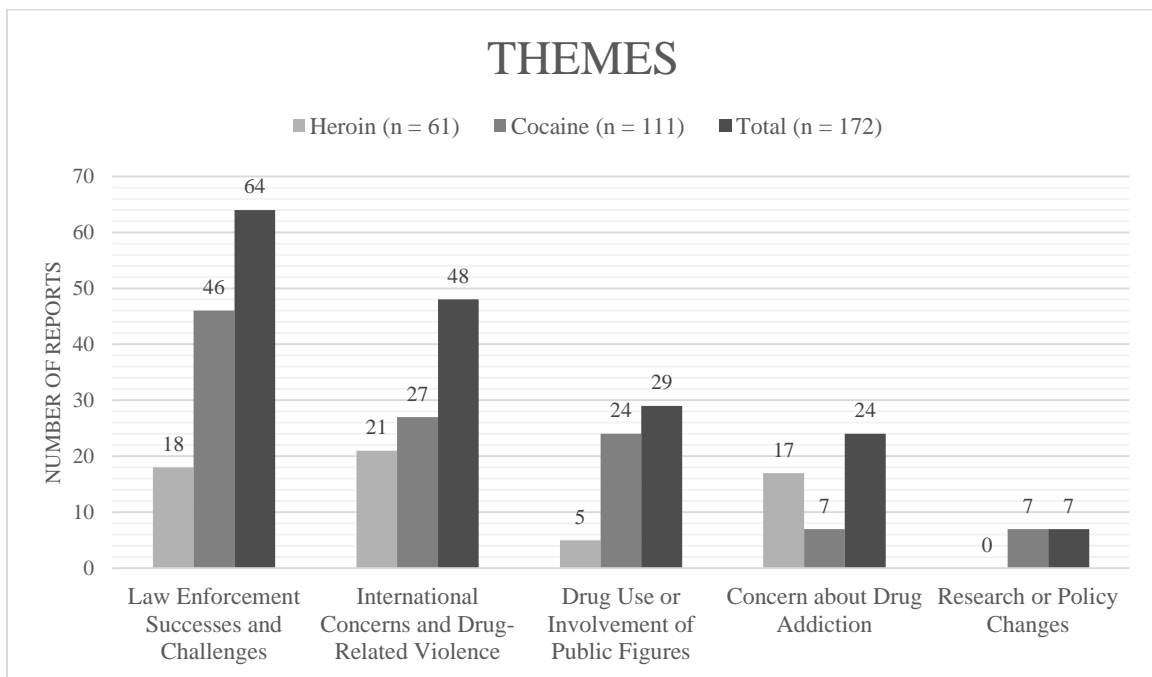


Figure 5.1. Themes in Network News Coverage of Heroin and Cocaine, 2000-2013

Other reports focused entirely on the detection of sophisticated smuggling equipment such as submarines (NBC, September 7, 2000). One example was the DEA's seizure of a 90-foot submarine found in Ecuador and designed to transport "multi-ton quantities of cocaine" (ABC, July 3, 2010). Additionally, tunnels between Mexico and the U.S. were newsworthy discoveries (NBC, February 28, 2002). In one drug smuggling tunnel between San Diego and Tijuana, Mexico, authorities found "eight tons of marijuana and hundreds of pounds of cocaine" (ABC, October 31, 2013).

Several broadcasts covered the arrests or deaths of specific drug lords, kingpins, or traffickers. Fabio Ochoa, described as "a reputed leader of the notorious Medellin drug cartel," was transferred to U.S. custody by Colombian authorities to face federal drug trafficking charges (NBC, September 8, 2001). An additional story reported that Colombian drug lord Gilberto Rodríguez Orejuela, identified by NBC as "the most powerful drug trafficker ever extradited to the United States," was in U.S. custody (NBC, December 4, 2004). Regarding the incident, George W. Bush declared, "This war against narco-terrorism can and will be won, and Colombia is well on its way to that victory." Similarly, when Mexican drug lord Benjamín Arellano Félix was arrested, NBC called it "a major coup for law enforcement on both sides of the border" and "a great victory for law enforcement," while ABC stated, "Today, the United States and Mexican drug enforcement agents won a battle in the war on drugs" (ABC, March 9, 2002; NBC, March 9, 2002). DEA Administrator Asa Hutchinson stated that the "supply chain" disruption was a "great victory for law enforcement all across the globe," and ABC reported that the arrest "effectively puts an end to a bloody family business" (ABC, March 9, 2002). U.S. Attorney Patrick O'Toole stated, "It would be naïve to think that that is absolving the Mexican drug crisis. The arrest of any one person...doesn't solve it, but it goes a long way." Although this statement

points out the shortcomings of the approach, the addition of “but it goes a long way” implies support of the efforts. In 2006, the apprehension of three ringleaders of the Colombian group FARC was reported as part of what the Justice Department called “the biggest narcotics trafficking indictment in American history” (NBC, March 22, 2006). When Mexican drug lord Arturo Beltrán Leyva was killed in a shootout, NBC stated that his death was “a major victory for Mexican President Felipe Calderón” (NBC, December 17, 2009). It was also reported when Mexican drug lord Edgar Valdez Villarreal was arrested (NBC, August 31, 2010).

Challenges faced by officials when fighting drug trafficking were the focus of other reports. For example, one story stated that the United States was considering an increase in its “commitment to fight drug trafficking in Colombia” in order to keep drugs out of the U.S., and described issues that could arise from giving Colombia 1.5 billion dollars in military aid (NBC, January 16, 2000). Opponents raised concerns about U.S. involvement in a Colombian civil war. In a 2003 story, NBC called Colombia “the front lines in the war on drugs,” described missions undertaken to destroy coca fields, and stated that destroying half a ton of cocaine was “one small victory in the ongoing war on terror” (NBC, December 6, 2003).

Another news segment identified ports and shipyards as “one front in the war on drugs where the traffickers are winning,” and discussed potential amelioration through various tactics including increased surveillance, fences, identification cards for workers, and controlled access (NBC, December 23, 2000). Other examples discussed specific endeavors such as searching ships on the Miami River (NBC, February 17, 2001) and pursuing drug smuggling submarines (NBC, December 28, 2008). In one discussion of efforts by the U.S. Air Force to catch drug runners and “slow the flow of drugs into this country,” NBC acknowledged that “many argue that the war against drugs has been... ‘a dismal failure’ [and] that the drug cartels are winning”

(NBC, December 27, 2008). Nevertheless, despite the fact that amounts of cocaine shipped from Venezuela had “mushroomed sixteenfold,” crews stated that they tried to “do the impossible” on a daily basis and stop the flow of drugs into the United States.

Negative potential consequences of losing resources with which to fight the drug war were also discussed. Specifically, then-Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld wanted to end the Army’s involvement in an operation called OPBAT (Operation Bahamas, Turks and Caicos) due to increased demands for resources for the War on Terror. Since 1986, OPBAT had led to the seizure of “more than 90 tons of cocaine, 400 tons of marijuana, 1600 arrests, and the disruption of trafficking routes to the United States” (NBC, August 20, 2006). U.S. law enforcement officials were adamant about retaining Black Hawk helicopters in the operation, fearing that removal would send a message to traffickers that “it’s open season again.” An additional report described a “growing challenge” for border patrol agents to “stem the flow of illegal drugs” from Mexico (NBC, September 24, 2011). In this instance, NBC stated that despite a record number of seizures, there were more drugs produced, smuggled, and available than before.

One report noted that 14 percent of cocaine and heroin entering the U.S. traveled through Haiti, and therefore identified it as “a newcomer...on the drug map” (ABC, May 15, 2000). Dismal prospects were communicated in the introduction which stated, “The question tonight is this: will anyone ever win the war against the illegal drug traders? It’s tempting to say no.” ABC called smuggling methods “impressive” and discussed difficulties related to Haiti’s “poorly trained, poorly equipped,” and “powerless” police force, as well as the limited presence of U.S. DEA agents. The story closed with the acknowledgment, “agents know that as much cocaine as they find, much, much more is getting through.”

The existence of underground tunnels to smuggle drugs and circumvent border security poses additional challenges for law enforcement officials. One report discussed the increasing number of tunnels used to smuggle contraband from Mexico into the United States, and stated that “the border has become ground zero for an explosion in illegal activity” (ABC, January 26, 2006). Similarly, in a later report, ABC identified tunnels as “a new symbol of the threat to American families from the river of illegal drugs smuggled into this country from Mexico” (ABC, July 12, 2012). The tunnel was described as 182 meters long, stretching from Mexico to Arizona, and an integral apparatus for supplying “a growing sea of illegal drugs.” The report concluded with the statement that authorities are only able to seize a fraction of “what the cartels are getting through by any means necessary.”

The development and utilization of novel methods and equipment is also a common challenge for law enforcement. For example, a 2008 story began with, “Federal law enforcement has just sounded a new alarm in the war on drugs” due to concern over a “new drug trafficking method” (ABC, June 6, 2008). The report stated that due to an increase in the intensity of U.S. law enforcement efforts, the disruption of traditional sea routes, and the cooperation of Colombian and Mexican officials, drug cartels were forced to become more innovative, producing submarines designed to carry large amounts of cocaine. The story remarked how “creative” and “adaptive” the cartels are, and stated that despite extensive law enforcement efforts, there was no significant decrease in the availability of cocaine. The story concluded with the statement that “progress in this war is...very difficult.” An additional broadcast which discussed the innovation of drug cartels described the “brazen new tactic” of smuggling drugs in tractor trailer trucks (ABC, April 16, 2009). It stated that very few truck inspections are conducted due to time and monetary constraints, and ended with, “[the] battle won’t be won just

by sending troops or building a big wall along the border.” The story, however, failed to elaborate or suggest an alternative approach. Another report mentioned that efforts to stop the production and flow of cocaine into the U.S. have been unsuccessful because demand is “as strong as ever” (ABC, July 5, 2008).

Some reports in this category dealt with security breaches and occurrences of corruption. One example involved the Dallas Police Department, which was under federal investigation due to suspicion that officers had planted fake drugs and made unwarranted arrests (ABC, February 11, 2002). It was discovered that nearly half of the cocaine seized the previous year by Dallas police officers was fake. Another report involved military soldiers smuggling drugs, which ABC called “corruption in the ranks” and “disturbing” (ABC, October 26, 2005). Chip Burrus, of the FBI’s Criminal Investigative Division, stated, “It has the potential to be a cancer that spreads in individual units.” ABC referred to those involved as “willing to sell out their country for profit,” and U.S. Attorney John Richter stated, “We...cannot protect the American people if those who are sworn to protect us join and conspire with our enemies.” An additional newscast described a “security breach” and “corruption” at U.S. airports, explained how airport workers were using their positions to exploit the system to smuggle drugs, and stated that the results “could be disastrous” (ABC, August 22, 2010).

International Concerns and Drug-Related Violence. Many reports focused on international affairs and linked drugs or involvement in the drug market with violence. The majority of these stories involved Mexico and Colombia, while the remainder discussed conditions in Peru, Haiti, Jamaica, and Brazil.

Reports regarding Mexico typically involved evidence of violence related to the drug war. An ABC report about “the new frontline in Mexico’s war on drugs” described cartels as

“ultra violent,” and discussed President Calderón, who called his initiation of a military effort against drug cartels a “permanent fight to the finish” (ABC, February 18, 2007). After his election, Calderón had deployed military troops and federal police around the country to fight the drug cartels who controlled large portions of Mexico (NBC, June 19, 2008). Subsequently, “high profile killings” in Mexico’s drug war became “a problem of increasing concern to American officials.” NBC noted the presence of “heavily armed drug traffickers” and stated that 4,000 people had been killed in the previous year and a half. ABC news also indicated that after the Mexican government’s attempt to “crack down” on the drug trade, the cartels “unleashed a torrent of violence” (ABC, March 14, 2009). In 2010, NBC reported that 23,000 people had been killed since the inception of Calderón’s presidency in 2006, and that 200 were killed that week (NBC, June 17, 2010). Critics of Calderón’s military approach wanted him to stop waging war on drug cartels. Former Mexican Foreign Minister Jorge Castañeda stated, “[Calderón] says the violence generated the war. But more and more people in Mexico believe that the war generated the violence.” In 2012, NBC reported that Calderón’s six-year war against drug traffickers had cost 55,000 lives, and reiterated that people wanted the war to end (NBC, June 30, 2012).

Fear of violence spreading from Mexico to the U.S. was common. NBC pointed out that Mexican smugglers supplied much of the U.S. with illegal drugs and were well organized and “very well armed” (NBC, January 13, 2009). The report ended with a quote from a federal official who stated that “with drugs and violence, the Mexican border has now moved north.” ABC also discussed the “violent drug war brewing right on our border” and focused on “efforts to keep the drugs and the violence out” of the United States (ABC, March 14, 2009). Another story described two simultaneous wars being fought in Mexico: one between the drug cartels which NBC called “brutal, internal power struggles over smuggling routes,” and the other

between the drug cartels and the “military of the US-backed government” of President Calderón (NBC, October 17, 2010). The report stated that while the violence had so far remained in Mexico, “US officials worry it could bleed into the United States.” A story the following weekend began: “We are back now with a gruesome new development in Mexico’s war on drugs and the violence that goes with it” (NBC, October 23, 2010). NBC included words and phrases such as “rampage,” “under siege,” and “bloody drug trade,” and stated that the “brutal war” had “penetrated 270 US cities.” The network discussed smuggling routes and reported the discovery of a kidnapped drug dealer held captive in a suburban neighborhood near Atlanta, concluding, “Mexican traffickers are now firmly entrenched across America among unsuspecting neighbors.” Calling the situation the “War Next Door,” NBC reported that farmers and ranchers near the southern border of the U.S. live “under the constant threat of violence, in constant fear” due to confrontations and threats from Mexican traffickers (NBC, November 25, 2011). One land owner described the area as a “war zone,” and a farmer informed NBC that a federal agent recommended that he buy a bulletproof vest. Finally, another report referred to the “growing and violent drug war that’s spilling into the US” and focused primarily on Joaquín Guzmán, described as Mexico’s “public enemy number one” (NBC, March 24, 2009). The broadcast stated that authorities blamed “Guzmán and his cartel for much of the drug-related violence in Mexico.”

Several reports which discussed drug-related violence pertained to Colombia. One story covered Barry McCaffrey’s request for increased aid for Colombian police and military, who were “out-gunned by drug traffickers and terrorists” (NBC, February 15, 2000). The White House called it a “drug emergency,” as Colombia had “heavily armed traffickers” and cocaine production had “more than doubled, to 520 metric tons” in the previous year. When President

Clinton visited Colombia the same year with an aid package to fight cocaine production, ABC noted that Colombia produced “90 percent of the cocaine” and “25 percent of the heroin” that is trafficked to the United States (ABC, August 30, 2000). Furthermore, Colombia was described as “one of the most violent places in the world.” Several other ABC news reports also discussed the involvement of the United States in Colombia’s fight against drug production (ABC, February 15, 2000; May 27, 2002; August 7, 2002; September 30, 2003; November 22, 2004). A report on the violence surrounding a Colombian presidential election stated that most of the terrorism in that country “was blamed on the leftist rebels who control much of Colombia’s cocaine industry” (ABC, May 24, 2002). Two days later, another newscast reiterated the connection between rebel groups, terrorism, and the cocaine trade (ABC, May 26, 2002).

Additional stories briefly covered Peru, Haiti, Jamaica, and Brazil. When ABC reported President Bush’s visit to Lima, Peru, it emphasized the suspected connection between “narco traffickers” and “terrorist groups,” and stated that “drug bosses have no qualms about retaliating with terrorism” (ABC, March 23, 2002).

Another report detailed drug trafficking with respect to Haiti, calling the country a “humanitarian and political crisis” and a “strategic threat to the US” due to its status as a “well-organized launching pad for narcotics into this country” (NBC, February 23, 2004). U.S. officials feared that Haiti was becoming a “narco state, a country without a functioning government, ruled by drug traffickers.” NBC reported that 8 percent of drugs in the United States travel through Haiti, and that its officials had “not arrested or prosecuted a single major trafficker” in the previous year. Barry McCaffrey stated that the police were corrupt and that “senior political leadership are also complicit.”

One report discussed the violence associated with authorities' attempt to capture Jamaican drug lord Christopher Coke, and described the scene in Jamaica that day as a "war zone" (ABC, May 25, 2010). Finally, a single story titled "Paradise Lost; Inside the Dangerous Drug Gangs" described police tactics undertaken in response to the "vast criminal underworld" in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (ABC, October 15, 2013). Anchor Diane Sawyer asked, "What will that country do about the dangerous circle of hell swarming the hills?" The report explained that most favelas are "effectively ruled by violent drug gangs," and identified drug lords as the cause of misery. ABC's reporter narrated that the drug kingpin interviewed was "draped in gold and carrying a semiautomatic rifle."

Drug Use or Involvement of Public Figures. Drug use or involvement of public figures was a theme identified when the primary focus of a newscast was a politician, actor, musician, athlete, or other prominent individual who had bought, sold, or used drugs.

There were numerous reports which discussed the drug-related death of a celebrity. For example, several stories focused on singer Whitney Houston (ABC, February 12, 2012; ABC, February 13, 2012; ABC, March 22, 2012; NBC, March 22, 2012), and included coverage of her past drug use, interviews, and the circumstances surrounding her demise. Cocaine was also determined to be a contributing factor in the death of television figure Billy Mays (NBC, August 7, 2009). Singer and songwriter Amy Winehouse's death was also reported along with information regarding her previous use of alcohol, cocaine, and heroin (ABC, July 25, 2011).

Newscasts reported information about political figures who were arrested or otherwise identified as having used drugs. For example, Republican politician Trey Radel, who had previously supported the drug testing of welfare recipients, was the focus of several stories when he was arrested for buying cocaine (ABC, November 19, 2013; ABC, November 20, 2013; NBC,

November 20, 2013). Additionally, significant attention was given to Toronto mayor Rob Ford, who became a target of a considerable amount of media coverage when information surfaced that he had smoked crack cocaine (ABC, November 5, 2013; November 13, 2013; November 15, 2013; November 18, 2013). An additional story covered political attacks leveled against President Barack Obama regarding his acknowledged past drug use (NBC, December 13, 2007).

Athletes with drug-related legal problems were sometimes a focus, such as when football player Jamal Lewis was indicted on federal drug charges (NBC, February 25, 2004). Two additional broadcasts pertained to the alleged drug dealing of NFL star Sam Hurd (ABC, December 15, 2011) and his subsequent charges (ABC, December 16, 2011), a development which ABC called a “stunning scandal” (ABC, December 15, 2011). ESPN/NFL business analyst Andrew Brandt pointed out that Hurd was liked and respected by his colleagues. Brandt continued, “Obviously, he was conning them if he was involved in this, and he led a double life” (ABC, December 16, 2011). Another segment covered baseball player Darryl Strawberry’s court order to return to drug treatment, the consequence of a four-day cocaine binge and probation violation (ABC, May 17, 2001). Additionally, the “comeback” of baseball player Josh Hamilton was highlighted as he quit using drugs and returned to a baseball career (ABC, July 15, 2008).

ABC reported the occurrence of model Kate Moss’ removal from three advertising campaigns as a result of an image of her using cocaine (ABC, September 21, 2005). Robert Downey Jr.’s sentencing to drug treatment was also reported (NBC, July 16, 2001). One story referenced numerous celebrities including Robert Downey Jr., Judy Garland, and Scott Weiland, and explored a connection between individuals in the spotlight and drug and alcohol issues (ABC, May 4, 2001). The story stated, “The media and the public often seem to feed off each other and off the addicted celebrity.” It pointed out that “performers can sometimes benefit from

a perverse sort of publicity buzz” and that the “public, the press, and the industry won’t give them the space they need to achieve sustainable recovery.”

Concern about Drug Addiction. Reports with this theme expressed concern about drug use, addiction, and related harms. Broadcasts included information regarding drug use trends, specific demographics or locations, occurrences of overdoses, challenges of successful recovery, and potential public safety hazards.

A DEA report in 2000 concluded that Baltimore may have had “the nation’s worst drug problem,” leading the country in heroin and possibly crack cocaine use. ABC stated that Baltimore had approximately “60,000 drug addicts” (ABC, July 30, 2000). Another story stated that health officials in Houston, Texas, had disseminated “emergency warnings” due to an unprecedented 18 drug overdoses in the same neighborhood in one weekend (ABC, August 14, 2001). The story warned of the danger of mixing cocaine and heroin, and ended with a quote from Dr. Joye Carter, Harris County Texas Medical Examiner, who stated, “If you have a drug habit, this could certainly be your fatal dose!”

In 2012, NBC reported a “steadily growing problem of heroin use and abuse among suburban kids,” stating that in one county, deaths from heroin went from six in 1999 to 30 in 2011 (NBC, June 20, 2012). The news focused on two individual stories: someone who had successfully recovered from addiction, and one teenager who had died of an overdose. The report emphasized the “tragic toll” that heroin addiction takes on individuals and families. Another segment which focused on the “peril” and “tragedy of addiction” stated that addiction damages and physically changes the brain (NBC, April 25, 2001). NBC conveyed that some experts argue “the victim is virtually helpless” while others believe that “addiction is a choice.” The story

reminded viewers of the risk of death and stated that “even the best programs fail about half the time.”

Another newscast stated that truck drivers who use “speed” in order to stay awake for long time periods could cause a public safety hazard for other drivers (NBC, May 21, 2008). The story conveyed concern due to “serious flaws in the drug testing system” and the prevalence of drug use among truck drivers. NBC reported that the “trucking industry wants a central database that includes every driver’s positive drug test” and stated that one company had already implemented a “tougher testing” policy. Many other companies had been “urging the government for years to toughen the drug testing system.”

An additional broadcast examined the effect of Mexico’s drug war on its younger generation (NBC, November 12, 2010). NBC reported that social workers worry that the drug war “is creating a lost generation.” Specifically, the report stated that 20,000 children were living on the street in Mexico City, “locked into a cycle of drug addiction and prostitution” and “vulnerable to be recruited by the drug cartels.”

Research or Policy Changes. A number of reports pertained to research regarding drug use trends among particular demographics, while others presented medical research which challenged previous assumptions. Some stories focused on potential policy changes in particular states, as well as new developments such as the lessening of the sentencing disparity between crack and powder cocaine.

Findings were reported from a Columbia University study which discovered that teenagers in rural areas of the United States are “much more likely than those in cities to use drugs.” Specifically, the news segment communicated that “eighth-graders in rural America are

more than twice as likely to have used amphetamines and 50 percent more likely to have used cocaine” (ABC, January 26, 2000).

A 2001 news report conveyed that a study in the Journal of the American Medical Association indicated “that the crack baby phenomenon may be overblown...because pregnant women who use cocaine often have a variety of other problems.” The story explained that the researchers “found that poverty, alcohol and tobacco are at least as likely as cocaine to cause developmental problems in unborn children” (ABC, March 27, 2001).

The news also reported the possibility of New Mexico passing “sweeping” legislation to broadly decriminalize drug use (ABC, March 16, 2001). Attempting to establish policy based on the knowledge that “tough enforcement alone doesn’t work,” Governor Gary Johnson had spearheaded new laws, stating, “The time has come in this country that we stop arresting and incarcerating individuals for doing arguably no harm to anyone other than themselves.” The story quoted Katherine Huffman of the Lindesmith Center, who pointed out that more drugs are available and “they’re purer and...less expensive than they were 30 years ago when we started the war on drugs.” However, New Mexico State Representative and Republican Ron Godbey stated that it was “extremely dangerous legislation” and expressed fear that if drugs were decriminalized, there would be an increase in consumption, addiction, and crime. The segment was immediately followed by a general discussion of U.S. drug policy, including comments on the “get tough” approach, the amount of money spent, and the fact that the U.S. has locked up “unprecedented numbers of drug offenders.” Anchor Peter Jennings stated that the U.S. government had “spent more than \$18 billion in the campaign against illegal drugs” in the previous year, and that there was “almost universal consensus that this war...is never going to be won in this way.” The story referred to “progress” as well as “frustration” over America’s

“insatiable” appetite for illegal drugs and “staggering” levels of production by drug cartels. Barry McCaffrey stated, “We’re seeing the most violent...and well-funded criminal organizations that global law enforcement has ever confronted.” Donnie Marshall of the DEA stated it was necessary to have a “holistic approach” incorporating prevention, education, and treatment. However, he added, “Without law enforcement, I’m convinced it’s doomed to failure.” The story concluded with the statements that the United States “continues to spend billions a year fighting drugs with enforcement and treatment,” and “[while] the war has not been a complete failure, no one is predicting victory in the near future.”

Several stories discussed attempts to correct the injustices of the sentencing disparity which punished crack offenders more harshly than powder cocaine offenders. One broadcast described the possibility of a federal commission making new crack sentencing guidelines retroactive, which would lessen sentences for approximately 20,000 inmates and release many earlier than originally anticipated (NBC, November 12, 2007).

The following month, both networks reported that the U.S. Supreme Court, in a 7-to-2 vote, had given federal judges “greater sentencing leeway in cases involving crack cocaine” (ABC, December 10, 2007). The Supreme Court acknowledged that “old assumptions” regarding the dangerousness of crack, its addictiveness, and its capacity to cause violence had been refuted, and granted “judges the authority to impose lower sentences than federal guidelines called for” (NBC, December 10, 2007). NBC stated that despite the endurance of mandatory minimum sentences for crack possession, the vote added “the court’s voice to calls for doing away with this big disparity between crack and powder.” Finally, in 2010, NBC reported that Congress had passed legislation to lessen the sentencing disparity between crack and powder cocaine, which was ultimately signed into law by President Obama (NBC, July 28, 2010).

Strategies and Responses to Cocaine

The following categories summarize the strategies and responses promoted in news reports which pertained to cocaine: *Interdiction Efforts and Security Measures*, *Financial and Military Resources to Other Countries*, *Drug Rehabilitation or Services*, *Sentencing Reform*, and *Other Strategies*. It was also noted when responses or strategies were not presented. Table 5.4 displays the frequencies of these categories in both networks' cocaine-related reports. The prevalence of strategies promoted for both drugs is shown in Figure 5.2.

Interdiction Efforts and Security Measures. The majority of newscasts promoted interdiction efforts by frequently reporting and positively framing their outcomes. These approaches typically included law enforcement tactics, border security, and military operations. Stories which discussed successful law enforcement operations were identified as supportive of interdiction efforts even if they lacked specificity or commentary. Likewise, segments which conveyed challenges or the futility of fighting drug trafficking typically reiterated that interdiction efforts were worthwhile. Remaining stories in this category promoted more stringent rules and security measures at particular locations.

Specific descriptions of interdiction efforts were provided in many cases. For example, one report indicated that in Florida, all vessels on the Miami River would be searched for drugs in an attempt to “return the rule of law” to the river by removing drug smugglers (NBC, February 17, 2001). In another segment, ABC discussed Operation Lively Green, an undercover FBI initiative to investigate members of the military and law enforcement who were involved in the drug trade (ABC, October 26, 2005). An additional story described OPBAT and quoted U.S. law enforcement officials who expressed the need for the operation to continue (NBC, August 20, 2006).

Table 5.4. Frequencies of Strategies in Network News Reports about Cocaine, 2000-2013

Strategy	NBC	ABC	Total
Interdiction Efforts and Security Measures	32	25	57 (51%)
No strategy mentioned	8	17	25 (23%)
Financial and Military Resources to Other Countries	6	10	16 (14%)
Drug Rehabilitation or Services	3	3	6 (5%)
Sentencing Reform	3	2	5 (5%)
Other Strategies	1	1	2 (2%)
Number of Reports	53	58	111

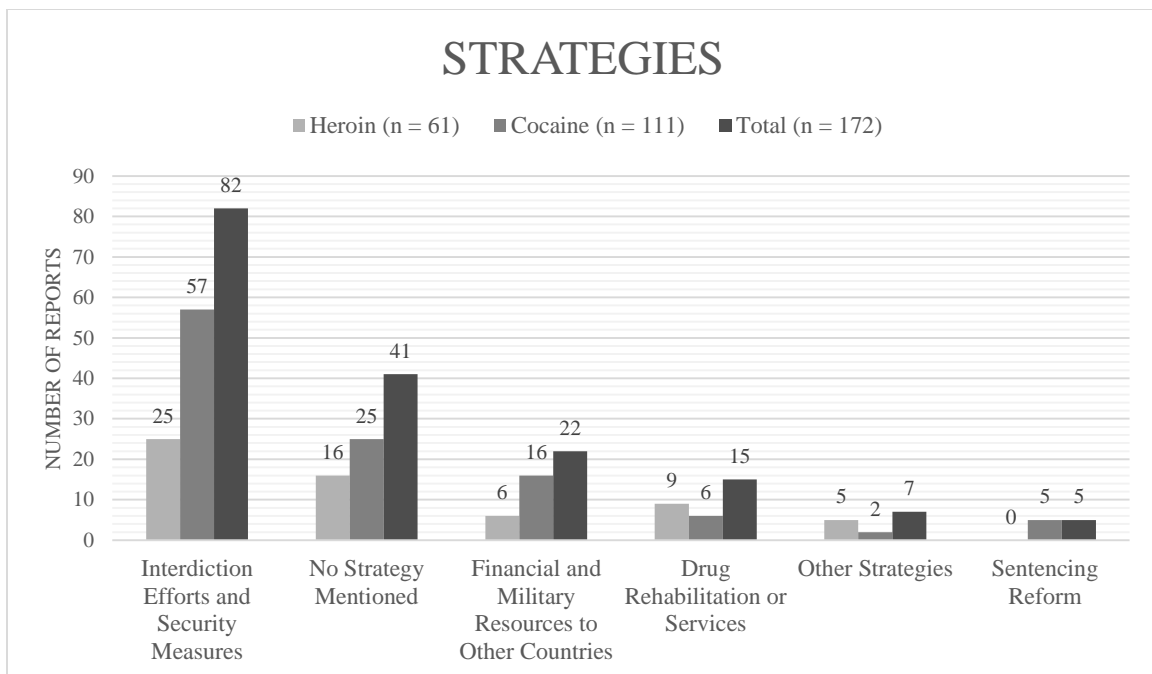


Figure 5.2. Strategies Promoted in News Coverage of Heroin and Cocaine, 2000-2013

A 2007 story conveyed that Felipe Calderón had initiated military action to fight drug cartels and that he declared it would be “a permanent fight to the finish” (ABC, February 18, 2007). Tactics included increased patrols, crop raids, checkpoints, boat inspections by the Navy, and “the extradition of drug kingpins to the United States.” Another report described “high tech” efforts by the U.S. Air Force in the Caribbean to “slow the flow of drugs into this country” (NBC, December 27, 2008). Despite an increase in the amount of cocaine shipped from Venezuela in the previous five years, a crew member declared that they were “having a big impact” because “some of the drugs are being interdicted.” One news segment described efforts to address the drug smuggling enabled by self-propelled semi-submersible (SPSS) ships made in Colombian jungles (NBC, December 28, 2008). NBC stated that the Coast Guard regularly chased the smuggling vessels and that Congress had outlawed them.

Reports of successful law enforcement actions, such as seizures, arrests, and the discovery of trafficking equipment, were also identified as supportive of prohibition. Examples included the Coast Guard’s discovery of a fishing boat which held 13 tons of cocaine (ABC, May 14, 2001; NBC, May 14, 2001), a “record” cocaine seizure of 40,000 pounds from a ship near Panama (ABC, March 21, 2007; NBC, March 21, 2007), and “huge” drug busts involving boats in the Caribbean and in Australia (ABC, July 28, 2001). Discoveries of tunnels for smuggling were also deemed important (ABC, January 26, 2006; ABC, July 12, 2012; ABC, October 31, 2013) as were vessels such as submarines (ABC, July 3, 2010; NBC, September 7, 2000), because they are critical for drug trafficking operations.

The purported dismantling of smuggling rings was also a focus of law enforcement stories deemed to be supportive of prohibition. For example, in 2000, U.S. Customs officials announced that after years of monitoring, an effort to “cut off the supply of cocaine” had come to

fruition and resulted in the dismantling of a major drug smuggling operation (NBC, August 26, 2000). Despite Raymond Kelly's admission that we will never "seize our way or arrest our way out of the drug problem in this country," NBC stated that the seizures and arrests from Operation Journey were "seen as progress in the drug war." A 2001 story described Operation Marquis, an undercover investigation which resulted in the bust of a "massive ring" operating in the U.S. and Mexico (ABC, June 20, 2001). Raids of Colombian coca farms and laboratories, the apprehension of ringleaders (NBC, March 22, 2006), the arrests of hundreds of traffickers (NBC, June 10, 2010), and the shutdown of the Silk Road website (NBC, October 2, 2013) were also placed in this category. An additional report covered hundreds of people in 19 states who were arrested for involvement in a Mexican cartel (ABC, October 22, 2009). Other arrests involved Teamsters union leaders (ABC, November 6, 2000) and a DEA bust of 75 San Diego State University students involved in a drug ring (ABC, May 6, 2008; NBC, May 6, 2008), after which the university president stated the dealers were predatory and "ruined hundreds of lives." One story noted that the New Orleans Vice Unit received praise for repairing its image and "cracking down on crime" (NBC, March 4, 2001). The report focused on the bust of a "crack party" and emphasized that children were living in conditions described as "unbelievable" and "alarming." Additionally, quotes and statements were included to suggest that the notion of "victimless crime" is a myth, with one interviewee stating that the term offended him.

Broadcasts which reported the arrests of public figures such as athletes and politicians were also placed in this category. Examples included coverage of the indictment of football player Jamal Lewis (NBC, February 25, 2004) and the arrest of NFL star Sam Hurd for selling cocaine and marijuana, after which an ESPN/NFL analyst suggested that Hurd was "conning" his peers by appearing to be a "great guy" while selling drugs (ABC, December 15, 2011; ABC,

December 16, 2011). In addition, Republican politician Trey Radel was in the news when he was arrested for buying cocaine (ABC, November 19, 2013; ABC, November 20, 2013; NBC, November 20, 2013). ABC used phrases such as “walk of shame” (ABC, November 20, 2013) and “American politician behaving badly” (ABC, November 19, 2013).

Reports proclaiming arrests or killings of major drug lords were also considered to be supportive of interdiction. The presentation of these stories reminded viewers of the violence involved in the drug trade, promoted law enforcement strategies as the primary way to stop traffickers and ringleaders, and perpetuated the notion that decommissioning drug dealers signifies progress. News coverage reinforced the connection between drugs and violent acts by using language such as “ruthless and violent drug lords” (NBC, August 31, 2010) and “violent and prolific” (NBC, March 9, 2002), as well as reminding viewers of “bombings and assassinations” committed by drug cartels (NBC, September 8, 2001). After the arrest of Benjamín Arellano Félix, ABC stated that agents had “won a battle in the war on drugs” (ABC, March 9, 2002). Similarly, when Colombian drug kingpin Gilberto Rodríguez Orejuela was taken into custody, George W. Bush declared, “This war against narco-terrorism can and will be won” (NBC, December 4, 2004). When reporting the killing of Mexican drug lord Arturo Beltrán Leyva, NBC called it “a major victory” and stated that he was “infamous for his extreme levels of violence” (NBC, December 17, 2009). The story also claimed that Leyva’s death “matters in America’s war on drugs.”

Enhancing security on the Mexico-United States border was promoted in several broadcasts. Security was discussed in a 2002 story regarding the DEA discovery of a tunnel between the U.S. and Mexico (NBC, February 28, 2002), and in a 2009 report describing the increasingly violent drug war in Mexico and the use of tunnels by cartels (NBC, March 24,

2009). An additional broadcast stated that officials were addressing the “threat” by increasing law enforcement on the border (NBC, September 24, 2011). A message of progress was conveyed when NBC reported that arrests by federal authorities on the border “destroy the main supply of cocaine for much of the South and Midwest” and that the assistance received by Mexican police was “proof that Mexico’s new president, Vicente Fox, is making a difference” (NBC, June 20, 2001). In an additional report about drug smuggling, it was mentioned that President Obama would meet with President Calderón in Mexico to examine “how to stop the flow of drugs and guns across the border” (ABC, April 16, 2009). Efforts to conduct raids and inspect trucks at border crossings were also discussed.

Support for prohibition was also evident in the report which expressed “outrage” at Mexico’s proposal to legalize the possession of some prohibited drugs (NBC, May 3, 2006). The story gave several potential negative outcomes and no prospective benefits, and all of the quotes were strongly against drug legalization, such as John Walters’ statement that legalizing drugs would be “bad for everybody.”

Reports also contained information about the challenges involved or futility of fighting drug trafficking, but reiterated that efforts were worthwhile. For example, Haiti was identified as a source of problems for the U.S. because of its facilitation of drug trafficking (ABC, May 15, 2000). Similarly, a subsequent NBC story expressed fear that Haiti was “becoming a narco state” and that no major traffickers had been arrested or prosecuted in the previous year (NBC, February 23, 2004). Haiti’s failure to adhere to efforts consistent with U.S. interdiction goals caused it to be identified as a “strategic threat” to the United States. Another story which described efforts to track submarines conveyed that cartels are innovative and adaptive in response to American law enforcement, and that efforts had not led to a dramatic reduction in

cocaine availability (ABC, June 6, 2008). Nevertheless, support was suggested with the concluding statement that “progress” in the drug war is “very difficult.”

Remaining reports in this category promoted additional rules and stricter security measures at particular locations. In one example, NBC conveyed that a significant amount of drug smuggling occurs through U.S. seaports (NBC, December 23, 2000). To combat internal drug smuggling, officials favored “tougher rules” and overall tighter security at ports and shipyards. Specific suggestions included the introduction of cameras, fences, identification cards, and employee background checks. Another news segment communicated a possible public safety hazard caused by truckers using drugs (NBC, May 21, 2008). Proposed solutions involved a tougher drug testing system and a central database for the trucking industry which would contain all drivers’ positive drug tests. Finally, one story pertained to an airport “security breach” involving employees who smuggled drugs (ABC, August 22, 2010). Screening the thousands of airline workers at international airports was named as a potential strategy, but it was also noted that this “remains a huge challenge...with enormous implications.”

Financial and Military Resources to Other Countries. Several reports in this category pertained to the role of the United States in fighting the drug trade in Colombia and Mexico, and discussed providing money, training, or other resources to those countries to aid in the fight against drugs.

One report discussed a \$1.6 billion military aid package for Colombia, which President Bill Clinton claimed was “urgently needed to keep illegal drugs out of the United States” and which the administration stated was “a small price for eliminating the flow of cocaine into the United States” (NBC, January 16, 2000). The following month, both networks covered the Clinton administration’s plan to spend in excess of \$1.5 billion to fight drug production and

trafficking in Colombia (ABC, February 15, 2000; NBC, February 15, 2000). NBC reported that Colombia's production had soared after intense U.S. efforts in Peru and Bolivia, alluding to the push down, pop up phenomenon. The segment also quoted Eric Sterling, of the Criminal Justice Policy Foundation, who stated that the goals of providing treatment, increasing education, and reducing demand should be prioritized. However, the reporter noted that it was an election year, so despite concerns, the aid was likely to be approved. Later that year, both networks reported President Clinton's arrival in Colombia with \$1.3 billion in aid. NBC stated that the money, equipment, and advisers were to "help Colombia in its fight against drug traffickers and rebel insurgents" (NBC, August 30, 2000). Colombian President Andrés Pastrana Arango declared it was crucial; however, a Colombian coca farmer stated, "If it all goes to the military and to destroying the crop, it will only add to the poverty of the people" (ABC, August 30, 2000).

In 2002, a series of reports discussed the role of the U.S. in Colombia's fight. One story referred to the billions of dollars spent to "support the government's war against the leftist rebels who run the cocaine trade" (ABC, May 24, 2002), and another pointed out that Colombia is the "third-largest recipient of US foreign aid" (ABC, May 26, 2002). The latter story explained that President Pastrana's attempt to "make peace with the guerrillas...didn't work." It then stated that presidential candidate Álvaro Uribe, in an effort to "make war, not peace," wanted the United States' assistance to "double the size of the Colombian army." A subsequent story described Uribe as "tough-talking" and "out to crush the cocaine industry" (ABC, May 27, 2002). The news indicated that the Bush administration had declared Colombian rebel groups "terrorist organizations," was supportive of "a broader war," and would therefore provide more weapons and training to Colombia. An additional broadcast described Colombia as the "front lines in the war on drugs" and reviewed the funding from the United States (ABC, August 7, 2002). ABC

discussed raids and missions to “find and destroy cocaine production labs,” and explained that while Colombians were involved, Operation Andaluz was essentially an “American military operation” because many “commandos were trained by US Marines” and the “military hardware [was] all paid for by the US government.” The following year, ABC stated that President Uribe had asked the United Nations for more aid (ABC, September 30, 2003). The report reminded viewers of the billions of dollars, training, and resources provided by the United States, and claimed that aerial spraying had resulted in a 30 percent reduction in coca fields that year. Decreases in kidnappings and murders as well as the support of Colombian citizens were noted. Professor Ann Mason, a political scientist from the University of the Andes, stated that because of some improvements, U.S. efforts could be considered successful. An additional story articulated that the U.S. government had spent billions and “made defeating the Colombian drug war a priority” (NBC, December 6, 2003). George W. Bush declared that terrorists benefited from “drug profits,” and the story concluded by stating that the destruction of half a ton of cocaine was “one small victory in the ongoing war on terror.” In 2004, ABC reported that George W. Bush intended to ask Congress for more aid for Colombia (ABC, November 22, 2004). The story discussed the billions already spent, as well as the predicament of Colombian farmers, specifically the temptation to switch from coffee to producing heroin and cocaine in order to support their families. Finally, in 2008, ABC reported that the effort to stop the flow of cocaine from Colombia to the U.S. had not succeeded; in fact, production had increased because demand is strong (ABC, July 5, 2008). Nevertheless, the news declared that a series of events constituted a “huge success” because it indicated “the beginning of the end” for the guerilla group FARC.

Reports from both networks discussed U.S. actions with regard to Mexico. For example, one story discussed a debate in Congress about whether to provide Mexico with \$1.5 billion in law enforcement aid due to fear of the violence spreading to the United States (NBC, June 19, 2008). A 2009 story reported that the U.S. had sent “\$400 million to help train and equip Mexican security forces” (ABC, March 14, 2009). David Johnson, Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, stated, “The Mexican army and the Mexican police are clearly capable of winning this, but we need to help...them do that.” In response to border states’ requests for aid, the White House Press Secretary explained that long-term challenges would not be solved by “militarization of the border.” According to the report, President Obama had communicated that he would only contemplate sending troops “if and when Mexico reaches a tipping point.” Finally, a report in 2010 expressed that various American agencies—the DEA, the FBI, and Homeland Security—were in Mexico “training Mexican officials, trying to create a federal police force” (NBC, October 17, 2010).

Drug Rehabilitation or Services. Several reports discussed individual treatment or services as a response to drug abuse. The portrayal of treatment was ambivalent, however, with NBC noting that “some people are able to overcome addiction and some simply cannot,” along with the figure that “half of all addicts don’t complete the programs they enter” (NBC, April 25, 2001). Quotes were included from Robert Downey Jr., who stated that “you can stop a bunch of times” but “it’s difficult to not start again.” An additional story explained that Robert Downey Jr. had been sentenced to one year of drug treatment and three years of probation after pleading no contest to cocaine charges (NBC, July 16, 2001). One segment which examined a link between fame and drug and alcohol issues mentioned a presence of Alcoholics Anonymous on television and movie sets as an ameliorative tactic, as well as music industry “organizations that fund

rehabilitation for addicted performers” (ABC, May 4, 2001). It also mentioned that the National Basketball Association (NBA) “has a rigorous program of testing, penalties and treatment.” In another story, ABC related that Darryl Strawberry had been ordered to return to drug treatment following his fifth probation violation (ABC, May 17, 2001). Finally, in a newscast exploring addiction in the suburbs, the only strategy mentioned was individual drug treatment (NBC, June 20, 2012).

Sentencing Reform. Reports in this category included those which expressed an evolution or potential advancement in policies. For example, one story discussed the actions of a commission which addressed the sentencing disparity between crack and powder cocaine offenses (NBC, November 12, 2007). Both networks reported the 2007 Supreme Court decision to give judges greater flexibility with sentencing in crack cocaine cases (ABC, December 10, 2007; NBC, December 10, 2007). NBC called the Court’s 7-2 ruling “surprising” but conveyed that “old assumptions about how much more dangerous crack is” had been disproven. In 2010, the network conveyed that Congress had passed legislation to narrow the sentencing gap (NBC, July 28, 2010). Finally, one broadcast covered a debate about a series of reformist drug laws proposed in New Mexico which would have decriminalized marijuana and shifted drug control policy in the state from punishment to treatment (ABC, March 16, 2001).

Other Strategies. Reports occasionally publicized alternative or supplementary strategies for dealing with a drug issue. For example, one broadcast which detailed George W. Bush’s visit to Lima, Peru, stated that the president was “focusing on building trade that does not rely on the coca crop” (ABC, March 23, 2002). Another newscast explained that President Calderón had decided to go after drug cartels’ money, a slightly different approach than his previous attempts to use only force against traffickers (NBC, June 17, 2010). Calderón had

placed a limit on cash deposits because billions of dollars a year “in suspicious deposits are placed in Mexico’s banks.” The story also pointed out that an increasing number of people in Mexico believed that the drug war generated the violence.

This chapter described the results of the dominant themes and strategies promoted in network evening news reports regarding heroin and cocaine. The following chapter will elaborate on the implications and significance of these findings.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study examined trends in media reporting of heroin and cocaine with the goal of identifying the dominant themes and strategies promoted on evening news programs. This chapter discusses the implications of the findings described above.

Predominant Themes and Strategies

The principal themes identified for news coverage of both drugs were *Law Enforcement Successes and Challenges*, *International Concerns and Drug-Related Violence*, *Drug Use or Involvement of Public Figures*, and *Concern about Drug Addiction*. The pervasiveness of these themes elucidates patterns regarding societal attitudes and typical frameworks for discussing and approaching drug issues.

The prevalence of law enforcement themes indicates a dominant narrative and is consistent with past research which found substantial reliance on social control frames (Beckett, 1995), news coverage which focused on supply reduction (Jernigan & Dorfman, 1996), and the presentation of law enforcement as the primary response to drug-related problems (McGaw, 1991). The present study found that it was axiomatic within the law enforcement theme that drug prohibition is desirable and that the best approach to drugs involves law enforcement tactics. The appropriateness of prohibition was reinforced by the fact that the majority of stories with this theme described successful operations. Frequently presenting these reports in a supportive manner may influence subsequent discussions by directing the discourse toward law enforcement tactics as optimal solutions for drug issues. Furthermore, reports which portrayed challenges in fighting drug trafficking contained reminders that although impediments exist for law enforcement officials, the overall goals and approaches undertaken were admirable and

worthwhile endeavors. Such stories advanced the notion that drugs should be prevented from entering the United States, and that production and trafficking should be eliminated.

Many news segments claimed that progress had occurred despite evidence of the futility of law enforcement efforts. Specifically, accounts often boasted arrests, raids, and seizures as representative of progress in quelling the drug trade. It has been common practice to conduct these operations and put what writer David Simon has termed “dope on the table” in order to give the illusory appearance of progress or productivity (Moyers & Simon, 2009). Disruptions of smuggling rings and apprehensions of drug traffickers were frequently touted as “victories” or battles won in the War on Drugs. However, as past research has noted, publicized drug raids function more as reassurance for the public that the “drug problem” is being addressed than as deterrents to drug traffickers (McGaw, 1991).

A second theme found in transcripts about heroin and cocaine was the focus on international concerns such as the violence of the drug trade, monetary support for other countries’ efforts, and attempts to hinder drug production. In stories with an international focus, descriptions of drug-related violence were common. By associating drugs with brutal acts and failing to propose alternative policies, these reports may have served to reinforce a punitive philosophy. In discussions of the drug market and its relation to violence, news reporting tacitly supported drug prohibition and failed to explicate that prohibition propagates violence. By framing drugs as heavily linked to violence and emphasizing the dangerous nature of engagement with the drug trade, interdiction efforts enacted through law enforcement and military operations were endorsed.

In previous decades, high-profile deaths related to drug use garnered public concern, inspired alarm, and galvanized support for an increase in social control measures. In the present

study, the drug use or involvement of public figures was also a prevalent theme and included subject matter such as treatment or recovery, arrest or indictment, political scandal, and death. News stories about recognizable figures constructed drug use as problematic behavior. Narratives emphasized drug use as “bad behavior,” “bad decisions,” or “scandals,” and discussed damage to famous individuals’ reputations and careers. Incidents involving celebrities were often covered in sequential news reports and sometimes facilitated a broader discussion. For example, heroin use in suburbia received increased coverage following the death of actor Cory Monteith.

Concern about drug addiction was another prevailing theme found in stories about heroin and cocaine. Reports of this type regularly expressed concern about drug use trends, the dangers of use and addiction, barriers to successful recovery, and particular demographic groups perceived to be at risk. Narratives typically framed addiction as an individual struggle or tragedy. Concluding one anecdote, the news stated that an individual was “struggling every day” to stay sober. The individualized narrative and medical model⁴ regarding treatment found in several stories was congruent with previous literature which discussed the pervasiveness of individualistic explanations for social problems in American culture (see Reinerman, 1994). Reinerman (1994) posited that drug use, addiction, and “loss of control” may be inordinately feared because of the Temperance culture and ideology of self-control on which American society was established. He theorized that this cultural characteristic has contributed to Americans’ susceptibility to drug scares, and further postulated that “on the foundation of a Temperance culture, advanced capitalism has built a postmodern, mass consumption culture that exacerbates the problem” because people are forced to constantly manage the contradiction between the two (p. 100).

⁴ See Reinerman (2005) for an illuminating analysis of the social construction of the medical or disease model and the implications of using this model to conceptualize addiction.

Stories which encouraged individual treatment often presented a tragic story as well as an anecdote about someone who had stopped using drugs. Potential solutions promoted for “widespread” issues were individualized, as exemplified in a report about truck drivers’ usage of drugs (NBC, May 21, 2008). The report constructed drug use as a personal failure and focused on drug testing and penalizing individuals instead of addressing systemic conditions. This individualization is consistent with previous research which observed that sociological examinations of issues were scarce in the news (Lancaster et al., 2011) and that media coverage tended to emphasize individual pathology rather than structural forces or societal institutions when discussing crime (Lombardo, 2010).

Some degree of progress was represented in stories which covered research findings or policy changes. For example, reports acknowledged that “old assumptions” about the dangerousness of crack had been disproven, including the recognitions that the “crack baby” phenomenon of the 1980s was exaggerated and that alcohol, tobacco, and poverty were just as likely to produce developmental problems. Furthermore, changes in sentencing guidelines reflected updated attitudes and an evolution from past mistakes. The injustices of the sentencing disparity between crack and powder cocaine were noted, and legislation was passed to lessen the disparity. Some reports relayed figures regarding drug use trends without providing any additional information, context, or analysis. However, other reports in this category were not progressive. For example, regarding one state’s proposed legislation, the news was riddled with notions that drug decriminalization would be extremely dangerous and increase consumption, addiction, and crime. Subsequent commentary discussed the high cost and dismal prognosis of the United States’ War on Drugs, but the importance of law enforcement was reiterated.

Prevailing themes in televised reports about drugs may effectively direct audiences toward certain policy solutions by implying support or explicitly promoting certain strategies or responses. The most prevalent pattern regarding strategies in this study was that news broadcasts overwhelmingly supported interdiction efforts. Ideological support for interdiction was present even in stories which lacked specificity with regard to policies. It was also exceedingly common that reports did not mention any strategies or policies. Discussions regarding the disbursement and administration of financial and military resources to other countries were present, which overlapped ideologically with endorsements of interdiction by conveying the need to fight or assist with extra-national drug wars. The predominance of these categories indicates an overarching hegemonic narrative about how society currently views and approaches drug issues.

Examinations of alternative policies such as harm reduction and decriminalization were largely absent. If such policies were reviewed, they were not described as legitimate or feasible possibilities, and potential negative consequences were emphasized.

Enduring Rhetoric and Emergent Narratives

One of the motivations for this study was to ascertain whether news media framing regarding heroin and cocaine has changed in the 21st century compared to previous drug coverage. Moderate rhetorical variations have occurred in recent years and panic appears to have diminished with regard to crack cocaine. However, moral panics are lengthy social processes; as they expand and subside, they leave behind informal traces such as attitudes and ideology which can facilitate a later eruption (Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 1994). In news stories examined in this study, coverage of heroin and cocaine was reminiscent of earlier reporting, and the ideology which has underpinned moral panics was evident.

Myths of instant and inevitable addiction have been advanced in past media reports about drugs (Reinarman & Levine, 2004). In this study, remnants of misguided assumptions were present such as the gateway theory and the notion that certain substances are instantly addictive. For example, the gateway theory was implied in statements such as “[she] tried pot in high school, then pills, then heroin” (ABC, March 30, 2010), and “[he] started experimenting with pot, then cocaine and eventually heroin” (NBC, June 20, 2012). Additionally, reports provided accounts such as “Jake told us he tried heroin for fun and instantly became addicted” (ABC, March 29, 2010), “[Katie] had no idea she’d instantly become hooked” (ABC, March 30, 2010), and “all it takes is just one time, and they’re hooked” (ABC, October 19, 2010).

Linguistic patterns were also indicative of dominant frameworks, underlying assumptions, and longstanding rhetoric. Specifically, language explicitly conveyed the intent to handle drug issues severely, and invoked images of fighting with terms and phrases such as “fighting the drug trade” (ABC, July 11, 2006; NBC, December 6, 2003), “permanent fight to the finish” (ABC, February 18, 2007), “fight the production” (ABC, February 15, 2000), “fight drugs and alcohol” (ABC, May 4, 2001), “fighting illegal drugs” (ABC, March 23, 2002), “commitment to fight drug trafficking” (NBC, January 16, 2000), “fight the war on drugs” (ABC, May 27, 2002), “fight against illegal drug production” (ABC, August 7, 2002), and “fight drug smuggling” (NBC, December 23, 2000).

The war metaphor was also present in phrases such as “war on drugs” (ABC, July 11, 2006; ABC, June 6, 2008; NBC, August 30, 2000; NBC, September 16, 2000; NBC, March 9, 2002; NBC, May 3, 2006; NBC, June 30, 2012), “war against drugs” (ABC, August 30, 2000; NBC, December 27, 2008), “America’s drug war” (NBC, December 29, 2001), “America’s war on drugs” (NBC, August 20, 2006; NBC, December 17, 2009), “fighting the war on drugs”

(ABC, October 26, 2005), “drug war” (NBC, January 16, 2000; NBC, June 15, 2006; NBC, June 19, 2008; NBC, March 24, 2009), “ongoing drug war” (ABC, March 14, 2009; NBC, March 12, 2010), “front lines in the war on drugs” (ABC, August 7, 2002; NBC, December 6, 2003), “combat guerrillas and the drug trade” (ABC, November 22, 2004), “war against the cocaine lords” (NBC, February 15, 2000), “win the war against the illegal drug traders” (ABC, May 15, 2000), “unrelenting war on drug cartels” (NBC, June 17, 2010), “the war next door” (NBC, October 17, 2010; NBC, November 12, 2010; NBC, September 24, 2011; NBC, November 25, 2011), “important weapon in the war on drugs” (NBC, August 20, 2006), and “war against drug smuggling” (NBC, February 17, 2001).

Battle analogies were also utilized in phrases such as “the best line of defense” (ABC, March 30, 2010), “secret weapon in the arsenal of Colombian drug traffickers” (NBC, September 7, 2000), “heroin explosion” (ABC, September 30, 2001), “ground zero for an explosion in illegal activity” (ABC, January 26, 2006), “ground zero in the war on drugs” (NBC, August 30, 2000), “skyrocketing threat” (ABC, March 29, 2010), “battle” (ABC, April 16, 2009; NBC, August 20, 2006; NBC, June 19, 2008), “front lines” (NBC, May 20, 2007), “front lines of a losing battle” (NBC, December 23, 2000), “won a battle in the war on drugs” (ABC, March 9, 2002), “uphill battle” (NBC, June 30, 2012), “tough, uphill battle against an enemy” (ABC, February 18, 2007), “long-running and frustrating battle” (NBC, August 26, 2000), and “anti-smuggling, anti-trafficking, counterdrug offensive” (NBC, February 17, 2001).

Other combative words and phrases were included such as “crush the cocaine industry” (ABC, May 27, 2002), “broken its largest heroin ring” (ABC, April 12, 2000), “final blow to the cartel” (ABC, March 9, 2002), “takedown” (NBC, June 20, 2001; NBC, October 2, 2013), “assault” (NBC, February 17, 2001), “stamping out...poppies” (NBC, April 27, 2003),

“crackdown on [poppies]” (NBC, June 8, 2008), “big blow to a mainline [*sic*] of heroin” (NBC, April 25, 2005), “sweeping crackdown,” “national dragnet” (ABC, October 22, 2009), “cracked down” (ABC, January 26, 2006), “defeat narcotics” (NBC, December 6, 2003), “capable of winning” (ABC, March 14, 2009), “destroy the main supply,” “hitting the leaders of a major drug ring” (NBC, June 20, 2001), “choking off a key pipeline,” “break the organizations,” and “clamps down on smugglers” (NBC, February 17, 2001).

Similar lexical choices were also observed with regard to addiction, with examples including “battling heroin addiction” (ABC, July 18, 2013), “grappling with addiction” (ABC, August 12, 2013), “the grip of addiction” (ABC, May 4, 2001), “in the grip of a killer” (ABC, October 29, 2010), and “that killer drug” (ABC, July 31, 2013).

Researchers have noted that media outlets’ habitual use of the words “epidemic” and “plague” puts “the most fearful spin possible” on descriptions of drug use in society (Reinarman & Levine, 2004, p. 187). Despite the empirical inaccuracy of these words to describe drugs, they have enabled reporters to rhetorically link drugs to danger (Reinarman & Levine, 1997). The tendency to invoke these terms was found in several stories in the present study. Reports regarding heroin included phrases such as “When you compare the use of heroin...to what it used to be, we’ve got an epidemic” (NBC, January 7, 2001), “availability of drugs...has driven...addiction to what is now considered an epidemic level” (ABC, April 24, 2010), “they have an epidemic on their hands” (ABC, October 19, 2010), “a series of snapshots of America’s new suburban epidemic” (ABC, October 29, 2010), “hidden epidemic” (NBC, June 19, 2012), “the not so hidden epidemic of heroin in suburban America” (NBC, June 20, 2012), and “heroin epidemic in America’s suburbs” (ABC, July 31, 2013). Similarly, the cocaine-related stories

included phrases such as “an epidemic of cocaine use by pregnant mothers” (NBC, October 4, 2000).

Potential risks to children and babies are often used to evoke emotional reactions, galvanize audience concern, and justify social control efforts. Past research has recognized the centrality of children in disseminating discourses of fear (Altheide, 2002) and “constructing drug victims” (McGaw, 1991). The present study also found an emphasis on the risks to children in drug-related stories. For example, when the New Orleans Vice Unit disrupted a “crack party,” an interviewee stated, “It’s a crying shame. You got a baby...living in these kinds of conditions. Crack pipes, prostitution. This is unbelievable” (NBC, March 4, 2001). The story stated that for the officers involved, the scene “vividly dispels the myth of Vice as a victimless crime.” In a report which covered smuggling methods and related raids, the reporter’s narration of a surveillance tape included “Now look as they wrap the drugs in a blanket with a toddler” (ABC, October 22, 2009). Additional coverage discussed a controversy surrounding the violation of patient privacy and “cocaine use by pregnant mothers who were potentially putting their babies at risk” (NBC, October 4, 2000). Another story presented “a staggering picture of heroin addiction...in children” and babies in Afghanistan, stating that they were becoming addicted by “breathing in the secondhand smoke as their parents got high,” and that “[these] children are paying the price of Afghanistan’s drug economy” (ABC, April 24, 2010). An additional report focused on “desperate” and “extremely vulnerable” children and teenagers “preyed upon by the drug cartels” in Mexico (NBC, November 12, 2010).

Reports about young suburban users typically focused on safety risks or harm to their health, often referring to them as “teens,” “teenagers,” “children,” and “kids” (ABC, March 29, 2010). Conversely, notions of predatory dealers were presented as the news stated that the

“explosion of heroin in suburban America isn’t by accident” but was the result of aggressive marketing and orchestration by “drug lords.” The report stated that a “steady supply of cheap and powerful heroin [was] being marketed with fashionable names and sold directly to teens and children, even in middle schools.” The following day, ABC reiterated that “children in middle and high schools are now...the targets of dealers” (ABC, March 30, 2010). NBC also reported the “steadily growing problem of heroin use and abuse among suburban kids” and stated it was a “new generation for this drug, sadly” (NBC, June 20, 2012). Reports which covered use in suburbia also called heroin a “killer drug” and “a dark, dead end” while discussing usage trends as “scary and startling” (ABC, July 31, 2013). These statements are similar to messages found in past media reports which encouraged fear regarding younger generations’ drug use.

One recent discursive development is the linking of drugs to terrorism, which emanated from the Bush administration. Previous research had observed how George W. Bush’s statements linked drugs to terrorism and framed drug use as unpatriotic (Altheide, 2003). The present study also found this connection in several news reports which included discussions of drugs in the context of the War on Terror, with phrases and terminology such as “the war on drugs meets the war on terror” (ABC, July 11, 2006), “narco-terrorism” (NBC, December 4, 2004), “drug traffickers and terrorists” (NBC, February 15, 2000), “drug terrorists,” and “drug-funded terrorism” (NBC, April 27, 2003). Other examples included “drug bosses...retaliating with terrorism” (ABC, March 23, 2002), “terrorism...blamed on the leftist rebels who control much of Colombia’s cocaine industry” (ABC, May 24, 2002), “terrorize the country and consolidate their control of the drug business” (ABC, May 26, 2002), and “twin threats of narcotics trafficking and subversive terrorism” (ABC, September 30, 2003). George W. Bush asserted that “terrorists

use drug profits to fund their cells to commit acts of murder” (NBC, December 6, 2003) and that the “war against narco-terrorism can and will be won” (NBC, December 4, 2004).

Ideology and Moral Judgment

The framing of drug use as immoral has been discussed in previous research which noted the marginalization of users and the construction of drug use as “wrong” (Bright et al., 2008). The ideology which has underpinned a prohibitionist response to drugs contains the assumption that using illicit drugs is “morally corrupt” (Cheung, 2000). Furthermore, Bright et al. (2008) found that moral discourse pertaining to drug use was “underpinned by a distinct ideology...informed by the institutions of Christianity and family, which are subsequently reinforced by the proliferation of this discourse” (pp. 141-142).

Moral judgments about drugs were frequently embedded in the reports examined in this study. This trend was exemplified by the story of Sam Hurd. The news stated that Hurd was a “god-fearing” person with “good character” who was a “devout Christian” and a “family man.” Subsequently, straightforward statements conveyed the opinion that selling drugs is morally reprehensible. For example, a source stated, “Everyone at the [Chicago] Bears said ‘good guy, great guy, quoting the bible, great guy to be around.’ Obviously, he was conning them if he was involved in [selling drugs], and he led a double life” (ABC, December 16, 2011).

The demonization of dealers and traffickers was also observed in other instances. In a report of a campus drug bust, a university president advanced the notion that dealers are predatory when he stated that if found guilty, the “individuals have preyed on students and have ruined hundreds of lives” (NBC, May 6, 2008). Many stories involving international concerns emphasized the brutality of drug kingpins and traffickers. However, drug users were typically portrayed as victims of substances, needing treatment, or in danger from predatory drug

traffickers. This subtle departure from previous coverage which vilified drug users indicates a shift toward a public health narrative in a few stories. However, stereotypes were acknowledged in statements such as “picture what a heroin addict looks like” (NBC, June 20, 2012), “I don’t look like a heroin addict,” and “I never thought in a million years that I would be *that kind of person*” [emphasis added] (ABC, October 29, 2010).

Contradictory Assertions

Contradictory messages were presented in the news examined in this study. The push down, pop up phenomenon that is characteristic of the drug trade was sometimes admitted. However, law enforcement efforts and supply-side strategies were supported despite the occasional acknowledgment of the futility of such efforts. In one example, a DEA informant stated that when a drug smuggler is arrested there will always be another one to fill the spot because of the extremely lucrative nature of the business. However, the same report favored a tightening of rules at seaports (NBC, December 23, 2000). Similarly, a story regarding a drug bust acknowledged, “In the past, when major Mexican drug rings were broken up, others quickly rushed in to fill their place.” However, this was immediately followed by, “The DEA hopes that this time, the drug lords will think twice” (NBC, March 9, 2002). Additionally, one report stated that agents had “won a battle in the war on the drugs” with a “final blow” to a Mexican cartel, but mentioned that “it would be naïve” to think the action would hinder drug trafficking (ABC, March 9, 2002). Comparable acknowledgments were communicated that the United States cannot “arrest our way out of the drug problem,” but then followed by explicit statements that arrests and seizures represented “progress in the drug war” (NBC, August 26, 2000). Furthermore, reports indicated that the destruction of coca labs constituted “small victories” and signified “success,” but stated that “despite hundreds of raids across Colombia...cocaine

production there is now higher than it's ever been" (ABC, August 7, 2002). Despite admissions that past efforts were futile, messages of success and hopefulness were conveyed to counteract and distract from feckless approaches.

Similar premises have also been found in past research. For example, Jernigan and Dorfman (1996) found the dual themes of "drugs are everywhere, and we are winning the drug war" (p. 180). They explained that the advancement of both of these ideas allowed television news to boast "victories in the drug war" regardless of trends in drug use statistics. The order and juxtaposition of certain stories found in their study advanced the perception that the U.S. was "doing its job in reducing demand" while reinforcing the utility of focusing on the supply side of the drug "problem" (p. 181).

Limitations

There are several limitations to this study. First, because I was an independent researcher, intercoder reliability and intracoder reliability are limitations because another researcher may have coded the data differently. The qualitative determination of predominant themes in media reports involved researcher discretion. Furthermore, I did not systematically select and recode stories after their initial coding to test agreement. However, I occasionally coded duplicate stories without consulting previous codes and subsequently compared results. The outcomes of that practice suggest high intracoder reliability and consistency throughout the data sets.

Second, a lack of prosodic information and sole reliance on broadcast transcripts for this analysis (due to the prohibitive cost of obtaining all of the necessary news footage) presented notable obstacles. The inability to hear the intonation and inflection of the news anchors and reporters was a disadvantage. Prosody and paralinguistic characteristics can be integral for information interpretation, and categories such as "Overall Tone" may have been coded

differently if I had been able to hear and see the report instead of evaluating only text. Similarly, observing visual images, fonts, symbols, and graphic representations would have been beneficial. Occasionally, transcripts stated which graphic the network used (e.g., “Heroin Explosion,” “Seeds of Terror?”), but analysis was limited without visual observation. It would also have been illuminating to see the participants, interviewees, and subjects of the news stories in order to analyze demographic characteristics. Likewise, a report indicated that a new advertising campaign incorporating the science of drug abuse was launched by federal officials. Viewing the video clips mentioned in the transcript would have been instructive.

Third, the present study was undertaken using the search terms “heroin” and “cocaine,” and this approach caused irrelevant stories to be included in the original sample. A substantial number of news reports regarding heroin and cocaine between 2000 and 2013 were examined; however, there were extant broadcasts that were not included. Although the sample contained many pertinent stories, alternative search terms or key words (e.g., “war on drugs,” “illicit drugs,” “drug war”) could also have been used which would have yielded a different set of reports. Furthermore, this research captures narratives about drugs as presented by the evening news, and therefore, the findings may not be applicable to other media sources.

Fourth, this study was limited to the discourse surrounding heroin and cocaine. However, during this time, prescription drugs were a significant concern in society. Fear-based messages in stories about these drugs were noted but not focused upon in the present study. In one instance, a report stated, “Traditionally, the drugs that have struck fear into the hearts of parents have been crack cocaine, pot and heroin. But now, the danger is right in your medicine cabinet,” and “Take care, experts say, or you could unwittingly end up becoming your child’s drug dealer” (ABC, December 11, 2007). Recent research has examined media framing of portrayals of prescription

drug abuse (LaVail, 2011). However, more exploration would be valuable to investigate media portrayals surrounding the abuse of these and other drugs.

Finally, it is difficult to definitively determine what impact these representations have on audiences. Researchers have found that news framing directs viewers to specific types of solutions for social problems (Iyengar, 1991; Jernigan & Dorfman, 1996), and that the media make an important contribution in shaping public opinion (Entman, 1989; Fan, 1996; Iyengar & Kinder, 1985; Nielsen & Bonn, 2008). However, scholars have also pointed out how social constructions can be contested and interpreted variously by audience members. Shaw, Whitehead, and Giles (2010) found that, contrary to previous assumptions of social learning theory and cognitive priming, young consumers interpreted media coverage of celebrity drug use more critically than expected, and displayed awareness and media literacy that challenged previous assumptions of modeling theory and “media effects” research. However, Shaw et al. (2010) also acknowledged the possibility that the “critical eye” with which young readers viewed celebrity drug use and its media coverage could be partially attributed to media framing. A “multiplicity of readings” is certainly possible depending on the varying interests and outlooks of viewers (McGaw, 1991). Furthermore, viewers are “sophisticated consumers” of stimuli who are capable of actively interpreting media messages in varying ways (Katovich, 1998). The agenda-setting power of the media is strong; however, interpretations can be complex processes that differ also depending on one’s age, gender, personal experience, or socioeconomic status (McCorkle & Miethe, 2002). Thus, audiences will not necessarily accept hegemonic narratives in every case; having particular narratives “featured prominently in media discourse does not ensure dominance in the meaning constructed by readers” (Gamson et al., 1992, p. 382). For example, it has been noted that some media messages which intended to prevent drug use had the

opposite effect (Jacobsohn, 2007; Murji, 1998). Specifically, the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign inadvertently contributed to an increase in young viewers' intentions to use marijuana by disseminating messages of the prevalence of its use (Jacobsohn, 2007).

Implications

This research contributes to the literature which examines media portrayals of illegal drugs, as well as that which explores the social construction of drug problems and the maintenance of drug war ideology. Furthermore, it extends previous scholarship by conducting a content analysis of media messages during a recent time frame. The present study has delineated predominant themes in drug stories as well as the principal strategies or "solutions" promoted in the media for dealing with drugs in society. The results coalesce to elucidate an overarching narrative about society's approach to drug issues. Drugs are still discussed primarily in the context of crime, violence, tragedy, and problematic behavior. Mainstream news sources continue to perpetuate a narrow set of propositions. The war metaphor is often employed, and domestic and international interdiction efforts are largely supported.

Given past patterns, concern could arise in the future about drug use trends or the emergence of new issues. Narrow ideological views have been a barrier to sensible drug policy and continue to impede progress and perpetuate the stigma associated with drug use. A number of individuals and groups currently advocate for an end to the drug war. However, for a paradigm shift to be accomplished, the ideology which has been embedded in the public consciousness and mainstream representations will be necessarily challenged. Increased education and rational discourse are imperative, as well as a renunciation of the ideological underpinning that has contributed to society's mistakes with regard to drug issues. In the future, media representations and the framing of drug issues should be vigilantly scrutinized and

critically examined because of the power of the media to advance hegemonic ideologies and influence public discourse.

Directions for Future Research

This study sought to examine dominant narrative themes and strategies promoted in recent television news broadcasts. However, certain goals are beyond the scope of this inquiry and should be considered for future research. For example, in content analyses focusing on drugs, attention should also be concentrated on the visual images broadcast in the media. Past research has explored this issue (Jernigan & Dorfman, 1996); however, it would be intriguing to update this field of investigation.

Researchers have previously noted the uniqueness of the construction of drug scares that involve white users which are contextualized in discussions about class status (Murakawa, 2011). In this study, reports which promoted rehabilitative drug treatment as a strategy often pertained to celebrities or young suburban users. Future research could explore the extent to which discourse has shifted toward a public health approach and whether the trend is applicable across demographic groups.

Due to the centrality of social media as a source of information and critical tool for information dissemination and activism in contemporary society, it would be worthwhile to explore emergent drug discourses in these venues. Additional types of media, such as partisan “news” sources, movies and television shows, online news sources, or editorials in prominent newspapers such as *The New York Times*, could be interesting subjects for analysis.

Future research could also compare the messages of the United States’ mass media outlets to those of another country, particularly one in which drugs are less demonized. For example, considering media representations in a country that has decriminalized or legalized

drugs could be illuminating and helpful for advancing drug policy and narratives in the United States. A comparative approach could also be utilized to observe similarities and differences between entertainment media and news.

This analysis omitted the reports which mentioned heroin and cocaine only in passing, but it would be constructive to more closely examine those to identify the context in which drugs are mentioned. During this study, it was documented that several of these stories briefly mentioned crack cocaine and heroin as a yardstick for addictiveness, but no calculation was conducted to identify the prevalence of this. In one example, a doctor stated that quitting OxyContin was “as tough as heroin or crack cocaine” (ABC, October 10, 2003), and in a later story, ABC noted that some call slot machines “the crack cocaine of the gambling industry” (ABC, July 5, 2004). It would be enlightening to systematically analyze these casual references to drugs made in news or other media, and this could reveal some of the underlying ideologies, themes, and assumptions about drugs in society.

Future research could also inspect discourse and themes in stories about prescription drug abuse, as it has emerged as a topic of concern in recent years. Given the historical precedent in the United States to demonize substances, it would be interesting to identify whether the rhetoric and ideology that transferred from alcohol to illegal drugs has evolved to be applied to certain prescription drugs.

Other directions for future research include focusing on a different or shorter time frame. For example, an in-depth analysis of all of the news coverage during a drug scare could be conducted. Occasionally, a public figure identifies drugs as a serious problem, or numerous news reports are featured consecutively over several days along with nighttime specials exploring the issue. Collecting all of the stories from such a time period would enable an exploration of

framing devices, language, and predominant themes with regard to media coverage during a drug scare.

This study examined national news broadcasts, and consequently did not identify all of the drug-related concerns in specific locations. Regional differences can exist in drug use trends, and due to the nature of the national news, these nuances were not captured. Therefore, additional studies could focus on local news reports or editorials. Methodological triangulation would also be useful in future research as it can enhance the credibility of findings (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011).

Finally, in-depth interviews could be conducted to attempt to understand the basis of individuals' attitudes toward drug use, drug users, current strategies, and alternative policies such as decriminalization or legalization. Exploration of the ideology and rationale for attitudes about drugs and drug policies could assist in the development of counter-ideology and the facilitation of progress.

References

- Alexander, M. (2010). *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New York, NY: The New Press.
- Altheide, D. L. (1997). The News Media, the Problem Frame, and the Production of Fear. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 38(4), 647-668.
- Altheide, D. L. (2002). Children and the Discourse of Fear. *Symbolic Interaction*, 25(2), 229-250.
- Altheide, D. L. (2003). Mass Media, Crime, and the Discourse of Fear. *Hedgehog Review*, 5(3), 9-25.
- Altheide, D. L. (2004). Media Logic and Political Communication. *Political Communication*, 21, 293-296.
- Altheide, D. L. & DeVriese, K. (2007). Perps in the news: A research note on stigma. *Crime, Media, Culture*, 3(3), 382-389.
- Altheide, D. L. & Schneider, C. J. (2013). *Qualitative Media Analysis* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Angus Reid Public Opinion. (2012, Jun 6). *Americans Decry War on Drugs, Support Legalizing Marijuana*. Retrieved from http://www.angusreidglobal.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/2012.06.06_Drugs_USA.pdf.
- Ariens, C. (2013, Nov 19). Evening News Ratings: Week of November 11. *TVNewser*. Retrieved from <http://www.mediabistro.com/tvnewser/category/evening-news-ratings>.
- Baldwin, C. (2001). The Development of Rhetorical Privilege in the News Reporting of Violent Crime. *Race, Gender & Class*, 8(4), 8-19.
- Baum, D. (1996). *Smoke and Mirrors: The War on Drugs and the Politics of Failure*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company.
- Becker, H. S. (1963). *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Beckett, K. (1994). Setting the Public Agenda: "Street Crime" and Drug Use in American Politics. *Social Problems*, 41(3), 425-447.
- Beckett, K. (1995). Media Depictions of Drug Abuse: The Impact of Official Sources. *Research in Political Sociology*, 7, 161-182.

- Bellis, D. J. (1981). *Heroin and Politicians: The Failure of Public Policy to Control Addiction in America*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Benavie, A. (2009). *Drugs: America's Holy War*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Berger, P. L. & Luckmann, T. (1966). *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books.
- Blendon, R. J. & Young, J. T. (1998). The Public and the War on Illicit Drugs. *JAMA*, 279(11), 827-832.
- Boaz, D. (1990). A Drug-Free America—or a Free America? *UC Davis Law Review*, 24(3), 617-636.
- Boyd, S. (2010). Reefer Madness and Beyond. *Sociology of Crime, Law and Deviance*, 14, 3-24.
- Bright, S. J., Marsh, A., Smith, L. M., & Bishop, B. (2008). What can we say about substance use? Dominant discourses and narratives emergent from Australian media. *Addiction Research and Theory*, 16(2), 135-148.
- Brownstein, H. H. (1991). The Media and the Construction of Random Drug Violence. *Social Justice*, 18(4), 85-103.
- Burns, R. & Crawford, C. (1999). School Shootings, the media, and public fear: Ingredients for a moral panic. *Crime, Law & Social Change*, 32, 147-168.
- Chermak, S. (1997). The Presentation of Drugs in the News Media: The News Sources Involved in the Construction of Social Problems. *Justice Quarterly*, 14(4), 687-718.
- Chermak, S. M. & Weiss, A. (1997). The Effects of the Media on Federal Criminal Justice Policy. *Criminal Justice Policy Review*, 8(4), 323-342.
- Cheung, Y. W. (2000). Substance Abuse and Developments in Harm Reduction. *CMAJ*, 162(12), 1697-1700.
- Cohen, B. C. (1963). *The Press and Foreign Policy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Cohen, S. (1972). *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of Mods and Rockers*. London: MacGibbon and Kee.
- Collins, M. (2014, October 16). U.S. State Dept. Calls for Reforming International Treaties That Support the Global Drug War. *Drug Policy Alliance*. Retrieved from <http://www.drugpolicy.org/blog/us-state-dept-calls-reforming-international-treaties-support-global-drug-war>.

- Courtwright, D. (2001). *Forces of Habit: Drugs and the Making of the Modern World*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Dotter, D. (2002). Creating Deviance: Scenarios of Stigmatization in Postmodern Media Culture. *Deviant Behavior*, 23, 419-448.
- Duncan, D. F., White, J. B., & Nicholson, T. (2003). Using Internet-based Surveys to Reach Hidden Populations: Case of Nonabusive Illicit Drug Users. *American Journal of Health Behavior*, 27(3), 208-218.
- Elwood, W. N. (1995). Declaring War on the Home Front: Metaphor, Presidents, and the War on Drugs. *Metaphor and Symbolic Activity*, 10(2), 93-114.
- Entman, R. M. (1989). How the Media Affect What People Think: An Information Processing Approach. *Journal of Politics*, 51(2), 347-370.
- Entman, R. M. (2007). Framing Bias: Media in the Distribution of Power. *Journal of Communication*, 57, 163-173.
- Fan, D. P. (1996). News Media Framing Sets Public Opinion That Drugs is the Country's Most Important Problem. *Substance Use & Misuse*, 31(10), 1413-1421.
- Fields, G. (2009, May 14). White House Czar Calls for End to 'War on Drugs'. *The Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124225891527617397.html>.
- Gamson, W. A. (1988). The 1987 Distinguished Lecture: A Constructionist Approach to Mass Media and Public Opinion. *Symbolic Interaction*, 11(2), 161-174.
- Gamson, W. A., Croteau, D., Hoynes, W., & Sasson, T. (1992). Media Images and the Social Construction of Reality. *Annu. Rev. Sociol.*, 18, 373-393.
- Gans, H. J. (1979). *Deciding What's News: A Study of CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, Newsweek, and Time*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books.
- Gerber, R. J. (2004). *Legalizing Marijuana: Drug Policy Reform and Prohibition Politics*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers.
- Gitlin, T. (1979). Prime Time Ideology: The Hegemonic Process in Television Entertainment. *Social Problems*, 26(3), 251-266.
- Gitlin, T. (1980). *The Whole World is Watching: Mass Media in the Making and Unmaking of the New Left*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

- Goode, E. (1999). *Drugs in American Society* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill.
- Goode, E. & Ben-Yehuda, N. (1994). Moral Panics: Culture, Politics, and Social Construction. *Annu. Rev. Sociol.*, 20, 149-171.
- Helmer, J. (1975). *Drugs and Minority Oppression*. New York, NY: The Seabury Press.
- Herman, E. S. & Chomsky, N. (1988). *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books.
- Hesse-Biber, S. & Leavy, P. (2011). *The Practice of Qualitative Research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Hill, J. B., Oliver, W. M., & Marion, N. E. (2012). Presidential Politics and the Problem of Drugs in America: Assessing the Relationship Between the President, Media, and Public Opinion. *Criminal Justice Policy Review*, 23(1), 90-107.
- Hoffmann, J. P. (1990). The Historical Shift in the Perception of Opiates: From Medicine to Social Menace. *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs*, 22(1), 53-62.
- Hughes, C., Spicer, B., Lancaster, K., Matthew-Simmons, F., & Dillon, P. (2010). *Monograph No. 19: Media Reporting on Illicit Drugs in Australia: Trends and impacts on youth attitudes to illicit drug use* (DPMP Monograph Series). Sydney: NDARC.
- Iyengar, S. (1991). *Is Anyone Responsible? How Television Frames Political Issues*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Iyengar, S. & Kinder, D. R. (1985). Psychological Accounts of Agenda-Setting. In S. Kraus & R. M. Perloff (Eds.), *Mass Media and Political Thought: An Information-Processing Approach* (pp. 117-140). Beverly Hills, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Jacobsohn, L. S. (2007). *Explaining the Boomerang Effects of the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest. (AAI3260921).
- Jensen, E. L., Gerber, J., & Babcock, G. M. (1991). The New War on Drugs: Grass Roots Movement or Political Construction? *The Journal of Drug Issues*, 21(3), 651-667.
- Jernigan, D. & Dorfman, L. (1996). Visualizing America's drug problems: an ethnographic content analysis of illegal drug stories on the nightly news. *Contemporary Drug Problems*, 23(2), 169-196.
- Katovich, M. (1998). Media Technologies, Images of Drugs, and an Evocative Telepresence. *Qualitative Sociology*, 21(3), 277-297.

- Kerlikowske, R. G. (2013, Apr 24). "Drug Policy Reform in Action: A 21st Century Approach." *White House Blog*. Retrieved from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2013/04/24/drug-policy-reform-action-21st-century-approach-0>.
- Lancaster, K., Hughes, C. E., Spicer, B., Matthew-Simmons, F., & Dillon, P. (2011). Illicit Drugs and the Media: Models of Media Effects for Use in Drug Policy Research. *Drug and Alcohol Review*, 30, 397-402.
- LaVail, K. H. (2011). *Is Media Framing of Coverage of Prescription Drug Abuse a Reflection of Cultural Diffusion?* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest. (AAI3460767).
- Lemaitre, R. (2013, August 12). "Real #DrugPolicyReform: DOJ's Change in Mandatory Minimum Policies." *Office of National Drug Control Policy*. Retrieved from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2013/08/12/real-drugpolicyreform-doj-s-change-mandatory-minimum-policies>.
- Levine, H. & Reinerman, C. (1987, Mar 28). What's Behind 'Jar Wars.' *The Nation*, 388-390.
- Levine, H. G. & Reinerman, C. (2010). The Trouble with Drink and Drugs: Why Prohibition and Criminalization Matter. *Addiction*, 105(5), 806-807.
- Lidz, C. W. & Walker, A. L. (1980). *Heroin, Deviance and Morality*. Beverly Hills, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Lombardo, R. M. (2010). The hegemonic narrative and the social construction of deviance: the case of the Black Hand. *Trends Organ Crim*, 13, 263-282.
- McCombs, M. E. & Shaw, D. L. (1972). The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media. *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36(2), 176-187.
- McCorkle, R. C. & Miethe, T. D. (2002). *Panic: The Social Construction of the Street Gang Problem*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- McGaw, D. (1991). Governing Metaphors: The War on Drugs. *The American Journal of Semiotics*, 8(3), 53-74.
- McSweeney, T. & Turnbull, P. J. (2007). *Exploring User Perceptions of Occasional and Controlled Heroin Use: A follow-up study*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Retrieved from <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/2079-heroin-controlled-drugs.pdf>.
- Mosher, C. J. & Akins, S. (2007). *Drugs and Drug Policy: The Control of Consciousness Alteration*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Moyers, B. (Interviewer) & Simon, D. (Interviewee). (2009). *Bill Moyers Journal* [Interview Transcript]. Retrieved from <http://www.pbs.org/moyers/journal/04172009/transcript1.html>.

- Murakawa, N. (2011). Toothless: The Methamphetamine “Epidemic,” “Meth Mouth,” and the Racial Construction of Drug Scares. *Du Bois Review*, 8(1), 219-228.
- Murji, K. (1998). The Agony and the Ecstasy: Drugs, Media and Morality. In R. Coomber (Ed.), *The Control of Drugs and Drug Users: Reason or Reaction?* (pp. 69-85). Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers.
- Musto, D. F. (1987). *The American Disease: Origins of Narcotic Control* (Expanded ed.). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Nadelmann, E. A. (1997). Drug Prohibition in the U.S.: Costs, Consequences, and Alternatives. In C. Reinerman & H. Levine (Eds.), *Crack in America: Demon Drugs and Social Justice* (pp. 288-316). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Nielsen, A. L. & Bonn, S. (2008). Media Exposure and Attitudes Toward Drug Addiction Spending, 1975-2004. *Deviant Behavior*, 29, 726-752.
- NORML. (2013). *States That Have Decriminalized*. Retrieved from <http://norml.org/aboutmarijuana/item/states-that-have-decriminalized>.
- Office of National Drug Control Policy. (2012, April 17). Obama Administration Releases 21st Century Drug Policy Strategy. *The White House*. Retrieved from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/ondcp/news-releases-remarks/obama-administration-releases-21st-century-drug-policy-strategy>.
- Orcutt, J. D. & Turner, J. B. (1993). Shocking Numbers and Graphic Accounts: Quantified Images of Drug Problems in the Print Media. *Social Problems*, 40(2), 190-206.
- Page, B. I., Shapiro, R. Y., & Dempsey, G. R. (1987). What Moves Public Opinion? *American Political Science Review*, 81(1), 23-44.
- Pan, Z. & Kosicki, G. M. (1993). Framing Analysis: An Approach to News Discourse. *Political Communication*, 10, 55-75.
- ProCon.org. (2015, January 8). *23 Legal Medical Marijuana States and DC: Laws, Fees, and Possession Limits*. Retrieved from <http://medicalmarijuana.procon.org/view.resource.php?resourceID=000881>.
- Radford, B. (2003). *Media Mythmakers: How Journalists, Activists, and Advertisers Mislead Us*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books.
- Reinerman, C. (1994). The Social Construction of Drug Scares. In P. A. Adler & P. Adler (Eds.), *Constructions of Deviance: Social Power, Context, and Interaction* (pp. 92-104). Boston, MA: Wadsworth Publishing Co.

- Reinarman, C. (2005). Addiction as accomplishment: The discursive construction of disease. *Addiction Research and Theory*, 13(4), 307-320.
- Reinarman, C. & Duskin, C. (1992). Dominant Ideology and Drugs in the Media. In J. Ferrell & N. Websdale (Eds.), *Making Trouble: Cultural Constructions of Crime, Deviance, and Control* (pp. 73-87). Hawthorne, NY: Aldine de Gruyter.
- Reinarman, C. & Levine, H. G. (1997). The Crack Attack: Politics and Media in the Crack Scare. In C. Reinarman & H. G. Levine (Eds.), *Crack in America: Demon Drugs and Social Justice* (pp. 18-51). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Reinarman, C. & Levine, H. G. (2004). Crack in the Rearview Mirror: Deconstructing Drug War Mythology. *Social Justice*, 31(1-2), 182-199.
- Sacco, V. F. (1995). Media Constructions of Crime. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 539, 141-154.
- Sharon, S. (2009, December 18). Ban Lifted On Federal Funding For Needle Exchange. *NPR*. Retrieved from <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=121511681>.
- Sharp, E. B. (1992). Agenda-Setting and Policy Results: Lessons from Three Drug Policy Episodes. *Policy Studies Journal*, 20(4), 538-551.
- Shaw, R. L., Whitehead, C., & Giles, D. C. (2010). "Crack down on the celebrity junkies": Does media coverage of celebrity drug use pose a risk to young people? *Health, Risk & Society*, 12(6), 575-589.
- Shoemaker, P. J. (1989). Introduction. In Shoemaker, P. (Ed.), *Communication Campaigns About Drugs: Government, Media, and the Public* (pp. 1-5). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Shoemaker, P. J., Wanta, W. & Leggett, D. (1989). Drug Coverage and Public Opinion, 1972-1986. In P. J. Shoemaker (Ed.), *Communication Campaigns About Drugs: Government, Media, and the Public* (pp. 67-80). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Sirin, C. (2011). From Nixon's War on Drugs to Obama's Drug Policies Today: Presidential Progress in Addressing Racial Injustices and Disparities. *Race, Gender & Class*, 18(3-4), 82-99.
- Smith, A. (2012, November 8). Marijuana legalization passes in Colorado, Washington. *CNN*. Retrieved from <http://money.cnn.com/2012/11/07/news/economy/marijuana-legalization-washington-colorado/>.

Speaker, S. (2004). Demons for the Twentieth Century: The Rhetoric of Drug Reform, 1920-1940. In S. W. Tracy & C. J. Acker (Eds.), *Altering American Consciousness: The History of Alcohol and Drug Use in the United States, 1800-2000* (pp. 203-224). Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press.

Taylor, S. (2008). Outside the Outsiders: Media representations of drug use. *Probation Journal*, 55(4), 369-387.

Warburton, H., Turnbull, P. J. & Hough, M. (2005). *Occasional and Controlled Heroin Use: Not a Problem?* York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Retrieved from <http://www.jrf.org.uk/system/files/1859354254.pdf>.

Weil, A. & Rosen, W. (1993). *From Chocolate to Morphine: Everything You Need to Know About Mind-altering Drugs*. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin.

Appendix A IRB Exemption Letter



Office of Research Integrity

September 30, 2014

Maria M. Orsini
Department of Sociology and Anthropology
One John Marshall Drive
Huntington, WV 25755

Dear Ms. Orsini:

This letter is in response to the submitted thesis abstract entitled "*Media Narratives of Illicit Drugs: A Content Analysis of NBC and ABC Evening News Reports.*" After assessing the abstract it has been deemed not to be human subject research and therefore exempt from oversight of the Marshall University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The Code of Federal Regulations (45CFR46) has set forth the criteria utilized in making this determination. Since the information in this study does not involve human subjects as defined in the above referenced instruction it is not considered human subject research. If there are any changes to the abstract you provided then you would need to resubmit that information to the Office of Research Integrity for review and a determination.

I appreciate your willingness to submit the abstract for determination. Please feel free to contact the Office of Research Integrity if you have any questions regarding future protocols that may require IRB review.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Bruce F. Day'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the 'y'.

Bruce F. Day, ThD, CIP
Director

WE ARE... MARSHALL™

401 11th Street, Suite 1300 • Huntington, West Virginia 25701 • Tel 304/696-7320
A State University of West Virginia • An Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer

Appendix B
List of Broadcast Transcripts

Number	Date	Network	Transcript Title
Primary Drug: Heroin			
1.	06/15/2000	NBC	Federal Agents Break up major heroin smuggling ring
2.	07/02/2000	NBC	Drastic Countermeasures taken against heroin addiction in Russia
3.	08/30/2000	NBC	President Clinton Visits Colombia
4.	09/16/2000	NBC	New Anti-drug Message Aimed at America's Youth
5.	12/23/2000	NBC	Lax Security at Ports & Shipyards Allow Drugs to Enter
6.	01/07/2001	NBC	Drug Use Increasing in U.S.
7.	03/31/2001	NBC	Portland, Oregon, has become haven for runaways
8.	12/29/2001	NBC	Breakup of Taliban Rule in Afghanistan reopens heroin market
9.	03/09/2002	NBC	Mexican drug lord Benjamin Arellano-Felix arrested today
10.	11/06/2002	NBC	Justice Department brings charges against three men accused of trying to sell drugs to finance al-Qaeda
11.	04/27/2003	NBC	Afghans can't afford to give up poppy fields
12.	12/04/2003	NBC	Baltimore federal prosecutor Jonathan Luna found murdered
13.	03/17/2005	NBC	Afghanistan in danger of becoming narcotics state as poppies resurge as cash crop
14.	04/25/2005	NBC	Top al-Qaeda supporter and heroin supplier arrested
15.	05/23/2005	NBC	President Bush hosts Afghan president at White House for talks on U.S. role in Afghanistan
16.	05/03/2006	NBC	U.S. outrage over Mexico's decision to make possession of some illegal drugs legal
17.	06/15/2006	NBC	New form of heroin, the bomb, triggers rise in overdoses
18.	06/22/2006	NBC	Taliban striking back hard in Afghanistan, winning control over some sections of the country
19.	02/10/2007	NBC	U.S. troops bracing for another Taliban offensive
20.	12/26/2007	NBC	Cheese heroin is highly addictive, popular illegal drug
21.	02/16/2008	NBC	War in Afghanistan almost the forgotten war now
22.	06/08/2008	NBC	Poppy farmers in Afghanistan losing crops, forced to sell their daughters
23.	06/19/2008	NBC	High profile killings in Mexico drug war
24.	01/13/2009	NBC	Violence of Mexican drug wars in U.S.
25.	03/24/2009	NBC	Public Enemy Number One in Mexico, Joaquin Guzman
26.	05/04/2009	NBC	New push to attack Taliban through drug trade
27.	12/17/2009	NBC	Mexican drug lord killed in shootout
28.	06/10/2010	NBC	More than 400 arrested for drug trafficking in two-year drug bust on U.S. Mexico border
29.	09/24/2011	NBC	Drug war in Mexico continues
30.	06/19/2012	NBC	Growing heroin addiction among the young in the nation's suburbs

- | | | | |
|-----|------------|-----|--|
| 31. | 06/20/2012 | NBC | Heroin abuse growing among suburban kids |
| 32. | 10/02/2013 | NBC | For October 2, 2013, NBC (Highlight: FBI breaks up a drug dealing ring with a sophisticated website) |
| 33. | 04/12/2000 | ABC | Heroin Ring Bust in Colombia |
| 34. | 06/15/2000 | ABC | Federal Agents Break up Largest Heroin Smuggling Ring in U.S. |
| 35. | 07/30/2000 | ABC | Baltimore Leads Nation in Illegal Drug Use |
| 36. | 07/21/2001 | ABC | Participants in UCLA drug study discuss their struggles with heroin addiction |
| 37. | 09/30/2001 | ABC | More than half of world's heroin supply comes from Afghanistan where crops are under Taliban control |
| 38. | 09/26/2002 | ABC | Overseas Briefing Afghanistan, Palestine, Italy |
| 39. | 05/16/2003 | ABC | National Briefing Drug Ring, Illegal Immigrants, High School Hazing |
| 40. | 09/30/2003 | ABC | The Other War Colombia |
| 41. | 12/04/2003 | ABC | Prosecutor killed Jonathan Luna |
| 42. | 12/20/2003 | ABC | Saddam's Capture Another Recollection of the Capture |
| 43. | 11/22/2004 | ABC | From cocaine to coffee coca farmers' plight |
| 44. | 03/04/2005 | ABC | Heroin Nation Afghanistan's Huge Drug Trade |
| 45. | 09/21/2005 | ABC | A Model's Behavior Drugs & Fashion |
| 46. | 07/11/2006 | ABC | The Other War; War on Drugs Meets War on Terror |
| 47. | 03/01/2007 | ABC | A Closer Look; Sobriety High |
| 48. | 08/10/2009 | ABC | Capture or Kill; Hit List |
| 49. | 10/22/2009 | ABC | Border war; Drug Raids |
| 50. | 03/29/2010 | ABC | Heroin Next Door; Children and Heroin |
| 51. | 03/30/2010 | ABC | Heroin Explosion; Heroin in the Heartland |
| 52. | 04/24/2010 | ABC | Child Addicts; Babies Hooked on Heroin |
| 53. | 05/02/2010 | ABC | Drug Raid; Overnight Raids Uncovered Millions in Cash |
| 54. | 08/22/2010 | ABC | Security Breach; Corruption at Airports |
| 55. | 10/19/2010 | ABC | Suburban High; Heroin in the Suburbs |
| 56. | 10/29/2010 | ABC | Grip of Addiction; In a Spiral |
| 57. | 07/25/2011 | ABC | A Life Cut Short; Gone Too Soon |
| 58. | 07/16/2013 | ABC | Fallen "Glee" Star; Cause of Death Revealed |
| 59. | 07/18/2013 | ABC | Fallen Star; "Glee" Star's Final Days |
| 60. | 07/31/2013 | ABC | Hidden America; Heroin Epidemic in America's Suburbs |
| 61. | 08/12/2013 | ABC | Tearful Tribute; "Glee" Actress on her Fallen Friend |

Primary Drug: Cocaine

- | | | | |
|-----|------------|-----|--|
| 62. | 01/16/2000 | NBC | U.S. to send Aid to Fight Drug Trafficking in Colombia |
| 63. | 02/15/2000 | NBC | Barry McCaffrey asking for money and firepower for drug war in Colombia |
| 64. | 08/26/2000 | NBC | U.S. Customs Service Announces Dismantling of One Drug-Smuggling Operation |
| 65. | 08/30/2000 | NBC | President Clinton Visits Colombia |
| 66. | 09/07/2000 | NBC | Authorities Discover Smuggling Sub |
| 67. | 10/04/2000 | NBC | Controversial case over privacy rights of women vs. the safety of children |

68.	12/23/2000	NBC	Lax Security at Ports and Shipyards Allow Drugs to Enter
69.	02/17/2001	NBC	Florida Begins Searching All Ships on Miami River for Illegal Drug Smuggling
70.	03/04/2001	NBC	New Orleans Vice Retools Image and Now Earns Praise
71.	04/25/2001	NBC	Arrest of Robert Downey, Jr. Reveals Peril of Addiction
72.	05/14/2001	NBC	Fishing Boat Caught with 13 tons of Cocaine
73.	06/20/2001	NBC	Coordinated Effort Busts Major Drug Ring
74.	07/16/2001	NBC	Robert Downey sentenced to drug treatment
75.	09/08/2001	NBC	Reputed leader of Colombian drug cartel in U.S. custody
76.	12/23/2001	NBC	Two police officers in New York are accused of paying informants with drugs
77.	02/28/2002	NBC	DEA discovers tunnel between Mexico and U.S. to smuggle drugs, people
78.	03/09/2002	NBC	Mexican drug lord Benjamin Arellano-Felix arrested today
79.	12/06/2003	NBC	Continued efforts to stop drug trafficking in Colombia
80.	02/23/2004	NBC	American officials fear Haiti falling under rule of drug traffickers
81.	02/25/2004	NBC	Baltimore Ravens running-back Jamal Lewis indicted on federal drug charges
82.	12/04/2004	NBC	Colombian drug lord Gilberto Rodriguez Orejuela in U.S. custody after being accused of running cartel from prison
83.	03/22/2006	NBC	Biggest drug bust in U.S. history today against Colombian cocaine lords
84.	05/03/2006	NBC	U.S. outrage over Mexico's decision to make possession of some illegal drugs legal
85.	08/20/2006	NBC	In Depth; New battle in war on drugs
86.	03/21/2007	NBC	Drug bust yields pounds of cocaine being brought to U.S.
87.	05/20/2007	NBC	In Depth; Texas sheriff's tough measures to stop illegal immigration
88.	11/12/2007	NBC	Sentencing commission wants to make retroactive new crack sentencing guidelines, releasing some early from prison
89.	12/10/2007	NBC	Supreme Court rules on disparity between powder, crack cocaine sentencing guidelines
90.	12/13/2007	NBC	Clinton supporter forced to resign after verbally attacking Obama on drug use
91.	05/06/2008	NBC	Seventy-five San Diego State University busted in drug ring
92.	05/21/2008	NBC	Truck drivers and drugs causing road hazards
93.	06/19/2008	NBC	High profile killings in Mexico drug war
94.	12/27/2008	NBC	High tech efforts to catch drug runners
95.	12/28/2008	NBC	U.S. Coast Guard chasing drug trafficking submarines
96.	01/13/2009	NBC	Violence of Mexican drug wars in U.S.
97.	03/24/2009	NBC	Public enemy number one in Mexico, Joaquin Guzman
98.	08/07/2009	NBC	Cocaine contributing factor in Billy Mays' death

99.	12/17/2009	NBC	Mexican drug lord killed in shootout
100.	03/12/2010	NBC	Drug war in Mexico
101.	06/10/2010	NBC	More than 400 arrested for drug trafficking in two-year drug bust on U.S. Mexico border
102.	06/17/2010	NBC	Deadliest month in Mexico's war on drugs
103.	07/28/2010	NBC	Sentencing gap between crack and powder cocaine to be lessened with new law
104.	08/31/2010	NBC	Mexican drug lord Edgar Valdez-Villarreal arrested
105.	10/17/2010	NBC	Growing violence of drug war in Mexico
106.	10/23/2010	NBC	Atlanta hub of Mexican drug trafficking
107.	11/12/2010	NBC	The War Next Door; Young generation getting swept up in Mexico drug wars
108.	09/24/2011	NBC	Drug war in Mexico continues
109.	11/25/2011	NBC	The War Next Door; dangers for American farmers and ranchers along U.S.-Mexico border
110.	03/22/2012	NBC	Coroner says Whitney Houston's death was caused by accidental drowning and complicated by heart disease and cocaine
111.	06/20/2012	NBC	Heroin abuse growing among suburban kids
112.	06/30/2012	NBC	Mexico's presidential election tomorrow amid drug wars
113.	10/02/2013	NBC	For October 2, 2013, NBC (Highlight: FBI breaks up a drug dealing ring with a sophisticated website)
114.	11/20/2013	NBC	For November 20, 2013, NBC (Highlight: Florida congressman Trey Radel arrested for buying cocaine)
115.	01/26/2000	ABC	Rural Teens More Likely to Use Drugs
116.	02/15/2000	ABC	Clinton Administration Rolls out New Plan to Fight Drug Trade from Colombia
117.	05/15/2000	ABC	Haiti Becomes Major Player in U.S. Drug Trafficking
118.	07/30/2000	ABC	Baltimore Leads Nation in Illegal Drug Use
119.	08/30/2000	ABC	Security is Tight as President Clinton Visits Colombia
120.	10/03/2000	ABC	The Legal Debate about Drug Tests on Pregnant Women
121.	11/06/2000	ABC	Teamsters Leaders Arrested for Drug Smuggling
122.	03/16/2001	ABC	New Mexico May Reform Laws Decriminalizing Drug Use; U.S. Government's War on Illegal Drugs
123.	03/27/2001	ABC	Developmental Problems in Unborn Children Stemming from Cocaine, Alcohol, and Smoking During Pregnancy
124.	05/04/2001	ABC	Link Between People in Spotlight and Drug and Alcohol Problems
125.	05/14/2001	ABC	Coast Guard Makes Largest At Sea Cocaine Bust
126.	05/17/2001	ABC	Darryl Strawberry Ordered Back to Rehab for Drug Treatment
127.	06/20/2001	ABC	Big Mexican Drug Bust
128.	07/28/2001	ABC	Drug busts in Caribbean and Australia
129.	08/14/2001	ABC	18 fatal drug overdoses in Texas over weekend causes concern

130.	02/11/2002	ABC	Dallas Police Department under federal investigation after drug bust found to be a fake
131.	03/09/2002	ABC	Mexican officials arrest drug lord Benjamin Arellano-Felix; U.S. wants him extradited to face trial
132.	03/23/2002	ABC	President Bush visits Lima, Peru
133.	05/24/2002	ABC	Colombian election held hostage by leftist terrorists
134.	05/26/2002	ABC	Security tight as Colombians cast votes for new president
135.	05/27/2002	ABC	Colombia's new president-elect vows to fight rebel forces in Colombia and stop their drug sales
136.	08/07/2002	ABC	A Closer Look at Colombian Drug War Troops Fight Cocaine Production
137.	09/30/2003	ABC	The Other War Colombia
138.	11/22/2004	ABC	From Cocaine to Coffee Coca Farmers' Plight
139.	04/01/2005	ABC	The Fugitive Saudi Cocaine Smuggler
140.	09/21/2005	ABC	A Model's Behavior Drugs and Fashion
141.	10/26/2005	ABC	A Closer Look Soldier Smugglers
142.	01/26/2006	ABC	Tunnels into the U.S.; Drugs, Illegal Immigrants Crossing Under the Border
143.	02/18/2007	ABC	Drug Wars; Mexican Military Fights Drug Lords
144.	03/21/2007	ABC	Cocaine Bust; Coast Guard Found Drug Near Panama
145.	12/10/2007	ABC	Sentencing Rules; More Leeway in Crack Sentencing
146.	05/06/2008	ABC	Campus Crime; Campus Drug Bust
147.	06/06/2008	ABC	Drug Traffic; Drug Runners
148.	07/05/2008	ABC	Drugs and Guns; A Humiliating Defeat
149.	07/15/2008	ABC	Cleanup Hitter; Back from the Brink
150.	03/14/2009	ABC	The War Next Door; Violent Drug War in Mexico
151.	04/16/2009	ABC	Target Cartels; Drug War
152.	10/22/2009	ABC	Border War; Drug Raids
153.	05/25/2010	ABC	War Zone; Closing In
154.	07/03/2010	ABC	Drug Running Submarine; Vessel Found in Ecuador
155.	08/22/2010	ABC	Security Breach; Corruption at Airports
156.	07/25/2011	ABC	A Life Cut Short; Gone Too Soon
157.	12/15/2011	ABC	Sideline Scandal; Undercover Sting
158.	12/16/2011	ABC	Player Charged; Fallen Star
159.	02/12/2012	ABC	Whitney Remembered; Whitney Houston One-on-one with Diane Sawyer
160.	02/13/2012	ABC	The Death of Whitney Houston; All She Hoped
161.	02/13/2012	ABC	The Death of Whitney Houston; Final Hours
162.	03/22/2012	ABC	Cause of Death; Her Final Moments
163.	07/12/2012	ABC	Drug Tunnel; Smuggling It In
164.	10/15/2013	ABC	Paradise Lost; Inside the Dangerous Drug Gangs
165.	10/31/2013	ABC	Drug Tunnel; How Drugs are Smuggled in the U.S.
166.	11/05/2013	ABC	Coming Clean; Mayor's Shocking Revelation
167.	11/13/2013	ABC	Under Fire; Hot Seat
168.	11/15/2013	ABC	Under Fire; Disgraced Mayor Fights On

- | | | | |
|------|------------|-----|---|
| 169. | 11/18/2013 | ABC | Stripped of Power?; Embattled Mayor Faces Off With Foes |
| 170. | 11/19/2013 | ABC | Drug Arrest; American Politician Behaving Badly |
| 171. | 11/20/2013 | ABC | Cocaine Arrest; Congressman Pleads Guilty |
| 172. | 12/10/2013 | ABC | Courtroom Drama; Celebrity Chef Under Fire |

Appendix C
News Transcript Coding Sheet

[Drug]/[Network]: __ of __

1. Date of broadcast:
2. Primary Drug Mentioned:
3. Focus (1=main; 2=secondary; 3=in passing):
4. Length of segment: ____ words
5. Anchor/Reporter:
6. Level (1=individual; 2=community; 3=society):
7. Topic (why it is news):
8. Title/Phrasing of intro:
9. Theme:
10. Notable vocabulary:
11. Persons quoted directly (& title):
12. Persons/organizations referenced (& title):
13. Crisis/emergency issue (Y/N):
14. Youth issue (Y/N):
15. Overall Tone:
16. Consequences of drugs (use only):
17. Moral evaluation of drugs (use or market):
18. Policy Suggestion, Strategy, or Response:
19. Statistics:
20. Location:
21. Miscellaneous: