Recapturing Joaquín “Chapo” Guzmán in the Mexican Press
An Analysis of the Front Page of El Universal, Reforma, Excélsior, and La Jornada in 2016

ELBA DÍAZ CERVERÓ, LUIS VERES, DANIEL BARREDO IBÁÑEZ

Elba Díaz-Cerveró, Universidad Panamericana, México
Luis Veres, University of Valencia, Spain
Daniel Barredo Ibáñez, Universidad del Rosario, Colombia

Abstract: This article, whose aim is to know exactly how the headlines of Mexico’s four main newspapers have reported on the recapture of Joaquín Guzmán, will show the results of an analysis of the journalistic content of these four Mexican newspapers. These are general papers, which published information on their front page regarding the recapture of the drug trafficker Joaquín “Chapo” Guzmán. The events took place on January 8, 2016, six months after his escape from Altiplano prison in Mexico. If the escape was spectacular—being from a high-security prison and evidencing collusion of authorities and corruption of the system—the recapture was even more so. Well-known figures, such as actors Kate del Castillo and Sean Penn, were involved, together with a female politician of the Action Nacional Party, thus leading to questioning of the Mexican status quo. Coverage of the recapture was reduced, tending to minimize the impact of the criminal acts and contributing to both fictionalizing and rendering frivolous the figure of Guzmán.

Keywords: Drug Trafficking, Mexican Journalism, Escape, Joaquín Guzmán Loera, Chapo

Introduction

On January 8, 2016, Joaquin Guzmán Loera, leader of the Sinaloa cartel and one of the most active and dangerous drug traffickers in the world, was recaptured by Mexican authorities in an apartment in Los Mochis, Sinaloa, near his hometown. He had been on the run since July 12 of the previous year, the date on which he had escaped from Altiplano prison—a maximum security prison in Mexico, ninety kilometers from the country’s capital. To carry out the escape, he had built a 1.5 km long tunnel, with the presumed connivance of prison authorities. The details of his capture were no less striking.

Mexican president Enrique Peña Nieto published on his Twitter account: “Mission accomplished. We got him. I want to inform all Mexicans that Joaquín Guzmán Loera has been detained” (@EPN, 10:19 on January 8, 2016). From that moment on, everything known about the escape and recapture would be considered spectacular. To begin with, Guzmán Loera had been in contact during his escape with Kate del Castillo, Mexican actor and producer, to help him with the production of a film based on his life. Curiously, the actor was best known for her role as drug trafficker Sandra Ávila Beltrán, known as the Queen of the South. Ávila Beltrán held an important position in the family business and handled public relations for both Joaquín Guzmán Loera and Ismael Zambada, leaders of the Sinaloa cartel. Del Castillo, in turn, asked Hollywood actor Sean Penn for his help. Penn decided to interview the drug trafficker in October 2015 without informing the authorities. The interview was published in *Rolling Stone* magazine a few days after Guzmán was recaptured.

The events would have consequences, not only for the recaptured drug dealer, who would now be jailed under extreme security measures, but also for the two actors, especially for Kate
del Castillo, who would have to respond to authorities for acting outside the law. All of these
details, together with many others—such as the kingpin’s contact with a female politician from
the Action Nacional Party (PAN) and his possible extradition to the United States—would fill the
front pages of national and international newspapers from January 9 to February 7. February 8
was the first date in which related items did not appear on the front page of the four newspapers
under analysis. In all, there were thirty days of consecutive information, with a total of 165 front
page articles.

Theoretical Framework

This study is presented within the framework of agenda-setting theory (McCombs and Shaw
1972; McCombs 2005; McCombs 2006) and that of framing. On the one hand, agenda setting
allows us to stipulate which topics, images, and perspectives are published on the front pages of
the selected media (McCombs and Evatt 1995). On the other hand, framing theory allows us to
evaluate the degree of subjectivity given by each newspaper on its front page, considering
these function as the “shop windows” of each paper, where the visual weight and the reading
strategy are subject to “the designs and desires of the informer” (Marín, Armentia, and Caminos
2014, 179).

While relating events, journalists interpret them and thus, socially construct reality. This
construction is framing theory’s answer to the pretensions of objectivity rooted in a large sector
of the journalism class. In the words of Sádaba (2001, 159): “When he says what happens, the
journalist frames reality and contributes his point of view.” Possibly the broadest definition of
journalistic framing is that of Muñiz (2015, 74) who, unifying the contributions of De Vresse
(2012), Entman (1993), Ryan, Carragee, and Meinhofer (2001), Scheufele (2006), and Hanggli
and Kriesi (2012), explains it thus:

It is possible to define the news frame as a structure present in the information content,
which is constructed from the selection, emphasis and exclusion of certain aspects or
elements and their relationship within the news. It is used by journalists to elaborate
their information and provide a certain angle, focus, perspective or treatment to the
informed matter, in order to make it more comprehensible to the public. It may generate
cognitive, emotional, attitudinal and / or behavioral effects on consumers.

Muñiz applies framing theory to great analytical depth in a study of the Mexican electoral
campaign of 2012. He concludes that what prevailed were strategic game frames—those which
prioritize candidate strategies—over issues or themes (issue frames), which privilege debate over
candidate proposals and substance in political issues (Muñiz 2015, 67). In this same line of work,
Dussaillant (2004) concludes in his study of the presidential elections in Chile that national
newspapers maintained neutrality, framing information according to the interests of the
candidates themselves.

Drug Traffickers, Drug Traffic, and Media

As had occurred six months previously with the escape itself, the spectacular events of Joaquín
Guzmán’s recapture made it inevitable that they would adopt characteristics of fiction. In this
sense, Trejo and García (2014) refer to Joaquín Guzmán as a character in a story charged with
both reality and fiction and generating a strong social impact. Much has been written about this
character, and at times, journalists themselves have published books about his life and the
violence he has generated in Mexico.

Some of the best known of these writers are Julio Scherer, Ricardo Ravelo, Marcela Turati,
Anabel Hernández, Juan Carlos Reyna and San Juana Martínez, and Jorge Fernández Menéndez
and Jesús Blancornelas, who have not only published works in the most important press media,
but also, as mentioned above, well-documented works that give proof and testimony to rigorous journalistic undertaking. Some of them, such as journalist Anabel Hernández (2006; 2008; 2012), have received death threats for denouncing connivance between the government and the cartels.

Yet some critics, removed from the world of journalism (though specialized in the struggle against drug traffic) point out that the greater part of these published works fall short, precisely due to fear on the part of their authors. They are merely descriptive and not very analytical (Valdés 2013). On the other hand, author and journalist Juan Villoro stated in El Universal (2010): “There is a certain narco culture in the street, in the media, in songs, which can give an appearance of normality to something that should not be so.”

In the field of academics, the bibliography is not as abundant, if we circumscribe to the representation of drug traffic in the Mexican press. In this realm, Casas (2013, 8) wonders if media coverage is contributing to solving the problem or if, on the contrary, it expands it: “By force of its presentation and its unrestricted diffusion through diverse media, today violence does not appear to be violence nor do its perpetrators appear to be delinquents.” More generally, the social sciences have addressed violence in Mexico from a variety of approaches and methodologies of work. Some of these studies have been published in monographs or scientific publications, as is the case of the magazine Desacatos. Here, Azaola (2012) reviews empirical and theoretical approaches and even statistics on violence in Mexico, and underscores institutional weakness as one of the causes of the current violent situation.

Although the capture of Joaquin Guzmán Loera could be interpreted precisely as the opposite—that is to say, as an act that shows the strong character of Mexican institutions—the truth is that this recapture arrived six months after the capo’s escape. Additionally, this was his second escape, and the third time that the Mexican government would imprison the drug trafficker. Journalistic coverage of the events would determine, definitively, if this fact would be perceived by readers as a triumph for the authorities.

**Hypothesis and Objectives**

The principal objective of this study is to know exactly how the headlines of Mexico’s four main newspapers reported on the recapture of Joaquin Guzmán. It will look at the similarities and differences among the four, and if, in the thirty days covered by the analysis, there was an evolution in the issues and in their respective framing.

The main hypothesis is that while the fact of the escape—and indeed, any fact related to the negative consequences of drug trafficking—could have been interpreted as bad news for Mexico, for the first time in a long time, the Mexican government had something good to tell. By extension, the main newspapers in the country could present this achievement of the authorities as good news. This could be seen in the content of the front pages and the framing by journalists in the headlines.

The second hypothesis is that, being that the events were quite spectacular, the content highlighted by the newspapers would tend toward sensationalism rather than detailing the repercussions of recapturing the most dangerous drug trafficker in the world. All of this would result in front pages which—as a showcase for general content on the events and as a sales hook—would resemble those of the more sensational press, leaning more towards the narration of superfluous details and the relationships between the different characters than towards the evolution of the events and their repercussions for the government, the citizenry, and even the status quo in Mexico.

---

2 The writer made these statements during an interview conducted by the newspaper on his winning the International Journalism Award King of Spain in the category of Latin-America, thanks to his work The Red Carpet, The Empire of Narcoterrorism. http://archivo.eluniversal.com.mx/notas/654770.html.
Methodology

To test the hypothesis and the main objective, we have designed a content analysis, a quantitative technique which, as explained by Riff, Lacy, and Fico (2014, 3), consists of coding “communicational content in categories according to certain patterns” as well as interpretation established from the correspondence of said categories. All content analysis is characterized by being “systematic and objective” (Bardin 2002, 25). That is, on the one hand, the research should evaluate the properties of content proportionally by means of a protocol where variables are established from the hypothesis. On the other hand, the quantifying process reduces bias or prejudice in data collection. According to Barredo (2015), content analysis should make it easy for other researchers to replicate the results by means of a transparent explanation of the methodology. Perhaps, due to these advantages, numerous works have addressed the examination of the construction of information in the media. Some of these studies are Díaz-Cerveró (2009; 2011; 2012); Repiso, Rodríguez-Pinto, and García (2013); Barredo (2013a; 2013b; 2014), López-Rabadán and Casero-Ripollés (2014); and Fernández, Abad, and Corral (2015).

This analysis centered on four newspapers printed in Mexico (El Universal, Reforma, Excélsior, and La Jornada), identified as referents allowing us to identify and compare ideological tendencies in social groups in the country (Muñiz 2015). El Universal has a circulation of 180,000 copies per day, Reforma has 140,138, La Jornada has 107,666, and Excélsior has 90,000. This makes them the four most read general content non-sensationalist dailies in Mexico (Instituto Federal Electoral 2014). Some experts consider it incorrect to refer to them as national papers, considering that they are centered in the capital. They can, however, be considered prestigious dailies (de Alba 1996), of national reference (Navarro 2007; Muñiz 2015), and with greater impact than the local press (García Rubio 2013).

As a sample frame, the front pages of the above-mentioned newspapers were selected, since this information space concentrates most of the repercussion and journalistic resources, as explained by Marín, Armentia, and Caminos (2014). In addition, the reduced size and need to capture reader and sponsor attention favors the appearance of highly concentrated and synthesized language, facilitating the study of written and non-written headline norms.

This study did not required a sampling. The selected newspapers ranged from January 9, 2016—the day after Guzmán’s recapture by Mexican authorities—to February 7, since February 8 was the first day in which the four papers did not publish any front page news related to the issue. That is, February 8 marks a breaking point with regards to the representation of the phenomenon. The unit of content analysis in the present study is constituted by each item published on the front page of the above mentioned dailies. In all, during the period under study, 165 items or headlines were published on eighty front pages. Each of these items was coded following the analysis protocol—see the Appendix—consisting of thirty-four categories.

Data Analysis

As mentioned in the previous section, the analyzed papers published 165 front page items related to the recapture of Joaquín Guzmán Loera. These items were published during thirty consecutive days, from January 8 to February 7, 2016, in a total of eighty front pages. Specifically, El Universal published sixty-four items in a total of twenty-four front pages; Excélsior, forty-seven in twenty front pages; La Jornada, thirty-one in a total of twenty-one front pages, and Reforma, twenty-three in fifteen front pages.

Items on the front page are mostly in a secondary position; that is, they do not occupy the masthead, nor do they use a large font. This is true in over half of the items (50.90%). The masthead is occupied by only 23 percent of the total items in average. Only La Jornada devoted more mastheads to the issue at hand—38.70 percent. As the story evolved, from January 31 on, the issue no longer appeared on the masthead of any of the newspapers selected.
The section that most of the front page items remit to is principally “Nation” (name used by *El Universal*) or “National” (as it is called in *Reforma*); 37.57 percent of front page news remit to this section. On the other hand, 26.67 percent of items related to the recapture of Joaquín Guzmán Loera published by *Excélsior* remit to a section named “First.” The most important news of the day is published in this section. 25.45 percent of front page items remit only to a page number. This occurs principally in *La Jornada*; it was so in thirty out of forty-two published items. 4.85 percent of the published items do not remit to a specific section, and another 4.85 percent remit to pages normally devoted to frivolous information. Concretely, 2.42 percent appears in *Reforma’s* “People” section, and the other 2.42 percent to the “Show Business” section in *El Universal*. On only one occasion (0.61%) did the item or headline on the front page remit to the “Editorial” page; this was in *El Universal*.

As to graphic complements, only 31.51 percent have them. In all, there are fifty-two items with a graphic complement and of them, in only five are there photographs of Joaquín Guzmán Loera. Three of these photos are published in *Reforma*, one in *El Universal*, and another in *La Jornada*. Rather than the photo of the protagonist of the events, the papers recur to another type of complement. That is, in the case of the daily *Excélsior*, it on seven occasions reproduces an illustration of the drug dealer’s handcuffed hands as an introduction to the front page content. Another recourse is a photograph of things linked to Joaquín Guzmán, such as a restaurant, a tank, the soldiers who were watching him, or the house where he hid while he was on the run from justice. In all, there are five photos with this content. In addition, the papers publish, on eight occasions, photos of Sean Penn, eight of Kate del Castillo, and six of Lucero Guadalupe Sánchez, the congresswoman implicated in the events. Thus, it can be said that there are more photographs of the secondary actors than of the protagonist himself.

The newspapers show a preference for small items on the front page. In general, this is because they published daily, up to January 29, one main item accompanied by several secondary or barely visible items as a complement. Thus, 50.30 percent of the front page items have a one-column headline and a simple composition; that is, it is composed of only one line in 55.15 percent of these items. As to the size of the majority of the items, in 58.78 percent of the cases, the headline either has no text or the text is brief—one paragraph. In the same vein, the size of the headline is small (sixteen size type) in the majority; this is 33.33 percent of the total items.

According to their communicative function, the headlines are mainly designative (32.72%) and declarative (27.87%), which means that 74.54 percent and 23.63 percent of the total items are, respectively, informative and, within them, declarations. The headlines and declaratory content are directly related to the fact that the Mexican federal government is the main source in most of the total items (30.90%). However, if we take into account that 40.60 percent of the items do not contain text, their source is unknown, or the content comes from agencies, then it can be affirmed that the Mexican federal government is the source of 52.04 percent of the items whose source is known.

The voice in the headlines is eminently active (72.12%), with only three cases of passive voice (1.81%). In 23.03 percent of the cases, this classification is not applicable, as the headlines are thematic or do not contain a conjugated verb. In some cases, there is no verb at all. In addition, 3.03 percent of the front page items appear without a headline.

As to authorship of the front page items, the majority appear with a byline (53.33%), though a fairly large percentage appears without the name of the author (38.18%). In 4.85 percent of the items, the author appears as Editorial Staff; only 1.81 percent is from agencies and 1.21 percent is information from agencies complemented by the Editorial Staff. In only once case, (0.6%) does the author use a pseudonym—Max Aub—to report events. *La Jornada* is the paper in which most authors include their byline—77.41 percent—and only 12.9 percent of the items in this paper appear without a byline. The paper which most avoids the use of bylines is *Excélsior*, where 53.2 percent of the front page items lack a byline, and only 40.42 percent include it.
In 95.15 percent of the cases, there is no explanation of who Joaquin Guzman is, either because the item consists solely of a headline with no explanatory text (16.36%), or because the text omits the information (78.79% of the cases). Only 4.85 percent of front page content include descriptive information about the protagonist of the events, and in those eight items, in two (1.21%) it is the kingpin himself who explains. In one of these items, Guzman Loera says of himself: “I deal more heroin, methamphetamine, cocaine, and marijuana than anyone else in the world. I own a fleet of submarines, airplanes, trucks and boats” (Reforma). In another, the drug dealer “states he is the largest distributor in the world” (La Jornada). Both were published on January 9, 2016, among the first items regarding the recapture.

The text supplies background in only 20.6 percent of published items, and does not supply it in the remaining 79.4 percent. Background is variegated, making it difficult to classify, but when the item is about Joaquin Guzman himself, the reference is to his own criminal background and previous arrests. As context regarding the damages caused by drug trafficking, only one item states that in 2015, 103 persons died because of it, in the states of Jalisco, Sinaloa, Nayarit, and Oaxaca.

With the exception of seven items—0.42 percent of the total—which are the only ones in which Guzman’s recapture serves to characterize or describe the current conditions in Mexico, in the rest of the content—99.58 percent—the recapture constitutes the principal objective. Even so, the protagonist of the events is the protagonist of only 38.8 percent of the total front page items. Concretely, Joaquin Guzman is the protagonist of 29.7 percent of the total items published in El Universal, 39.13 percent in Reforma, 40.42 percent in Excelsior, and 51.61 percent in La Jornada. Though he is the protagonist in the majority of the items, the drug trafficker shares the main role with Kate del Castillo (20%), Lucero Guadalupe Sanchez, the congresswoman linked to him (12.72%), and Sean Penn (6.66%). Joaquin Guzman Loera is the co-protagonist of 8.48 percent of the items, together with one of the aforementioned.

The differences between newspapers in the type of coverage of the events they offer are sometimes especially remarkable. To illustrate this, a good example is the front page of El Universal on January 10, only two days after the recapture of the criminal. In it, the newspaper gives much more importance to the relationship between Joaquin Guzman Loera and Kate del Castillo than to the extradition of the criminal, whereas Reforma does the opposite.

The protagonist of 15.15 percent of the items analyzed is unknown. The protagonist is someone other than Joaquin Guzman in 37.57 percent of the items. That is, taking into account Guzman is the co-protagonist of 8.48 percent of the items, it can be affirmed that there are more items about others than about Joaquin Guzman Loera himself in front page content on his own recapture.

Reforma is the paper which most falls into this practice; 56.52 percent of items published on their front page do not have Guzman Loera as the central character. It is followed by Excelsior (46.8%) and, considerably behind, by El Universal (29.68%) and La Jornada, with only 25.8 percent of items with a central protagonist who is not the drug dealer. If we consider Kate del Castillo the second most important character behind Joaquin Guzman, the actor finds greater notoriety in Excelsior, as the protagonist of 23.40 percent of front page coverage about the recapture. On the other hand, in El Universal, she is the protagonist of 21.87 percent of the front page items about the event, and 17.39 percent in Reforma. Once again, it is La Jornada which publishes fewer items with del Castillo as the protagonist, with only 12.9 percent of front page content.

As to the topics of the articles, these were discernible in 96.36 percent of the units. Kate del Castillo and her relationship with Joaquin Guzman—as well as other topics related to her, like her tequila company and other minor issues—make up most of the secondary themes (19.49%), followed by extradition (16.35%), the implicated congresswoman (13.83%), Joaquin Guzman’s accomplices (8.80%), details of the interview (6.91%), the escape (5.66%), details of the film (5.03%), finances (3.77%), and Joaquin Guzman’s personality (2.51%).
The interpretation or point of view of the journalist is hardly perceived beyond the frames that will be analyzed later. Only one interpretative item is published—a chronicle of the events—and sixteen opinion items (9.7% of the total published on the front page). The writer’s value judgement appears in seven opinion items and in eleven of the 165 total (6.66%). The fact that there are fewer valuations than opinion items is due to the fact that in others, the valuations are not known because only the headline is included on the front page. Only one of these comments is a positive assessment of the work of the authorities. Another directly refers to Enrique Peña Nieto, whom he exhorts to act quickly so that the criminal cannot escape again. Another is aimed at commenting on Kate del Castillo, who it says “will not come out well of the trial in the United States courts” (“Kate enfrentará a una corte de EU…” [“Kate will face up to a United States court…”], February 2, 2016, El Universal, Section A5). The rest comment directly on something related to the protagonist of the story. One of them indicates that Joaquín Guzmán acted “in an absurd way” (“El Chapo acaso termina enterrado en vida en EU por querer protagonizar la propia historia de su vida” [“Chapo may end up being buried alive in UE in his attempt to perform his own life’s play”], January 22, 2016, El Universal, Section A9).

The percentage of items that anticipate possible repercussions of the events is 24.84 percent, compared to 75.16 percent that do not. Of the total of the items published, only 5.45 percent foresee repercussions for Joaquín Guzmán Loera. These have to do, above all, with possible extradition to the United States. Another 5.45 percent of the items predicts repercussions for both Joaquín Guzmán and Mexico, and again the expected effects have to do with extradition and how it will affect not only the drug trafficker, but Mexico as a country. 4.85 percent of the content announces repercussions for Kate del Castillo and her future situation, 4.24 percent deals with Lucero Guadalupe Sánchez, the congresswoman who visited Guzman in prison. Only 2.42 percent of what is published anticipates repercussions of the events for Mexico—1.21 percent for Mexican society; 0.6 percent for the rule of law; and another 0.6 percent are general conclusions.

As for frames, these have been detected in 35.75 percent of the front page items. All frames are formulated around the successes and failures of each of the agents that have to do with the events—Joaquín Guzmán himself, the Mexican authorities, and US authorities. 68.29 percent of the units with framing (16.96% of the total) frame content in the triumph of the Mexican authorities. La Jornada is the newspaper which most practices this type of framing, presenting this in 32.14 percent of the items that have one. 44.44 percent of those items are the main ones on the front page.

The second of the most outstanding frames is the triumph of Joaquín Guzmán himself (17.07% of the items with framing, and 4.4% of the total). The daily that most practices this vision is Excélsior, where this frame is presented in 35.9 percent of the items that have it. 33.33 percent of these items are the main ones on the front page. Only 9.75 percent of the units with framing (2.42% of the total) are framed in the triumph of the American authorities, and this takes into account that the second most mentioned subject on the front page items is extradition to the United States (16.35%). As for failures, only one item (2.43% of those with framing) is framed in the failure of the Mexican authorities, and another in the failure of Joaquín Guzmán himself.

In analyzing the lexical terms with which the studied journals refer to Joaquín Guzmán Loera, we find that there is no direct reference to the protagonist of the events in 23.03 percent of the content analyzed. This corresponds to the journalistic items focusing on Kate del Castillo, Sean Penn, Lucero Guadalupe Sánchez, or other characters or issues. Only 7.87 percent of the front page items refer to Joaquin Guzmán Loera by his full name or by his surnames—one or both—on the first occasion he is named in those items.

29.69 percent of the items refer mainly to Joaquin Guzman Loera by his alias (El Chapo), preferably in italics. Twenty-seven of forty-six items that refer to it, or 13.93 percent, refer to him by his alias without the article, or “Chapo,” also in italics preferably. 9.69 percent of the items refer to him including his alias in the formula Joaquin El Chapo Guzman, referring to the alias in italics or in quotation marks, this time in equal parts. 7.87 percent designates him as “the
capo” (although without quotation marks). 5.45 percent includes only the alias and his last name—El Chapo Guzmán—with the alias preferably in italics. The expressions “Joaquin Guzmán Loera El Chapo,” “narco,” “narco head,” or “that person (“El Chapo”)” are used on one occasion each (0.6%). In total, 77.95 percent of the terms or expressions used, as a first option, by the four newspapers analyzed to refer to Joaquin Guzmán Loera or contain his alias.

According to the Dictionary of the Royal Spanish Academy (2016), “chapo” is a colloquial term used in Mexico to refer to somebody of short stature. More specifically, the term is used in Joaquin Guzmán Loera’s home state of Sinaloa as a term of affection for a short person. In regards to aliases, Luis Veres (2003) states that aliases contribute to the mythification of the criminal agent. At the same time, they are intended to persuade receivers of the message. Other authors, like Rodrigo 1991 and Rivas Troitiño 1992, warn of the danger of journalists systematically transferring to the pages of newspapers the mimetic use of terrorist terminology.

Reforma is the paper which most uses his alias to refer to Joaquin Guzmán (91.30% of the total published by the daily in regards to the events). This is followed by La Jornada (87.09%), El Universal (81.25%), and Excélsior (78.72%). The paper which most uses the full name, or only the surnames of the trafficker is Excélsior (14.89%), followed by El Universal (6.25%), Reforma (4.34%), and La Jornada (3.22%).

Conclusions

In global terms, front page coverage of the recapture of Joaquín Guzmán Loera can be described as reduced from the point of view of the size of the items, since these are essentially small and are published in an eminently secondary place. In fact, as of January 31, the issue no longer occupied major items on the front page of any of the newspapers analyzed. Less than one-third of these publications contain graphic accompaniment and, in addition, the majority—one-third—of the headlines are small in size and are composed of a single titling element. In most cases, they are either not accompanied by any text or accompanied by a brief; that is, a text consisting of only one paragraph of information. In effect, we consider the main hypothesis—presentation of the recapture as an achievement of the authorities and as good news—to be accepted because the media studied presented the recapture as an achievement of the Mexican government. According to the analysis presented above, the chosen media tended to minimize the impact of criminal acts; more than nine out of ten content analyzed omit details about Joaquín Guzmán and almost 80 percent omit the story of his recapture. This is related to the eminently official origin of the sources of information and, on the other hand, to the dissolution of the journalist’s point of view, observable from interpretation in the analyzed content being almost null, which only advances possible repercussions of the events in one-quarter of total items analyzed.

The second hypothesis—the tendency towards sensationalism shown in the content—is also accepted because we observed a fictionalization of the events; that is, a distortion of the narrative by isolating the criminal complexity and partially dissolving the responsibilities of Guzmán Loera. This phenomenon—the hybridization between the approaches of the so-called “serious press” and those of the sensationalist press—is also common in contexts such as Spain (Redondo 2013), and is due mainly to causes related to contemporary professional practice. The Internet has undoubtedly accelerated the speed of writing and dissemination of content due to the high competition that is established in a media ecosystem with numerous options available. The strong influence of the audiovisual sector is also perceived in the framework of the textual, i.e. the transfer of the imaginary of the social networks to the informative platforms.

The very nature of the events and their development places them in a field close to fiction. Contributing to this is the content published on the front page, which is more often carried out by secondary characters than by Joaquín Guzmán himself. In line with this, we find that the main theme of these front page items is not the narco-trafficker’s own recapture by Mexican authorities, but his relationship with actor Kate del Castillo, which focuses on the most morbid aspects of events and, at the same time, is the least important from the point of view of public interest.
This frivolous treatment of the events about the detention of the most dangerous drug trafficker in the world by the authorities of Mexico reaches the point of placing some of the content announced on front pages onto Society pages, while it is dressed in the lexicon overuse of the alias of the drug trafficker. Although it can be lexicalized and is known throughout the world, this contributes to portraying the kingpin with a certain sympathy. With all this, the national newspapers contribute to a criminal mythification that is intensified when presenting front page information from the point of view of the triumph of Joaquin Guzman, which is the second most perceived frame in the notes. When talking about framing, it is paradoxical that, along with the one that frames content as a triumph for the drug trafficker, there is another one that frames it as a triumph of the authorities. Although there are no major differences between newspapers in this regard, it is striking that La Jornada is the daily newspaper which, being the most independent newspaper of the four, is more likely to fall into that frame of triumph of the authorities.

Since only one-third of items detected these frames, the incidence of framing in the interiorization of the content could be considered limited both in the case of the first triumph of the authorities and in the second triumph of the criminal. Regardless, in any case, this second scenario should not be allowed because, however small its influence, it intensifies the perception of the criminal as a successful agent in the events of his recapture.

This characterization of Joaquin Guzman Loera as an agent of triumph through the events is incongruous with the favorite use of eminently institutional sources in content presented by headlines that are mostly declarative. That appeal may have to do with a certain self-censorship of the journalist who, in the first place, knows that he depends to a great extent on institutional and government advertising which characterizes, in general, all traditional Mexican newspapers. On the other hand, journalists do not want to make value judgments that could compromise his safety, considering that Mexico is a country where journalists who cover drug trafficking issues often live in a threatening climate. Perhaps that is why many of those who report, in addition to limiting their interpretive frames, prefer to publish their front page notes without a byline, as in 38.18 percent of cases.

In order to understand what we have pointed out in this last paragraph further, it would be necessary to delve into the qualitative aspects of our analysis, which have focused only on quantitative coverage of journalism thus far. Therefore, a possible line of future research would be to compare the results obtained above with responses by the media editors studied, possibly through focus groups or in-depth interviews with each. This future analysis would help explain the sometimes surprisingly frivolous treatment of this issue, which nevertheless remains a common practice by the Mexican press reporting on issues of depth.

REFERENCES


**APPENDIX: ANALYSIS SHEET USED**

**IDENTIFICATION DATA OF UNIT OF ANALYSIS**

1. Unit of analysis number
2. Heading or newspaper title
3. Headline
4. Publication date

**GENERAL ASPECTS OF THE ITEM**

5. Page where the item belongs
THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF INTERDISCIPLINARY CULTURAL STUDIES

6. Front page of the newspaper with the item
7. Place the item occupies on the front page
   a. Principal
   b. Secondary
   c. Low visibility
8. Section remitted to
9. Graphic complement (indicate subcategory it belongs to)
   a. Photograph
   b. Infographic with data
   c. Illustration
   d. Comic
   e. None

HEADLINE
10. Size (in columns)
11. Font size
12. Composition
   a. Simple
   b. Double
   c. Multiple (pre-title, title, and subtitle, or title and two subtitle)
13. Type of headline according to its communicative function (Consider that in some cases, one headline may have more than one function)
   a. Designative: If it is limited to informing the events, without contributing valuations.
   b. Thematic: If it only announces the topic, without designating subtopics.
   c. Referential: If, unlike the previous, it provides information about the context.
   d. Evocative: If it includes frequent word play, association of ideas, or other resources which briefly allude to the context.
   e. Expressive: If it goes beyond designation, providing the point of view of the communicator in regards to the described events.
   f. Appeal: If it seeks to attract the attention of the reader, usually highlighting in quotation marks some word or phrase of the text, which may be colloquial or used figuratively.
   g. Declarative:
      a. Direct quotation
      b. Indirect quotation
      c. Mixed quotation
14. Headline voice
   a. Active
   b. Passive
   c. Not applicable (when the headline is thematic or contains no verb)

TEXT OF THE ITEM
15. Size of the text
   a. Brief or no text
   b. 1 column
   c. 2 columns
   d. 3 columns
   e. 4 columns
   f. 5 columns
   g. 6 columns
16. Text author
17. Sources of information for the item
a. Enrique Peña Nieto, President of Mexico
b. Federal Government
c. Lawyers
d. Legislators
e. Barack Obama, President of the United States
f. American authorities
g. Political leaders
h. News agencies
i. Investigative journalism
j. Experts
k. Other journalists or media
l. Show business
m. Unknown
n. Not applicable (if the item consists of a headline only)

18. Journalistic genre (indicate the type of text where applicable)
a. Informative
b. Interpretative
c. Opinion

19. Not applicable (if the item consists of a headline only)

20. Protagonist of the item
a. Joaquín Guzmán
b. Kate del Castillo
c. Lucero Guadalupe Sánchez, implicated PAN congresswoman
d. Sean Penn
e. Others (indicate who)
f. Not applicable (when it cannot be clearly inferred from the item)

DEGREE OF INFORMATION

21. Does it clearly explain who is Joaquín Guzmán?
a. Yes
b. Yes, though partially
c. No

22. Does it add background to the event
a. Yes
b. No

23. If the previous answer was affirmative, explain which ones.

24. Is this the main object of the item
a. Yes
b. No, the subject is simply outlined to characterize or describe the current panorama of Mexico.

25. Main topic of the item
a. Events recapture
b. Events escape
e. Interview Sean Penn
f. Kate del Castillo
g. Implicated congresswoman (Lucero Guadalupe Sánchez)
h. Details autobiographical film
i. Finances Joaquín Guzmán or Sinaloa cartel
j. Personality Joaquín Guzmán
k. Other topics
l. Not applicable (when it cannot be clearly inferred from the elements on the front page)

26. Secondary or subtopics (if any, indicate which ones)

DEGREE OF INTERPRETATION

27. Journalists evaluation of the recapture
   a. Positive
   b. Negative
   c. Neutral / no judgement
   d. Complete (provides positive and negative points)

28. Does the author identify repercussions or consequences of the recapture?
   a. Yes
   b. No

29. If yes, which ones and by whom?

30. Is it notably rigorous?
   a. Yes
   b. No

FRAMING

31. Can it easily be situated within a framework?
   a. Yes
   b. No

32. If the answer to the previous question is affirmative, identify which one:
   a. Triumph Mexican authorities
   b. Triumph American authorities
   c. Triumph Joaquín Guzmán
   d. Failure Mexican authorities
   e. Failure Joaquín Guzmán

LEXICOMETRIC ANALYSIS

33. Terms used the first time the item refers to Joaquín Guzmán Loera principally (first time it refers to him)

34. Terms used when the item refers to Joaquín Guzmán Loera in a secondary position (the second time it refers to him)

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Dr. Elba Díaz-Cerveró: Professor and Research Manager, Escuela de Comunicación, Universidad Panamericana, Guadalajara, México

Dr. Luis Veres: Professor, Faculty of Philology, University of Valencia, Valencia, Spain

Dr. Daniel Barredo Ibáñez: Professor, School of Human Sciences, Universidad del Rosario, Bogotá, Colombia
The International Journal of Interdisciplinary Cultural Studies is one of seven thematically focused journals that support the Interdisciplinary Social Sciences Research Network. The Research Network is comprised of a journal collection, book imprint, conference, and online community.

The journal presents studies that exemplify the disciplinary and interdisciplinary practices of the social sciences. As well as articles of a traditional scholarly type, this journal invites case studies that take the form of presentations of practice—including documentation of socially engaged practices and exegeses analyzing the effects of those practices.

The International Journal of Interdisciplinary Cultural Studies is a peer-reviewed, scholarly journal.