FROM REPORTERS TO REVOLUTIONARIES:
JOHN REED AND GEORGE F. WEEKS DURING THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION
by
AMANDA E. SWENNES
(Under the Direction of Leara Rhodes)

ABSTRACT

As embedded correspondents in Mexico in 1914, John Reed and George F. Weeks framed news stories on the Mexican Revolution for American audiences, presenting primarily the view of the victorious Constitutionalist rebels. In this study, framing theory and textual analysis are used to investigate the selection, emphasis, interpretation and exclusion of attributes that organize news stories. Analysis showed that both Reed and Weeks framed their news reports to emphasize the military superiority of the Constitutionalists over the federals, the superior leadership of Pancho Villa and Venustiano Carranza, and the humanity of the Mexican peasant population. This study lays the groundwork for future research on news framing by embedded correspondents through the lenses of framing theory and textual analysis.

INDEX WORDS: Frames, Framing, Objectivity, Embedded correspondent, John Reed, George F. Weeks, Mexican revolution, Framing analysis
FROM REPORTERS TO REVOLUTIONARIES:
JOHN REED AND GEORGE F. WEEKS DURING THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION

by

AMANDA E. SWENNES
B.A., Hollins University, 2004

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

ATHENS, GEORGIA
2006
FROM REPORTERS TO REVOLUTIONARIES:
JOHN REED AND GEORGE F. WEEKS DURING THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION

by

AMANDA E. SWENNES

Major Professor: Leara Rhodes
Committee: Dwight Brooks
            James Hamilton

Electronic Version Approved:
Maureen Grasso
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
May 2006
DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to Alton – my husband, my best friend and my love.

For always.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my major professor, mentor and friend, Dr. Leara Rhodes, for her ever-present support, calm guidance and infectious laugh. I would also like to thank Dr. Dwight Brooks and Dr. James Hamilton for their insights, encouragement and assistance with this project. I thank my family for giving me the freedom to become the woman I am and my friends for giving me the support I needed to make it through graduate school with my sanity relatively intact.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</th>
<th>v</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

## CHAPTER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 LITERATURE REVIEW</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Twentieth Century American Journalism and Objectivity</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Journalists and Embedded Correspondents</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 THEORY AND METHODOLOGY</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Framing Theory</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 CONTEXT</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Mexican Revolution</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Mexican Revolution’s Major Players</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Reed: Reporter and Revolutionary</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George F. Weeks: Reporter and Revolutionary</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 ANALYSIS</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Framing the Mexican Revolution’s Major Events</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Framing Francisco “Pancho” Villa and Venustiano Carranza</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Framing of Mexico and Mexicans</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Framing of News Reports.................................................................87

6 CONCLUSIONS..................................................................................100

REFERENCES....................................................................................104

APPENDIX.........................................................................................108
John Reed and George F. Weeks are both American reporters who rose to the pinnacle of their journalistic careers as embedded correspondents for U.S. news publications during the Mexican Revolution. Like revolutionaries Francisco “Pancho” Villa and Venustiano Carranza, Reed and Weeks made their names during the Mexican Revolution because of actions they took, whether riding into battle alongside a troop of revolutionaries, reporting news or disseminating propaganda. Also like the revolutionary figures they covered, Reed and Weeks lived and worked in Mexico during tumultuous times. Matthews (1971) writes that “‘difficult moments’ are the best ones for the journalist. Peace is not news; war is” (p. 430). Like wars, revolutions are newsworthy events that provide some of the most illustrious characters and events for news coverage.

In this thesis, I will examine the roles that Reed and Weeks played during the Mexican Revolution as well as their coverage of major events and major figures, particularly Villa and Carranza. I will examine the ways in which these reporters created heroes and villains through their storytelling, how they explained the revolution’s causes and effects, portrayed the Mexican people to an American audience, and covered some of the revolution’s major battles and political events. By first setting the scene for the American press in the early twentieth century through discussions of the rise of journalism as a profession, the journalistic ideal of objectivity and the development of
embedded correspondents reporting for newspapers in their home countries, I will
analyze the newspaper articles published by Reed and Weeks in the *New York World* and
the *New York Herald*, respectively, in 1914.

Although this thesis looks at journalism and embedded correspondents through a
historical lens, the study of reporting techniques and the ethical issues embedded
correspondents face is as important now, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, as it
was at the turn of the twentieth century. The recent – and current – conflicts in Iraq and
the Middle East have once again given rise to debates regarding the role of embedded
correspondents, the military, and media agenda-setting and framing. Through a historical
lens, this thesis will discuss many of the same issues current embedded correspondents
face, while remaining distanced from politics and judgment of “right” and “wrong.”
Early Twentieth Century American Journalism and Objectivity

*In the Beginning...*

According to Willis (2003), “a long-held tradition of news reporting dictates that journalists should somehow separate themselves from their emotions while on the job and should detach – if not distance themselves entirely – from the people, issues, and events they are covering. This is seen by many as the essence of objectivity, and objectivity has long been a cornerstone of the journalistic profession” (p. 119). However, objectivity in Willis’ sense is a rather recent invention. The “long-held tradition” actually arose in its earliest form in response to sensationalistic press practices of the 1830s, became increasingly common throughout the mid-nineteenth century, and became “codified as the great law of journalism” in the 1890s (Mindich, 1998, p. 114). However, objectivity as the journalistic ideal known today did not become routine practice until later, in the 1930s (Mindich, 1998).

Prior to the 1830s, the concept of objectivity was not even on the journalistic radar; in fact “American newspapers were expected to present a partisan viewpoint, not a neutral one” (Schudson, 1978, p. 4). One theory, posited by Schudson (1978), of how the ideal of objective reporting began centers around the organization of the Associated Press in 1848. The Associated Press, originally composed of a group of New York newspapers
seeking to take advantage of the speed of news transmission offered by the recently
invented telegraph, gathered and circulated news available for publication by a variety of
newspapers across the country. Since those newspapers held divergent political
ideologies – and published their papers with those ideologies in mind – the Associated
Press succeeded by making its news reports objective enough that they were usable by
any newspaper, no matter the publication’s political agenda. According to Schudson
(1978), “by the late nineteenth century, the AP dispatches were markedly more free from
editorial comment than most reporting for single newspapers. It has been argued, then,
that the practice of the Associated Press became the ideal of journalism in general” (p. 4).
The primary problem with this theory, however, is that the ideal of objectivity did not
actually become predominant journalistic practice until the turn of the twentieth century –
nearly half a century after the inception of the Associated Press (Mindich, 1998).

Enter the penny press. The penny papers were the “groundwork on which a belief
in facts and a distrust of the reality, or objectivity, of ‘values’ could thrive. But in 1840
or 1850 or 1860, American journalism did not yet have clearly articulated common ideas
and ideals. American journalism had not yet become an occupational group or industry”
(Schudson, 1978, p. 60). The shift to objectivity and the advent of the penny papers,
which operated by seeking high circulation numbers and through advertising revenue – as
opposed to traditional methods of subscription fees and political subsidies – coincided
with the introduction of and dependency on a more market-based economic structure
(Schudson, 1978). In response to the economic shift that increased competition for
circulation, as well as the shift to less partisan, more factual news reporting, during the
1890s, “newspapers tried to satisfy public demands of truth, public ideals of decency, and
public taste in entertainment” (p. 70). Meeting those demands meant that newspapers that wanted to seriously compete for limited audience share had to be “lively, colorful, and entertaining” as well as factual (p. 70).

When James Gordon Bennett published the first issue of the *New York Herald* on May 6, 1835, he announced his intention to “record facts on every public and proper subject, stripped of verbiage and coloring” (Mindich, 1998, p. 5). McLaughlin (2002) reinforces Mindich’s claim, adding that Bennett also “put the emphasis of coverage on reporting and gathering facts and information rather than propagandizing” (p. 158). Furthermore, Bennett said that while his reporters’ “political sympathies” were their own to hold, “their facts belong to history” (p. 158). In contrast to Bennett’s *New York Herald* (or, at least, to Bennett’s claims on information rather than sensation), Joseph Pulitzer and the *New York World* (which he purchased in 1883) relied on “sensationalism, popularizing huge headlines, pictures, women’s pages, self-promotion, and immoderate writing” (Mindich, 1998, p. 129).

Publishers, like Bennett, who chose to “‘emphasize news’ added general news, but their greatest increase came in specialized news, such as sports, business, religion, and society” (Smythe, 1994, p. 149). Although the ideal of objectivity had been born, sensationalism still reigned supreme. According to Willis (2003), “most historians feel sensationalism reached its zenith during the 1890s under Pulitzer and Hearst and their *New York World* and *New York Journal*” (p. 5). The 1890s, after all, was the era of “yellow journalism,” which derived its name from the primary character in Richard F. Outcault’s color comic strip, “The Yellow Kid.” “The toothless, mischievous grin on the kid’s face became an appropriate symbol of this age when any pretense of objectivity was
trampled upon in the name of newspaper competition between Hearst and Pulitzer” (p. 5). However, Schudson (1978) asserts that the New York World became the “circulation giant of New York journalism” in the 1880s because of Pulitzer’s “unembarrassed use of illustrations and other techniques of self-advertisement,” such as larger and darker headlines (p. 97). Pulitzer focused primarily on publishing stories (as opposed to factual, hard news) and continued in the previously-held tradition of subjective, sensational journalism.

*The Twentieth Century...*

The move from sensationalism to objectivity took decades to accomplish, and during that time each ideal took turns leading and lagging behind the other. Scandals, verbal and printed arguments among newspaper publishers, and scoops ensured that the battles among newspapers printing facts and newspapers printing sensational stories – and outselling the competition – was difficult. According to Schudson (1978), “while reporters subscribed concurrently to the ideals of factuality and of entertainment in writing the news, some of the papers they worked for chose identities that strongly emphasized one ideal or the other. The World and the Journal chose to be entertaining; the old penny press […] took the path of factuality” (p. 89). At the turn of the twentieth century, there was nearly equal emphasis (in leading New York newspapers, at least) on telling both good stories and factual stories. Also at the turn of the twentieth century, criticism of American journalism centered around its unrestrained, market-oriented practices. In response to this focus on sensationalism and selling copy, the first half of the twentieth century saw journalism establish itself as a legitimate profession by means
of establishing professional schools and ethical codes, and developing objectivity – the factual approach to news – as a dominant reporting ideology (Schudson, 1978).

Thus, by 1914 – the primary year of Reed and Weeks’ coverage of the Mexican Revolution – objectivity had begun to become a working journalist’s “daily grind” issue, one with increasing pressure, and reporting the facts without sensationalism as a journalistic practice was not unpopular. On the contrary, in 1914, Melville Stone, director of the Associated Press, spoke at the Columbia School of Journalism, which had been endowed by Joseph Pulitzer in 1904 and officially opened in 1913 (Schudson, 1978). Stone argued that the “highest and best form of news is informative in its character. We should be writing the real history of the world and, so far as may be, we should dismiss the episode and the tittle tattle” (Schudson, 1990, p. 189). Stone’s successor at the AP, Kent Cooper, disagreed. Cooper was more inclined to defend a more sensational style of journalism. Cooper felt that human interest – the story – “is the color in the picture of events that brings a lasting impression on the memory” (p. 189). While journalism throughout the twentieth century has seen resurrections of Cooper’s more colorful, human interest ideology – perhaps most notably in the form of Tom Wolfe and the New Journalism of the 1960s – the profession has predominantly progressed in the more factual manner suggested by Melville Stone.

Prior to the 1920s, journalists thought little about the subjective nature of their own perceptions (Schudson, 1978). After World War I, this attitude changed and journalists became increasingly cognizant of the influence their own beliefs held over what they wrote in – and how they framed – news reports. “Journalists, like others, lost faith in the verities a democratic market society had taken for granted. Their experience
of propaganda during the war and public relations thereafter convinced them that the world they reported was one that interested parties had constructed for them to report” (p. 6). Although journalists in the early- to mid-twentieth century held a still-developing belief in the ideal of objective journalism, many realized that the ideal was possibly simply that – an ideal – rather than a philosophy attainable in daily practice. The reporters of the 1890s believed in the possibility of writing news reports realistically and factually, yet by the end of the 1930s, even those journalists who had committed themselves to the ideal of facticity “acknowledged that objective reporting was ultimately a goal beyond reach – the perils of subjectivity were well recognized” (p. 155). The ideal of objectivity, then, became somewhat of an enigma. The definition of objectivity became more diluted, simply referring to reporters “keeping themselves and their opinions out of their stories” (Willis, 2003, p. 51). In that way, the ideal of objectivity became a more attainable, practical approach to daily news reporting. And yet, correspondents, it turned out, often provided for readers what official reports lacked: “color, description, and timeliness” (Smythe, 1994, p. 189).

Objectivity: Defined and Redefined

Objectivity has been described as “‘the emblem’ and ‘keystone’ of American journalism” (Hackett, 1984, pp. 229-230). As much as the ideal of objectivity is revered by American journalists, however, coming up with one single definition proves incredibly difficult. Objectivity is a term that has evolved over the past two centuries and will continue to develop nuances as the practice of journalism continues to change with advances of time and technology. That said, many scholars do agree on a few, similar
foundational requirements, although each seems to offer slightly different definitions of objectivity. The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines the word “objective” thus: “treating or dealing with facts without distortion by personal feelings or prejudices.” Pedelty (1995) claims it is easiest to define objectivity “in negative terms – what the professional code of objectivity excludes” (p. 170). He goes on to first name emotion, saying that “emotional concern is anathema to objective journalism” (p. 170). Pedelty then attempts to define objectivity by what it is: “superficial” (p. 178). He claims that the “demands of balance and fairness, the emphasis on elite sources, and the fetishization of fact lead to a simplistic, and at times, cryptic discourse” (p. 178). Johnstone, Slawski and Bowman (1972) argue that at the heart of objective journalism lies “emphasis on the importance of verified information” (p. 527). Although these initially seem like rather simplistic definitions of a complex ideology, the basic components are there: non-distortion, balance, verifiability, and lack of personal influences.

Bearing these core tenets of objectivity in mind, Mindich’s (1998) fleshed-out definition of objectivity makes more sense. He defines objectivity as a combination of five distinct components: first, detachment, which means ensuring that “facts are doing the talking, not the reporter’s own preconceived notions”; second, nonpartisanship, by which reporters “must offer ‘both sides’ of each story”; third, the writing style known as the inverted pyramid, which “gives readers the most important facts in the lead paragraph”; fourth, the concept of naïve empiricism, which entails a “reliance on ‘facts’ to ‘report accurately the truth or reality of events’”; and finally, balance, that “impossible yet all-important goal that leads to ‘undistorted reporting’” (p. 8). Like Mindich, Schudson (1990) gives a modern definition of objectivity as “the view that one can and
should separate facts from values” (p. 3). Facts, he claims, are statements made about the world that can be validated independently and that “stand beyond the distorting influences of any individual’s personal preferences” (p. 3). Values, in contrast, are an individual’s preferences (whether conscious or unconscious) for how the world should be; ultimately, he says, values are “subjective and have no legitimate claims on other people” (p. 3). The belief in objectivity, then, is more a faith in “facts,” a distrust of “values,” and a commitment to keeping the two separate in reporting the news (Schudson, 1978, pp. 5-6).

While Schudson and Mindich agree that objectivity includes naïve empiricism, Schudson (1990) only names two other components, in contrast to Mindich’s five: first, “self-conscious subjectivity,” through which the journalist admits his personal preferences to his audience; and second, trustworthy statements, which can be validated through submission to “established rules of inter-subjective consensus, the ordered, collective criticism of a scientific community” (pp. 5-6). Mindich and Schudson both give definitions of objectivity that reflect the journalistic standards in America today. However, a commitment to facts and hard news has not always dominated the American press; as previously explained, objectivity as a journalistic ideal began relatively recently in history, and has continued to develop slowly to what it is today.

Objectivity: Reporting in Context

“What reporters report on, how they report, what they aim for, and how they go about their work varies from one era to another” (Schudson, 1978, p. 229). Keeping this point in mind will be imperative to the analysis of news articles for this thesis simply
because although Reed and Weeks wrote news articles about Mexico for media outlets in the United States in 1914, their reporting styles did not always take the “hard news” objective approach to which American journalists subscribe today. Rather, they often explained the revolutionaries’ causes from a sympathetic, human-interest standpoint. Reed, in particular, delved into the personas of the Mexican Revolution’s major players, creating heroes and villains through lively descriptions and pitting good against evil in stories for his readers. Both Reed and Weeks became friends with the revolutionaries, and, both symbolically and literally, took up arms in the revolution’s fight. Thrust into the heat of battles, they were companions of powerful, dynamic men. If their reporting was more colorful than modern accounts would be, McLaughlin (2002) excuses it based on his assertion that the very act of reporting is essentially subjective. “Objective, dispassionate journalism has its place,” he says, “but not in the midst of some brutal war or human calamity. It is still possible in the reporting of domestic politics and it is a statutory requirement for television news but it is inadequate to meet the needs of the good war reporter” (p. 154).

While McLaughlin does make a convincing argument for subjectivism, defined by Murphy (1974) as allowing for the “writer’s opinion, ideas or involvement to creep into his story” (p. 3), Power (2004) claims that modern journalists work under the expectation that they will multisource, not use unnamed sources, and report with a sense of neutrality. During the twentieth century, a journalist was traditionally required to go into a situation or place, get the story and then write it up “objectively,” presenting all (sometimes said ‘both’) sides of the issue being covered. Becoming friends with revolutionaries, therefore, can (and often does) by current standards undoubtedly pose an
ethical problem. However, such may not have necessarily been the case in 1914 when Reed and Weeks were riding alongside Villa and Carranza during the Mexican Revolution.

Because of the difficulty in determining the “truth” of historical events and now-legendary individuals, this thesis will not attempt to establish solely what is missing from Reed and Weeks’ reporting or say that one man or reporting style was “right” and the other “wrong.” The “truth” of the Mexican Revolution, Pancho Villa and Venustiano Carranza, among others, has already been established and argued in history textbooks and is far beyond the scope of this thesis. Although I will examine what may be lacking in their reporting, based on other journalists’ accounts of the same events and individuals and historical accounts found in textbooks and other secondary sources, I will analyze what is present in their reporting, and, even more importantly, analyze how they framed their stories.
Professional Journalists and Embedded Correspondents

Origins

Although the first American newspapers date back to the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, reporting as a “specialized journalistic activity” was relatively rare until the 1830s and did not become common, everyday practice until the 1880s and 1890s (Schudson, 1988, p. 229). Prior to the late nineteenth century, nearly every function dedicated to publishing a newspaper, from printing and advertising to editing and reporting, was handled by a single person. Even when reporters did become more common in newsrooms, before the 1880s and 1890s, they received little acknowledgement – from the publishers or the public (Smythe, 1994). At the turn of the twentieth century, that began to change as reporters – at least the best and most prolific ones – received bylines for their stories. According to Smythe (1994), however, the low wages, constant job insecurity, “long, arduous hours with few vacations, general ‘grunt’ work, and the increasingly strident public criticism,” show that journalism as a profession had still not entered its “Golden Age.” As Smythe (1994) explains:

Working conditions for all reporters were similar to those of laborers, even though reporters considered their jobs to be similar to law or medicine. They worked long hours for generally low pay and were fired without a moment’s notice. Their jobs were competitive. They often faced reporters for competing newspapers when covering stories. They sometimes faced risks to their lives similar to those of common laborers. (p. 150)
During the eighteenth century – and even into the early nineteenth century – newspaper “correspondents” were usually “travelers or friends of the editor in foreign ports who wrote letters back to their hometown papers” (Schudson, 1990, p. 163).

During the nineteenth century, that tradition slowly changed as editors began to rely more on hired freelance reporters and less on friends and travelers. In this vein, the penny papers, which had led the way in the move away from sensationalistic journalism, were also the first to hire freelance reporters to cover local events and issues. Even so, reporters were still paid very little, unless they learned to specialize in a particular news area, and they were expected to always be “on call” for covering breaking news from “diverse places.” Covering “diverse places” meant that reporters had to be on the scene, “or the report had to look as though they had been on the scene” (Smythe, 1994, p. 152).

Furthermore, James Gordon Bennett, publisher of the *New York Herald*, was the first to hire a “foreign correspondent” (Schudson, 1990). This will be an important point to bear in mind during the analysis of Reed and Weeks’ articles on the Mexican Revolution, since Weeks was employed as a foreign correspondent for the *Herald*, which claimed to value facticity, and since Reed wrote for Pulitzer’s *New York World*, which appears to have long appreciated the value of sensationalism for selling newspapers.

The period between the Civil War and World War I, and during the end of which Reed and Weeks covered the Mexican Revolution, has been described as the “golden age” of the war correspondent; however, “reporting in this period had more impact on the circulation figures of major newspapers, and in feeding into the popular myths of war as glamorous adventure, than it had in influencing people’s opinion against war” (Knightley, 1982, quoted in McLaughlin, 2002, p. 54). While Knightley and McLaughlin
may claim that the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were the “golden age” for war correspondents, the present age seems to have forgotten the fact in the face of war correspondents embedded in the first Gulf War and in the current Iraq conflict. As Engelhardt (2003) says:

We’ve been dealing with the hundreds of ‘embedded’ reporters in Iraq as if they were a phenomenon completely novel in the history of journalism, and yet (even forgetting all those World War II reporters and photographers who went ashore with official approval in Normandy or on islands in the Pacific, slogged it out, and died with the troops) embedding is really the norm of American journalism.

Although the early foreign correspondents and war correspondents may not have been labeled as such, they were nonetheless embedded. At the turn of the century, editors and readers alike pressured reporters to provide eyewitness accounts. Thus, “interviewing and eyewitness accounts alone created a need” for embedded correspondents; “It also caused many reporters to substitute false descriptions of people or events in order to satisfy editors” (Smythe, 1994, p. 152). I argue that this was the case for Reed and Weeks as they covered the Mexican Revolution, even though they were not called “embedded” at the time.

\textit{Expectations}

One of the first things embedded correspondents were expected to do after arriving upon the scene was locate and gain control of a telegraph wire. “Gathering the news without a means of delivering it to the office was as unprofessional as not getting
the news” (Smythe, 1994, p. 160). Embedded reporters are generally expected to live, work and travel with the individuals or groups they are covering – which both Reed and Weeks did (Pfau, 2004). This is done in order to “facilitate maximum, in-depth coverage” of the people and the situation on which the journalist is reporting (p. 74).

Embedded correspondents, then, are in unique positions to write stories from first-hand perspectives, which offers readers a heightened sense of the story’s credibility. Even though embedded foreign war correspondents write in-depth stories, sometimes from first-hand perspectives, no matter what a journalist thinks is going on in a situation or should be done about it, ultimately his job as the reporter is to “get out of the way and to let the characters that [he’s] encountered take over” (Power, 2004, p. 9). And the journalist must do this, of course, while remaining faithful to sources, factual information, and the events that are happening all around, sometimes all at once.

In the face of this, however, journalists – particularly embedded war correspondents – often feel the need to “humanize” events when writing a story. In order to explain what is happening in a particular situation or describe an event’s major players, “journalists are constantly reverting to the story form – attributed quotes take on the nature of dialogue, a point of view develops, details are added that turn a statistic into an unemployed miner or a bereaved parent” (Bird and Dardenne, 1988, p. 78). This is not to say that reporters who use storytelling techniques in their writing are not being faithful to facts. While Johnstone, Slawski and Bowman (1972) say that the journalist’s primary points of responsibility are detachment and neutrality towards information, and that the journalist’s relationship with news sources should be one of straightforward detachment, they also explain that proponents of a more participant press see the situation differently.
In that case, in order for events to be newsworthy, “information must be reported in context, and it is the journalist’s task to provide the background and interpretation necessary to give events meaning” (p. 524). Therefore, in analyzing news articles regarding the Mexican Revolution written by “embedded” foreign war correspondents, bearing this point in mind will be vital.

The Dangers Embedded War Correspondents Face

Inside knowledge often comes at a price. Embedded correspondents are, more often than not, completely reliant on the people they are covering to provide access to key individuals or sites, food, shelter, protection, and a means of getting their story back to their media outlet (Pfau, 2004). Power (2004) corroborates this statement, saying that “without having built a network of contacts, the reporter parachutes in and is at the mercy of fixers or minders” (p. 5). While “parachuting in” is a modern phrase for what embedded war correspondents do, it is applicable to the type of reporting done by Reed and Weeks. They simply rode a train or a horse rather than an airplane or a Humvee into the thick of battle. Either way, the meaning remains the same: they entered into the revolution with little prior knowledge of the realities of the situation and with a heavy reliance on local sources and official “minders” to gain access to key individuals and information.

Furthermore, embedded correspondents are likely to befriend the individuals with whom they spend so much time under extreme circumstances. One of the dangers reporters in these situations face is becoming too close to the subjects they are covering. Not surprisingly, this dependence can result in favorable coverage and framing of the
individuals providing the means of survival. This idea is further reinforced by Paul and Kim (2004), who claim that embedded reporters are “able to reliably report only what they have seen, though they can report that narrow view with great detail” (p. 111).

While this is true, one must take into account that journalists do not always witness first-hand the events they report. This proved to be the case for Reed, who reported the battle of Torreón, and the fall of that city, not only nearly a week before it actually happened but also based on second- and third-hand accounts from individuals fleeing the scene.

As Pfau (2004) says, “embedding might produce a narrow, decontextualized coverage” of the situation or individual being covered (p. 76). Internalizing the values of the people they are covering becomes easier for embedded journalists, particularly in combat situations. This proved to be the case with Reed and Weeks, who came to believe in the ideals of Villa and Carranza and who, through their close contact with these men, eventually became revolutionaries themselves. When journalists intimately know the individuals whom they are covering, it can lead to writing through the lens of certain frames in their news coverage (Pfau, 2004). And, although getting close to sources and gaining positions unavailable to other journalists or officials is often considered a feat for reporters, it can be quite costly. On the other hand, as Matthews (1971) writes, “the price to be paid for inside knowledge is worth what it costs. It is true that when one gets on terms of friendship with leading figures […] detachment becomes impossible. In such cases the choice is between impartial ignorance and biased knowledge” (p. 419). Being an ignorant journalist, however, can prove detrimental to one’s career.

Pfau (2004) further explains that “embedding alters the nature and tone of coverage” (p. 84). When journalists are embedded in a revolution (or, really, any
emotionally charged situation), they tend to produce stories that are more personal and more evocative. There is a danger, then, in an embedded correspondent becoming too close to an individual or a situation and choosing sides. Considering these points will be important for analyzing Reed and Weeks’ framing of the Mexican Revolution because, while neither man would have called himself “embedded,” both men, in effect, acted as such in Mexico in 1914.
Framing Theory

Introduction

Framing theory is one of many mass communication theories that, when viewed as a whole, across time and across disciplines, looks as the ground does from an airplane window. It is a theory made up of various constructs and applications patched together and given a common name. While most mass communication scholars agree, at the very least in a commonsensical way, that framing theory is important and that it exists and has a place in the discipline, it is also widely agreed that framing is what Entman (1993) calls a “fractured paradigm.” Framing theory is fraught with inconsistent definitions, has been used in almost as many different ways as there are papers published about it, and finds a home in numerous disciplines besides mass communication. While Entman (1993) calls framing a fractured paradigm with inconsistent definitions, D’Angelo (2002) responds by claiming that there should not be one single framing paradigm – rather, that diversity of definition has in fact led to a more comprehensive view of framing. In many cases, framing theory’s greatest strengths are also its greatest weaknesses. This fact alone has strong implications for research conducted using framing theory and will be an important consideration for this thesis.
Defining Framing Theory

According to Hallahan (1999), framing, as a paradigm, has been used for investigating and understanding communication, and communication-related behavior, across a wide range of disciplines. Framing and frames can perhaps best be described, in lay terms, as a window through which to view the world. The view through that window, however, represents only a narrow portion of the big picture. Depending on which way the window faces, and at what particular moment in time one looks through it, the view can be vastly different. The study of the window itself, the person looking through it, and the particular view seen and described combine to form the core elements of framing theory.

Researchers have described frames as patterns of interpretation (Scheufele, 2004), attributes of objects (Scheufele, 2004), and as central organizing ideas (Gamson, 1989) that help people classify and efficiently process information (Scheufele, 2004), make sense of events, and suggest what is at issue (Gamson, 1989). Framing has been explained as the selection of attributes (Scheufele, 2004), as a critical activity in the construction of social reality (Hallahan, 1999), and as a consistent way to describe the power of a communicating text (Entman, 1993). Framing is critical in the construction of social reality because “it helps shape the perspectives through which people see the world” (Hallahan, 1999, p. 207). More specifically, according to Entman (1993), “Framing essentially involves selection and salience. To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” [italics in original text] (p. 52).
This definition of framing has become increasingly important and useful within the mass communication field, particularly for analyzing and discussing media uses, current journalistic practices, and the work of journalists.

For Carragee and Roefs (2004), the most meaningful definitions of framing theory “emphasize the ways in which frames organize news stories and other discourses by their patterns of selection, emphasis, interpretation, and exclusion” (pp. 215-216). That frames focus attention on key elements within a situation or a news text by the processes of inclusion, exclusion and emphasis (Entman, 1991; Gamson, 1989; Hallahan, 1999) is a recurring definition of framing theory that is particularly applicable in journalism studies because in reporting the news, journalists tell stories within particular frameworks that, in turn, affect the way events (and their major players) are interpreted by readers.

Using Framing Theory

Framing theory is important to the field of mass communication research, and especially to journalism research, because even though news stories include factual elements, according to Gamson (1989), “Facts have no intrinsic meaning. They take on their meaning by being embedded in a frame or story line that organizes them and gives them coherence, selecting certain ones to emphasize while ignoring others” (p. 157). To use the window metaphor again, what one sees out of the window has no meaning unless it is described and explained in understandable terms. In the process of describing and explaining what one sees, some objects will be given greater prominence and described in more detail than others, and some objects will be omitted from the description entirely. Furthermore, frames, and framing theory, are important to the study of journalism
because it is possible to tell many different stories about the same objects or events, even
if they are viewed through the same window. According to Pan and Kosicki (1993),
“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). Because frames can hold such potentially great power, it
becomes increasingly important to take into consideration omissions as well as inclusions
when analyzing news texts using framing theory. Accounting for omissions can lead
researchers down a slippery slope of speculation, particularly when conducting historical
research as I am doing here. Without having been with the journalist during the covered
event, or conducting exhaustive interviews, historical research that seeks to discover
omissions is extremely difficult. It is also well beyond the scope of this thesis.

Accounting for some omissions – in this case by looking for a lack of attributions, direct
quotes, or named sources for news accounts or looking for a side of the story left untold –
is helpful for textual analysis using framing theory.

As Entman (1993) says, this is primarily because audience responses are “clearly
affected if they perceive and process information about one interpretation and possess
little or incommensurable data about alternatives. This is why exclusion of
interpretations by framers is as significant to outcomes as inclusion” (p. 54). Omissions,
then, are powerful framing devices journalists use and are as important as inclusions
when analyzing texts. Omissions will also prove important for discussing how Reed and
Weeks framed accounts of the Mexican Revolution in 1914.
Researchers must not only recognize the power of frames themselves, but also understand that there are three primary players who act throughout the framing process: sources, journalists and audience members (Pan & Kosicki, 1993), and that frames have at least four separate, yet not mutually exclusive locations that can be studied either independently or in context with each other: the communicator, the text, the receiver, and the culture (Entman, 1993; D’Angelo, 2002). Bearing these facts in mind, Carragee and Roefs (2004) claim that, “Ideally, framing research examines how frames are sponsored by political actors, how journalists employ frames in the construction of news stories, how these stories articulate frames, and how audience members interpret these frames” (p. 215). Research that takes these things into consideration, focuses on their uses and influences, and attempts to explain the connections between and among them should also account for the primary framing players as well as frames’ locations within texts.

Applying Frames

According to Pfau (2004), “Journalists frame news; that is, they package stories and, in the process of doing so, give stories meaning. Framing is about the choices that journalists make in the reporting of stories. Journalists’ choices, in turn, affect the way that stories are interpreted by consumers of news” (p. 76). A key issue in reporting is that of the journalist’s selective perception – what he or she sees out the metaphorical window and chooses to describe to his or her audience. According to Liebes (2000), selective perception is a process which “leads to alternative framings [of news stories] that are necessarily tainted with ideology, wittingly or unwittingly” (p. 297). Gamson (1989) also
recognizes that although frames journalists apply to stories can be interpreted as bias, they may simply be unconsciously applied. As Gamson (1989) points out, “there may be no motive other than a conscientious effort to frame events in a way that the sponsor considers most meaningful” (p. 158). However, he goes on to point out that at other times the opposite may be true and framing may be intentional, favoring “the interests of a particular organization whom the source represents, helping it to further its programs or neutralize its opponents” (Gamson, 1989, p. 158). Whether consciously or unconsciously, journalists make choices about how they present issues and tell stories to their audiences. Although the specific reasons behind those choices are innumerable, Scheufele (1999) names five factors that potentially influence how journalists frame a given issue: social norms and values, organizational pressures and constraints, pressures of interests groups, journalistic routines, and journalists’ ideological or political orientations.

**Locating Frames**

Frames work, according to Hallahan (1999), by limiting and defining a message’s meaning, reflecting the judgment of the framers (i.e. journalists), placing a positive or negative spin on the information presented, phrasing information in alternative ways, and through storytelling. In order to uncover how frames work within specific texts, researchers must understand not only how frames are constructed but also how to locate them. According to Entman (1991):
News frames are constructed from and embodied in the keywords, metaphors, concepts, symbols, and visual images emphasized in a news narrative. Since the narrative finally consists of nothing more than words and pictures, frames can be detected by probing for particular words and visual images that consistently appear in a narrative and convey thematically consonant meanings across media and time.

By providing, repeating, and thereby reinforcing words and visual images that reference some ideas but not others, frames work to make some ideas more salient in the text, others less so – and others entirely invisible. (p. 7)

Frames are constructed through language, whether textual, visual or verbal. Therefore, in order to locate frames in news stories, researchers must have a strong grasp of the language in which they are written (or otherwise expressed).

Because frames can be located in omissions as well as inclusions in text, and because one story may invoke several frames – even competing ones (Liebes, 2000) – a sound understanding of what to look for is also necessary for conducting framing research. Pan and Kosicki (1993) name five rhetorical devices which most commonly signify the use of frames: metaphors, exemplars, catchphrases, depictions and visual images. Pan and Kosicki (1993) also name four structures of news discourse which can further signify the use of frames in text: syntactical structures (the recurring patterns and arrangements of words or phrases into sentences), script structures (the reporter acts as a storyteller), thematic structures (the news story as told through themes), and rhetorical structures (the stylistic choices journalists make related to their intended effects).
Through construction and location, frames are able to highlight, and thus increase, an item’s salience.

Operationalizing Frames

Furthermore, according to Entman (1993), frames typically diagnose, evaluate and prescribe; they define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgments, and suggest remedies for those problems. Responding to Entman, D’Angelo (2002) names four empirical goals of news framing research: first, to identify thematic units called frames; second, to investigate antecedent conditions that produce frames; third, to examine interaction of frames with individuals’ prior knowledge; and finally, to examine how news frames shape social-level processes. In other words, because the purpose of frames is to diagnose/define, evaluate and prescribe solutions to problems for an audience, scholars whose research examines those frames must seek not only to identify them, but also investigate why they are presented and used as they are, investigate the relationship of those frames with the intended audience, and (perhaps the most difficult goal of all) examine how those frames and their interaction with audiences affect society and social-level processes. For Pan and Kosicki (1993), the basic idea of framing research is simpler: to “view news texts as a system of organized signifying elements that both promote the advocacy of certain ideas and provide devices to encourage certain kinds of audience processing of the texts” (pp. 55-56). Frames, however, do not simply appear. They are made and used, and sometimes manipulated, by various powerful entities, from individuals to corporations to governments. Most often, however, framers are journalists.
Journalists are sources of great power within the media, whether they are conscious of this fact or not. They hold positions of power because “the intended meaning of a news story has the capability of directing attention as well as restricting the perspectives available to audiences” (Pan & Kosicki, 1993, p. 59). Journalists direct attention and restrict available perspectives in a variety of ways, and discovering those perspectives is a large part of the practical side of framing research. Scheufele (2004) suggests two presumptions that researchers should bear in mind regarding the idea of framing: first, that framing means stressing certain objects and relations over others; second, that framing means applying certain standards to objects. Framing research involving news stories should be based on these two presumptions because researchers must understand that stories have to be developed, created and written by individual journalists at some point in both time and place. For Liebes (2000), reporting requires, “almost by definition, extracting a part of a sequence of ongoing events out of its original context” (p. 296). Reporting, in other words, requires a journalist to look out the metaphorical window, pick out the most meaningful and important things that will convey what s/he sees to his/her audience, and describe them. This means, of course, that what the journalist reports will almost certainly be taken (at least somewhat) out of its original context. Liebes (2000) goes on to further explain that, “As there is no way to tell ‘facts’ ‘as they are,’ the only answer for responsible journalism is the traditional professional canons of story editing” (p. 299). In other words, because there is no ‘Truth,’ and certainly no way for a journalist reporting what s/he sees through a frame to tell the whole ‘Truth,’ the best possible solution for accurate reporting is ethical
professionalism on the part of journalists and their editors and publishers. As Entman (1991) says, “The analytical goal [of framing research] should be to determine which of a narrative’s words and images are components of the frame and which are not, and we need a theoretical basis for making these distinctions” (p. 8). Therefore, an understanding of framing as outlined above will be critical in the analysis of the articles selected for this thesis.
Research Questions

Taking this knowledge of framing into account, my question focuses on how a journalist, who has become close friends with a subject and who strongly supports the subject’s cause, frames individuals and issues in his or her reporting. It is arguable that, while journalists (including many in the early twentieth century) strive for professionalism in their news reporting, it is a nearly impossible task for an embedded correspondent – particularly one immersed in war or a revolution – to not find him- or herself writing the story as (s)he sees it, and without some degree of subjectivity. I believe both Reed and Weeks framed their news reports in ways that supported their subjects (friends) and demeaned or entirely neglected the opposition during the Mexican Revolution.

1. How do John Reed and George F. Weeks frame major events of the Mexican Revolution, such as the battle of Torreón, in the American press?

2. How do Reed and Weeks frame Pancho Villa and Venustiano Carranza in the American press?

3. How do Reed and Weeks frame Mexico and Mexicans in the American press?
Methodology

For this thesis, I will use textual analysis, a qualitative research method for analyzing media content, to both uncover meaning and attempt to answer the questions proposed above regarding John Reed and George F. Weeks’ framing of the Mexican Revolution. As a method of inquiry, textual analysis delves beneath the surfaces of a text – in this case, newspaper articles – to uncover meanings that work to frame news stories and influence audience perceptions of the issues and individuals covered. I chose to employ textual analysis because it is the ideal way for me to uncover how these news stories were constructed in order to produce meanings for readers. Textual analysis is a useful method for overcoming limitations often encountered with traditional content analysis, such as analyzing only manifest content and “numerically evaluable categories” (Fürsich and Lester, 1996, p. 29). Textual analysis is also a particularly applicable method for this thesis because it complements framing theory. Incorporating both framing theory and textual analysis in my research will provide the best opportunity and tools for answering my research questions.

Textual analysis was first prominently used in communication research by the Glasgow University Media Group in the mid-1970s and the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham in the 1980s, among others. According to Fürsich and Lester (1996), textual analysis evolved from earlier literary-critical, linguistic and stylistic methods. Because of its literary and linguistic roots, textual analysis allows researchers to “discern latent meaning, but also implicit patterns and emphases of text” (p. 29). As a research technique, textual analysis “yields a rich and deep sense of media messages and an understanding of the context in which they are produced” (Shah, 1993,
p. 7, quoted in Fürsich and Lester, 1996, p. 29). Furthermore, unlike quantitative analysis methods, textual analysis does not produce statistically analyzable coding categories, but rather results in “the extraction of pivotal cases for further examination” (p. 29).

Interpretation of texts chosen for analysis is also always done in the context of the complete reading, which ensures that any interpretations made from the smaller samples, such as at the paragraph and sentence level, “does not reflect a coincidental account but a prevalent discursive strategy” (p. 29). Interpreting texts is also quite subjective. One researcher’s reading may not necessarily produce the same findings as another researcher’s reading. Personal interpretation is therefore one of the limitations posed by conducting research using textual analysis. As Kellner (2003) points out, “Each reading of a text is only one possible reading from one critic’s subject position, no matter how multiperspectival, and may or may not be the reading preferred by audiences” (p. 15).

My interpretation and analysis of Reed and Weeks’ news articles, therefore, will be only one of the many possible interpretations. My interpretation, however, will be based on extensive analysis and a firm grounding in framing theory, the history of the Mexican Revolution, and the journalism profession, particularly for embedded correspondents in the early twentieth century.

Bearing the usefulness and limitations of framing theory and textual analysis in mind will be key to conducting research for this thesis. As discussed in the theory section of this thesis, news frames are “constructed from and embodied in the keywords, metaphors, concepts, symbols, and visual images emphasized in a news narrative” (Entman, 1991, p. 7). Therefore, since news stories are constructed with words and pictures, frames can be identified by analyzing texts for specific words or visual images.
that appear consistently. As Entman (1991) explains, “by providing, repeating, and thereby reinforcing words and visual images that reinforce some ideas but not others, frames work to make some ideas more salient in the text, others less so – and others entirely invisible” (p. 7). Identifying repetitive and reinforcing words, phrases, and visual images – as well as omissions – will therefore be vital for my analysis.

Specifically, I will analyze the chosen texts for their syntactical structures, which refers to the “stable patterns of the arrangements of words or phrases into sentences” (Pan and Kosicki, 1993, p. 59). I will analyze the articles’ headlines and sub-heads, lead paragraphs, and the frequency and use of quotations, particularly from official sources and common people. I will also analyze the articles based on Gamson’s (1989) five framing devices: metaphors, exemplars, catchphrases, depictions, and visual images, which are used to “invoke images, increase salience of a point, and increase vividness of a report” (Pan & Kosicki, 1993, p. 59).

I chose to analyze these two journalists and the Mexican Revolution for a couple of reasons. First, revolutions are somewhat rare events in history, and to have first-hand accounts of their causes and effects in addition to personal interviews with the major figures published in major media outlets is even more unusual. Furthermore, for language and access reasons, I will focus on the reports these journalists published in U.S.-based publications. The Mexican Revolution is unique because it is one of only two revolutions (the other being the Castro Cuban Revolution of the 1950s and 60s) that occurred in the Western hemisphere in the twentieth century.

Using textual analysis, I will examine a total of twenty-five news articles – five written by Reed and twenty written by Weeks – during the Mexican Revolution,
specifically from March 4 to June 20, 1914, in order to uncover the ways in which they frame news stories to elicit sympathy from readers and also express their own biases toward the individuals and situations they were covering. I will examine only the news stories these journalists wrote about the revolution and revolutionaries, not editorial or opinion pieces, as those are typically written with the understanding that the author’s opinions, viewpoint and biases will be openly stated. Although there is a large discrepancy between the number of newspaper articles each correspondent published, the overall amount of text is similar. Each of Reed’s five *World* articles are two- to four times as long as each of Weeks’ twenty *Herald* articles. In addition, while Weeks’ correspondence was published only in the *Herald*, Reed had contracted with *The Masses* and *Metropolitan* (both magazines) in addition to the *World* to publish much longer stories of his time in Mexico. Therefore, to examine all of the work written by Reed and Weeks and the publications for which they wrote would have been too large an undertaking for this thesis.

I chose to focus my analysis on these news reports from 1914 – specifically from March 4 to June 20, 1914 – because that is when the heaviest coverage of the Mexican Revolution occurred. That is also the period during which articles focused on the revolution, written by Reed and Weeks, were published. Furthermore, 1914 was the year of some of the most notable events of the Mexican Revolution. On April 2, the city of Torreón fell to Villa’s forces. On May 17, the city of Tampico was captured by Gen. Gonzalez. On June 24, Villa and his forces captured Zacatecas. On July 15, Gen. Huerta resigned. And on July 22, an armistice was signed by the primary revolutionaries. Also of significance, the Mexican Revolution took place on the eve of, and during, the First
World War. Between 1913 and 1914, U.S. headlines were focused heavily on the Mexican situation. After mid-July 1914, however, the focus shifted almost entirely to events and battles in Europe. The Mexican Revolution was pushed to the back pages, if not neglected entirely. In fact, one of the last major stories of the revolution covered by the *New York Herald* (not written by Weeks) was the arrival of Carranza and his triumphant forces in Mexico City on August 20, 1914 – the same day the death of Pope Pius X was announced. The Pope made the headlines ahead of Carranza.

I chose to analyze news reports written by Reed and Weeks because both men were American journalists embedded in a revolutionary movement, yet covering the revolution for newspapers and audiences in the United States. Finally, both journalists wrote for New York-based publications – Reed for the *New York World* and Weeks for the *New York Herald*. I think it will be interesting to compare the ways these two journalists wrote and framed their stories for different New York-based newspapers during the same revolution while taking two very different sides.
The Mexican Revolution

Roots of Revolution

Revolutions come in a variety of forms: short and quick or long and drawn out, violent or peaceful, peasant or elite, successful or unsuccessful. Revolutions have occurred throughout centuries and around the world. According to Katz (2001), no matter its form, moment in history or geographical location, the revolutionary process most often involves a radical transformation of the society in which it occurs. New leaders come to power and implement political and economic changes that affect the social fabric of their countries. Revolutions can brew under the surface of a society, creating periods of uncertainty, fear and hope for a populace. Revolutions can be seen as good, evil, social, political, cultural, democratic, even necessary.

Katz (2001) says that although definitions of “revolution” may vary, they generally involve two parts: first, the “downfall of an old regime through nonlegal means (that is to say, not via elections)” and second, the replacement of the old regime by a new regime “that attempts (whether successfully or not) to establish a new political, and perhaps also socioeconomic, order” (p. 5). I argue that another point is also generally involved: the creation and destruction of reputations. As one individual rises to power,
another (or even many others) falls. All three of these proved to be the case with the
decade-long Mexican Revolution.

Long before the revolution officially began in 1910, the seeds of uprising had
taken root. The history of Mexican civilization after the Spanish conquered Mexico is
replete with accounts of misery, hardship, domination and subservience. According to
Cumberland (1972), “conquering Spaniards destroyed the ancient cultures and imposed
their style of European civilization: a paternal and absolutist political structure, a
capitalistic economic system that benefited the few and impoverished the many, and a
caste society that relegated the Indian and mixed-blood majority to subservience” (p.
xvi). The Spanish social and political structure remained dominant in Mexico even into
the early twentieth century, when the wheels of revolution began quickly turning.

By 1900, then under the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz for twenty years, Mexico
appeared to be flourishing. Cumberland (1972) describes a turn-of-the-century Mexico in
which important cities were connected by working railroads, industrialization had finally
taken hold, and mining and raw material exports appeared to have significantly boosted
the Mexican economy. In fact, under Díaz, Mexico had become a “neocolonial society
where the old abuses were becoming worse” (pp. xvii-xviii). Fewer individuals owned
land – the lifeblood of Mexican people for centuries – than ever before. The haciendas,
“encouraged by benevolent laws and compliant officials, swallowed up small private
holdings and even ejidos – the Indian communities that had survived centuries of
attempts to destroy them. Debt peonage increased and so did hunger; the inherent
tendency of the hacienda to produce at minimum levels meant that most Mexicans ate
less each year” (pp. xvii-xviii). The strain of shrinking land holdings coupled with
increasingly lower food production bred animosity among those in the lower classes. Cumberland (1972) claims that under Díaz, in 1910, “nearly seventy percent of the Mexicans depended directly upon agriculture for a livelihood, but less than two percent owned land” (p. 230). Similarly, Quirk (1960) says that by 1910 “less than five percent” of the Mexican population owned the vast majority of the country’s cultivable land (p. 2). Although their exact statistics differ slightly, both Quirk (1960) and Cumberland (1972) agree that while the masses depended on it for sustenance, the wealthy controlled the land.

The wealthy not only controlled the land, but also controlled the peasants living on it. As Quirk (1960) explains, “peasants were as good as bound to masters of haciendas” (p. 2). In rural areas of the country, the government kept guards on duty who tracked down peasants who owed money or other debts and returned them to their masters. If a peasant died and had outstanding debts, his family was held responsible. And yet, as difficult as life was for peasants in rural areas, “peasants in cities fared little better, working in unsanitary and unsafe conditions for minimal wages” (p. 2). Because of the peasants’ increasing difficulty in simply surviving, Mexico at the turn of the twentieth century was ripe for revolution.

In an article written for the socialist periodical The Masses, John Reed explained the Mexican Revolution to his readers in the following way: “In the first place, it is not a revolution of the middle class; it is a slowly growing accumulation of grievances of the peons – lowest class – which has finally burst definitely into expression. There is not one peon out of twenty who cannot tell you exactly what they are all fighting for: Land” (Knudson, 2003, p. 61). And yet, while the masses of peasants (Reed’s “peons”)
understood that land reform was vital to their continued existence, and agreed, as
Cumberland (1972) points out, that the haciendas and wealthy landowners were the
dominant force impeding more widespread land ownership, very few of the “hacendados
gave any encouragement to the new rebellion” (pp. 230-231). And yet, the peasant
rebellion steadily grew until it became an all-out revolution in 1910 and, by the end, cost
roughly one million lives (Knudson, 2003).

Although the dates generally given for the Mexican Revolution are 1910 to 1920,
Tuck (1984) argues that it would actually be in the best interests of accuracy to “limit that
identification to the 1910-1914 period,” because the six years from 1914 to 1920 were
spent primarily enduring various power grabs by semi-victorious revolutionaries (p. 82).
Furthermore, the most significant points of the revolution occurred between 1914 and
1915, a time when the Mexican people were “offered a choice of ideologies. The answer
was given on the field of battle, in parliamentary debate, and in revolutionary
proclamations” (Quirk, 1960, pp. 4-5). The year 1914, as will be discussed in more detail
in the methodology section of this thesis, is also significant because it is the primary year
during which John Reed and George F. Weeks covered the Mexican Revolution for
American newspapers.

*The Mexican Revolution: From Diaz to Carranza*

In 1910, beginning with a revolt led by Francisco Madero, the Mexican
Revolution brought the downfall of Porfirio Díaz’s thirty-six-year dictatorship. Diaz
was, for all intents and purposes, a dictator, “despite claims to democracy, a constitution
and elections” (Quirk, 1960, p. 2). During the 1910 presidential election, Madero, “a
member of a rich, landowning family from the northern state of Coahuila,” ran against Díaz (p. 2). Madero was imprisoned until after voting ended, however, and when the results of the elections were announced, “few were surprised to learn that Díaz and his unpopular vice president, Ramón Corral, had been chosen again for another six-year term” (p. 3). In October 1910, Madero denounced Díaz’s election as a fraud and laid claim to the Mexican presidency in a document titled the Plan of San Luis Potosí.

Apparently the Mexican people agreed with Madero. After enduring more than thirty years under Díaz’s regime, the Mexican peasantry felt it was time for a change.

Subsequently, in 1911, Díaz was forced into exile and Madero, who had become the political figurehead of the revolution, was elected president (Knudson, 2003). Victory was short-lived, however, as Madero and his vice president, Pino Suarez, were murdered in Mexico City on February 22, 1913, in a coup led by General Victoriano Huerta. Huerta, the “‘bloody usurper’ in Mexico’s revolutionary tradition, assumed the provisional presidency while the martyred Madero gained a popularity in death which he had never achieved in life” (Quirk, 1960, p. 7). Partly as a result of Madero’s murder and Huerta’s take-over, Mexico became embroiled in civil war – in addition to the new revolution. Francisco “Pancho” Villa, located in the northwest, Venustiano Carranza, located in the northeast, and Emiliano Zapata, located in the south, all strongly opposed Huerta’s coup – and so at first together, then individually, they began their own power grab (Knudson, 2003).

In late February 1913 news of Madero’s murder reached Carranza in Cuatro Ciénegas (Smith, 2003). Carranza, who was then governor of Coahuila, refused to recognize Huerta as the new president of Mexico. Carranza formed an alliance with
Villa, who was in Chihuahua, and with Alvaro Obregón, who was in Sonora and, by March 26, 1913, had written his Plan de Guadalupe (Smith, 2003). In the Plan de Guadalupe, Carranza denied Huerta’s claim to the presidency and named himself “First Chief of the Constitutionalist Army in charge of the Executive Power” (Quirk, 1960, p. 9). He did not lay claim to the Mexican presidency, understanding that he could not constitutionally become president without an election. The significance of Carranza’s refusal to declare himself the provisional president of Mexico lay in his ultimate goal of becoming the legally elected president of Mexico. He knew that, according to the Mexican constitution, interim officials could not succeed themselves in permanent office (Quirk, 1960). And yet, acting as First Chief, Carranza pledged to drive Huerta from power and reestablish Constitutionalist rule (Smith, 2003; Quirk, 1960). The Plan de Guadalupe quickly became the banner for the Constitutionalist cause because it gained acceptance by most revolutionaries and, by the end of 1913, Carranza had established his own national capitol in Hermosillo (Cumberland, 1972).

The Battle of Torreón

One of the most important events in the entire history of the Mexican Revolution was the spring 1914 battle for the city of Torreón. Torreón, located in the heart of the wealthy cotton-producing Laguna district, was the “economic and transportation nerve center for most of Mexico north of Zacatecas and east of the Sierra Madre. Its connections with Durango, Zacatecas, Chihuahua, and Saltillo made it of critical military importance, and here resided the headquarters of a vast military district” (Cumberland, 1972, p. 29). Torreón was also significant because it was the site of a large junction of
the Central Mexicano railroad, with lines running to Parral, Saltillo, and Monterrey in the
east, and to Zacatecas and Mexico City in the south. The city of Torreón itself had been
occupied since the beginning of 1914 by Huerta’s federal troops, under the command of
General José Refugio Velasco (Quirk, 1960). Federal troops and Colorados had been
heavily entrenched throughout Torreón’s surrounding countryside to prevent
Constitutionalist approaches to the city. The hills surrounding Torreón were a maze of
trenches, and heavy artillery was dug into the slopes. General Velasco had “openly
boasted that the city of Torreón was impregnable to rebel [Constitutionalist] attack” (p.
19). And yet, the Constitutionists had to find a way to oust Velasco and the federalists
because their presence in Torreón blocked Carranza from reaching Saltillo, and, perhaps
more importantly, blocked both Carranza and Villa from reaching Mexico City: the seat
of presidential power. If Carranza’s Constitutionalist forces could take control of
Torreón, Huerta’s reinforcements would be prevented from entering Chihuahua, roughly
three hundred miles away, and Carranza would have a virtually unobstructed path to
Mexico City and the presidency.

One obstacle to Carranza’s forces lay in the fact that federal troops would not
wage war in the open. Most of the fighting of the Mexican Revolution took place in, or
on the outskirts of, towns and cities. The revolutionaries, therefore, were often unable to
take advantage of any element of surprise since small rebel bands or armies were forced
to attack towns and cities by advancing toward them through open countryside (Quirk,
1960). They were then either “repulsed or succeeded in capturing the fortified point, with
the federals fleeing along a railroad to the next town” (p. 14). The various federal and
Constitutionalist armies fighting during the Mexican Revolution most often relied on the
railroads to get their men and machinery from one town to another – thus increasing the importance of controlling major railway junctions. Just as troops had begun to rely on more modern modes of transportation (railway cars instead of horses or marching on foot), they had also begun relying on more modern weapons, such as heavy cannons and artillery, machine guns, and grenades. Huerta and his federalists possessed more modern weaponry than the Constitutionalists, which proved to his advantage – at least as long as the supply lines to Mexico from the United States continued operating smoothly. In early 1914, however, Huerta’s advantage slipped. American president Woodrow Wilson decided to ban continued shipments of arms to Huerta, “even to the extent of seizing the port of Veracruz,” which insured Huerta’s ultimate defeat, because the Constitutionalists continued to receive supplies through the Texas-Mexico border (Quirk, 1960, pp. 10-11).

The outcome of, and the battle for, the city of Torreón has been well documented in history books, and was extensively covered by John Reed for the *New York World*. According to Cumberland (1972), “it was undoubtedly the most destructive engagement to that date, both in lives and property. Considering the entire campaign from March 20 to April 15 as one battle for control of the Laguna City, the campaign probably cost three thousand dead and five or six thousand wounded among contestants and civilian population” (p. 118). Putting the battle for Torreón in context and explaining its significance is important for any analysis of Reed’s coverage of the event as well as the revolution as a whole.
The Convention of Aguascalientes

Important to note are the political battles raging during and after Reed and Weeks’ coverage. In September 1914, Villa officially renounced Carranza and the two severed their ties, putting aside any pretense of amicability. The beginnings of the split were documented by Weeks as early as June, 1914. As Cumberland (1972) explains, “during the period between Huerta’s destruction of constitutional government in February, 1913, and the reinstitution of constitutional government in May, 1917, the political process was a shambles” (pp. 212-213). Furthermore, as long as the revolutionaries felt they had a common enemy in Huerta, their “mutual hatreds and jealousies were kept within reasonable bounds. But in the late summer of 1914 relations among the various caudillos degenerated” (Quirk, 1960, p. 101). Although the leaders were not usually openly hostile toward one another, they agreed that they had little chance of establishing a permanent, peaceful government without instituting some drastic changes in the revolution’s leadership. Huerta, Zapata, Villa and Carranza each imposed their own conflicting political decrees on the Mexican people. Then, finally, on October 10, 1914, many of the Mexican leaders from across the country gathered together in Aguascalientes to discuss the future of the country from a political perspective. Carranza and Villa, however, were conspicuously absent from the Convention of Aguascalientes. And, although Villa sent a representative in his stead, Carranza did not. As First Chief, Carranza could not attend the Convention because attending simply as a delegate “would have put him on equal footing with a hundred others, his vote having no more weight than that of a captain or major” (Quirk, 1960, p. 114). And he could not send a representative because doing so would have meant admitting that the Convention was a
sovereign body, rather than simply a “‘junta’ of advisers with no legal status” (p. 114). Finally, Carranza also understood that one of the Convention’s primary purposes was to elect his successor – a problem for Carranza because of his firm belief that he would still be elected president of Mexico.

*The Mexican Presidency*

For a while, at least, Carranza’s belief became reality. On August 18, 1914, Carranza arrived in Mexico City “to take charge of the capital and set up Mexico’s first national revolutionary administration” (Quirk, 1960, p. 61). Carranza named a cabinet for his provisional administration and also formed a civilian government in the Federal District (Quirk, 1960). Villa, of course, opposed Carranza’s rise to power, and on January 31, 1915, declared himself “in charge” of the Mexican presidency (Anderson, 2000). For the time being, however, Carranza triumphed over Villa. Carranza’s Constitutionalist government was officially recognized by American president Woodrow Wilson on October 19, 1915. And yet, while revolution raged in Mexico, by the time Carranza officially took the oath of office in 1917, World War I was raging in Europe. Carranza’s victory was not to last, however. After his murder on March 20, 1920, the Mexican congress elected Adolfo de la Huerta interim president. de la Huerta served in that capacity for six months, until official elections on September 5, 1920, put Alvaro Obregón in office. Obregón remained in office until 1924 and became the first Mexican president since Porfirio Díaz to complete a full term (Cumberland, 1972).
Francisco “Pancho” Villa was born June 5, 1878, in the Mexican village of Río Grande, located in San Juan del Río, a rural Durango municipality. It is a matter of public record that Villa, the eldest of five legitimate children born to Agustín Arango and Micaela Arámbula, was given the baptismal name Doroteo Arango at birth (Tuck, 1984, p. 23). (That he changed his name later in life is somewhat understandable, considering that the name Doroteo is generally given to females.) To better understand Villa’s actions as a revolutionary, one must understand his background. Villa “sprang from Mexico’s rural proletariat, lived a childhood of brutish poverty, and was driven to banditry by the inequities of a social system in which his opportunities for advancement were nonexistent” (p. vii). For a man born a peasant, however, Villa became one of – if not the – most recognizable and memorable figures of the Mexican Revolution. This is partly because of his romanticized reputation as a dangerous bandit prior to his involvement in the revolution. Tuck (1984) says that Doroteo-cum-Villa began living as a bandit in September 1894, at age sixteen. Villa had become an outlaw and a “folk hero” after he killed a federal soldier who had allegedly raped his sister (Knudson, 2003). After the murder, Villa fled to the mountains of Durango and spent twenty-two years “as a bandit rustling cattle from rich haciendados until the revolution gave him a place in the scheme of things” (Knudson, 2003, p. 62). As a revolutionary, Villa engaged in battles across Mexico. He made a name for himself (whether heroic or villainous) among the Mexican people and found many supporters across the country. He was in contention for the Mexican presidency, however, with Carranza and Zapata, both of whom proved to be...
formidable opponents. And yet, to simply call Villa an infamous bandit or a semi-successful revolutionary and nothing more would be misleading. In addition to these “occupations,” during his lifetime Villa was also a “sharecropper, a butcher, a horse trader, a keeper of accounts, and according to one source, an unwilling military conscript” (Tuck, 1984, p. 22). Of course, he is best remembered as a legendary bandit-turned-revolutionary.

Villa, according to Anderson (2000), “rose from international obscurity to become a media sensation – from one revolutionist among many in early 1913 to Mexican revolutionary without equal eighteen months later. So remarkable was his sudden visibility that in late 1914 he began to jockey for American diplomatic recognition of his movement” (p. 3). Much credit for his rapid rise to international fame must be given to Villa himself. For a man with little or no formal education, he had an uncanny ability to attach himself to powerful men – particularly those working in American media, such as John Reed – and use them to his advantage. Villa’s increasing popularity in the United States was due in large part to mass media portrayals of him (Anderson, 2000). Although American media accounts initially focused on Villa’s military prowess, Villa was also able to successfully generate political propaganda in the American press that was favorable to himself and his cause. American media portrayals of Villa also reflected what was considered good copy at the time and therefore sold newspapers. Villa orchestrated his own self-promotion in the mass media – both in the United States and in Mexico, where he owned his own propaganda newspaper, Vida Nueva (Anderson, 2000). Villa employed publicists and bribed reporters and editors in both countries to portray him in a favorable light, sold his romanticized story to Hollywood, and “charmed,
bullied, deceived, censored, and cajoled foreign news reporters into casting him in a favorable light” (p. 45). As Anderson (2000) further points out, “Villa successfully promoted himself as aesthetically attractive – as an attractive, active, hands-on leader, a fearless warrior, vital, robust, and possessed of uncommon horse-sense” (p. 115). These accounts of Villa only underscored the rift widening between himself and Carranza, and enhanced the differences between the two revolutionaries.

After enjoying a successful career as one of Carranza’s generals, Villa gradually began to “dispute the First Chief’s leadership. He [Villa] was a charismatic leader to the masses, but erratic and uneducated, and therefore unappealing to the middle class reformers who surrounded Carranza” (Richmond, 1983, p. 59). While Villa was born to a life of hardship as a “peon” in rural Mexico, Carranza was born in the city to the privileges of an educated middle class (Quirk, 1960). Villa, however, exuded all of the passionate characteristics that Carranza did not. He was “virile […], earthy, passionate, [and] given to emotional outbursts” (Quirk, 1960, p. 12). Cumberland (1972) perhaps best describes the profound differences between Villa and Carranza, and the impact that those differences had on their relationship and the ultimate outcome of the revolution:

[Pancho Villa and Venustiano Carranza] were poles apart in attitude, education, and personality, and from their first encounter near Ciudad Juárez in 1911 their relations were somewhat strained. Villa was volatile, quixotic, crude, and unlettered in spite of a high intelligence. Carranza was deliberate, cold, thoughtful – scheming, his enemies said – suave, and sophisticated. Villa had a great sense of personal pride and personal honor; Carranza had a great sense of Mexican pride and national, as well
as personal, honor. And they both had an enormous \textit{don de mandro} – the ability and the need to command. Villa respected most of Carranza’s good qualities, but he saw him as a \textit{perfumado} and a \textit{chocolatero}, without either the ability or the audacity to lead troops in the field, but with unlimited ambition. Carranza saw Villa as a semi-savage with delusions of grandeur who could be used by every schemer who happened to be in his good graces, and with unlimited ambition. And since both were partially right but saw themselves in quite different light, the breach was inevitable. (pp. 127-128)

Thus it came as little surprise when Villa officially renounced Carranza and struck out on his own revolutionary track in September 1914.

\textit{Venustiano Carranza}

Venustiano Carranza was born September 29, 1859 – nearly twenty years before Villa – to a middle-class family in Cuatro Ciénegas, Mexico. In 1887, he ran for and won the office of municipal president (mayor) of Cuatro Ciénegas, and he remained in that position for eleven years, until 1898. Before the downfall of Díaz’s regime, Carranza served as a state deputy and a federal senator, and he briefly held the position of interim governor of Coahuila in 1908. In May 1911, Francisco Madero made him Secretary of War, and when Madero officially became president of Mexico, Carranza successfully ran for the position of governor of Coahuila (Tuck, 1984). Carranza emerged as a national leader in 1913 after he defeated “the usurper,” Victoriano Huerta, and “won out over rivals Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata because he, more than these other men,
understood the nature of the unrest that had precipitated the Revolution” (Richmond, 1983, p. 22). Having lived all of his life under the dictatorship of Díaz (albeit as a member of the middle class) Carranza at least understood the roots of unrest in the peasant population, if not the current situation. Quirk (1960) describes Carranza in the following way:

Carranza was a man of property, of middle-class mentality like the dead president [Madero]. Tall, taciturn, with an Olympian beard, his person was the hallmark of respectability and legality in the Constitutionalist revolution against Huerta. He was the living proof of the revolutionary claim to the inheritance of the Liberal traditions. […] He was aloof, usually approachable only through intermediaries, men such Isidro Fabela, Félix Palavicini, Rafael Zubarán Campany, and the rest of the Carrancista clique of lawyers, engineers and educators who grouped themselves around their First Chief. He could be admired or hated; he was too detached from his fellow citizens to be loved. He was incredibly honest and insufferably conscious of his own rectitude. […] His speeches were uninspiring, long-winded, and dull. […] The First Chief said, wrote, perhaps even thought, little that was important or worth remembering. He was bourgeois mediocrity incarnate. (pp. 9-10)

And yet, not everyone who knew Carranza or interacted with him would have agreed with Quirk’s assessment. Even historians disagree to some extent about the true nature of Venustiano Carranza. Richmond (1983) describes Carranza as tall – over six feet – and an excellent horseman, just like Villa. Carranza, he says, “manifests characteristics of the
classic Mexican caudillo” (p. 6). And while Richmond says that Carranza was somewhat reserved in his manner, he also says that Carranza was “simpatico enough to draw support from all social classes” (p. 6). This description differs entirely from Quirk (1960), who described Carranza as a man who was unloved by the general population and only appealed to others within the Mexican middle class bourgeois. The conflicting descriptions of Carranza found in contemporary biographies is indicative of the conflicting accounts of Carranza published and circulated in the mass media during the revolution.

Carranza was negatively portrayed in several media outlets, both in the United States and in Mexico (Anderson, 2000). He was associated with violence in the revolution and thus implicated in the media as a “sneak and a thug;” he was depicted as “vain and excessively opinionated,” as “dictatorial,” and as “frightened of Villa politically” (p. 91). Furthermore, in several press accounts, Carranza was portrayed as the “consummate Mexican Sneak – slightly barbaric, oafish, egoistic, haughty, defiant, and disingenuous” (p. 146). Particularly in American media accounts, Carranza was portrayed so as to typify “Mexicanness” through four key variants of sneakiness: “first, he was slightly savage; second, he was disrespectful and defiant toward the United States; third, he presented himself in false light, in part to disguise his cowardice; and, fourth, his behavior was contemptible” (p. 155). The American press tended to dismiss Carranza and favor Villa through comparing Carranza’s “sneakishness” with Villa’s “more favored character as the archetypal Warrior” (p. 146). In order to counteract the negative opinions being formed about him both at home and abroad, and to respond in kind to Villa’s thus-far successful propaganda, Carranza found it necessary to establish his own
propaganda machine to disseminate favorable information about himself and his revolutionary ideals. In many ways Carranza’s propagandistic activities closely resembled those of Villa (Anderson, 2000). “For example, Carrancista consuls disbursed thousands of dollars to support and bribe news publications in Mexico and the United States” (p. 99). And yet, Carranza’s publicists did not try to present him as physically appealing, and thus compare him to Villa in that way. Instead, Carranza’s publicists stressed his experience as a leader and his toughness and quiet vitality that impressed even the highest ranking officials he encountered.

Carranza received even wealthy and influential visitors “in his usual garb of a simple military tunic with only brass buttons breaking the monotony of olive drab, grey, or khaki” – which is how he was dressed during one interview with John Reed (Richmond, 1983, p. 6). Not only was Carranza a modest man, but he was also shrewd, with relatively few vices; a man who never smoked or drank excessively. Because Carranza was stubborn, tirelessly ambitious, impressive, and had emerged as the clear, decisive leader of the Mexican Revolution, he “would finally have to be assassinated in order to be shorn of power” (p. 7).

Biographers for Carranza and Villa are not the only ones to present the two revolutionaries in divergent lights. Reed and Weeks’ coverage of the Mexican Revolution and its major players often differed drastically as well, leading readers of both reporters’ accounts to wonder which, if either of them, was “right.” As there is no way to determine the “truth,” this study will at least show the reporting techniques both reporters – and many others like them – used to frame Villa, Carranza, and the revolution as a whole.
John Reed: Reporter and Revolutionary

John Reed was born in Portland, Oregon, in 1887 into a “prominent family that later suffered business losses” (Knudson, 2003, p. 61). He attended Harvard University from 1906 to 1910, became sub-editor of American Magazine and also became a “forerunner of the 1960s ‘New Journalism’” (p. 60). Also known today as ‘Literary Journalism,’ New Journalism involves reporting news “with greater evocative techniques to compete with the visual and immediate impact of television” (p. 60). Although Reed reported on the Mexican Revolution long before the advent of television, his writing style was “literary – even poetic – and at times seemed to stretch the truth to offer the essence of an event or personality to readers unfamiliar with Mexican culture” (p. 60). Reed learned during his brief career, particularly the time he spent in Mexico, that “stories of history can assume the power to shape readers and events” (Lehman, 2002, p. 1). In that context, it makes sense that Reed was sympathetic to the Mexican revolutionaries’ cause and felt the need to share events south of the border with his fellow Americans in a way that would encourage them to feel empathy for the Mexican situation. Knudson (2003) attributes Reed’s sympathy for the revolutionaries to his youth and his liberal education and claims that Reed “was not a rebel from the outset” (p. 60). However, he did ultimately become as much a part of the Mexican Revolution as many of Villa’s troops, traveling with them from battle to battle across Mexico.

In 1914, at age twenty-six, Reed was one of the “youngest correspondents to cover a major revolution” (Tuck, 1984, p. 83). Not only was he one of the youngest foreign correspondents in Mexico, but Reed “went to Mexico in December 1913 as an untested freelance reporter [and] emerged four months later as a $500-a-week literary
superstar and the self-styled confidante of Mexican rebel Pancho Villa” (Lehman, 2002, p. 94). Prior to his coverage of the Mexican Revolution for the *New York World*, Reed had only ever published poetry and short stories in “small-circulation radical publications [...] such as the *Metropolitan* and *The Masses*” (Knudson, 2003, p. 60). Reed’s association with *The Masses* only seemed to deepen his commitment to social issues and helped him progress even closer toward involvement in the Mexican Revolution (Tuck, 1984). Reed, who had been interested in Mexico since his youth, arrived there in December 1913, shortly after Huerta’s coup. By April 1914, Reed was a “conduit of information, accurate or embellished,” for his readers back in the United States (Knudson, 2003, p. 60). Although he initially reported on the situation for *The Masses* beginning in January 1914, his primary coverage of the Mexican Revolution was featured in a series of five stories focused on Pancho Villa and the battle of Torreón, published in the *New York World*.

According to Knudson (2003), “Reed came to idolize Villa, admiring his swift, forced charges of calvary [sic], coupled with surprise night attacks” (p. 63). The first time that Reed and Villa met, both men became instantly fascinated with each other. Reed got his foot in the door of Villa’s movement by establishing contact with Villa’s troops – “a small band of 100 Indians, known as La Tropa” – in January 1914 after they captured the town of Ojinaga (p. 62). Villa and Reed’s first meeting, which took place in El Paso, Texas, on February 27, 1914, made the lead headline of the *New York World* on March 1, 1914, under the caption: “Villa is Brutal, Yet He Has Ideals, *World* Man Finds” (Knudson, 2003, p. 62). While his descriptions of the infamous revolutionary were not always glamorous, Reed wrote honestly and with a spirit that captured the imaginations
of his readers and made them want to also be on Villa’s side. According to Lehman (2002), Reed’s writing style simply reflected the journalistic standards of his time; “today’s practice of customarily effacing the reporter’s point of view was not the standard of journalism then” (p. 45). Although this has already been shown to not necessarily be the case – objectivity had already been introduced as a journalistic ideal by the turn of the century – Lehman is not the only scholar or historian to grant Reed leniency in his reporting. Tuck (1984) says, “with journalistic standards being what they were, and with Reed’s colleagues filing fraudulent dispatches from the safety of hotel rooms, he undoubtedly felt entitled to embroider his narrative here and there. He, after all, was one of the few who had actually crossed the border and taken the risks” (p. 113). Reed was able to get to the front lines of the revolution because of his friendship with Villa. Villa had enough political authority and liked Reed so much that he issued the reporter a pass “ordering civil and military authorities to give Reed aid and protection. He also would be allowed to use railway and telegraph lines without charge” (Knudson, 2003, p. 62). This gave Reed an advantage over other reporters in Mexico for getting his story back to the *World* office in New York.

Although it has been noted that Reed sometimes embellished his news reports, his personal papers and journals show that he did rely extensively on “copious note taking and journaling to summon the details that made his writing most descriptive” (Lehman, 2002, p. 41). According to Lehman (2002), “each evening, after riding long days on horseback or in a primitive buggy across the Mexican outback, Reed took the time to enter a handwritten page or two in his journal” (p. 41). And what Reed wrote was the truth as he saw it, Mexico as he experienced it and the Mexican people as he encountered
them. As for the factual errors found in Reed’s reports, Tuck (1984) excuses them, noting that “many were caused simply by Reed’s faulty knowledge of Spanish” (p. 105). And yet, even Reed’s embellishments and errors did not negatively influence his ability to get to the heart of the story (Tuck, 1984). “He might misunderstand an idiomatic phrase or err on dates and places, but his aim was perfect when he keyed in on major figures,” such as Villa and Carranza (p. 105).

From his writings it is also evident that Reed firmly believed in the powers of his man – Pancho Villa – to restore Mexico to glory. According to Lehman (2002), “the overriding theme of John Reed’s writing – both early and late – is its deep interest in human relationships within a context of social and political power” (p. 6). During his time as a correspondent, Reed certainly became close to the Mexican people and felt compelled to write about them, in the context of the situation as he understood it, for an American audience. He rode alongside Villa’s men and completely shared their way of life for a time. In his autobiographical fragment, written a few years before his death, he wrote, “I made good with these wild fighting men, and with myself. I loved them and I loved the life. I found myself again. I wrote better than I have ever written” (Knudson, 2003, p. 63). Reed certainly believed, like Weeks, that he told the truth about the Mexican Revolution, the Mexican people, and, in particular, Pancho Villa.
George F. Weeks: Reporter and Revolutionary

When Venustiano Carranza and his triumphant Constitutionalist forces entered Mexico City in August 1914, George F. Weeks was riding alongside them (Smith, 2003).∗ (Carranza formally became the president of Mexico in May 1917.) During the Mexican Revolution, Weeks became the principal U.S. publicist for Carranza’s Constitutionalist regime (Smith, 2003). Weeks was born in Whateley, Massachusetts, in 1852 and worked a variety of newspaper jobs in New England before contracting tuberculosis in the mid-1870s (Smith, 2003). In 1876, he moved to California to recover from the illness and by 1879 was well again. By then he had also begun working for the San Francisco Chronicle where, “over the next several years, he worked his way out of the composing room into the positions of proof reader, city and night editor, and, finally, editor of the Chronicle’s Sunday Magazine” (p. 4). During this time, he was also still writing stories for several Eastern U.S. publications, was a “telegraphic news correspondent” for the New York World, and “operated a newspaper clippings service and prepared advertising campaigns for real estate developers” (p. 4). Weeks’ experience in the newsroom helped him become the editor and publisher of the Bakersfield Daily Californian in 1890 and to purchase the Alameda Daily Encinal in 1895 (Smith, 2003). Weeks also became the director of the Mexican Bureau of Information and later founded and edited the Mexican Review/Revista Mexicana, “a bilingual magazine that promoted Mexican interests in the United States” (p. 4).

After his son and future daughter-in-law were murdered in 1906, Weeks sold the Alameda Daily Encinal and “abandoned his other journalistic endeavors to seek

∗ Very little is known about George F. Weeks, hence my heavy reliance on Smith’s (2003) research.
recuperation in Mexico” (p. 4). He established himself in Coahuila, a state in northern Mexico, and for a period of time “was the only foreign resident of Cuatro Ciénegas,” which was also Carranza’s hometown (p. 4). There, Weeks befriended Carranza and Carranza’s extended family, “many of whom later held key political, military, and diplomatic positions in the Constitutionalist revolutionary movement” (p. 4). Weeks’ “personal charm” and “natural popularity” (p. 5) helped him to eventually become an important figure within Carranza’s inner circle, and his experience in the newspaper and advertising business helped him become a primary publicist for Carranza’s Constitutionalist movement.

Weeks had become an invaluable resource to Carranza, although he had initially been skeptical of the revolution’s chances of success. When Carranza named himself First Chief in 1913, Weeks was on a train headed back to the United States. However, rebels on the train who were bound for Piedras Negras convinced Weeks that the revolution would be successful and that Carranza would drive Huerta from power (Smith, 2003). Weeks, being the journalist he was, recognized “the newsworthiness of an event of potentially spectacular proportions and indisputable international significance [and] immediately contacted the *New York Herald* and secured appointment as a field correspondent” (p. 4). Securing this appointment was potentially the most important move of Weeks’ journalistic career and it would set him on the path he would follow for the rest of his life.

The *New York Herald* instructed Weeks to “remain close to Carranza’s headquarters” (Smith, 2003, p. 4). Weeks’ personal connections to Carranza and his inner circle, which he had formed in the early days in Coahuila, “gave him access to the
First Chief’s entourage and facilitated his ultimate emergence as Carranza’s principal liaison to the U.S. press” (p. 4). Weeks was in such a unique position – and such a spectacular position from a journalistic standpoint – that he was the one to whom Carranza “made his first public statement outlining and justifying his rebellion to the American public” (p. 4). Subsequently, in 1913 and 1914, Weeks became the sole foreign correspondent to accompany Carranza on a “rugged, 1,000-mile trek on horseback across the western Sierra Madres to join Alvaro Obregón on the Pacific coast” (p. 4). Carranza subsequently appointed Weeks publicist for his Constitutionalist regime and Weeks gladly accepted. He believed wholeheartedly in Carranza and in the Constitutionalist cause. This support came through both in Weeks’ actions and in his reporting.

Not all journalists were as sympathetic to the Constitutionalist movement as was Weeks. According to Smith (2003), “Constitutionalists denounced as blatantly biased and false the reporting of foreign correspondents, newspapers, and wire services” and, consequently, “an effort to cultivate favorable public opinion in the United States became a vital component of Carranza’s diplomatic posture toward his northern neighbor” (p. 5). Weeks’ role in this propaganda effort was invaluable to Carranza. He worked diligently, via his reports in the American press, to elicit support for and diplomatic recognition of Carranza from the U.S. government, garner support from American readers for Carranza’s Constitutionalist movement, and enhance Carranza’s image internationally.

In order to facilitate these objectives, in late 1914 and early 1915, Weeks helped organize the Pan American News Service (PANS), “an international wire service operating through the Constitutionalist Secretariat of Foreign Relations” (Smith, 2003, p.
5). As the head of the PANS office in Galveston, Texas, Weeks would receive information concerning the movements of Carranza and the Constitutionals from Veracruz, prepare news stories and press releases based on that information, and distribute the prepared materials to PANS branch offices in every city that housed a Mexican consulate (Smith, 2003). Weeks worked for PANS in Galveston until June 1915, when Carranza called him back to Veracruz and placed him in charge of all publicity directed towards the United States (Smith, 2003). Weeks’ main responsibility in Veracruz became gathering and editing information regarding “Mexican military, political, and economic affairs,” which was often provided by Carranza’s Department of Information and Propaganda (p. 5). From the information he gathered, Weeks “framed news reports favorable to the Constitutionalist government and transmitted the information to Mexican agents in the United States” (p. 5). However, and not surprisingly, reports that came from PANS were often considered unreliable and biased because of the wire service’s (and Weeks’) blatantly obvious affiliation with Carranza and his Constitutionalist government.

Weeks continued to further ingrain himself in the Constitutionalist government and became increasingly close to Carranza himself. Weeks became Carranza’s “go-to guy” when it came to publicity and news reporting in the United States. As evidence of this, in March 1916, “Carranza authorized Weeks to take control of the Mexican government’s information service in Washington, D.C.,” which Weeks did and subsequently renamed the Mexican News Bureau (Smith, 2003, p. 6). While he was in charge of the Mexican News Bureau, Weeks abandoned any and all pretexts that he, or the news agency, was operating independently of Carranza’s regime. He allowed the
agency to openly function as the “official public relations office of the Mexican government” in the United States (p. 6). Weeks’ affiliation with and promotion of Carranza’s regime and the Mexican Revolution did not stop there. Weeks convinced Carranza to finance the startup of the *Mexican Review/Revista Mexicana*. As a result of Weeks’ convincing, the Mexican government not only paid the journal’s startup costs, it also paid the salaries of Weeks’ staff, including writers, translators and office personnel, and “bore all of the expenses for [its] production and distribution” (p. 7).

Weeks, who signed the articles that he wrote for *The Mexican Review* as “El Gringo,” touted the publication as a bilingual illustrated monthly journal whose purpose was to promote Mexican interests and culture in the United States; to “place Mexico in a proper light before the world” and tell readers the “truth” about Mexico (Smith, 2003, p. 7). The *Mexican Review* was published from 1916 to 1921, had a maximum circulation of 25,000, and, as its primary audience, targeted “public officials, civic and religious organizations, business groups, schools and universities, public and private libraries, newspaper exchange services, and potential investors” (p. 7). Weeks’ job, as he saw it, was to “disseminate true reports favorable to Mexico, which cannot be obtained any other way, and to refute false news that appears in the United States press” (p. 8).

To the end of his life, Weeks believed that throughout his time covering Carranza, the Constitutionalists and the Mexican Revolution, he told the truth. He believed that the American press did not report on the events or the major players of the revolution accurately or fairly, and he actively proclaimed that it was his duty to do so.
Analysis of John Reed and George F. Weeks’ 1914 newspaper articles on the Mexican Revolution reveals that both correspondents wrote highly descriptive, personalized accounts of major battles, prominent figures and Mexican citizens. Although these points have overlapping elements, for analytical purposes, I will discuss each question separately. I will also discuss how both correspondents frame their news reports using various descriptors and reporting techniques. In my conclusion, I will discuss how these points and patterns combine to reveal the nature of framing and embedded war correspondence in the early twentieth century.

Framing the Mexican Revolution’s Major Events

As anticipated, analysis reveals that both Reed and Weeks reported favorably on the actions and attributes of the Constitutionalist rebels (the side both men favored and worked for), framing them in order to emphasize their bravery and military superiority over the enemy: Huerta’s federal forces. Analysis also shows that Reed and Weeks’ framing of the federals is predominantly negative, focusing on the federals’ defeats and casualties, their cowardice, and their defection to the rebels.

1 For the sake of readability, please note that, unless otherwise indicated, all references in this chapter to writings by Reed and Weeks come from the New York World and the New York Herald, respectively.
Accounts of the rebels’ heroism and courage – both in and out of battle – are scattered throughout nearly every article analyzed for this thesis. For example, Reed’s March 25, 1914, *New York World* headline on the battle of Torreón declares that a “Victorious Rebel Army Forces Its Way Through Bogs, Canals, and Barbed Wire Into Streets of Beleaguered City” (March 25, p. 1), framing the Constitutionalists as brave, determined and ultimately victorious even before getting to the full text. Reed further describes the Constitutionalists as “victorious” (March 25, p. 1), “triumphant” (March 25, p. 1), and “crazily courageous” (April 1, p. 1). Weeks calls the rebel army “formidable” (May 16, p. 5), “confident” (May 16, p. 5), and even lucky (May 24, pp. 3-4) in his news stories, framing his favored side in the most positive light possible. And yet, even reports that would otherwise be considered damaging to the Constitutionalists’ image are framed to elicit support for the rebels from the reader. Reed’s March 25 headline states: “Villa’s Triumphant Forces, To Avoid Spread of Epidemic, Fire Barracks, and City Presents Scene of Conflagration” (March 25, p. 1). Even setting fire to Torreón and destroying the city is turned into an act of goodness: in other words, if Reed’s account is to be taken at face value, the rebels did not set fire to Torreón in order to further defeat the enemy, but rather to halt the spread of a cholera epidemic.

Both Reed and Weeks also frame the Constitutionalist army as brave, superior warriors in their accounts of major battles. Reed writes that the rebels advance steadily toward the next target and that Villa’s army advances toward the enemy “unchecked” (March 25, p. 1), thus emphasizing the Constitutionalist army’s courage, determination and fierce reputation. Reed also writes that Villa’s “crazily courageous” (April 1, p. 1) infantry and cavalry are responsible for defeating the federals at Torreón, further framing
the rebels as victorious and brave. He writes that the rebels “drove the Federals out” of
Torreón (March 25, pp. 1-2) and “pursued [them] relentlessly” (March 25, pp. 1-2), even
in the face of “dire loss” (March 25, p. 2). All of Reed’s battle accounts paint a scene for
American readers of a superior military force (the Constitutionalist rebels) dominating a
weak and cowardly force (the enemy federals). Reed paints these scenes by using Pan
and Kosicki’s (1993) thematic framing structures to tell the news stories of battles
through themes of bravery and triumph.

Weeks also frames the rebels as confident, an attitude which he claims is
“predicated to a large extent on the long succession of victories against the very men the
army is now about to attack” (May 16, p. 5). Moreover, he writes, “not an officer, from
Villa down, and not a soldier has the slightest doubt of the outcome of the impending
battle” (May 18, p. 5). Thus, the victorious rebel army is framed as somewhat cocky in
its confidence. Weeks further emphasizes the sheer might of the Constitutionalist forces,
declaring that it is a “formidable army for the 12,000 discharged federals now in Saltillo
to make a last stand against” (May 16, p. 5). In other words, the federals stand no chance
of winning, and the Constitutionists are framed as ultimately victorious in the
revolution.

Accounts of the battles at Torreón, Gomez Palacio, Saltillo, and San Luis Potosí
are consistently framed by both Reed and Weeks to emphasize the bravery and triumph
of the Constitutionists over the federals. As Reed writes of the battle of Torreón, “Gen.
Villa has won a complete and sweeping victory […] having] routed the Federals to the
north, scattering many of them over the United States border for their lives. He has
smashed and driven everything before him, from the United States border to Torreón”
The rebels of Reed’s accounts are framed so that readers will believe they cannot lose. He describes “fierce hand-to-hand fighting in the streets” (March 25, p. 1), and declares that “the flaming of buildings put to the torch and the devastation generally that fell on Gomez Palacio have also been visited on Torreón” (March 25, p. 1). These dramatic battle descriptors – Pan and Kosicki’s (1993) depictions and visual images – leave little doubt in readers’ minds of the ferocity, bravery and superiority of the Constitutionalist army. Furthermore, the rebels’ continued attacks on Torreón, which are “renewed with blasting effect” (April 1, p. 3), suggest the anticipated defeat of the federals and yet another Constitutionalist victory.

Reed does not fail to acknowledge the physical and emotional toll the revolution has taken on the soldiers, however. He tells World readers that “the exhausted soldiers of both forces fought as in a delirium” (April 1, p. 3). Framing the soldiers this way shows them as real people, humanizing them and putting the reader in touch with how desperately the Constitutionalist soldiers – Mexican citizens – are fighting for what they believe is right. The rest of the battle account is framed decidedly in favor of the rebels, for Reed writes that in spite of the enemy federals’ valiant attempts, Torreón ultimately falls to the Constitutionists. He describes the scene thus: “house by house, street by street, was defended by little knots of [federal] men until not one was left alive. Panic also seized great numbers, who threw down their arms and fled out to the desert in the darkness” (April 1, p. 3). This description of the federals under attack further emphasizes the rebels’ victory as well as the federals’ defeat and cowardice. The story frames the federals in a very condescending and cowardly light, thus inspiring distaste for the losing side of the revolution among American newspaper readers.
This is not to say that all accounts of the federals were demeaning and all accounts of the rebels were uplifting. To his credit, Reed does report on the destructive actions of the Constitutionalists after their victory at Torreón, writing that although “no quarter was given” to the federals after the city was conquered (April 1, p. 3), “exasperated rebels, half mad with fatigue and drunk with fighting, threw dynamite bombs into the Federal trenches” (April 1, p. 3). This is by no means a glamorous look into the rebels’ actions, which seem almost unnecessarily cruel, but the following description of their actions only gets worse:

Panting soldiers fell upon barrels of liquor and broke into stores and private houses. They were to be seen staggering along with yards of priceless Spanish lace and ostrich feathers, shouting and singing, while a hellish chatter of rifle fire, the scream of shrapnel and the stab-stab of machine guns steadily killed in the distance. (April 1, p. 3)

The latter half of Reed’s description almost seems to excuse the rebel soldiers’ destructive actions. After all, Reed seems to imply, is it any wonder the troops felt the need to release their frustrations after living day-in and day-out surrounded by so much devastation? And, as Reed shortly points out, the looting and drunkenness only lasted one night, since “there came a swift change at dawn” when General Villa’s staff finally entered the town (April 1, p. 3). Reed explains to his readers that “order was established in a trice. It was strictly forbidden to loot. The drinking and selling of liquor was prohibited on pain of death. And these orders were rigidly enforced” (April 1, p. 3). Drunken soldiers become orderly once more, the burning of a city becomes an act of
mercy, and rampant destruction is short-lived. Through Reed’s framing of these events, even destruction and drunkenness are made to appear more acceptable.

In marked contrast to the positive framing given to the Constitutionalists, both Reed and Weeks frame the federal forces as cowardly and inferior to the rebels. Not only do both correspondents use disdainful descriptors, they also write at length about the problems the federals have with troops deserting Huerta’s regime to join the Constitutionalists. To begin with, Reed’s March 25 World headline states that 1,500 federals were slain at Gomez Palacio, reinforcing prior claims that the rebels were winning the revolution. Weeks’ May 24 Herald headline plainly states that the federals are simply cowards who turn tail and run – even at the sight of a much smaller rebel force: “Rebels Take Saltillo as Federals Flee Without Fight: Huerta Troops Evacuated Town Thursday Night on Approach of Five Hundred Men Under General Robles: Looted City Before Retreat” (May 24, p. 3). And the next day’s Herald headline reinforces Weeks’ framing of the federals as cowards, telling of the federal soldiers’ plans to defect to Villa: “Huerta Troops at Saltillo Refused to Fight the Rebels: Federals Plotted to Murder Officers and Were Ready to Go Over to Villa, but Were Held in Check by General Orozco’s ‘Colorados’” (May 25, p. 4). Weeks’ accounts therefore frame the federals as cowards and traitors, in direct contrast to the praiseworthy ways in which he framed Constitutionalists.

Newspaper headlines describing the federals as cowards and deserters are merely the beginning. The actual articles go much more in-depth. For example, Reed describes the federals as uncaring looters who “refused to fight” (March 25, p. 1), “got no respite” (March 25, p. 1) and “desert” (March 25, p. 2). Furthermore, by writing that the federals
are not only “demoralized” (April 1, p. 1) and “desperate” (April 1, p. 1), but also “mowed down” (March 25, p. 1), “broken beyond repair” (March 25, p. 1), “smashed and driven out” (March 25, p. 1), “silenced” (March 25, p. 2), and “cut to pieces” (March 25, p. 2) by the Constitutionalists, Reed frames the federals as a defeated army that deserves little respect and has no chance of winning the revolution.

Reed also frames the federals as uncaring, writing that the federals “utterly abandoned their wounded in the fields of Gomez Palacio and Torreón” (March 25, p. 2). In the same sentence, he frames the Constitutionalists as caring, claiming that while the federals left their fallen soldiers to die, the rebels were “rushing their men to the Bermejillo emergency hospital and on trains to the general hospital at Chihuahua” (March 25, p. 2). Reed further reinforces the notion that the federals fail to care for their dead and wounded, vividly describing a scene in which “Bodies from the Federal trenches were being dumped into the river at Torreón and the water was unfit for drinking, inflicting untold suffering on the wounded” (March 30, p. 1). Even though much of Reed’s reporting is framed in favor of Villa’s rebels, he occasionally attempts to frame the federals in ways that will allow American readers to realize that the federals are Mexican people, too.

Perhaps, according to Reed’s account, the federals’ disregard for their fallen comrades was due to the complete defeat they endured, since “the loss of life on the Federal side is believed to have been the heaviest of the present revolution” (March 25, p. 1). Reed further describes a demoralized federalist force, in which “it was apparent […] that the heart was waning […] as] their resistance was not of the amazing and admirable stubbornness they had shown at Gomez Palacio” (April 1, p. 1). By describing the
federals in this way, Reed shows some respect for the “enemy.” And, even though readers should now consider the federals thoroughly defeated cowards, readers are shown that the federals were once a strong force with courage and determination.

Weeks’ framing of the federals is similar to Reed’s. He describes them as cowardly, disaffected and desperate, writing: “It is the beginning of the end for the federal army, which has been fighting desperately for months to uphold Huerta’s hands in the North” (May 29, p. 5). The federals, he claims, abandon important points, not even waiting “for any formidable force to attack them. In fact,” he writes, “save for some long range fighting with Robles’ men [Constitutionalists], which was ineffective, they didn’t even make a pretence of defence [sic]” (May 24, p. 3). This type of reporting fed easily into both Reed and Weeks’ framing of the federals as weak and cowardly, and allowed them to write at length about the federals’ rampant desertion.

Reed plainly writes in his _World_ reports that “Federal officers shot bullets in the backs of men who tried to flee” (March 25, p. 1), and explains to his readers:

> The disposition to desert of the Federal forces accounted no little for their defeat, for while the rebels charged in open order, yielding and firing at will, the Federals were compelled to remain in groups, their officers fearful that they would bolt if not held directly under their hands. Under this formation the ranks of slate-colored Huertistas were cut to pieces by Villa’s men. (March 25, p. 2)

This account of events would have inspired little, if any, confidence in the federals from American readers. Neither would Reed’s account that federal officers “with drawn revolvers guarded the roads out of town and ruthlessly shot deserters” (April 1, p. 1).
Both Reed and Weeks went to significant lengths to tell American readers that the federals were not only losing to the Constitutionalists, but losing because of the defection and desertion of their own troops. Weeks writes that “disaffection is rampant and […] these men realize that Huerta’s downfall is close, despite the efforts of officers to keep them from getting any news” (May 25, p. 4). The federals, according to Weeks’ accounts, know they are losing and for that reason the lower-ranking troops are trying desperately to move over to the winning Constitutionalist side. Understanding this, Weeks goes on to say:

The Federal soldiers simply will not fight. They can be driven into a show of resistance for a time, but under continued heavy attack they will not remain in the trenches. Wholesale killing of minor officers and men suspected of fomenting mutiny has been going on in the federal army for days, […] and officers have been found dead in the streets and the outposts, presumably shot by their own men. (May 29, p. 5)

Through vividly describing troop movements and actions, and explaining major revolutionary events from the perspective of the victorious (Constitutionalist) army, both correspondents frame the Mexican situation to inspire confidence and pride in the Constitutionalists and semi-sympathetic disgust for the federals. Both reporters also wrote in ways that support Pan and Kosicki’s (1993) structures of news discourse, which signify the use of frames; namely, rhetorical structures (the stylistic choices made related to intended effects), script structures (the reporter acts as storyteller) and thematic structures (the news story as told through themes).
Framing Francisco “Pancho” Villa and Venustiano Carranza

For the most part, Reed and Weeks’ coverage of Villa and Carranza was as expected from two embedded correspondents who interacted closely with the revolutionaries and ultimately “took sides.” Both correspondents frame the revolutionaries in favorable ways, presenting them primarily as superior leaders and military heroes – each reporting slightly more favorably on their chosen revolutionary. As anticipated, Reed and Weeks both frame Villa using metaphors, catchphrases, depictions and visual images (Pan and Kosicki, 1993) that reinforce the idea of him as an enigmatic legendary figure. Surprisingly, at times both correspondents give contradictory accounts of Villa’s actions both on and off the battlefield. This occurs particularly when they try to maintain his image as a romantic warrior while simultaneously exposing his human, fallible side. Because Villa was Reed’s man, and Carranza was supported more by Weeks, it came as no surprise that Weeks’ overall coverage of Villa is less favorable than Reed’s, and vice versa. Weeks tends to show Villa the man as opposed to Villa the legend. To their credit, however, both correspondents at least once point out Villa’s faults; thus indicating that their reporting was not entirely biased in favor of their own personal opinions.

Structurally, Reed and Weeks’ reports on Carranza and Villa are similar, meaning that each man wrote about the revolutionaries in terms of their powerful positions on and off the battlefield, and described them through quotes and accounts of their actions. This holds true across the news stories analyzed, with one primary exception: John Reed gives a full, detailed account of his meeting with Carranza on March 4, 1914 – something he does not do for Villa, and something Weeks never does for either Carranza or Villa in
his newspaper reporting. In his March 4 news article, Reed paints a clear, realistic picture of Carranza as he sees him, without either obscene flattery or an overwhelming sense of negativity.

For the most part, both Reed and Weeks frame Carranza in a respectful, deferential way. For Reed, Carranza is never just “General Carranza,” as he usually is in Weeks’ reports. Rather, Reed almost always refers to Carranza somewhat reverently as the “first chief” or some derivative thereof. Weeks presents Carranza similarly to the way he presents Villa, taking the approach that will give American readers a sense of Carranza as a more human figure, complete with the same hopes and fears as other men. This is indicative of Weeks’ different framing style, compared to Reed’s.

Pancho Villa

Reed frames Villa in three distinct ways: as a sympathetic, caring and occasionally carefree man, as a fearless warrior and inspirational leader, and finally, as a complex, contradictory mixture of the two. Reed’s March 25 World headline exemplifies this point perfectly: “Gen. Villa Master of Northern Mexico […] Villa Passes Out Food and Coffee to His Struggling Followers” (March 25, p. 1). Seeing both the powerful militaristic and caring humanistic sides of Villa in a single headline is particularly telling of how the rest of the article reads. Reed shows Villa’s personal side through descriptions of Villa’s altruism. Reed writes that after the battle of Torreón, Villa appeared “simultaneously” (as if by magic or divine intervention) with the arrival of a relief train (March 25, p. 1), and “rode among the men as the food and coffee were distributed, now and then putting it forth with his own hand” (March 25, p. 1). The sight
of him doing this “moved the spent men to fiery outbursts of enthusiasm” (March 25, p. 1), and in Reed’s article, Villa is therefore framed through depictions not only as a caring leader, but also as an inspiration to his exhausted troops.

Reed also frames Villa as a man concerned for the value of human lives – on both sides of the revolution. In his April 1 article, Reed writes: “Villa pleads with the Federals to surrender and stop ‘the awful waste of human life’” (April 1, p. 1). And yet, these depictions of a serious, sympathetic Villa stand in stark contrast to the playful, carefree Villa who laughs in the face of danger and turns a blind eye to thievery among his men. Reed shows his readers the Villa who “rode away laughing and waved his sombrero at his men” (March 25, p. 2) after becoming the target of federal artillery fire, as well as the Villa who “winked at the riot and looting” his troops engaged in after the fall of Torreón (April 1, p. 1). Not only is Villa described as “winking” at such actions, but Reed also writes that Villa “gave out orders that whatever a soldier got was his and that the men should not be molested in their pillage by the officers” (April 1, p. 1). These descriptions of Villa the man are freely intermixed throughout Reed’s reporting with descriptions of Villa the conqueror and serve to frame him as a complex figure worthy of his legendary status.

On March 25, Reed writes that the “former bandit and refugee is now the absolute master of Northern Mexico” (March 25, p. 1). That Reed does not credit Carranza or any other general who participated in the fighting or politics of the revolution with the Constitutionalists’ victory shows his favoritism toward Villa as the supreme rebel leader. “The conqueror,” as Reed calls him, “is being cheered to-night by his men and his generals as the great military genius in Mexico” (March 25, p. 1). That Reed calls an
uneducated outlaw a “genius” in his newspaper report underscores his favorable framing techniques and indicates that he shows favoritism to Villa over all others. Reed also favorably frames Villa in terms of his military prowess, writing that Villa “mercilessly pursued the beaten forces” (March 25, p. 1), and, “save when he hurried to Bermejillo to wire his respects to Gen. Carranza, […] has not left the saddle or his command at the fore of the army” (March 25, p. 2). These descriptions frame Villa as a superior military leader dedicated to fighting with all of his might and fury for the rebel cause.

Furthermore, Reed writes:

> Returning from Bermejillo [Villa] found his troops slowing up in their fierce attack on the Federals. It is said that he seized his horse and crying: “Great God, is this the way you fight when I am away?” hurled himself at the enemy with his troops following him in a frenzy inspired by his wanton bravery. (March 25, p. 2)

This is not the only account Reed gives of Villa inspiring his troops, or the only account in which he uses such overly dramatic descriptors as “fierce” (March 25, p. 1), “seized” (April 1, p. 3), “hurled” (March 25, p. 1), “frenzy” (April 1, p. 1), and “wanton bravery” (March 25, p. 2). In his March 25 report, Reed describes the inspirational Villa riding among his troops: “whenever they faltered […] his presence stirred them to enthusiasm and renewed determination” (March 25, p. 1).

And yet, for all of the glowing accounts Reed gives to his American readers of Villa as a sympathetic, caring man and merciless, victorious leader, he also writes of the Villa who enters the battle of Torreón four days after it had begun; a leader who “cheered […] from the opposite bank and yelled gleefully” (March 25, p. 2) while his subordinate,
General Benavides, “led his men in person” (March 25, p. 2). This complex account of Villa as almost cowardly and weak is discordant with Reed’s more numerous accounts of Villa as a brave conqueror. Perhaps Reed describes Villa’s complex personality best in the March 25 account of the battle of Torreón when he writes: “For all the dash and brilliancy of his advance and the merciless pursuit of the routed forces of Gomez Palacio, Villa had not gone headlong to the attack” (March 25, p. 1). Thus, for all of his favorable framing of Villa as a warrior-hero, Reed finally truthfully describes the incongruous revolutionary, presenting him as a man with faults rather than an infallible legend. In this instance, Reed’s framing comes across as more balanced because his account of Villa is more realistic. After all, no man – not even the legendary Pancho Villa – could be brave and good and perfect all the time.

Because of his reporting style and descriptions of Villa, Weeks comes across as less biased than Reed – at least on the surface. He often presents Villa as fallible, and even frames him as a subordinate to Carranza and a less-than-superior player in the revolution. He writes for the Herald on May 10 that Villa acts “in an advisory capacity” (May 10, p. 4), and that “immediately on his arrival [in Torreón] Villa ordered all honors due to General Carranza” (May 10, p. 4). In this way, Weeks frames Villa as aware that he plays follower to Carranza’s lead, and points this out to his American readers in a way that will help them understand the revolutionary power structure. But, from Weeks’ June 17 report, it becomes obvious that Villa grew tired of the power-struggle situation between himself and Carranza and wanted to have the Mexican leadership all to himself. As Weeks writes in his lead to that Herald article, “General Francisco Villa has resigned as commander of the Army of the North” (June 17, p. 5). But, as the headline indicates,
Villa is not content to give up his power entirely: “Villa, Leaving Army, Resumes the Governorship of Chihuahua” (June 17, p. 5). Weeks therefore frames Villa as a man who maintains a prestigious position in Mexican politics, although not the one ultimately desired (the Mexican presidency).

In contrast to framing Villa as the second-in-command, Weeks (like Reed, though not nearly so favorably) also frames Villa as a heroic, inspirational military commander. Weeks’ May 31 Herald headline reads: “Villa Quickly Accomplishes Almost Hopeless Task: Moves His Army of 20,000 from Torreón Toward Saltillo in a Month Though Railroad Had Been Torn Up, Bridges Burned and Water Tanks Destroyed” (May 31, p. 4). Weeks frames Villa as a caring military leader who takes pride in the fact that his train cars are equipped with hospital supplies and surgeons and that “all of his wounded had been cared for” on the battlefield (May 31, p. 4). Similar to Reed’s reports, Weeks describes an inspirational Villa, writing that the Constitutionalists “were preceded into town by Villa himself, who had been riding up and down the line for two days, hustling along his officers” (May 27, p. 5). Weeks goes on to show that it is not only Villa’s officers who respect and applaud his leadership and military prowess, but also the Mexican people. On May 25, Weeks reports that “General Villa received an enthusiastic reception at Saltillo, the residents of the town turning out and cheering him” (May 25, p. 4). And yet, Weeks also sees – and reports to the Herald readership – that Villa is still, at the end of the day, only human.

Weeks is unapologetic for showing Villa as a man with worries, hopes and fears, just like anyone else. His May 15 report states that “it is no longer a secret” that Villa is “anxious over the shortage of ammunition” (May 15, p. 5). In fact, Weeks writes, “Last
night, Villa made a remarkable statement in which he admitted that he was deeply worried over the situation, but still entertained hopes that the United States would raise the embargo” against much-needed arms shipments (May 15, p. 5). Not only is Villa framed as worried and anxious, but also as slightly unstable. On May 18, Weeks writes: “Villa is erratic in his movements, and although he said to-night that no advance is to be made at this time, it would surprise no-one if the commander announced a complete change of programme inside of twenty-four hours” (May 18, p. 5). Through descriptions such as these, Villa is framed as slightly unstable and unreliable. Not only is he “erratic” (May 18, p. 5), he is also “impatient” (May 27, p. 5) and “resentful” (June 17, p. 5) – all descriptions which allude to a human, egoistic side of Villa previously unseen in other news accounts, particularly in comparison to Reed’s reports.

Venustiano Carranza

Although Reed consistently refers to Carranza as the “first chief of the Constitutionalists” (March 4, p. 1), “supreme chief of the rebels” (March 30, p. 1), “supreme chief of the Constitutionalists” (April 1, p. 1), and “head of Mexican rebels” (April 8, p. 1), his framing of Carranza in the New York World is sometimes far less deferential. Overall, Reed frames Carranza as a powerful player in the Mexican Revolution, writing that the “chief’s attitude is consistent” (March 4, p. 1) and that even though he is surrounded by advisers and minders, he tends to ultimately do as he pleases. When Reed met with Carranza on March 4, he explained to his readers that “while the General gives the impression that he wishes to act only on the advice of his counselors, he occasionally breaks away from this resolve and speaks his mind” (March 4, p. 1).
Furthermore, when Carranza’s Chief Secretary of Foreign Relations, Isidro Fabela, tries to interrupt Carranza’s conversation with Reed, the first chief waves him aside, “determined” (March 4, p. 1) to say what he pleases. These descriptions frame Carranza as strong man and serious leader.

Reed also frames Carranza as a polite man, writing: “When the correspondent [Reed] entered the room, the General advanced to meet him and extended his hand” (March 4, p. 1). And yet, for all of his manners and politeness, Carranza ensures that Reed understands without any doubts who is in charge of the revolution. Reed even quotes Carranza explaining to him the relationship between himself and Villa. Carranza says, “Villa and I are in perfect accord. He obeys my orders, as he should obey them, and without question. Why, anything else would be unbelievable” (March 4, p. 1). Carranza later adds, “According to the plan of Guadalupe I am not only chief of the Constitutionalist party, but absolutely chief of the army, every soldier of which, in the entire republic, is at my orders” (March 4, p. 1). Reed thus frames Carranza as the powerful, assertive and dominant leader of Mexico, the revolution and the people.

And yet, for all of the powerful descriptors and Carranza’s own bold statements, Reed manages to frame Carranza as indecisive, nervous, paranoid, old, and unwell. These unelegant descriptions stick with the reader far more than the prestigious ones, showing that Reed framed his reports on Carranza so that American readers would still prefer Villa as the leader of Mexico. In the same March 4 article, Reed paints a portrait of Carranza that is clear – and clearly contemptible – in spite of the uplifting descriptors he uses elsewhere. Reed writes:
The General is tall, of ruddy complexion and wears a full beard. His mouth gives one the idea of indecision, and this is accentuated by his habit of gnawing his beard and clinching his fist as he converses. Smoked glasses partly conceal his eyes. He is hunky of build, but an acute observer leaves the old man with the impression that he is far from well.

No one is allowed to see Gen. Carranza until he has passed a rigid inspection, and then only in the presence of I. Fabela, Chief Secretary of Foreign Relations, or other trusted persons. Once in his presence, the visitor finds himself in a room in which the shades are ever lowered and soon learns that he must not make direct inquiries. (March 4, p. 1)

Although some descriptions in this excerpt, such as “tall, of ruddy complexion,” wearing a “full beard,” and “of hunky build” (March 4, p. 1), could be used to show that Reed actually frames Carranza positively through visual images and depictions, in the context in which Reed wrote them they are decidedly less favorable. Reed may frame Carranza as a strong man, but he simultaneously (and overwhelmingly) frames Carranza as a paranoid “old man” (March 4, p. 1) with numerous nervous habits that inspire little confidence from those who meet him – and therefore should inspire little confidence in American readers or the American government.

Reed is not the only correspondent to characterize Carranza as nervous and paranoid through rhetorical structures. Even though Carranza was Weeks’ man to the end, Weeks described him similarly to the way Reed did. In his June 1 article, Weeks describes Carranza as “mystified” (June 1, p. 6) and apprehensive about maintaining his powerful position, writing that “suspicion is entertained by Carranza that wealthy
cientificos of the Terrazas and Creel type are organizing a fresh revolution” (June 1, p. 6). By June 20, Carranza’s paranoia has grown to the point that Weeks writes, “Sentries about the palace and General Carranza’s residence have been doubled in fear of a plot against the first chief. All are forced to explain their business before entering” (June 20, p. 5). Although these descriptions of Carranza and his actions are less than favorable, and inspire little confidence in a reader, Weeks does not always frame Carranza as suspicious and mistrustful. In fact, much of his reporting frames Carranza in ways that reinforce Carranza’s power and detail his exemplary actions for empowering Mexico.

For Weeks, Carranza is “the Constitutionalist leader” (May 10, p. 5) and “first chief of the revolution” (June 17, p. 5) who gives “final instructions” (May 10, p. 4) on important matters concerning the revolution and Mexico as a whole. Carranza accepts Villa’s resignation, showing that he is superior to Villa. Not only does Weeks frame Carranza as the superior leader, but he also frames Carranza as a great thinker and great politician. On June 1, Weeks reports that “Carranza has selected his entire Cabinet” (June 1, p. 6) and drafted a platform which will “include a programme for the solution of the agrarian problem” (June 1, p. 6). Partly because he appears to have the interests of the common people at heart while making important political decisions for the future of Mexico, Carranza is also framed as well-received by the Mexican people and his own rebel soldiers. On May 10, Weeks reports that when Carranza “arrived at the railroad station 3,000 troops, headed by Villa himself, were lined up to meet him,” and that “the populace gave a warm greeting to General Carranza and in front of the cuartel became so insistent for a speech that Carranza violated his set rule and yielded” (May 10, pp. 4-5).
Thus the all-powerful Carranza is framed as a man still connected to the land and his people.

Weeks reiterates this portrayal of Carranza as a man of the people, and a man like anyone else, by explaining in his May 6 article that Carranza “feels keenly the exodus of foreigners and the closing down of the great mining and manufacturing plants in Chihuahua. He regards it as a reflection on his repeated utterances that Americans and other foreigners are absolutely safe in the country” (May 6, p. 5). Carranza is depicted as having feelings, worries and concerns, albeit connected to his huge responsibilities as the leader of the revolution and the soon-to-be president of Mexico. Finally, Weeks frames Carranza as a humble, realistic leader. He quotes Carranza saying, “I myself am merely head of the constitutionalist forces, but by virtue of that leadership I am empowered to gradually start reforms, which I shall do until it is possible to establish our national officers by an election” (May 10, pp. 4-5). Thus, Carranza admits his responsibilities as first chief of the revolution and allows for the reality that his position may only be for the interim instead of the long-term, as he would wish. By framing Carranza as a mixture of suspicious, yet powerful and humble, Weeks is able to show Herald readers that Carranza is a real person with aspirations and feelings, in contrast to Villa, who has been primarily framed through metaphors, catchphrases, depictions and visual images – thematic and rhetorical structures (Pan and Kosicki, 1993) – as an untouchable and enigmatic legend.
Framing of Mexico and Mexicans

Very little is said about the country of Mexico itself by either Reed or Weeks. In fact, the only description of Mexico comes from Weeks’ May 31 report, in which he writes: “Most of the country between Torreón and Saltillo is of a desolate, desert character, where little or no subsistence is to be found for either human beings or beasts” (May 31, p. 4). This description does, however, set the scene for Weeks’ descriptions of the Mexican people, particularly the Constitutionalist troops and their camp followers, with whom he interacted daily.

Weeks does his utmost to frame Mexicans as happy, determined people in spite of their extreme poverty and the victimization they suffered under the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz. He also compares them to Americans, describing them in no uncertain terms as competent and trustworthy – in direct contrast to how Mexicans were usually portrayed in the American press – as dirty, drunk, lazy and untrustworthy (Anderson, 2000). Weeks’ May 31 Herald article is perhaps the most openly biased in favor of Mexican people of his 1914 newspaper publications. In it, he writes that the “faithful [Mexican] railroad employees showed themselves worthy of the trust put in them” (May 31, p. 4). This was written in response to the quick repair of destroyed railroad lines which Villa needed in order to move his 20,000 troops to Torreón. Framing the Mexican railroad workers as competent and trustworthy, Weeks further reports:

And yet there were not wanting men and newspapers to declare at the time the American railroad employees threw up their places and left the country, about two years ago, that Mexicans were not competent to run the railways! The experience of the last few months, of which the prompt
movement of Villa’s army is only an instance, has shown how poorly
founded was this slur upon the ability of the natives to cope with an
unparalleled situation in railroading. (May 31, p. 4)

Not only does Weeks’ rhetorical structure frame Mexican men in such a dramatically positive light, he also indicates that this is only one example of the many good things they do.

Weeks also writes favorably of the Mexican women who have followed their men into battle. In contrast to the common American conception of Mexican women as repressed and victimized (Anderson, 2000), Weeks describes the Mexican women he encounters as resourceful and seemingly perpetually happy. He explains that Mexican soldiers often take their “entire [families] with [them] to war” (May 31, p. 4) and that the women make the best of all bad situations encountered along the way. For example, Weeks describes the Mexican women camp followers he has encountered during the revolution thus:

Women have lighted fires on the floors of the [railroad] cars, a layer of earth or ashes serving to protect the wooden planks from the heat, and are cooking for their soldier companions. (May 31, p. 4)

He goes even further in his favorable descriptions by directly comparing Mexican women to American women, and openly suggesting to the Herald readership that Mexican women are more competent and have more fortitude than American women, who have been spoiled by modern conveniences. He writes:
Fires are lighted and the women go about their task of preparing food and
caring for their children as calmly as any American woman would perform
her household duties in the most modernly furnished and appointed home.
Nothing can exceed the patience and fortitude with which the female
companions of the soldiers undergo hardships which the average
[American] woman would think absolutely unbearable. They are good
natured at all times, laugh and chaff at each other day and night, and one
would sooner imagine them participants in a jolly gypsy camping
expedition than a band of grim fighters, many of them going to their
deaths and all certain of undergoing hardship of the most painful
character. (May 31, p. 4)

By framing Mexican women as “good natured” (May 31, p. 4) and having strong resolve
in the face of danger and adversity, Weeks openly challenges the predominant American
beliefs about Mexico and Mexicans.

Moreover, Weeks frames the Constitutionalist soldiers just as positively as he
does their women followers. He repeatedly describes the soldiers as “in the best of
spirits” (May 18, p. 5), “in splendid spirits” (May 16, p. 5), and singing “national
anthems as they fired their guns in the air” (May 16, p. 5). He also frames them as happy
and with positive outlooks, even in the face of war, writing: “The spirit of the army is
that it is invincible. This extends through officers and men, and there never are
suggestions of a possible defeat in the coming campaign” (May 16, p. 5). This visual
image of the rebel troops as optimistic and brave carries through both Weeks’ and Reed’s
reporting, as shown here as well as in the previous analysis of the way both
correspondents frame major battles and events of the revolution.

Reed describes the Constitutionalist soldiers as “tired but brave veterans” (April 1, p. 1) and “victorious rebels” (April 1, p. 1), who “marched stoically over mud flats in the face of artillery fire” (April 1, p. 1). He takes time to particularly point out to his American audience the Durango brigade, which he describes as “mountaineers armed only with old Springfields and sparsely supplied with ammunition. These are the men,” he writes, “who last fall fought before Torreón for eleven days without food and without success. They go into battle singing” (April 1, p. 3). Thus, the soldiers as well as the women are framed by both reporters as always happy, even though they are poverty-stricken and face innumerable hardships on a daily basis. Reed further describes the troops as having “ragged” garb (April 1, p. 3); “they are without shoes save cow-hide sandals [and] many are even without blankets for the bivouac” (April 1, p. 3).

For all of the negative framing of the federal soldiers in battle accounts, both Reed and Weeks frame the low-ranking federalists as Mexicans first and foremost. As explained previously, many reports focused on the proclivity of the federal troops to defect and fight for the Constitutionists. Reed explains this dichotomous situation (they are enemies, but still Mexicans) in such a way that the federals are framed as downtrodden peons, forced into service for Huerta against their wishes, and therefore nearly forgiven for fighting on the “wrong” side of the revolution. He writes that the federal troops are:

Composed of jailbirds impressed out of prisons and peons impressed into the army by Huerta’s orders. In some cases the whole male peon
population of provinces have been thus forced into the ranks. They fight with their officers stationed behind them with drawn swords and pistols. (April 1, p. 3)

Therefore, according to Reed’s accounts, the federal soldiers who have been forced into fighting for the enemy are not really to blame. By framing them as downtrodden “peons” who had no choice, he is further able to show that the Constitutionalist cause is “right” and just. Weeks reiterates Reed’s point in his own articles, writing on May 31 that when the federals deserted and joined the rebels, “they asserted that they had been impressed into service” (May 31, p. 4). Therefore, both Reed and Weeks use Pan and Kosicki’s (1993) rhetorical, thematic and script structures to frame the Mexican people in ways that make them appear more like everyday people than the “dirty Mexicans” most Americans assumed them to be (Anderson, 2000). By writing about both men and women in a favorable, realistic way, Reed and Weeks are able to connect the Mexican people to a far-removed American audience and garner sympathy from them for the Mexican plight.
Framing of News Reports

Use of Quotes and Attributions

Both Reed and Weeks quote Villa and Carranza on several occasions, incorporating the revolutionaries’ declarations and thoughts into *New York World* and *New York Herald* news articles. Reed also quotes Mrs. Francisco Villa in his April 1 *World* article. For the most part, however, the vast majority of Reed’s news reports lack direct quotes from either official or unofficial sources. He relies heavily on vague official-sounding attributions to lend credibility to his stories. For example, he attributes information through phrases such as “High Constitutionalist officials had said” (April 8, p. 1) and “It is generally admitted by officials in Juarez” (April 1, p. 1), or “From the Constitutionalist headquarters at Juarez” (March 30, p. 1). On one occasion he writes that “Gen. Carranza and his Cabinet to-night persisted in denying” the validity of information with which Reed confronted them and which he had received from other unnamed sources (April 1, p. 1). It appears from this account that Reed trusts his unnamed sources more than the official sources that he is actually willing to name, thus indicating, by refusing to name his sources, that he may have been constrained by professional pressures and conditions which helped to produce his particular news frames. Then, on March 30, Reed explains that “these reports were completely confirmed by Villa’s dispatch of to-night” (p. 1), showing his preference for what Villa says, as opposed to what Carranza reports. At one point, Reed lends his personal attribution to a quote, writing that Carranza “declared today to a staff correspondent of The World” (March 4, p. 1). Putting his own name to the event and showing that he was there to hear the declaration himself helps lend credibility to what follows in the text.
Although he also attributes his information to excerpts from news “bulletins” (April 8, p. 1), most often Reed simply writes: “It is said that” (March 25, p. 2) or “It has been said that” (April 8, p. 1) – neglecting to use any direct quotes or specific attributions in order to more concretely support the validity of the information he reports.

Weeks, for his part, directly quotes high-ranking revolutionary figures, including Carranza, Villa, and Generals Luis Benavides, Benjamin Argumedo, Pablo Gonzales and Pablo Robles, far more frequently than Reed does. For example, Weeks writes that “Villa continues to assert” (May 16, p. 5) and “Carranza and Villa confidently assert” (May 10, p. 4). Like Reed, several of his attributions include first-hand accounts of his conversations with these officials, such as “General Carranza to-day told me” (May 6, p. 5) and “Luis Benavides when I asked him what final arrangements had been made said…” (May 10, p. 5), which, again, helps lend credibility to the news reports.

Even though Weeks uses more direct quotes than Reed, he, too, relies on vague, official-sounding attributions to make his points seem credible. For example, Weeks refers to a collective of principal revolutionaries multiple times by writing: “all leaders agree” (May 10, p. 5), “the leaders say” (May 13, p. 5), “leaders believe” (June 1, p. 6) and “the general sentiment among the leaders is that…” (June 1, p. 6). Even more specifically – though still without naming names – Weeks writes that “Constitutionalist officials now believe” (May 24, p. 3) and “official confirmation was received here to-day that…” (May 24, p. 3). Using the same basic syntactical structures over and over again in his news reports allows Weeks to frame his stories to achieve increased credibility. Furthermore, he inserts personal accounts for factual leverage, such as, “I am informed on the highest authority” (June 1, p. 6) and “while unwilling to be directly quoted,
officials frankly state that…” (June 1, p. 6). Weeks also cites news “bulletins” (May 12, p. 6) he received from General Gonzales regarding the battle at Tampico. Although he relies on official-sounding attributions to strengthen his stories and lend credibility to them, Weeks fails to name his sources. These omissions simultaneously frame his news reports in a more official light and detract from his own credibility regarding his use of sources.

Again, like Reed, Weeks relies heavily on vague, unattributed information, using such non-descriptors as, “According to reports brought here to-day” (May 19, p. 6), “it is reported” (April 29, p. 5; May 27, p. 5; May 29, p. 5), “reported here” (May 13, p. 5), “recent reports were that” (May 16, p. 5), or some variation thereof. He also uses “it is said” (May 19, p. 6; May 25, p. 4), “it is believed” (May 19, p. 6), and “news was received” (May 19, p. 6) frequently as well. Perhaps most interesting to read are the attributions Weeks gives to spies, scouts and prisoners, as well as his frank admissions that he is dependent on those sources for news and cannot ascertain their accuracy. For example, Weeks writes: “This is the situation as given out here unofficially to-night” (April 29, p. 5), giving the idea that the information may have come from a trustworthy source who simply wished to not be named – although this cannot be verified. He furthermore explains to the Herald readers that, “if dependence is to be placed on reports of spies and scouts” (May 16, p. 5), the information he presents is accurate. Weeks frequently refers to his sources as “scouts” (May 16, p. 5; May 18, p. 5; May 25, p. 4) and “spies” (May 16, p. 5; May 24, p. 3) and, on May 24, tells his readers:

Newspaper reporters have not been allowed to proceed to Saltillo, but they probably will be able to get away in the morning. In the meantime I am
dependent for news on such official dispatches as the censor chooses to make public. If one-half of the information that General Robles has sent here is accurate the federal indulged in a wholesale destruction of property before leaving Saltillo. (pp. 3-4)

This report is indicative of similar ones Weeks gives on numerous occasions, when he writes accounts of battles and important military and political proceedings based on nothing but the authority of unverifiable, unnamed sources.

Not only does he rely on “scouts” and “spies” for information, but Weeks also relies on federal deserters and prisoners of war. His May 16 report to the Herald states:

“We [correspondents] are dependent on the reports of spies and scouts on conditions in Saltillo, and these necessarily are very meager and in some measure inaccurate” (p. 5). Although Weeks qualifies the May 16 article with the admission that the accounts he is printing are “very meager” and “inaccurate” (p. 5), and includes in another such report, “If the reports which deserters and prisoners give are accurate…” (May 29, p. 5), more often than not he simply writes, “I am informed by officers who now are prisoners here” (May 25, p. 4) and “prisoners say” (May 25, p. 4).

Neither was Reed immune to reprinting information garnered from unofficial, unknown sources. His April 8 World headline attributes information previously printed in the newspaper to “Rumors,” which had “Told of a Serious Defeat of the Rebels” (p. 1). Relying on unverified and untrustworthy sources, not naming sources, and printing information based on third- and fourth-hand accounts are serious issues currently facing modern journalists. However, as previously discussed, the ideal of journalistic professionalism, objectivity, and the constraints embedded correspondents faced, as they
would have been understood in the early twentieth century would have been seriously stretched to their limits by this type of reporting.

**Reliance on Conjecture**

Not only do both correspondents rely on rumors and questionable sources for their information, but Weeks, in particular, seems to rely heavily on conjecture to make his points in the press. On April 29, he reports that “Surface indications are that there is perfect harmony [between Carranza and Villa]” (p. 5) and, furthermore, that “There is much talk here that Villa and Carranza are keeping up a pretense of friendship for the United States to get the embargo raised, but officials scout the idea” (April 29, p. 5). His speculations about the state of affairs in the revolution do not end there. On May 13, he reports: “No official confirmation of the fall of Mazatlan has been received here, but it is believed that General Obregon has captured the place” (p. 5). Furthermore, the information printed in his May 17 report ends with the statement, “but this cannot be confirmed” (p. 4), indicating that what is framed as the truth may not be. Perhaps one of Weeks’ plainest admissions of reprinting unverified information appears on May 24, when he writes: “Where the federals have gone is a mere matter of conjecture, but it seems reasonably certain that…” (pp. 3-4). Stories that rely on conjecture appear to be more editorial and opinion-based in nature than straightforward news reports, and yet embedded reporters, as discussed previously, were/are often left with little choice. The news must be printed, after all.
In addition to printing information based on conjecture, both Reed and Weeks report their own personal opinions on the revolution in their newspaper articles, again leading one to believe that their “news stories” are little more than glorified editorials or shortened personal essays – neither of which fit the criteria of an objective, factual, information-based news report. Both men also insert themselves into the stories they write, often framing themselves through Pan and Kosicki’s (1993) script structures (again, where the reporter acts as a storyteller) as important individuals with access to sources, high-ranking individuals and information unavailable to the general public. Reed does this, for example, by writing, “It is thought here by those of us who know the situation” (April 1, p. 1), implying that he is one of the select few who are privy to “knowing” the situation discussed. Weeks does this on several occasions as well, writing: “I am informed that…” (May 13, p. 5; May 25, p. 4) and “I expect the entire army, save a small garrison for the protection of the city, to be on the road by Saturday” (May 27, p. 5). Including their own thoughts on revolutionary matters frames them as knowledgeable about major events and troop movements, and having inside information. Perhaps most telling, however, is Weeks’ June 17 report on Villa’s resignation. He writes that “General Villa’s resignation came as a surprise to many persons, but to those who were in close touch with the developments of the last few weeks it was not unexpected” (p. 5), fully implying that he is intimate with the revolution’s major players and has inside knowledge that permits him to know of important events before they actually occur.
Both correspondents also provide first-hand accounts of important interviews and events, lending believability to their accounts of interactions with important figures. At times, however, these first-hand perspectives have the opposite effect, detracting from the reporters’ credibility, accentuating their bias, and making them appear unscrupulous. On March 4, Reed gives an in-depth account of his one-on-one interview with Carranza. He begins by writing that the interview was held “in spite of the continued efforts of [Carranza’s] entourage to prevent newspaper men from having personal talks with him” (March 4, p. 1), giving the impression that Carranza and his advisers have something to hide, which Reed plans to uncover. Reed then indicates that the interview itself gave cause for suspicion because, in Reed’s words, “In place of the verbal questions, The World correspondent was forced to write his interrogations, then hand them to the General’s advisers, that they might be inspected before they were presented and answered” (March 4, p. 1). Not only does framing this account in such a devious manner give readers the impression that Carranza has something to hide and must be looked after by advisers so as to not say anything he should not, but Reed further heightens this image of a young child needing watching-over by writing that “Fabela, seeing the General was discussing matters in the plainest speech, again sought to interrupt, but he did not succeed” (March 4, p. 1). Tacking on “but he did not succeed” at the end of the sentence does little to assuage the already-framed image of Carranza as paranoid, suspicious, and in need of “minders” to keep from revealing secret information to newspaper reporters.

Moreover, Reed’s April 1 World article has much the same effect, in that it depicts Carranza and his entourage as hiding information and frames them as liars. He begins the story by writing:
Gen. Carranza and his Cabinet to-night persisted in denying that Torreón had fallen, and said no message had passed through the wires from the front to-day, but since it is known that several did pass through on different subjects, this is thought to be an excuse to hide the true condition of affairs at the front. (April 1, p. 1)

And yet, in his attempt to frame Carranza as deceptive, Reed reveals that he is not immune from taking underhanded action in order to gain information. He admits using bribery to get what he wants, writing: “By a liberal use of gold telegraphers were persuaded to admit that Mrs. Villa received the message about 4 o’clock” (April 1, p. 1).

To his further personal discredit, Reed prints information which, once again, he cannot verify, and frames Mexican officers as immature and ignorant. He reports:

An armistice was agreed upon between Gen. Villa and Gen. Velasco Sunday night to permit the latter to treat for surrender. This news is uncertain, but it sounds like the truth. Federal soldiers or the Constitutionalists may have broken the truce in a fit of anger after taunting each other, since these men can never be persuaded to keep truces and have no notion of what they mean. (April 1, pp. 1-3)

The fact that Reed plainly writes “but it sounds like the truth” and “federal soldiers or the Constitutionalists” (emphasis added) indicates that, really, Reed has no idea what he is writing about and is simply framing the situation in such a way as to discredit Mexicans on both sides of the revolution. In reality, it only serves to make Reed look uninformed and biased.
Life as an Embedded Correspondent

Weeks’ June 1 New York Herald article shows the perils that can befall embedded correspondents. He describes, in vivid and personal detail, the mechanics and effects of various artillery on individuals caught up in war. The headline reads: “Shrapnel Shells, More Terrifying than Dumdum Bullets, Sing Song of Death: Used by the Federals in the Battle of Torreón with Telling Effect: Are Called Devilish” (June 1, p. 6) and gives readers an idea of what the text of the article includes. Weeks’ lead is perhaps even more telling. He begins by using onomatopoeia to place his readers in the middle of the battlefield. The first sentence of the article reads: “BOOM! Whee-ee-eee-eeee-eeeee-POW! CRASH!” (June 1, p. 6). The sound effects are followed by, “A person who has never heard the sound of shrapnel shells and never has been within their range can have no conception of its absolute fiendishness. Both the sound and the effects of the missile are best described as devilish” (June 1, p. 6). Weeks goes on to describe both the sounds and mechanics of shrapnel shells in minute detail using metaphors and highly descriptive visual images. Later in the article, however, he gets to the crux of the issue: what it is like, as an embedded correspondent, to watch people around him get maimed and die. As Weeks reports:

While trying to escape from the line of shrapnel fire in the battle of Gomez Palacio, a soldier, running directly in front of me, was hit by the iron case of an exploded shell and one of his legs was cut off just above the knee. The cut was almost as sharp as if it had been done with a cleaver. (June 1, p. 6)
As if the personal account and vivid description were not enough, the understanding follows that Weeks realizes that he could just as easily have been in the same position as the maimed soldier running before him, or the other newspaper correspondents who did not survive covering the revolution. Weeks recounts the bombing of a house filled with known non-combatants, framing federal soldiers as murderers of innocents and framing the job of embedded correspondents as dangerous, deadly, and unpredictable. His account of the bombing is as follows:

A shell entered the kitchen of a house in which a party of newspaper reporters had taken shelter during the bombardment of Gomez Palacio by the federals, after they had retreated to Torreón. It passed completely through a three foot adobe wall and then exploded, instantly killing three persons who were in the room and wrecking the apartment. The house was in a locality which was singled out by the federal gunners at Torreón, three miles distant, apparently for the sole reason that they had been repeatedly notified that it and adjoining edifices were occupied by non-combatants and refugees. Despite this notification, however, every day for more than a week the federals bombarded the house morning, noon and night. (June 1, p. 6)

Weeks’ personal, intimate accounts of these two events are indicative of how embedded correspondents live day-in and day-out on the battlefield, and serve to frame the Mexican Revolution in ways that allow American readers to see the horrors of war and the mortality of human life.
Censorship

One final way that Weeks and Reed frame the Mexican Revolution is through their accounts of news censorship, which is rampant and on-again, off-again. Although Reed is able to plainly report Carranza’s next expected movements in his March 4 *New York World* report, by March 30, he writes that “censorship had been imposed only because decisive results had not been achieved” (March 30, p. 1). On April 1, the situation becomes clearer as Reed explains that Villa is “censoring all the news so as to be able to destroy his prisoners and generally to allow vengeance to be taken up on the city by his troops” (April 1, p. 1). Although it appears that Reed understands – and possibly even supports – Villa’s decision to censor news reports in order to maintain secrecy and the element of surprise, he still must obey Villa’s orders and suppress reporting what information he may have.

Weeks writes about, and appears to fall under the rules of censorship, more frequently than Reed. On May 12, Weeks reports that “newspaper correspondents were called in and informed that until further orders they must not send out news of rebel movements” (p. 6). He is able to circumvent being entirely censored, however, and finds ways to report at least a little of what he knows to the *Herald* readership. For example, on May 12, he writes: “While I am not permitted to send news of troop movements, I can state that within a few days there will be nothing but a strong garrison left here, all other forces having gone east or south” (p. 6). He continues the report with the detail that “General Torres’ large force is close to San Luis Potosí, but I am in position to state that no general attack had been made upon that point up to this afternoon” (May 12, p. 6). Occasionally, Weeks blames the lack of available information on the telegraph wires
being “down” (May 12, p. 6; May 13, p. 5), although most often he is forthcoming with the fact that his news reports are being censored by Constitutionalist officials. Weeks also implies that he self-censors his reports, such as on May 13, when he writes, “the destination of various columns [of troops] I am not permitted to make public” (p. 5). But the fact that he knows he will be censored if he reports troop movements is evident because he simply omits the information to begin with. This is yet another indication of the workaday constraints embedded correspondents face(d).

While self-censorship occurs frequently with Weeks, it is not always the case. For example, on June 3, Weeks writes that “the censor freely passed dispatches making the facts public” (p. 4). And, on some occasions, he indicates that although he is not able to publish information at the time, he will be able to disclose it in the future. For example, on June 1 he writes, “these matters are being closely guarded and little accurate information will be obtainable until Saltillo is reached” (p. 6). Thus, Weeks indicates the difficulties he encounters with publishing and even obtaining information, even with the intimacy afforded an embedded correspondent.

Only once does Weeks appear, like Reed, to excuse the news censorship. On May 19, he explains that it appears that Villa put an embargo on the news (meaning that it cannot be published until a specified time, as opposed to not published at all). Weeks excuses this, however, by writing “This is the natural course for him to take, in view of the nearness of the last big battle that in all probability will be fought in the north” (May 19, p. 6). Like Reed’s excuse, this one is focused on the need to keep sensitive military information and troop movements secret so as to maintain the element of surprise in an important upcoming attack.
In direct contrast, however, is Weeks’ last report published in the *New York Herald* from Mexico. The report is focused almost entirely on the difficulties he has encountered with censorship as an embedded correspondent. He writes:

> Strict censorship is on here. I am sending by messenger what I can to the border, to be relayed there. A message with the first news of the break should have reached you Tuesday if it was allowed to be sent. It was passed by the censor, but this is not a definite indication that it went.

(June 20, p. 5)

That this is the last report from either Reed or Weeks from the front lines of the Mexican Revolution is indicative of the difficulties both correspondents experienced while trying to gather and report the news. It appears that while information passed rather freely at first, particularly for Reed, who was able to interview Carranza and publish his account of the meeting, the situation deteriorated toward the end, particularly after Villa’s resignation and Carranza’s increased paranoia regarding his position as candidate for the Mexican presidency.
My research questions for this thesis focused on how an embedded correspondent who has become close friends with a subject and who strongly supports the subject’s cause frames individuals and issues in his or her reporting. Specifically, I analyzed how John Reed and George F. Weeks framed major events of the Mexican Revolution, revolutionary leaders Pancho Villa and Venustiano Carranza, and Mexico and Mexicans in the American press in 1914. I also examined the reporting techniques, including Pan and Kosicki’s (1993) signifying structural devices, that both correspondents used to frame their news stories.

The answers to these questions are intimately intertwined. Each relates to the others in ways that reinforce central themes of framing theory. Therefore, I will not discuss my findings for each separate question, but rather address them as a whole in order to illustrate the ways in which they combine to form the latent content of the chosen articles.

My findings show that both correspondents did appear to at least make an attempt at detachment – the separation of facts from values – in a few of their news reports. Weeks, in particular, used straightforward reporting techniques for the majority of his articles in an attempt to publish the biggest news stories of the day’s events. However, because both correspondents included in-depth personal accounts of their experiences in
their news reports, their ability to separate their own opinions from the events and facts at hand was often undermined.

Neither journalist aspired to balanced reporting or nonpartisanship. This is clearly evident in their lack of multi-sourcing (for example, rarely did either correspondent quote more than only Carranza or Villa or a Constitutionalist general when giving an account of an event or in order to corroborate news) and, moreover, in the complete absence of information attributed to specific, named sources. Rarely did either correspondent offer more than one side to any story. This is perhaps most evident in their complete reliance on Constitutionalists for information. The federal side of the story (for battles or political decisions) remains untold – unless we are to consider accounts given by deserters and prisoners of war. Finally, neither journalist ever openly admits his personal preferences. While their loyalty to the Constitutionalists and either Carranza or Villa can be surmised through the focus and framing of their news reports, we never actually see Reed or Weeks admit their preference to the reader.

Although it is relatively easy for me, as a modern researcher, to describe the working conditions of early twentieth century journalists and define objectivity as I believe it was conceptualized by the journalistic community in 1914, it is also important to bear in mind that my definition and my reading of these texts are only one possibility out of many. I believe it is important to consider that Reed and Weeks were embedded correspondents at a time when embedding journalists in foreign countries was a relatively new concept. Both of these journalists worked during a time when the seed for the modern ideal of objectivity had been planted but not yet blossomed into the full-fledged ideology and commitment it is today. I also believe that it is important to understand the
difficulties in remaining objective and the techniques used to frame news reports that embedded correspondents face simply because they are often completely reliant on the individuals they are covering for survival. I believe that I achieved most, if not all, of D’Angelo’s (2002) four empirical goals of news framing research. I identified the thematic units, or frames, that Reed and Weeks used in their news reporting. I also investigated the antecedent conditions that helped produce those frames, most notably the working conditions and pressures early embedded correspondents and workaday journalists faced during the early twentieth century. Perhaps to a lesser extent, I examined the interaction of Reed and Weeks’ prior knowledge of Mexico, Mexicans, and the Mexican situation with the frames they created to explain the revolution’s events and key players.

Analysis of Reed and Weeks’ news articles also showed that they consistently framed their stories through the rhetorical devices previously described: metaphors, exemplars, catchphrases, depictions and visual images. Each reporter gave his readers a particular view through the metaphorical window, selecting what he would write about, emphasizing some points over others, interpreting events and individuals in different ways, and excluding some events and individuals from their reports altogether. They chose to reinforce a few ideas and either framed their coverage favorably (in the case of the Constitutionalists, Carranza or Villa, and the Mexican people) or negatively (in the case of the federalists) in order to increase the salience of their selected reports. And yet, the view that each correspondent gave to his readers was only one of many possible views to be seen through the window overlooking the Mexican Revolution, its major figures, and the Mexican people.
The same idea holds true for this thesis and my analysis. What I have presented here is only one view of the history of the Mexican Revolution, professional journalism and objectivity, and embedded correspondents in American journalism, and of framing theory and textual analysis. Opportunities for future research, therefore, include deeper and broader exploration of any of these topics, as well as an examination how news frames shape social-level processes (D’Angelo, 2002). My analysis of Reed and Weeks’ work is also very narrow in scope. Both men reported extensively throughout their lives. John Reed also covered Mexico and the Mexican Revolution for *The Masses* and *Metropolitan* magazine, until he left Mexico to cover the 1917 Russian Revolution. George F. Weeks continued working for Venustiano Carranza’s propaganda machine in the United States, covering Mexico and its people in the *Mexican Review/Revista Mexicana* until 1921. Future research on either of these correspondents could focus on a broader collection of their magazine reports. I believe that Reed and Weeks did an admirable job as early embedded correspondents. They covered a revolution from the front lines, with the sources and resources available to them. They made the best of tough situations – from battle to censorship – to get the news back to their readers in the U.S. and framed their reports in ways that they believed were best with the tools at hand. In the end, researchers focusing on this topic, using framing theory and textual analysis, should bear in mind – and keep coming back to – the understanding that the written word and its placement in the text can, and does, have huge impact on the meanings that readers carry away. This holds true not only for Reed and Weeks during the Mexican Revolution but also for embedded correspondents covering the current conflicts in the Middle East and future correspondents covering future wars and revolutions.


---. (1 April, 1914). Villa Tells Wife He took Torreón; Fears Fresh Army. *New York World.*


---. (13 May, 1914). Bombardment of Tampico by the Rebels Continues throughout Day; Rebel Leaders Seek News from Tampico. *New York Herald.*


---. (29 May, 1914). Zacatecas and San Luis Potosi Now are Surrounded; Fall is Imminent. New York Herald.


