Border Wars? Representations of the U.S.- Mexican Border in Reality TV

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The only true borders lie between day and night, between life and death, between hope and loss.

Erin Hunter

Dedicated to the many women and men worldwide who leave everything behind in search of a better life.
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1. Introduction: Becoming Media Literate

In today’s media age, television and the Internet offer unlimited amounts of videos, pictures, articles and opinions from all over the world with only one click. However, most of us rarely question the flood of information and only few people conduct their own research or consider the relations of power underlying every cultural text. In view of an increasingly monopolized media world, media illiteracy is a dangerous state for each one of us. In the U.S., for instance, 90 percent of the nationwide and local newspapers and magazines, radio and television stations, book publishers, and motion picture studios – that is 90 percent of all of the media content - is controlled by one of the “Big Five.” (cf. Grabe & Drew, 2007: 149; Bagdikian, 2004: 3) The “Big Five” has become a conventional term used for the five biggest media corporations in the United States - whose scope though reaches far beyond U.S. borders. “Operating with many characteristics of a cartel” they include such familiar names as The Walt Disney Company, Time Warner/AOL, Viacom, Bertelsmann based in Germany, and Murdoch’s News Corporation based in Australia. (cf. Bagdikian, 2004: 3) Ben Bagdikian explains the dilemma arising from such concentrated power in his bestseller The New Media Monopoly as follows:

No imperial ruler in past history had multiple media channels that included television and satellite channels that can permeate entire societies with controlled sights and sounds. The leaders of the Big Five are not Hitlers and Stalins. They are American and foreign entrepreneurs whose corporate empires control every means by which the population learns of its society. And like any close-knit hierarchy, they find ways to cooperate so that all five can work together to expand their power, a power that has become a major force in shaping contemporary American life. (2004: 4)

The subject of study of this analysis, the reality program Border Wars, is the product of one of the “Big Five”, as the National Geographic Channel, by which the show is produced and broadcasted, is owned primarily by Fox Cable Networks, a division of Murdoch’s News Corporation. (cf. “National Geographic Channel,” n.d.)

Identifying by whom and how media messages are created is only one part of being media literate. In order to evaluate a text, we also have to be able to recognize what the media maker wants us to believe or do, what kind of tools are used to persuade us, distinguish lies and misinformation from reality and truth, and discover what is excluded from discourse. (cf. “Introduction to Media Literacy,” n.d.) The aim of this thesis is therefore the ‘thorough,’ i.e. multidimensional and multiperspectival, analysis of the crime reality show Border Wars.
With respect to this, the first part of this paper will constitute a theoretical framework, which focuses largely on Kellner’s “three-dimensional approach” for the analysis of cultural texts and the identification of ideologies at work in them. Basic concepts such as hegemony in media culture, the “intended reading position,” and Fiske’s codes of television will also be of importance in this theoretical part. Chapter 2. will provide the reader with an overview of the U.S.-Mexican border history, including the U.S. Border Patrol, and present important data and facts concerning the current situation of the ‘border conflict.’ The last chapter of the theoretical part will then introduce the reader to the reality TV genre and classify *Border Wars* as crime reality program. The problematic classification of reality TV as either factual or fictional, as well as, the generic characteristics of (crime) reality television will be the two focal points of chapter 3. Next, the thesis will move from theory to textual analysis and show how *Border Wars* uses the “politics of difference” and the construction of realism and fear to establish an intended reading position that works within dominant ideology and which attempts to induce consent to an anti-immigration, pro-law enforcement policy at the U.S.-Mexican border. In this way, the reader will ‘learn’ to (a) unmask (reality) television’s techniques to ‘manipulate’ reality with the objective to make a profit, as well as to (b) identify the hidden ideologies at work in *Border Wars*. The main goal of this thesis is the exposure of *Border Wars* as sensationalist reality program that exploits a ‘humanitarian crisis’ and propagates the idea of a “war against terrorism and illegal immigration” at the U.S.-Mexican border at the expense of millions of Latin American migrants in the United States.
2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Hegemony in Media Culture

According to Kellner\(^1\) society is a “contested terrain with various groups and ideologies struggling for dominance.” (Kellner, 2011: 6) In the United States, for instance, various groups of different nationalities, religions, ethnicities, political beliefs and economic interests have been struggling for hegemonic power ever since the arrival of the Pilgrims on the Mayflower. Although hegemony appears to be rather fixed, there is no single, stable, dominant ideology but hegemonic systems have to be reproduced and negotiated continually in order to ‘override’ oppositional and alternative forms. Thus “the hegemonic ideology changes in order to remain hegemonic; that is the peculiar nature of the dominant ideology of liberal capitalism.” (Gitlin, 1979: 263)

Kellner has argued that we can notice these “heterogeneous struggles being played out on the screens and texts of media culture.” (Kellner, 1995: 58) In this sense, the media become “important sites for the production, reproduction and transformation of ideologies.” (Hall, 2011: 19) This is possible because media texts are products of society and culture. By creating representations of the social world in the form of images, descriptions, explanations, frames etc., they reproduce the social and political struggles of its society (cf. Kellner, 1995: 58; Hall, 2011: 20) Accordingly, they can show us what social, political and cultural questions are at stake in a particular society at a given moment (cf. Kellner, 1995: 108) and tell us who has power and who has not and what we consider moral or evil, positive or negative. Thus, media texts are “intensely political and ideological” and “encode relations of power and domination” that either (a) serve the dominant groups of its society, (b) oppose “hegemonic ideologies,” or (c) present a struggle between these two poles. (1995: 55-56) This thesis will show that Border Wars operates largely within (a) the dominant hegemony, as it “produces representations that attempt to induce consent to [a] certain political [position].” (59)

Accordingly, Border Wars adopts a principally anti-immigration, pro-militarization, patriotic and, one might argue, right-wing position that leaves no doubt that the only way to save the United States’ economy, moral integrity, and culture is to adhere to an aggressive foreign policy and militarization of its borders. Nevertheless, media texts are usually not the product of one single ideological voice but rather the “expression of a multiplicity of voices struggling for dominance,” ergo allowing a multiplicity of readings. Border Wars, too, contains to a

\(^1\) Kellner’s theory on media and culture is strongly influenced by Gramsci’s work.
certain extent (c) “a contradictory mixture of forms that promote domination and resistance” at the same time. (56)

2.2. Naturalizing Positions

Despite the possibility of contradictory readings in Border Wars, the series largely remains within dominant hegemony and therefore attempts to get the spectator to see its ideologies as ‘the way things are.’ According to Hall “ideologies tend to disappear from view into the taken-for-granted ‘naturalised’ world of common sense.” (Hall, 2011: 19) Hall uses the example of race that is often considered a ‘natural’ category, i.e. determined by nature, although it is as much a socio-cultural construct as any other social category, e.g. gender, class, religion. (ibid.) Border Wars too tries to convince the spectator to see the government’s current actions in immigration law and foreign and domestic policy as inevitable and simultaneously naturalizes ideological implications about race, ethnicity, gender, class, and especially about the binary opposition of ‘us’ and ‘them.’
The analysis of Border Wars will reveal the many different forms and techniques through which ‘naturalization’ takes place, including the use of dominant images and discourses and the generic codes of reality TV. We will learn that reality TV with its claim to truth and authenticity is particularly suitable for the process of naturalization, as what the viewer is presented with appears as non-fictional/unconstructed. In his article “Encoding/Decoding” Hall argues that “certain codes may be so widely distributed […] that they appear not to be constructed – the effect of an articulation between sign and referent – but to be ‘naturally’ given.” (2000: 55) Similarly to language, the visual codes of the television sign produce “apparently ‘natural’ recognitions,” with the (ideological) effect of hiding “the practices of coding which are present.” (ibid.) Therefore the television viewer will tend to think that the visual sign for ‘gun’ on the screen actually is a gun and not its representation. Since the visual discourse however “translates a three-dimensional world into two-dimensional planes, it cannot, of course, be the referent or concept it signifies.” (ibid.) Thus the gun on the screen can look like a gun (x looks like y) but not shoot at the viewer (x is not y). According to Hall, the reason for this confusion is that like other iconic signs the visual sign looks like an object in the real world because it reproduces “the conditions (that is, the codes) of perception in the viewer.”” (56) Based on this, Hall further argues:

These ‘conditions of perception’ are, however, the result of a highly coded, even if virtually unconscious set of operations – decodings. This is as true of the photographic
or televisual image as it is of any other. Iconic signs are particularly “vulnerable to being ‘read’ as natural because visual codes of perception are very widely distributed and because, this type of sign is less arbitrary than a linguistic sign. (2000: 56)

We are therefore able to conclude that the television sign in general, and the ‘reality TV sign’ in particular can be powerful tools in the distribution of ideological values and messages for the reason that the practices of decoding are largely concealed by their generic codes. As we will see in chapter 4., reality TV’s use of special techniques, such as hand-held or surveillance cameras, allows - even more than other television formats - to reproduce the conditions of perception in the viewer, leading to the confusion of the virtual sign with the real object.

2.3. Singularizing Subjects

‘Real people,’ hand-held cameras, ‘confession rooms,’ and other features exclusive to reality TV help to construct the format’s unique ‘reality effect.’ The use of special viewer positions that give the audience the feeling of participating in the programs has been particularly relevant in the genre’s development and “satisfies both overt and subliminal voyeuristic tendencies.” (Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2007: 357) Such viewer positioning strategies range from direct involvement, often found in game and casting shows such as American Idol, to more detached observational formats, usually being concerned with presenting ‘ordinary people’ at home or at their workplace, such as Cops or Border Wars. (ibid.)

Hall suggests that one manner through which ideologies work is by “constructing for their subjects positions of identification and knowledge which allow them to ‘utter’ ideological truths as if they were their authentic authors.” (2011: 19) He continues claiming that this is “because we find ourselves mirrored in the positions at the centre of the discourses from which the statements we formulate ‘make sense’ and that the same ‘subjects’ can be differently constructed in different ideologies.” (ibid.) In Kellner’s theory these subjects are what he calls “core assumptions” - the “common sense” of a society. (cf. Kellner, 1995: 58) Similarly to Hall, he explains that different groups and forces at struggle use them to inflect them according to the group’s own ideological agendas and purposes. Such ‘core assumptions’ or ‘subjects’ are for example discourses of democracy, freedom, individualism, the value of family, patriotism and so on. (cf. Kellner, 1995: 58) In the case of Border Wars a variety of these core assumptions is used to encourage the spectator to identify primarily with the agents and support their, i.e. the program’s, main political and ideological message. While there are multiple ways of reading a text, such subjects help the program to “induce audiences
focus on a single interest that unites them and [to] downplay different interests that might
divide them or produce different policy outcomes.” (Consalvo, 1998: 3) This is what
Consalvo calls “singularizing:” hegemonic frameworks try to limit the “range of contending
world views by systematically preferring one picture of the world over others.” (4) Border
Wars for instance uses discourses of patriotism – repeated low-angle shots of the U.S. flag are
only one of many examples - to invite the U.S. American spectator to join the agents in their
fight against invaders and terrorists. Furthermore, by invoking fear of terrorism and crime in
the audience, viewers are encouraged to worry rather about their own security than about that
of many thousands detained and/or deported Latin Americans. In the end, it is exactly this
picture of a constantly threatened world that unites the viewers and promotes the program’s
intended reading. The analysis will therefore take a closer look at how the viewer of Border
Wars is presented with a rather one-sided view of the real situation at the U.S.-Mexican
border and how the program continually attempts to induce consent to a pro-law enforcement
and anti-immigration position.

2.4. Spectator, Audience, Response

Although this thesis will focus on the intended message of Border Wars, I do not consider the
audience as purely passive, controlled by the overwhelming forces of the media industry but
capable of making their own decisions and creating their own readings. Since the theoretical
foundation for this thesis is however strongly influenced by the works of Hall, Morley and
Kellner, who consider television an “ideological closed medium” and the viewer an
“Althusserian subject-in-ideology,” (Fiske, 1986: 391) the “passive spectator” and the
“preferred reading position” shall be addressed briefly at this point.

2.4.1. Introduction to Response Theory

Film studies distinguishes between the individual viewer, usually referred to as the spectator,
and collectives of people, the audience. With regard to spectatorship we differentiate between
passive spectator was the prevailing model of the 1960s and 1970s and was strongly
associated with the ‘subject-apparatus’ theory and the works of the Frankfurt School, which
saw the cinematic movie as a kind of modern ‘‘opium of the people,’ a form of mass culture
which entertained and seduced people into an uncritical acceptance of the values, attitudes
and fantasies presented to them.” (105) The passive spectator, ‘the subject’, was thus considered a tabula rasa, which could be manipulated and exploited by the film apparatus, which imposed its ideological messages on the spectator in order to secure hegemony. Psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan and his work on desire and the so-called ‘mirror phase’ helped film scholars to explain “both the pleasure and the ideological effect of surrendering to the film image.” (106) Based on his work it was argued that the spectator experiences pleasure because a film stages the fulfillment of our unfulfilled desires. In order to enjoy a film or television program, the spectator thus has to (at least partially) surrender to the film and become the subject of the ‘subject-apparatus.’ For this reason, response studies have associated pleasure with the passive spectator and the preferred reading position. (114)

The beginning of post-structuralism also marked the beginning of the opposing active spectator model. Influenced by French philosophers Jacques Derrida, Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault, it considered meaning as much more negotiable, less fixed and more dependent on the reader. This idea gave birth to a spectator who was not held in place by the film text/subject apparatus anymore but who was capable of negotiating meaning - the active spectator model was born. (109)

Consequently the focus shifted towards the individual and its so-called ‘formation:’ the “result of all our life experiences,” which became the primary influence on how we relate and interpret a film. (ibid.)

Eventually, a ‘limited pluralism’ constituted a compromise between the Neo-Marxist/structuralist and the post-structuralist spectator model. Drawing from both models, it acknowledged both the idea that we all share (a) “social construction/ideological mechanisms” and “cognitive processes/mental mechanisms” (thus partially accepting the idea of the subject apparatus), as well as the fact that the spectator’s individual formation and own identity is brought to every film event and has a significant impact on the reading. (110)
2.4.2. Polysemy of Media Texts and Reading Positions

John Fiske argues that the existence of many different subcultures is proof that an unthinking atomized mass does not exist. (cf. Fiske, 1986: 393) He concludes that because of this and the fact that television is an entertaining medium from which we expect to derive pleasure, a program can only be popular and reach a wide diversity of audiences when the text is polysemic and “allows the various subcultures to generate meanings from it that meet the needs of their own subcultural identities.” (392) In this way, different audiences might derive different kinds of pleasures from a reality program such as Border Wars, depending on their formation, competence, and familiarity with the genre.

It is inevitable to mention that Fiske’s theory is largely based on Hall’s work on encoding/decoding, in which Hall argues that a (television) sign has multiple connotative meanings but only one denotative. (cf. Hall, 2000: 57) Despite signs’ multiple (connotative) meanings, messages propose and prefer certain readings over others, i.e. their “connotative codes are not equal among themselves.” (ibid.) Therefore signs are polysemic. Hall explains that society’s hierarchical social and cultural order is imposed on and therefore reflected in any type of text, which led him to argue that signs have a preferred/intended meaning. Fiske’s work is largely consistent with Hall’s at this point, as Fiske believes that “the structure of meanings in a text is a miniaturization of the structure of subcultures in society.” (Fiske, 1986: 392) Just like the social struggle for power, there exists a struggle for meaning in every text. This struggle is ‘fought’ by the different (genre specific) codes of television, which work ‘hegemonically’ to attract the viewer to adopt the ideological position of the program’s intended meaning. (ibid.) If a spectator surrenders to the preferred/intended meaning, s/he remains within a preferred reading position, which is often associated with the passive spectator model as noted above. Whether or not the program succeeds depends, according to Morley, on the following aspects:

Whether or not a programme [sic] succeeds in transmitting the preferred or dominant meaning will depend on whether it encounters readers who inhabit codes and ideologies derived from other institutional areas (e.g. churches or schools) which correspond to and work in parallel with those of the programme [sic] or whether it encounters readers who inhabit codes drawn from other areas or institutions […] which conflict to a greater or lesser extent with those of the programme [sic]. (1983: 473)

Taking this quote into consideration, we can conclude that both the structure of text as well as of society allows space for resistance, (cf. Fiske, 1986: 391) and that although authority
attempts to impose itself on us, we are capable of ‘oppositional’ readings. ‘Oppositional’ reading is thus the second possible reading position. It is associated with the active spectator, who rejects the intended meaning of a text. This however does not mean that an oppositional reading cannot generate pleasure. Brummett and Duncan claim that there “is no single television with limited pleasure but multiple televisions, each involving distinct pleasures.” (Geiser -Getz, 1995)

On the whole, however, we are most likely to conform to the attitudes and pleasures presented to us simply because “we are all subjects of the same hegemonic values that circulate within our corporate capitalist culture.” (Phillips, 2003: 114) Therefore, the third and last reading position is probably the most plausible one: the ‘negotiated reader’ like the ‘negotiated code’ as discussed in 2.1. constitutes a middle way and acknowledges both the fact that we are most likely to ‘surrender’ to a film or television program but are also capable of producing our own critical and alternative readings. A negotiated reading of Border Wars for example could thus still generate pleasure from its voyeuristic, suspense-centered structure and content, while questioning the treatment of illegal immigrants or immigration policy in general.

2.5. Kellner’s Three-Dimensional Approach

To conclude, media texts are complex, they reproduce relations of power and are an effective tool in securing dominant values and political ideologies. But they are also a place of struggle and possible empowerment and resistance. As we increasingly spend time online, watching television, or consuming other types of media, we should not ignore or downplay their influence on our lives. A critical attitude towards media contents and their surrounding forces and processes is therefore indispensable. In this way, cultural studies can provide the necessary tools, i.e. theories, to “help us identify what, if any, ideologies are operative” and how there are encoded in a given cultural artifact. (Kellner, 2011: 14) Throughout this chapter I have already pointed out some of the foundational ideas and institutions of cultural (text) studies. Kellner however warns against a too one-sided approach that should neither “romanticize the active audience” nor overrate the manipulative effects of media texts on an (obviously not) homogenized unthinking mass. Therefore he suggests an approach that is “critical, multicultural and multiperspectival:” (Kellner, 2011: 14)

- First, “critical” in terms of “[developing] concepts and analyses that will enable readers to critically dissect the artifacts of contemporary media and consumer culture, help them to unfold the meanings and effects on their culture, and thus give
individuals power over their cultural environment.” (1995: 10)

- Second, “multicultural” in terms of including the marginalized, minority, and oppositional groups and voices in the cultural dialogue and integrating the dimensions of race, class, gender, ethnicity etc. in the process of analysis. (2011: 8)

- Finally, Kellner believes that cultural studies has “overemphasized reception and textual analysis, while underemphasizing the production of culture and its political economy,” and therefore urges for a “multiperspectival” approach that attends to all three elements equally - the production of culture, the texts themselves, as well as their reception by the audience. (1995: 41 - 42)

The “political economy of culture”, that is the system of production and distribution of cultural texts, so Kellner, often determines what sort of artifacts are produced, what the structural limits will be and what sort of audience effects that text has, and should therefore not be neglected in a proper analysis. (2011: 9) As we will be shown later, especially reality TV is defined by rigid genre-specific formulas and conventions of production that are prescribed by a profit oriented television industry. In addition to the ‘political orientation’ of the production company – Fox is known for its conservative, Republican attitude – the system of production defines not only how but also what kind of messages are delivered into the living rooms of America’s citizens. Looking at the political economy of a cultural artifact, however, does not only involve the analysis of film/television production and processes but also includes the study of social and political history, as the analysis moves from “text to context, and thus from texts to culture and society.” (1995: 28) In the chapter following, I will therefore explore the history of Latin American illegal immigration and of the Border Patrol to enable the reader to attain a better understanding of the actual situation and to produce her/his own (critical and alternative) readings of Border Wars.

Textual analysis is Kellner’s second element in the analysis of cultural artifacts and will be the focal point of this thesis. As a quantitative content analysis would go beyond the scope of this paper, the focus will be on a qualitative analysis, which will identify and analyze images, symbols, myths, and the narrative structure among other factors. Taking film studies into account, it will also reveal how the television codes of camera angle, distance and so forth and the specific generic codes of (crime) reality TV help to produce meaning. As suggested by Kellner this textual analysis will include the dimensions of race, ethnicity and political ideology in order to produce an ideological textual analysis. Nevertheless, this analysis reflects only my opinion, as Kellner points out:

Each reading of a text is still only one possible reading from one critic’s subject
position, no matter how multiperspectival, and [sic] may or may not be the reading preferred by audiences (who themselves will be significantly different according to their class, race, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, ideologies and so on). (2011: 11)

As I have already discussed above, the intended or preferred reading of a text is not necessarily identical with the actual audience reading. Therefore an accurate (sociodemographic) audience reception study – Kellner’s third and last dimension - that looks at how different audiences read and derive pleasure from Border Wars and how this may affect their attitudes towards (Latin American) immigrants and the border conflict is crucial for a complete cultural studies analysis of the show.

2.6. Fiske’s “Codes of Television”

In order to conduct an accurate textual analysis of Border Wars, it is crucial to become acquainted with the different codes of television and understand how they work upon each other and thus produce meaning. Some of these codes, for instance the casting of ‘real people’ and hand-held cameras, are genre specific. Other codes, such as music and setting can be found in all types of television programs. But what exactly is a television code? In his article “The Codes of Television” John Fiske argues that “a code is a rule-governed system of signs, whose rules and conventions are shared amongst members of a culture, and which is used to generate and circulate meanings in and for that culture.” (2000: 221) In the same article he also establishes a simplified and hierarchical categorization of the most common of television codes. According to Fiske these categories of codes and “their classification into levels in the hierarchy” are completely “arbitrary and slippery,” as some of them are almost indistinguishable and could be classified in more than one category. (ibid.) All in all, he differs between three levels of television codes: (1) “REALITY,” (2) “REPRESENTATION,” and (3) “IDEOLOGY.” (222) Level one “reality” is already encoded by the “social codes” of a specific culture. (ibid.) “Social codes” include physical characteristics, such as skin color, hair, appearance and dress, or speech, gesture and behavior of a person, and it is through these codes that we “perceive and make sense of reality.” (ibid.) Next, the codes of level two are applied when the already encoded reality of level one is televised. Together the “technical codes” of camera work, editing, music, sound etc. and the “conventional representational codes” of narrative, conflict, character, action, setting, casting and dialogue are used to make it “(a) transmittable technologically” and (b) create an “appropriate cultural text for its audiences.” (222 -223) Chapter 4. will specify some of these technical codes that are
important in reality TV. Finally, the “ideological codes” of level three (e.g., patriarchy, race, class, patriotism, individualism, etc.) “work to organize the other codes into producing a congruent and coherent set of meanings that constitute the common sense of a society.” (223) The interplay of all three levels of codes, however, is only guaranteed when they all form a seemingly “natural unity.” (ibid.) In reality TV this “natural unity” appears to be inherent in the form, as technical and representational codes are seemingly transparent (or create the impression of transparency.) But reality TV is just as constructed as any other television program. The difference is merely that in reality TV less “conventional representational codes” are used. Therefore it relies more on the social codes of “level one/reality” and the technical codes of camera work, editing and music to create ideological meaning. Thus, while, for example, drama series are scripted and create a representational reality structured upon reality (using casting, costumes, scripted dialogue, etc.,) reality TV depends (largely) on actual events, cutting techniques, and music to create action. In the analytical part, I will therefore look at how such codes are used to (a) create the impression of reality, (b) generate fear of the ‘Other,’ and (c) construct an ‘Us/Them’ dichotomy with the goal to justify repressive law enforcement and immigration policies.
Almost twelve years after September 11, the U.S. east coast was shaken by another terrorist attack on April 15, 2013, in which three people were killed and another 264 were injured. The Boston Marathon bombings, conducted by two Chechen immigrants, have not only re-fueled deeply routed fears of terrorism in the United States but have also shed dark shadows over a just recently reignited debate about U.S. immigration law. Only in February 2013 had president Barack Obama urged the Congress to enact a long overdue immigration reform that would include legalization programs for many of the nation's illegal immigrants, mandatory employment verification, a substantial reform of the legal immigration system and advance border enforcement. (cf. Chishti et al., 2013) As the proposal appeared to be only beneficial and Republicans started to run out of counter-arguments, the Boston bombing was brought up to support notions about the connection between immigration and terrorism at a Senate hearing. Republican Senator Grassely asked at the beginning of the hearing: “How can individuals evade authorities and plan such attacks on our soil?” While Representative Louie Gohmert, a Texan Republican, warned the nation of “radical Islamists posing as Hispanics and infiltrating from the southern border.” (“Immigration and Fear,” 2013) Despite the lack of real evidence for Islamist terrorists infiltrating from Mexico and cooperating with Latin American governments or Mexican cartels, terrorism has been an important argument in the process of militarizing the southern border, at least since 9/11. (cf. Isacson, 2013a) Repeatedly, the “mission of keeping terrorists and their weapons out of the U.S.” is mentioned on Custom and Border Patrol’s official website as the agency’s primary concern. (cf. http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/about/) We will see, however, that this has not always been the Border Patrol’s main priority but that the ‘criminalization’ of the border has been a rather recent development.

3. The U.S.-Mexican Border

In FY 2012 the number of illegal immigrants in the U.S. has dropped for the first time in over a decade, from a peak of 12 million in 2007 to a currently estimated 11.1 million. (cf. “Number of Illegal Immigrants In US Drops […],” 2012) At present, unauthorized

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2 In the meantime Bill SB744 was passed by the Senate on June 27th 2013. Whether it will also pass through the House of Representatives is still uncertain. (cf. Foster, 2013)
immigrants make up 28 percent of the entire foreign-born population in the U.S. Although 80 percent of all illegal immigrants come from Mexico and Latin America, Asian immigration has in fact topped Hispanic immigration in 2012 for the first time since 1910. Thus, Hispanics and Asian Americans are the United States’ two fastest-growing population groups. Despite this, experts doubt that the U.S. will see a “return to the levels of Mexican illegal immigration of a decade ago,” which might influence the economy noticeably in the long run. (ibid.) In the past, Mexicans have helped to fill low-wage jobs in farming, construction, home health care and many other sectors. “Therefore U.S. immigration policies will have a significant impact shaping a future U.S. labor force, which is projected to shrink by 2030.” (ibid.)

The reasons for the downturn of (illegal) Hispanic immigration are multiple but it is most likely the result of a weakened U.S. economy, stronger border enforcement, and a resurgent economy in Mexico. The downward trend can also be noted in declining numbers of Border Patrol apprehensions. Although FY 2012 saw a slight increase of seven percent in apprehensions at the Mexican border compared to 2011, the almost 365,000 apprehensions nationwide in 2012 (of which 356,873 occurred on the U.S. – Mexico border) still represent a 50 percent decrease since FY 2008 and a 78 percent decrease from FY 2000. (ibid.) Figure 1. from the Office of Immigration Statistics illustrates this downward trend, showing that the number of Border Patrol apprehensions declined for 61 percent from 1,189,000 in 2005 to 463,000 in 2010. (cf. Sapp, 2011) In 2010, 97 percent of apprehensions occurred at the southwest border, where 87 percent of apprehensions concerned Mexican nationals, followed by Hondurans, El Salvadorians and Guatemalans.3 Due to the virtual still stand of illegal immigration at the U.S.- Mexican border, it is possible that “the biggest surge of immigration in modern U.S. history ultimately may be recorded as occurring in the mid-1990s to early 2000s, yielding illegal residents who now have been settled in the U.S. for ten years or more. ” (“Number of Illegal Immigrants In US Drops [...]”

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3 The apprehension data collected by the Department of Homeland Security represents events, not individuals. (cf. Sapp, 2011)
In addition to the task of preventing illegal immigration, the CBP is also in charge of illegal contraband, drug and currency seizure. In FY 2012, CBP officers seized more than 4.2 million pounds of narcotics across the country and US$100 million in unreported currency. (cf. “CBP’s 2012 Fiscal Year in Review,” 2013) Figure 2. shows that around 3.1 million pounds of the overall 4.2 million were seized along the U.S. - Mexican border.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enforcement Actions</th>
<th>Arizona</th>
<th>Texas</th>
<th>New Mexico</th>
<th>California</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apprehensions</td>
<td>124,631</td>
<td>172,335</td>
<td>5,661</td>
<td>54,246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug Seizures</td>
<td>1.1M pounds</td>
<td>1.7M pounds</td>
<td>43.4K pounds</td>
<td>285.6K pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currency Seizures</td>
<td>$5.6M</td>
<td>$12.5M</td>
<td>$715K</td>
<td>$15.9M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadmissible</td>
<td>6,011</td>
<td>27,392</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>28,167</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While the most apprehensions and drug seizures occurred in Texas, the state of California is leading the statistic in currency seizures with US$ 15.9 million – although closely followed by Texas with US$ 12.5 million. New Mexico, compared to the other three states of the southern border, accounts for the least apprehensions and seizures. The DHS states that “over the past three years [2009-2012], DHS has seized 74 percent more currency, 41 percent more drugs, and 159 percent more weapons along the Southwest border as compared to fiscal years (FY) 2006-2008.” (cf. “Border Security Results,” n.d.)

3.1.1. Inaccurate Data?

Although DHS and CBP proudly present their achievements, the dark figure of illegal crossings and smuggling might be much higher than expected and recognized by authorities. The recently installed VADER (Vehicle and Dismount Exploitation Radar) system indeed gave a troubling result, indicating that the Border Patrol does not even intercept half of the total number of illegal border crossings: its results showed that agents apprehended 1,874 crossers that the sensor identified, but 1,962 more escaped capture. (cf. Isacson, 2013c) Additionally, the remotely operated aircraft detected 7,333 border crossers during its Arizona missions between October and December 2012, but Border Patrol agents only reported 410 apprehensions during that same period. (ibid.) In January 2012, the Government Accountability Office also released a report, affirming that the Border Patrol only intercepts
61 percent of illegal crossings, “which translated to 208,813 individuals not being apprehended” of which “85,827 […] would go on to illegally enter the United States, while the rest returned back into Mexico.” (“Mexico-United States Border,” n.d.) Researchers have also warned that although data indicates a decrease of illegal immigration, that, as a result of the higher risks illegal immigrants have to take due to stronger border enforcement, many more decide to remain in the U.S. for longer periods of time and eventually bring their families, thus actually balancing out the number of illegal aliens residing in the U.S. in comparison to earlier periods. (ibid.)

Another aspect that needs to be taken into consideration is that the process of collecting data and creating statistics about illegal immigration is a rather vague and complicated task. Thus, an estimate of the total number of unauthorized immigrants in the U.S., for example, can only be derived by subtracting the estimated legally resident foreign-born population – legal permanent residents, naturalized citizens, asylees, refugees, and non-immigrants - from estimates of the total foreign-born population. (cf. Hoefer et al., 2010)

3.2. Securing the Border – a “Budget-Busting Project”

As already mentioned, a decrease in apprehensions and illegal immigration may be partly assigned to a stronger border enforcement. In FY 2012, CBP employed over 21,300 Border Patrol agents (cf. “CBP’s 2012 Fiscal Year in Review,” 2013) – the highest number since its formation, making it the largest federal law enforcement body of the U.S. (cf. Chacón & Davis, 2006: 205) Recently Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) have been added to the large variety of technologies deployed to control the southern border. Other high-technology assets include mobile surveillance units, thermal imaging systems, unattended ground sensors and large-and small-scale non-intrusive inspection equipment. In addition, CBP has started screening southbound rail and vehicle traffic to prevent weapons and cash flowing back to the cartels in Mexico. (cf. “Fact Sheet: Alliance to Combat Transnational Threats […],” 2011) Despite doubts about its costs and benefits and claims of a violation of the Posse Comitatus (cf. “Mexico-United States Border,” n.d.), National Guard troops have also actively assisted law enforcement agencies along the border.

The biggest budget-busting project of them all, however, remains the construction of a double-layering fence along the border. Signed in 2006 by president George W. Bush to make the nation more secure in the aftermath of 9/11, the Secure Fence Act authorized the
construction of a 700 miles fence along one-third of the 2,100 mile U.S. – Mexico border.\(^4\) (cf. Koch, 2006) According to the homepage of DHS, 651 miles of the border fencing have been completed. (cf. “Border Security Results,” n.d.) The failure to complete the last four segments and to actually erect double-layering fence along the entire 700 miles, has led the Republican Party to urge the Congress in their 2012 platform statement to finally comply with the mandate from 2006. (cf. Isacson, 2012) However, many supporters of the border fence fail to acknowledge the extremely high costs that the construction has produced and would, if it was to be continued.

Depending on the type of terrain two different types of fences have been constructed, each one coming at a different price. “In high-traffic pedestrian areas, such as around ports of entry, the barriers include 10-foot-tall mesh fences,” at an average cost of US$ 3.9 million per mile. (cf. Simon, 2009) 300 miles of pedestrian fence have been completed thus far. “In remote regions where drive-through smuggling is the top concern, the Border Patrol has built vehicular barriers, often steel posts driven into the desert ground at close intervals,” calculated at an average of US$ 1 million per mile. (ibid.) Complying with the Republican platform’s call to complete the fence “would [therefore] cost over US$ 4.1 billion — more than the Border Patrol’s entire annual budget (US$ 3.55 billion).” (Isacson, 2012)

Largely because of increased costs and the rugged terrain along large parts of the border, the

\(^4\) In addition, the act also upped the number of Border Patrol agents, increasing the number of agents from 9,000 at the beginning of Bush’s presidency to 18,000 at the end. (cf. Koch, 2006)
fence was never supposed to be erected along the entire 1,969 miles. Likewise the meanders of the Rio Grande make it “impossible to build a continuous straight-line fence.” (Dear, 2013) In remote areas where no actual fence has been constructed a so-called “virtual fence” is used, consisting of sensors and cameras, to help Border Patrol agents detect illegal movements. (cf. “Mexico-United States Barrier,” n.d.)

3.3. Consequences of a Dangerous Journey

A report from last year by the Congressional Research Service found "strong indication" that the fence does not actually reduce illegal immigration at the southern border but that migrants had simply found new routes. (cf. Dear, 2013) Indeed, many experts agree with this finding, noting that “the efforts to curtail illegal immigration by means of security has done nothing but redirect the migration flows into the most desolate and desert areas of the border.” (cf. “Mexico- United States Border,” n.d.) This redirection has had a fatal consequence: a significant increase of the mortality rate because more people try to cross in such inhospitable areas like the Sonoran Desert and the Baboquivari Mountain in Arizona. Thus, “border militarization has not stopped migration; it has only imposed deadly rules upon it.” (Chacón & Davis, 2006: 205) In the last thirteen years around 5,000 people died along the border. Last year alone, agents declared 464 deaths - the dark figure remains unknown. (cf. “Mexico-United States Barrier,” n.d.; Isacson, 2013b) Immigrants, who rely on coyotes to navigate them across the border, often walk for days through remote areas. The dangers are multiple, ranging from poisonous animals to drowning, dehydration and death from cold. A study by the University of Arizona warns that the risk of death from dehydration is exceedingly common in places like southern Arizona and south Texas. The study also revealed that 39% of the survey’s participants ran out of water and 31% out of food during their trip. Moreover, it showed the many other threats immigrants encounter during the extremely dangerous trip: “12 percent were robbed by bandits during their last crossing, seven percent were kidnapped, and two people witnessed murders.” (Isacson, 2013b) Human rights organizations have also repeatedly pointed out the threats the trip poses to female migrants, such as rape, violence, and sex slavery. Various statements made by INS staff suggests that an increased mortality is in fact a ‘welcome side effect’ of border fortification: Thus, Doris Meisner, former chief of the INS commented: “We did believe geography would be an ally,” and another INS supervisor told the San Diego Union-Tribune that: “Eventually, we’d like to see them all out in the desert.” (Chacón & Davis, 2006: 207)
The erection of “el muro del odio” (engl.: “wall of hate”) has also affected the cultural and socio-economic balance of the borderlands. (cf. Simon, 2009) “Mutual interdependence has always been a hallmark of cross-border lives. Residents on both sides of the line regard parts of Mexico and the United States as their home. For them, the border is a connective membrane, not a line of demarcation.” (Dear, 2013) But the fence and the increasing militarization of the borderlands have divided land and people and have even cut the campus of the University of Texas at Brownsville in two. American Indian groups have demonstrated against their lands being divided or seized by the state and environmentalist and animal rights organization have warned that the fence threatens animal and plant life. Other critics have pointed to the fence’s disproportionate construction in poor and minority communities. (ibid.) Public criticism has also been voiced against Border Patrol and other U.S. agencies. For instance, it has been claimed that the Border Patrol rarely investigates complaints and mistreats immigrants. Amnesty International regularly issues reports on the situation at the U.S.-Mexican border. In their report from May 1998 they denounced agents of ill-treatment, including “[…] people struck with batons, fists and feet, often as punishment for attempting to run away; denial of food, water, blankets; sexual abuse; denial of medical attention, and abusive, racially derogatory and unprofessional conduct […].” (“United States of America: Human Rights Concerns […],” 1998)

Another threat to border-crossers are the “Minutemen” – private neo-vigilant groups that began ‘patrolling’ the Arizona-Mexico border in 2005. (cf. Chacón & Davis, 2006: 83) Their goal to “defend national sovereignty against the ‘Brown Peril,’” has had an “electrifying impact” even on the conservative part of the government and has been “the latest incarnation of anti-immigration patrols” on the U.S.-Mexican border. (ibid.) Although largely unorganized, their intentions as well as their actions are extremely questionable and should therefore not be ignored by officials and law enforcement. (cf. Chacón & Davis, 2006, for various stories on such “hunting expeditions”)

3.4. Border and Immigration History

“Over generations, borders have been reified as natural extensions of ‘nationality’ even though they have existed for perhaps one percent of the history of humankind.”

(Chacón & Davis, 2006: 201)

There are currently forty-five U.S.-Mexico border crossings with 330 ports of entry. (cf.
“Mexico – United States Border,” n.d.) But they have not always been there, nor has the border. For most of U.S. history no border existed, and people were able to move back and forth freely. “The border itself was not clearly defined and remained so until the Mexican colony became independent from Spain and entered a period of political instability.” (ibid.) Fearing invasion from the North, Mexico attempted to create a buffer zone by encouraging thousands of people to settle in the region that is now Texas. But only short time later, in 1836, Texas declared its independence and was finally annexed by the U.S. in 1845. The constant conflicts in that region led to the Mexican-American War which began in 1846 and ended with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, because of which Mexico lost 55 percent of its national territory, including what is today California, Arizona, New Mexico, and many more. The Gadsden Purchase five years later was the last acquisition in the contiguous United States and “completed the creation of the current U.S.-Mexican border.” (ibid.) The settlement of the border is based on the Treaty of Guadalupe and the Treaty of 1884, which both declared that the middle of the Rio Grande was the border. (ibid.)

Although the border was specified as early as 1848, there were no regulated crossing points before 1917, no records were kept until after 1908, and unobstructed movement was still possible until after WWII. (cf. Chacón & Davis, 2006: 201 & 298) At the beginning of the 20th century both Mexican and Canadian immigration grew substantially, even though Canadian numbers were about twice as high. While Canadians settled in New England and
the Middle West and were, because of their skin color, more easily accepted and naturalized, Mexicans who settled in the Southwest were seen as foreigners. Nonetheless, they filled important jobs in western agriculture. (cf. Spickard, 2007: 298) Soon, the agricultural lobby realized that the “combination of racism and exclusivity over the rights of citizenship” would allow them to maintain a “degraded, segregated Mexican labor force.” (Chacón & Davis, 2006: 174) These factors would become the primary shaping factors in the formation and development of Hispanic immigration policy in the U.S. While on the micro level employers applied rather simple but effective techniques, such as setting Mexican workers apart from other employees in separate camps, company towns and so called colonias, (cf. Spickard, 2007: 299) on the macro level, restrictive practices were legalized and inscribed in U.S. immigration laws, for example in the form of immigration quotas.

As early as 1904 a very restrictive and irregular number of Mounted Guards were the first ones to patrol the border - at that time to prevent Chinese illegal border crossing. However, illegal immigration was not the main concern in the early years of the 20th century but customs violations and “intercepting communications to the ‘enemy’” were. (cf. “Border Patrol History,” 2010) Thus, with the beginning of Prohibition in 1919, the call for more patrollers became even louder and finally led to the Labor Appropriation Act of 1924, which established the U.S. Border Patrol as arm of the Bureau of Immigration and amplified its number from formerly 75 to 450 agents. (cf. “Border Patrol History,” 2010; Spickard, 2007: 304)

Due to the fact that Mexicans were considered the “optimal workforce by Southwestern capital,” Mexican migration during that period was mostly exempted from the quotas that the Immigration Act of 1924 had established on immigrants from Asia and Eastern and Southern Europe, and were therefore not really targeted by border agents. (cf. Chacón & Davis, 2006: 192)

Nevertheless, this attitude was rather short-lived and ended with the beginning of the Great Depression of 1929, which led to the “country’s first mass deportation.” (ibid.) During the so-called “repatriation programs” between 1929 and 1935, an estimated half a million people “returned or were returned to Mexico.” (cf. Chacón & Davis, 2006: 193; Spickard, 2007: 301) Thousands of people had to board buses and trains that took them to the Mexican border and dumped them, while the government made no effort to distinguish between Mexican citizens and U.S. citizens of Mexican ancestry. (cf. Spickard, 2007: 301) Chacón and Davis argue in No one is illegal that it was exactly this moment in U.S. history at which “immigration was criminalized, segregated, and dehumanized through the emergent status of the ‘illegal.’”
In 1933, the Bureau of Immigration and the Bureau of Naturalization were combined to form the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), which would be in charge of controlling immigration and naturalization policy and the border until 2003. In 1940, INS was moved from the Department of Labor to the Department of Justice and 712 more agents were recruited, thus doubling its force. (cf. “Border Patrol History,” 2010)

When the economy boomed during WWII, former expulsion turned to recruitment again: Beginning in 1942\(^5\) the “Bracero Program” (“Bracero” from sp. brazo, engl. ‘arm’) signed millions of Mexican guest workers to temporarily harvest crops, maintain railroads, and fill slots in other U.S. industries. Over the entire period about 5.2 million people worked under inhumane conditions, being treated like “arms for temporary hire, not human beings to whom American society owed anything.” (Spickard, 2007: 302)

Although Mexicans had significantly contributed to the emergence of the United States as the number one world power after WWII, another period of mass deportations followed in the 1950s. Influenced by McCarthyism, Cold War xenophobia, and above all the recession of 1953, the Border Patrol deported thousands of “illegal aliens” from all over the country. As a result of a legislation act from 1952 that had allowed Border Patrol agents for the first time in history to board and search a conveyance for illegal immigrants anywhere in the U.S., “officers swept into Mexican American neighborhoods, conducted warrantless searches,” broke up families, and terrorized communities. (cf. “Border Patrol History,” 2010; Spickard, 2007: 305; Chacón & Davis, 2006: 302) Approximately one to two million deportations and detentions took place during this period, making Operation Wetback was considered a great success by the government.

In their book *No One Is Illegal* Chacón and Davis try to explain the alternating waves of appreciation and disdain for the Mexican (guest) worker, arguing that:

\[
\text{[…]} \text{During times of capitalist contradiction, such as recession or depression, or other threats to the stability of profits, admiration for the immigrant gives way to disdain; […] the immigrant is portrayed as a malicious force in society, responsible for a constellation of social ills that threaten the nation.} \text{(2006: 176)}
\]

The second half of the 20\(^{th}\) century brought profound changes in immigration law, border security, and U.S. demographics. In 1965, the Immigration and Nationality Act “removed the racist shape that immigration and citizenship laws had gradually taken on over the previous

century” by abolishing the quota system and thus opening the doors for new waves of immigrants, primarily from Latin America and Asia. (cf. Spickard, 2007: 341) Mexican immigration increased from 450,000 in the 1960s to 2.2 million in the 1990s. (369) These new waves, however, also brought with them the rise of new fears. The idea of the “last line of defense for the American people, their culture and their economy” came up in the 1970s and constituted “a means to exploit the fears of and garner support from the broader public.” (cf. Chacón & Davis, 2006: 201-202) In order to defend this “last line” of the homeland, the militarization of the border, involving the deployment of military technology, increased personnel, the cooperation with the armed forces, and eventually also the construction of fences and walls, began in the 1970s during the Ford and Carter administrations. (202)

In the 1980s President Ronald Reagan continued what his forerunners had begun. Equaling immigration policy with homeland security for the first time in U.S. history, he paved the way for a “new era of border security.” (203) In order to protect the U.S. from “hordes of poor migrants, Central American subversives, and narco-traffickers,” Reagan increased funding for the INS by 130 percent and employed 82 percent new agents. (ibid.) Additionally, the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1987 made employees of the Border Patrol drug enforcement agents. (ibid.)

Enforcing the border remained a primary objective during the 1990s. A “four-part federal project” to take control of the southern border, including Operation Gatekeeper in California, Operation Safeguard in Arizona, and Operations Hold the Line and Rio Grande in Texas, started in 1993. (ibid.) The use of new technologies, such as underground sensors and infrared night scopes, and the erection of miles of ten-foot high walls and secondary fences should provide a “‘show of force’ to potential illegal border crossers.” (cf. “Border Patrol History,” 2010)

In 1994, Canada, Mexico and the United States signed the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Although its main cause - to facilitate trade between the three countries - was supposed to be beneficial, NAFTA had devastating consequences for the Mexican economy, as Mexican farmers simply could not compete with the low prices of U.S. agriculture and U.S. investments in the border region of northern Mexico started to destabilize the economies in other regions of Mexico. As a consequence many thousands were drawn northward in search for work, giving rise to the biggest Mexican migration wave in the history of the United States (cf. Spickard, 2007: 370)

In 2001, the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon should drastically
change the Border Patrol’s function one more time: the fight against terrorism and for homeland security was declared the organization’s main goal. One of the first major steps was the creation of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) under a clause of the Patriot Act two years after the attacks. Subsequently, the U.S. Border Patrol was made part of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), a component of the DHS, funding and personnel were increased and the National Guard was sent to defend and protect the southern border (cf. “Border Patrol History,” 2010)

In addition to the Secure Fence Act of 2006, one of the most highly disputed bills of the last decade was the so-called “Sensenbrenner Bill,” passed in 2005. Officially called the “Border Protection, Anti-terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act” (H.R.4437) the bill made being in the United States without papers a felony; made it a felony to help anyone without papers enter the country; and established mandatory sentences for immigration smugglers and migrants without papers who returned after having been deported before. (cf. Spickard, 2007: 437)

Chacón and Davis argue that the promises made by such bills have “created the image of a fantastic fortified boundary in the mind of the public and are used by politicians to stoke fear and generate support. It is this ‘image’ of the border that has been deemed successful, more than any attempt to stem immigration.” (2006: 212) Considering the alternating waves of appreciation and disdain for the Mexican (guest) worker during the first half of the 20th century, image management has been an important, if not the most important, part of immigration policy making in the United States. This shall be of importance again later in this thesis, when we will analyze the image(s) created by Border Wars in detail.

In conclusion, we can argue that the regulation of Mexican immigration has primarily been influenced by the demands for labor in U.S. economy, and secondarily by the provision of political capital in the “War on Terror.” (cf. Chacón and Davis, 2006: 205)

Influenced by issues of race, class, and proximity to Mexico, [immigration policy] reflects a two-track system by which Mexican workers become segregated and separated from the rest of the working class through the designation of some Mexicans as ‘illegal.’ This pejorative is loaded with the anti-Mexican bias of the past, now encoded in ‘acceptable’ discourse. Couched in the language of legality, it remains a means of division and exclusion to better sustain the hegemony of capital over labor. (195)
4. Reality TV

In the period 2012 to 2013, four of the top ten shows on U.S. television were reality TV programs. With ‘only’ 15.1 million viewers Fox’s American Idol (Wednesday) ranked sixth, followed closely by ABC’s Dancing With The Stars (7th), American Idol (Thursday) (8th) and NBC’s The Voice (9th). (cf. Schneider, 2013) Despite American Idol’s declining viewership numbers, reality TV is still one of television’s major genres. But what exactly is reality TV and how can it be defined, taking into consideration a large variety of different formats? What subgenres can we identify and how authentic is reality TV really? And, finally, where and how does Border Wars fit into the genre and how does this influence the show’s effect on the audience? These are some of the questions that will be of concern in this introductory chapter on reality television and that will help us understand how the genre, its codes, and its political economy influence the production of meaning in a series like Border Wars.

4.1. Defining Reality TV

Reality TV experienced a first ‘boom’ in the late 1980s. Nevertheless, even before that programs that involved “unscripted situations with ordinary people” had been discovered as lucrative and successful ways to build audiences. (Murray & Ouellette, 2004: 3) Early precursors are considered the quiz shows of the late 1950s and programs like Candid Camera, An American Family (the first ‘docusoap’), and America’s Funniest Home Videos. Likewise, the daily talk shows of the early 1990s and their celebration of everyday drama contributed greatly to the genre’s current form. However, with programs as different as American Idol, Big Brother and Cops it is difficult to trace the genre’s origin back to one single format. (ibid.) It is also this diversity that makes a clear definition of the genre problematic. While media critics largely agree on some of the characteristics that define a reality show, a clear (industry) standard does not exist and therefore many different definitions are possible. Ellis, for example, defines reality TV as a genre that “combines ordinary people into a situation which takes them out their everyday life, either by setting them a challenge or by constructing an entirely artificial situation that often uses elements drawn from game shows.” (2007: 124) While this definition acknowledges reality TV’s very common quiz or game element (e.g., America’s Next Topmodel, The Voice), it ignores the multitude of programs that do not include challenges and simply follow people’s everyday lives (e.g., Jersey Shore, Dance Moms.)
In contrast to Ellis, Murray and Ouellette take a completely different approach. According to
them, reality TV is not just one of many formats we watch on TV but has been responsible for
a range of important institutional and cultural developments, among others “the merger of
marketing and ‘real-life’ entertainment, the convergence of new technologies with programs
and their promotion, and an acknowledgment of the manufactured artifice that coexists with
truth claims.” (2004: 2) Therefore, Murray and Ouellette’s definition focuses rather on the
social and cultural aspects of the genre than on the specification of its formal characteristics:
“We define reality TV as an unabashedly commercial genre united less by aesthetic rules or
certainties than by the fusion of popular entertainment with a self-conscious claim to the
discourse of the real.” (ibid.)
This definition introduces two essential characteristics of reality TV. First, the genre’s blend
of information and entertainment - and respectively of the factual and the fictional -, and
second its commercialization. With respect to the latter, it is crucial to point out that reality
TV developed out of the need to overcome financial troubles, shifting regulations, increasing
competition among networks, and labor unrests in the television industry in the late 1980s.
(2004: 7) And it has remained a ‘loop hole’ ever since. As reality programming does not
require either the engagement of screenwriters/actors or of expensive sets, props and
costumes, reality shows are extremely cheap and easy to produce. With an estimated
production cost of $150,000 to $250,00 per week for a program like Real Stories of the
Highway Patrol, compared to an episode of a drama series (in the millions,) it is no surprise
that reality shows of all kinds have become a staple on today’s TV schedules. What is more,
their standardized formats can be placed in syndication and re-run to audiences endlessly – as
in the case of Cops, which premiered in 1989 and is still running. Gitlin summarizes the
standardization of reality programming, arguing: “Leisure is industrialized, duration is
homogenized, even excitement is routinized, and the standard repeated TV format is an
important component of the process.” (1979: 255)
The cost-effective concept behind reality TV can be largely attributed to Rupert Murdoch’s
Fox network which pioneered reality programming. Murdoch’s strategy was to run the Fox
network on a tight budget and produce shows that attracted an audience not served by the
three major stations (young, low-income, minority.) The reality-based crime show America’s
Most Wanted, which premiered on Fox in 1988, met exactly those criteria and proved to be an
enormous success. (cf. Fishman & Cavender, 1998: 67) Following its example, other
networks, among them also the three major ones, started producing their own formats soon
after. By January 2003, for instance, one-seventh of all programs on ABC were reality based. (cf. Murray & Ouellette, 2004: 4)

The genre also owes its massive popularity among producers to its proximity to the news and documentary format, which has allowed them to brand certain shows as ‘educational’ or ‘public affairs’ programs. This in turn has helped the networks to renew their license with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and avoid other regulations by the same institution, such as the Prime Time Access Rule (PTAR) from 1971, which limited network prime-time entertainment production. (cf. 2004: 127) A consequence of the PTAR was that in the early 1990s reality shows appeared on the major broadcast networks during the weekday ‘access hour’ (usually 7 to 8 p.m.) right before ‘limited’ prime time and on Saturdays during the prime time. Later on, reality programs were moved to off hours (late afternoon and late evening) until they reappeared during prime time, e.g. American Idol Wednesdays and Thursdays at 8 p.m. (cf. Fishman & Cavender, 1998: 68 – 69) In this manner, reality shows are frequently used to ‘fill holes’ in our TV schedules and are therefore extremely lucrative.

Finally, the development of reality programming is closely linked to the emergence of new technologies, such as microphones, hand-held cameras, and other film and audio equipment.

The popularity of the reality genre relies on the domestication of video and other technologies that allow audiences to become content producers as well as the ability to capture the unexpected [...] , [which] satisfies both overt and subliminal voyeuristic tendencies, which range from the direct involvement of audiences to participate in TV content (game shows) to the more detached observation of the daily interactions of ‘ordinary’ people. (Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2007: 357)

4.1.1. Defining Reality TV: Reading Through the ‘Generic Lens’

Daily hundreds of different shows promise to provide us with the most truthful and authentic insights into other people’s lives, whether that person is a celebrity or simply our next-door neighbor. Clearly, this promise - of providing the viewer with an “unmediated, voyeuristic, [...] often playful look into [...] the ‘entertaining real’” - is both reality TV’s primary distinction from fictional television as well as its primary selling point. (cf. Murray & Ouellette, 2004: 4) Nonetheless, reality TV cannot be classified exclusively as either fictional or factual for a number of reasons.

First, as suggested above, reality TV entertains for profit. Thus, its main purpose is not to inform but to entertain. This is also true for most ‘fictional’ programs. Moreover, reality programs like Border Wars emphasize the ‘spectacle,’ heighten sensation and dramatize with
the help of music, subjective camera angels and many other codes and techniques. On the other hand, reality TV undoubtedly shares a variety of characteristics (such as the use of minimal writing and ́real peoplé) with ́factuaĺ programs whose primary purpose is to inform. Because of this reality TV has repeatedly been referred to as ́infotainment,́ a fusion of information and entertainment. (cf. e.g., Fishman & Cavender, 1998: 12)

But why is it even important to categorize a genre as either factual or fictional? The distinction between fact and fiction has not only been central to literature but also to broadcast TV. The viewer ́trusts´ that the (on-screen) naming of programs and their categorization into genres tell her/him how to approach a certain show. In this way, ́reading through a specific generic lens´ „invoke[s] different relationships to footage on the part of their viewers.Á (Ellis, 2007: 28) „News footage, and factual footage in general, calls on viewers to be witnesses to events. The TV cameras and their operators have seen the events themselves: their footage bears witness to those events.Á (29) Therefore, what we see on factual programs can be trusted and its meanings appear to be transparent. Hence, realism is inherent in the form, which in turn serves to naturalize ideological positions in the text. (cf. Wells, 2003: 199) Wells argues that ́it is only by understanding that ́actuality´ may be extensively manipulated that we can understand the relativity of documentary practice and question the whole notion of documentary ́truth.Á (2003: 199) This is also true for other formats, such as reality TV and the news, which claim to present ́things as they really are.Á We will see in the analysis of Border Wars that the viewer is continuously given an impression of immediacy and transparency (e.g., with the help of the continuity of sound and the linear unfolding of the narrative) although the program is in fact heavily constructed (e.g., voice-overs, cutting.) Wells explains that ́the material is edited not to reveal the ́truth´ but [rather] a set of symbolic relationships with a specific political purpose,Á thus creating a ́politicized/dramatized reality.Á (2003: 199) In this way, the decisions made by the producers about who to cast, where (not) to film and what (not) to film and edit, set up possible versions of reality for a given show. The exclusion of certain material can thus be as powerful as the material included. In programs like Cops and Border Wars, for instance, the viewer is rarely provided with information about the suspects or about their motives. This exclusion of relevant social and psychological background information leads, on the one hand, to the viewerÁs inability to relate to the suspects and, on the other hand, inhibits an adequate (re)solution. (cf. Murray & Ouellette, 2004: 222) In fact, Rapping argues that it seems like that ́there is no sense that preventive or corrective measures should be taken. The editing techniques preclude any idea that social conditions, much less racial or economic inequality,
play a role here.” (227) In *Border Wars* illegal immigration is treated in a similar way. It is seen as unsolvable, unpreventable crime. The “politicized reality” created in *Border Wars* thus justifies an immigration policy that, among other methods, ‘dumps’ illegal immigrants right across the other side of the border, often thousands of kilometers away from their homes and with no financial aid to return to their place of origin. At the same time the reality viewer is expected to accept this. Indeed, the appeal to reality that documentary/reality footage holds, is often so powerful “that the missing context – social, emotional, narrative – seems irrelevant or, worse, is never even considered.” (222) Hence ‘reading through the lens of realism’ can make us ‘vulnerable’ to the underlying myths and messages, hidden under the notion of ‘truthfulness’ of factual programming.

4.1.2. Defining Reality TV: A Factual Program?

As already mentioned, reality TV borrows from both (fictional) entertainment programs as well as from (factual) informative formats, such as the news or the documentary. In order to define (crime) reality TV as a genre more clearly, it is necessary to elaborate its main differences and similarities with other ‘related’ factual and fictional genres.

First, many crime reality programs such as *America’s Most Wanted* or *Border Wars* borrow intensively from the discourses and codes of journalism. Examples for this are the use of journalistic parlance, as well as on-location interviews, on-screen information text, anchors or hosts, or simply the use of hand-held cameras and clips from surveillance cameras. Cavender and Fishman point out that studies also have shown that many viewers indeed perceive (crime) reality shows as news or ‘factual.’ (cf. 1998: 10) The genre’s ‘passion’ for the spectacle and the goal to entertain for profit, however, connect it rather to the tabloid news than to the ‘serious’ news of CNN or BBC. As I have already argued, it was largely Rupert Murdoch, who pioneered reality programming by importing “tabloid journalists from Fleet Street (and their methods) to Fox’s reality programs.” (66) Partly because of this, a trend towards a more tabloid-like programming in U.S. television has been noticeable over the past twenty-five years. (12)

Although some similarities between (tabloid) news and reality programming exist, ‘serious’ news footage (which can be regarded as the purest type of factual material) distinguishes itself by two major points from reality TV: on the one hand, news footage is (usually) recently produced, and second, it demands minor intervention on behalf of the producers. (Ellis, 2007: 27) In an article from *Harper’s Magazine* in November 1993, Debra Seagal, who used to
work as a story analyst for *American Detective* (ABC), unmasksthe ‘dirty tricks’ of reality TV producers to compress hundreds of hours of footage into the shortest, most “action-packed segments of tantalizing, crackfilled, dope-dealing, junkie-busting cop culture.” (1993) According to Seagal scenes that compromise cops are cut out (due to a close cooperation between production company and law enforcement agencies), prerecordedsounds and visuals are used from a databank where necessary, and story analysts, cameramen and cutters are reminded by a list to look for: “Death, stab, shoot, strangulation, club, suicide.” (1993) She further comments: “We are to hope for a naturally dramatic climax. But if it doesn't happen, I understand, we'll 'work one out.'” Clearly such procedures violate the journalistic tradition of objectivity, non-intervention as well as immediacy and rather resemble crime fiction than news footage. (cf. Fishman & Cavender, 1998: 12).

The fine line between intervention/subjectivity and objectivity has also been an important issue in the documentary tradition. Although the documentary format is a rather well respected genre with a great deal of credibility, it shares quite a few aesthetic and textual characteristics with reality programming. Examples are the use of handheld cameras, voiceovers, footage of live events, roll-call of experts or witnesses, archive material and most importantly the fascination with ‘real’ people and events. (cf. Murray & Ouellette, 2004: 5; Wells, 2003: 188) Both genres are also characterized by an underlying promise of providing “direct access to the experience of the observed subject.” (Murray & Ouellette, 2004: 5) The following definition of ‘documentary’ allows us to notice how similar and yet different reality programming and the documentary format are:

A non-fiction text using ‘actuality’ footage, which may include the live recording of events and relevant research material (i.e. interviews, statistics etc.) This kind of text is usually informed by a particular point of view, and seeks to address a particular social issue which is related to and potentially affects the audience. (Wells, 2003: 188)

This definition could also be applied to *Border Wars*, which uses live recordings, as well as interviews, is informed by a particular point of view, and addresses a particular social issue (illegal immigration, drug prevention etc.) that affects the audience.

What differentiates, however, both the documentary as well as reality television from being truly factual is that both are constructed: “The documentary is constructed and may be seen not as a recording of ‘reality’, but as another kind of representation of ‘reality’.” (ibid.) In fact, there is no doubt that all recordings have “to be ordered, reshaped and placed in sequential form, [and that] even in the shooting of the material choices have to be made in regard to shot selection, point of view, lighting etc.” (ibid.) In this sense, no truly ‘factual’
(i.e. objective/unbiased/unconstructed) representation exists and thus the question should rather concern the degree of intervention than its existence. In order to determine the kind and extent of construction and self-reflexivity in documentary film-making (and maybe also in reality programming), Wells points to Corner’s “four modes of visual language and three modes of verbal language in the documentary form.” (ibid.) Especially Corner’s distinction between “reactive observationalism” and “proactive observationalism” is of significance, as it distinguishes two kinds of film making: the one with the greatest (proactive) and the one with the least (reactive) intervention by the camera-operator/director with regard to the choice about what material is to be recorded. (ibid.) In this sense, Border Wars would most likely be categorized as proactive observationalist, due to its high degree of construction and intervention on behalf of the producers.

4.1.3. Defining Reality TV: Reality TV and the Documentary

Undoubtedly, the degree of intervention is an important factor in both documentary as well as reality programming and can help to differentiate them from other genres. But what exactly is the difference between a documentary and a reality show? And why does one program classify as documentary while another does not? One of the major problems in distinguishing the two genres is the large variety of different formats (i.e. subgenres) that exist within reality programming. While Gamedocs, for instance, can be distinguished more easily, programs like Border Wars share a greater amount of aesthetic and textual similarities with the documentary, as for example: “the focus on the everyday lives of their subjects in somewhat ‘natural’ settings without a game setup,” the use of cinema verité techniques, and fewer commercial elements (i.e., product placement or the promise of prizes.) (Murray & Ouellette, 2004: 42) Many reality formats also borrow intensely from other (fictional) genres. Murray points out that the docusoap does not only use many of the textual and aesthetic elements of direct cinema but also applies the overt structuring devices of soap operas, such as short narrative sequences, intercuts of multiple plotlines, mini cliff-hangers, the use of musical sound track, and a focus on character personality. (ibid.) Most of these features can also be found in Border Wars, a reality program with an overall very ‘documentary-like’ look: usually four to six different plotlines intercut, each at a different location and/or ‘connected’ to a different officer, often with mini cliff-hangers at the end of each segment/before advertisement break; use of musical sound tracks with a returning theme, as well as tension-building music during action-packed scenes; and, finally, short narrative sequences either by
the narrator or by the officers. Only a “focus on character personality” cannot be noticed in Border Wars, as the show mainly concentrates on action.

Another aspect is narration time, which is often mentioned as a distinctive feature between reality TV and documentary. Ellis for example argues that reality programming prefers to repeat key moments and previous events (in Border Wars usually after advertisement breaks and/or at the beginning of new plotlines) instead of using narration for recaps. (cf. 2007: 124) While some reality shows make use of this technique, I would not mention it as a primary distinctive feature, as some documentaries lack or only use narration scarcely and many reality programs (Border Wars is only one example) use a narrator, who repeats, sums up and comments important events.

Evidently, aesthetic and textual characteristics alone cannot establish a clear boundary between reality TV and the documentary format. Therefore, Ellis turns to documentary’s “explanatory intent,” arguing that documentaries involve the discussion of issues, and “the analysis of situations or some kind of sustained interrogation of people by the film and its makers.” (2007: 124) Thus documentaries have social responsibility. (ibid.) This argument can also be found in Murray, who claims that the distinction between reality programming and documentary cannot simply be based on the narrative form or other aesthetic qualities but involves an underlying belief that documentaries “should be educational or informative, authentic, ethical, socially engaged, independently produced, and serve the public interest, while reality TV programs are commercial, sensational, popular, entertaining, and potentially exploitative and/or manipulative.” (Murray & Ouellette, 2004: 42 - 43) Taking into consideration that reality TV is strongly profit-oriented, it has a different cultural value than other factual genres, which explore cultural/political issues in order to inform the public. In this sense, “generic placement becomes a way in which to gauge a program’s cultural value and import through discursive means.” (43)

Furthermore, the rather liminal aesthetic and textual identifiers also enable networks to sell a program as either documentary or reality program, “by packaging it in such way as to appear either more educational/informative or more entertaining/sensational, or in some cases both.” (44) This in turn may influence the viewer, who will be either more likely to read a given program as informative and authentic or as entertaining (depending on his/her prior expectations and competence to read a specific genre.) (ibid.) In the case of Border Wars, branding and generic placement is of specific interest as the program’s format is a mixture of documentary and (fictional) crime show and therefore difficult to categorize. Like other reality programs that concentrate on specific professions, Border Wars also has a somewhat
‘educational’ value in terms of ‘teaching’ the viewer something about a specific social aspect of life that s/he is not familiar with. The fact that it is broadcasted on a channel like the National Geographic – commonly perceived as an informative and educational channel – adds credibility and authenticity and certainly impacts the audience’s reading. As we will see in the analytical part of this thesis, however, Border Wars seems to pursue a specific sociopolitical agenda, by emphasizing the ‘spectacle’ of an alleged war at the border, and should therefore not be categorized as either factual or documentary.

4.2. Reality TV’s Subgenres

Reality TV is certainly one of the most multi-facetted formats on television. As mentioned above, many different formats and shows exist, making it difficult to define and develop a typology of the genre. Despite its diversity there are some characteristics that cut across many reality shows, such as the use of non-actors portraying themselves, ‘real’ locations, “agreed-on surveillance,” minimal writing (although events/scenes are often placed in a narrative context,) dramatic uncertainty, and the promise of the popular and voyeuristic pleasure of authenticity. (cf. Murray & Ouellette, 2004: 2; Nabi, 2007: 372-373) In what follows, I will discuss some of the possible subgenres within reality TV, before categorizing Border Wars as crime reality program and elaborating some of the subgenre’s typical features.

While typologies are often based on content, Raphael adopts a different approach by distinguishing programs according to “how much each relies on nontraditional labor (for story development, writing, performing, and camerawork) and production inputs (such as sets, props, and costumes).” (Murray & Ouellette, 2004: 120) Thus, he differs between those reality programs that principally depend on professional labor, for example, most tabloid TV shows, e.g., Entertainment Tonight; formats that use hybrid production techniques, such as Totally Hidden Video; experiment-based programs like The Real World; and competitive programs, e.g., Survivor. (120 -121) These programs contrast with shows that rely completely on amateur footage, such as the typical home video programs (e.g., America’s Funniest Home Videos) and with clip shows (the “world’s best/worst/most” programs,) which mix amateur and professional video. Similarly, crime-time and emergency response programs (e.g. Rescue 911, America’s Most Wanted, Unsolved Mysteries and Cops) are shot and edited by professionals but may also make use of amateur footage. “These programs also take advantage of props, sets, and costumes provided by the law enforcement authorities, corrections institutions [etc.].” (ibid.)
Another approach to develop a typology of reality programming is taken by Nabi, who identifies six subgenres “based on an exploratory factor analysis of the viewing frequency of 12 reality-based programs.” (2007: 373) In contrast to Raphael, her typology omits news-related tabloid TV programs and the somewhat out-dated formats of clip and home video shows (which can be found on YouTube now.) Reality-drama (The Real World), competition/game (e.g., Survivor), and crime (e.g., Cops) can be found in both, Nabi and Raphael, while Nabi adds romance (The Bachelor), talent (e.g., American Idol) and informational (e.g., Trading Spaces) as independent categories. (373)

Similarly to Nabi, Oullette and Murray distinguish between shows with a game element, the ‘gamedoc;’ dating programs; programs using elements from the soap opera, the ‘docusoap;’ and talent contests. (cf. 2004: 3) In addition, they include the reality sitcom (e.g., The Osbournes, Keeping up with the Kardashians;) “celebrity variations” such as I’m A Celebrity… Get Me Out Of Here!; as well as makeover/lifestyle programs (e.g., Extreme Makeover.) (ibid.) Finally, they also include court programs such as Judge Judy but overlook other crime related dramas. (ibid.)

Although all three approaches suggest similar categories, no clear industry standard for what defines a specific reality format or reality TV in general exists. Largely, this may be the result of a constantly transforming television schedule, with old programs being cancelled and new ones being developed every season. Another factor is that many hybrid formats exist. The Bachelor, for example, combines romance with competition/game elements, and Cops and America’s Most Wanted are both categorized in the same subgenre (crime reality) although their formats are completely different: America’s Most Wanted uses reenactments, while Cops uses ‘real’ footage.

4.3. Crime Reality TV & Border Wars

Crime based reality shows have been an integral part of TV schedules since the first reality TV boom of the late 1980s. Prime examples (including also some of the longest running shows on TV) are America’s Most Wanted (1988-2008), Unsolved Mysteries (1987 – present) and Cops (1989 – present). Due to a large number and variety of different reality shows dealing with crime and law, crime reality TV (or reality legal programming) should be considered an independent subgenre, as suggested above by Nabi and Raphael. But what exactly defines a crime reality show? According to Eschholz et.al. a program classifies as crime reality show if it either includes “actual footage or uses dramatic reenactments of real-
life adventures of police officers, criminals, emergency medical personnel, and everyday citizens performing heroic feats.” (2002: 328) Another popular format, omitted by Eschholz et. al., is the reality court show. Its most famous example is probably *Judge Judy*, broadcasted since 1996. Thus we can conclude that crime reality shows deal with reality-based subjects having to do with crime, police or litigation. On the production level crime reality shows do not differ much from other reality subgenres: inexpensive, flexible, lasting formulas, aimed at entertaining for the highest possible profit. *Border Wars*, too, follows this concept. In 2013, *Border Wars* went into its 5th season, proving it to be a lasting formula that attracts sufficient viewers, while being relatively inexpensive to produce. Last but not least, *Border Wars*’ content – it uses actual footage of the real-life ‘adventures’ of the border patrol agents of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), a federal law agency – classifies it as a typical crime reality show according to Eschholz et.al.

### 4.3.1. Crime Reality TV: Distorting Reality

As already noted above, reality programming appears authentic and truthful because its generic techniques (e.g., actual footage, hand-held cameras, synchronized sound, etc.) relate it to other ‘trust-worthy’ television genres such as the news and the documentary. This apparent authenticity makes reality crime programs like *Cops* or *Border Wars* compared to other fictional crime series even more powerful with regard to the myths and messages they distribute. (cf. Prosise & Johnson, 2004: 76) Furthermore, since most viewers lack first hand experience with crime and police work they tend to believe or to ‘depend’ on the myths of crime and crime fighting reinforced by certain reality programs. (85) A prevalent myth in crime reality series, for instance, is that race and crime are seemingly connected. In this way, ‘blackness’ is often treated “as a sign for increased risk of criminality” and media crime depictions may serve to reinforce those kinds of myths. (75) *Border Wars*, too, treats ethnicity in a similar way: it ideologically connects ‘Latinism’ to drug trafficking and illegal immigration.

Unlike documentaries, reality TV’s primary goal is not to inform but to entertain. Therefore crime (or illegal immigration) as represented on TV should not be confused with reality. With its focus on spectacle, crime reality TV tends to exaggerate not only the relative frequency of violent crime but also the police’s success in solving it, thus serving to justify law
enforcement’s function in society.\(^6\) (cf. Prosise & Johnson, 2004: 76) Seagal claims that: “watching a finished episode of American Detective, one easily forgets that the detectives are, for the most part, men whose lives are overburdened with formalities and paperwork.” (1993) Similarly we can assume that the work of CBP agents is not as thrilling as Border Wars tries to make the viewer believe. However making a show about officers filling out paperwork or patrolling the border for hours without any incidents does not sell TV shows because it is not what viewers have come to expect. Therefore, “(crime) reality shows are carefully constructed narratives designed to appeal to audience expectations.” (ibid.) Border Wars, too, is carefully constructed, following a rigid (narrative) structure: per episode four to six independent plotlines are told (usually ab ovo,) each one containing an introduction (usually the agents, their place of work or the situation are introduced), a rising action (e.g., a group of illegal immigrants is spotted), a climax (e.g., chasing the illegal ‘aliens’ through the desert or searching a car for illegal substances,) and a resolution (almost every plotline ends with an arrest.) In order to ensure this rigid narrative formula, producers, editors and cutters first have to arrange the actual recorded material – which in its raw form will rarely add up to a clear narrative – and connect the parts, often using prerecorded sounds and images from a large databank to compensate missing or useless material, so that in the end the result purports to represent the reality of law enforcement-civilian interaction. (79)

While enhancing the actual footage is crucial to selling a program to TV viewers, Seagal explains that often material also needs to be cut out because it is “too much reality for reality-based TV.” (1993) This is certainly true for material that compromises federal law agents on the program. As a matter of fact, (crime) reality TV rarely presents the police, or any other government agency, in a negative light. Largely this may be due to the fact that production companies work in close cooperation with the departments and the officers when shooting their material and therefore depend on their goodwill. (ibid.) As a result, law enforcement agents are often portrayed as courageous defenders of law and justice who protect society against nameless hordes of criminals, drug traffickers, and illegal immigrants.

On the other hand, reality is also ‘censored’ because programs like Border Wars are not designed to answer or provide solutions for complicated social problems since their main focus is on entertainment. Seagal gives an example:

And what I see, what the viewer will never see, is the women--disheveled, shocked, their clothes still scattered on musty hotel carpets-- telling their stories to the amused

\(^6\) Prosise and Johnson point to a study of six reality TV programs whose arrest rate of 60% contrasted sharply with an actual rate of 18% of cleared crimes in the same year. (2004: 76)

Showing those kind of images and taking the suspects’ social and psychological background into consideration would only “cast doubt on the very system that has produced the criminal activity in the first place” and is therefore omitted from ‘mainstream’ television programming. (ibid.) This can also be noticed in Border Wars. In chapter 3., I have already outlined the many economical and historical factors that have to be taken into consideration with regard to the U.S.-Mexican border conflict. However, Border Wars manages to downplay this complexity in favor of an entertaining, action packed, pseudo-informative, ‘manhunt spectacle,’ which often resembles a modern Bonanza western. Dealing with a complex topic in this way is typical for mainstream media as Elias argues: “The media typically treat crime in simplistic and Manichean terms: victims are innocent good people and offenders are guilty bad people, even though many offenders have themselves been victimized.” (Prosise & Johnson, 2004: 75)

4.3.2. Crime Reality TV: Focus on the ‘Front End’ and the Construction of ‘the Other’

An analysis of how (crime) reality TV distorts reality and influences the audience’s intentional reading also involves a closer look at how shows like Cops, America’s Most Wanted, and Border Wars mainly focus on the “front end” of the criminal justice system. As already mentioned, the cops and agents of crime reality programs “present themselves [and are presented] in the most cleaned-up, wholesome of terms:” (Oullette & Murray, 2004: 220) officers show “saintlike restraint and patience” even in the face of the most ‘freakish’ of events or characters, (225) and their tidy uniforms and composed ways of speaking often contrast sharply with the chaotic and irrational behavior and appearances of their suspects. “They are constructed as the image of the traditional, U.S. male heroism,” while their counterparts are constructed as the inferior ‘other’ or ‘alien,’ with the help of humiliating imagery of scantly clothed suspects behaving and screaming irrationally and being overwhelmed by the officers, pushed to the floor and handcuffed during an arrest. (220) Especially in Border Wars, language barriers are also used as ‘signs of otherness’ and mark suspects as inferior and inherently different from “normal” Americans, i.e. foreign. (225) In this context “only the police seem to represent ‘real’ human nature – a superior army patrolling settlements of primitive, barbaric tribes.” (226) To understand the effects that the qualitative differences between those who police and those who are policed have on the
construction of race, ethnicity, and gender in *Border Wars*, it is important to examine specific images in a textual analysis.

An important role in the construction of difference also plays the use of hand-held cameras, which present audiences with ways to “recognize, understand, make sense of, and even anticipate the unfolding of a situation,” through the eyes of law enforcement. (Prosise & Johnson, 2004: 78) The hand-held camera basically enables the viewer to ‘ride along’ with the officer. Additionally, a sort of ‘personal connection’ is established between viewer and agent, especially in those moments when the agent addresses the camera directly, as if the viewer was his/her partner on the passenger seat. The result is that the audience and the officers come to form a sort of ‘in-group,’ which opposes an ‘out-group’ of nameless criminals, suspects, and illegal immigrants, resulting in an Us/Them dichotomy. In addition to the uneven distribution of speech time, subjective camera angles and symbolic signifiers such as violent or arrest scenes, the officers thus appear emotionally closer, more human, and superior and the audience is encouraged to favor the police’s perspective and identify with them, rather than with the emotionally alien out-group, which is presented as depraved, inferior, and criminal.

Since *Border Wars* is concerned exclusively with illegal immigration and drug trafficking at the U.S.–Mexican border, the viewer will primarily see Mexicans and other Latin Americans and learn to identify them as ‘the other.’ Although many of the officers themselves are clearly of Hispanic descent, they are (visually) outnumbered by groups of exhausted and desperate illegal immigrants and ruthless, and very often, incoherent drug traffickers. Thus *Border Wars* (and many other programs for the matter of fact) criminalizes not just the ‘Other’ but one ethnic group in particular: Latin Americans. The consequence of this criminalization on television is the creation and reinforcement of stereotypes and myths about ‘Spanish-looking’ or ‘Spanish-speaking’ people in the U.S., as well as the justification of stricter anti-immigration policies and repressive law enforcement methods at the border, with the objective to hold back the ‘threat’ coming from south of the border.

In conclusion we can argue that the (reality) crime drama plays a crucial role in “maintaining social stability and the authority of the state” by using the “symbolic narratives of wrongdoing and retribution” to ‘teach’ society the distinction between ‘us’ and ‘them,’ right and wrong, and between which “acts of violence are authorized, even valorized, and which are forbidden.” (Murray & Ouellette, 2004: 214) In this way television is often used as a ‘means to an end’ in times of political and hegemonic change. Rapping argues that it is television, in
both news and entertainment divisions, that ‘inform’ the public of major shifts in the processes and policies of law enforcement and help it to “adjust, culturally and psychologically, to their implications.” (215)

Thus, in times of paradigmatic cultural, social, and political change, it is the media that must perform the difficult work of ‘redefining the cultural context within which the criminal justice system operates,’ and indeed, redefining ‘the very concepts of crime, justice and retribution,’ to fit the needs and norms of the changing social order. (2004: 214)

This is also consistent with Kellner’s argument about the hegemonic power of media culture:

Media culture, as well as political discourses, helps establish the hegemony of specific political groups and projects. Media culture produces representations that attempt to induce consent to certain political positions, getting members of the society to see specific ideologies as ‘the way things are’ (i.e. […] that protecting the country requires intense militarization and an aggressive foreign policy, and so on). Popular cultural texts naturalize these positions and thus help mobilize consent to hegemonic political positions. (1995: 59)

At least since 2001 when George W. Bush became the 43rd President of the United States and the world was shocked by 9/11, U.S. politics including its law enforcement and immigration policy have experienced a dramatic shift to the right. An invasive war in the Middle East, followed by a range of scandals, such as the latest NSA-Snowden affair, and a large number of reports about the violation of human rights in Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo Bay and many more, have shown that U.S. law enforcement has taken on harsher and seemingly uncontrollable dimensions. Taking Kellner’s and Rapping’s argument into consideration, it is up to television to help the public to adjust to those sociopolitical changes. In an increasingly xenophobic and paranoiac political climate, Border Wars seems to do exactly this: mark the immigrant as inherently different, and justify repressive policies, by invoking fear in the viewers. Thus Border Wars is not simply an entertainment program but functions as a means of control for many different communities of interest, such as the arms and prison industry7 which both benefit from the construction and maintenance of the border fence and detention facilities, as well as the many other industries and work sectors (e.g., service occupations like construction and maintenance, and production and transportation occupations) that largely depend on a cheap Latin American workforce.

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7 The United States holds 25% of the world’s prison population and is the country with the largest defense budget in the world.
5. Analysis

5.1. Introducing Border Wars

By January 16, 2013, the National Geographic Channel had broadcasted 58 episodes of *Border Wars* in five seasons.\(^8\) No new episodes have been broadcasted since then. Whether the show was cancelled is unclear at this time, no specific information has been published on the channel’s website. The first episode premiered on January 10, 2010, a Sunday at 9 P.M. and was the “network’s highest-rated series premiere ever.” (“National Geographic Show […],” 2010) The rest of season one was broadcasted on Mondays 9 P.M. Season two also premiered on a Sunday and was then scheduled on Wednesdays. The remaining seasons were split up between Monday and Wednesday show times. Although the National Geographic Channel is currently rerunning the 45-minutes program on weekdays in the early or late afternoon, *Border Wars* certainly used to be one of the channel’s hit show. In an interview, Nicholas Stein, *Border Wars*’ producer, attributed its immense success to “the enormous hunger [its] viewers have for a real sense [of] what is going on down there.” (Goodwin, 2011) Nevertheless, *Border Wars* actually has not much to do with the reality or the “real sense” of what is happening at the U.S.-Mexican border. It rather presents a one-sided, highly dramatized version of the events at the border, which I want to discuss in more detail in this chapter.

As mentioned before, the series was officially co-produced by Customs and Border Production (CBP.) Producer Nicholas Stein and his team had also unprecedented access to the activities of other agencies of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), including the ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement), the DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration) and the U.S. Coast Guard. (cf. Goodwin, 2011) A cooperation of this kind undoubtedly has implications for the message that the program produces. Stein claimed that “the CBP really trusted” him and his team to “tell their story in a serious way and to tell it in an accurate way.” (Cavanaugh & Heilbrunn, 2010) Thus, it is undeniable that Stein’s intention was to create a show that produces a pro-law enforcement message and that presents the Customs and Border Protection in the most positive light possible. In the same interview Stein also confirmed that the border issue is only presented from the point of view of law enforcement, not the immigrants: “This is a look from the point of view of the federal law enforcement

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\(^8\) For a full list of episodes see http://channel.nationalgeographic.com/channel/border-wars/episode-guide/.
folks. [...] There’s so many points of view. But we decided that a lot of people really didn’t understand what these men and women are being asked to do on our behalf and with our tax dollars.” (ibid.) Without a doubt, Border Wars is not the story of thousands of illegal immigrants, who try to cross the U.S.-Mexican border under the most dangerous conditions with the goal to find work in the north but it is the story of the people who catch them – sometimes even “hunt” them. (cf., the subtitle of episode 2x8 is “Manhunt”) The show is also indifferent to the economic and sociopolitical circumstances that actually force many to leave their families behind and “gamble everything they have.” (“Last Defense”) “We didn’t talk policy, we didn’t talk about, you know, what people should do in terms of policy and legislation and laws,” Stein argues, thus situating Border Wars as nothing more than a sensationalist reality show which exploits the suffering of thousands of people with the objective to make profit. (Cavanaugh & Heilbrunn, 2010)

5.1.1. Determining Border Wars’ Subject Matter

The National Geographic Channel sums up Border Wars’ subject matter as follows:

Every day thousands of men, women and children attempt to enter the United States illegally – some looking for work, some seeking a new life and other trying to smuggle drugs or other contraband. Many will do whatever it takes, often risking their lives by crossing Arizona’s treacherous Sonoran Desert. Follow the officers and agents of U.S. Customs and Border Protection as they scour the inhospitable landscape at one of the busiest border crossings in the country, seeking to fight terrorism and intercept illegal entrants from the air, on the ground and at the port of entry. (“National Geographic Show [...]” 2010)

Similarly, the narrator introduces each episode emphasizing the heroic tasks CBP agents perform to secure the border, e.g.: “The U.S. border stretches over thousands of miles, and everyday officers and agents of the Department of Homeland Security guard the frontlines as illegal immigrants and drug traffickers search, for new ways to penetrate.” (“Bullets over the Border”) In another introduction the narrator comments: “In a city under constant threat, these federal law enforcement officers are at the frontline, they battle illegal immigration, smuggling and terrorism. [...] (“City Under Siege”) As a result, we can conclude that Border Wars follows the agents and officers of the Customs and Border Patrol (sometimes also of the ICE, DEA, Coast Guard and the local police departments) while they guard/watch/defend America’s “frontline” against “terrorism,” “illegal immigration,” and “smuggling.”

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9 2x8 signifies: Season 2, episode 8
While the first five episodes exclusively take place in Arizona, other episodes include locations in parts of Texas and California. There are also special episodes such as “Cocaine Dump Truck” in season four, which was filmed in Puerto Rico, and “Murder Capital” in season three, including scenes in Ciudad Juárez (which constitutes a bi-national metropolitan area with El Paso, Texas.) Each episode is limited to a specific state, sometimes even a particular area or city. States only vary between episodes. As already mentioned, every episode consists of usually five to six intercutting plotlines, each one set at a different location, for example at a specific port of entry, in a city, or some remote area. Furthermore, the different stories often take place at different times of the day. The viewer however is given the impression that all the events of an entire episode happened during the successive “12/24/48/72 hours,” as announced by the narrator at the beginning of each show. While most of the stories are set during the daytime (mornings, afternoons) every episode includes at least one segment that was (partially) shot at night. These night episodes are filmed with night vision cameras (cf. Image 1.) and recall the shooting style and atmosphere of “amateur horror movies,” like The Blair Witch Project (1999).

![Image 1. Night vision cameras create an atmosphere of horror/terror](image1.png)

At the beginning of every plotline and frequently at the beginning of segments (after advertisement breaks or recaps,) the viewer is informed about the exact location and time by on-screen text, maps and the narrator. The different stories of an episode are also ‘connected’ to at least one particular officer or agent, who may be featured on various episodes. The narrator introduces every ‘host agent’,...
and on-screen text tells the viewer his/her name and position. While even the canine unit in episode 5x2 is named by on-screen text, suspects, smugglers, and illegal immigrants remain completely nameless. Another discrepancy is the gender inequality with regard to host agents featured on the show. Out of the four episodes primarily used for this analysis, only two of the hosts were female (episodes 5x2 and 1x1,) compared to approximately 23 male officers. Most of the male agents also carry Hispanic names, speak English with a Spanish accent or have a ‘Hispanic look.’

Despite minor differences, the show’s concept remains unchanged throughout all five seasons: the narrator introduces the show, sums up the content of the episode (accompanied by visuals and sounds) and finishes with: “These are the Border Wars.” This is usually followed by an opening sequence and the first segment/story. Every episode is composed of several intercutting segments, lasting from two to a maximum of ten minutes per segment. The number of segments per plotline varies from one to various per story. Most episodes include both at least one drug seizure story and one story in which officers apprehend illegal immigrants or human traffickers. The pilot episode thus includes two stories that deal with illegal immigration and two with smuggling: first, officers Ortiz and Berlanga chase a truck loaded with illegal immigrants and later catch another group of illegal immigrants at night; another story involves a Black Hawk crew and their rescue operation. The two smuggling stories of episode 1x1 are set at the Nogales port of entry, where officer McNamara stops two cars during her shift, the first one loaded with $18.000 worth of marijuana and the second with over $300.000 in cash. There are, however, also episodes that are concerned with one specific subject. For instance episode 2x8 (“Manhunt”) focuses on illegal immigration. In this particular episode officers first chase suspected illegal immigrants on their ATVs (all-terrain vehicles) through a remote area outside of San Diego, California; then follow a man with counterfeit papers in a sting operation; and finally detect a woman hidden in front of the passenger seat at the San Isidro port of entry. As noted above, every episode includes at least one night scene in which officers pursue suspected illegal immigrants or drug smugglers through remote areas. At the end of (almost) every episode CBP agents and federal law officers are successful: they always catch the smugglers, human traffickers, drug dealers or illegal immigrants they were pursuing, they always find illegal narcotics or money, and they rarely lack evidence for apprehensions. In this way, episodes frequently end with an arrest.

Overall, Border Wars is quite similar to other crime reality shows but especially to Cops: A large number of chases, a focus on action, and the portrayal of crime from the point of view of law enforcement. The only main difference seems to be that Cops does not feature a narrator.
When asked about the similarities between the two programs Nicholas Stein admitted that “some of the action” was like *Cops* but that law enforcement at the border was completely different from law enforcement in Newark, Baltimore or Cleveland. He saw the difference especially in the “enormous implications,” with regard to both security and immigration, that everything that happens at border has and added: “You know, every single person that tries to come in here illegally, they’re worried about terrorism.” (Cavanaugh & Heilbrunn, 2010)

5.1.2. The Title

Before discussing the interplay of the concepts of fear, terrorism, the criminalization of “the other” in *Border Wars*, some remarks about title and subtitles shall be made at this point, as they introduce us to exactly those concepts. First of all, the term ‘war’ is a negative one. It invokes fear and implies somebody is under attack. Along with other words and phrases such as “terrorism,” “ground zero,” and “protecting America’s border,” the title may be associated with the war on terrorism, thus indirectly fuelling xenophobia. The location of this alleged war is narrowed down by the second word: “border.” Considering that two borders enclose the United States, one in the north with Canada and one in the south with Mexico, it is unclear which border the title refers to. In order to know that the “border” in fact relates to the U.S.-Mexican border, the viewer actually has to watch the show. But even after identifying the exact location, one question remains: Is the United States at war with Mexico? Undoubtedly, *Border Wars* attempts everything in its power to create the impression of an actual border war: lots of weapons, CBP agents who look like soldiers, wounded illegal immigrants in the desert etc. Nevertheless, the United States and Mexico have not lately declared war on each other. On the contrary, Mexico is actually one of the U.S. most important trading partners. (cf. 3.4.) As every war needs an enemy, the most important question then is: Who or what is this enemy? According to *Border Wars* it is not just the Mexican cartels but in fact every single smuggler and illegal immigrant crossing the border. As Stein argued: “[…] every single person that tries to come in here illegally” is a possible (terrorist) threat; and great threats demand for great measures. *Border Wars*’ leaves no doubt that in order “to maintain operation and control of our borders and hopefully protect this great nation of ours,” (“Last Defense”) the only solution are repressive law enforcement tactics and an anti-immigration policy.

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10 cf. The opening of episode 1x3: “These officers and agents of the Department of Homeland Security work around the clock protecting America’s borders. They are at ground zero in the war against narcotrafficking, illegal immigration and terrorism.” (“Dead of Night”)
5.2. The Construction of Realism in Border Wars

The main focus of this part of the analysis will be the identification of the techniques and codes used to create the impression of realism in Border Wars. As discussed in chapter 2.6., reality TV is different from other television programs with respect to the codes at work. While fictional shows are scripted and make use of costumes, sets, props (i.e. “representational codes,” cf. Fiske, 2010: 222), Border Wars relies more on the “social codes” of level one (“reality”) and the technical codes of camera work, editing, and music to create “an appropriate cultural text.” (223) As a result the codes at work appear transparent, as if what the viewer sees on her/his television screen actually is reality and not its representation. Because ideologies thus “disappear from view into the taken for granted ‘naturalised’ world of common sense,” it is crucial to deconstruct the concept of realism/transparency/authenticity in Border Wars. (Hall, 1995: 19, cf. chapter 2.2.)

Like in the crime reality show Cops, Border Wars’ realism “is based more in the pervasive cultural understanding that ‘seeing is believing,’ the veracity of firsthand experience ‘straight from the horse’s mouth,’ and emotional authenticity (it ‘feels real’)” (Fishman & Cavender, 1998: 99) In this way, the series attempts to give the reality viewer the impression as if s/he was right on the spot and sees what is going on with his/her own eyes, e.g., driving along with the officer, or chasing an illegal immigrant through the undergrowth. The most prominent technique that creates this kind of impression in reality programming is undoubtedly the hand-held camera. Nevertheless, Border Wars applies a large variety of other techniques and codes that help the viewer to ‘buy into’ the show’s realism, starting with its opening sequences.

5.2.1. Realism in the Opening Segments

A number of episodes (e.g., episodes “Death On the Rio Grande” and “War Games”) begin with a viewer discretion warning: “The following program contains scenes that some viewers may find disturbing. Viewer discretion is advised.” (“War Games”) Meanwhile, the viewer hears off-screen noise of an incomprehensible police radio voice, the clicking noise of loading a gun, and an emerging police siren. This initial warning serves not only to advise sensible viewers against “disturbing” scenes but also tells them that what they are about to see is ‘real’ and authentic. This promise (or threat) is subsequently confirmed by the opening segment: half a minute of rapidly changing visuals of weapons, immigrants, and officers in action,
followed by another half a minute of the most action-packed scenes from the episode, all set to dramatic music and the narrator’s voice, who introduces and summarizes what the viewer is about to see in “the next [number] hours.” The message seems to be clear: it cannot get any realer than that. This actually is a war zone, not a game, and so the narrator warns the audience at the end of his introduction: “These are the Border Wars.”

The opening segment is usually followed by an establishing bird’s eye shot or satellite images of the location of the first scene. These techniques are also used at the beginning of the individual stories, and sometimes after intercuts. In “Last Defense,” for example, the viewer first sees a satellite image of the border between Arizona and Mexico.

Image 2.: Satellite image of the location of the first segment

Image 3.: Satellite image of the Nogales Border Patrol HQ
Then a scope zooms in twice on a specific point on the border and on screen text designates the respective area as “Nogales Border Patrol Headquarters,” followed by another zoom in and a close-up shot of two flags fluttering in the wind. The narrator announces: “It’s four p.m. and at Border Patrol headquarters a group of agents prepares for combat,” while on-screen text displays the time and the words “CBP, Border Patrol.” (“Last Defense”) As the localization of the scene at an exact place in time and space tells the viewer that this must be a ‘real’ location, i.e. a location that actually exists and that is not too far from ‘home,’ a first moment of authenticity and immediacy is established at the beginning of each episode.

5.2.2. Editing Realism

The technical code of editing is used to arrange the fragments of actual footage in a meaningful order and thus ensures the linear unfolding of narrative. This is crucial because it gives the viewer the impression that the action unfolds linearly and in real time, even though scenes might have even been recorded on different days. In “Last Defense” (1x1) agents Ortiz and Berlanga first arrest a group of illegal immigrants at around four p.m. in the desert. After also catching the suspected human traffickers that helped the immigrants cross the border, they decide to look for a trail used by smugglers. ‘Immediately’ agent Ortiz spots a toothbrush in the bushes and they find the trail. ‘Later at night’ Ortiz and his colleague officer Peru return to the trail to “play hide and seek” with potential smugglers. At the end, they apprehend another group of illegal immigrants. Most certainly, these events did not take place in the course of a couple of minutes, as screen times wants the viewer to believe, but were probably recorded in the course of many hours or even different days. In film studies, this is called compressed time: the plot time of a film (i.e. the period of time covered by the events shown) is compressed to fit its screen time (e.g., 45 minutes)

Similarly the continuity of sound between shots is used to create a feeling of immediacy. During chase scenes quick cuts frequently show the racing police car from various angles, while the sound of the car’s siren and screeching tires carries on unaffectedly. “The continuous sound suggests continuity in time, as if the viewer has simply looked in a different direction in the same time and place, although of course shots could have been taken at different moments or in a matter in hours.” (Cavender & Fishman, 1998: 99) In fact, many of those sounds (sirens, screeching tires, yelling, helicopter) are pre-recorded and simply edited in later. (cf. Seagal, 1993) So-called voice-overs – off-screen talk, which overlaps a cut between two different visuals – have a similar effect. In Border Wars they are often used
when agents comment on an event. The editor thus has the possibility to support what is being said with visuals, adding additional (emotional or ideological) meaning. Often the visuals will show what the agent is talking about, for instance, the illegal immigrants s/he just apprehended, and then show a medium shot of the agent speaking into the camera. For the viewer it will therefore feel as if s/he simply looked in another direction “in the same time and place.” (ibid.)

5.2.3. Realistic Cameras

*Border Wars* makes use of a variety of different types of cameras: surveillance cameras, helicopter cameras, night vision cameras, infrared cameras, x-ray cameras, etc. On the one hand, they increase the dramatic effect of the stories (especially night vision cameras,) on the other hand they help to construct the notion of realism. In the sense of “seeing is believing,” the view through an x-ray camera confirms (i.e. makes real) the suspicion of a hidden stash of drugs in a car, while surveillance cameras often have a certain voyeuristic effect. (Fishman & Cavender, 1998: 99)

Nevertheless, the most important camera used in *Border Wars*, with respect to both, the construction of realism, as well as viewer identification, remains the lone hand-held camera. To a certain degree we could argue it is crime reality TV’s ‘trademark.’ First and foremost, it allows the viewer to see and hear what the agents (or rather the cameraman) experiences, i.e. it simulates the officers’ point of view.

![Image 4](image_url). The lone hand-held camera simulates the agents’ point of view while chasing a suspected human trafficker.
Additionally, the realist effect is increased by the simulation of ‘real movement’ – a result of carrying the camera, instead of using a tripod. Especially during action scenes, such as car chases, pursuits on foot or on ATVs through the desert, or in the inside of a helicopter, the viewer feels as if s/he was ‘right there.’ During the night, hand-held night vision cameras add a chaotic, horrifying type of realness to the events. Sometimes it gets so confusing, it is impossible to tell where the camera is actually pointing or to identify who is who. Taking a close look at those kinds of scenes, the viewer will notice that they are in fact constructed, i.e. edited, and that many of the visuals actually do not come from the lone hand-held camera. In episode 1x1 for example, the Black Hawk crew rushes to save a lost group of exhausted and severely dehydrated illegal immigrants in the Sonoran desert. During their search, as well as during their highly complicated landing on the rugged desert ground, the helicopter is shown from all different kinds of angles and distances, proving that many of the shots must have been edited in later and actually come from a large database as suggest by Seagal (1993) or were recorded at a different point in time.

5.2.4. Realist Narrative

Realism cannot just be found in the technical codes but also in the narrative, i.e. in what is being told. As noted above, reality TV is supposedly unscripted. However, claims have been made that reality shows are actually planned in the minutest detail and re-enacted. (cf. Milio & Peltier, 2008) Therefore the term ‘soft-scripted’ is much more suitable for shows like Border Wars. This is because in contrast to Cops, Border Wars relies not only on the arrangement of visuals and police/suspect commentaries but also makes use of the (scripted) comments and explanations of a narrator to create a clear narrative structure. Although, a narrator voice tends to reduce the realist effect of the usual ‘direct access’ (cf. Cops) to a certain degree, it is still less perceptible than a host (cf. Robert Stack in Unsolved Mysteries.) One advantage is also that the narrator contributes to the “emotional authenticity” of the show, by commenting the events with the help of emotionally loaded words and phrases. (Fishman & Cavender, 1998: 99)

In order to make the stories ‘feel real’ on an emotional level, Border Wars relies on the dramatic and emotional fates of its characters. In episode 8x2 (‘Manhunt’) officers at the San Isidro port of entry detect a woman rolled up in the small space in front of the passenger seat. The interrogation of the woman is staged as a highly emotional narrative. Alternating comments of the narrator, the young woman and officer Balanza describe her dramatic fate.
She entered the U.S. illegally at the age of eight with her parents and has lived there ever since. Now, at the age of 23 she has a five-year old son with an American citizen and wanted to apply for a regular visa back in Mexico. However because of her illegal stay in the U.S. the narrator tells us, she “cannot legally enter the U.S. for up to three years, which means she cannot go home to see her son.” Repeated close-up shots of her hands and the back of her head (her face is never shown) are used to intensify the moment even more. The narrator explains further that she was so “desperate to get home, she hired smugglers not once, but twice.” Before the young woman breaks out into tears she sobs “I know they can’t give me my visa anymore, but I wanna be with my son […] This is hell.” This particular scene is repeated at various points in the show (opening segment and recaps.) Much of the story’s intensity is created by the ‘right’ arrangement of narrator and character commentary, sound (voice-overs of her sobbing) and close-up shots and is used to generate the highest level of emotion. Many other scenes are created in the same style. At the end of the episode “ officer Ortiz stops by “a special spot.” Shots from different angles show him walking up to a memorial plaque somewhere in the desert. It is the spot where his co-worker and friend was shot and killed by drug smugglers in 1998. Officer Ortiz reads out the printing and has to stop because tears are about to overwhelm him. A close-up of his face is used to intensify the moment. Then an on-screen display reads: “Dedicated to the fallen men and women of Customs and Border Protection.” Thus both stories use emotions that most viewers will be able to relate to, such as loss, death, hope, and desire. The result is that the program ‘feels real,’ which contributes to the (emotional) authenticity of a program, as noted above.

5.3. Singularizing Fear

Fear and threat are probably two of the most striking features of Border Wars. With the help of editing, camera work, and narration the already encoded social codes of level one (cf. chapter 2.6.) are arranged in ways that create an environment of tension and dread, in which anyone crossing the border could constitute a possible threat, i.e. be criminal or even a terrorist. Repeatedly, expressions like “battle,” “threat,” or “terrorism” and close-ups of rifles, officers in camouflage, military helicopters, illegal immigrants in handcuffs, and settings that remind of distant countries (Stein talks about feeling like he came back from Iraq or Afghanistan; cf. Cavanaugh & Heilbrunn, 2010) are used to invoke fear of war and terrorism in the viewer.
In a world that is so hazardous and chaotic, only repressive law enforcement tactics and a pro-militarization, pro-gun policy can ‘save’ the U.S. nation. As already discussed, there is currently no ‘real’ war taking place between the United States and Mexico, nor have there been any reports of terrorists trying to cross the southern border. (cf. chapter 3) The Mexican cartels, however, do constitute a threat and should not be underestimated. The question though is how and what kind of measures should be taken to stop them and at whose expenses this should come. In chapter 3., I have already pointed out that an increased border security has “deliberately and inhumanely forced migration over deadly terrain resulting in the deaths of thousands of migrants on U.S. soil.” (Frey, 2010) In FY 2012, the Customs and Border Protection declared 464 deaths, about five migrant deaths every four days. (cf. chapter 3.3.) Frey also argues that Border Wars “conveniently […] fails to mention that current border policy and security infrastructure is not working,” (2010) thus referring to the last four segments of the border fence that have not been completed as well as to the deficient virtual fence project, intended to secure the border in those areas where no double-layering fence can be erected. (cf. chapter 3.)

Border Wars tries to avoid exactly those kinds of problematic subjects by focusing on the construction of fear and spectacle and promoting the current way of ‘handling things.’ In this sense, cultural texts can be an effective tool for ‘directing’ the ‘common sense’ of a society. Gramsci describes the “common sense” of a society as “an unquestioning belief that this is the way things are supposed to be, with no need for justification.” (Consalvo, 1998: 3) Thus, sensationalist and supposedly ‘real’ television shows like Border Wars that appeal to the psychological and ideological needs of its audiences are used to ‘manipulate’ the viewers into believing that the current border policy is the only possible measure in a war against terror. Especially with respect to issues as complex as the U.S. – Mexican border conflict and anti-immigration policies the implications are profound because they raise important questions about the worth of human life and the rights of the individual. Therefore Border Wars needs to “narrow the range of actual and potential contending world views” and “induce audiences focus on a single interest that unites them and [thus] downplay other interests that might divide them or produce different policy outcomes.” (Condit in Consalvo, 1998: 4) On the one hand, Border Wars does so by (almost completely) excluding the ‘other’ from discourse. In chapter 5.4. we will see how life and work at the border are primarily shown from “the point of view of the federal law enforcement folks,” who defend ‘their’ border against a nameless and largely voiceless horde of illegal immigrants and criminals. (Cavanaugh & Heilbrunn, 2010) On the other hand, the show uses fear to unite its audiences and to “downplay other interests,”
i.e. the interests of thousands of illegal immigrants who risk their lives in search for a better living. Therefore, critics have accused the show of profiting from a humanitarian crisis and denounced it as “law enforcement propaganda.” (cf. Frey, 2010; Caramanica, 2010) Although ‘propaganda’ is certainly a strong word, often associated with totalitarian regimes like Hitler’s Third Reich (cf. Joseph Goebbels ‘propaganda machine’) the following definition of the term may as well apply to *Border Wars*: “[Propaganda is] the systematic construction of a text in which the ideological principles of a political stance are promoted, endorsed and made attractive to the viewer in order to influence the viewer’s beliefs and preferences […]” (Nelmes, 2003: 195) Without a doubt *Border Wars* promotes the “ideological principles” of a particular political stance (pro-law enforcement, pro-gun, anti-immigration) and attempts to make it attractive to the viewer. According to this definition ‘propaganda’ must also be ‘intended.’ Although much of the series is designed to appeal to audiences with the objective of profit, its political economy cannot be denied: first, the program is a product of the cooperation between Customs and Border Protection and must therefore present the agency in a positive light, secondly, the National Geographic Channel belongs to Fox Network, which is known for promoting a conservative, Republican opinion.

5.3.1. Constructing Fear

As the name of the series’ title and many of the subtitles suggest, fear is primarily linked to the concepts of war and violence, as well as terrorism. The border is depicted as warzone and the CBP agents are America’s “frontline” against hordes of illegal and partially criminal border crossers trying to penetrate. Supported by strong visuals such as rifles and physical violence, the narrator’s commentary is used to emphasize the dangers of working at the border verbally and to describe the border as “battle field” in the opening segments as well as throughout the episodes. In the opening segment of “City Under Siege” for instance, the narrator uses the expressions “constant threat,” “frontline,” “battle,” and “terrorism.” (2010) In another opening he tells the viewer that for the officers “every hour is rush hour,” (“Last Defense”) “as illegal immigrants and drug traffickers search for new ways to penetrate 24/7.” (“Bullets Over the Border”) Likewise, the narrator’s voice quality influences how audiences perceive what is being said. Thus Bill Graves’ rather deep voice (the narrator of seasons one to four) and Larry Davis’ even darker (Texan) voice (the narrator of season five) give the narration a sense of terror. Sometimes the narrator also uses facts to underpin the severity of the ‘war’ at the border, e.g.: “The drug war claimed over more than 6000 lives in Mexico in
2008,” (“Last Defense”) or “1000s of illegal immigrants are supposed to slip through.” ("Manhunt") On the one hand, such facts are used to verify that there is indeed a menace coming from beyond the border. On the other hand, they also add authenticity to everything else being said, i.e. naturalize. Furthermore, facts are knowledge and Hall suggests that knowledge is important in the working of ideologies because it allows their subjects “to ‘utter’ ideological truths as if they were their authentic authors.” (2011: 19)

Since reality TV shows cannot make use of many representational codes such as costumes and props, *Border Wars* relies largely on the social codes of dress, setting, and the physical appearance of their casting, which are already encoded. For that purpose footage of special units, like the Black Hawk crew in episode 1x1 and the RIIP team in episode 5x2, are selected. Both teams are introduced with a variety of shots that show the teams being handed out rifles – a first visual reminder that they are “preparing for combat,” as the narrator explains.

Dynamic music and ECUs (extreme close-ups) of the rifles or other equipment (e.g. a taser) intensify the dramatic effect additionally. Furthermore, the Black Hawk crew’s camouflage uniforms, military equipment and helicopter in episode 1x1 ‘naturally’ carry the meaning of war. This ‘war imagery’ is enhanced by quick cuts, voice-overs of helicopter sounds and helicopter radio talk, as well as visuals from the helicopter night vision camera.

The settings are also of importance. Fiske argues that the social codes of landscapes are “less easy to specify systematically, but they are still present and working hard.” (2000: 223) The
first five episodes, for example, are exclusively set in Arizona and many scenes are recorded in the Sonoran desert, a dry, rugged terrain with few signs of life. An inhospitable environment like this ‘naturally’ carries the meaning of danger. Camerawork and editing are simply used to increase the dramatic effect of its intrinsic meaning by showing helicopters, cars and ATVs whirling up sand, or groups of exhausted, handcuffed illegal immigrants sitting on the sandy ground. In “Last Defense” the Black Hawk crew comes to rescue a group of severely dehydrated illegal immigrants, who were abandoned by their guides. The visuals strongly resemble scenes shown on the news depicting war zones in the Middle East: a desert-like environment, people lying on the ground, some of them exhausted, others wounded, their faces and rather simple clothes are dusty, they are surrounded by soldiers in uniforms, helmets and bulletproof vests.

![Image 6. A group of illegal immigrants is getting water bottles from the CBP special agents in the Sonoran desert.](image)

Then the narrator reminds the viewer: “These men have travelled through one of the most unforgiving sectors of the southwest,” and an officers tells the camera: “It is nearly impossible to survive without someone who knows the way.” After an intercut a specially trained unit arrives to give medical aid to the immigrants. A close-up shows how an agent performs an IV on an unclean hand. The message of this scene seems clear: This is a war zone where people are wounded, and all of this is just happening a few miles away from ‘home.’
5.3.2. Border Fears

The borderline too is an important carrier of meaning throughout the episodes of *Border Wars*, and as Chacón and Davis argue “has been politically cultivated as the ‘last line of defense’ for the American people, their culture, and their economy designed and redesigned to fit the foreign policy objectives of successive U.S. administrations.” (2006: 201) While in
other types of media this cultivation has been less explicit, *Border Wars* is more blunt about calling and depicting the border as “last line of defense,” the “frontline” that must be defended by all means. (cf. opening segments “Last Defense” and “City Under Siege”) In episode 1x3, the narrator takes it even one step further and calls the border “ground zero in the war against narcotrafficking, illegal immigration and terrorism.” (“Dead of Night”) Identifying the border with September 11 is part of constructing a media image of the border as ‘out of control’ as well as it is part of maintaining a “climate of uncertainty” and creating fear of immigrants, who pose as possible terrorist threats. (Chacón & Davis, 2006: 216) Andreas argues that “alarming images of a border out of control, can fuel public anxiety;” and that “[therefore], successful border management depends on successful image management [which] does not necessarily correspond to levels of actual deterrence.” (ibid.) In chapter 5., we will see how *Border Wars* uses ‘image management’ to ‘criminalize’ the border crosser and subsequently Hispanic migrants in general.

In *Border Wars*, the border is also a clearly defined line that separates ‘our’ world from ‘their’ world, like shown in the satellite image at the beginning of “Last Defense.” (cf. Images 2. & 3.) The space around the border is a “battlefield,” unforgiving, and highly dangerous for both, soldiers and their enemy: “[…] their battlefield is more than 1000 miles of unforgiving desert,” the narrator warns us in “Last Defense.” Bird-eye shots of the border fence help to underpin the idea of a ‘clear’ line visually. For that purpose cameramen and editors selected a specific section of the border fence in image 9. and 10., which show the border fence clearly separating a crowded Mexican side, with lots of houses, from an almost plain American side. Although the contrast is not as evident in other shots of the border (e.g., at the ports of entries) such visuals are important in the construction of the Mexican ‘Other’ and support the show’s depiction of the ‘other side’ as threat. In the particular images it seems as if only a fine line holds back the expansion of the (Mexican) houses, threatening to flood the American side of the fence.
Similarly in episode 2x8, a guardrail symbolically serves as clearly defined ‘last line of defense’ against an ‘imminent threat.’ At the beginning of the episode the ATV nightshift is introduced - again rifles are being handed out: “This unit works the frontline against terrorism, narco trafficking, illegal immigration and cartel violence.” (“Manhunt”) Then the unit heads out to patrol the San Diego ‘channel.’ The narrator explains: “Two third of the border is protected by two parallel fences, twelve and fourteen feet high, but even with this fortification there are still areas at risk,” and the ‘channel’ is one of them. The officers tell the camera that it is extremely difficult to control this specific area, owing to the fact that there is only a thin fence on the American side and a guardrail on the Mexican side as protection. One
of them calls it the “most disgusting” place on the border. Then the border agents are shown standing at the guardrail only half a meter from a group of heroin addicts shooting up right on the other side. Like in images 9. and 10., the guardrail is used as a symbol for the “last line of defense” the Border Patrol agents have to defend against an imminent threat. In this case this ‘imminent threat’ are the heroin addicts who symbolically represent the “most disgusting” part of (Mexican) society and who must be stopped from coming into the country and ‘polluting’ American society.

Image 11. Officers confront a group of heroin addicts on the Mexican side of the ‘guardrail.’

5.4. ‘U.S.’ Versus ‘Them:’ Border Wars’ “Politics of Difference”

Every war needs an enemy. In Border Wars this enemy is the illegal border crosser, who is systematically constructed as the ‘Other’ by the program’s representational practices. This subchapter will analyze Border Wars’ ‘politics of difference’ and look at the ways the program links the dichotomy of Us/Them to other binaries, especially, those of police/criminal and U.S./alien. Two integral parts of assigning these binaries to the respective groups of federal agents and suspect border-crosser are (a) to encourage the viewer to identify with the CBP agents, while (b) verbally, visually, and ideologically marking the border-crosser as inherently different/illegal/criminal. With respect to these practices it is essential to keep in mind the “relations of power, […] which prevail between the people who are

11 Narrator commentary and visuals of the channel suggest a symbolic relation between the actual trash and the people who are walking around on the Mexican side of the channel.
represented and the cultures and institution doing the representing.” (Hall, 1997: 223) Especially, in crime reality shows like *Border Wars* and *Cops* this is an important factor that should be taken into consideration at all times. Not only are the shows the product of the cooperation between law enforcement and production companies, but they also represent an already unequal power relationship (police-criminal,) that is subsequently reinforced by the programs. By (ab)using the Us/Them dichotomy to justify an increased border security and hostile immigration policy, *Border Wars* takes on a trans-national, panethnic dimension, that ultimately serves various socio-economic and political interests at stake in the United States.

Where there “are gross inequalities of power,” there is also ‘stereotyping.’ (Hall, 1997: 258) According to Hall, ‘stereotyping’ can be understood as the process of reducing a person “to a few essentials, fixed in Nature by a few simplified characteristics.” (249) As stereotypes are based on a few static, one-dimensional characteristics, they often fluctuate between poles, i.e. binaries such as attractive/ugly, good/bad, civilized/primitive, U.S./alien. (235) One of these binaries is usually the dominant one (in bold) and thus considered to be the ‘norm.’ By assigning the dominant characteristics to ‘Us’ and the subordinate ones to ‘Them,’ stereotypes set a “symbolic frontier between the ‘normal’ and the ‘deviant’, […] the ‘acceptable’ and the ‘unacceptable’, what ‘belongs’ and what does not or is ‘Other’, between ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’, Us and Them.” (258) Thus stereotyping “facilitates the ‘binding’ or bonding together of all of ‘Us’ who are ‘normal’ into one ‘imagined community.’” (ibid.) As will be shown below, *Border Wars* uses the ‘subject identification’ to encourage its audiences to identify with this ‘imagined community,’ – a community that is presented as overall more attractive, likeable and above all opposes a criminalized group of non-American aliens threatening to ‘invade’ the United States.

5.4.1. Agents & Identification

In its simplest meaning ‘other’ signifies ‘not one of us.’ However, in order to understand who or what exactly the ‘Other’ is, we first have to determine the meaning and significance of ‘Us’ and analyze how this ‘imagined community’ is constructed in *Border Wars*. As discussed above, *Border Wars* focuses primarily on the ‘front-end’ and depicts the border conflict from the point of view of law enforcement. Through a variety of practices the viewer is encouraged to identify with the agents and officers of the Customs and Border Protection. “This provides protagonists for the story, but also reinforces the us-them dichotomy” (cf. Fishman & Cavender, 1998: 100) Thus the agents become the viewer’s subject position of identification,
crucial for the working of ideologies as the viewer has to “adopt the same ideological practice in the decoding as the encoding” in order to make sense and derive pleasure from a program. This means that we are (automatically) drawn into an intended reader position of a (usually) Hispanic-white, male, middle-class patriot of high morality. (cf. Fiske 2000: 228) In the following, we will look at the techniques used to construct this intended reader position in *Border Wars*.

According to Doyle four mechanisms (partially intended, partially structure related) are used to encourage the viewer to identify with the officers in *Cops*.

1. Differences in the contextualization of cops and non-cops
2. Identification through the same point of view, simulated by the lone camera
3. Descriptions of the sensation and satisfaction of police work
4. Voyeuristic pleasures

(cf. Fishman & Cavender, 1998: 100 – 102)

These four mechanisms constitute a useful starting point, but must be extended in order to attain a complete picture of the construction of the intended reader position in *Border Wars*. Like in *Cops*, there are differences in the contextualization of cops and non-cops. First, host agent’s names and ranks are flashed on the screen at the beginning of every story, while non-cops remain ‘nameless’ – and sometimes even ‘faceless’ because their faces are not shown or blurred. Other officers are also named by on-screen text if they are interviewed and speak directly into the camera. In order to ‘get to know’ the agents even better, sometimes additional (autobiographical) information is provided by the narrator or the officers themselves. Usually, this additional information will concern the number of years in the line of duty, his/her reasons for working at the CBP and a description of their exact task. Occasionally agents will also tell the camera something about their personal life. In episode 1x1 “Last Defense,” for example, female CBP agent Glady McNamara is first introduced by the narrator, who explains that her job is to “monitor every car for foul play” at the vehicle port of entry in Nogales, Arizona. Supported by a variety of mid-long shots and mid close-ups from the side that show her wearing pitch-black glasses and inspecting cars, McNamara explains how she ‘goes about her job.’ A few shots later the narrator informs us that a suspicious car has led McNamara to order a complete inspection, and the narrator announces that: “For McNamara every bust is a victory.” Immediately after that, we can hear McNamara’s voice again, saying: “I have a high school kid, so it means a lot to me when we can help taking drugs off the streets.” During the last couple of words, the camera shows her alone somewhere outside in front of a building, in a mid close-up. This combination of
narration and camera work creates an effect of intimacy between agent and viewer. By sharing personal information about her life, McNamara is humanized and marked as ‘one of us,’ a sort of emotional bonding takes place that serves to encourage the viewer to identify with her.

The last scene of this episode creates the same effect. As mentioned before, the last scene of 1x1 shows officer Ortiz revisiting the site where his friend and colleague was killed. The establishing shot shows the car driving up and then him walking up a small path to the place where the memorial plague was installed. Shots from a separately recorded interview of Ortiz in mid close-up are alternated with close-ups and long shots showing him standing by the memorial. Two extreme close-ups, one of Ortiz’ hand touching the plague and another of officer Berlanga’s rifle are also used to increase the dramatic effect. The visuals are accompanied by Ortiz’ voice, explaining what happened during the incident. The final shot constitutes the climax of this highly emotional scene. Ortiz is shown close-up at the plague while he is reading the text. Then right before the last words he has to stop as he is trying to hold back his tears. A long moment of silence follows, while the camera focuses on his face and no music, and no sounds can be heard. This scene creates a sharp contrast to the usually accelerated camera work of Border Wars and therefore increases the dramatic effect drastically. For the viewer it feels like as if s/he was right there on the spot with officer Ortiz and is able to share this extremely personal moment with the agent.

Image 12. Officer Ortiz, close-up
As a result the viewer is encouraged to feel both empathy as well as respect for the agents of the CBP, who risk their lives to defend ‘Us’ against ‘Them.’ Scenes like this also contrast sharply with the rather neutral and distanced representation of illegal border crossers, who are presented as undistinguishable collective and (largely) stripped of their human background, as we will see later on in this subchapter. (cf. Fishman & Cavender, 1998: 100)

According to Doyle another technique of identification is the description of law enforcement work as sensational and satisfactory. (101) Officer McNamara, for instance, gets excited when she and her colleagues find $18,000 worth of marijuana in a car and states: “I like it, I love it, I get so excited, you get a rush, […]” (“Last Defense”) Other agents seem to agree with McNamara, as they frequently describe their work as “pretty cool,” or as “adrenaline rush.” Regularly agents also emphasize the importance and the satisfaction of taking away money or drugs from the “bad guys.” Thus the viewer is encouraged to join the officers in the pleasures of “authorized power.” (Fishman & Cavender, 1998: 101) What Doyle fails to acknowledge however is that sensation is not only the product of sheer narration but rather the result of a combination of technical and representational codes: quick cuts, dramatic music, sounds of shots, sirens and helicopters, and a large number of visuals of rifles, racing cars, helicopters, ATVs, packages of drugs and money complement the narrator’s and agents’ commentary and increase the viewer’s adrenaline level. Especially the opening and self-promotional segments depict law enforcement work at the border as extremely sensational, dangerous, and exciting. In the opening segment of “Last Defense,” for instance, the viewer does not only see the usual loads of drug packages, helicopters, and rifles but also two half-naked boys with packages (presumably narcotics) taped to their bodies. Off-screen, an officer says: “One’s 12, one’s 14.” This is followed by a shot of a CBP agent in a helicopter, in full gear holding his rifle. Like an invitation he asks the camera: “You guys ready to go.” Examples like this are almost infinite in Border Wars and undoubtedly serve to make the viewer believe that work at the line of duty is not only well respected but also extremely exciting and ‘fun.’
The authoritarian pleasures described here are also “intertwined” with the programs’ voyeurism. (cf. Fishman & Cavender, 1998: 101) “Voyeurism is taking pleasure from viewing the private or forbidden.” (ibid.) By violating the wishes of the observed object to remain secreted, “viewing may thus be experienced as an act of domination.” (ibid.) Common examples for this are viewer discretion warnings, which I have already discussed in the previous chapter, and scenes in which the viewer is allowed to ‘observe’ suspects alongside the agents, such as stakeouts. Thus, the viewer is basically enabled to ‘step into the agent’s shoes,’ i.e. s/he is granted the same authoritarian power as the agent. In episode 2x8 “Manhunt,” for instance, officer Guzman and Loperena let the viewer join them in a sting operation. At the San Isidro port of entry, the team of CBP agents wants to follow a guy with counterfeit papers with the goal to uncover a human smuggling ring. The first voyeuristic moment is created when the camera is placed behind a one-way mirror in a small dark room inside the port of entry, where officer Loperena watches his colleague to give him a secret sign when the guy is at the checkpoint. As soon as the suspect is through immigration service, the viewer joins officer Guzman in his car, in which we follow the illegal alien to a bus stop. Together with the agent, the viewer observes the man with the counterfeit papers while he talks to several other people until the time has come to arrest them.
Observation scenes like this are frequent in *Border Wars* and linked to the use of the lone hand-held camera. As already discussed in previous chapters, the hand-held camera simulates real movement and thus increases the effect of realism in crime reality programs. Moreover, it also serves to create intimacy with the host agents, by allowing the viewer to ‘ride along’ with the agents on the passenger seat. Since the cameraman and/or camera team are always edited out of the footage, it often feels as if the agent addresses the viewer directly, for instance, in scenes inside of the police car. In chasing scenes, the lone camera also simulates the viewpoint of “a particular character” and gives the viewer the impression as “if they themselves were cops.” (Fishman & Cavender, 1998: 101) Thus the viewer is allowed direct access to the experiences of the observed subject, who is subsequently ‘humanized’ and marked as one of ‘Us.’

On the whole, technical codes of crime reality shows can be considered to be just as important as narration for viewer identification. Camera distance, for example, has the power to direct our sympathy away from one character to another one. In *Border Wars* close-ups and extreme close-ups are often used to create intimacy, above all in ‘car scenes.’ Repeatedly, the camera focuses on the eyes of the officers reflected in the small rearview mirror, suggesting intimacy. Frequently the camera also zooms in on the officer’s hands on the wheel. This may be interpreted as a suggestion of authority especially in comparison to the close-ups of handcuffed hands, suggesting subordination – one of many examples of how the representational practices of *Border Wars* work to assign binaries to the Us/Them dichotomy. Frequent low-angle shots of the officers from the perspective of the immigrants sitting on the floor are another example of how the technical code of camera is used to depict the agents as superior in comparison to the inferior ‘Other.’ In this way, camera work undoubtedly constitutes an integral part of ‘signifying.’
With regard to other technical codes, distribution of speech time (on- as well as off-screen) and the distribution of overall camera time should not be neglected, as they also influence viewer identification. In general, the viewer ‘spends’ more time with the CBP agents than with the smugglers or illegal immigrants, who receive proportionally less camera time. Additionally, agents speak more frequently and for longer periods of time, on- as well as off-screen. Even when the camera team interviews the migrants or smugglers they are either given less time, are solely used as off-screen voice-overs or edited in so-called ‘Frankenbites,’ i.e. their words are cut up and arranged in a different sequence. Additionally, in many cases, their faces will be blurred or only shown from the back. This creates a certain kind of distance
between the viewer and all non-cops, thus reinforcing the emotional and spatial distance between ‘Us’ and ‘Them.’

5.4.1.2. ‘Us’ and the Social Codes of Reality TV

Fiske argues that “abstract ideological codes,” such as heroism, villainy, or attractiveness “are condensed into a set of material social ones.” (2000: 226 – 227) Thus correlations between certain social and other ideological codes may develop. The same also holds true for different types of ideological codes. Fiske distinguishes between explicit ideological codes (heroism, attractiveness, etc.) and those that work “less openly and more questionably” under them (e.g., race, class, morality). In Border Wars they serve to naturalize the correlation between middle-class American with the more attractive, more moral and therefore heroic, while they conversely also naturalize the correlation between lower-class non-American with the less attractive, less moral and therefore criminal. (ibid.) Although Fiske’s idea was based on fictional television shows, the concept remains basically the same in reality TV. The only main difference is that the reality camera relies more on the ‘natural’ codes of reality (social codes,) which are however just as encoded as the representational codes of costume, make-up etc. As Fiske argues: “It is in the aggregate of apparently insignificant encodings that ideology works most effectively.” (ibid.)

In Border Wars, the social codes of appearance, dress and the (representational) code of casting play an important role in depicting the CBP officers as more attractive, more likeable, which in turn makes them easier to identify with. First, the CBP agents wear uniforms, which carry the meaning of authority and unity and thus reinforce the idea of an unitary, authoritarian group – ‘Us.’ In contrast to non-cops, their appearance is also overall ‘cleaner’ and ‘neater,’ (their clothes are not dusty from walking through the desert for days.) Third, casting is relevant as well. Although all casting members are not as attractive as officer Berlanga in episode 1x1 or officer Heather Schrock in 5x2, the agents featured in Border Wars are generally likeable, mostly attractive, well-articulate, and relatively young or middle-aged. Noticeable is also that most of the agents carry Hispanic names, speak English with a Spanish accent or have a ‘Hispanic look,’ which relieves some of the implicit ethnic tensions of the show. Furthermore, agents also display a high level of restraint and control in dangerous or unpredictable situation. Thus they shed an overall positive light on the Customs and Border Protection and ‘put to bed’ rumors about violent or inappropriate behavior on behalf of the agents.
Apart from diligence, the agents personify especially the values of patriotism and heroism. In this way, officer Berlanga remarks at the end of episode 1x1 that: “Out here it seems work is never done but we are out here and as agents we have one goal and that’s to maintain operation and control of our borders and hopefully protect this great nation of ours.” (“Last Defense”) Many other scenes depict the agents similarly as heroic defenders of a great nation with the help of camera work (low angle shots of the agents and of waving flags at the beginning of segments,) narration (the narrator reminds the viewer regularly that “these agents are at the frontline” to defend a great nation) and the selection of particular ‘heroic’ and ‘sensational’ events. Thus, Border Wars frequently uses those kinds of stories that reinforce the image of the officers as benevolent, responsible heroes. An example for this is the Black Hawk’s rescue mission in 1x1, or the story about officer Ramos who “fights to save the life of a suspected smuggler,” who was supposedly shot by the Mexican military in “Bullets Over the Border.” Interesting is also how the narrator’s praise tends to focus solely on the host agent, although various other CBP agents are involved. Certainly this owes to the fact that the host agent is the viewer’s primary point of identification.

The overrepresentation of crime and an unreasonably high clearance are also part of the construction of heroism and patriotism in Border Wars. First of all, the program tends to overrepresent ‘spectacular’ crimes. For instance, agents at the port of entries always seize large amounts of illegal money or narcotics. Usually, entire cars have to be taken apart in order to find them because they are hidden in the most secretive places. Apprehensions of illegal border crossers are similarly sensational: frequently at night, or they involve large groups, car chases and pursuits. As Seagal suggests in her article about American Detective, Border Wars’ story analysts most probably pick the most exciting and sensational scenes from hundreds of hours of footage and thus create the impression that the work of CBP agents equals an action movie. (1993) Furthermore, the probability of an arrest or seizure is much higher than the actual clearance rate: agents are always successful and they are always rewarded for their initial suspicion. When an agent suspects illegal substances or goods in car, s/he will find it at the end of the episode. When they pursue somebody, they will always catch the fugitive or at least be able to confiscate his load. In episode 5x2 for example, officer Schrock chases a truck loaded with packages of narcotics. Before the police are able to catch the drivers, the smugglers crash the car and swim to the other side of the Rio Grande. When Schrock arrives at the scene, she comments the success: “They were able to flee, but we have their load, two out of three is not that bad.” (“War Games”) Nevertheless, most episodes end either with the click of handcuffs or the presentation of what the agents were able to
confiscate, e.g. 4x1 and 5x2 both end with the announcement of the confiscated drug’s value. This reinforces the perception that the increased fortification of the border has been a successful project (although there is reason to doubt this, cf. chapter 3.1.1.) and portrays the CBP agents as highly successful heroes, who serve their country well.

Finally, the image of a superior army that defends ‘Us’ against ‘Them’ is also reinforced by the emphasis on technology both in the visuals as well as in the narration. Especially episode 2x8 (“Manhunt”) focuses on the presentation of the newest technologies the CBP uses to defend the “frontier:” at the beginning of the episode the narrator and the agents talk about the use of ATVs (all-terrain vehicles) in the line of duty.

In the next scene the camera takes the viewer on a high-speed boat chase for training purposes. The narrator emphasizes that this “is the most powerful law enforcement vessel in the world” and names all the extras the boat offers: night vision, high-tech GPS, etc. Last, at the San Isidro port of entry the narrator explains that because it is the busiest border crossing in the world they use a special kind of license plate scanner that can compare thousands of license plates at the same time. All of this contrasts sharply with the illegal immigrants who do not have any high-tech equipment to rely on but only their feet and a couple of bottles of water to slip away from the CBP agents. Again, the result is the reinforcement of the Us/Them dichotomy by assigning the binaries of superior/technology to ‘Us’/U.S.A. Further, Condit argues that the emphasis on technology “replaces concerns regarding social values with concerns of technical codes (instead of why something is done, the question becomes
how it is done.)” (Consalvo, 1998: 4) Thus the technology theme may serve to distract the viewer from the real issues at stake in the U.S.-Mexican border conflict.

5.4.2. The ‘Other’

Chacón and Davis argue in their book No One Is Illegal (2006) that: “immigration policy has served to […] to encourage separate planes of consciousness, such as being “American,” “white,” or a “citizen” versus being “Mexican,” an “immigrant,” or an “illegal.” (2006: 174 - 175) With the help of social, technical/representational and ideological codes Border Wars reinforces exactly those “separate planes of consciousness” by constructing two opposing groups: (1) the CBP agents, who the viewer is encouraged to identify with – therefore ‘Us’ – and (2) all ‘non-cops’ (especially illegal border crossers, smugglers, criminals, cartels, etc.,) who are collectivized, marked as inherently different, victimized, and criminalized – the ‘Other.’ Because Border Wars is primarily concerned with the representation of the Latin American ‘Other,’ the result is the reinforcement of already existing ethnic tensions and stereotypes about Hispanic migrants in the United States. Therefore, the aim of this subchapter will be the systematic deconstruction of the representation of the ‘Other,’ starting with ‘step one:’ collectivization.

5.4.2.1. Collectivization

In order to attach the reductive, as well as negative, binaries of ‘alien,’ ‘victim,’ and ‘criminal’ to an entire ethnic group, they must be represented as a collective. Largely, collectivization is established by the contrast between the different representations of border crossers and smugglers in comparison to the highly individualized agents as discussed in the previous chapter. One of the most noticeable differences between ‘Us/Them’ is that non-cops remain nameless, while officers’ names and positions are displayed on-screen. (Partly) as a result, the narrator and the agents also make use of ‘they-talk.’ In other words, they solely use third person plural pronouns, such as “them,” “they,” indefinite pronouns, such as “all,” “anybody” and general expressions such as “people,” or “human beings,” in order to refer to illegal border crossers and smugglers. Frequently, CBP agents will also make use of ‘technical vocabulary,’ such as “bodies,” or “illegal aliens.” This has a certain reductive, dehumanizing effect, as the viewer is encouraged to see the migrants as nothing more than “bodies,” instead of individual human beings. In episode 5x2, a group of illegal immigrants
waiting to cross on the other side of the Rio Grande is even referred to as “something” when
the narrator announces that: “Something is on the south side.” (“War Games”)
In addition to narration, camera work is crucial for the process of collectivization. Regularly,
migrants’ or smugglers’ faces will be blurred or only shown from the back. Even though this
is influenced by whether the person filmed signs the release papers or not, it creates a certain
‘emotional’ distance between the ‘Other’ and the viewer, who will be less likely to identify
with a person whose face is not shown. In some extreme cases, the viewer will not even see
any specific person matching the voice being heard off-screen. In episode 1x1, for instance,
officer Ortiz interviews one of the suspected illegal migrants, while his face is never shown.
The viewer only sees the agent from the perspective of the migrants or shots of the truck, in
which the suspected illegal immigrants are sitting.
Similar shots of groups of illegal immigrants sitting side by side in detention vehicles or on
the ground, or walking in line with their hands crossed behind their heads are numerous,
especially in opening and self-promotional segments, and are probably the most effective
visual ‘tool’ for the construction of a ‘collective illegal immigrant’ in Border Wars.

Image. 17 Typical shot of illegal Immigrants sitting on the ground
Like in Images 17. and 18., illegal immigrants are often depicted as undistinguishable group of people in inferior positions. Since many of the apprehension stories are shot at night, night vision cameras additionally obstruct the viewer’s ability to distinguish between the individuals. Everything the viewer sees is the same type of groups of people, episode after episode, dressed in the same kinds of clothes, behaving in the same kinds of exhausted and desperate ways, speaking the same ‘foreign’ language, thus marking them as inherently different from the agents/‘Us’. This repetition of the same kind of picture of the ‘collective illegal immigrant’ serves especially to naturalize the correlation between illegal/non-American with the less attractive, less moral and ultimately criminal, as mentioned in the introductory part to this chapter.

5.4.2.2. Victimization

[The] migration, segregation, impoverishment, and victimization [of groups of people] make for ‘good business.’ This pattern of exploitation, violence, and attacks on immigrants is playing itself out in country after country. […] The attack on Mexican workers is also bound up with a long and ugly history of victimization based on their segregated status within the United States. (Chacon & Davis, 2006: 94 - 95)

In this analysis ‘victimization’ refers primarily to the process of marking the collective ‘Other’ as victim, i.e. inferior and dependent on U.S. immigration service. Rescue scenes like in episodes 1x1 and 4x1 are particularly ‘suitable’ for this process. In both examples, camera work and commentary are extremely important because they work together to construct the
dehydrated illegal immigrants in 1x1 and the severely wounded suspected smuggler in 4x1, as victims whose lives are completely “in the hands of immigration.” (cf. commentary by one of the migrants in 1x1) During the rescue scene in “Last Defense,” for example, the camera zooms in repeatedly on the exhausted illegal immigrants lying on the ground. At the same time the narrator stresses the dangers of crossing the Sonoran desert illegally: “Some three thousand people have died trying to cross. […] It’s nearly impossible to survive without someone who knows the way. A guide or a coyote, and theirs abandoned them, as soon as they couldn’t go on.” While the viewer sees numerous close-ups of the water bottles, the agents gave to the dehydrated men, the voice of one of the migrants can be heard off-screen, explaining that they walked for three days without food and that the guides eventually abandoned them: “Fourteen people could have died,” he tells the viewer in Spanish. In this way, the illegal immigrants are framed as completely dependent on the agents’ kindness ‘symbolified’ in the water bottles. This in turn also has a positive effect on the representation of the officers, which aids to ease some of the tensions caused by the question whether deportation is ‘humanitarian.’ In this sense, one of the agents comments: “First of all you are a law enforcement officer. You got your duties, you gotta go out there and make your arrests. But when it comes to situations like that, you gotta turn your head around and you know, basically treat them.”

Victimization is also visually enhanced by camera angle. Low angle shots of the officers from the perspective of the illegal border crossers sitting on the ground have the effect of ‘looking
up’ at the agents from an inferior position, while high angle shots of the migrants from the perspective of the agents reinforce the officers’ superior position.

With regard to plotline, ‘discrepancies’ also serve to victimize the illegal immigrants. ‘Discrepancies’ are especially those kinds of stories and scenes that generate a high level of empathy in the viewer and therefore possibly obstruct the reinforcement of the Us/Them dichotomy. In this way, discrepancies also reveal the points with the greatest tension and help to defuse the ideologies at work in a given cultural text. To include them in the show’s narrative is therefore an important part of the reproduction of hegemony, as “alternative material is routinely incorporated: brought into the body of cultural production” in order to ‘neutralize’ it. (Gitlin, 1979: 264) Thus stories that actually question law enforcement and immigration policies are used to transport “major social conflicts,” such as the tragic fates of thousands of illegal immigrants, “into the cultural system, where the hegemonic process frames them, form and content both, into compatibility with [the] dominant system[…] of meaning.” (ibid.) In Border Wars, such stories often involve the commentaries of migrants who describe their tragic fates of suffering only to reunite with their families or leave them behind in order to earn money to feed them. Frequently, they also concentrate on children, like the two minor girls in 1x1, who are on their way to meet their parents for the first time of their life, or the desperate woman in 2x8, who hides in front of the passenger seat to reunite with her husband and son after she was denied a visa. In this way, Border Wars ‘picks out’ the stories of a few individuals to frame them as victims, unable to take control of their own destiny. While even the agents empathize with the ‘victims’ occasionally, Border Wars leaves no doubt that there is a clear line between empathy and enforcing the law. Officer Rodriguez sums this thought up in “Bullets over the Border,” commenting on a group of illegal immigrants, with many children among them: “They don’t know when to quit. I guess the American Dream is just so big and they got families to feed. […] But some people have to make those hard decisions.”

5.4.2.3. Criminalization

As already mentioned throughout this thesis, Border Wars’ representational practices systematically work to criminalize the Hispanic ‘Other’ and in doing so moves from marking the collective ‘Other’ as alien/illegal to criminal and ultimately to terrorist. Its premise thus is the assumption that illegal immigration is morally indefensible and must therefore be treated like any other felony. Without a doubt, Border Wars makes no difference between the crime
committed by somebody who simply crosses the border in search of a better living and those people who smuggle illegal drugs, money, and weapons for the Mexican cartels. Both types of ‘criminals’ are treated and punished the same way by the officers of the Customs and Border Protection: the suspects will be apprehended, handcuffed and processed at one of their facilities and although “it’s sad,” as one officer puts it, even the two unaccompanied minor girls of episode 1x1 will be arrested and transported to the next CBP facility in a ‘detention vehicle’ behind bars. In this environment, practically everybody crossing the border is a potential criminal. This is especially relevant at the ports of entries, through which thousands of people pass every day. Agents working at the ports are often described as “vigilant,” “observant,” or “cautious.” Officer McNamara, for instance, is shown inspecting each car carefully, although often she only “got seconds” to decide who she will pull aside. Additionally, the narrator reminds the viewer constantly that “anyone” could at “any time” attempt to smuggle drugs, weapons or money, which could “go to the schools” and “mess people up.” (“Bullets Over the Border”) Thus narrator and character commentary serve to remind the viewer of the constant threat these men and women pose to society, and especially to their children.

“Illegal bodies” in the Sonoran desert, or anyplace else in the borderlands, are treated in similar fashion. Agents do not only warn the viewer that they could be smugglers but also that they are unpredictable, e.g.: “With human beings you can’t predict what they gonna do.” (Officer Gonzalez in “Manhunt”) Similarly, officer Berlanga tells the camera in episode 1x1 that their job requires them to always remain vigilant because: “We don’t know their history, we don’t have access to their criminal records until they get processed. […] You would be surprised, […] some of them could be felons.” (“Last Defense”, 2010) What officer Berlanga however fails to mention is that because of policies like Operation Streamline many of the illegal border crossers are felons not because they sold drugs or murdered somebody but because they had previously attempted to enter the United States illegally. Furthermore, Officer Berlanga’s statement also contradicts the visuals, which show a group of illegal immigrants walking in line between agents on horseback, while their hands are locked behind their neck and a helicopter is ‘spot-lightening them’ from above. Without a doubt, this group is in no position to pose a threat to anybody. Nevertheless, they are framed and treated as possible felons by the officers and the narrator.
Some other aspect of criminalizing the ‘Other’ is that the narrator and the CBP agents repeatedly stress that many of the suspects are most likely ‘habitual offenders’ and will attempt to cross or smuggle again. In 1x1 various examples support this view. First the narrator remarks that even though the group of dehydrated men was abandoned by their coyote “[…] people are so desperate to enter the U.S., it’s also possible they use the guide service again.” Immediately afterwards, one of the officer’s comments: “There is a good chance we have handled them before.” Then during the night segment, the CBP catch another group of illegal border crossers and the narrator notes: “It’s a familiar story, another desperate group abandoned by their guides.” The idea of ‘habitual offence’ is also reflected in the migrants’ commentaries, who repeatedly confirm on camera that they will attempt to cross again. For example in 2x8, one of the illegal border crossers explains that he came in search of work and now owes money to the guides and therefore will have to try again. Other migrants affirm this and frequently add that they have either lived in the United States or attempted the dangerous crossing before.

Likewise, narration/commentary is used to reinforce the Us/Them dichotomy by creating a clear moral distinction between criminals and heroic agents. “Crime is a problem of evil or pathological individuals who are a them [sic] less human than us. Police are a thin blue line between them and us. Criminals are strangers [literally].” (Fishman & Cavender, 1998: 97) Repeatedly commentaries such as: “It’s pretty cool, you get to take the money away from the bad guys,” (“Last Defense”) or “This is the modern day version of the good guys and the bad guys;” (“War Games”) assign the binaries of ‘good’ and ‘bad,’ ‘moral’ and ‘amoral’ to the
respective categories of officers and criminals, Us and Them. This moral distinction is magnified by the program’s implied connection between terrorism and illegal immigration, as already noted before. In this way, Border Wars frames the ‘Other’ not only as ‘criminal’ but also as possible ‘terrorist.’ Although expressions like “terrorism,” “ground zero” and “the war against…” are used especially during the first season; a sense of ‘terror’ is noticeable throughout all fifty-eight episodes. According to Chacón and Davis the use of the discourse of terrorism to characterize illegal immigration is the result of projecting perceptions of immigration “through the lens of foreign policy objectives, as a means to rally domestic support […] for the external aims of the state.” (2006: 96) In this sense, the “U.S.-Mexico border has been ramped up in the public consciousness as a major battleground in the ‘War on Terrorism,’” and “all immigrants and border crossers now carry the stigma of ‘potential terrorists’ and bear the burden of racial profiling, increased harassment, and outright violence.” (ibid.)

Finally, “a great deal of visual or iconic attention is devoted to arrest.” (Fishman & Cavender, 1998: 134) Shots of ‘handcuffed hands,’ closing prison or police car doors, people being violently pushed to the floor during an arrest, or the presentation of confiscated money or drugs, are frequently used to criminalize the collective ‘Other’ visually and to induce consent to current law enforcement practices by displaying the ‘results’ of the agents’ good work.

Image 21. Officers of the CBP declare the value of a confiscated load of marijuana.
In addition to constructing the illegal immigrant as criminal, visuals like image 22, likewise serve to justify, or reinforce, law and order ideology and its methods. In this way, ‘clicking handcuffs’ become the simple and effective solution to a complex problem. This solution is also a physical one, in other words, physical punishment is promoted over alternative ways of resolving crime. Thus, physical violence is not suggested verbally but visually: repeated shots of firearms or rifles, officers chasing and overwhelming suspects, clicking handcuffs etc., demonstrate that law enforcement (at the U.S.-Mexican border) is not passive but aggressive and forceful. In “War Games” this message is confirmed. At the beginning of the episode, the narrator notes that: “drug smugglers try anything to move contraband north.” The viewer sees a variety of different shots, showing a few examples of what kind of methods drug smugglers employ. Next, the narrator announces: “and law enforcement must use their own kind of tactics to stop them,” while various shots show (1) officers taking rifles out of the storage inside of one of their facilities, (2) an agent inside of a helicopter, (3) officers on ATVs, (4) and finally an officer smashing flower pots. Six minutes and thirty seconds into the episode almost the same scene is repeated. Again, the narrator tells the viewer that “Border Patrol and police need their own counter tactics to fight back and stay one step ahead,” and again visuals of helicopters, police vans, and violent agents are shown. The final shot presents a bold guy from the back, who is being led off by an agent, while the camera zooms in on his ‘handcuffed hands.’ As these examples demonstrate, Border Wars promotes a specific type of
law enforcement that employs both the newest technologies as well as physical violence in the “war against terrorism, narcotrafficking and illegal immigration.”

6. Closure/Conclusions

As shown throughout this thesis, media texts such as Border Wars are important sites for the negotiation of hegemony. Therefore, media literacy is an increasingly necessary requirement in today’s media society. Especially during times of political and socio-cultural change, such as the last decade, media literacy helps identify hidden ideologies and myths and thus ‘saves us’ from becoming the passive spectator of the unthinking mass, Kellner cautions us against. In this sense, the textual analysis of Border Wars has exposed the program’s biased and one-sided representation of the border conflict and the Latin American immigrant. It has shown how it naturalizes and reinforces the Us/Them dichotomy with the help of the (generic) codes of (reality) television and revealed how fear of war and terrorism serves to promote current (border) law enforcement and immigration policies. Further, the deconstruction of Border Wars’ viewer identification position has exposed the views of the Customs and Border Protection as the dominant ones, both visually and ideologically, while the illegal, Latin American ‘Other’ is ripped off its voice, and instead victimized, criminalized and marked as potential “terrorist” threatening America’s society and cultural integrity.

Even though a reality program like that is obviously not designed to provide solutions for a complicated socio-cultural, economic and political problem, such as the U.S.-Mexican border conflict, every episode and every story ends with the click of handcuffs, an arrest, a face behind bars, that provide the viewer with a ‘quick-fix closure,’ no matter how grave or complex the problem might be. Thus Border Wars closes off any alternative readings and solutions and serves as ultimate justification for law enforcement’s “own kind of tactics” in the battle against ‘all evil.’ To finish off with the words of CBP officers Guerra: “Some people have to make those hard decisions.”
Filmography - Primary Sources

1x1

1x2

1x3

2x1

2x8

4x1

5x2
Bibliography and Webliography


Dear, Michael (2013, March 10). “Mr. President, Tear Down This Wall”. The New York


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