

CREATING CAPTAIN AMERICA: A FRAME ANALYSIS OF THE PAT TILLMAN EPIC

Christina A. Childs DeWalt

Thesis Prepared for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

May 2013

APPROVED:

Koji Fuse, Committee Chair  
Tracy Everbach, Committee Member  
Roy Busby, Committee Member and  
Director of the Frank W. Mayborn  
Graduate Institute of Journalism  
Jean Keller, Acting Dean of the Frank W.  
and Sue Mayborn School of  
Journalism  
Mark Wardell, Dean of the Toulouse  
Graduate School

DeWalt, Christina A. Childs. Creating Captain America: A Frame Analysis of the Pat Tillman Epic. Master of Arts (Journalism), May 2013, 61 pp., 6 tables, 3 illustrations, reference list, 74 titles.

Pat Tillman—an Arizona Cardinals player who sacrificed everything to serve his country but died in Afghanistan—was initially touted as a true American hero who was killed by enemy fire. In reality, however, the Tillman narrative was based on nothing but military propaganda. This research focused on how mainstream U.S. newspapers used news frames, overall story tone, and news sources before and after the official acknowledgement of the true cause of Tillman's death as fratricide. As hypothesized from C. Wright Mills' "lesser institutions," Antonio Gramsci's hegemony, and Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky's propaganda model, the newspapers generally decreased both direct and indirect references to news frames involving "lesser institutions" (e.g., NFL, Arizona State University) and ideological values (e.g., heroism, patriotism) after the revelation, but they were not critical of the Iraq/Afghanistan wars or the Bush administration at all. In addition, they increased their dependence on official sources and decreased family and friend sources after his cause of death was changed. The results as a whole indicate that in the Tillman saga, the revelation of his true cause of death introduced a significant disruption to the propaganda information system, causing news frames to decrease, but the third filter of the propaganda model—reliance on official sources—was strong enough to overcome that disruptive event and continue to protect the power elite.

Copyright 2013

by

Christina A. Childs DeWalt

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the following individuals, all of whom hold a special place of recognition in regards to completion of this project.

First, I would like to thank my thesis chair, Dr. Koji Fuse. His constant support, assistance, and enthusiasm toward this project was invaluable. He is an adviser second to none.

Dr. Tracy Everbach for all of her insightful suggestions, and for her willingness to help me reach my research goals in any way she could.

Professor Nann Gopleurd for her ethics class, which laid the foundation and inspiration for this paper.

My husband, Matt, and my son, Cale, for allowing me the time and space to complete this thesis, and for understanding the demands it made on my time.

Finally, thank you to Brenda Jaskulske. To put it simply, I would not be where I am today without her unwavering support and friendship.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	iii
LIST OF TABLES .....	v
LIST OF FIGURES .....	vi
INTRODUCTION .....	1
LITERATURE REVIEW .....	4
Pat Tillman .....	4
The Ambiguity of Fratricide and Other Misreported Cases .....	8
Theoretical Basis .....	12
RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES .....	22
METHODS .....	28
Sampling .....	28
Measuring and Coding Procedures .....	29
Intercoder Reliability .....	33
Sample Characteristics .....	35
Preliminary Analysis .....	36
RESULTS .....	37
DISCUSSION .....	42
Observations .....	42
Limitations .....	45
Further Research .....	46
APPENDICES .....	48
REFERENCES .....	54

## LIST OF TABLES

	Page
1. Mann-Whitney U Test – Lesser Institution Frames.....	39
2. Mann-Whitney U Test – Moral Ideology Frames.....	40
3. Mann-Whitney U Test – Overall Tone of Story.....	41
4. Mann-Whitney U Test – News Sources.....	41

## LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
1. Pat Tillman timeline of events .....	7
2. Chain of reinforcement of imposed elite power structure in the current U.S. system .....	18
3. Visual interpretation of statistical data .....	42

## INTRODUCTION

It was the story of a decade. A brilliant, handsome, charismatic NFL player walks away from fame, riches, and glory to serve his country in its ultimate time of need. When news broke that Arizona Cardinals player Pat Tillman was sacrificing a \$3.6 million contract to join the Army, a love affair within the media began.

The “Pat Tillman” narrative quickly came to represent the kind of American bravery and courage that would win the War on Terror [*sic*]. Tillman was positioned as the ultimate American hero; the fallen soldier-athlete whose ultimate sacrifice came when he was heroically defending freedom from the threatening infidels. (Winslow, 2008, p. 3)

From the start, Tillman was idealized and touted as an all-American who loved his country and dismissed materialistic riches for morals far more pristine. He was described as “the perfect Can-Do poster boy” (Whitley, 2011, para. 8), “an achiever and leader on many levels who always put his team, his community, and his country ahead of his personal interests” (Associated Press, 2004, para. 14), and—as media personality Ann Coulter described him—“An American original—virtuous, pure and masculine, like only an American can be” (as cited in Niman, 2006, para. 6).

On the surface, this seemingly innocent display of media coverage was viewed as positive, and certainly warranted. However, there was one major dilemma with the Pat Tillman story as it was presented. In testimony before a congressional panel, Tillman’s brother and fellow Army Ranger, Kevin Tillman, explained: “The tale inspired countless Americans, as intended. There was only one small problem with this narrative, however: it was utter fiction” (as cited in Winslow, 2008, p. 3).



The Tillman plot thickened on April 22, 2004, when he was killed in Afghanistan. Initially, government officials reported he was killed in combat, a brave patriot charging into battle, uttering words of encouragement and bravado to his fellow soldiers, but it was not so. It was a lie told by the government and perpetuated by the media. In reality, Tillman was killed by friendly fire.

Despite the clearly contradictory circumstances and reports issued by the government after Tillman's death, the mainstream media did not resort to their roots of investigative reporting. Rather, they continued with their imposed story line, running headlines including "Ex-NFL star Tillman makes 'ultimate sacrifice': Safety, who gave up big salary to join Army, killed in Afghanistan" (Lewis, Miklaszewski, & Johnson, 2004, p. 1), and "Tillman's Gone but His Legacy Must Endure" (Davis, 2004, p. 1). Meanwhile, the military went on dictating false claims without accountability, and the Tillman family and the public remained uninformed as to the true cause of the acclaimed soldier's death for more than a month. Additionally, congressional hearings investigating his death would last through August 2007.

Public opinion is a crucial element in times of war and social crisis. If the media fail to report from a holistic standpoint that questions official rhetoric consistently, where does this leave the idea of a free press and its role within a democratic society? To explore the media's role in this endeavor, one must look at not only the ways in which the Tillman story was covered, but also how the absence of objectivity and investigation tactics on the part of the media were enacted and perpetuated.

While many scholars have examined the idea of news frames in relation to the Bush administration and the war on terror, few works exist that examine the distinct roles that social

institutions and moral ideologies play in shaping and creating war support through a specific narrative.

This research is a content analysis of the media-constructed Pat Tillman story through a critical perspective using theoretical bases in hegemony, manufactured consent, and power establishments within the constructs of Western democracy. The aim of this study is to investigate how the media used Pat Tillman's story to facilitate support for the war on terror by linking their narrative of him with social institutions, moral ideologies, and official news sources that serve to maintain the existing norms in the mainstream U.S. consciousness. Finally, and more specifically, this research focuses on how media frames and news sources changed after the revelation of the true cause of Tillman's death.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Pat Tillman

In May of 2002, the nation, still rocked to the core by the events of 9/11, stood in a collective awe once again when a successful NFL star walked away from the comfort and celebrity of a \$3.6 million contract with the Arizona Cardinals to join the ranks of the United States Army. Much to the media's chagrin, the famed athlete in question, Pat Tillman, didn't issue any interviews. In fact, he didn't even offer a single statement or press conference pertaining to his surprising choice; rather, he chose to keep his decision personal. Despite his obvious objection to any notoriety surrounding his decision, the media and the military took notice of his extraordinary story and circumstances.

Tillman became "a poster child of the War on Terrorism [*sic*], a model of patriotism, sacrifice, and honor. A real American hero, someone our kids should aspire to" (Lingle, 2010, p. 30). With the persistence of the U.S. media, Tillman became a real-life Captain America, a hero second to none, painted with the same brush of normalized opinions as those framed in patriotic fame before him. In reality, however, he was not an undying supporter of the war effort, he was not a man of faith, and he was not a fame-hungry celebrity seeking his next window of exposure. In fact, Tillman himself only requested one thing in regard to his service: "I don't want them to parade me through the streets" (Lingle, 2010, p. 34). Sadly, however, the press did not honor that desire, even after his death.

In the end, like most epic tales spun throughout history, the hero in this case was also doomed to fall. On April 22, 2004, Tillman was killed on a hillside in Afghanistan. Just days after his death, Pentagon sources began spinning a tale full of bravado, heroism, sacrifice, and virtue, citing his cause of death as killed in action (KIA) due to enemy fire. In conjunction, the

media allowed the government to direct the narrative flow on Tillman's death by framing his efforts as a "worthy and heroic sacrifice rather than a senseless waste" (Aday, 2010, p. 447).

According to the initial U.S. Army statements, which appeared in a large number of U.S. print publications, Tillman was killed when his convoy came under attack by insurgents, and was subsequently blocked in by small arms and mortar fire. Tillman was said to have issued commands leading his platoon into the oncoming array of bullets in order to "take the fight to the enemy"; further he was credited with protecting his team without regard for his personal safety (Madigan, 2004), actions that would earn him the Silver Star citation for bravery, one of the military's highest honors.

On May 3, 2004, more than 2,000 people gathered in San Jose at the Municipal Rose Garden to pay their respects to the fallen soldier. This nationally televised event included a number of prestigious guests and speakers, such as California First Lady Maria Shriver, Arizona Sen. John McCain, and many high-ranking military officials and representatives. Tillman's memorial service marks a pivotal turning point in his narrative, because it is at this event that "the lies about Tillman's death were made official" (Battsek & Bar-Lev, 2010). During the service, Tillman family friend and Navy SEAL Steve White read Tillman's official Silver Star citation recommendation as part of his eulogy, not knowing at the time that the statements and detailed accounts cited therein were completely fabricated and trumped to the specifications of the existing narrative. White would later be quoted as saying, "I'm the guy who told America how he died, and it was incorrect. That does not sit well with me" (Battsek & Bar-Lev, 2010).

Almost a month after his national memorial service, which not only reiterated but highlighted his death by "enemy fire," the propaganda-driven morale statements that hid the reality of Tillman's death began to crumble, as did the hero archetypes developed around him;

they could no longer sustain the facts of his death. On May 29, 2004, in a statement to the press, Lt. Gen. Philip R. Kensinger, Jr., commanding general of the United States Army Special Operations Command (USASOC), acknowledged, for the first time publicly, that Tillman had “probably” died as a result of friendly fire. However, the public address was too late because the retraction of his cause of death was in direct conflict with original official statements on the circumstances of his demise. Tillman’s family and the U.S. public, thus became aware of the discrepancies and mythmaking perpetuated by both the military officials and White House administrators.

In addition, formal investigations into Tillman’s death would begin only 10 days later, it is during this congressional review process that the figurative “smoking gun” in this case is uncovered. A highly confidential P4 memo, issued by U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) to the White House and written on April 29, 2004, by Lt. Gen. Stanley McChrystal, commander of U.S. Forces in Afghanistan (USFOR-A), detailing fratricide as the suspected cause of Tillman’s death, was exposed to the public and the press in 2006 (Battsek & Bar-Lev, 2010). The memo stated that not only was fratricide highly likely as the true cause of death, it also warned White House personnel to eschew any language or direct reference to the details of Tillman’s death in order to avoid public embarrassment later on (Battsek & Bar-Lev, 2010). It should also be noted that during this same time period that the P4 memo was drafted and sent to the White House, McChrystal approved Tillman’s Silver Star for bravery, citing a false account of his death within the citation recommendation and gave the directive to recite the same fabricated story during Tillman’s televised memorial (Krakauer, 2009).

With each exposure of truth, the Tillman saga became more distorted. In addition to demands by his family for justice, the discoveries of misinformation led to political

fragmentation in the electorate arena. After the cause of death was changed in late May of 2004, McCain became vocal and joined with Tillman’s family in the quest for “truth and justice” for Pat. Although McCain later would ease away from the Tillman limelight and controversial issues surrounding his story, this political dissention would be a key element, as would the earlier revelations, in disrupting the narrative flow of Tillman coverage (see Figure 1).

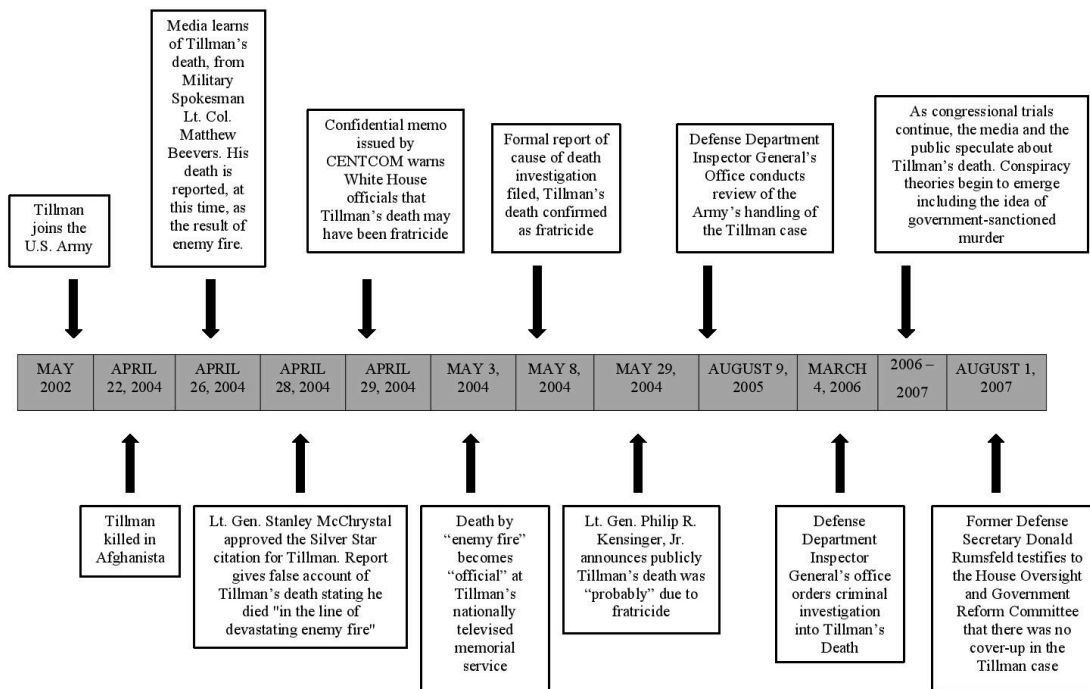


Figure 1. Pat Tillman timeline of events.

In reality, Pat Tillman and his story were much too complex to be narrowed down to a grouping of generalizations, and in doing just that, the media failed to report with full disclosure on not only the man but also the circumstances of his service. On a much larger scale, the media failed the public in a most fundamental way by creating a story that was not grounded in fact and adding a new layer in an already thriving propaganda campaign. The media failed the people by allowing their responsibility to the fulfillment of a self-governing, democratic society to be driven by the empty ideals of sensationalism, imperialism, and conjecture.

## The Ambiguity of Fratricide and Other Misreported Cases

Fratricide, or “friendly fire” is defined as “the accidental killing in a combat setting of one soldier by another of the same or an allied force” (Davidson, 2011, p. 124). It is most certainly not a new issue faced in battle. In 1758, during the French and Indian War, Col. George Washington himself was part of a fratricide incident in which a group of an estimated 13 to 40 soldiers or “friendlies” were killed by allied forces (Abbot, 1988, pp. 120–123). Additionally, fratricide is not an exclusively U.S. issue, either. In the battle of Verdun, during World War I, an entire French infantry unit was destroyed by friendly fire (Schmidt, 2005). Finally, in 2010, researchers from the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago found evidence of a mass fratricide incident in an ancient Mesopotamian city, dating back more than 5,000 years (Jarus, 2010). Although fratricide is not a new issue faced on the field of combat, it is still one that is shrouded in a cloak of secrecy and misrepresentation, as highlighted by the Tillman case.

According to a U.S. Navy report written by Lt. Cdr. William Ayers, III, “Fratricide incidents generally fall into three major categories: the human element, the environment, and technology” (Ayers, 1993, para. 6). Of these three factors, most experts agree that human error bears the brunt of responsibility, but it is not unusual to see a situation where a combination of conditions apply. Most fratricide incidents are due to multiple contributing factors. Common causes of combat identification errors include inadequate training, poor leadership, inappropriate procedures, language barriers, and an inability to communicate changing plans (Wilson, Salas, Priest, & Andrews, 2007).

A clear understanding and quantification of fratricide is difficult to obtain because of various contributing conditions and less than concise definitions of such. According to a report compiled by the U.S. Congress’ Office of Technology Assessment (1993):

Recording of fratricide has not been uniform. Casualty report forms, for example, have not included fratricide as a cause. Thus, fratricides during the Vietnam War were cataloged under either “accidental self-destruction” or “misadventure.” (p. 8)

Due to the ambiguity of fratricide categorization, it is not uncommon for incidents to be mislabeled and subsequently underreported. “Broad-based data on fratricide rates are not available; but, a recent review of long-extant casualty surveys from World War II and the Vietnam War shows that fratricide estimates of 2 percent are unrealistic and 15 to 20 percent may be the norm, not the exception” (U.S. Congress, 1993, p. 1). A recent study suggests similar findings to that of the congressional report: “the true rate of fratricide is usually higher than what is reported” (Webb & Hewett, 2010, p. 1). According to a 1991 article published in *The Washington Post*, “the Defense Department disclosed that 35 of the 148 American servicemen and women who died in battle in the Persian Gulf War were killed inadvertently by their comrades. The toll was more than three times the total previously acknowledged by the Pentagon” (“Friendly Fire,” 1991, para. 1).

Additionally, experts tout that due to technological advancements in combat, fratricide rates are on the rise. U.S. Army researchers found that “over the course of 2004–2007, the number of fratricides per year increased” and that there were “55 U.S. Army fratricide incidents from 11 September 2001 to 30 March 2008” (Webb & Hewett, 2010, p. 4).

Of the deaths from fratricide during the war on terror, many were initially reported as killed by enemy action, only to be retracted and corrected later, as was the case with Tillman. Consequently, the gross vastness of errors purported in the Tillman case served to usher in a new wave of coverage of previously undisclosed fratricide instances during the war on terror.



Among the first to emerge, during the Tillman congressional hearings, were the cases of Spc. Alan E. McPeek, 20, and his fellow battalion member Pvt. Matthew Zeimer, 18. Undisputed in this case was the fact that the duo had been killed on February 2, 2007, in Ramadi, Iraq (Morlock, 2007), but questions arose as to the real reasons behind their demise not long after Tillman's epic shocked the public and created a new awareness as to the potential for release and reporting of military misinformation.

A week after acknowledging a litany of errors in the friendly fire death of former NFL star Pat Tillman, the Army said Wednesday two soldiers who died in Iraq in February may also have been killed by their own comrades. The Army said it is investigating the deaths of Pvt. Matthew Zeimer, 18, of Glendive, Mont., and Spc. Alan E. McPeek, 20, of Tucson, Ariz., who were killed in Ramadi, in western Iraq, on Feb. 2. (Associated Press, 2007, paras. 1-2)

In both cases, the Department of Defense initially claimed that insurgents caused the soldiers' deaths.

At first, the Pentagon's report was another of those that have been coming out of the war's news-release assembly line. The soldiers died, it said, "of injuries sustained when they came in contact with enemy forces using small arms fire" (Hamilton, 2007, para. 4).

A supplemental inquiry report into their deaths was filed by the Office of Army Intelligence 26 days after they died, and it took an additional month before the families of the fallen were informed that friendly fire could have been a factor contributing to the duo's demise (Associated Press, 2007). Subsequently, it took the press even longer to report the truth.

In a similar case, the families of Lt. Andre Tyson, 33, and Spc. Patrick Ryan McCaffrey, Sr., 34, were told that their deaths in June 2004 were the result of enemy fire, only to be

informed nine months later that they were actually killed by Iraqi allies they were on patrol with (Melcher, 2007). Media acknowledgment of the change in the cause of death was not reported until a new incident investigation report was released by official sources.

On October 16, 2006, in an official release, the U.S. Department of Defense (2006) stated that, “Pfc. Kenny F. Stanton Jr., 20, of Hemet, Calif., died on Oct. 13 in Baghdad, Iraq, from injuries suffered when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle” (para. 2). In a *Los Angeles Times* article dated October 22, of the same year, the rhetoric from the official report was repeated: “While patrolling Baghdad on Oct. 13, Stanton was killed when a roadside bomb exploded near his Humvee” (Reitman, 2006, para. 4). On October 31, *The Washington Post* published a different account of the young soldier’s final moments, “and then one rainy night in October, the Sholeh police set up an ambush and killed Army Cpl. Kenny F. Stanton Jr., a 20-year-old budding journalist, his unit said” (Paley, 2006, para. 2). Despite the published contradictory account, which carried eyewitness statements, many news outlets continued to report the original version of the story.

Nineteen-year-old Lance Cpl. Russel White’s death on June 20, 2004, was first listed as “a non-combat related incident at Camp Bulldog, Afghanistan” (U.S. Department of Defense, 2004, para. 2). Initial reports claimed his fatal head wound was self-inflicted while he was performing a routine gun cleaning. It was later determined he was shot and killed by a fellow marine who had a history of mishandling weapons (Melcher, 2007). In June 2005, White’s fellow battalion member, Federico Pimienta-Perdomo, was convicted of involuntary manslaughter in connection with his comrade’s death. Following a short stint as a fugitive, Pimienta-Perdomo turned himself in to authorities in February 2006 (Dewan, 2006).

Lt. Ken Ballard's family was initially told that the 26-year-old died in battle in May of 2004. Less than a month later, *The Los Angeles Times* was quick to indulge the official statement publishing that Ballard "was killed in a firefight with insurgents in Najaf" (Tamaki, 2004, para. 4). Fifteen months after the original Department of Defense report was released, Ballard's family was told he was killed when his tank backed into a tree and set off subsequent arms fire (Melcher, 2007).

Finally, according to the official Department of Defense release (2004), "Spc. Wesley R. Wells, 21, of Libertyville, Ill., died Sept. 20, in Naka, Afghanistan, when his observation post was fired on by anti-coalition militia forces" (para. 1). Later, his family was informed by one of his fellow unit members that he was actually killed by friendly fire (Melcher, 2007). According to Wells' family the military did concede in acknowledging his death was due to fratricide, but as of 2012 the official Department of Defense release still cited KIA as the cause of death, although an addendum was added citing the case was "under investigation" (U.S. Department of Defense, 2004, para. 3).

Cited above are fratricide cases that received some news coverage since 2003 (Melcher, 2007). However, they are only a small percentage of the 55 confirmed cases during the war on terror, many of which were never reported in mainstream media. Although *The New York Times* reported in 2006 that "more than a dozen families [had] publicly said they were misled or overtly lied to about the cause of their loved one's death in Afghanistan or Iraq" (Dewan, 2006, para. 9), the watchdog function of the U.S. media still appears to be flawed.

#### Theoretical Basis

C. Wright Mills' seminal work, *The Power Elite* (1956), established a framework of the dominant powers within the U.S. He identified a trifecta of ruling classes, which he referred to as

the “power elite,” or “those political, economic, and military circles which as an intricate set of overlapping cliques share decisions having at least national consequences. In so far as national events are decided, the power elite are those who decide them” (p. 18).

The idea of a ruling class that dictates a collective directive is not a novel one, but how it maintains power has been debated. Marxists identified this social power structure as one that drew its persuasiveness from an economic base (Morton, 2007), but later scholars recognized the subtle differences in the preservation of a ruling classes between the socialist structure of Marx’s proposals and the more contemporary workings of a capitalist society.

Stepping away from the industrial aspects of Marxism, theorist Antonio Gramsci “identified civil society with the ideological superstructure, the institutions and technical instruments that create and diffuse modes of thought” (Femia, 1987, p. 26). Further, Gramsci discusses the concept of hegemony, or “an ideology-based dominance that is exercised by the state” and “thus [legitimizes] the interests of the upper classes” (Martinez & Berna, 2007, p. 47) as a byproduct of class rule in a capitalist paradigm.

In a capitalist society the exertion of power and reinforcement of the status quo are not induced by a system of reward and punishment, or by physical force. Rather in this design, class dominance persists because of what Gramsci called “*direzione intellettuale e morale*” or intellectual and moral leadership, a type of “supremacy that constitutes hegemony” (Femia, 1987, p. 24). Because this type of rule is internalized by the masses, “it follows that hegemony is the predominance obtained by consent rather than force of one class group over another” (Femia, 1987, p. 24). This notion can be clearly identified in modern U.S. practices where “propaganda is to a democracy what the bludgeon is to a totalitarian state” (Chomsky, 2002, pp. 20–21).

The propaganda model, first proposed by Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky in 1988, derives “crucial structural factors from the fact that the dominant media are firmly imbedded in the market system” and asserts that the media are “dependent on government and major business firms as information sources” (Herman, 1996, p. 1). The model in its original conception consisted of the following five interactive, mutually reinforcing news filters to sanitize news, marginalize dissent, allow for the government’s and private interests’ messages to reach the public, and leave “only the cleansed residue fit to print”:

(1) the size, concentrated ownership, owner wealth, and profit orientation of the dominant mass-media firms; (2) advertising as the primary income source of the mass media; (3) the reliance of the media on information provided by government, business, and “experts” funded and approved by these primary sources and agents of power; (4) “flak” as a means of disciplining the media; and (5) “anticommunism” as a national religion and control mechanism. (Herman & Chomsky, 2002, p. 2)

The fifth filter, anticommunism, has receded in the Western media, but its ideological replacement is the neoliberal belief in the free market, along with anti-terrorism and the war on terror (Mullen, 2009, p. 15).

Although disparaged as a conspiracy theory, criticized for its determinism, and questioned about its disregard for opposition and resistance, the propaganda model is more complex and subtle, like Gramsci’s idea of hegemony, than many of the model’s critics have denounced it. First, the propaganda model assumes that many individuals and organizations take independent actions, but they often share a common view of issues and similar interests in a decentralized, non-conspiratorial free market system of control and processing (Herman, 1996, p. 117; Herman, 2000, pp. 102–103). Second, the model allows for elite disagreements that weaken

the effectiveness of the five filters although the parameters of debate are usually limited to sustain elite interests. Only when the elite is monolithically unified and/or ordinary citizens are unaware of their own stake in an issue or immobilized by effective propaganda will the mainstream media serve elite interests “uncompromisingly” (Herman, 1996, p. 119; Herman, 2000, p. 104). Finally, the model attempts to explain structural factors for mass media’s systematic behavior and performance to participate in “propaganda campaigns,” not media effects. Conversely, the existence of opposition and resistance does not constitute counterevidence against the propaganda model (Herman, 1996, p. 122; Herman, 2000, p. 107).

The Internet has posed a threat to the traditional media, thus seemingly reducing the applicability of the propaganda model. However, the hegemony of the traditional media is still sustained by their status as dominant news providers on the Internet, their resources and pre-existing audiences as leverage against alternative media, Internet operators’ heavy dependence on advertising and limited interest in producing original news content, the new media’s focus on social connections, not politics, and the alternative media’s specialization in critical analysis, not news-making (Mullen, 2009, p. 20). Herman and Chomsky explains the model’s continued relevance as follows:

What would make the Propaganda Model more “marginal in its applicability” is not the rise of blogging, podcasting and other potential media vehicles, but rather the diminution of class and hierarchically organized social orders, and the spread and deepening of egalitarianism. As long as highly unequal and unfair economic and social orders persist, their dominant elites will have to justify themselves and they will continue to need supportive propaganda. The media structures that will help them will keep the Propaganda Model and its filters relevant. (Mullen, 2009, p. 20)

The power trifecta as related by Mills, the hegemonic model explicated by Gramsci, and Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model could not maintain if not for a system of social institutions that serve as support pillars for their control.

The idea of social institutions as tools for elite propaganda dissemination form a type of supportive cultural elements that lend more to the perception of public involvement. Mills (1956) states as follows:

Families and churches and schools adapt to modern life; governments and armies and corporations shape it; and, as they do so, they turn these lesser institutions into a means for their ends . . . And the symbols of all these lesser institutions are used to legitimate the power and the decisions of the big three. (p. 6)

Additionally, use of these social institutions adds more convolutedness to the path of propaganda implementation in the U.S. system of control. Emphasizing the ingenuity of the U.S. system that provides just enough wealth and freedom to just enough people, Zinn (1980) explains:

There is none that disperses its controls more complexly through the voting system, the work situation, the church, the family, the school, the mass media—none more successful in mollifying opposition with reforms, isolating people from one another, creating patriotic loyalty [than the U.S. system]. (p. 646)

Also, as “the elite is never an entirely visible agency” but rather “a secular substitute for the will of God, being realized in a sort of providential design” (Mills, 1956, p. 16), the lesser institutions provide ample cover for controversial elite decisions and policy initiatives. These institutions serve as a distraction to the true issues at hand. In addition, they must convey a message of unity that would curtail mass dissent toward the purpose of the elite agenda. At

times, these social constructs can serve as supporting structures to the power branch in the spotlight. For example, in times of war, they can serve as a support system for the military agenda. Additionally, if the military fails or suffers a loss of credibility, they can also serve to redirect the focus of that failure.

Finally, these institutions add a level of relevance by allowing the general public to feel connected to dimensions, actions, and decisions that they, by nature, are passive within. “If you can personalize events of the world,” then “you’ve succeeded in directing people away from what really matters and is important” (Chomsky, 1994, p. 54).

Therefore, the mass media’s fundamental role is to serve as a facilitating factor for elite directives. According to Mills (1956), the media enable those in power to sustain that standing, because if they were removed from the limelight that the press offers, they would lose their dynamism. The media also perpetuate the elite message through the creation of celebrity martyrs, as Mills (1956) explains.

The world is at once the pinnacle of the prestige system and a big-scale business. As a business, the networks of mass communication, publicity, and entertainment are not only the means whereby celebrities are celebrated; they also select and create celebrities for a profit. (p. 74)

This idea develops further prevalence when applied to Tillman, a man who already existed on the social conscience and elicited a certain level of recognition because of his role in the athletic arena; therefore, his story was even more malleable in regard to shaping war support. Tillman’s profession coupled with what some scholars cite as a “hero demand” on behalf of society, advances the role of the lesser institutions further in this specific case. “In the end, Tillman’s story warns against our culture’s often damaging need for heroes. As long as we



blindly grasp for the hero narrative, governments and other hierarchies will offer appealing stories that blur and hide the truth” (Lingle, 2010, p. 34).

This research posits that the relationship among manufactured consent, the power elite, and lesser institutions in society is hierarchal in design. The elite messages are linked to social foundations in order to provide cultural relevance to the populous, while simultaneously providing distraction topics to keep the public away from potentially controversial decisions and reinforce the hegemonic model. The U.S. media facilitate this system of power through the use of news frames that affect public opinion (see Figure 2).

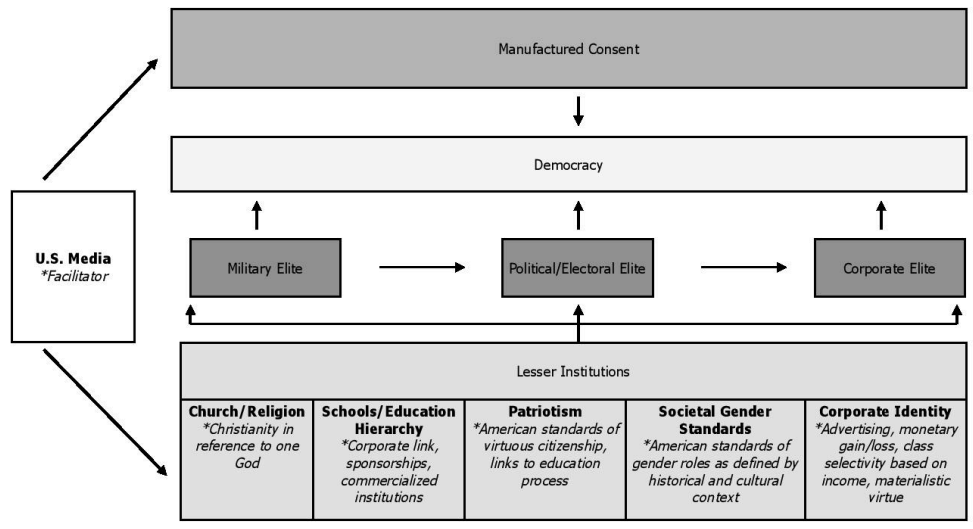


Figure 2. Chain of reinforcement of imposed elite power structure in the current U.S. system.

Framing is a theoretical construct that offers significant usefulness in gaining a more corporeal understanding of the media coverage involving Tillman. “A media frame can be described as an organizing mechanism for media content” (Dimitrova & Connolly-Ahern, 2007, p. 155). Or, more tangibly, “News is a window on the world. Through its frame, Americans learn of themselves and others, of their own institutions, leaders, and lifestyles, and those of other nations and peoples” (Tuchman, 1978, p. 1). Frames are pivotal elements in the construction of

news by “making certain aspects more salient than others in media content leads to different constructions of reality” (Dimitrova & Connolly-Ahern, p. 155). As “the importance of establishing and maintaining favorable public support during war is still seen as an essential element in the successful outcome of war” (Christie, 2006, p. 519), one can clearly see how the application of news frames would become a focal point of research concerning the relationship between elite messages and the mass media during times of foreign conflict.

The Tillman narrative represents what Bennett (2005) calls “reality news frames,” or “a decontextualized account based on a documented element of an event that becomes journalistically repackaged in a different story frame” (Bennett, 2005, p. 173). He goes on to explain that reality news frames can be distinguished by a mandatory precursor called the “pseudo event.” This counterfeit occurrence “is constructed by communication consultants specifically to disconnect an event from an underlying complicating or contradictory reality” (p. 173). Directly paralleling Chomsky’s discussion on distraction techniques within state-maintained propaganda, the pseudo event in the Tillman narrative would have been the reporting of his death by enemy fire.

Bennett’s (2005) approximations still gain more relevance to the Tillman case. He states in each instance of news reality frame usage that an interested elite involves “journalists in constructing news drama that blurs underlying contextual realities, ranging from passive reporting of routine pseudo-events (such as the campaign stop), to more active co-productions on the part of the press (such as the [George W. Bush] carrier landing), to a growing stream of journalistically driven rumor, spin, and speculation-based stories” (p. 174). This distortion of context and reality through the use of frames reinforces Gramsci’s concept of hegemony and subsequently shows the news media as a major contributor to “the fostering of a climate of

conformity” (Milliband, 1969, p. 238).

Frames can be destructive elements in regards to media objectivity. Researchers suggest frames can become collaborative, thus enforcing “pack journalism” and “metanarratives” (Baum & Groeling, 2010, p. 447) in which news organizations follow each other’s lead on story framing and narrative flow. Eventually these collective narratives become “increasingly resistant to challenges, even if [they are] based on faulty assumptions” (p. 447). Other scholarly research finds that the elements of framing and objectivity can be further complicated when frames derived from elites become internalized by mass media.

Lewis and Reese (2009) state that when the George W. Bush administration repeatedly used the term “War on Terror [*sic*],” it became a loaded frame used to justify a singular perspective on foreign policy. Stating that the war on terror frame was “as influential as it was subtle” (p. 85), they argued that the U.S. media internalized the idea, thus thwarting their ability to report objectively in regards to aspects of the war and administrative directives. Further, they explored how the subtlety in the phrasing of the war effort led to a “socially shared organizing principle” (p. 86) and how U.S. journalists showed war support simply by reciting a phrase designed by the elite electorate: “The mainstream media quickly picked up the War on Terror [*sic*] frame, often without questioning its assumptions or challenging its built-in worldview” (Lewis & Reese, 2009, p. 87).

Through extensive phone interviews with *USA Today* journalists, Lewis and Reese (2009) found that nearly all of those interviewed “expressed frustration with the difficulty of defining the War on Terror [*sic*] and disappointment with its usage in the press, and most seemed resigned to accept that the phrase had become a convenient (yet unfortunate) shorthand for Bush administration policies since 9/11” (p. 90). From interview excerpts within the study, it appeared

that the resignation by many journalists was due in part to a double-edged sword of objectivity. “The objectivity ideal encourages journalists to be circumspect in their wording and give difference to official accounts of issues and events. When it was pointed out that liberal critics refer to the Bush policy as the ‘so-called’ War on Terror [*sic*], Journalist L laughed and said, ‘Yeah, if we say that it sounds like we’re pissing on it’” (p. 95).

Findings from this study suggest that catch-phrasing, or elite labeling, once internalized by the media, become verbal artillery in the fight to win public opinion for war initiatives and continued militaristic enterprises. Once again, this research highlights an affinity between contemporary communication criticisms and Chomsky’s propaganda model. According to Chomsky’s (2002) creation of abstract ideologies, like Bush’s “war on terror,” is “the whole point of good propaganda” (p. 26). He states those elites want to “create a slogan that nobody’s going to be against, and everybody’s going to be for. Nobody knows what it means, because it doesn’t mean anything” (p. 26). This created idea is used to distract the populace from the reality of the situation or the underlying truths of a situation. This can be further deconstructed to add more relevance by examining the use of heroic archetypes and patriotic themes utilized during times of war or conflict.

Finally, if news frames “are organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world” (Reese, 2001, p. 11), then those institutions within our social world should be further explored as a means to an end for elite messaging and frame embedding. In other words, the lesser institutions as proposed by Mills (1956) should be seen as significant tools in creating a meaningful connection between framed news narratives, social reactions, and the embedding of elite ideologies.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES

The attempt to understand how the Pat Tillman story became and sustained in “utter fiction” and to what end the lesser-institution and ideological news frames, as well as the news sources, shaped that narrative leads to several research questions and hypotheses.

As previously discussed, Mills’ (1956) “lesser institutions” form the foundation that sustains the elitist power structure. He cites schools, churches, family structure, and social groups as physical representations of lesser institutions, all of which serve as a means to an end for elite agendas: “the symbols of all these lesser institutions are used to legitimate the power and decisions of the big three” (Mills, 1956, p. 6). The populace could see their own daily lives and/or experiences more readily reflected in the heroic tale of Tillman by relating their lives to anecdotes concerning his group affiliations, education, professional contract/sacrificed income, and corporate sponsorships. Thus, the first research question is posed as follows:

RQ1: What are the dominant lesser-institution frames trending within coverage of Pat Tillman?

Mills (1956) notes that during times of social crisis, the power trifecta is more closely interlocked, supporting one another to form a type of elite consensus. Similarly, the power elite is, at these times, at its most visible. “It is entirely typical for the major media, and the intellectual classes generally, to line up in support of power at a time of crisis and try to mobilize the population for the same cause” (Chomsky, 2001, p. 30). According to Baum and Groeling (2010), in the establishment phase of war, “the public has little or no independent information about events on the ground. It thus depends on a representation of events provided by elites whose construction in turn depends on media framing” (p. 449). Aday (2010) also writes that

there is a “well-established tendency of mainstream media to produce uncritical, patriotic, and casualty-free war coverage, especially early in a conflict” (p. 444).

However, as the role of propaganda increases in the process of manufacturing consent, the power elite will relinquish the reins of visibility to the lesser institutions that serve as distraction tools. The lesser-institution frames can serve to marginalize anti-war sentiments and present a picture of militarism to the public, which has “only the remotest relation to reality,” and “the truth of the matter is buried under edifice after edifice of lies upon lies” (Chomsky, 2002, p. 37). According to Herman (2000), the propaganda model

does suggest that the mainstream media, as elite institutions, commonly frame news and allow debate only within the parameters of elite perspectives; and that when the elite is really concerned and unified and/or when ordinary citizens are not aware of their own stake in an issue or are immobilized by effective propaganda, the media will serve elite interests uncompromisingly. (p. 104)

Conversely, after a major disruption like the exposure of Tillman’s true cause of death happens, making ordinary citizens aware of their being manipulated by their government, the mass media will no longer be able to sustain the existing propaganda information system. In other words, the mainstream media will serve the power elite “uncompromisingly” by using the lesser-institution frames until a public uproar over the power elite’s manipulation occurs, which will decrease the frequency of references to lesser-institution frames. Therefore:

H1a: The average number of direct references to lesser institutions will decrease after Tillman’s cause of death is changed.

H1b: The average number of indirect references to lesser institutions will decrease after Tillman’s cause of death is changed.

Despite Mills' (1956) theorization, lesser institutions need not be physically manifested; moral ideologies or standards of virtue are also considered as relevant frames within this research. Heroic archetypes, intrinsic values, and cultural standards can also serve to induce a sort of collective frame of reference. This is relevant to the Tillman case in that he was framed from the start as someone to be idolized, a true "American hero." According to Winfield (2003), "No matter the era or continent, heroes exhibit similar attributes: distinctive physical skills, and exemplary response to a set of challenges or a particular challenge, and admirable moral characteristics" (p. 867). Stereotypical, idealistic elements, such as heroism and masculinity, patriotism, God and faith, and war support and morale, within the Tillman saga might have served to support a narrative that most of the general public could recognize and relate to. Thus, this research poses the second research question:

RQ2: What are the dominant ideological frames trending within coverage of Pat Tillman?

Again, the official acknowledgement of Tillman's true cause of death will necessitate, decreasing references to ideal moral ideologies and virtues.

Again, when ordinary citizens become aware of their stake in an issue, the mass media will not be able to maintain the existing propaganda system. In other words, the mainstream media will cease to serve the power elite "uncompromisingly" when a public outrage over the power elite's manipulation surfaces, which will necessitate a more subtle approach to framing by decreasing the frequency of references to moral-ideology frames. Thus:

H2a: The average number of direct references to the idealism of the Tillman story will decrease after his cause of death is changed.

H2b: The average number of indirect references to the idealism of the Tillman story will decrease after his cause of death is changed.

Also, the overall tone of each story about Tillman must be analyzed based on statements or comments that represent support of or opposition to the U.S.'s two ongoing wars or the Bush administration.

Iowa State journalism professor Michael Bugeja describes objectivity as “seeing the world as it is, not how you wish it were” (as cited in Cunningham, 2003, p. 26). Ultimately, this is exactly what the media did not ascribe to when reporting on Tillman. Initially, the media reported the idealized picture of him, one that was based on superficial anecdotes and official information, thus playing into the pattern of propaganda dissemination. Other researchers note this is not a new behavior: “In the media, stories are often carefully selected, romanticized and expanded to express larger principles. Such stories may sell more papers, but they also shape beliefs by engaging emotions, suppressing reason and ignoring divergent information” (Greene, 2004, p. 1). This norm of objectivity (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996, pp. 112–114) consistently suppresses such expressions to a negligible level, even after the revelation of Tillman’s true cause of death. Therefore:

H3a: The average number of statements or comments supportive of the administration, the Iraq War, or the Afghanistan War will remain stable before and after Tillman’s cause of death is changed.

H3b: The average number of statements or comments critical of the administration, the Iraq War, or the Afghanistan War will remain stable before and after Tillman’s cause of death is changed.

Many scholars have scrutinized the U.S. media’s heavy reliance on official sources during wartime. Herman and Chomsky’s (2002) third news filter—sourcing—refers to media’s “symbiotic relationship with powerful sources of information by economic necessity and



reciprocity of interest” (p. 18). Using official sources recognized as “credible” and “objective” shields the mass media from criticisms of bias and the threat of libel lawsuits (Herman & Chomsky, 2002, p. 19). Cunningham (2003) suggests that a misguided interpretation of objectivity coupled with a dependency on official dictation has led the U.S. media to become “passive recipients of news, rather than aggressive analyzers and explainers of it” (p. 26). Media analyst Andrew Tyndall’s research shows that of the more than 400 reports on Iraq broadcast on NBC, ABC, and CBS from September 2002 through March 2003, “all but thirty-four originated at the White House, Pentagon, and State Department” (Cunningham, 2003, p. 26).

Suggesting an evolution of sorts, Chalmers Johnson (2004) expands on the idea that corporate control of the media and the ever-growing military industrial complex have led to the inevitability of the official scripting of news. “In the war against Afghanistan the only information available to the public and its representatives came from the Department of Defense. The military had become an expert at managing the news” (p. 13). If the “national means of mass communication have been the channels through which those at the top could reach the underlying population” (Mills, 1956, p. 84), the mainstream media facilitate dissemination of elite cues and agendas.

Because the propaganda model will function to normalize the situation by restricting the range of discourse in times of crisis, news coverage after the revelation of the true cause of Tillman’s death will rely more heavily upon official sources and rhetoric than before the revelation. On the other hand, relatively speaking, news coverage after the revelation of the true cause of Tillman’s death will rely less on family and friend sources than before the revelation because of possibly discordant, anti-establishment messages they may create to disturb the existing elite power structure. As Herman and Chomsky (2002) states, “Critical sources may be

avoided not only because of their lesser availability and higher cost of establishing credibility, but also because the primary sources may be offended and may even threaten the media using them” (p. 22). Hence:

H4a: Official sources will appear more frequently on average after than before his cause of death is changed.

H4b: Family and friend sources will appear less frequently on average after than before his cause of death is changed.

## METHODS

### Sampling

A quantitative content analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between the lesser institutions as introduced by Mills (1956) and elite propaganda directives disseminated by the U.S. media. Further, the relationships between distinct news frames were examined to better see the measure of media objectivity in regards to the Pat Tillman story.

Eighteen U.S. newspapers and the Associated Press (AP) were chosen for analysis based on circulation size and availability (see Table C.1). To provide fairness to the process of article attribution, the AP was treated as a separate news entity. Papers were chosen on a purposive basis and each fell within the Top 100 publications based on distribution numbers (Newspapers.com, 2012). Articles were collected based on availability from two databases: LexisNexis Academic and Access World News. All AP articles published in newspapers were excluded from that sources total count. Only body copy was analyzed; headlines were not included in the coding process.

Combined print sources yielded a total of 286 individual and relevant articles. The number of articles found in Time Frame 1 was 112; the total number in Time Frame 2 was 174. This study analyzed all articles found.

Two distinct time periods were examined with specific and pertinent start and end dates. Time Frame 1 began on May 1, 2002, the month and year specific to when Pat Tillman joined the U. S. Army and ended May 28, 2004, the day before Lt. Gen. Philip R. Kensinger publically acknowledged Tillman's death was in fact due to fratricide. Time Frame 2 begins with that announcement on May 29, 2004, and concludes on August 10, 2007, after the final government investigation was concluded and the findings were released (see Figure 2).

## Measures and Coding Procedures

The independent variable in this study is the time period. Basic information from each article included headline, date, and article length. Placement was also examined as it pertained to front page, section front, and section of run. Article treatment was noted and placed into one of four mutually exclusive categories: general news, feature, commentary or criticism, and other. Additionally, the total number of sources cited in each article was recorded and then further broken down by three additional groups: official sources, family and/or friend sources, and other sources. Source delineation plays a valuable role in determining not only the direct relationship between the press and the elitist message, but also the active and passive stages of lesser institution utilization. These elements, therefore, will serve as variables in relation to the time frames and frequency of citation.

In total, eight frames were coded. Four frames were in relation to lesser institutions, and the other four were in reference to moral ideologies. Each frame was constructed with the condition of showing a direct reference and an indirect reference with a place allocated for frequency of occurrence. The first four coded frames of reference regarded “lesser institutions” and were as follows: (1) National Football League (NFL), (2) Arizona State University (ASU), (3) sacrificed income, and (4) corporate sponsorship or identity. The remaining four frames concern moral ideologies: (5) heroism and masculinity, (6) patriotism and American idealism, (7) God, faith, and Christianity, and (8) war support or morale.

In regards to each lesser institution frame and each more ideology frame a subtle, yet distinct relationship exists between it and militarism.

The National Football League, or professional sports in general, and the military have formed a cohesiveness that has been naturalized in U.S. society, even though in reality that

relationship should not be one that is an expected norm. Sports and warfare terms are constantly interchanged, and often linked together when describing professional sporting events. NFL players have been commonly labeled as “gridiron warriors.” In addition, sports commentators routinely describe plays with terms such as “the troops are entering enemy territory” or said player has “punched a hole in the enemy’s defensive line.” Even the most basic sports terminology, such as “blitz,” “shotgun,” and “aerial bombs” encompass battlefield ideals. Sports analyst Dave Zirin states that professional sports leagues actively promote militarism, so much so that these ideas become “so commonplace in our culture that we don’t even notice it. We don’t even question it” (Jhally & Earp, 2010). Zirin adds,

If going to war isn’t political, then nothing is. And yet this mix of sports and politics seems perfectly natural to us. We’re made to think it’s not political at all, that it’s just the way it is. And this is how ideology works: It naturalizes ideas and images that deflect attention away from other realities. And this is where it really starts to matter. (Jhally & Earp, 2010)

The relationship between militarism and educational institutions is less subtle, but still somewhat subversive. While many state-funded institutions are independent of any direct military affiliation, they are often hosts to numerous recruitment efforts and postings on behalf of all branches of the military. Currently, federal law maintains, “while schools can bar military recruiters from campus, they can lose federal funding if they prohibit military recruitment, but welcome other job recruiters” (New York Civil Liberties Union, n.d., para. 1). In addition, “recruiters may request ‘directory information’ on any student enrolled or formerly enrolled at a school” (New York Civil Liberties Union, n.d., para. 4). Finally, many schools are home to active Reserved Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC) units. ROTC is a program that prepares

students for entrance into military service as commissioned officers rather than enlisted soldiers.

Sacrificed income and military service also maintains a paired existence that has been normalized as an expected outcome in our society. The idea of an underpaid military has been perpetuated for years, however it is not the case. “There’s a common myth in American society that the military personnel are underpaid for their services. While there certainly isn’t a dollar figure that can be attached to jeopardizing a human life, the military and US government has gone to great lengths in approving consecutive military pay scale increases since the 1980s” (Meyer, 2010, para. 1). This notion of financial sacrifice is needed to maintain the perception of heroic service. Despite the fact that military pay has been increased significantly in recent decades, the belief that U.S. military members suffer from low incomes has been perpetuated time and time again in the mainstream media.

The relationship between the military and corporate entities has grown more and more cohesive in recent years. Service branches can be seen in almost every walk of life from video game endorsements, to professional sports team sponsorships, and product endorsement. In 2011, *The New York Times* reported on only three branches of the military finding “the Army, the Air Force and the National Guard spend millions of dollars on sponsorship — \$100 million over the past 10 years” (Rhoden, para. 5). Additionally, this relationship is codependent in design, as almost all major corporations and business actively employ some type of “support our troops” campaign during times of conflict.

Moral ideology frames can be seen as a collective unit when examining their relevance to militarism. These socially cultivated values, heroism and masculinity, patriotism and American idealism, faith and Christianity, and war support and morale, can be viewed as the brand of the U.S. military. From commercial depictions to Hollywood portrayals, the ideal U.S. soldier is one

who embodies all of these, both outwardly in appearance, to inward an elevated yet personal moral compass. “American military discourse consistently constructs characters that represent the idealized soldier as male, heroic, selfless, and strong” (Fancher, 2008, p. 125). In doing so, these notions of what it means to be a U.S. soldier are internalized and normalized by the masses, they are perpetuated to the point that they seem to be inseparable.

Additionally, each of the eight were cited as having a direct or an indirect mention to the frame, conversely they could also be marked as having both types of references. A direct reference notation was used when any of the eight frames were clearly and directly stated. Indirect references were noted when a statement was implied. These indirect statements are a bit more abstract in terms of coding.

Some examples of the coding procedures for both direct and indirect notations are as follows. In the first frame regarding professional football, any reference using the exact words NFL, Cardinals, or a combination of the like would be a direct reference to that element. Subsequently, anytime the game of football or Tillman’s position on a team, which was safety, was noted, it would be coded as an indirect reference to that frame. The process to citing Arizona State references would be similar to the process of coding for the NFL. ASU, Arizona State University, and Sun Devils would be direct references, while collegiate career, scholarship, or college in general would be indirect. To directly reference Tillman’s sacrificed income a specific monetary amount needed to be stated, for example: “Tillman walked away from a \$3.8 million contract,” or “Tillman sacrificed more than \$1 million a year to join the army.” Indirect references to sacrificed income included the use of words akin to millions, lucrative, celebrity, wealth, and fame.

Moral ideology frames were coded similarly. Direct citations for heroism and masculinity needed the terms hero or masculine to be mentioned literally, or physical descriptions of Tillman such as “long blonde hair” or “205 pounds.” Virtue and morality statements, such as valiant, brave, and manly, would be coded as indirect. Direct references to God, faith, and Christianity included those literal terms as well as denominations of religion, such as Catholic or Jewish, and official church rankings and titles, including pastor, priest, or rabbi. Indirect references to this frame included words and statements such as angels, heaven, “better place,” or “crossed over.”

Finally, two additional variables were included to analyze the overall tone and level of objectivity within each article. Established to identify any major breach in neutrality on behalf of the media, the final two variables looked for statements on behalf of the reporting news organization that were either critical of the war and/or Bush administration, or supportive of them. It is important to make the clear distinction here that reporting factual events such as a U.S. victory or other accomplishment is not to be coded as a breach of neutrality. Rather, it is the language that is under review. Whether it was implied or directly stated, a message or statement of either criticism or support that was issued by the reporting agency or writer was marked in the corresponding area. Also, if no breach was noted, neither element was marked for coding.

#### Intercoder Reliability

Coding was done by the author. Then, 42 articles were randomly selected from each time frame, resulting in approximately 30% of the sample ( $n = 84$ ). They were independently coded by a graduate student who received thorough instructions and training. For calculating an overall intercoder reliability coefficient, Wimmer and Dominick (2014) recommend having independent coders reanalyze “a subsample of the data, probably between 10% and 25%” (p. 175). Therefore,



the size of the subsample reanalyzed by an independent coder for this research was deemed sufficient.

This research calculated Krippendorff's  $\alpha$ -coefficient for each variable by using ReCal, which is a free online program developed by Deen G. Freelon (n.d.; 2010; in press), an assistant professor at the School of Communication at American University. This reliability measure is versatile because it takes chance agreement into account, is independent of however many values a variable may take, is applicable to any number of coders, corrects itself for different sample sizes, adjusts for the levels of measurement, and is unaffected by missing data (Krippendorff, 2013, p. 278). However, it has rarely been used "because of the tedium of its calculation" (Neuendorf, 2002, p. 151). Because three modules of Freelon's program—ReCal2 and ReCal3 for nominal variables, and ReCal OIR for ordinal, interval, and ratio variables—have been shown to be quite accurate (Freelon, 2010, in press), the present research used them for different levels of measurement.

First, Krippendorff's  $\alpha$ -coefficients for the nominal or "presumably nominal" (e.g., article length available in each article retrieved from LexisNexis Academic) variables were as follows: date (1.000), newspaper (1.000), article length (.976), front page (1.000), section (.947), section front page (1.000), writer (1.000), and treatment (.942). Second, the coefficients for the news source variables, which were radio-level data, were as follows: total number of sources (1.000), number of official sources (.999), number of family or friend sources (.975), and number of other sources (.929). Third, the coefficients for the frame variables, which were radio-level data, were as follows: NFL/Arizona Cardinals direct (.962) and indirect (.740), Arizona State University (ASU) direct (.975) and indirect (.803), sacrificed income/contract direct (.991) and indirect (.946), corporate sponsorship/identity direct (.702) and indirect (-.050), heroism/masculinity

direct (.812) and indirect (.721), patriotism/American idealism direct (.914) and indirect (.797), God/faith/Christianity direct (1.000) and indirect (.491), and war support/morale direct (.314) and indirect (.569). Fourth and finally, the coefficients for the variables that measured the overall tone of the story, which were radio-level data, were as follows: supportive (.663) or critical (.000) of the administration, the Iraq War, or the Afghanistan War.

Given that reliabilities above .800 are acceptable and those between .667 and .800 are appropriate for drawing tentative conclusions (Krippendorff, 2013, p. 325), most variables were suitable for this research. Although the two variables that measured the overall tone of the story respectively had a low reliability coefficient, the coders detected those supportive/critical comments in only a couple stories with the frequency of one. Conversely, one disagreement would significantly lower the reliability coefficient. Although containing chance agreement, the overall agreement for each of the two variables was quite high (98.8%).

#### Sample Characteristics

Among 286 articles found during a little longer than five years covered in this study, 39.2% appeared in Time Frame 1 (May 1, 2002–May 28, 2004) whereas 60.8% belonged to Time Frame 2 (May 29, 2004–August 10, 2007). The most articles (42.7%) were published in 2004—the year when the military publicly acknowledged the cause of Tillman’s death as fratricide. The second highest number of articles (27.3%) was found in 2007, during which the federal government concluded its investigation into Tillman’s death and subsequently released its final report and findings.

The Associated Press published the most articles (29.4%), followed by the *San Jose Mercury News* (15.7%), the New York *Daily News* (8.4%), the *USA Today* (7.0%), *The Seattle*

*Times* (6.3%), and the *San Francisco Chronicle* (5.6%). The remaining newspapers respectively accounted for less than 5% of the sample (See Table C.2).

The mean article length was 648.5 words. While 40.6% of the articles were shorter than 500 words, 43.7% were more than 500 words, but less than 1,000. Although only 10.1% of the articles were published on the front page, an additional 8.7% were published on the inside section front page. The sports section carried the highest number of articles (42.7%), followed by the main section A (35.3%) and the local/metro/state/region section (12.9%). Staff writers produced the vast majority of articles (90.6%). As for article treatment, general news dominated the coverage (76.6%), followed by feature (20.6%).

#### Preliminary Analysis

To examine MANOVA assumptions, preliminary analysis was conducted on the pair of direct and indirect references to each of the eight frames. Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant (eight pairs at  $p < .0005$  and one pair at  $p = .036$ ), indicating that for each pair of direct and indirect frame references, the residual covariance matrix of the dependent variables was not an identity matrix. However, the Box  $M$  test of equality of covariance matrices was consistently significant (six pairs at  $p < .0005$  and two pairs at  $p = .004$  and  $.001$  respectively), meaning that for most pairs of direct and indirect frame references, the observed covariance matrices of the dependent variables were not equal across the two time frames. In addition, all dependent variables violated the normality assumption because they were severely right-skewed. Instead of executing data transformation for MANOVA, which would make statistical interpretation difficult, this study applied the Mann-Whitney  $U$ -test to examine each hypothesis.

## RESULTS

H1a and H1b concerned the lesser-institution frames. See Table 1 for the results. H1a predicted the average number of direct references to each lesser institution would decrease after Tillman's cause of death was changed. Except for the unchanged corporate sponsorship/identity frame,  $p = .186$ , each of the other three frames (i.e., NFL/Arizona Cardinals, Arizona State University (ASU), sacrificed income/contract) significantly decreased after the revelation of the true cause of Tillman's death—all the three frames significant at  $p < .0005$ . Therefore, H1a was mostly supported.

H1b predicted the average number of indirect references to each lesser institution would decrease after his cause of death was changed. Each of the four frames significantly decreased after the revelation of the true cause of Tillman's death:  $p = .001$  for NFL/Arizona Cardinals;  $p = .044$  for Arizona State University (ASU);  $p < .0005$  for sacrificed income/contract; and  $p = .007$  for corporate sponsorship/identity. Therefore, H1b was supported.

Next, H2a and H2b concerned the moral ideology frames. See Table 2 for the results. H2a predicted the average number of direct references to each moral ideology would decrease after Tillman's cause of death was changed. Except for the unchanged war support/morale frame,  $p = .390$ , each of the other three frames (i.e., heroism/masculinity, patriotism/American idealism, God/faith/Christianity) significantly decreased after the revelation of the true cause of Tillman's death—all the three frames significant at  $p < .0005$ . Therefore, H2a was mostly supported.

H2b predicted the average number of indirect references to each moral ideology would decrease after his cause of death was changed. Each of the four frames significantly decreased after the revelation of the true cause of Tillman's death:  $p < .0005$  for heroism/masculinity;  $p <$

.0005 for patriotism/American idealism;  $p = .036$  for God/faith/Christianity; and  $p = .007$  for war support/morale. Therefore, H2b was supported.

Then, H3a and H3b concerned the overall tone of each story. See Table 3 for the results. H3a predicted the average number of statements or comments supportive of the administration, the Iraq War, or the Afghanistan War would remain stable before and after Tillman's cause of death was changed. The statistical analysis showed a significant decrease in supportive statements or comments after his cause of death was changed,  $p = .009$ , leading to the rejection of H3a. However, this result must be interpreted with caution because only five stories had supportive statements or comments before the revelation, while no stories had such statements or comments after the revelation. In other words, despite the statistically significant result, the difference was practically negligible.

H3b predicted the average number of statements or comments critical of the administration, the Iraq War, or the Afghanistan War would remain stable before and after Tillman's cause of death was changed. The statistical analysis showed no significant difference in critical statements or comments before and after his cause of death was changed,  $p = .158$ . In fact, only four stories had critical statements or comments after the revelation, while no stories had such statements or comments before it. Again, the difference was practically negligible.

Therefore, H3b was supported.

Finally, H4a and H4b were posed to examine news sources. See Table 4 for the results. H4a predicted that official sources would appear more frequently on average after than before Tillman's cause of death was changed. The statistical analysis showed a significant increase in official sources after the revelation of his true cause of death,  $p < .0005$ . Therefore, H4a was supported.

H4b predicted that family and friend sources would appear less frequently on average after than before Tillman’s cause of death was changed. The statistical analysis showed a significant decrease in family and friend sources after the revelation of his true cause of death,  $p < .0005$ . Therefore, H4b was supported.

Table 1

*Mann-Whitney U Tests on the Contrast Between Time Frame 1 and Time Frame 2 for “Lesser Institution” Frames*

Frame	Time Frame 1 ( $n = 112$ )			Time Frame 2 ( $n = 174$ )			$z$	$p$	$r$ (ES)
	$M$	$SD$	$M$ Rank	$M$	$SD$	$M$ Rank			
NFL/Arizona Cardinals									
Direct	5.36	4.46	194.96	2.18	2.27	110.38	-8.58	< .0005	-.51
Indirect	1.14	1.44	161.59	0.58	0.84	131.86	-3.26	.001	-.19
Arizona State University (ASU)									
Direct	1.20	1.87	165.03	0.60	1.54	129.64	-4.17	< .0005	-.25
Indirect	0.20	0.58	148.78	0.10	0.40	140.10	-1.68	.044	-.10
Sacrificed income/contract									
Direct	0.91	0.89	179.83	0.34	0.51	120.11	-6.72	< .0005	-.40
Indirect	0.91	1.05	164.94	0.43	0.55	129.70	-3.92	< .0005	-.23
Corporate sponsorship/identity									
Direct	0.88	1.61	148.06	0.58	1.15	140.57	-0.89	.186	-.05
Indirect	0.08	0.33	148.41	0.02	0.30	140.34	-2.82	.007	-.17

*Note.* All results were based on one-tailed tests.

Table 2

*Mann–Whitney U Tests on the Contrast Between Time Frame 1 and Time Frame 2 for “Moral Ideology” Frames*

Frame	Time Frame 1 ( <i>n</i> = 112)			Time Frame 2 ( <i>n</i> = 174)			<i>z</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i> (ES)
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i> Rank	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i> Rank			
Heroism/masculinity									
Direct	1.15	1.47	166.63	0.51	0.85	128.61	−4.27	< .0005	−.25
Indirect	1.66	2.36	183.30	0.40	0.69	117.88	−7.22	< .0005	−.43
Patriotism/American idealism									
Direct	1.24	1.68	170.98	0.40	0.82	125.81	−5.26	< .0005	−.31
Indirect	1.06	1.20	182.54	0.21	0.55	118.37	−7.76	< .0005	−.46
God/faith/Christianity									
Direct	0.21	0.51	156.90	0.05	0.42	134.87	−4.58	< .0005	−.27
Indirect	0.05	0.26	146.86	0.02	0.30	141.34	−2.22	.036	−.13
War support/morale									
Direct	0.12	0.37	142.51	0.14	0.43	144.14	−0.31	.390	−.02
Indirect	0.29	0.59	131.47	0.39	0.51	151.24	−2.43	.007	−.14

*Note.* All results were based on one-tailed tests.

Table 3

*Mann–Whitney U Tests on the Contrast Between Time Frame 1 and Time Frame 2 for the Overall Tone of Story*

Overall tone	Time Frame 1 ( <i>n</i> = 112)			Time Frame 2 ( <i>n</i> = 174)			<i>z</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i> (ES)
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i> Rank	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i> Rank			
Supportive	0.15	1.02	147.38	0	0	141.00	-2.81	.009	-.17
Critical	0	0	141.50	0.03	0.26	144.79	-1.61	.158	-.10

*Note.* All results were based on two-tailed tests.

Table 4

*Mann–Whitney U Tests on the Contrast Between Time Frame 1 and Time Frame 2 for News Sources*

News sources	Time Frame 1 ( <i>n</i> = 112)			Time Frame 2 ( <i>n</i> = 174)			<i>z</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i> (ES)
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i> Rank	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i> Rank			
Total	3.82	2.82	152.93	3.20	2.36	137.43	-1.57	.059	-.09
Official	0.81	1.20	118.15	1.53	1.52	159.82	-4.36	< .0005	-.26
Family/ friends	1.54	1.86	162.28	0.71	0.89	131.41	-3.30	< .0005	-.20
Other	1.47	1.70	158.90	0.97	1.44	133.59	-2.69	.004	-.16

*Note.* All results were based on one-tailed tests.



## DISCUSSION

### Observations

This research investigated mainstream U.S. print media's uses of frames relating to what Mills (1956) calls "lesser institutions" and moral ideologies in the Pat Tillman coverage.

Additionally, the overall tone of the news story and news sources were examined. In particular, the research focused on how a disruptive event, such as the official acknowledgement of his true cause of death as fratricide, would affect the mainstream media's propaganda information system.

In brief, as for news frames, mainstream print media generally retreated from participating in the power elite's propaganda information dissemination after the military acknowledged Tillman's true cause of death as fratricide. Yet, the print media included in this research did not advance any serious critical discourse on the Iraq/Afghanistan wars or the Bush administration even after the military's manipulation of the public was exposed. Furthermore, their heavy dependence on official sources, while decreasing Tillman's family and friend sources indicates how covertly, but potently the propaganda model operates in contemporary society (see Figure 3).

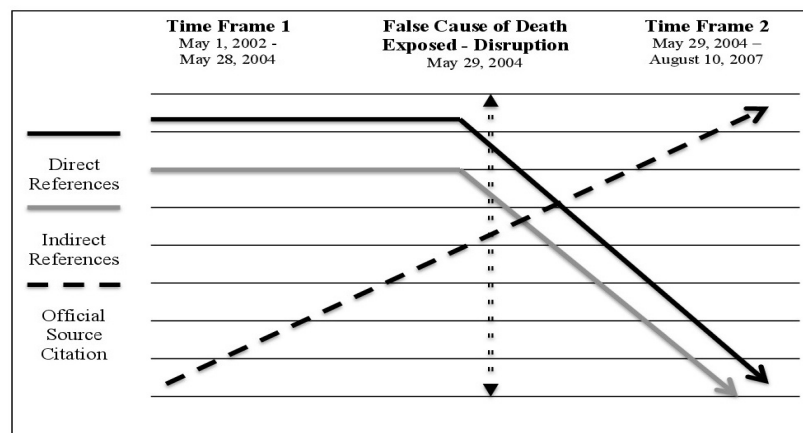


Figure 3. Visual interpretation of statistical data.

Expanding on these findings, one must start with news frames and the possible causal factors behind their implementation. As cited earlier, because public opinion is a crucial element in times of war and social crisis, the government and the military attempt to capitalize on anything available to them. “For the US military, Pat Tillman’s enlistment provided an opportunity of a different kind ... No scriptwriter in the Pentagon press bureau could have devised a more persuasive poster boy” (Brown, 2010, para. 2).

Subsequently, when Tillman died as a result of friendly fire, “the spin machine at the Pentagon went into overdrive. Rumsfeld and company couldn’t have their most high-profile soldier dying in such an inelegant fashion, especially with the release of those pesky photos from Abu Ghraib hitting the airwaves. So an obscene lie was told to Tillman’s family, his friends and the American public” (Zirin, 2010, para. 2). Additionally, “The death of America’s most famous soldier came at a particularly critical time for the US military. In early April 2004, American forces had suffered a humiliating setback in the abortive attempt to capture the Iraqi city of Fallujah, and the 131 US casualties that month would be the highest in nine months. America was fast growing disillusioned with its ‘war on terror’” (Brown, 2010, para. 21).

These examples show blatant reasoning on the part of the elite, and why they chose to utilize and define Tillman as they did. However, these points cannot justify the media’s role in this endeavor, nor can it assuage its role in the perpetuation of this propaganda campaign. Although, the mainstream media did retreat in general from active participation in the Tillman propaganda after the exposure of purposeful misinformation, it did not advance any serious inquiry into the military’s manipulation of the public. The media’s role in the propagation of this manufactured storyline is critical because society is dependent on journalistic outlets for the very

definition of reality and for the information needed to self govern and advance discourse and input into government proceedings as the democratic system promotes.

The media bring a manufactured public world into private space. From within their private crevices, people find themselves relying on the media for concepts, for images of their heroes, for guiding information, for emotional charges, for recognition of public values, for symbols in general, even for language. Of all the institutions of daily life, the media specialize in orchestrating, everyday consciousness—by virtue of their pervasiveness, their accessibility, their centralized symbolic capacity. (Gitlin, 1980, pp. 1-2)

Furthermore, it could be argued that because the media failed to seek the full story in regards to Tillman, his service, and ultimately his cause of death, they missed critical points of the story, which in turn made it impossible for the public to be truly informed.

What we know about the world is circumscribed by what the media are able to tell us—and choose to tell us—about the world. And their omissions, wrote *New York Times* columnist Max Frankel have broad ramifications. “A shallow understanding of the world will damage the nation’s sense of itself, its commerce and its standard of living and may blind it even greater threats.” (Moeller, 1999, p. 17)

Relating to Tillman himself, “the worst part about all of this was that this whitewashing of Tillman’s story also hid what might be the most important part of his story: that while he was stationed in Iraq in 2003, he had turned against the war” (Jhally & Earp, 2010). When the media consistently fail to report the holistic nature of a story, it is easy to assume that deviations from the narrative do not exist. Tillman’s dissention would have been viewed as a massive blow to the preferred storyline.

In addition, the media's heavy reliance on official sources serves to add support to media critics who claim that the current system allows for little more than recording of stated facts without the quest for truth. Dependence on official sources also erodes the media's sovereignty, and offers little separation from state-driven initiatives, thus directly conflicting with the First Amendment's intentions for a "free press."

Finally, by using heroic archetypes and partial depictions of Pat Tillman as key pillars in his narrative, the mainstream media blurred the line between news and entertainment journalism, thus creating a distance from the reality of war, death, and foreign relations, by only reporting a morale-driven narrative based on idealistic, elite value sets and ideals.

#### Limitations

The present research has some limitations. First, as previously noted, because this research investigated only the Pat Tillman case, the results could not be generalizable to other fratricide cases. As noted before, many more confirmed cases of fratricide exist, and more than a dozen families have publicly expressed that they were "misled" or "overtly lied to" about how their loved ones died, while serving in Afghanistan or Iraq (Dewan, 2006, para. 9). Systematic manipulation of the public by the power elite of the U.S. military and government is obvious, which indicates an urgent need for critically examining media's performance during wartime. If mainstream mass media remain as the power elite's lapdog, then the public will be kept in the dark, ultimately making democracy dysfunctional.

Second, operationalization of critical concepts and constructs is very difficult, if not impossible. For example, not everything in Herman and Chomsky's (2002) propaganda model comes down to an either-or dichotomy. In this sense, it is very important to examine various critical researchers' views and map out their disagreements and agreements to elucidate various

situations in which, for example, propaganda will or will not function. By making theoretical constructs more explicit, scholars can quantitatively test critical theory more validly.

Third and finally, as noted earlier apply operationalization to critical concepts is a difficult if not impossible task, individual interpretation of implied references is more subject to dissention, thus intercoder reliability in regards to indirect references showed a lower reliability.

#### Further Research

This study provides significant foundation for further research in a number of areas. First, in regards to the Tillman narrative specifically, a textual analysis of coverage could be conducted to investigate how multiple news frames appear together to illuminate more subtle roles of framing. This research should expand the sample of media to include general news magazines, both print and online, as well as broadcast news.

On a broader scale of further research application, this study clearly shows that lesser institutions and moral ideologies play a meaningful role in the shaping and maintenance of public support during the establishment phases of war and social crises. Additionally, it appears that during this period the level of objectivity in mainstream media is most challenged. To understand the structural reasons for journalists' obedience to the power elite, it is necessary to interview them. Although the objectivity norm will be the most significant reason for their dissemination of tacit propagandistic information, it may be partly because of their sense of patriotic duties as citizens. In the contemporary media landscape in which some journalists and news commentators overtly express their political views, their patriotism may be lurking behind their official proclamation of professionalism.

Finally, this research would be a valuable platform from which to launch an investigation into the naturalized relationship between professional sports and militarism. Sports writer Dave

Zirin alludes to this dysfunctional partnership as a fundamental element cultivating ideological relativism: “The dominant narrative in sports culture presents a narrow, glamorized view of militarism and violence that conceals many of the costs and consequences of this fictionalized ideal of male invulnerability” (Jhally & Earp, 2010). Furthermore, an analysis of how that relationship serves to blur that line between reality and entertainment in regards to war and military recruitment procedures would be innovative and interesting.

APPENDIX A  
CODING SHEET

STORY ID \_ \_ \_ \_

CODER \_\_\_\_\_

Headline \_\_\_\_\_

Newspaper:

- 1. AP
- 2. NYT
- 3. WP
- 4. USAT
- 5. NYP
- 6. NYDN
- 7. HC
- 8. PI
- 9. SJMN
- 10. CST
- 11. DMN
- 12. ST
- 13. DP
- 14. SFC
- 15. SAEN
- 16. AJC
- 17. SLPD
- 18. MH
- 19. PPG

Date: \_ \_ \_ \_ / \_ \_ / \_ \_

Date line: \_\_\_\_\_

Article length: \_\_\_\_\_

Front page: choose one

- 1. Yes  2. No

Section: \_\_\_\_\_ (USE CODE)

Other (Specify \_\_\_\_\_)

Section Front: choose one

- 1. Yes  2. No

Jump: choose one

- 1. Yes  2. No

Origin: choose one

1. Wire/News Service - IF OTHER THAN AP (Specify \_\_\_\_\_)

2. Staff

3. Reader

9. Unknown

Contact: choose one

- 1. Yes  2. No

Treatment: Choose One

1. General news

2. Feature

3. Commentary/Criticism

4. Other (Specify \_\_\_\_\_)

Sources:

\_\_\_\_\_ # of sources quoted

\_\_\_\_\_ # of official sources quoted

\_\_\_\_\_ # of family/friend sources quoted

\_\_\_\_\_ # of other sources quoted

Reference to NFL/Arizona Cardinals affiliation:

1. Directly referenced # \_\_\_\_\_

2. Indirectly referenced # \_\_\_\_\_

Reference to sacrificed income/contract:

1. Directly referenced # \_\_\_\_\_

2. Indirectly referenced # \_\_\_\_\_



**Reference to Arizona State University:**

- 1. Directly referenced # \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Indirectly referenced # \_\_\_\_\_

**Reference to corporate sponsorship/identity:**

- 1. Directly referenced # \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Indirectly referenced # \_\_\_\_\_

**Reference to God/Christianity/faith:**

- 1. Directly referenced # \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Indirectly referenced # \_\_\_\_\_

**Reference to heroism/masculinity:**

- 1. Directly referenced # \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Indirectly referenced # \_\_\_\_\_

**Reference to patriotism/American Idealism:**

- 1. Directly referenced # \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Indirectly referenced # \_\_\_\_\_

**Reference to war support/morale:**

- 1. Directly referenced # \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Indirectly referenced # \_\_\_\_\_

**Photo used (choose one)**

- 1. Yes  2. No  3. Unknown

**Photo in color (choose one)**

- 1. Yes  2. No  3. Unknown

**Photo used:**

- 1. Official Army issue shot w/flag
- 2. Army uniform shot (casual)
- 3. NFL shot w/uniform/affiliation
- 4. ASU shot w/uniform/affiliation
- 5. Candid/Familiar shot
- 6. Other
- 7. N/A

**Overall tone of language/comment (breach of neutrality):**

- 1. Critical of administration or War in Iraq/Afghanistan (list below) # \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Supportive of administration or War in Iraq/Afghanistan (list below) # \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

APPENDIX B  
SUPPLEMENTAL TABLES

Source	Used/Coded	Not available via databases	Contained only AP articles and/or editorials
Associated Press	✓		
Wall Street Journal			✓
USA Today	✓		
New York Times	✓		
Los Angeles Times		✓	
New York Daily News	✓		
San Jose Mercury News	✓		
The New York Post	✓		
Washington Post	✓		
Chicago Sun-Times	✓		
Chicago Tribune		✓	
Dallas Morning News	✓		
Denver Post	✓		
Newsday		✓	
Houston Chronicle	✓		
Philadelphia Inquirer	✓		
Arizona Republic		✓	
Minneapolis Star Tribune		✓	
Tampa Bay Times			✓
Orange County Register			✓
Newark Star-Ledger		✓	
Oregonian			✓
Cleveland Plain Dealer			✓
Seattle Times	✓		
San Diego Union Tribune		✓	
Detroit Free Press		✓	
Boston Globe		✓	
Atlanta Journal-Constitution	✓		
San Francisco Chronicle	✓		
St. Louis Post-Dispatch	✓		
Miami Herald	✓		
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette	✓		
Kansas City Star		✓	
Columbus Dispatch		✓	
Indianapolis Star			✓
San Antonio Express-News	✓		

<b>Source</b>	<b>Percentage Coded</b>
<b>Associated Press</b>	<b>29.4 %</b>
<b>San Jose Mercury News</b>	<b>15.7 %</b>
<b>New York Daily News</b>	<b>8.4 %</b>
<b>USA Today</b>	<b>7.0 %</b>
<b>Seattle Times</b>	<b>6.3 %</b>
<b>San Francisco Chronicle</b>	<b>5.6 %</b>
<b>Washington Post</b>	<b>4.9 %</b>
<b>New York Post</b>	<b>4.5 %</b>
<b>New York Times</b>	<b>3.5 %</b>
<b>San Antonio Express-News</b>	<b>2.8 %</b>
<b>Chicago Sun Times</b>	<b>2.1 %</b>
<b>Miami Herald</b>	<b>2.1 %</b>
<b>Houston Chronicle</b>	<b>1.4 %</b>
<b>St. Louis Post Dispatch</b>	<b>1.4 %</b>
<b>Dallas Morning News</b>	<b>1.4 %</b>
<b>Philadelphia Inquirer</b>	<b>1.0 %</b>
<b>Denver Post</b>	<b>1.0 %</b>
<b>Atlanta Journal Constitution</b>	<b>1.0 %</b>
<b>Pittsburgh Post-Gazette</b>	<b>0.3 %</b>

## REFERENCES

- Abbot, W.W. (Ed.). (1988). *The papers of George Washington: Colonial series*. (Vol. 6). London: University Press of Virginia.
- Aday, S. (2010). Leading the charge: Media, elites, and the use of emotion in stimulating rally effects in wartime. *Journal of Communication*, 60, 440-465.
- Associated Press. (2004, April 23). Tillman killed in Afghanistan: Former Cardinals safety walked away from NFL to join Army rangers. *Sports Illustrated*. Retrieved from <http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/2004/football/nfl/04/23/tillman.killed>
- Associated Press. (2007, April 5). Army: Friendly fire may have killed pair. *Lubbock Avalanche-Journal*. Retrieved from [http://lubbockonline.com/stories/040507/nat\\_040507042.shtml](http://lubbockonline.com/stories/040507/nat_040507042.shtml)
- Ayers, W. (1993). *Fratricide: Can it be stopped?* Retrieved from [http://www.global security .org/military/library/report/1993/AWH.htm](http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/1993/AWH.htm)
- Battsek, J. (Producer), & Bar-Lev, A. (Director). (2010). *The Tillman story* [Motion picture]. United States: The Weinstein Company.
- Baum, M. A., & Groeling, T. (2010). Reality asserts itself: Public opinion on Iraq and the elasticity of reality. *International Organization*, 64, 443-479.
- Bennett, W. L. (2005). News as reality TV: Election coverage and the democratization of truth. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 22(2), 171-177.
- Brown, M. (2010, October 7). Betrayal of an all-American hero. *The Telegraph*. Retrieved from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/8046658/Betrayal-of-an-all-American-hero.html>
- Chomsky, N. (1994). *Secrets, lies and democracy*. Chicago, IL: Odonian Press.
- Chomsky, N. (2001). *9-11*. New York, NY: Seven Stories Press.

- Chomsky, N. (2002). *Media control: The spectacular achievements of propaganda* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York, NY: Seven Stories Press.
- Christie, T. B. (2006). Framing rationale for the Iraq War: The interaction of public support with mass media and public policy agendas. *International Communication Gazette*, 68(5-6), 519-532.
- Cunningham, B. (2003). Re-thinking objectivity. *Columbia Journalism Review*, 42(2), 24-32.
- Davidson, M. J. (2011). Friendly fire and the limits of the military justice system. *Naval War College Review*, 64(1), 122-141.
- Davis, N. (2004, April 23). Tillman's gone but his legacy must endure. *USA Today*. Retrieved from [http://www.usatoday.com/sports/football/columnist/2004-04-23-tillman-commentary\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/sports/football/columnist/2004-04-23-tillman-commentary_x.htm)
- Dewan, S. (2006, November 5). Anger joins grief as Marine's family feels misled. *New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/11/05/us/05friendly.html>
- Dimitrova, D. V., & Connolly-Ahern, C. (2007). A tale of two wars: Framing analysis of online news sites in coalition countries and the Arab world during the Iraq war. *Howard Journal of Communications*, 18(2), 153-168.
- Femia, J. V. (1987). *Gramsci's political thought: Hegemony, consciousness, and the revolutionary process*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Fancher, P. (2008). The pleasure of death: The construction of masculine citizenship in military recruitment ads. *Gnovis Journal*, 8, 125-133.
- Freelon, D. G. (2010). ReCal: Intercoder reliability calculation as a web service. *International Journal of Internet Science*, 5, 20-33. Retrieved from <http://www.ijis.net>

- Freelon, D. G. (in press). ReCal OIR: Ordinal, interval, and ratio intercoder reliability as a web service. *International Journal of Internet Science*. Retrieved from [http://www.ijis.net/ijis\\_inpress/ijis8\\_1\\_inpress\\_Freelon.pdf](http://www.ijis.net/ijis_inpress/ijis8_1_inpress_Freelon.pdf)
- Freelon, D. G. (n.d.). ReCal: Reliability calculation for the masses [Online software]. Retrieved from <http://dfreelon.org/utills/recalfront/>
- 'Friendly fire' death toll 3 times higher in gulf war than pentagon first admitted. (1991, August 13). *Desert News Archives*. Retrieved from <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/189338/FRIENDLY-FIRE-DEATH-TOLL-3-TIMES-HIGHER-IN-GULF-WAR-THAN-PENTAGON-FIRST-ADMITTED.html>
- Greene, B. (2004, July 8). *Sacrifice, patriotism, and Pat Tillman*. Retrieved from <http://depts.washington.edu/egonline/2004/07/2003-04-winner-sacrifice-patriotism-and-pat-tillman-by-ben-greene/>
- Gitlin, T. (1980). *The whole world is watching: Mass media in the making & unmaking of the new left*. Los Angeles, CA: The University of California Press.
- Hamilton, J. (2007, April 6). An entangled grief. *Hartford Courant*. Retrieved from [http://articles.courant.com/2007-04-06/news/0704061045\\_1\\_friendly-fire-death-friendly-fire-soldiers-deaths](http://articles.courant.com/2007-04-06/news/0704061045_1_friendly-fire-death-friendly-fire-soldiers-deaths)
- Herman, E. S., & Chomsky, N. (2002). *Manufacturing consent: The political economy of the mass media*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books.
- Herman, E. S. (1996, July/August). The propaganda model revisited. *Monthly Review*, 48(3). Retrieved <http://www.chomsky.info/onchomsky/199607--.htm>
- Herman, E. S. (2000). The propaganda model: A retrospective. *Journalism Studies*, 1, 101–112. doi:10.1080/146167000361195

- Jarus, O. (2010, September 24). New discoveries hint at 5,500-year-old fratricide at Hamoukar, Syria. *The Independent*. Retrieved from <http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/history/new-discoveries-hint-at-5500-year-old-fratricide-at-hamoukar-syria-2088467.html>
- Jhally, S. (Producer), & Earp, J. (Director). (2010). *Not just a game: Power, politics, & American sports* [Documentary]. United States: Media Education Foundation.
- Johnson, C. (2004). *The sorrows of empire: Militarism, secrecy, and the end of the republic*. New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company, LLC.
- Krakauer, J. (2009). *Where men win glory: The odyssey of Pat Tillman*. New York, NY: Doubleday.
- Krippendorff, K. (2013). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lewis, G., Miklaszewski, J., & Johnson, A. (2004, April 26). *Ex-NFL star Tillman makes 'ultimate sacrifice: Safety, who gave up big salary to join Army, killed in Afghanistan*. MSNBC.com. Retrieved from [http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/4815441/ns/world\\_news/t/ex-nfl-star-tillman-makes-ultimate-sacrifice/#.TtqGXWA5Dos](http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/4815441/ns/world_news/t/ex-nfl-star-tillman-makes-ultimate-sacrifice/#.TtqGXWA5Dos)
- Lewis, S. C., & Reese, S. D. (2009). What is the war on terror? Framing through the eyes of journalists. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 86(1), 85-102.
- Lingle, B. (2010). Jon Krakauer's *Where Men Win Glory*: Pat Tillman as American epic hero. *War, Literature & The Arts: An International Journal of the Humanities*, 22, 29-36.
- Madigan, N. (2004, May 4). Service for ex-N.F.L. player killed in combat. *New York Times*. p. A22.



- Martinez, J. H., & Brena, M. O. (2007). U.S. political culture and hegemony. *Latin American Perspectives*, 34(1), 46-52.
- Melcher, L. (2007). The fog of war? *News Media & The Law*, 31(2), 1.
- Meyer, C. (2010, February 27). The myth of low military pay. *Truthout*. Retrieved from <http://archive.truthout.org/the-myth-low-military-pay57231>
- Milliband, R. (1969). *The state in a capitalist society: An analysis of the western system of power*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Mills, C. W. (1956). *The power elite*. New York, NY: The Oxford University Press.
- Moeller, S.D. (1999). *Compassion fatigue: How the media sell disease, famine, war and death*. New York, NY: Routledge Press.
- Morlock, B. (2007, December 20). Tucsonan's death laid to friendly fire. *Tuscan Citizen*. Retrieved from <http://tucsoncitizen.com/morgue/2007/12/20/71937-tucsonan-s-death-laid-to-friendly-fire/>
- Morton, D. A. (2007). *Unraveling Gramsci: Hegemony and passive revolution in the global economy*. Ann Arbor, MI: Pluto Press.
- Mullen, A. (2009). The propaganda model after 20 years: Interview with Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky. *Westminster Papers in Communication & Culture*, 6(2), 12-22. Retrieved from Communication & Mass Media Complete database. (Accession No. 52409631)
- Neuendorf, K. A. (2002). *The content analysis guidebook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Newspapers.com. (2012). *Top 100 newspapers* [Data file]. Retrieved from <http://newspapers.com/top100.php>

- New York Civil Liberties Union. (n.d.). *Youth and student rights*. Retrieved from <http://www.nyclu.org/content/college-student-military-recruitment-faq>
- Niman, M.I. (2006). Who killed Pat Tillman? *The Humanist*, January/February 2006. Retrieved from <http://thehumanist.org/humanist/articles/Niman.JanFeb06.html>
- Paley, A.R. (2006, October 31). Infiltration of Iraqi police, delays handover. *Washington Post*. Retrieved from <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Infiltration+of+Iraqi+Police+delays+handover.-a0183539014>
- Reese, S. D. (2001). Framing public life: A bridging model for media research. In S. D. Reese, O. H. Gandy, Jr., & A. E. Grant (Eds.), *Framing public life: Perspectives on media and our understanding of the social world* (pp. 7–31). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Reitman, V. (2006, October 22). Army Cpl. Kenny F. Stanton Jr., 20, Hemet; killed by a roadside bomb. *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved from <http://articles.latimes.com/2006/oct/22/local/me-stanton22>
- Rhoden, W.C. (2011, February 18). Resilient bond between military and sports. *New York Times*. Retrieved from [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/19/sports/autoracing/19rhoden.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/19/sports/autoracing/19rhoden.html?_r=0)
- Schmidt, D. E. (2005). *The folly of war: American foreign policy 1898-2005*. New York, NY: Algora Publishing.
- Staff. (2003, March 23). Sunday people in sports. *Houston Chronicle*. Sports, p. 16.
- Shoemaker, P. J., & Reese, S. D. (1996). *Mediating the message: Theories of influences on mass media content* (2nd ed.). White Plains, NY: Longman.

- Tamaki, J. (2004, June 6). Army 1st Lt. Ken Ballard, 26, Mountain View; Dies in firefight. *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved from <http://articles.latimes.com//2004/jun/06/local/me-ballard6>
- Tuchman, G. (1978). *Making news: A study in the construction of reality*. New York, NY: The Free Press.
- U.S. Army Special Operations Command, Public Affairs Office. (2004, May 29). *USASOC announces Tillman investigation results* [press statement]. Retrieved from <http://www.iraqwarheroes.com/tillman.htm>
- U.S. Congress, Office of Technology Assessment. (1993). *Who goes there: Friend or foe?* (Publication No. OTA-ISC-537). Retrieved from <http://www.fas.org/ota/reports/9351.pdf>
- U.S. Department of Defense. (2004, June 22). *DoD identifies Marine casualty*. [News Release]. (Report No. 592-04). Retrieved from <http://www.defense.gov/releases/release.aspx>
- U.S. Department of Defense. (2004, September 22). *DoD identifies Army casualty*. [News Release]. (Report No. 942-04). Retrieved from <http://www.defense.gov/releases/release.aspx>
- U.S. Department of Defense. (2006, October 16). *DoD identifies Army casualty*. [News Release]. (Report No. 1035-06). Retrieved from <http://www.defense.gov/releases/release.aspx>
- Webb, C.M. & Hewett, K.J. (2010). *An analysis of U. S. Army fratricide incidents during the global War on Terror: 11 September 2001 to 31 March 2008*. (USAARL Report No. 2010-14). Retrieved from <http://www.fas.org/man/eprint/fratricide.pdf>

- Whitley, D. (2001, May 2). What Pat Tillman set out to do finally comes to pass. *Sporting News*. Retrieved from <http://aol.sportingnews.com/sport/story/2011-05-02/what-pat-tillman-set-out-to-do-finally-comes-to-pass>
- Wilson, K. A, Salas, E, Priest, H. A., & Andrews, D. (2007). Errors in the heat of battle: Taking a closer look at shared cognition breakdowns through teamwork. *Human Factors*, 49(2), 243- 256.
- Wimmer, R. D., & Dominick, J. R. (2014). *Mass media research: An introduction* (10th ed.). Boston, MA: Wadsworth.
- Winfield, B. (2003). The press response to the corps of discovery: The making of heroes in an egalitarian age. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 80(4), 866-883.
- Winslow, L. A. (2008, November 20). *The perfect victim: Pat Tillman and the doctrine of atonement*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the NCA 94th Annual Convention, San Diego, CA Online <PDF>. 2012-06-21 from [http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p255764\\_index.html](http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p255764_index.html)
- Zinn, H. (1980). *A people's history of the United States: 1492 – present*. New York, NY: HarpersCollins Publishers.
- Zirin, D. (2010, June 25). In the name of Pat Tillman: Good riddance to Stanley McChrystal. *The Nation*. Retrieved from <http://www.thenation.com/article/mcchrystals-pat-tillman-connection#sthash.qdxmlrI.dpuf>