

The background features a patriotic theme with a large grey circle on the right side, a blue border with white stars on the right edge, and a black and white striped area with white stars at the bottom left.

Uncle Sam Wants You!

A Content Analysis of Patriotic Symbolism in Military
Recruitment Posters

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Introduction

THE SOLDIER'S CREED

I am an American Soldier.
I am a Warrior and a member of a team.
I serve the people of the United States and live the Army Values.
I will always place the mission first.
I will never accept defeat.
I will never quit.
I will never leave a fallen comrade.
I am disciplined, physically and mentally tough, trained and proficient in my warrior tasks and drills.
I always maintain my arms, my equipment and myself.
I am an expert and I am a professional.
I stand ready to deploy, engage, and destroy the enemies of the United States of America in close combat.
I am a guardian of freedom and the American way of life.
I am an American Soldier.

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U.S. ARMY
ARMY STRONG.™

- ★ Recruitment posters attract young men and women
 - ★ How is the military constructed?
- ★ Mission of Military is to protect country
- ★ National Identity



Research Question

- ★ How does patriotic symbolism varies between World War II and the Iraq war?





Thesis



★ The recruitment posters reflect a military attitude and the military's belief of what the general public sentiment is towards the war they represent



Literature Review

- ★ History of the American Military: WWII and Iraq
 - ★ Loyalty and Courage during times of despair
- ★ Patriotism and the Media
 - ★ Construct meaning
 - ★ United States Office of War Information
 - ★ Freedom of Information Act
- ★ Patriotism and the Military Recruit
 - ★ Personal Motivations



Theory



- Social Construction Theory
 - Berger and Luckmann (1966)
- National Identity
 - Stuart Hall (1996)



Methodology

- ★ **Content Analysis**
- ★ **126 posters**
 - ★ 64 from World War II
 - ★ 62 from the Iraq War
- ★ **Demographics**
- ★ **Coding**
 - ★ characters
 - ★ national symbols
 - ★ themes
- ★ **Strengths/Weaknesses**





Findings

Table 1: Comparison of Themes in Words on Poster

	World War II	Iraq war	Total
Honor/respect	6 (9.4%)	25 (40.4%)	31 (24.6%)
Revenge/Protection	15 (23.4%)	13 (20.9%)	28 (22.2%)
American	17 (26.5%)	7 (11.3%)	24 (19.1%)
Personal	11 (17.3%)	8 (12.9%)	19 (15.1%)
Supporting Roles	9 (14%)	6 (9.7%)	15 (11.9%)
Necessity/belonging	6(9.4%)	3 (4.8%)	9 (7.1%)
Total	64 (100%)	62 (100%)	N=126 (100%)



Findings

Table 2: Use of National Symbols in Recruitment Posters

	World War II	Iraq War	Total
Colors red white and blue	20 (39.2%)	3 (15.8%)	23 (32.9%)
Stars and Stripes	11 (21.6%)	7 (36.8%)	18 (25.7%)
Military symbols	7 (13.7%)	7 (36.8%)	14 (20.0%)
Historical figures	8 (15.7%)	1 (5.3%)	9 (12.8%)
National Monuments	2 (3.9%)	1 (5.3%)	3 (4.3 %)
Eagle	3 (5.9%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (4.3%)
Total	51	19	n =69



Findings

Table 3: Character Appearance

	World War II	Iraq War	Total
Work Uniform	18 (41.8%)	13 (24.5%)	31 (32.3%)
Combat Gear/Camis	11 (25.6%)	19 (35.8%)	30 (31.2%)
Formal Uniform	8 (18.6%)	15 (28.3%)	23 (24.0%)
Civilian clothes	4 (9.3%)	4 (7.5%)	8 (8.3%)
Other	2 (4.6%)	2 (3.8%)	4 (4.2%)
Total	43	53	n= 96



Findings

Table 4: Characters in Action

	World War II	Iraq War	Total
In Combat/ preparing	21(48.3%)	13 (24.5%)	34 (35.4%)
Solitary movement	13(30.2%)	15 (28.3%)	28 (29.2%)
At work (non- combat)	8(18.6%)	13 (24.5%)	21(21.8%)
Training	0 (0.0%)	7 (13.2%)	7 (7.3%)
At attention	1 (2.3%)	5 (9.4%)	6 (6.3%)
Total	43	53	n=95



Discussion

- ★ Narrative of the Nation
- ★ Collective national identity
- ★ Reason for involvement determines public discourse
- ★ Change in the way Military is depicted





Questions?

