

Kneeling heroes, standing heroes:

The role of identity discourses in the national anthem
controversy.

“Athletes are looked up to and serve as role models, leave personal opinions about race and politics alone. Do what you get paid to do & play!” @JermichaelF88

“What role are you modelling?” @MartysaurusRex

-Exchange on twitter between former Green Bay Packers TEs Jermichael Finley and Martellus Bennett.

Abstract

The controversy over the national anthem protests became the latest battleground in an ongoing 'Culture war' to define American identity. Domestic debates are where the content of common identity is negotiated, in this case the arguments made in the debate also taps into established discourses on identity. Building on a constructivist approach this thesis investigates the discursive production and negotiation of common identity in media coverage of the national anthem protests. This is done by carrying out a post-structuralist discourse analysis of reporting on the controversy in mainstream American news outlets.

The case for the players right to protest is made with reference to America as nation of civic values, while the case against the protesters is made with reference to America as a nation of militarized patriotism, united in response to the perception of foreign threats.

What discourse on identity prevails will impact the American politics both domestically and abroad. Emphasis on freedom or security would likely have implications for the ongoing balancing of personal integrity and collective security, as well as Americas proneness to military spending and action.

Keywords: National Anthem Controversy, American Identity, External Threats, Patriotic Symbols, Culture Wars, Freedom, Security.

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1 Introduction

In September of 2017 president Trump, speaking at a rally in Alabama, sparked national controversy by injecting himself in the national anthem debate. A small number of NFL players had been taking a knee during the playing of the national anthem for over year, as a manifestation against social injustice and police brutality. Trump called for NFL ownership to fire players that refused to stand for the anthem, referring to kneeling as an act of “total disrespect” of the flag and the armed forces (NYT#1). The issue became the latest battleground in an ongoing “culture war” in the US. The political fracture in contemporary America is partially over policy, but it also an ongoing struggle to define American identity. Further the controversy was about ascribing meaning to national symbols. The anthem and flag where politicized, with different ideas presented on what these manifestations of identity represent.

The controversy offers an interesting case to investigate how a domestic debate pits different discourses on American identity against each other. On the one hand, America is constructed around a belief in the exceptionalism of its institutions, a civic form of nationalism. On the other hand, America is also an insecure nation, constructed in relation to external threats. A nation where the military serves the purpose of keeping *us* safe, a service for which we owe them loyalty.

Identities are not fixed and singular, but socially constructed, multiple, and fluent (Joireman, 2003:54,56). The United States is no different, it is place and a people that can be conceptualized in many different ways. As the anthem states, America is at once both the land of the free, and home of the brave. These two concepts sometimes clash as in the ongoing debate over balancing freedom and security, where the presence of perceived threats can legitimize the infringement on personal freedoms.

Further, studying the national anthem protests can tell us more about how a logic of external threats is so embedded in the very fabric of American identity that it can be accessed as a point of sensitivity, even in a seemingly unrelated situation, without reference to any specific threat. When Trump tweets in opposition of the protests for disrespecting the armed forces, segments of the American press and citizens are triggered since the protest challenges national symbols. The flag and anthem are connected to the armed forces that protect *us*, an understanding based on a perception of the outside world as threatening. (In)security is constructed not only in regards to specific issues in the traditional security sphere. Rather it is interwoven with our very concepts of how the world functions, and who we are. Hence the ambition of the thesis is to investigate the controversy over the national anthem protests by answering the following research questions:

Which contending discourses of national identity can be identified in the national anthem controversy?

How are perceptions of foreign threats expressed in the contending discourses?

In mapping out these discourses on identity the thesis will aim to expose constructions and common-sense understandings, opening up for alternative interpretations (Weldes et al. 1999:13; Alvesson&Deetz, 2003:13). Particularly how discourses of danger are present in an arena for identity construction in the everyday, far away from policy documents and speeches.

Investigating this issue can hopefully make a contribution to our cumulative understanding of how domestic debates and discursive constructions of identity are interrelated.

Analyzing this clash of identity discourses carry real world implications, any of the discourses gaining the upper hand would likely result in changes at the legislative and policy level. Both in regards to internal and external affairs, not least as it pertains to the balancing of security and personal freedoms. Further the study can make a contribution to the academic field of peace and conflict studies by adding to our understanding of the discursive underpinnings of militarization in the US. If understanding this process in the society wielding the most powerful army in history is not relevant to this field, quite frankly I do not know what is.

1.1 Background

Since some might not be familiar with the national anthem protests a brief background is in order. In September 2016 San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick decides to sit during the national anthem. Asked to explain himself Kaepernick says the manifestation is meant as a protest against police brutality and social injustices against African-Americans. A few players join Kaepernick in taking a knee during the anthem, stirring controversy as some people think it is disrespectful. A relatively small number of players keep protesting throughout the season. After the initiating the protests Kaepernick is unable to find a new team, some believe this is due to teams shying away from the attention he brings (SB Nation, 2017).

The controversy continues on low intensity with a few players kneeling until the issue is fired back into national spotlight after Donald Trump tweets in September of 2017 that: the kneeling players shows disrespect of the flag and armed forces, and should be fired. The NFL commissioner, players, and owners condemns Trumps interference, often citing the players right to peaceful protest under the first amendment. The fans and the American public is split on the issue that has become a hot topic (Fox News#26; NYT#7).

The following Sunday many teams decide to join in on the protests by kneeling collectively, locking arms, or even staying of the field all together for the national anthem. One of the teams deciding to stay off the field is the Pittsburgh

Steelers. However, one of their players, decorated Afghanistan veteran Alejandro Villanueva decides to walk onto the field for the anthem. Villanueva is quickly dubbed a hero for standing alone by the sections of the media, and sales of his jersey explodes among the fans (NYT#7,Fox#73).

After the first initial peak the protests and coverage of them ebbs back to the previous intensity. Given this decline in attention one could correctly draw the conclusion that the president getting involved caused most of the buzz, yet this only made for more attention on the debate and its already established conflict lines: did the protestors have a legitimate right to express themselves or were they being unpatriotic protesting during the anthem?

2 Theory

This section will build on previous literature in trying to theorize how identities like being “American” are socially constructed within discursive practices. Arguing that national identity is perceived as a natural state for many, domestic debates becomes the arena where different constructions of what *we* are battle for hegemony. In the case at hand two such discourses of identity are present: America as a nation of civic patriotism, and America as nation constructed in relation to foreign threats, where military patriotism is required as a response.

2.1 A world constructed through discourse

Discourse is most commonly referred to as a method for analysis, but is at the same time a theoretical assumption (Bergström&Boréus, 2012:404). The notion that the world is socially constructed through discursive practice, a foundational building block for constructivist theory. The social fabric of a society is made up of the spoken manifestations of a collective frame of mind, or in one word: discourse. This discourse puts boundaries to imagination by a socially defined framing of reality (Halperin&Heath, 2017:338). As social beings we tell a collective story of ourselves and our compatriots. A process of representation where we define who we are as a collective, who we are not, and how we fit into the wider picture of existence (Weldes et al. 1999:14; Kinnvall, 2003:11). The implications for this is that the world is not made up by some ontologically given identities and realities, but that world views, notions of reality, and truth are all concepts that are socially defined. The same goes for the area of interest to this thesis: identities like nationality (Hall,2003:119).

Discourses frame reality, and discourses help define identities.¹ Discourses on these matters are not confined to abstract thinking and certain people, but rather reproduced in our everyday lives. Through everyday practices, education, and media consumption discourses are transmitted between people and constructs

¹ To a certain degree social identities and reality perception is interrelated in that realities are constructed within discursive practices, with discursive practices existing in social environments. Our group is understood as part of a wider context, a reality. This reality is in itself constructed within a social structure (Hall, 2003:115).

reality (Billig,1995:175; Alvesson&Deetz, 2003:15). Identities are complex and abstract concepts, but we have a tendency to connect values and beliefs to certain physical manifestations (Sapolsky, 2017:391). For example, they can be condensed to symbols such as a flag (Billig, 1995:39). What this means is that seemingly arbitrary symbols can carry great meaning to the construction of identity, and the very ontological foundation of existence for many of us.

Finally, these discourses have a tendency to result in a construction of the world in such a way that our group is superior. How the rationale for our superiority is formulated can vary, but a cornerstone of most identity constructions is that *we* are considered better than *others*. Inside our groups we then celebrate our exceptionalism, the phenomenon of patriotism, loving of us and our social contract (Campbell, 1998:196; Greene,2011:49; Billig, 1995:172).

2.2 A world of nation states

Constructivist approaches risk reaching a level of abstraction and relativity that lacks practical applicability, although phenomenon in the social world are constructed they do indeed exist. Not in the sense that they are laws of nature, but that are perceived as such. For example, many of us share the understanding that our world is divided into nation states (Hall, 2003:118). At least in the west this notion is so common-sense that it has become naturalized and invisible to us. Even in a more globalizing world national identities still thrive because the nation-state is perceived as the self-evident point of reference (Billig,1995:10). Further national identity and the concept of nationalism is “banal”, in the sense that it is so much more than the far-right connotations that come to mind. It is also the countless, and mindless little things that we all do to reproduce it in the everyday. (Billig,1995:7,43). In celebrating common holidays, national idols, sports teams, and consuming certain cultural canons we reproduce our imagined community (Billig, 1995:45, 70).

The point here is that nationalism is not a concept confined to the far-right but serves as an underlying principle to identity: who we are. This ‘banal nationalism’ can be found in the center-left media as well, and that contemporary left political movements also aspires to represent the nation, just with another conception of what the nation ought to be (Billig,1995:95.104). In this nationalism, common-sense understandings of what the national *we* are, becomes the framework for domestic politics. The entity itself is naturalized, but its ideals are up for grabs (Billig,1995:99, 146). Political arguments will tap into established understandings of what makes us unique, while at the same time being the battleground for defining what we are. Accordingly, domestic debates, especially over national symbols, are the arena where identity is produced and reproduced.

2.3 What are we? The national anthem debate as battleground

As mentioned in the previous section nationalism is a naturalized state of mind to many, including most people in the American context. Accordingly, nationalism becomes the framework for domestic debates (Billig, 1995:146). In the case of the national anthem protests all parties considers themselves American, but the controversy becomes one of defining what the American thing to do is. In a controversy over the nations symbols, the question is what values are assigned to these symbols. Hence a controversy involving the national anthem and flag is one of defining the content of identity.

Nationalism and other identities serves as a way to make sense of the world. Often in a way where we are constructed as the reasonable and good, traits that are defined in relationship to other people's lack thereof (Billig, 1995:172). So, what makes America and its people special? What is the discursive glue that holds the American nation together? And what brand of exceptionalism does its symbols represent? These questions are up for discussion in issues relating to identity formation like the national anthem debate (Hall, 2003:134).

The theoretical operationalization of this paper will be built around identifying themes in the empirical material where facets of American identity is evoked. One key principle here is that a national identity is by no means fixed, although the perception of it might be. The discourse analysis will focus on two key dimensions, facets of American identity that have been identified as central in constructing the nation.

2.3.1 Land of the Free

The term American Creed was minted by Gunnar Myrdal in analyzing the distinctive character to American society, the term implies a series of foundational beliefs, an ideological package, that defines America. Examples of these beliefs include principles like the constitutional civil liberties, but also typically American institutional traditions of limited centralization of power, set to hone individual freedoms (Huntington, 2004:45). Simply put the concept is a certain brand of civic nationalism popularly perceived as typically American. This ideal type can absolutely be viewed as a bit hypocritic given an extensive history of slavery and social injustices but is non the less theoretically relevant since the concept of creed can be linked to a self-understanding of America as a land of the free (Huntington, 2004:66-7). In this American identity is constructed around an understanding of the own political ideals as exceptional, understood as such in relation to inferior alternatives.

In the discourse analysis itself this concept of America as a nation of civic values will be operationalized by analyzing two over-arching themes:

- Freedom

- Constitutional Rights like the 1st amendment

2.3.2 Home of the Brave

Another line of thinking is that American identity is largely constructed around outside threats. Patriotism and national unity has seldom been stronger than during WWII and the Cold War, while periods without a potent outside threat have seen internal division and even civil war (Huntington, 2004:8, 118-20).

This tendency can be understood theoretically. The self is defined by differentiating it from external others, the internal us is constructed in such a way that it is superior to the external other. Foreign policy should be seen as border, not a bridge to other entities since the differentiation is what defines us. The story of who we are is also told by defining who we are not. The world is understood in dichotomies where we are superior, morally righteous, orderly, civilized, and pure. A state that is contrasted to an inferior, barbaric, chaotic, and potentially pathological and threatening other, one that we need military mobilization to protect ourselves from (Campbell, 1998:8, 70).

An important constructivist premise is that states lack a pre-discursive state, and hence are in constant need of discursive reproduction. This is paradoxical in regards to security since the *raison d'état* for the state is supposed be the protection of its citizens, yet if it does indeed supply security it undermines the reason for its own existence (Campbell,1998:12-3). American identity is constructed within such “Discourses of Danger”, in relation to a threatening other. The most prominent example being how the antagonist Soviet Union was villainized during the Cold War, but also how other enemies have replaced this function after the collapse of the Soviet Union (Campbell:1998:166). In the contemporary world the threat of a nuclear Armageddon has been replaced by new sources of insecurity. Consider for example the, at least perceived, rise of terrorism. The diffuse and unpredictable nature of the threat makes it a potential source of constant fear, creating a need for substantial security measures that could even impede on personal liberties (Huntington, 2004:337).

One way to interpret this dynamic is that American identity is constructed around a logic of external threats. The good us is both defined and threatened by external others, and the armed forces serves as the hard boundary that keeps *us* safe from these threats. In line with this one way to view American identity is as a nation of militarized patriotism, built around pride in the nation and loyal support of its armed forces and symbols like the flag and national anthem. Identity is constructed through the imposition of norms on what is considered to be patriotic, for example support of the armed forces that protects *us*, from more or less defined *thems* (Campbell, 1998:10).

The construction of us in relation to threatening others carries implications for social practices since military forces are required to keep us safe, and identity is reproduced by recognizing their sacrifices and bravery. This concept is reproduced in the everyday in a “normalization of militarization”. The military and its symbols are present in our everyday lives through celebration of veterans,

flags and anthems, and visually emotional displays like the reunion of military families on television (Åhäll:2016:160, 164-5). Identity, and hence the discursive economy in domestic politics, is shaped by the immense value ascribed to the armed forces and their symbols, a value derived from a common-sense logic amongst us that *we* are threatened by external others (Campbell, 1998:145,170).

Regarding America as a nation of militarized patriotism, the empirical material will be analyzed according to the three over-arching themes:

- Loyalty towards the armed forces
- Praise to armed forces for keeping the homeland safe
- The discursive connection to the flag and anthem, and the special status of these symbols

3 Method

The research questions will be investigated carrying out a post-structuralist discourse analysis of how different concepts of American identity are reproduced in the controversy over the national anthem protests. The empirical material will be made up by coverage of the national anthem protests from the 23rd of September 2017 to 7th of October 2017 available in MSNBC, Fox News, and the New York Times web archives.

3.1 Post-structuralist discourse analysis and identity

Regarding the method carried out my choice is discourse analysis. As compared to content analysis this method lacks quantifiable dimension and is hence less transparent, but at the same time allows for more contextual analysis of the words used and is less influenced by preconceptions as compared to operating with a more rigid coding scheme (Bergström&Boréus, 2012:80-1). Emphasis will hence be put on identifying themes relating to identity-construction, not frequency of certain words.

The framework used is the poststructuralist view that discourses frame reality by putting boundaries to imagination (Halperin&Heath, 2017:338). This is a highly social process, where some ideas gain traction within a social system and are valued higher than other kinds of “knowledge”. Knowledge that become dominant, and common-sense defines what is possible to say, and the space for action. Power is not directly exercised by or against any particular subject within the discourse, but it is bound to benefit some and lead to the exclusion of others (Bergström&Boréus, 2012:358,361). Further discourses are practices and meanings where ‘objects’ of which we speak are created within a community of actors. In this, discursive practices are where identities are constructed and defined, where identity signs like ‘American’ receives meaning (Howarth, 2000:5,7,137).

The choice did not fall on seemingly suitable methods like critical discourse analysis (CDA). CDA relates to the material context and how dominant groups exercise power through controlling discourse (Bergström&Boréus, 2012:143-9, 172,339-41). These factors are undoubtedly important to understand the world in which the discourse exists, not least as it relates to race in America, but goes beyond the scope of this research for two reasons. First, this investigation is rather about ways in which reality is constructed and framed, and how that affects

opinions and the repertoire of arguments available in a domestic setting. Second the focus of analysis will be on a bottom up approach to the construction of threats, by emphasizing how reality is framed and accepted by wide segments of the population, rather than emphasis on elite motives and manipulations (Scott, 2009:16).

3.2 Media and identity discourses

The aim of this paper is to examine discourses in the everyday, more precisely on how identity constructions are reproduced, and manifest themselves in the debate over the national anthem protests. Ideally one would combine a variety of surveys, focus groups and in depth-interviews with “normal” Americans to get a sense of how they view the situation. Such ambitions are however too lofty for the means available to yours truly. Instead these discourses, frameworks for understanding the world and our groups place in it, will be traced in media coverage. To a large extent the media are broadcasters of a common narrative, and media coverage supplies a lens through which we as consumers view the world. Media gives us access to events that we ourselves have not experienced and frame the story in a certain way. In this media outlets make up the cultural space where the world is constructed, and are key transmitters of discourses (Åhäll, 2016:162). Perhaps this is especially true in regards to identity, as we identify and can relate to those that receive the same information. American nationalism is no exception, the big media outlets speak *to* and *for* the nation, serving as hubs for discursive constructions of who the *we* are (Billig, 1995:109,115). In recent years the media landscape has shifted significantly towards more TV coverage and internet news, with printed press in steady decline. More variety and new platforms may have changed the media environment, but the big outlets still serve as important hubs for discursive practices like identity formation.

3.3 Material

3.3.1 Outlets

The ambition has been to choose empirical material on the issue from the most influential American news outlets, those being the TV networks Fox News and MSNBC, as well as the newspaper New York Times. The two TV networks are the biggest ones in terms of viewership and represent consumers at different ends of the ideological spectra (Buissness Insider, 2014; Adweek, 2017). Due to the limited material available from MSNBC the New York Times were chosen as a

compliment to give a better overview of the liberal end of the politically fractured American media landscape. Further NYT was chosen as the major newspaper with most extensive coverage of the issue, coverage that gave more space than the TV stations to quotes from protesting player and ordinary Americans on the issue. Other suitable complements could have been chosen, for example NBC or CNN but in both cases their archives did not allow for time specific searches, making the task of manually identifying the correct articles among roughly 6000 others an insurmountable task.

Given that the two TV networks have large audiences one could argue that their coverage is most likely to impact popular perception of an issue. Further, news outlets have a tendency to select and frame their coverage based on the what their target audiences want. Foxs' coverage shape its consumers views, and its consumers views shape its coverage. The same holds true for the more liberal outlets chosen. In this media outlets and its consumers are interlinked in a cycle of feedback that together produce discourse (Hollis&Smith, 1990:8; Öberg&Sollenberg, 2011:56). Further the media and the population are connected in that journalists are not isolated from their social environments, and are bound to be influenced by established discursive practices in their communities (Dulic,2011:38).

3.3.2 Time period

The empirical material will cover reporting on the national anthem protests starting the same day Donald Trump injected himself into the debate, further sparking controversy and coverage. The material will cover the reporting during the two ensuing weeks, 23rd of September to 7th of October. The rationale for this time frame is that it allows for plenty of coverage on an issue that really was old news. In this it was easy to find material on a hot topic, while at the same time the narratives had had time to settle in and spread over the course of the less intense first year of protests.

3.4 Reflections on method and material

Despite the ambition to survey the debate as thoroughly as possible the material is bound to be limited. From a validity standpoint looking for discourses of identity in media coverage on a domestic debate is suitable (Billig, 1995:115,146). The choice of material though is potentially problematic. The choice fell on the most consumed outlets, chosen in a way to represent a width of the political spectra. In a country as politically fractured as contemporary America it is important to take this dimension into account, in order to get an accurate overview of opinions.

Three outlets will not cover the entire range of opinions and narratives pushed on the subject, nor fully cover the discursive reproduction of identity in everyday

settings. In regards to this particular case though, we have a situation where the debate is framed as a being for, or against the protesters. In line with this dichotomy the more liberal outlets show more support for the protests, with Fox's opinion pieces being more critical of them. In this the coverage is in line with the large blocks of opinions in the public. Further I do believe that this particular issue, and timeframe allows for a methodologically sufficient investigation of how domestic debates tap into established discourses of identity. Not least since the controversy is linked to a larger context of American culture war, and the national attention made for a large sample of material available in a limited time frame.

As far as reliability goes it is bound to be problematic due to the choice of discourse analysis, this method makes me the interpreter of the material, inviting a subjective dimension to the research process (Bergström&Boréus, 2012:85). A few comments on this are in order: the opportunity for general theoretical conclusions are limited in discourse analysis of a limited empirical material. A contribution can however still be made by an in-depth investigation, adding to our cumulative understanding of how discourses of identity, and logic of external threats are present in domestic debates. Further the interpretation is bound to build on some of my preconceptions and theoretical assumptions. This is not a problem limited to discourse analysis, but a potential issue that can be applied to more quantitative research as well, since any investigation is bound to build on some theoretical assumptions about our world (Halperin&Heath, 2017:58). The only way to face this issue is to be transparent about the research process and its assumptions to the best of ones' abilities. In this I aspire to increase intersubjectivity by defining the operative tools for analysis, trying to be clear about how I approach the material.

This brings us to the final issue of potential bias; how do I make sure to report objectively on my empirical findings? Fact of the matter² is I cannot. We are all bound to be influenced by our experiences, social environments, and forms of knowledge we have been exposed to (Bergström&Boréus, 2012:31). There is simply no way around this, what I can do is state my own opinions and be as transparent as possible with how the research process has been carried out. To come clear: I reflexively liked the idea of African-American athletes using their platform to highlight perceived injustice. Further the idea for this thesis was born out of how puzzled I felt when reading the narrative on "disrespect for the flag", what did this have to do with the issue in question? I might somehow get a skewed picture of the situation for these reasons. However, what is truly important to this thesis is that it made sense to large segments of the American population. And at the end of the day the ambition is to investigate why that is.

3.5 Operationalization of the discourse analysis

² Pun intended

Discourse analysis is a method that relies on interpretation, hence it is of the utmost importance to be transparent about the operationalization. Discourse analysis differ from positivist views on scientific methods possibility to find objective truth. That does not mean that the analysis can be carried out in an unstructured manner, rather one has to define and apply certain rules by which to investigate the material (Howarth, 2000:2,133-4). In the context of identity, a preferred way to do this is by defining nodes and chains of equivalence. Chains of equivalence refers to how signs are embedded in a system of linguistic distinctions, whereas nodes are central concepts that receives meaning by having either a positive or a negative relationship to other words in the discourse (Bergström&Boréus,2012:367).

In regards to the national anthem controversy my area of interest is how the discursive node of “American” is used by both sides, but carries different connotations depending on what facet to identity is being evoked. These facets to identity are of course overlapping and present simultaneously in the minds of many, at the same time they are separate linguistic constructions. Separate in the sense that they are embedded in different discursive systems, the concept of being American is understood in relation to different chains of equivalence.

The material will be approached trying to identify what concepts are positively and negative linked to the understandings of America as a nation of militarized patriotism, and civic patriotism respectively. Different discourses of identity are bound to be connected to different concepts in a discursive chain of equivalence. Building on the theoretical formulation the following connections are a reasonable starting point for the operative analysis.

Nodes	America as home of the brave: a nation of militarized patriotism.	America as land of the free: a nation of civic values.
Chains of equivalence		
Positively connected to	Loyalty, unity, sacrifice, heroism.	Freedom, constitutional rights.
Negatively connected to	Dissent, ungratefulness, egoism	Oppression, acting un-constitutional.

This operationalization is the outcome of an abductive process of working with the theoretical framework and empirical material, with the model above designed to create a rudimentary lens through which the material has been analyzed.

4 Analysis

The empirical analysis for this essay has been carried out surveying the debate over the national anthem protests, specifically after the rejuvenation of the debate following Donald Trump's tweets on the issue on September 23rd 2017. The analysis has been carried out with the operationalization of facets to American identity in mind, identifying themes relating to these.

In summary a few things jump out: While a multitude of opinions might exist in the debate the chosen media outlets consistently frames it as an issue over whether the protestors are the promoters of American ideals by exercising constitutional rights to peaceful protest, with Trump acting unamerican in his attack on the protestors. Or the protestors acting unamerican by disrespecting the flag, implying that the American thing to do is uniting under a militarily patriotic understanding of what America is. Along those lines some of the central figures in the controversy are portrayed very differently depending on perspective, becoming politicized in terms of who is embodying American identity.

On one hand, the notion of America as a nation of militarized patriotism is part of a discursive chain of equivalence where American identity is positively connected to concepts like: *loyalty* and *unity* in regards to the military and its symbols. As well as the glorification of the *heroism* and *sacrifice* made by American soldiers and their families. In contrast the nation is also defined by what it is not. Hence the protesting players are delegitimized as *egoistic*, and *ungrateful* in their failure to recognize the sacrifice of soldiers, portraying their protests as un-American. On the other hand, the notion of America as a nation of civic values is constructed as part of a discursive chain of equivalence where American identity is positively connected to ideals tied to *freedom*, and *constitutional rights*, like freedom of speech. These foundational principles are contrasted to un-American phenomenon like *oppression*, and *disregard for the constitution* and other civic institutions. These latter negatively charged signs are often associated with Donald Trump. These concepts, highlighted in *italic*, are all part of common themes, where the different concepts are all related to separate discourses of American identity, making it difficult to break the single concepts into separate sub-headings in the analysis. Instead I have chosen to collect them under the main identity discourses of this thesis "America as a militarily patriotic nation" 4.1.1. and "America as a nation of civic values" 4.2.1.

The material is made up by a variety of opinion pieces, live debates, and more 'neutral' news coverage. The former two play an apparent part in formulating and reproducing discourses, but I would argue the latter type of coverage plays as important a role in transmitting discourses. Journalistic writers and news anchors are gate-keepers for what and who's opinions reach the public, and the outlets consistently choose to present different facts and angles that support lines of

argumentation in opinion pieces and debates. In a politically fractured media landscape like the American this is an important aspect since facts and framings vary. General trends in the material will be laid out in the sections below with illustrative examples of the dominating themes. With discourse analysis there is always a risk of cherry-picking material to find what one wants to find. I do however believe that the examples below give a fair overview of the material, the quotes chosen are representing frequent themes and a more complete overview of the material will be available in the Appendix to increase transparency.

4.1 Opposing the protesters

The primary argument made against the protesters is that they are disrespectful of common symbols and the armed forces. This line of argumentation is tapping into a discourse of identity, with a particular understanding what the identity entails. The identity sign American is the node in a discursive system, where *American* carry certain militarized connotations. As will be illustrated below “American” is positively linked to concepts like *loyalty*, *sacrifice*, *unity*, *heroism*, and make a claim to define patriotism- the exceptionalism of us in militarized terms. Further American is negatively linked to concepts like: *ungratefulness*, *dissent*, and *egoism*. The claim to represent America is made by referencing different indicators that the public is opposing the protesters.

4.1.1 Defining America as a militarily patriotic nation

One line of argumentation in the debate supports Donald Trump’s suggestion that the protesters disrespects the flag, a symbol that is closely linked to the *sacrifices* of the armed forces. This narrative is primarily pushed amongst talking heads on the political right. The argument is presented in the such a way that honoring the flag is the American thing to do, and that *dissent* is unamerican. The whole concept is well illustrated in a monologue from Fox host Sean Hannity:

“Now, the president is dead on when it comes to this kneeling issue. The national anthem, the flag is about saluting, honoring our military. (...) Maybe they should learn why every American should proudly stand for the flag, for ‘The Star Spangled Banner.’ Why don't they talk to the mothers and fathers -- I've interviewed them -- who lost their sons and daughters or why don't they talk to those who had their limbs blown off fighting for this country.(..) This is about respect. This is about respect for the military, for our country, for our flag and those who fought under that flag. It is plain and simple, which is why these acts of protest are beyond disrespectful.” (Fox#6)

The discourse presents loyalty and awe of the flag, and the military as the American thing to do. Further this argument is reinforced by using the patriotic

legitimacy of military families, and their *sacrifice* for the common good. Those who had loved ones pay the ultimate price for the common security adds weight to the argumentation voicing their disapproval of the protesters. The below examples are taken from an Opinion piece by Marc Theisen, and a top of the morning report quoting the upset widow of a veteran:

“Worse, the players held their disgraceful protest on National Gold Star Mother’s Day, the day our country honors mothers who have lost children in war. A Gold Star mother whose son died in Afghanistan told CNN last year that when she first saw players taking a knee, ‘my heart kind of stopped and I lost my breath because the flag that I see is the flag that draped my son’s casket.’ Imagine what she and other Gold Star mothers felt seeing 100 players do the same on the very day our country set aside to thank them. Way to go, NFL.” (Fox#7).

“Taya Kyle, widow of decorated military sniper Chris Kyle, blasted the NFL for fostering ‘division and anger’ with its support of players kneeling in protest of the national anthem (...) calling the protests ‘disgraceful’ and ‘blatantly disrespectful to veterans who fought for flag and country’.” (Fox#10).

Related to this is the understanding of the protesting players as *ungrateful* and *egoistic* in their failure to appreciate the *sacrifice* of these soldiers and their families. This discursive construction of ingratitude and being spoiled is explicitly present in the material:

“politically, Trump is tapping into popular resentment, especially among his base, toward multi-millionaire football players who seem ungrateful and, by dissing the anthem, unpatriotic” (Fox#37).

An interesting dynamic is how the discourse of military patriotism recognize the right to freedom of expression, just not in regards to military symbols. Showing a positive connection to the concepts of *loyalty* towards the armed forces, and *unity* under common symbols. Further this line of thinking shows evidence of how just how deeply rooted the military symbolism is to identity construction and how this brand of patriotism sometimes transcends normal politics. It is American to speak your mind, but *loyalty* towards the flag and the armed forces is an untouchable principle:

“The flag and the national anthem are sacred symbols of our sovereignty. Offering disrespect to these symbols is inappropriate and not an effective method of offering political dissent. Police brutality against non-whites is deplorable and needs to be discussed in Congress, Senate, townhalls, public forums, etc., but not at the solemn singing or playing of the national anthem.” (NYT#51)

“in the NFL, players who take a knee over a flag that many of our generations preceding us have died to protect the freedoms there, they somehow get honored as martyrs by the media.(...) I think there ways to show your concern on social activism without having to dishonor the flag” (Fox#28).

Taken together the issue is portrayed as one over loyalty to the symbols of the armed forces, a form of naturalized militarization and of the everyday. While recognizing the importance of civic values the symbols of militarized patriotism are considered above and beyond these principles. Patriotic symbols carry an emotional value as markers of our great nation, carrying the weight of our common *heroes* that *sacrificed* themselves to protect us from foreign threats. This form of patriotism is framed as the foundational principle for American identity:

“Americans have always had and always will have disagreements on policy and other matters. Thankfully, we have the freedom to engage in healthy debate and protests over those disagreements. (...) But we erode the bonds of our country if we fail to find some common ground – some anchor point – where we can stand united as Americans. Our national anthem and respect for our great country – even with its failings – should still be one of those places of commonality (...) Some of these brave patriots who were unable to stand sat at attention in their wheelchairs with all the dignity of those able to rise. No heart present escaped unmoved from experiencing these American heroes with savage wounds echoing their devotion through the anthem. They certainly would have all stood for ‘The Star-Spangled Banner’ if only they could. (...) ‘The home of the brave’ became so because of our choice to fight as a unified nation” (Fox#43).

4.2 Supporting the protestors

The primary argument made in favor of the protestors is that they exercise their constitutional rights to peaceful protest. This argumentation taps into another discursive understanding of identity, where “American” carries connotations of civic nationalism/values. The identity sign American is a node in a discursive system, positively linked to concepts like: *freedom* and *constitutional rights*, with a claim to define patriotism- the exceptionalism of us in terms of civic ideals. Further “American” is negatively linked to concepts like: *oppression*, and *un-constitutional* actions. The claim to represent America is made with reference to indicators that the public is siding with the protestors.

4.2.1 Defining America as a nation of civic values

The arguments made in favor of the protestors revolve around their right to use their platform of fame to voice their opinions on social issues. To speak out on inequalities is framed as the “American” thing to do, exercising the first amendment right to freedom of expression. The protestors do not intend disrespect the flag, rather the issue in question should be the attempt at silencing the protestors, showing how American is positively connected to *freedom*, and

negatively connected to *oppression*, a recurring theme illustrated in the quotes below:

“We got to be for free speech. We got to be for agreeing to disagree. We got to learn how to sit next to somebody and disagree with him. (...). We don't know the politics of these players, but they definitely don't like the police situation right now. And they're saying they can't express themselves. They can't have a 1st Amendment right.” (MSNBC#1).

“The teams and coaches once again took a stand against the president's comments about firing NFL players who dare to exercise their first amendment rights during the playing of the national anthem.” (MSNBC#3).

“Denver Broncos linebacker Von Miller referred to Trump's recent words as ‘an assault on our most cherished right, freedom of speech’.” (Fox#45).

Further freedom of expression is defended in principal, even if one does not agree with the protesters it is recognized that they have a *constitutional right* to do so. This sentiment is a cornerstone in the discourse, and can be exemplified by the remarks of a guest Fox News on Sunday that:

“There are some players that choose to peacefully protest and that's their right as an American, whether you or I agree with it or not. I've never taken a knee during the national anthem. But I support these guys speaking their mind if they feel that's the way they want to do it. It's America. It's their choice.” (Fox#42)³

Further guarding civic American values is portrayed as the truly patriotic thing to do. The nation is framed in a different way where civic ideals like the *freedom of expression* is what American national symbols represent. This narrative is present among sections of the public as well, as can be seen in the opinions sent in to the New York Times on stating similar sentiments:

“I teach high school. Much to my students' amazement, I have always explained that there could be no greater honor for the men and women who have given their lives for this country than not to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance or the national anthem. I explain that they died precisely so that we would have that choice, not so that we may become automatons who stand and sit on cue.” (NYT#51)

“I am a Vietnam era veteran and a proud patriot, and I would never display disrespect for our flag; however, this is not North Korea. It is not written in our constitution that one must stand during the national anthem, nor am I aware of any law requiring it. More despicable behavior by the nation's so-called leader.” (NYT#51)

The last of the above quotes plays into another central theme, how the portrayal of key figures in the debate are framed in regards to what is the American thing to do. Specifically, the case in favor of the protestors is also one of opposition to Trump's stance that kneeling players should be forced to stand or fired, calling out the president for acting un-American. In this particular example the President's actions are framed as belonging more in North Korea, a standard bearer of *oppressive* values, diametrically opposed to American ones.

Overall there are clear signs of the argument tapping into a collective self-understanding of America as a nation where civic ideals are central to identity construction, more so than principles of patriotic symbolism. Rather the symbols are sometimes co-opted in the discourse of civic ideals, attaching another meaning to them:

"I mean, we don't worship the flag as a totem (...) We admire the flag because of what it represents, and the chief thing that it represents is freedom of conscience, freedom of speech, freedom of religion and freedom to think unpopular thoughts despite the booing of crowds or the views of a president intent on rabble rousing." (MSNBC#5).

Another interesting theme is how people with patriotic credentials are often chosen by the liberally leaning media outlets as spokespersons for supporting the protestors. In doing so the role of the military is framed differently, delegitimizing the rights claim of military patriotism, and portraying the armed forces as the protectors of civic ideals. The example below from an Afghanistan veteran appearing on MSNBC's "The Last Word":

"I didn't fight for any flag or anthem. I don't know anybody who did fight for a flag or anthem. (...) what I did hear people say is they wanted to defend freedom, such as the freedom of speech, the freedom to not have your President come after your job on live television." (MSNBC#7).

The debate over the national anthem protests are to a certain degree a battleground over defining America, and what it means to be American. The debate is one over whether civic or militarized forms of nationalism should prevail. Both concepts are established discourses in the American context which can be seen in how many people being interviewed and writing opinion pieces juggle both concepts, recognizing the right to protest while at the same time being careful to maintain a respectful tone towards the armed forces:

"I'm one that really believes in standing for the flag. I understand the players and the way they felt from the comments that were made earlier in the week. They felt they had to go down and kneel and that's up to them." (Fox#53).

"I disagree with what the president said and how he said it. I think it's very unbecoming of the office of President of the United States to talk like that to the great people like that. And obviously he's disappointed a lot of people. But as it pertains to the national anthem, I will always feel that if

you are an American that the national anthem is the opportunity for us all to stand up together, to be unified and to show respect for our country.” (NYT#7)

4.3 Portrayal of key figures

A central dimension in this struggle to define the national identity is the portrayal of central figures, as standard bearers of American ideals or challenging them. In accordance with the different understandings of what America is, its ideals are embodied by different people. For example, Trumps involvement in the debate is framed either as the latest transgression on civic ideals, *un-constitutional* acts by a man who has “disrespected virtually every major institution in American life and American democracy” (MSNBC#4). Or claiming that the “president is dead on” in his remarks that the protests are disrespectful (Fox#6).

Similarly, the athletes are portrayed either as “the true patriots here, defending life, liberty and equality under the law.” (NYT#63). Or simply spoiled and *ungrateful* towards “The country that has turned you into heroes while you train 8-year-olds who don't know any better to take a knee against America...” (Fox#35).

Finally, a key figure is the army veteran and current player Alejandro Villanueva. The ironically Spanish born veteran decided to stand alone on the sideline the weekend the rest of his team had decided to stay in the locker room. Villanueva is portrayed as a carrier of American ideals by those opposing the protesters, described as a *hero*, the patriot who stood alone:

“Villanueva, who served three tours in Afghanistan, decided to stand his ground instead and placed his hand over his heart while the anthem played.” (Fox#38)

“He did what any patriot would've done. He did what any veteran would've done. (...) Villanueva had a choice: either respect the football team or respect America. He chose America. I salute and honor Alejandro Villanueva“ (Fox#74).

On the other hand, Villanueva is portrayed as more ambivalently in the New York Times⁴ as illustrated by the headline: “*Steelers’ Villanueva Takes a Stand, but Might Agree With Kaepernick’s Mission*” (NYT#22), implying that the veteran might make be an odd choice as a front figure for discourses of American military patriotism.

4.4 Evidence of popular support

⁴ MSNBC has no mention of him at all

A central battleground of the controversy takes place in regards to which side enjoys popular support. A pattern emerges where the core of the respective discourses can be seen in opinion pieces and debate-like TV programs, but where other news reports underscores the legitimacy of different claims of popular support by selectively presenting facts. Here the political leanings of the outlets, and their viewership becomes central since media outlets wield the power to select what gets reported, and how its angled.

4.4.1 Public opinion against protesters

The conservative Fox reports that public opinion is siding with the president, a notion that is repetitively underscored by a series of presented facts. For example, several reports claim that the TV viewership is in decline for NFL games as a product of public outrage with the NFLs support of the protesters:

“Viewership for the primetime game (...) was down on NBC by 11 percent from the same night one year ago and 9 percent from the previous week. The less-than-stellar ratings came after President Trump slammed the NFL during a rally in Alabama on Friday” (Fox#1).

Other reports cite opinion polls that showing how the vast majority of Americans find the protests unpatriotic:

“A Quinnipac poll found that only 38 percent of those supported NFL players kneeling during the National Anthem. A Reuters poll found that 72 percent found the protest to be unpatriotic but also that 64 percent agreed there should be no punishment or fine.” (Fox#3).

Finally, Alejandro Villanuevas jersey rose from relative obscurity to the number one selling jersey following his decision to stand alone on the field for the national anthem while his teammates stayed in the locker room (Fox#38), an indicator of popular support of his actions.

4.4.2 Public opinion with protesters

The more liberally leaning MSNBC and NYT spin the story in a different direction, implying public support of the players right to freedom of expression. This is similarly underscored by a series of indicating claims. First of the decline in ratings is problematized as a measurement since change in patterns of media consumption explains the declining viewership:

“Reading Something in the N.F.L. Ratings? You’re Probably Wrong. (...) Across all live sports, though, it is likely that ratings will continue to drop. Viewers are continuing to abandon their cable packages, or refusing to sign up in the first place” (NYT#29)

Further different opinion polls are cited that shows how the public finds that the president is out of line and attacking fundamental freedoms:

“A Reuters poll finds that most Americans, of course, do not agree with the President. 57 percent say the NFL should not fire players who kneel during the national anthem. Only 29 percent agree with the President”. (MSNBC#8).

Finally, a frequent picture is painted on how former friends of president Trump within the NFL community is now turning their backs on him since this latest tirade is challenging constitutional rights:

“Robert Kraft, the owner of the New England Patriots, who is a close friend of Mr. Trump’s and who has spent the night at the White House and ridden with him on Air Force One, issued a pointed statement on Sunday in which he said he was ‘deeply disappointed with the tone of the comments made by the president’ at the rally, and defended players’ right to express themselves” (NYT#6).

4.5 Discussion of findings

The arguments for and against the national anthem protests are tapping into different understandings of what the American nation is, yet the two discourses have some common denominators. Both ideas build on an understanding of American exceptionalism, either supported by civic ideals or common sacrifice in the face of external danger. Further both discourses imply a spatial dimension relating back to common sense understandings of state as the self-evident point of reference. The military fight abroad to keep the domestic sphere safe (military patriotism) or the president cannot say certain things because this is not a dictatorship like North Korea (civic patriotism).

Both lines of argumentation present evidence of popular support, meaning that one principle of American identity is deeply entrenched enough to not be up for discussion: The democratic principle that majority rules. Yet an important fault line remains that makes this a struggle over defining identity: Did American soldiers die so that you could exercise your freedom of expression, or did they die so that you could exercise your freedom of expression, just not in regards to the symbols of their sacrifice?

In the discourse of American civic nationalism, the military is framed as a means to an end, the protectors of civil values, whereas in regards to military patriotism the armed forces are framed as a means to themselves, implying an order of loyalty and status-quo.

The latter discourse on militarized patriotism in the national anthem controversy offers an interesting case in itself. The logic of external threats is so deeply embedded in the world view of many Americans that it creates a level of sensitivity. Even when there is no reference to a particular threat, and the

discussion is not about the armed forces themselves, but merely American symbols interpreted as related to the armed forces.

In the material we can see indication that military symbols should be exempt from criticism, in so doing transcending civil liberties. Accordingly, we could talk about how the discourses are different in that the issue is politicized by those supporting the protestors, and securitized, transcending the norms of democratic politics, by those opposing the protests (Buzan et al. 1998:23-4). Freedom of expression is an important principle but the presence of foreign threats makes military symbols above and beyond the normal rules of politics. In this the militarily patriotic discourse frames the space for potential action, by trying to limit the scope for freedom of expression. Similarly, the discourse built around notions of civic patriotism aims to define the nation and its norms, just according to different foundational principles. In so doing it also aspires to frame the room for action, delegitimizing the president's transgressions on civil liberties.

The separate discourses are often present simultaneously in peoples thinking on the issue, which is evident in how many considers both lines of thinking but leans slightly more to the one way or the other. They are also theoretically connected in the sense that external others are defined as inferior partly due to their lack of institutional sophistication. The difference can be seen in emphasis the different discursive

It is hard for yours truly to crown a "winner" among the contending discourses of American identity. Rather the investigation can pose the question of what discourse will prevail, and what the implications of an emerging dominant discourse would be. If it for example were to be the discourse of militarized patriotism it seems likely that the tangible results would be an active foreign policy, in a militarized sense of the word. A nation of militarized patriotism is perhaps more dependent on the construction and management of external threats, creating both incitement and popular support of foreign military expeditions. Such developments could have massive implications. Apart from geopolitical considerations the US have the capability to intervene in other parts of the world, having profound consequences. Take for example the decision to invade Iraq and its long-term impact on the middle east, like the creation of a power vacuum and the rise of ISIS. In this understanding where discourses of national identity are trending are an important indicator to bear in mind when trying to understand foreign affairs and conflict dynamics. Insecure nations can be militarily active ones, and traces of discursive constructions of insecurity can be found in domestic debates relating to identity, even in a controversy over a few athletes kneeling at the playing of the national anthem.

5 Conclusions

Discourses of identity are tapped into in the debate over the national anthem protests. Arguments are made for and against the players right to protests by emphasizing different version of what it means to be American. The case in favor of the protesters is part of a discursive construction of America as a nation of civic patriotism, a nation that celebrate *freedom* and *constitutional rights*, *oppressing* these rights is considered un-American. In similar but different fashion the case against the players right to protest is part of a discursive understanding of America as a nation of militarized patriotism, a nation that celebrates *loyalty*, *unity*, *sacrifice*, and *heroism*. These values are contrasted to unamerican ones like *dissent* and *ungratefulness*.

Both sides make a claim to define patriotism, define what the nation is, and what principles it celebrates. These claims are made with reference to popular support as proof of righteousness.

The discourse of militarized patriotism is underpinned by a construction of insecurity in regards to foreign threats, where the military is celebrated for its protection of us from external others.

The anthem protests are part of a wider context of culture war and political fracture in the US, an ongoing negotiation of what the nation is. What identity discourse will eventually win out will have real world implications in shaping future debates and policy. In regards to the national anthem protests there is no clear indication that either discourse is becoming hegemonic, rather there is an ongoing discussion where either side gaining the upper hand long term is likely to influence debates over more tangible matters. If for example the notion that military symbols transcend constitutional freedoms where to gain more traction, that development is likely to be linked to wider support for security measures impeding on personal liberties. Further a militarized collective self-understanding becoming the prominent discourse would likely result in a situation where the sense of insecurity creates a perceived need for military spending and action abroad. Such a development in the greatest military superpower in human history has a series of important implications, both domestically and abroad. What America does impacts the rest of the world.

5.1 Future research

This investigation spurs a few questions that remain unanswered, what side will eventually win out in the long term, and what will be the consequences of that? Future research could aim to monitor the development of the clashing discourses

and investigate its outcomes. Would the discourse of militarized patriotism gaining the upper hand result in tangible militarization, like increases in military spending and interventions?

Finally, a few comments on the theme of race relations in America are in order. There is no way to fully understand a situation with protests by primarily African-American players, in an entertainment forum with primarily white consumers, and the involvement of a political figure closely related to right wing populism, without including the race dimension. The debate itself takes on racial overtones occasionally as opinion pieces calls out Trump, and the 'political left' respectively for racial demagoguery and divisionism. This is an issue that requires careful treading, and someone with more in-depth expertise in regards to the issues of racial inequality than yours truly. However, the material likely presents an opportunity for future research in terms of a CDA analysis regarding the use of a militarily patriotic discourses to uphold the status-quo in regards to racial- and socioeconomic inequalities.

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6.1 Material

6.1.1 Fox News

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6.2 Appendix

In an attempt to further increase transparency in a study using an interpretivist methodology, examining a substantial empirical material I have put together this Appendix to give a road map to the material and my interpretation of it. In chapter 4 “Analysis” I present quotes that represent key themes in the material, these are however not the only examples of certain themes. Accordingly, prominent examples of key themes are listed for whoever would like to take an in depth look at the material and how it corresponds to my interpretation. The links are numbered in order of appearance (oldest-to-newest) when searching for the terms: “National Anthem Protests”, “Colin Kaepernick”, and “Alejandro Villanueva” (one at a time, in that order) on the news outlets respective web archives. An important detail to note is that for MSNBC solely “transcripts” were chosen.

Something to keep in mind when attacking the material is that the discourses are primarily manifested in what I have chosen to label “Opinion pieces”. This is the part of the material where ideas and standpoints are highlighted, like written opinion pieces, debate settings in news broadcasts, and news talk shows. This is where the one can find the most condensed and elaborate traces of the discourses, with the other coverage highlighting and reinforcing these discourses by angling its reporting. These opinion pieces are:

Fox News #: 6,7,18,20,35,39,40,43,59,60,65,73

New York Times #: 11,14,20,23,25,26,46,57,62,63,66,67,68

MSNBC #: 1-11.

Not all of these opinion pieces are in line with the main arguments highlighted in this thesis but they offer a great place to begin an overview of the arguments pushed.

An important thing to point out is that the different words and concepts (for example *loyalty* etc.) are interrelated and part of a discourse of identity, not isolated in different text. Due to this I have listed them together under: “America as a nation of patriotism” and “America as a nation of civic values” in the table on

the next page (44). The prominent examples chosen are those that I listed in my notes as other potential choices to illustrate key themes, other examples will be frequent in the material but these news objects are a once again a good place to start to get an overview of the material.

One theme largely absent in my analysis is the role of race relations and inequality, an analysis of this dimension would require a different approach, primarily in relating the discourses more to a material reality. The theme is discussed in the media in regards to the national anthem protests, some examples of this, and a potential entry point to future research can be found in:

Fox# 16,40.

NYT#14,15,16,41,45,62.

MSNBC#1,2,6, 10.

America as a nation of military patriotism: Loyalty, unity, sacrifice,	Prominent examples found in:	America as a nation of civic values: freedom and constitutional rights.	Prominent examples found in:
a) honoring flag=honoring armed forces and "America". b) freedom of speech, but not in regards to military symbols	a) Fox#2,3,6,7,10,19,24,28,35,43,44,51,66 b) Fox#7,28,71. NYT#8,17,51,64	Trumps statements and tweets challenges American values of freedom and constitutional rights. b)	MSNBC#1,4,6,8 NYT#4,6,9,11,25,36,51,63 Fox#30,42,53,65
Portrayal of key figures: Trumps opinion popular,Alejandro Villanueva a hero, Colin Kaepernick unamerican.	Fox#6,9,12, 33,38,59,60, 72,73 NYT#25	Portrayal of key figures: Trump is unamerican and oppressive, Alejandro Villanueva ambivalent, Protesters are true patriots.	NYT#22,51,63 MSNBC#7,10 Fox#42.
Evidence of popular support: ratings down because public dislike protests, Villanueva jersey sales, opinion polls.	Fox#1,2,3,5,6,8,14,21, 35,36,38,41,42,47,48,53,65 NYT#20,25,27,51,63,68.	Evidence of popular support: ratings down for different reasons, Trumps friends turn on him, public opinion with protesters	NYT#6,9,10,21,29,40,42 MSNBC#5,11