Semper Fi:

How Images of Death in *NCIS* Affect Attitude Change

Virginia E. Board

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Abstract

This pre-test, post- test experiment examined the effects of mortality salience, frames of
the military and military personnel, and regulatory focus on viewer attitudes toward the military,
support for the military, and their perceptions of military personnel's criminal behavior.
Participants viewed a short video clip from an episode of *NCIS* which contained either a
sympathetic or non-sympathetic frame of the military and, in the treatment condition, a mortality
salience reminder. Frame (sympathetic or non-sympathetic) had a significant effect on
participant attitudes toward the military in the control condition when there was no mortality
salience reminder present in the video clip. However, when participants' mortality was made
salient, attitudes and support for the military did not change. Theoretical and practical
implications and suggestions for future research are discussed.

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Introduction and Purpose

Introduction

Communication scholars have been examining the effects of television on viewers for decades. As this medium has grown more popular, so have concerns about the amount of television individuals watch and what influence programming has on viewer attitudes, beliefs, and values. Cultivation research has examined the long-term impact of television viewing on attitudes and perceptions, and research has shown that long-term entertainment viewing can influence viewer perceptions of the real world (Morgan & Shanahan, 1997). For example, the framing of government officials and institutions within television programming can influence viewer attitudes toward government institutions and the government as a whole (Moy & Pfau, 2000). However, it has been noted that cultivation research has not focused on a specific genre or program that may impact particular attitudes and beliefs (Holbrook and Hill, 2005).

One genre that has been the focus of recent attention by communication scholars is dramatic programming. Across hundreds of channels, individuals may choose from a wide range of genres and programming options, but dramas consistently appear in the lineup for primetime programming on major networks and encompasses a wide range of areas, including medical dramas, legal dramas and crime dramas (ABC, 2011; CBS, 2011i; NBC, 2011b). Crime drama programming has long been a staple of the entertainment industry, including police procedural shows such as *Hawaii 5-O* (1968), CHiPs (1977), *Hill Street Blues* (1981), and *Cagney & Lacey* (1981). The recent surge in "procedural" crime dramas such as *CSI* (CBS, 2000c), *Numb3rs* (CBS, 2005h), *Criminal Minds* (CBS, 2005b), and *Law & Order* (NBC, 1990b) has garnered the attention of scholars, and policy makers alike. Legal and communication scholars have debated the existence and impact of the "CSI effect," which relates to the public's expectation of forensic evidence in criminal trials and perceptions of crime, as the show has become more popular and

spin-off series have been developed (Bilandzic, Busselle, Spitzner, Kalch & Reich, 2009; Cole & Dioso-Villa, 2007; Cooley, 2007). The portrayals of crime and criminal investigations in these dramas cause viewers to develop particular expectations about the world around them and the system in which law enforcement operates. It is important to understand how these portrayals of legal and government institutions carry over into viewer perceptions of the real world and their attitudes toward institutions as a result of that carry over. This study examined one particular crime drama, *NCIS* (Naval Criminal Investigative Service), and how portrayals within the program influenced viewer attitudes and perceptions.

A key element of these crime dramas is the crime itself. Portrayals of crime within television programming require the presentation of a victim of that crime, which usually means a dead body was present on screen at some point during the program. It stands to reason that the presence of a dead body on screen, even one created by a special effects department, makes viewers uncomfortable and influence the way they perceive the show. Terror Management Theory (TMT) provides an explanation as to why death-related images on a crime drama program may influence the way people feel about the groups and institutions portrayed within that program. TMT argues that when individual mortality is made salient (i. e. when they are reminded of their own death) individuals defend their cultural worldviews and sense of identity (Solomon, Greenberg, & Pyszczynski, 2004). Consequently, individuals are more likely to defend pre-existing attitudes against alternative points of view and will not experience attitude change. This study contributes to the body of TMT literature that attempts to explain how mortality salience impacts individuals' attitudes and behaviors. This study showed that even short-term viewing of a crime drama related to the military can impact viewer attitudes toward the military, support for the military, and perceptions of military personnel's criminal behavior.

However, when viewers are reminded of their mortality, their attitudes, support, and perceptions of criminal behavior did not change as they defend their pre-existing attitudes.

Since this study examined participant reactions to the television show *NCIS*, individual's chronic regulatory focus was also measured. Individuals with a promotion focus are inherently approach-oriented toward their goals, while prevention focused individuals are more focused on avoiding losses and have an emphasis on duty. Given the program's focus on the United States Navy and the military emphasis on security and duty, this study provided an opportunity to examine the relationship between regulatory focus, particularly prevention focus, and individual's perceptions of an institution with similar values.

Purpose

In order to examine the effects of framing and mortality salience on attitudes toward the military, this experiment used clips from the television crime drama *NCIS* to determine the impact of short-term television viewing on study participants. In this pre-test, post-test, 2 x 2 factorial design experiment, frame (sympathetic or non-sympathetic) was crossed with a mortality salience manipulation (treatment or control) to examine participant attitudes toward the military, their military support, and their perceptions of military personnel's criminal behavior after watching a clip from *NCIS*. Regulatory focus for each participant was measured in order to account for the possible effects of regulatory focus on attitudes, support, and perceptions.

Although previous studies have examined the effect of frame on viewer attitudes (Holbrook & Hill, 2005; Moy & Pfau, 2000; Pfau, Moy & Szabo, 2001), this study also includes mortality salience to address the nature of crime dramas and their effects on viewers.

Literature Review

This study draws on research related to entertainment media, framing, Terror Management Theory, Regulatory Focus Theory, and the Transportation Imagery Model to examine the effects of frame, mortality salience, and regulatory focus on attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions. Appropriate literature related to these theories served as the basis for the current study is described in subsequent sections.

Drama Programming and Framing

Since the introduction of television in the 1950s, it has supplied information, entertainment, and background noise for individuals as they go through their daily routines. Television gives viewers access to scenarios, lifestyles and environments they would not otherwise have the ability to experience. Viewers can see the inside the lives of celebrities on *MTV Cribs* (MTV, 2011) or explore the frozen tundra or rainforest by watching shows like *Survivorman* on the Discovery Channel (2011). A consistently popular genre of television programming is the drama. This drama genre encompasses a wide range of areas, including medical dramas, legal dramas and crime dramas. Although there are multiple subgenres within dramatic programming, this study focused on the potential impact of crime dramas.

In research related to television and crime dramas, violence and the cultivation effects of television programming provide a starting point for effects research (Morgan & Shanahan, 1997). Depictions of crime in television may show violent acts or show the results of such acts, such as the victims of violent crimes. These media depictions of violence sparked Gerbner's cultivation theory and a line of research that has spanned decades examining the cumulative effects of the long term viewing of televised violence (Gerbner & Gross, 1976; Morgan & Shanahan, 1997). This theory argues that individuals who watch large amounts of television over

extended periods gradually shift their perceptions of reality to match what appears on television. Research has shown that these cultivation effects exist in relation to issues like violence and mistrust (Gerbner, Gross, Jackson-Beeck, Jeffries-Fox, & Signorielli, 1978; see Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, Signorielli, & Shanahan, 2002, for an overview). Although cultivation effects have been supported in previous research, some scholars (Bilandzic, 2006; Holbert, 2005; Holbrook & Hill, 2005) have argued that cultivation research does not fully address the issue. As Holbrook and Hill (2005) point out, cultivation research rarely focuses on particular programs or specific genres, such as crime dramas, in order to examine cultivation effects, which generally focus on the number of violent incidents in media over long periods of time. Also, the causal relationship may often be reversed, so the relationship between television and viewers' attitudes regarding crime remain unclear. Given these limitations in cultivation research, some researchers have chosen to approach the study of entertainment media and its effects from other angles.

Research has shown that entertainment programming can affect viewer attitudes toward the government and political institutions and figures (Holbert, Pillion et al., 2003; Holbert, Tschida et al., 2005; Holbrook & Hill, 2005; Moy & Pfau, 2000; Pfau, Moy, & Szabo, 2001). A news program may have a story about the President of the United States, but the story may only be two minutes long. Entertainment programming can spend up to an hour on a single issue and entire series have been developed around particular aspects of government and law enforcement, including *The West Wing* (Internet Movie Database, 1999), *NCIS* (CBSa, 2003), *Law & Order* (ABC, 1990) and *Numb3rs* (CBSh, 2005) to name a few. Entertainment programming also allows producers to cover issues with high dramatic effect and intensity (Holbert, 2005; Holbrook & Hill, 2005). Through framing, producers of media content may "consciously or not – construct a particular point of view that encourages the facts of given situation [or issue] to be

viewed in a particular manner, with some facts made more or less noticeable (even ignored) than others" (Kuypers, 2009, p. 182). These frames are based on cultural beliefs and social norms, and they help individuals "classify, organize, and interpret life experiences to make sense of them" (Goffman, 1974, p. 56) The process of framing allows producers of entertainment media to construct frames around particular issues to either show them positively or negatively, in a sympathetic light or a non-sympathetic one. Previous framing research is typically associated with how the news media frame issues (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007; Weaver, 2007; Zhongdang & Kosicki, 1993), including politics and international conflict (Evans, 2010; Kothari, 2010) and health issues (Hoffner & Ye, 2009; Morgan, Harrison, Chewning, Davis, & Dicorcia, 2007). However, research has also shown how the frames present in entertainment viewing can influence perceptions of political issues, political actors and government bodies and institutions, even though there has been some argument as to what types of frames dominate in the media (Lichter, Lichter & Amundson, 2000; Moy & Pfau, 2000; Pfau, Moy, & Szabo, 2001).

Lichter, Lichter and Amundson (2000) argued that primetime entertainment media outlets are often negative in their frames of the government and government entities. In a content analysis that examined frames of public officials, civil servants and law enforcement officers associated with the government in entertainment programming from the mid-1950 to the mid-1980s, the entertainment roles of public officials were 51 percent negative, 40 percent positive, and 9 percent neutral. Law enforcement officers were portrayed more positively at 62 percent with 13 percent of frames depicting them negatively, and 29 percent were neutral. Civil servants were portrayed positively 42 percent of the time compared to only 18 percent of frames being negative, and an additional 40 percent being neutral. When the frames of public officials in entertainment programming were reexamined from 1992-1998, public officials were portrayed

negatively 31 percent of the time versus positively 22 percent of the time. From 1992-1998, law enforcement officers were portrayed negatively 16 percent of the time versus positively 43 percent of the time. Overall, the increasing number of neutral characters affected these numbers, but public officials were consistently portrayed as corrupt and unethical or foolish and incompetent. Law enforcement characters were either part of the political corruption and incompetency, such as Sheriff Rosco Coltrane in *The Dukes of Hazzard*, or depicted outside of the political system and pitted against corrupt officials. Although there were fewer negative frames of public officials in the 1990s, they were still portrayed more negatively than positively. The negative perceptions of public officials also lead to negative perceptions of the government as a whole (Lichter et al., 2000), which could also lead to negative perceptions of government run institutions. Recent research has shown that viewer perceptions of government actors and institutions may still be negative in some instances. Pfau, Moy, and Szabo's (2001) research showed that viewers who indicated a preference for science fiction programming such as the *X-Files* still tended to have more negative perceptions of government, in part due to the elements of conspiracy and backdoor politics within the show's storylines.

Holbrook and Hill's (2005) research on crime dramas used the programs *Third Watch*, *Robbery Homicide Division, Without a Trace*, and *NYPD Blue* to show that the messages presented in crime dramas had a significant effect on the political attitudes of viewers. Even though these programs were intended as entertainment, viewer perceptions of crime as an important issue were heightened and their perceptions of the current president were tied to the information framed within the programs. For example, exposure to either *Without a Trace* or *Robbery Homicide Division*, decreased participant approval ratings for President George W.

Bush. The researchers noted that exposure to crime dramas could raise or lower overall approval levels based on the message presented in the program.

Although some research still shows the negative impact of frames in entertainment programming, Pfau, Moy, and Szabo (2001) have argued that this portrayal has changed in recent years with the increasing number of primetime dramas that portray the government, such as *The West Wing* and programs that emphasize aspects associated with law enforcement, as more positive in nature. Marks (2001) called this shift to more positive frames of government the "West Wing" effect to describe the shift in frames of government officials from inept bumblers to competent leaders. Research has shown that individuals who watched significant amounts of comedy, drama and reality television programming had more positive perceptions of the federal government as a whole and watching news magazine programming lead to more positive perceptions of the legislative branch of government in particular (Pfau et al., 2001). Programs like *The West Wing* have also allowed media consumers a behind-the-scenes look at the office of the president and it has been shown that this fictional presentation of the presidency can influence audience perceptions of the actual presidency and what it means to be the president. Audience perceptions of the office were more positive after viewing *The West Wing* and these positive feelings translated into more positive perceptions of the person currently holding the office in reality, no matter which party was in power (Holbert, Pillion et al., 2003; Holbert, Tschida et al., 2005).

Previous research has demonstrated that frames within entertainment viewing can influence viewer attitudes about real-world figures, such as the president, and institutions, such as the United States government. Those who watch entertainment programming that frame aspects of government, such as the military, and government actors, or military personnel, in a

sympathetic light should have more positive perceptions of the military and those who serve within it. The sympathetic frame within the program should translate into a sympathetic viewpoint in reality as well. Those who see the military framed in a negative or non-sympathetic manner should have less positive perceptions of military and soldiers in the armed services as they accept the frames that are presented within the program and bring these frames into the real world (see Figure 1).

Although frames within television programming should influence viewer attitudes, they are not the only factor that may influence participant attitudes after watching a television program. According to TMT, images of death within crime dramas should prevent individuals from being influenced by the frame of the program as they defend their more firmly established pre-existing attitudes and perceptions.

Terror Management Theory

Crime dramas often show the results of violent crimes and those affected, including the criminals, legal investigators and the victims (Surrette, 2011). *NCIS* investigators are often charged with tracking down criminal perpetrators responsible for the death of naval personnel, who were part of naval fleet operations, officers or Marines (CBS, 2011a). The dominant role of death within these narratives may influence the way audience members view the world around them and their interactions with other members of society. Since death-related images and narratives are common within crime dramas, Terror Management Theory (TMT) provides a theoretical foundation for the examination of crime drama's role in society.

TMT is based on cultural worldviews that have been developed as a defense against thoughts of death (Solomon et al., 2004). Human beings are consistently confronted with the fact that no one lives forever, and this awareness makes individuals uncomfortable and anxious. As a

defense against these thoughts of death, humans subscribe to cultural worldviews. Cultural worldviews are the "conceptions of reality" prescribed by a given culture that provide members of that culture with the perception that the world is a just place where they may achieve immortality by subscribing to the religious and social mores of the culture, providing meaning for life even though death is inevitable (Rosenblatt, Greenberg, Solomon, Pyszczynski, & Lyon, 1989, p. 681). Adhering to the tenets of a cultural worldview, and subscribing to this understanding of how the world works, allows individuals to perceive themselves as valuable to society and gives their lives meaning beyond day-to-day existence until death. It also allows them to reinforce their self-esteem and ease the anxiety caused by death-related thoughts.

Although cultural worldviews provide a buffer that allows individuals to function and flourish in society, rather than be crippled by the thought that they are eventually going to die, these buffers are not permanent fixtures. These buffers are based on the current values of society and require constant validation and defense against everyday reminders of mortality and the threat of opposing values and beliefs. As a result, when mortality is made salient, individuals respond more favorably to those who uphold the values of society, thereby defending the dominant cultural worldview, while societal transgressors are judged more harshly. Individuals also react more negatively toward members of out-groups and those who criticize the dominant culture (Greenberg, Pyszczynski et al., 1990).

Individuals use two types of defenses in order to maintain their cultural worldview and avoid death-related thoughts: proximal and distal defenses (Greenberg, Arndt, Simon, Pyszczynski, & Solomon, 2000). Proximal defenses are immediate defenses such as distraction, thought suppression or denial. These immediate defenses allow death-related thoughts to fade from conscious levels of thought. Once these thoughts have left consciousness, proximal

defenses relax and distal defenses take precedence. According to Greenberg et al., (2000), "the accessibility of death-related thoughts increases as the suppression is relaxed and symbolic worldview defense is stepped up in intensity" (p. 93). Individuals defend their worldview more vigorously once distal defenses are being used.

In summary, in spite of these defenses, death-related thoughts are unavoidable and individuals must confront their own mortality. Proximal defenses allow individuals to mentally push thoughts of death away while distal defenses allow them to avoid such thoughts after the immediate threat is over by reinforcing dominant ideologies. Distal defenses operate below the conscious level, so individuals are unaware that they are defending themselves against thoughts of death. They unconsciously reaffirm their cultural worldviews, assuring themselves that they are valued and have a place in society. These unconscious reaffirmations cause them to more vigorously defend their cultural worldviews, thereby defending their place in society. By increasing individuals' mortality salience, confronting them with thoughts of death, they cling more tightly to their cultural worldviews and pre-existing attitudes, defending what they believe to be true on an unconscious level, and close themselves off to alternative options or points of view (Solomon et al., 2004; see Figure 2).

The need to defend cultural worldviews once confronted with mortality salience affects individual's attitudes. This need leads individuals to cling more tightly to the attitudes and beliefs to which they already subscribe. For example, in the 2004 presidential race, when mortality was made salient, negative advertisements from the John Kerry campaign were perceived as a threat to the dominant American cultural worldview, and caused viewers to show increased support for Bush, the incumbent president, and decreased support for Kerry (Miller & Hansen, 2007). Positive ads from the Kerry campaign did not appear to threaten

the American cultural worldview and had no effect even when mortality was made salient. Liberals were more strongly affected by these advertisements than conservatives, implying that political identification may play a role in studies that address political or government issues.

Mortality salience effects are dependent on individuals' pre-existing attitudes toward specific subjects and topics. In previous research, individuals with a supportive attitude toward the reunification of Germany whose mortality was made salient were more likely to react favorably to a positively framed essay regarding the fall of the Berlin Wall and were more likely to defend reunification efforts against criticism, reinforcing their pre-existing beliefs and defending their worldview. Those with a pre-existing negative perception of the reunification reacted more favorably to a negatively framed essay, which supported their own pre-existing attitudes (Jonas & Greenberg, 2004). By framing the reunification efforts of Germany in either a positive or negative light, individuals who held pre-existing attitudes about the issue reacted more favorably to media that fell along the same lines as their cultural worldview. When asked to respond to the articles, participants whose pre-existing attitudes were reinforced by the frame of the article were more likely to defend their point of view. This implies that when mortality is made salient, individuals engage in more vigorous defense techniques and maintain their pre-existing attitudes.

When considering pre-existing attitudes and mortality salience, certain constructs are more accessible than others. Arndt, Greenberg, and Cook (2002) found that men find nationalistic constructs more accessible than women, while romantic constructs are more accessible for women than men when mortality is salient. Individuals are also more likely to be inherently biased when their mortality is made salient (Nelson, Moore, Olivetti, & Scott,

1997). When individuals were asked to assign blame for an accident to automotive manufacturers in either the United States or Japan, nationalistic and intergroup biases were present in mortality salience conditions. When American participants experienced mortality salience they placed less blame for the accident on an American automotive company than a Japanese automotive company, reinforcing the dominant American cultural worldview and distancing themselves from alternative cultural worldviews.

In addition to defending cultural worldviews and reinforcing pre-existing attitudes and beliefs, TMT can provide an explanation for specific behaviors when mortality is made salient. For example, smokers whose self-esteem was closely associated with their identity as a smoker were more likely to continue to smoking regardless of mortality salience messages, or even smoke more when confronted with messages on cigarette packaging that use warnings with a mortality salience reminder (Hansen, Winzeler, & Topolinski, 2010). Individuals were also shown to be more indulgent in their choices when mortality salience was high and the choice related to an area in which the individual had low self-esteem. In this case, women who had low body esteem were more likely to indulge in eating chocolate cake when mortality salience was high. Unless self-esteem was highly related to the issue at hand, individuals were more indulgent in their behaviors when confronted with mortality salience message (e. g. eating more unhealthy foods, spending money on oneself) (Ferraro, Shiv, & Bettman, 2005).

In summary, when mortality is made salient, individuals defend their pre-existing attitudes more vigorously and resist alternative information and viewpoints. It is expected that those with a more positive or sympathetic view toward the military will resist changing their attitudes when confronted with non-sympathetic frames that contradict their pre-existing

views. Individuals' support for the military may vary, depending on prior behaviors and self-esteem in relation to the military, but predicting these effects is dependent on the population in question. The connection between mortality salience and military support will be further explored in the results section.

Manipulations of mortality salience have varied in previous research. Participants in previous research studies have been asked to describe the emotions that they feel when they think about their own death or what they think will happen once they physically die (Greenberg et al., 2000). Other studies have asked participants to remember how they felt when they heard about the tragedy on September 11 (Ferraro et al., 2005). However, these are not the only ways in which mortality salience effects have been induced. In a series of studies examining the effects of mortality salience on brand choices, death-related thoughts were prompted after watching a news report about September 11, after watching a movie in which a character committed suicide and after watching a news report about a fatal plane crash (Liu & Smeesters, 2010). It has also been shown that exposure to images that individuals associate with death-related issues, such as the logo of an insurance company, can prompt death-thought accessibility and increase mortality salience (Fransen, Fennis, Pruyn, & Das, 2008). Based on the range of manipulations that have prompted death-related thoughts, watching television programming like *NCIS* may prompt death-related thoughts through their use of special effects and makeup to show the dead bodies of individuals who have been killed within the narrative. In various episodes, bodies have appeared beaten, shot, blown up, burned, partially dissolved, and in the process of being autopsied. These graphic depictions of death may cause increased mortality salience, prompting viewers to engage in defensive processing, defending their cultural worldviews, once their mortality has been made salient by these depictions of death. This study determined if these

depictions of bodies in crime dramas prompt death-related thoughts and lead viewers to process in a defensive mode.

Although television viewers should be influenced by framing, except when their mortality is made salient, their pre-existing attitudes are not the only inherent factor that may influence their perceptions of the program and the military. Each individual has a particular regulatory focus that determines how they approach life goals which may determine how they perceive the military and view programming like *NCIS*.

Regulatory Focus

Individuals choose what media they prefer to consume by picking the television shows they want to watch on a regular basis. For media consumers who watch *NCIS*, weekly viewing becomes part of their Tuesday night routine. They likely become involved in the stories and characters and follow the storylines established within the program. They choose to watch particular show over others because the messages within the show appeal to individuals with a particular type of regulatory focus.

According to Higgins (1997), individuals approach life in ways that are consistent with meeting their own particular goals. These individuals have an inherent regulatory focus that guides their actions. These foci are part of an individual's personality that is established during childhood and remain with them throughout their lives.

As individuals attempt to reach desired end states, their regulatory focus will determine the strategies used to reach goals. Higgins (1997) argued that individuals have either a promotion focus or a prevention focus. A promotion focus is characterized by the "presence of positive outcomes" and ideal-oriented regulation with an emphasis on "concern with advancement, growth, and accomplishment" toward goals (p. 1285). When attempting to reach a particular

goal, these individuals focus on strategies that are associated with gains or, at worst, non-gains (accomplishment versus non-accomplishment). Promotion-focused individuals are more approach-oriented in their strategies and are more open to possibilities as they focus on advancing toward their goals.

A prevention focus is characterized by the "absence of negative outcomes" and ought-oriented regulation with an emphasis on "protection, safety, and responsibility," with an emphasis on duty (Higgins, 1997, p. 1282). Prevention-oriented individuals use strategies that are aimed at an end goal of avoiding loss, or at least achieving non-loss. When attempting to reach a desired end-state, or goal, prevention-oriented individuals tend to be more focused on carefully choosing their strategies in order to avoiding possibly not reaching their goal.

Regulatory focus describes how individuals make decisions, based on their particular focus, but several researchers have attempted to use the theory to assess behavioral intentions and explain particular behaviors. Some research has focused on the concept of regulatory fit. Regulatory fit states that when individuals make decisions that coincide with the orientation of their regulatory focus, either promotion or prevention oriented, they experience fit. This fit provided individuals with a feeling of "rightness" related to their decisions. This synergy increased the value that people associated with their decisions, such as choosing a product, known as the endowment effect, or made them more likely to pursue particular behaviors in order to reach a goal (Avent & Higgins, 2006).

Other research has examined the matching effect. Messages have more persuasive impact when regulatory focus of the individual and the regulatory frame of a message match (Ramanathan & Dhar, 2010; Yi & Baumgartner, 2008), which is known as the matching effect (Zhao & Sengupta, 2006). When health messages were framed in terms of gains (promotion),

they were more persuasive to promotion-focused individuals while loss-framed (prevention)

messages were more persuasive to prevention-focused individuals (Lee & Aaker, 2004).

Research showed that adolescents found messages more persuasive and had lower intentions to

smoke when regulatory focus and regulatory frame matched. When matching occurred,

participant perceptions about the benefits of smoking were also lessened (Kim, 2006; Zhao &

Pechmann, 2007).

Previous research has shown that regulatory focus can have an impact on persuasion

when it is matched with the regulatory frame of a message. However, the studies previously

described have primed a situational regulatory focus to be matched with the regulatory frame of

the message. The relationship between an individual's chronic regulatory focus, as conceived by

Higgins, and the effect it may have on attitudes and behaviors remains unclear. Given the

military emphasis on duty and security, this study determined whether regulatory focus,

especially prevention focus, played a role in influencing participant attitudes. This study is based

on the previous research that has been described in relation to framing, TMT and regulatory

focus. However, in order to avoid potential alternative explanations for the effects found in this

study, the effects of transportation are also considered.

Transportation Imagery Model

Although TMT and Regulatory Focus Theory explain the basis for this study, they do not

fully address a key issue relevant to entertainment media and studies of this type: the issue of

individual self-selection of television programs and interest in the content. Viewers self-select

their television programming, and often use it to help make sense of the world around them.

Even as they enter the world of television, they bring their own attitudes, values, beliefs and

knowledge of the world with them. The information in television programming may seem more

relevant and interesting to the viewer if it already coincides with the viewer's existing beliefs and values. For example, audiences identified more closely with characters who behaved in ways that were consistent with the viewer's morals (Raney, 2005). Crime dramas were viewed as more enjoyable when their outcomes aligned with viewers' moral judgments regarding appropriate punishments. If these judgments failed to align, viewers would switch over to other programs. However, television content may also appear to be more relevant if the viewer becomes highly involved in the program and its constructed narrative. This effect is known as transportation.

The Transportation Imagery Model is based on the assumption that viewers of a narrative can be so deeply drawn into a narrative that they distance themselves from their own reality and immerse themselves in the reality created by the author (Green & Brock, 2000). Viewers may feel as though they are moving along with the characters or adopt a point of view from within the story if their transportation levels are high. This immersion in a narrative encourages viewers to fully engage their mental faculties in the storyline and accept the narrative as reality, even though in actual reality they may counter argue with the beliefs and attitudes of the author. Once they are deeply immersed in a story, real world contradictions to information in the narrative may not register with the viewer or be set aside in favor of the continued enjoyment of the narrative. As a result, viewers of entertainment content may have shifts in their attitudes or beliefs after being highly transported into a narrative that has encouraged them to adopt the mediated experience as something more personal. High levels of identification with characters and the perception of personally relevant issues within the narrative also encouraged viewers to adopt information presented in the narrative and include it in their own personal knowledge and experience, which lead to a shift in attitudes and beliefs (Green, 2004; Green & Brock, 2005). Television viewers who watched an episode of a drama (*CSI: NY, Numb3rs, House, Grey's Anatomy*) that contained

a story line related to organ donation indicated in an online survey that they were more likely to become organ donors if an episode specifically encouraged the behavior. They were more likely to become an organ donor themselves if they were involved in the narrative and emotionally connected to the characters within the program. However, it was noted that viewers were also more likely to subscribe to and believe inaccurate information or believe in organ donation myths, such as the presence of a black market for organs (Morgan, Movius, & Cody, 2009). Based on this previous research, transportation was included in the main experiment for this study to determine its affects on military attitudes, support for the military, and perceptions of military personnel's criminal behavior after exposure to *NCIS*.

Hypotheses and Research Question

It has been shown that sympathetic and non-sympathetic framing within television programming influences viewer perceptions of the world around them and their attitudes toward particular institutions. However, based on previous research in TMT, viewer attitudes and behaviors should be reinforced, not changed, when their mortality is made salient by seeing images of death within television programming. Based on this prior research related to framing and TMT, the following three hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Mortality salience will moderate the effect of the frame such that in the mortality salience control condition a sympathetic (vs. non-sympathetic) frame will result in more positive attitudes toward the military, while in the mortality salience treatment condition the frame will not affect participants' attitudes toward the military.

H2: Mortality salience will moderate the effect of the frame such that in the mortality salience control condition a sympathetic (vs. non-sympathetic) frame will result in higher military support, while in the mortality salience treatment condition the frame will not affect participants' military support.

H3: Mortality salience will moderate the effect of the frame such that in the mortality salience control condition a sympathetic (vs. non-sympathetic) frame will result in lower perceptions of military personnel's criminal behavior, while in the mortality salience treatment condition the frame will not affect participants' perceptions of criminal behavior.

Although the relationship between regulatory focus and attitudes has been explored somewhat in previous research, it is unclear how chronic regulatory focus theory interacts with other theories such as TMT and if it influences attitudes and behaviors related to television

programming content. Based on this gap in previous research, the following research question is

proposed:

RQ1: Does regulatory focus (prevention or promotion) have an impact on attitudes

toward the military, military support, or perceptions of criminal behavior?

Pilot Experiment

Prior to the main experiment, a pilot experiment was conducted to test video clips and scales intended for use in the main experiment. Participants ($N = 108$, 70% female) were recruited from the Department of Communication research pool and were granted course credit in exchange for their participation. Participant age ranged from 18-30 ($M = 20.32$), but the majority of respondents ($n = 92$) fell between the ages of 19 and 21 years old.

Procedure

Participants in the pilot experiment were randomly assigned to a condition. Upon arriving at the study, each individual was given a consent form and given time to read through the document and ask any questions before being asked to grant their consent if they wished to continue with the study. Participants were permitted to withdraw their consent and leave at anytime during the study if they did not wish to continue. Participants within control condition were given a military attitude questionnaire and were then shown one video clip (sympathetic frame or non-sympathetic frame). They then completed the media consumption questionnaire, the word-completion task (Arndt, Greenberg, Solomon, Pyszczynski, & Simon, 1997) to measure death-thought accessibility, the Regulatory Focus Scale (RFS; Fellner, Holler, Kirchler, & Schabmann, 2007), the post-test military attitude scale with military support measures, the positive and negative affect scale (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988), and the mood repair exercise. Participants were then given a debriefing statement, thanked for their participation and dismissed.

In order to test the efficacy of the mortality salience manipulation within video clips from the show, participants in treatment condition were shown a video clip that featured either a sympathetic frame or non-sympathetic frame, and completed the first military attitude

questionnaire. They were then shown another video clip (sympathetic frame or non-sympathetic frame) that also featured a mortality salience reminder. Participants who were first exposed to a sympathetic frame were also exposed to a sympathetic frame the second time. They then completed the remaining measures in the same order as those in the control condition, given a debriefing statement, thanked and dismissed.

Results

Manipulation check. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) test was run to examine the effect of the mortality salience manipulation on the death-thought accessibility measure. There were no significant differences between conditions, $F(1, 106) = 0.360$, $p = 0.55$. Therefore, the mortality salience manipulation appeared to be unsuccessful. However, tests indicate that even though the mortality salience manipulation was non-significant, apparent effects were found, as described later. Due to this lack of significant differences in death-thought accessibility, an additional measure was necessary for the main experiment.

Mood. A one-way ANOVA test was run to examine the possibility that the mortality salience exposure might have led to a difference in negative affect. There was not a significant difference between conditions, $F(1,104) = 0.217$, $p = 0.64$. Therefore, the stimulus materials did not lead to differences in negative affect. The pilot experiment produced a Cronbach's α of .85 for the negative affect scale and an α of .88 for the positive affect scale.

Attitudes toward the military. The pilot experiment was used to validate the scales developed for the purposes of this study. The pilot yielded a Cronbach's α of .82 for the attitude toward the military scale and was considered reliable.

A two-way ANOVA test was conducted to examine the potential effects of frame and mortality salience on participant attitudes toward the military after being exposed to stimulus

materials. The main effect of frame (LS $M_{non\text{-}sympathetic}$ = 4.58, SE = 0.09; LS $M_{sympathetic}$ = 4.70, SE = 0.09) and main effect of mortality salience (LS $M_{control}$ = 4.74, SE = 0.10; LS $M_{treatment}$ = 4.53, SE = 0.076) did not have a significant impact on participant attitudes toward the military, $F(1, 104)_{frame}$ = .84, p = .36; $F(1, 104)_{mortality\ salience}$ = 2.62, p = .11. However, the frame x mortality salience interaction effect was significant, $F(1, 104)$ = 4.45, p = .04. Post hoc testing revealed participant attitudes varied significantly between the non-sympathetic mortality salience treatment condition, LS $M_{non\text{-}sympathetic\ treatment}$ = 4.34, SE = 0.11, and non-sympathetic mortality salience control condition, LS $M_{non\text{-}sympathetic,\ control}$ = 4.82, SE = 0.15. The other means did not differ significantly, LS $M_{sympathetic,\ control}$ = 4.66, SE = 0.15; LS $M_{sympathetic,\ treatment}$ = 4.73, SE = 0.11. However, the procedure differed markedly between the treatment and control conditions, rendering any clear differences between the conditions uninterpretable. In the mortality salience control condition, but not in the mortality salience treatment condition, participants were administered a pre-test that likely heightened the accessibility of their attitudes toward the military before they viewed the video clip. In addition, participants in the mortality salience treatment condition, but not the mortality salience control condition, viewed two different video clips, in which only the second featured a mortality salience reminder. Therefore, the effects of the frame were confounded. These differences in procedure also resulted in uneven cell sizes, with only 38 participants in the mortality salience control condition and 70 participants in the treatment condition.

Support for the military. The support for the military measures were developed for the purposes of this study and also required validation before being used in the main experiment. The pilot experiment yielded a Cronbach's α of .83 for the this scale and it was considered reliable.

A two-way ANOVA test was also conducted to examine participants' support for the military after being exposed to stimulus materials. Results show that the main effects of frame, $F(1, 104)_{frame} = 0.0002$, $p = .99$ (LS $M_{non\text{-}sympathetic} = 4.56$, $SE = 0.14$; LS $M_{sympathetic} = 4.56$, $SE = 0.15$) and mortality salience, $F(1, 104)_{mortality\ salience} = 2.50$, $p = .12$ (LS $M_{control} = 4.72$, $SE = 0.17$; LS $M_{treatment} = 4.40$, $SE = 0.12$) did not have a significant impact on participant support for the military. Even though the main effects were non-significant, the interaction effect of frame x mortality salience was significant, $F(1, 104) = 5.107$, $p = .03$. Post hoc testing revealed that, once again, there was a significant difference between the non-sympathetic mortality salience control condition (LS $M = 4.95$, $SE = .23$) and the non-sympathetic mortality salience treatment condition (LS $M = 4.16$, $SE = .17$). The other means did not differ significantly (see Table 5). Once again, the combination of frame and mortality salience had a significant impact on participants' military support, but main effects were not significant. As with the previous results regarding frame and attitudes toward the military, differences in procedure during the pilot experiment renders these results uninterpretable.

Regulatory focus. There were no significant relationship between promotion regulatory focus and attitudes toward the military, $F(1, 100) = .79$, $p = .38$. There was also no significant interaction effect between mortality salience, frame, and promotion focus on attitudes toward the military, $F(1, 100) = 1.91$, $p = .17$. However, there was a significant main effect of prevention regulatory focus on attitudes, $F(1, 100) = 13.17$, $p < .001$. However, the interaction effect of frame, mortality salience, and prevention focus was not significant, $F(1, 100) = .14$, $p = .71$.

Reliability tests suggest that these mixed findings may be due to low reliability between scale measures on the Regulatory Focus Scale (Fellner et al., 2007). Tests of item reliability indicated a Cronbach's α of .42 for the promotion scale as a whole and a Cronbach's α of .66

after removing the item "Rules and regulations are helpful and necessary for me." For the

prevention scale, tests indicated a Cronbach's α of only .04 and a maximum Cronbach's α of .27

after removing the item "I am not bothered about reviewing or checking things really closely."

Given these low reliability levels, the scale was replaced with the Regulatory Focus

Questionnaire (Higgins, Friedman et al., 2001) for the main experiment.

Potential Confound. The results of this pilot experiment lead to the identification of a

potential confounding variable that was addressed for the main experiment. A one-way ANOVA

test indicated a significant relationship between the length of the video clips (short, medium, or

long) and participant attitudes toward the military, $F(2, 105) = 4.65$, $p = 0.01$). Therefore, a

measure of transportation (Green & Brock, 2000) was added to the main experiment.

The mortality salience control clips were short clips. Mortality salience treatment clips

with a non-sympathetic frame were medium in length and mortality salience treatment clips with

a sympathetic frame were long. Means comparison tests indicated that a significant difference in

military attitudes existed between the clips, $M_{short} = 4.74$, $SE = .14$, $M_{long} = 4.73$, $SE = .15$,

$M_{medium} = 4.34$, $SE = 0.15$. Medium-length clips were significantly different from long-length

clips, $p = .03$. A significant difference also existed between the short-length clips and the

medium-length clips, $p = .02$. There was no significant difference between short-length clips and

long-length clips, $p = 1.00$.

One-way ANOVA tests also indicated that there was a possible significant relationship

between the length of the video clips and participants' military support, $F(2, 105) = 3.11$, $p =$

0.05. However, post-hoc analysis revealed no significant differences between pairs, $M_{short} = 4.72$,

$SE = .24$, $M_{medium} = 4.63$, $SE = .24$, $M_{long} = 4.16$, $SE = .25$, $p > .05$.

The Transportation Imagery Model (Green & Brock, 2000) provides a possible explanation for these differences based on clip length. According to this model, individuals who are drawn deeply into a narrative are more likely to distance themselves from reality and immerse themselves in the reality created by the program. Individuals may be drawn into a narrative through the use of vivid imagery or high levels of identification with story characters. In order to become immersed in a narrative, individuals must read or see enough of the story to perceive the reality created by the author and identify with the characters. The short length of the mortality salience control clips within this study may have prevented individuals from becoming fully immersed in the narrative and experiencing transportation effects that would change attitudes or behaviors while the longer clips allowed them to become more engaged with the story and characters. An alternative explanation could be that the sympathetic and non-sympathetic frames within the clips affected transportation levels, possibly accounting for the significant differences between medium and long length mortality salience treatment clips. In order to address these differences, transportation levels were measured as a potential confound variable in the main experiment.

Due to a lack of adequate control data and modifications in procedure, direct comparisons between groups yielded uninterpretable results with regards to the effects of frame and mortality salience. Based on the results of the pilot experiment, the procedure for the main experiment was streamlined and several new scales were incorporated in order to address issues of validity, reliability, and the potential for alternative explanations of the effects present in the study. The Regulatory Focus Scale (Fellner et al., 2007) was removed and replaced with the Regulatory Focus Questionnaire (Higgins et al., 2001) and a transportation scale (Green & Brock, 2000) and thought-listing measure (Cacioppo, von Hippel, & Ernst, 1997) were added.

Main Experiment

Design

This experiment used a 2 x 2 factorial design to test the effects of military frame (sympathetic vs. non-sympathetic) and mortality salience (treatment vs. control), along with regulatory focus as a measured independent variable, on participants' attitudes toward the military, support for the military and perceptions of military personnel's criminal behavior.

Participants

Participants (N = 229, 66% female) for this study were drawn from the Communication Department research participant pool via the SONA Systems online website. The study was described as an examination of viewer attitudes toward television dramas. Experiment sessions were run during the spring 2011 semester and conditions were assigned to sessions using a randomized list. Participants received course credit in exchange for their participation and everyone was eligible to participate. Participant age ranged from 18-32 (M = 20.06), but the majority of respondents (n = 137) were either 19 or 20 years old.

Materials

Among the number of crime dramas on the air today, including *CSI* (CBS, 2000c) , *CSI: Miami* (CBS, 2002d) *CSI: New York* (CBS, 2004e), *Bones* (FOX, 2005), *Numb3rs* (CBS, 2005h), *NCIS: LA* (CBS, 2009g) and the reboot of *Hawaii 5-0* (CBS, 2010f), *NCIS* (CBS, 2003a) is a unique player. *NCIS* premiered in 2003 as an offshoot of the series *JAG*, a trend consistent with that of *CSI* and its companion series: *CSI: Miami* and *CSI: New York*. A longtime hit on the CBS network, *NCIS* averaged 19.9 million viewers per week during its 8th season, not including the number of viewers who tune in to reruns of episodes on the *USA Network* (USAToday, 2011).

NCIS focuses on the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, a branch of law enforcement associated with the federal government that works to solve crimes with ties to the Navy or the Marine Corps, in which naval personnel and their families are either the victims or the perpetrators (CBS, 2011a). The show revolves a around team of federal agents who investigate crimes related to the United States Navy and Marine Corps. Crimes committed against naval personnel, or by them, are investigated by this team. The team includes lead Special Agent Jethro Gibbs, Senior Field Agent Tony Dinozzo, Special Agent Tim McGee, medical examiner Donald Mallard and forensic specialist Abby Scuito. Also present on the team is Special Agent Caitlin Todd, later replaced by former Mossad Officer Ziva David. This team investigates crimes in the Washington, D.C., area, including cases of national security and murder, although their cases have also taken them around the world to countries such as Israel, Iraq and Somalia (CBS, 2011a).

Based on previous research on frames in entertainment media, this study attempted to determine how sympathetic and non-sympathetic frames of military personnel in *NCIS* influence viewer attitudes toward the military. Across episodes, *NCIS* has framed the military in a sympathetically light through their portrayals of military personnel who are dedicated to serving their country, efficient and quick thinking in high stress situations, and committed to their fellow soldiers and duty toward the country. They have also been shown as hardworking, cooperative, courteous and competent in their roles. However, *NCIS* has also framed naval personnel in a non-sympathetic light. Naval officers have been portrayed as uncooperative, chauvinistic and rigidly bureaucratic and naval personnel have been depicted as aggressive criminals who commit crimes such as drug dealing, kidnapping and murder in various episodes. The series has shown that the military and military personnel are not perfect; both are flawed and make mistakes. This

mix of frames of the military and its personnel may lead viewers to have mixed perceptions of what it means to be in the military, what military personnel are like, and the overall character of military personnel and officers.

Stimulus materials were drawn from various episodes of *NCIS* from seasons 1-5. To insure that the content of these clips would serve as an effective manipulation, two clips were chosen for each condition and pilot tested for efficacy. By using two clips for each condition, differences in the production of various episodes, settings, characters, and plot did not mitigate manipulation effects. A description each episode used in the study and the length of clip segments can be found in Appendix A. Table 1 in Appendix D describes the operationalization of each clip.

A full episode of *NCIS* is typically 43-45 minutes without commercials. *NCIS* is produced with fast-paced scenes and rapid cut sequences. Based on time restrictions for this study, an entire episode of *NCIS* could not be shown to study participants, even though a full episode would have lead to higher levels of transportation as participants become engaged in the narrative and identify with the characters. Short clips ranging from 1 minute and 45 seconds to approximately 3 minutes were chosen for this study to allow for a scene break at the beginning and end of each video clip. Since it was necessary to use episode clips during this study, transportation effects were measured and controlled for as longer clips may lead to higher levels of transportation than short clips.

Clips were chosen for sympathetic and non-sympathetic frames of the military within *NCIS* and additional clips were chosen for sympathetic and non-sympathetic frames with the inclusion of a mortality salience reminder.

Sympathetic frames without a mortality salience reminder of the military were drawn from the season 1 episode "Sub Rosa" and the season 3 episode "Family Secret." The clips from these episodes portrayed military personnel as efficient, courteous and cooperative. "Family Secret" portrayed the Marine Corps as an institution in which individuals can develop specialized skills, connections and feelings of camaraderie between members of a unit.

Clips framing the military in a sympathetic light with the inclusion of a mortality salience reminder, in the form of a dead body shown on screen, were drawn from "Sub Rosa" and the season 2 episode "Call of Silence." In "Sub Rosa" the clip showed crew efficiency, cooperation and quick thinking as they remove the body of an eco-terrorist from a nuclear submarine. In "Call of Silence" the clip showed a veteran of World War II, Ernie, recalling the death of one of his comrades on Iwo Jima and Ernie's determination to see justice done for his friend. It also showed the determination of the NCIS agents to see justice done even as they defend Ernie from the JAG lawyer, Faith.

Non-sympathetic frames of the military without a mortality salience reminder came from "Sub Rosa" and the season 5 episode "Chimera." Both of these clips portrayed officers in the military as unwilling to cooperate with authority, secretive, verbally combative and chauvinistic. In "Chimera" in particular, the officer is portrayed as someone who is willing to put his project ahead of the safety of *NCIS* investigators aboard a research ship and was verbally combative with agency director Jenny Sheppard.

Clips with non-sympathetic frames of the military with a mortality salience reminder were drawn from "Sub Rosa" and the season 4 episode "Sandblast." In "Sub Rosa," a body is discovered in a drum of acidic waste material that is spilled by incompetent military workers. This clip also showed that not only was the Petty Officer in the drum murdered by someone in

the Navy, but also the inability of the Navy bureaucracy to keep track of its sailors. In "Sandblast," Agent Gibbs and Army Criminal Investigative Division Lieutenant Colonel Hollis Mann portrayed the military as a constant game of one-upmanship and territorialism rather than cooperation when a marine was killed by a bomb at the Army-Navy Club.

In order to measure the effects of framing and mortality salience, reliable scales were drawn from previous research while other constructs were measured with scales developed for the purposes of this study.

Measures

Death-thought accessibility. Participants were asked to complete a death-thought accessibility measure (Arndt et al., 1997), as a manipulation check for mortality salience, in the form of a word completion task that included 6 possible death-related words: buried, dead, grave, killed, skull, and coffin.

Participants were also asked to complete a thought-listing exercise after viewing the video clip (Cacioppo et al., 1997). These lists were coded for death-related words and thoughts and used as a secondary measure of death-thought accessibility.

Regulatory focus. As noted previously, individuals have a chronic regulatory focus related to how they see the world around them, which may have had an effect on their military attitudes and support for the military. Therefore, before viewing the episode clips, participants responded to a regulatory focus scale, the Regulatory Focus Questionnaire (RFQ; Higgins et al., 2001). The Regulatory Focus Questionnaire is a 5-point, Likert-type scale with 11 questions and statements that asks participants to report the frequency (never or seldom to very often) of specific events in their lives. The promotion scale consisted of six items and included questions like "Compared to most people, are you typically unable to get what you want out of life?" and

"Do you often do well at different things you try?" The prevention scale consisted of five items and included questions such as "How often did you obey rules and regulations that were established by your parents?" and statements such as "Not being careful has gotten me into trouble at times." Reported reliability for these scales yielded a Cronbach's α of .73 for the promotion scale and .80 for the prevention scale. In the main experiment, reliability for the promotion scale only yielded a Cronbach's α of .57, but the prevention scale yielded a Cronbach's α of .83.

Mood. Participants in this study completed a positive and negative affect scale (PANAS; Watson et al., 1988) to rule out the potential confound of mood. Participants were given a list of positive and negative emotions and indicated the extent to which they were experiencing each emotion at the current time. The 7-point, Likert-type scale was administered at the end of the study, just before participants were asked to complete a mood repair exercise. Positive feelings included the following: interested, excited, strong, enthusiastic, proud, alert, inspired, determined, attentive, and active. The main experiment yielded a Cronbach's α of .89 for the positive affect scale. Negative feelings included the following: distressed, upset, guilty, scared, hostile, irritable, ashamed, nervous, jittery, and afraid. A Cronbach's α of .86 was yielded in the main experiment for this scale.

Transportation. To assess participant involvement with the video clips shown during the experiment, a transportation scale was included in the post-test questionnaires (Green & Brock, 2000). The 11 item, 7-point, Likert-type scale assessed participant transportation into the narrative. Participants' indicated their level of agreement with statements such as "I could picture myself in the scene of events occurring in the film," "I found myself thinking of ways the film could have turned out differently," and "I was mentally involved in the film while viewing it."

Three scale items were reverse coded in order to obtain a positive direction. These three items were "While I was watching the film, activity going on in the room around me was on my mind," "After seeing the film clip, I found it easy to put out of my mind," and "I found my mind wandering while watching the film." Reported Cronbach's α for this scale was .76. Cronbach's α in the main experiment was comparable at .75.

Attitudes toward the military. Participants' attitude toward the military was assessed using a questionnaire containing 16 Likert-type items on a 7-point scale that was developed for the purposes of this study. This scale contains questions that address participant perceptions and attitudes toward the military. Participants were asked to rate their agreement with statements such as "A strong military makes me feel secure," "The military provides a valuable service," and "I can trust military personnel." Questions such as "I think the U.S. military is too powerful," and "The military decision-making process should be more democratic," were reverse coded. The main experiment produced a Cronbach's α of .85 for this scale. It should be noted that this scale was slightly leptokurtic at a level of 2.79 in the pre-test for the main experiment. This kurtosis level was lower in the post-test at 1.01, but should be noted and considered when examining study results.

Support for the military. To measure participants' inclination to support the military in specific ways regarding the military, nine military support behavior items were included in the post-test military attitude questionnaire. These items included statements such as "I would discuss the possibility of a military career with a friend," "I would provide information about the military to others," and "I would be willing to pay more in taxes to support military efforts." Cronbach's α was .89 in the main experiment.

Perceptions of military personnel's criminal behavior. Participants were asked to indicate their agreement with two statements in order to measure their perceptions of military personnel's likelihood to engage in criminal behavior. These two statements were "Soldiers are less likely to engage in criminal activities than average citizens" and "Soldiers always obey the law." These two statements were positively correlated $r(229) = .55, p < .001$.

Media consumption questionnaire To allow time for proximal defenses to fade after exposure to stimulus materials, a media consumption questionnaire was developed for the purposes of this study to serve as a distraction task for the mortality salience manipulation (Greenberg et al., 2000).

Demographic and other measures. Demographic information, including age and gender, was gathered from each participant in the study. Arndt, Greenberg, and Cook (2002) found that certain constructs, such as nationalistic or romantic constructs, can be more accessible to individuals based on their gender. Demographic information was used to determine if gender did affect differences between conditions.

Participant attitudes may have also been affected by their identification with a particular political party or the fact that they may have friends or family who are currently serving, or have previously served, in the military. Measurements for these constructs were included in the study questionnaires so that these potential confounds could be addressed during the analysis of the study data.

Participant responses to the video clips used for each condition may have also been affected by previous viewing. Those who had already seen these clips may have been able to recall information about the narrative within the episode. This may have influenced their perceptions of overall narrative. Measures were included to assess whether or not each

participant has seen *NCIS* before and if they had seen the stimulus clip in an episode of the program before participating in this study. All scales used in this study can be found in Appendix B.

  Mood repair. Since participants were drawn from a student pool, they were asked to list the emotions they feel when they receive an A on an exam. By completing this exercise, participants ended the experiment session on pleasant note and the exercise was intended to moderate potentially negative feelings they may have experienced as a result of the study.

Procedure

  During this between-subjects experiment, all data were collected using pencil and paper measures. When participants arrived at the study location, they were given a consent form to read. Once the study began, participants were given the opportunity to ask questions related to the consent form, directed to sign the consent form if they wished to participate and the forms were collected before the study officially started. Once again, participants were free to withdraw from the study at any time during the proceedings. Participants first completed the pre-test military attitude scale and Regulatory Focus Questionnaire. They were then shown one of eight possible video clips (sympathetic frame, non-sympathetic frame, sympathetic frame with a mortality salience reminder, or non-sympathetic frame with a mortality salience reminder). After viewing the video clip, participants were given the remaining measures to complete in order: the thought-listing exercise, a transportation scale measure (Green & Brock, 2000), the media consumption questionnaire, the word-completion task (Arndt et al., 1997) to measure death-thought accessibility, the military attitude scale again, questions related to military support and perceptions of military personnel's criminal behavior, party affiliation, military service, previous viewing of *NCIS* and demographic questions, the positive and negative affect scale (Watson et al., 1988), the mood repair exercise and a hypothesis-guessing exercise. After completing these

measures, participants were given a debriefing statement and thanked for their participation as

they left the study.

Main Experiment Results

Before conducting analyses to determine the effects of the video clips on the dependent variables of attitudes toward the military, support for the military, and perceived criminal behavior of military personnel, tests were run to examine the potential impact of confounding variables. Effects models for each dependent variable were constructed to determine the effects of mortality salience, frame, pre-existing attitudes toward the military, transportation, and negative affect on dependent variables. A separate model was run for each dependent variable, $F(31, 197)_{attitudes} = 48.01$, $p < .0001$, $Adj.\ R^2 = .86$ (see Table 2); $F(31, 197)_{support} = 2.13$, $p < .001$, $Adj.\ R^2 = .13$ (see Table 3); $F(31, 197)_{crime} = 3.73$, $p < .0001$, $Adj.\ R^2 = .27$ (see Table 4).

This study used a pre-test, post-test design examining pre-existing attitudes toward the military as well as attitudes after exposure to stimulus materials. As a result, pre-existing attitudes were expected to have a significant impact on attitudes measured in the post-test. This supposition was supported by analyses indicating that across conditions, pre-existing attitudes were a significant predictor of attitudes after exposure to the stimulus materials, $p < .0001$ (see Table 2). These pre-existing attitudes were also significant predictors of military support, $p < .0002$ (see Table 3), and perceptions of criminal behavior, $p < .0001$ (see Table 4). Pre-existing attitudes were controlled for in all subsequent tests.

Initial ANOVA tests indicated that participant transportation levels had a significant effect on all three dependent variables, $F(1, 227)_{attitudes} = 15.55$, $p = .0001$, $F(1, 227)_{support} = 20.22$, $p < .0001$, $F(1, 227)_{crime} = 7.43$, $p = .007$. Regression of all dependent variables on transportation showed a significant relationship between participants' level of transportation and their attitudes toward the military, $\beta = .25$, $t = 3.94$, $p = .0001$, military support, $\beta = .29$, $t = 4.50$, $p < .0001$, and perceptions of criminal behavior, $\beta = .18$, $t = 2.72$, $p = .007$. Therefore, transportation effects were controlled for in all subsequent analyses.

Since mortality salience studies intentionally confront participants with thoughts of death, negative affect may impact study results, especially those related to positive and negative attitudes. Negative affect did not vary significantly between mortality salience control and treatment conditions, $t(227) = 1.70$, $p = .09$, $M_{control} = 1.82$, $SE = .08$; $M_{treatment} = 2.01$, $SE = .08$. However, since these p-values approached significance levels, regression analyses were run to determine the exact relationship between negative affect and the dependent variables. Regression of attitudes toward the military on negative affect showed that negative affect was significantly related to attitudes toward the military, $\beta = -.21$, $t = -3.19$, $p = .002$. Additional regression showed that negative affect was not significantly related to support for the military, $\beta = -.05$, $t = -.72$, $p = .47$. Regression of perceptions of criminal behavior on negative affect revealed a relationship that was not significant, but approached significance levels, $\beta = -.11$, $t = -1.66$, $p = .10$. Based on these results, negative affect was controlled for in all subsequent tests as well to rule it out as a possible alternative explanation for effects.

Manipulation Check

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) test was run to test the effect of the mortality salience manipulation on the death-thought accessibility measure. There were no significant differences between conditions, $F(1, 227) = 0.04$, $p = 0.84$. As with the pilot experiment, this word completion task may not have been sensitive enough to measure differences between control and treatment groups.

However, another one-way ANOVA was run to measure the effectiveness of the thought listing measure and there was a significant difference in the number of death-related thoughts between control and treatment conditions, $F(1, 227) = 120.98$, $p < .0001$. Analyses showed that participants in the control condition rarely included a death related thoughts on the exercise ($M =$

.06, *SE* = .07). Participants in the treatment condition commonly listed at least one death-related word or thought, and some participants listed up to 5 death-related thoughts (*M* = 1.17, *SE* = .07).

Attitudes Toward the Military

After controlling for confounding variables and pre-existing attitudes, tests were conducted to determine the effects of a sympathetic or non-sympathetic frame on participant attitudes toward the military, military support, and perceptions of criminal behavior in relation to military personnel.

According to H1, clips with a sympathetic (vs. non-sympathetic) frame of the military would have a significant positive effect on participants' attitudes toward the military in the mortality salience control condition, but these effects would not be present in the mortality salience treatment condition. The test indicated a significant interaction effect between mortality salience and frame, $F(1, 228) = 6.56$, $p = .01$ (see Table 2). Post hoc testing revealed that participants in the non-sympathetic mortality salience control condition, LS $M_{non\text{-}sympathetic,\ control}$ = 4.74, *SE* = .04, had significantly less positive attitudes toward the military than those in other conditions, LS $M_{sympathetic,\ control}$ = 4.93, *SE* = .04; LS $M_{sympathetic,\ treatment}$ = 4.91, *SE* = .04; LS $M_{non\text{-}sympathetic,\ treatment}$ = 4.94, *SE* = .04 (see Table 6 and Figure 3). As predicted, attitudes toward the military were significantly different in mortality salience control condition while these effects were not present in mortality salience treatment condition.

Paired *t*-tests were conducted to examine differences within mortality salience treatment and control conditions. When examining the impact of mortality salience on attitudes toward the military there was a significant effect for frames within pairs in the control condition, $F(1) = 8.74$, $p = .004$. However, there was no significant difference among pairs, $F(1) = .25$, $p = .62$. On

an individual level, participants' attitudes toward the military were swayed by the frame within the clip when there was not a mortality salience reminder.

This effect was reversed in the treatment condition, which contained a mortality salience reminder, with a significant difference among pairs, $F(1) = 3.94$, $p = .05$, but no significant difference within pairs, $F(1) = .45$, $p = .50$. These results indicate that when mortality was made salient, individuals pre-existing attitudes were not influenced by the frame within the clip. When individual mortality was made salient, their attitudes did not change (see Figure 3).When mortality was not made salient, frame caused significant differences in participant attitudes, but there was no change in participant attitudes when they are made aware of their mortality. H1 was supported.

Support for the Military

H2 predicted that participants' support for the military would vary significantly between sympathetic and non-sympathetic frames in the mortality salience control condition, but the frame would have no impact on military support when mortality was made salient. The test showed that means did not differ significantly between conditions, $F(1, 228) = .13$, $p = .72$ (see Table 3). In the mortality salience control condition, the frame had no significant impact on military support, (LS $M_{sympathetic, control} = 2.51$, $SE = .25$; LS $M_{non-sympathetic, control} = 2.76$, $SE = .26$), and in the mortality salience treatment condition there was also no significant differences in military support $F(1, 228) = .66$, $p = .42$ (LS $M_{sympathetic, treatment} = 2.63$, $SE = .27$; LS $M_{non-sympathetic, treatment} = 3.07$, $SE = .27$). Mortality salience did not moderate the effects of frame between conditions, and H2 was not supported.

Perceptions of Military Personnel's Criminal Behavior

H3 predicted that participants' perceptions of military personnel's criminal behavior would be lower after viewing a clip with a sympathetic frame in the mortality salience control condition, but frame would have no impact on participant perceptions when their mortality was made salient. The test showed that means did not differ significantly between conditions, $F(1, 228) = .68$, $p = .41$ (see Table 4). The frame did not have a significant effect on participant perceptions of criminal behavior in either the mortality salience control, (LS $M_{sympathetic, control} = 3.67$, $SE = .16$; LS $M_{non-sympathetic, control} = 3.40$, $SE = .16$) or mortality salience treatment conditions (LS $M_{sympathetic, treatment} = 3.33$, $SE = .17$; LS $M_{non-sympathetic, treatment} = 3.34$, $SE = .18$). H3 was not supported.

Regulatory Focus

To answer the question of whether regulatory focus has an impact on the attitudes, support, and perceptions of military personnel's criminal behavior of study participants (RQ1), regulatory focus (promotion or prevention) was added as an independent variable to the models previously described with attitudes, military support, and perceptions of criminal behavior as dependent variables.

The test of promotion focus on attitudes toward the military revealed that a promotion focus was not a significant predictor, $F(1) = 1.24$, $p = .27$, although the overall model was significant, $F(63, 164) = 25.96$, $p < .0001$, *Adj. R^2* = .87. A promotion focus was also not a predictor of support for the military, $F(1) = .23$, $p = .63$, even though the model for military support remained significant with promotion focus added, $F(63, 164) = 1.66$, $p = .006$, *Adj. R^2* = 15. It was also not a predictor of perceptions of criminal behavior, $F(1) = .15$, $p = .70$. Once again, the model remained significant with promotion focus added, $F(63, 164) = 2.55$, $p < .0001$, *Adj. R^2* = .30. Although the models remained significant due to the strong effects of frame and

mortality salience, the effects models did not improve with the addition of promotion focus and, in fact, became somewhat weaker.

Tests also indicated that prevention focus was not a significant predictor of attitudes toward the military, $F(1) = .2.22$, $p = .14$, $F(63, 164)_{attitudes} = 24.56$, $p < .0001$, $Adj.$ $R^2 = .87$. Initial tests indicated that a prevention focus may be a predictor of military support, $F(1) = 8.78$, $p = .004$, $F(63, 164)_{support} = 1.77$, $p = .002$, $Adj.$ $R^2 = .18$. However, further testing showed that when prevention focus interacted with frame, $F(1) = .67$, $p = .41$, or mortality salience, $F(1) = .02$, $p = .89$, as covariates, these effects were no longer significant.

Prevention focus was also not a significant predictor of participant perceptions of military personnel's criminal behavior, $F(1) = 1.14$, $p = .29$; $F(63, 164)_{crime} = 3.06$, $p < .0001$, $Adj.$ $R^2 = .36$.

Potential Moderators

As noted in the literature review, particular constructs are more accessible to each gender, such nationalistic constructs for men and romantic constructs for women (Arndt et al., 2002). A one-way ANOVA test showed that gender did not have a significant main effect on attitudes toward the military, $F(1, 227) = 1.67$, $p = .20$, or perceptions of criminal behavior, $F(1, 227) = .45$, $p = .50$. However, there was a significant main effect between gender and support for the military, $F(1, 227) = 65.56$, $p < .0001$, with men ($M = 4.08$, $SE = .20$) having stronger support for the military than women ($M = 2.11$, $SE = .15$). This may have influenced the results related to military support.

Individual party affiliation may also play a role in participant attitudes, support for the military, and perceptions of criminal behavior. Party affiliation had a significant main effect on attitudes toward the military, $F(4, 223) = 9.50$, $p < .0001$. Republicans ($M = 5.25$, $SE = .08$) had

significantly more positive attitudes toward the military than those who identified with other parties (see Table 7).

Political party affiliation also had a significant main effect on support for the military, $F(4, 223) = 3.20$, $p = .01$. Independents ($M = 3.51$, $SE = .37$) and Republicans ($M = 2.93$, $SE = .20$ showed significantly more support for the military than Democrats ($M = 2.06$, $SE = .28$) or those who identified with an "Other" party ($M = 3.83$, $SE = .79$; see Table 8).

Party affiliation had a significant main effect on perceptions of criminal behavior as well, $F(4, 223) = 3.80$, $p = .005$. Republicans ($M = 3.83$, $SE = .14$) had significantly lower perceptions of criminal behavior among military personnel than Independents ($M = 2.94$, $SE = 2.94$; see Table 9).

Previous viewing of the program *NCIS* may have also influenced participant attitudes, and 74 percent of participants ($n = 170$) indicated that they had seen the program before. Only 13 percent of participants ($n = 31$) could identify the episode of *NCIS* from which the clip was drawn. A one-way ANOVA indicated that prior viewing of *NCIS* had a main effect on participant attitudes toward the military, $F(1, 227) = 4.27$, $p = .04$. Participants who had seen the program before had significantly more positive attitudes toward the military ($M = 4.96$, $SE = .06$) than those who had not seen *NCIS* before ($M = 4.71$, $SE = .11$). Previous viewing did not have a main effect on support for the military, $F(1, 227) = .62$, $p = .43$, or perceptions of criminal behavior, $F(1, 227) = .04$, $p = .84$.

Seventy-one percent of participants ($n = 161$) also indicated that they had family or friends currently serving in the military. This had a significant main effect on attitudes toward the military as well, $F(1, 226) = 9.56$, $p = .002$. Those with family or friends currently serving had significantly more positive attitudes toward the military ($M = 5.00$, $SE = .06$) than those who

did not ($M = 4.64$, $SE = .10$). It also had a main effect on support for the military, $F(1, 226) = 17.10$, $p < .0001$. Support for the military was higher for those with family or friends serving ($M = 3.14$, $SE = .15$), than those who did not currently know someone serving in the armed forces ($M = 1.99$, $SE = .23$). There were no main effects on perceptions of criminal behavior, $F(1, 226) = .38$, $p = .54$.

The results of the hypothesis guessing exercise indicated that 61 percent ($n = 139$) correctly identified the independent variable of frame and the dependent variable of attitudes toward the military within this study. An additional 20 percent ($n = 45$) identified only attitudes toward the military as a dependent variable, and 15 percent ($n = 34$) identified only the independent variable of frame. A total of eight individuals could not correctly identify any of the independent or dependent variables. Only three participants indicated that they believed this study to be measuring some aspect of media violence. None of the participants in this study identified the dependent variables of military support or perceptions of criminal behavior. No participants addressed the mortality salience manipulation within the hypothesis guessing exercise. Participant reports of their attitudes toward the military may have been influenced once they identified the study's examination of frame and military attitudes, and this potential for reporting bias should be taken into account when examining study results.

Discussion of Results and Implications

The results of this study fully supported only one of the proposed hypotheses, did not

support two, and attempted to answer one research question. Although not all hypotheses were

supported, these results contribute to the existing literature by continuing to examine the impacts

of frame and mortality salience on attitudes and behaviors in relation to a specific genre of

television programming. It also examines the potential impact of chronic regulatory focus on

attitudes and behaviors.

Summary of Drama Programming and Framing Findings

Previous research has studied the effects of framing, including the use of frames in

entertainment media to examine the effects that frames of government actors can have on

viewers' perceptions of government and government institutions (Lichter, et al., 2000; Moy &

Pfau, 2000; Pfau et al., 2001). Frames in political drama programming can have impacts on

viewer attitudes and perceptions of the presidency (Holbert, Pillion et al., 2003; Holbert, Tschida

et al., 2005), but this study extends that research into the realm of crime dramas.

The military is responsible for the security and defense of the nation. Perceptions of the

military are closely tied to citizen feelings of patriotism and nationalistic pride. Although they

may be covered by the news on occasion, especially with recent armed conflicts in the Middle

East, individuals in the armed services are not typically shown on entertainment television. If

they are shown, it may be because they have retired from service or are acting in another

capacity. *NCIS* allows viewers a behind-the-scenes glimpse of life in the armed services and

what kind of work military personnel do and how they conduct themselves. This depiction of

military personnel and the ways in which they are framed within the program have a significant

effect on viewer attitudes toward the military. Participants within this study had more positive

attitudes toward the military after watching clips in which military personnel were framed in a

sympathetic light and less positive attitudes toward the military after watching clips with a non-sympathetic frame. By showing naval personnel as competent, dedicated, and loyal, viewers felt more positive about the armed services. The perceived competence and dedication of the actors on screen carried over into the real world and influenced participant attitudes about those actually serving in the armed forces. This is particularly important since non-sympathetic frames had a similar impact on viewers. Viewers who saw personnel within the show framed as inept, chauvinistic, or uncooperative carried those perceptions over into the real world once the clip was over and their attitudes toward the armed services was less positive. This speaks to the power of frames and transportation effects on viewers. The images seen on television screen have a real-world impact on viewer attitudes, even if they are only catching a brief glimpse of the program. As Pfau, Moy, and Szabo (2001) point out, the number of positive frames of government institutions and actors is increasing, but negative frames remain in abundance in entertainment programming and they have an effect on viewers. Negative frames within entertainment programming may lead to lower levels of trust in our government institutions, or armed forces, without a balance of positive frames. Although there are positive frames of the military throughout *NCIS*, there are also negative frames of military personnel, and these frames are often mixed together in each episode. The balance between frames was not examined in this study, but may be an area for future research. Also, this study only exposed participants to one type of frame at a time in short episode clips, but when confronted with conflicting information during an episode, viewer attitudes may shift in accordance with the frame they have seen most recently or shift along with the more dominant frame within the program.

It is important to note that even though these positive and negative frames influence viewer attitudes about government institutions, such as the military, they do not significantly

affect support for the military or perceptions of military personnel's criminal behavior. In accordance with cultivation theory, it may take long-term exposure to positive and negative frames in order to affect these two constructs.

Summary of Terror Management Theory Findings

The death-thought accessibility measures used in this study have shown that even brief exposure to clips from crime dramas that include visuals of dead bodies can remind viewers of their own mortality and prompt them to defend their cultural worldviews. Even though these bodies were the product of special effects and make-up artists, the bodies on screen prompted viewers to remember their own vulnerability and attempt to defend themselves against thoughts of their own demise through proximal and distal defense mechanisms. If mortality was not salient, the sympathetic or non-sympathetic frames of the military in the clip affected attitudes as previously discussed, but when mortality was made salient, individuals clung more tightly to their pre-existing attitudes toward the military and there was no significant change in attitudes. If participants had positive attitudes about the military before watching the video clip, their attitude did not change significantly after watching the video clip with the mortality salience reminder. When those with a positive attitude toward the military were presented with a negative frame of military personnel, participants resisted the influence of information that was contradictory to their pre-existing attitudes, maintaining their own cultural worldview and resisting an alternative approach.

Although this study focused on one short exposure to a crime drama, given the presence of autopsy scenes and dead bodies in crime dramas, it is not unreasonable to expect that viewers' mortality is consistently made salient when they watch crime drama programming as part of their weekly routine. Viewers' resistance to attitude change when mortality is made salient indicates

that the framing effects previously discussed may be somewhat overstated in terms of their impact, at least as they relate to crime dramas. Individuals who watch crime dramas may not experience attitude change as a result of the frames presented within the narratives because once mortality is made salient by the image of a dead body, usually in the beginning of a crime drama program, they engage in defensive processing that prevents attitude change. However, this may not hold true for other types of dramas. Political dramas such as *The West Wing* lack the type of imagery present in crime dramas that would raise mortality salience and prompt defensive processing. Overall, political dramas may have more of an attitudinal impact on viewers than crime dramas since mortality salience would not interfere with the framing effects present within political dramas.

Although the results of this study showed that mortality salience reminders within entertainment programming cause individuals to more vigorously defend their pre-existing attitudes, there were no significant effects on support for the military or perceptions of military personnel's criminal behavior. Hansen, Winzeler, and Topolinski (2010) demonstrated that individuals are more likely to continue particular behaviors, in addition to defending pre-existing attitudes, when confronted with mortality salience messages. Without assessing military support behaviors prior to exposure to stimulus materials, it is beyond the scope of the present study to determine if behavioral maintenance took place as a result of exposure to mortality salience messages within *NCIS*. This study can only show that support for the military was not significantly different between participants who were exposed to mortality salience messages and those who were not.

Summary of Regulatory Focus Findings

This study found that chronic regulatory focus does not have an effect on attitudes toward the military. It is beyond the scope of the current study to determine if an individual's regulatory focus plays a role in the type of entertainment programming they prefer. However, this study does show that promotion and prevention foci do not influence attitudes after watching a short television clip.

Chronic regulatory focus also did not influence participant perceptions of criminal behavior among armed services personnel. However, there were some differences between individuals with a promotion and a prevention focus when addressing support for the military. Although a promotion focus was not a significant predictor of military support, main effects tests showed that prevention focus may be a possible indicator of behavioral intent regarding support for the military. Although this did not reach significant levels when other factors were taken into account, it is important to note that an effect may exist. This relationship may be because of the characteristics inherent in those who are more prevention focused. Prevention focused individuals tend to focus on protection, safety, and duty while avoiding loss as much as possible as they attempt to reach desired end-states (Higgins, 1997). This emphasis on safety and duty may make them more inclined to support a stronger military or join the military themselves in order to fulfill a perceived duty. Future research may focus on determining the exact nature of this relationship and the impact that it may have when combined with a message containing a particular regulatory frame.

Study results showed that political party had a significant impact on participant attitudes toward the military. Those in the Republican Party had significantly more positive attitudes toward the military than Democrats or Independents (see Table 7). This may be the result of the

current political climate in which armed ongoing armed conflict in the Middle East was directed

by President George W. Bush (R) and then President Barack Obama (D), or the perception that

the Republican political platform is more commonly associated with international affairs,

including those involving the armed services while Democrats are more commonly associated

with domestic affairs, but political ideology and party identification should taken into account for

future studies.

Theoretical Implications

The purpose of this experiment was to extend framing research, TMT and regulatory

focus theory into the world of entertainment media and drama programming, particularly that of

crime dramas. Although this study has interesting implications for those interested in

entertainment media and its effects on viewers, it also has important implications for the theories

that provided the basis for this research.

On a theoretical level, this study used TMT to examine the role that defensive processing

plays in the maintenance of attitudes and support behaviors. In line with previous research, this

study has shown that individuals who are confronted with thoughts of their own mortality more

vigorously defend their attitudes against outside influences than those who have managed to

avoid thoughts of death. Message frame may be persuasive when an individual's defenses are

down, but the frame of a message has no significant impact once individuals have engaged in

defensive processing. Although this study used TMT along with framing, the tenets of TMT took

precedence once mortality was made salient. The effects of framing are only evident if

individuals are open to potential persuasion rather than on the defensive. Those who watch crime

dramas in which dead bodies are present may be more resistant to persuasive messages

potentially imbedded in these programs as they cling more tightly to their pre-existing attitudes

and defend their worldview. This may also make individuals less receptive to persuasive appeals during commercial breaks during programs that prompt defensive processing as they close themselves off from alternative points of view.

Defensive processing can prevent framing from persuading the viewers of a particular message, but it can also prevent viewers from being persuaded by frames within media. Positive and negative frames, or sympathetic and non-sympathetic frames as in this study, are persuasive and have a significant impact on the attitudes of media viewers. However, once mortality has been made salient and distal defenses have been engaged, viewers are more resistant to frames that contradict their pre-existing attitudes. For example, those with a negative view of public officials who watch a crime drama that primes thoughts of death will be more resistant to accepting the frames of public officials within that drama if those frames are positive.

On a methodological note, previous research within TMT has relied heavily on manipulations that called for participants to reflect on how they feel when they consider their own death or are in situations which may also prompt thoughts of death (Greenberg et al., 2000). However, this study shows that alternative manipulations may be effective as well. In this case, the presence of a death body within an entertainment video clip prompted thoughts of death and prompted defensive processing. Although these clips provided an effective manipulation to prompt death-related thoughts, the word-completion task was not sensitive enough to reflect significant differences between control and treatment conditions when using this particular manipulation. A thought-listing exercise was necessary in order to adequately measure manipulation effects and additional measures may be necessary for other studies using alternative mortality salience manipulation materials in order to accurately measure death-thought accessibility.

Practical Implications

This study also attempted to determine if chronic regulatory focus has an impact on individual's attitudes and perceptions. The results indicate that there may be a relationship between focus and attitudes, but additional research is necessary with reliable measures in order to determine the nature of these effects. The effects of regulatory focus on attitudes may be dependent on the construct in question, particularly given the approach-oriented nature of promotion focused individuals and the emphasis on duty for prevention-focused individuals.

The framing and mortality salience effects found in this study have practical implications as well. When mortality is made salient within entertainment programming, such as crime dramas, viewers' pre-existing attitudes are reinforced. As a result, advertisers placing ads within prime time television programming should be conscious of what types of advertisements they are placing within these time slots. Advertisements that attempt to influence viewers to change their minds about a product, switch to a new product, or move toward supporting a particular political candidate may not be effective after viewers mortality has been made salient by the program that is being aired around the commercial break. However, ads that are attempting to reinforce brand loyalty or connect with a given party base for a political candidate may be more successful after mortality is made salient since defensive processing leads to the reinforcement of pre-existing attitudes and beliefs.

This should also be taken into account by advocacy groups that are using advertisements to reach large numbers of viewers by airing ads during primetime programming. Advocacy campaigns that attempt to persuade individuals to change attitudes or behaviors may find ads less effective if they are aired during programs that prime death-related thoughts, such as crime, or potentially medical, dramas. Also, if ads prime death-related thoughts, advocacy groups may find

that they are less persuasive because once mortality is made salient, and individuals engage in defensive processing, attitudes are more resistant to change. Ads developed by groups such as the "Truth Campaign" may find that their advertisements prime death-related thoughts and only reinforce the negative behaviors that they are trying to combat. However, it should again be noted that if groups are attempting to reinforce positive pre-existing attitudes and behaviors, advertisements that make mortality salient do not cause attitudes to become more negative since pre-existing attitudes are reinforced.

Although this study did not specifically look at political ideology in relation to mortality salience, it should be noted that political party identification did have an impact on the attitudes of participants and their perceptions of the military. Additional research is necessary before conclusions can be drawn regarding any potential interactions between mortality salience and political ideology, but it should be taken into account when examining issues or institutions which may be more closely tied to one political party's platform.

Limitations and Future Research

Although this study provided insight into aspects of the theories used, there are some limitations that should be noted and taken into consideration when examining the results of this experiment. Implications for future research in these areas are considered.

This study tied the viewing of a crime drama program to significant attitudinal change in the control condition, but was limited to the attitudinal changes that resulted from exposure to short clips of *NCIS*. The clips shown during this study were short in comparison to the length of a regular episode, which is typically around 43 minutes without commercials, or how strong effects may be if participants were to watch an entire episode. Future research should attempt to determine if framing effects are still present or stronger if viewers watch an entire episode. Watching an entire episode of a crime drama should also moderate the significant impact that

transportation levels have on study results. Transportation effects varied across these short clips, but watching an entire episode should allow all participants to become immersed in the narrative of the episode. Equal levels of transportation across conditions should make effects more apparent in future studies.

Television viewing is naturally episodic and general viewers tend to channel surf and jump between programs. A viewer may only catch a few minutes of a program or not really be paying attention to the program while they complete other tasks, never actually watching an entire episode of a program all the way through even though they have that opportunity. Although this study has shown that even briefly viewing a few minutes of a program can result in attitudinal change, this study can only describe the immediate effects of watching a segment of crime drama programming. As Gerbner and Gross (1976) has argued, the perceptions of individuals who watch large amounts of a particular type of programming may be more closely tied to what they have seen on television than this particular study has shown. Within this study, there were no significant differences in participant perceptions of military personnel's criminal behavior, but long-term viewing of the program may cause that to change. The attitudes of long-term, habitual viewers toward the military may also be more stable than individuals who are only tuning in for a few minutes. Mortality salience effects may also differ for those who are long term viewers of the program or those who consume large amounts of crime drama programming. Given the duration of the clips being used and the participant population, examining the attitudes and behaviors of long-term viewers of *NCIS*, or the cumulative effects of watching crime drama programming, is beyond the scope of this particular study, but the attitudinal effects of long-term, habitual viewing should be a focus of further study.

It is also unclear how viewer attitudes change when they are exposed to multiple crime dramas, as they would in an evening prime time lineup. This study only examined changes in attitudes in relation to *NCIS* and perceptions of the military. Other crime dramas may affect a wide range of attitudes and perceptions based on the episode. For example, shows like *White Collar* (USA, 2009) and *Leverage* (TNT, 2008) may lead viewers to have more positive perceptions of criminals and con artists and more negative perceptions of corporate leaders and government, depending on how characters are portrayed within the drama. When confronted with a wide range of frames, sympathetic or non-sympathetic, viewers' attitudinal response is still unknown. Future studies should consider the ways in viewer attitudes shift when program viewers are confronted with conflicting frames of characters and institutions.

The mortality salience manipulation within this study was dependent on the content of each video clip. Although the results of this study showed that the manipulation worked, the word-completion task did not show significant differences in death-thought accessibility between conditions. Researchers who attempt similar manipulations when examining entertainment programming will need to take this into consideration or continue to include additional mortality salience manipulations in order to insure that participants' mortality is made salient. Also, participants' negative affect had a significant relationship with participant attitudes toward the military and had the potential to influence study results. After controlling for affect, significant results were still found, but future studies should try to avoid this if possible. This may not be possible with crime drama programming, given the nature of images and subject matter. However, the goal of a crime drama is to catch the perpetrator and have closure for the victim or victim's family. Future studies that attempt to use a full episode of a show may be able to avoid negative affect as the narrative arc of an episode closes on a positive note. Using a full episode is

rarely practical, so studies using a shorter video clip may not be able to avoid negative affect based on the subject matter of the program being used.

The pilot and main experiments in this study used two different regulatory focus scales, the RFS (Fellner et al., 2007) and the RFQ (Higgins et al., 2001). Only the prevention focus scale in the RFQ achieved a reasonable level reliability based on study data, although the promotion scale of the RFQ was more reliable as a whole than the scale from the RFS. The low reliability of promotion focus scale measures indicates that some effects related to promotion focus may not be apparent within this study. Although there were no significant effects for regulatory focus in this particular study, future research may look at alternative ways of measuring regulatory focus rather than using these scales. Additional research may find other ways in which regulatory focus affects crime drama viewers and their attitudes.

Conclusion

The main purpose of this study was to examine how sympathetic and non-sympathetic frames in entertain can influence the attitudes of viewers, especially when their mortality is made salient. In this case, the attitudes of those who watched *NCIS* were influenced by the frame within the episode clip, except when their mortality was made salient. When mortality is made salient, viewers hold tight to their pre-existing attitudes and resist change. Viewers may also be influenced by the frame within an entertainment program, but not when mortality is made salient. In general, viewers are more open to persuasion and attitude change when their defenses are down. When defenses are raised as a result of mortality salience, they are more resistant to persuasion and attitudinal change.

Although this study does not account for the effects of long-term viewing, it may be that the worldview of individuals who watch crime dramas are less likely to be influenced by the images of violence once their mortality is made salient. As a result, they may not see the world

as more violent and dangerous, as Gerbner would argue, because they are engaged in defending the belief that they are safe and secure. This is a broad supposition and more research is necessary before any definitive claims can be made, but the results of this study provide an interesting insight into the role that crime dramas and entertainment viewing may play in attitudinal change.

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Appendix A : Stimulus Materials

1.) "Sub Rosa" -- 00:10:42 – 00:12:25
In this clip, Special Agents Gibbs and Todd board the submarine, where they are greeted by the submarine commander and his executive officer.

2.) "Family Secret" -- 00:19:13 –00:20:55
Season 3, Episode 16, Original Airdate: February 28, 2006
Episode Description: An ambulance supposedly carrying the remains of a Marine mysteriously explodes. The NCIS team discovers the ambulance was rigged to blow up, but that the DNA of the victim does not match that of the deceased Marine.
During this clip, Special Agents Dinozzo and Gibbs discuss the Marines involved in the case while Dinozzo receives first aid for a sprained ankle.

3.) "Sub Rosa" -- 00:08:28 – 00:10:42
This clip shows interactions between NCIS agents and a naval officer. The officer refuses to let Special Agent Todd accompany Special Agent Gibbs on board a submarine to continue the investigation because she is female. Gibbs and the officer argue until Agent Todd is allowed to go on board.

4.) "Chimera" -- 00:20:01 –00:21:45
Season 5, Episode 6, Original Airdate: October 30, 2007
Episode Description: While investigating a mysterious death aboard a top-secret naval research ship, Gibbs and the NCIS team discover an abandoned ship in the middle of the sea and a killer secret that could cost them their lives.
In this clip, NCIS Director Jenny Sheppard argues with the naval officer in charge of a classified operation being conducted aboard a ship that has been found deserted. She demands answers from the officer while the NCIS team hunts for clues on the ship.

5.) "Sub Rosa" -- 00:39:12 – 00:42:15
In this clip shows Special Agent Gibbs and members of the submarine crew trying to remove the booby-trapped body of a dead eco-terrorist who was impersonating a naval petty officer.

6.) "Call of Silence" -- 00:37:26 – 00:41:06
Season 2, Episode 7, Original Airdate: November 23, 2004
Episode Description: A World War II Medal of Honor recipient confesses to murdering his best friend during a battle at Iwo Jima almost 60 years ago. Believing there's more to the story, Gibbs and the team work to solve the mystery and save the man from going to prison.
In this clip, Special Agent Gibbs and his team are trying to prove that a Medal of Honor winner, Ernie, is not responsible for the death of his friend on Iwo Jima during World War II. Gibbs guides Ernie through his memories of that time until Ernie can recall what happened.

7.) "Sub Rosa" -- 00:02:50 – 00:05:28
Season 1, Episode 7, Original Airdate: November 18, 2003
Episode Description: Gibbs and Todd investigate the possibility of an imposter on board a nuclear submarine.
In this clip, workers on a Naval base discover a dead body that has been shoved into a drum full of acid. The NCIS team of investigators arrives on scene to take control, and meets a new agent, Timothy McGee, who is new to NCIS and uncomfortable around the body.

8.) "Sandblast" -- 00:03:26 –00:06:03
Season 4, Episode 7, Original Airdate: November 7, 2006
Episode Description: An explosion on a military golf course kills a Marine colonel and the NCIS team must work with the Army Criminal Investigative Unit to find the killer. Romance is in the air for both Gibbs and Tony.
In this clip, the NCIS team arrives at the Army-Navy club to investigating a explosion that killed a Marine in a sand trap on the golf course. Army CID is already on the scene and trying to take over the investigation. As Gibbs and Colonel Mann argue back and forth about who should take lead on the case, the team begins its investigation.

Appendix B: Study Measures

Measure 1: Regulatory Focus Questionnaire

This set of questions asks you about specific events in your life. Read each question carefully and indicate your answer to each question by circling the appropriate number. Indicate your response to the following statements on a scale from 1 to 5 where "1" means *never or seldom* and "7" means *very often*.

Promotion Scale Items: (* indicate items that were reverse coded for scoring purposes)
1.) Compared to most people, are you typically unable to get what you want out of life?*
2.) How often have you accomplished things that got you "psyched" to work even harder?
3.) Do you often do well at different things that you try?
4.) When it comes to achieving things that are important to me, I find that I don't perform as well as I ideally would like to do.*
5.) I feel like I have made progress toward being successful in my life.
6.) I have found very few hobbies or activities in my life that capture my interest or motive me to put effort into them.*

Prevention Scale Items: (* indicates reverse coded items)
1.) Growing up, would you ever "cross the line" by doing things that your parents would not tolerate?*
2.) Did you get on your parents' nerves often when you were growing up?*
3.) How often did you obey the rules and regulations that were established by your parents?
4.) Growing up, did you ever act in ways that your parents thought were objectionable?*
5.) Not being careful enough has gotten me into trouble at times.*

Measure 2: Positive and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS)

This document contains a number of words that describe different feelings and emotions. Indicate to what extent you feel this way right now, that is, at the present moment. Read each statement carefully, and then circle the number that best expresses your feelings. Rate your level of agreement with the following statements on a scale from 1 to 7 where "1" means *very slightly or not at all* and "7" means *extremely*.

Positive Affect Items:
1.) Interested
2.) Excited
3.) Strong
4.) Enthusiastic
5.) Proud
6.) Alert
7.) Inspired
8.) Determined
9.) Attentive
10.) Active

Negative Affect Items:
1.) Distressed
2.) Upset
3.) Guilty
4.) Scared
5.) Hostile
6.) Irritable
7.) Ashamed
8.) Nervous
9.) Jittery
10.) Afraid

Measure 3: Military Attitude Scale (* indicates reverse coded items)

Rate your level of agreement with the following statements about on a scale from 1 to 7 where "1" means *strongly disagree* and "7" means *strongly agree*. Read each statement carefully, and then circle the number that best expresses your feelings.

1.) A strong military makes me feel secure.
2.) I approve of taxes used to improve our military.
3.) The military provides a valuable service.
4.) I can trust the military to protect my country.
5.) The military exists for the public good.
6.) Everyone should have to serve in the military.
7.) I think the U.S. military is too powerful.*
8.) Less money needs to be spent on the military.*
9.) The military decision-making process should be more democratic.*
10.) Military officers and troops are well trained.
11.) Military leaders are competent and knowledgeable.
12.) I can trust military personnel.
13.) Soldiers are just like average citizens.
14.) Soldiers are held accountable for their actions.
15.) Soldiers always follow orders.
16.) The military inhibits free expression.*

Measure 4: Behavioral Intention Measures

Rate your level of agreement with the following statements about on a scale from 1 to 7 where "1" means *strongly disagree* and "7" means *strongly agree*. Read each statement carefully, and then circle the number that best expresses your feelings.

1.) I would be willing to serve in the military.
2.) I would be willing to pay more in taxes to support military efforts.
3.) I would support legislation providing additional resources to troops.
4.) I would support legislation supporting additional military spending.
5.) I would feel comfortable approaching a soldier or military officer.
6.) I would send supplies to deployed soldiers.
7.) I would provide information about the military to others.
8.) I would discuss the possibility of a military career with a friend.
9.) I would visit a military base.

Measure 5: Perceptions of Military Personnel's Criminal Behavior Measures

Rate your level of agreement with the following statements about on a scale from 1 to 7 where "1" means *strongly disagree* and "7" means *strongly agree*. Read each statement carefully, and then circle the number that best expresses your feelings.

1.) Soldiers are less likely to engage in criminal activities than average citizens.
2.) Soldiers always obey the law.

Measure 6: Death-thought accessibility measure (* = indicates death-related word options)

Complete the following by filling letters in the blanks to create words. Fill in the blanks with the first word that comes to mind. Write one letter per blank. Some words may be plural.

1.)   BUR _ _ D*

2.)   PLA _ _

3.)   _ _ OK

4.)   WAT _ _

5.)   DE _ _*

6.)   MU _ _

7.)   _ _ NG

8.)   B _ T _ LE

9.)   M _ J _ R

10.)   P _ _ TURE

11.)   FL _ W _ R

12.)   GRA _ _*

13.)   K _ _ GS

14.)   CHA _ _

15.)   KI _ _ ED*

16.)   CL _ _ K

17.)   TAB _ _

18.)   W _ _ DOW

19.)   SK _ _ L*

20.)   TR _ _

21.)   P _ P _ R

22.)   COFF _ _*

23.)   _ O _ SE

24.)   POST _ _

25.)   R _ DI _

Measure 7: Thought Listing Exercise (Secondary Death-thought accessibility measure)

We are interested in everything that went through your mind as you viewed the video clip.

For approximately three minutes, list thoughts (**positive** thoughts, **negative** thoughts, and **neutral** thoughts) regarding the video you viewed. You may use single words or full sentences. Ignore spelling, grammar and punctuation.

We have deliberately included more space than we think you will need to ensure that everyone will have plenty of room.

Be completely honest. Your responses will be anonymous.

We have prepared a form for you to record your thoughts and ideas. Simply write down the first thought you had in the first box, the second thought in the second box, etc.

Please put only one idea or thought in a box.

1.	2.
3.	4.
5.	6.
7.	8.
9.	10.
11.	12.
13.	14.
15.	16.

Measure 8: Transportation Scale (* indicates reverse coded items)

Rate your level of agreement with the following statements about on a scale from 1 to 7 where "1" means *strongly disagree* and "7" means *strongly agree*. Read each statement carefully, and then circle the number that best expresses your feelings.

1.) While I was watching the film, I could easily see myself there with the characters.

2.) While I was watching the film, activity going on in the room around me was on my mind.*

3.) I could picture myself in the scene of events occurring in the film.

4.) I was mentally involved in the film while viewing it.

5.) After seeing the film clip, I found it easy to put out of my mind.*

6.) I was to learn how the film ended.

7.) The film affected me emotionally.

8.) I found myself thinking of ways the film could have turned out differently.

9.) I found my mind wandering while watching the film.*

10.) The events in the film are relevant to my everyday life.

11.) The events in the film have changed my life.

Measure 8: Demographics and Other Measures

Demographic Information
1. What is your current age? _____
2. What is your gender?   Male   Female
3. What is your major? _____

Party Affiliation
1. Do you identify with a particular political party? (Circle one. If "other," please identify.)
       Republican   Democrat   Independent
        No Affiliation   Other _____

2. Did you cast a ballot in the previous presidential election?   Yes   No

Military Service
1. Do you have family or friends currently serving in the military?   Yes   No

2. Do you have family or friends who will serve in the military in the future? Yes   No

3. Do you have family or friends who have previously served in the military? Yes   No

4. Have you ever served in the military? Yes   No

5. Do you plan to enter the military within the next four years? Yes   No

Previous Viewing of *NCIS*
1. Have you seen the television show *NCIS* before? Yes   No

2. Do you watch *NCIS* twice a month or more? Yes   No

3. Have you seen the video clip in an *NCIS* episode before? Yes   No

4. (For pilot experiment mortality salience treatment condition only) Have you seen the second video clip in an *NCIS* episode before? Yes   No

Measure 9: Media Consumption Questionnaire

Think about the television shows that you watch during the week. Answer the following questions based on your television viewing habits.

1.) On an average day, how many hours of television do you watch?
2.) During an average week, how many hours of local news do you watch?
3.) During an average week, how many hours of national news do you watch?
4.) During an average week, how many hours of sports programming do you watch?
5.) During an average week, how many hours of drama programming do you watch?
6.) During an average week, how many hours of crime/legal drama do you watch?
7.) During an average week, how many hours of medical drama do you watch?
8.) During an average week, how many hours of reality television do you watch?
9.) During an average week, how many hours of situational comedy television do you watch?
10.) During an average week how many hours of romantic comedy television do you watch?
11.) During an average week, how many hours of science fiction television do you watch?
12.) During an average week, how many hours of documentary programming do you watch?
13.) During an average week, how many hours of horror television programming do you watch?
14.) During an average week, how many hours of talk television programming do you watch?
15.) During an average week, how many hours of soap operas do you watch?

Measure 10: Mood Repair and Hypothesis Guessing Exercise

Instructions for Mood Repair Exercise:
On the lines below, describe how you feel when you receive an A on an exam.

Instructions for Hypothesis Guessing Exercise:
On the lines below, describe what you think this study was about. What do you think was being measured during this study?

Measure 10: Regulatory Focus Scale (used during pilot test only, * indicate promotion scale items, § indicate prevention scale items)

Rate your level of agreement with the following statements about on a scale from 1 to 7 where "1" means *strongly disagree* and "7" means *strongly agree*. Read each statement carefully, and then circle the number that best expresses your feelings.

1.) I am afraid of not fulfilling the obligations on me.
2.) For me, it is particularly important to be able to go my own way and do the things which interest me and which suit me.
3.) I often think about how I can avoid failures in my life.
4.) For me, it is particularly important to live in a stable environment.§
5.) I prefer to work without instructions from others.*
6.) Rules and regulations are helpful and necessary for me.*
7.) In new, unfamiliar situations I feel uncomfortable.
8.) Changes make my life thrilling and worth living.
9.) It is very important to me that I am satisfied with myself, regardless of what other people think.
10.) For me, it is very important to carry out the obligations placed on me.
11.) It is very important to me to develop myself further and to improve myself.
12.) I admit that I make mistakes.
13.) I set myself very high goals and risk not achieving them as a consequence.
14.) I try to avoid risk as much as possible, as a rule.
15.) Hobbies and leisure pursuits are an extremely important part of my life.
16.) I generally solve problems creatively.*
17.) Financial security is extremely important to me.
18.) In risk situations, I tend to go for it and take the risk.
19.) If I do something well, it is important to me to be praised by other people.
20.) I am not bothered about reviewing or checking things really closely.§
21.) I am a fairly anxious person.
22.) I like to do things in a new way.*
23.) I try to avoid changes in my life as much as possible.
24.) New, unfamiliar situations represent a challenge for me.
25.) I feel constrained by rules and regulations.
26.) I always try to make my work as accurate and error free as possible.§
27.) I like trying out lots of different things, and am often successful in doing so.*
28.) It is important to me that my achievements are recognized and valued by other people.§
29.) For me, it is very important not to do anything wrong.
30.) Not being careful enough has often got me in trouble.
31.) I often think about what other people expect of me.§
32.) I try to solve problems using tried and trusted methods.
33.) I set myself goals which I am confident I will achieve.

Appendix C: Figures

Figure 1. Predicted Framing Effects
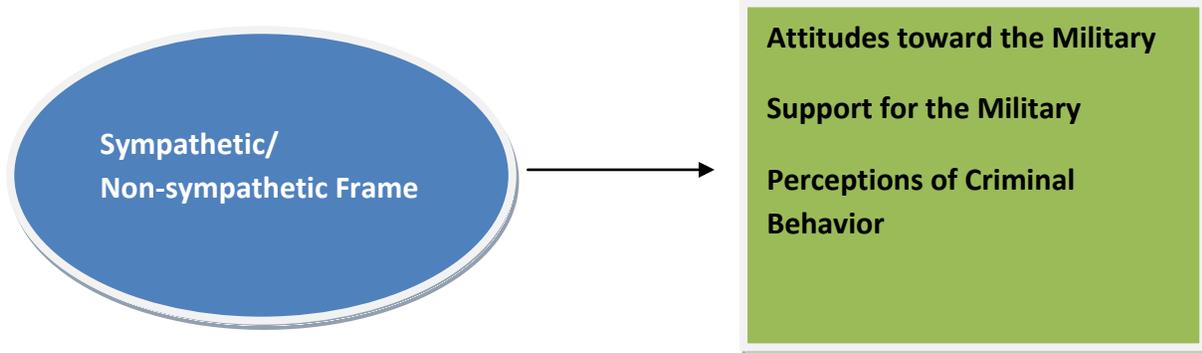
Figure 2. Predicted Mortality Salience Effects
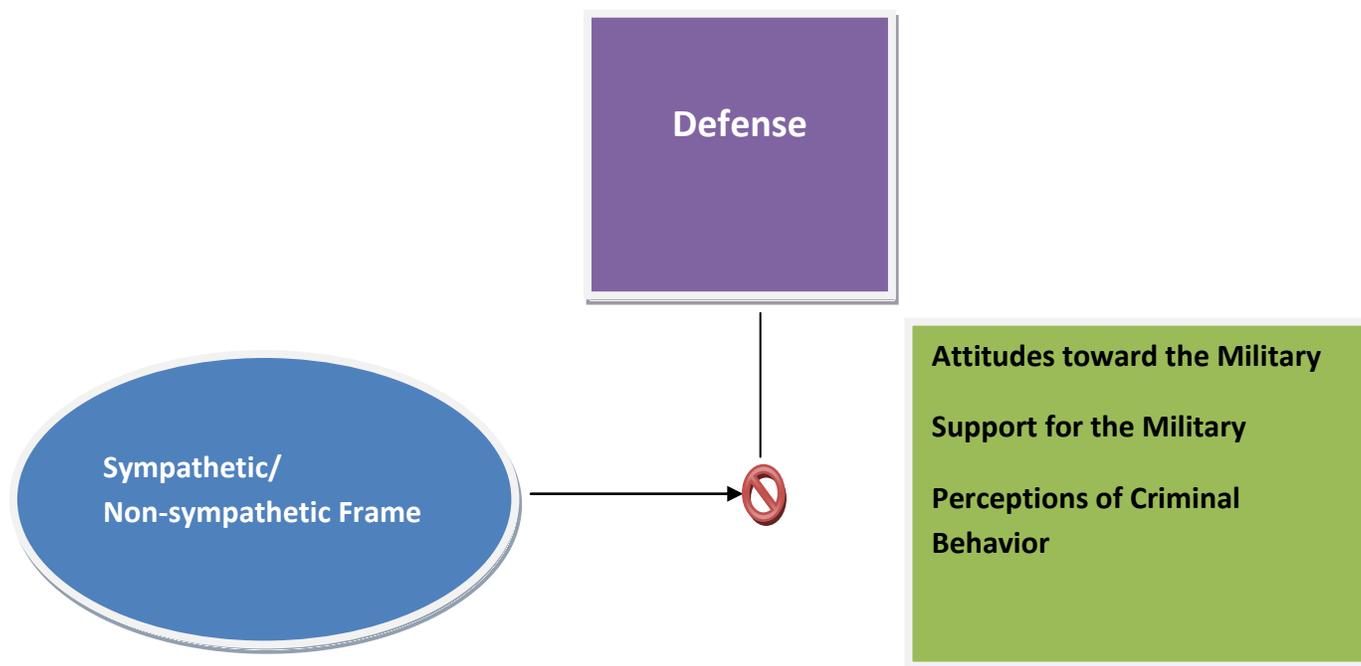
Figure 3. Main Experiment: Effects of Frame and Mortality Salience on Military Attitudes.
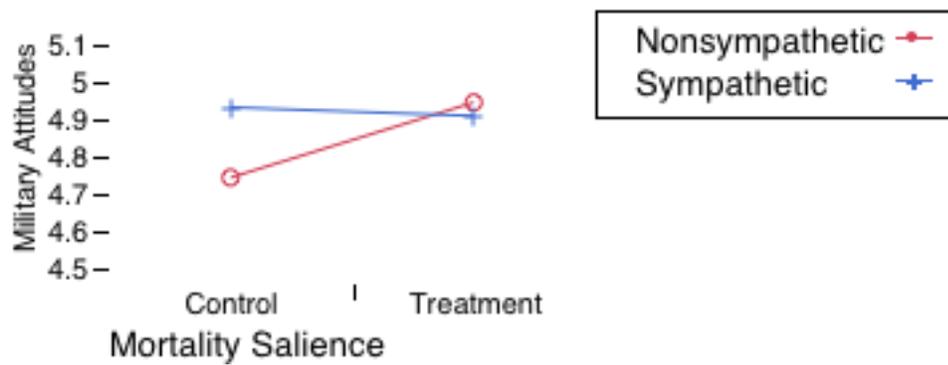
Appendix D: Tables

Table 1. Operationalization of Video Clips

Mortality Salience	Clip Frame	Clip Number	Episode Name
Control	Sympathetic	1	"Sub Rosa"
Control	Sympathetic	2	"Family Secret"
Control	Non-sympathetic	3	"Sub Rosa"
Control	Non-sympathetic	4	"Chimera"
Treatment	Sympathetic	5	"Sub Rosa"
Treatment	Sympathetic	6	"Call of Silence"
Treatment	Non-sympathetic	7	"Sub Rosa"
Treatment	Non-sympathetic	8	"Sandblast"

Table 2: Main Experiment: Mortality Salience, Frame, Pre-existing Attitudes, Transportation and Negative Affect on Attitudes Toward the Military

Measure	B	SE	β	t	p
MS	-.04	.02	-.05	-2.04	.04*
F	-.04	.02	-.05	-1.73	.08
PRE	1.01	.04	.90	28.74	<.0001*
T	.06	.03	.07	2.03	.04*
NA	-.09	.03	-.09	-2.72	.007*
MS*F	-.06	.02	-.07	-2.56	.01*
MS*PRE	.04	.04	.04	1.32	.19
F*PRE	.05	.04	.04	1.33	.19
MS*T	-.06	.03	-.06	-1.80	.07
F*T	-.02	.03	-.02	-.59	.55
PRE*T	-.02	.04	-.01	-.36	.72
MS*NA	.01	.03	.01	.33	.74
F*NA	.02	.03	.02	.48	.63
PRE*NA	-.04	.05	-.03	-.74	.46
T*NA	.04	.05	.03	.80	.43
MS*F*PRE	-.007	.04	-.006	-.20	.84
MS*F*T	.01	.03	.01	.33	.74
MS*PRE*T	.06	.04	.06	1.44	.15
F*PRE*T	.01	.04	.01	.29	.77
MS*F*NA	-.01	.03	-.01	-.35	.73
MS*PRE*NA	.11	.05	.09	2.08	.04*
F*PRE*NA	.02	.05	.01	.33	.74
MS*T*NA	-.03	.05	-.02	-.54	.59
F*T*NA	-.09	.05	-.08	-1.94	.05
PRE*T*NA	-.03	.07	-.02	-.41	.68
MS*F*PRE*T	.002	.04	.002	.04	.97
MS*F*PRE*NA	-.11	.05	-.10	-2.30	.02*
MS*F*T*NA	.09	.05	.08	1.90	.06
F*PRE*T*NA	-.003	.07	-.003	-.05	.96
MS*PRE*T*NA	-.07	.07	-.06	-1.01	.31
MS*F*PRE*T*NA	.11	.07	.09	1.64	.10

MS = Mortality Salience
F = Frame
PRE = Pre-existing Attitudes
T = Transportation
NA = Negative Affect

Table 3: Main Experiment: Mortality Salience, Frame, Pre-existing Attitudes, Transportation and Negative Affect on Support Toward the Military

Measure	B	SE	β	t	P
MS	-.11	.13	-.05	-.81	.42
F	.17	.13	.09	1.28	.20
PRE	.84	.22	.30	3.84	.0002*
T	.63	.19	.27	3.27	.001*
NA	-.07	.19	-.03	-.34	.73
MS*F	-.05	.13	-.02	-.35	.72
MS*T	-.20	.19	-.09	-1.04	.30
F*T	-.010	.19	-.004	-.05	.96
MS*PRE	.24	.22	.09	1.09	.28
F*PRE	.13	.22	.05	.57	.57
PRE*T	.50	.28	.18	1.81	.07
MS*NA	.11	.19	.05	.55	.58
F*NA	.06	.19	.02	.29	.77
PRE*NA	-.24	.32	-.08	-.74	.46
T*NA	.46	.30	.16	1.55	.12
MS*F*PRE	.13	.22	.05	.59	.56
MS*F*T	-.14	.19	-.06	-.74	.46
MS*PRE*T	-.08	.28	-.03	-.31	.76
F*PRE*T	-.009	.28	-.003	-.03	.98
MS*F*NA	-.05	.19	-.02	-.26	.79
MS*PRE*NA	.10	.32	.04	.32	.75
F*PRE*NA	.26	.32	.09	.81	.42
MS*T*NA	-.14	.30	-.05	-.49	.63
F*T*NA	.48	.30	.17	1.62	.11
PRE*T*NA	.25	.41	.08	.60	.55
MS*F*PRE*T	-.07	.28	-.03	-.26	.80
MS*F*PRE*NA	--.46	.32	-.16	-1.45	.15
MS*F*T*NA	-.19	.30	-.07	-.63	.53
MS*PRE*T*NA	-.29	.41	-.10	-.71	.48
F*PRE*T*NA	.32	.41	.11	.78	.43
MS*F*PRE*T*NA	-.30	.41	-.10	-.74	.46

MS = Mortality Salience
F = Frame
PRE = Pre-existing Attitudes
T = Transportation
NA = Negative Affect

Table 4: Main Experiment: Mortality Salience, Frame, Pre-existing Attitudes, Transportation and Negative Affect on Perceptions of Military Personnel's Criminal Behavior

Measure	B	SE	β	t	P
MS	.10	.09	.07	1.18	.24
F	-.06	.09	-.05	-.75	.45
PRE	.96	.14	.50	6.91	<.0001*
T	.26	.12	.16	2.08	.04*
NA	-.16	.112	-.10	-1.32	.19
MS*F	-.07	.09	-.05	-.82	.41
MS*PRE	-.06	.14	-.03	-.45	.66
F*PRE	-.03	.14	-.01	-.19	.85
MS*T	-.04	.12	-.02	-.30	.77
F*T	-.06	.12	-.04	-.52	.60
MS*NA	.10	.12	.06	.80	.42
F*NA	.22	.12	.14	1.79	.07
PRE*T	-.11	.18	-.06	-.63	.53
PRE*NA	.02	.20	.008	.08	.94
T*NA	.22	.19	.11	1.17	.24
MS*F*PRE	-.03	.14	-.02	-.22	.82
MS*F*T	-.03	.12	-.02	-.20	.84
MS*PRE*T	.30	.18	.15	1.68	.09
F*PRE*T	.30	.18	.16	1.71	.09
MS*F*NA	-.08	.12	-.05	-.67	.50
MS*PRE*NA	.15	.20	.08	.72	.47
F*PRE*NA	-.13	.20	-.07	-.64	.52
MS*T*NA	-.27	.19	-.14	-1.42	.16
F*T*NA	-.19	.19	-.10	-.99	.32
PRE*T*NA	.06	.26	.03	.23	.82
MS*F*PRE*T	-.05	.18	-.02	-.27	.79
MS*F*PRE*NA	-.48	.20	-.25	-2.36	.02*
MS*F*T*NA	.14	.19	.007	.75	.46
MS*PRE*T*NA	.04	.26	.02	.14	.89
F*PRE*T*NA	.20	.26	.10	.78	.44
MS*F*PRE*T*NA	-.44	.26	-.22	-1.69	.09

MS = Mortality Salience
F = Frame
PRE = Pre-existing Attitudes
T = Transportation
NA = Negative Affect

Table 5. Pilot Experiment: Significant Differences Between Participant Support Toward the Military

Mortality Salience	Frame			LS *M*	*SE*
Control	Non-sympathetic	A		4.95	.23
Treatment	Sympathetic	A	B	4.63	.17
Control	Sympathetic	A	B	4.49	.23
Treatment	Non-sympathetic		B	4.16	.17

Levels not connected by the same letter are significantly different at *p* < .05.

Table 6. Main Experiment: Significant Differences in Participant Attitudes Toward the Military

Mortality Salience	Frame			LS *M*	*SE*
Treatment	Non-sympathetic	A		4.94	.04
Treatment	Sympathetic	A		4.93	.05
Control	Sympathetic	A		4.91	.04
Control	Non-sympathetic		B	4.74	.04

Levels not connected by the same letter are significantly different at *p* < .05.

Table 7. Main Experiment: Significant Differences in Participant Attitudes Toward the Military by Party Affiliation

Party			*M*	*SE*
Republican	A		5.25	.06
Democrat		B	4.63	.11
No Affiliation		B	4.70	.11
Independent		B	4.57	.15
Other	A	B	4.40	.31

Levels not connected by the same letter are significantly different at $p < .05$.

Table 8. Main Experiment: Significant Differences in Support Toward the Military by Party Affiliation

Party			*M*	*SE*
Republican	A		2.93	.20
Democrat		B	2.06	.28
No Affiliation	A	B	2.75	.27
Independent	A		3.51	.37
Other	A	B	3.83	.79

Levels not connected by the same letter are significantly different at $p < .05$.

Table 9. Main Experiment: Significant Differences in Perceptions of Criminal Behavior by Party Affiliation

Party			*M*	*SE*
Republican	A		3.83	.13
Democrat	A	B	3.23	.19
No Affiliation	A	B	3.37	.19
Independent		B	2.94	.26
Other	A	B	2.67	.55

Levels not connected by the same letter are significantly different at *p* < .05.

Note: Higher means indicate perceptions of military personnel as more law abiding, while lower means indicate perceptions of military personnel as more likely to commit a crime.