While the Nation Looked On:

A Framing Analysis of Print News Media Coverage of Terri Schiavo's Final Days

_____

Presented to the Faculty

Liberty University

School of Communication Studies

_____

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Master of Arts

In Communication Studies

By

Aubrey Blankenship

11 April 2011

Thesis Committee

_____

Stuart S. Schwartz, Ph.D., Chairperson   Date

_____

Clifford W. Kelly, Ph.D.   Date

_____

Angela M. Widgeon, Ph.D.   Date

Abstract

One of the richest areas of current research in mass communication involves framing theory. Originally developed by Erving Goffman (1974), framing is used by the media to organize content. As such, it has implications for the values, beliefs, and actions of those exposed to that content. This study attempts to apply framing theory to a controversial issue and event profusely covered by American mass media: the case of Terri Schiavo. To accomplish this, coverage of her final month by two print newspapers, *The New York Times* and the *New York Post*, was analyzed for prevalence (present or absent), level of substance (substantive or ambiguous), and valence (positive, neutral, or negative) of frames. Each paper was also coded for the type and valence of sources cited. Significance was found to support the presence of certain frames in each newspaper, with a leaning toward keeping Terri Schiavo alive found in frame valence in *New York Post* and a leaning, with stronger significance, toward removing her feeding tube in *The New York Times.*

Key Terms: framing theory, media bias, Terri Schiavo, New York Times, New York Post

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

In 2005 the United States news media covered numerous events that deeply impacted the country, including Hurricane Katrina, the war in Iraq, and President George W. Bush's appointment of two justices to the Supreme Court. Another "top ten" story with off the charts publicity did not center on a national event but on a single individual (Roscoe, Osman, and Haley, 2006). The media frenzy came at the climax of a seven-year legal dispute that determined the fate of a Florida resident, who has since been dubbed the "Most Newsworthy Woman of the Year" (Tyndall Report, 2005).

Theresa (Terri) Marie Schiavo collapsed from cardiac arrest on February 25, 1990. Due to a lack of oxygen, the collapse left her brain damaged and in a "permanent vegetative state," according to her doctors. For eight years she was reliant on feeding and hydration tubes, and in May of 1998 her husband filed a petition to remove her feeding tube. Her parents disagreed and a legal battle ensued that cumulated on March 31, 2005 when she died at age 41, after the removal of her feeding tube (Associated Press, 2005). American news media highlighted each event in the dramatic battle over Terri Schiavo's life. As stated by Hoffmann (2005), "The story fit all the news values of media. It could easily be personalized. It was a two-valued, either-or conflict. Articulate, demonstrative advocates existed on both sides" (p. 325).

The high level of publicity placed Terri Schiavo as a daily topic of conversation and the American public became highly engaged in the events during her last month, often harshly divided into "right to life" and "right to death" camps. Because most people obtain information about current events through the mass news media, it becomes imperative for the media to present accurate and reliable coverage of events. A significant amount of research in the field of communication has focused on the bias of mass media coverage. It is certainly possible for

individual editors, writers, and reporters to insert their own opinions and personal biases and thus influence the public's beliefs about a news item. This phenomenon has been called "agenda extension" and moves beyond the more popular concept of "agenda setting" (Denton & Kuypers, 2008). Whereas agenda setting happens when a publication or its reporters choose specific events or issues to cover, agenda extension moves beyond telling its audience what to think about to how to think about it (Denton & Kuypers, 2008). In short, neutrality takes a back row seat. According to Altheide (1996), agenda setting and agenda extension exist when the media decides "what will be discussed, how it will be discussed and above all, how it will not be discussed" (p. 31).

A number of communications studies focus on why the story of Terri Schiavo was subject to such a large amount of media coverage (Sofka and Black, 2005; Roscoe, Osman, and Haley, 2006). Why was the life of a private individual who could not even speak in her own defense at the center of media coverage, both in America and across the world? Was it ethical for family decisions to be broadcasted for the whole world to critique? Was this media coverage consistent with the privacy rights of incapacitated patients?

Due to the focused nature of this study, this question of why Terri Schiavo was in the news will not be examined. Instead, the question at hand is how national print media chose to present, or frame, the story of Terri Schiavo. To frame is simply to use a frame of reference or certain context when choosing to cover a story. Erving Goffman, one of the foremost scholars in the area of framing, established that frames are cognitive structures that include elements of organization and subjectivity. As such, they help guide representations and perceptions of reality (Goffman, 1974; Holody, 2006). Whether consciously or unconsciously, reporters commonly use frames to emphasize aspects of an issue they deem important.

Frames used in the specific news coverage of Terri Schiavo have been analyzed by various communication scholars. While some studies focus on coverage by bloggers (Gray, 2007), websites (Hopkins Tanne, 2005), or broadcast media (George, 2005), others specifically center on the focus of this study: print news media. For instance, one such study analyzed *The New York Times, The Washington Post*, and *USA Today* for the use of Christian words and Christian sources to determine whether an anti-Christian bias existed in the media coverage. The study found that the newspapers did reference people who claimed to be Christians and represent a Christian viewpoint (Kaylor, 2010). It established that there was not an imbalance in coverage since Christians were included as sources (40 percent of the articles included at least one religious reference). Kaylor also found that the Christian faith was predominantly represented, as opposed to other faiths. Thus, Kaylor states that an anti-Christian bias does not exist in the media coverage, and by this he means that Christians were included as sources and represented in news coverage. But he does not code for tone, or valence – positive, negative, or neutral, of each mention, which would determine in what way Christians are represented in news.

Other studies stayed away from religious issues and focused on determining frames for broader concepts that relate directly or indirectly to the Terri Schiavo story, including frames in press releases about death with dignity (Holody, 2006), end of life care (Roscoe, Osman, & Haley, 2006), surrogate decision making (Ditto, 2006), rights of the disabled (Sofka & Black, 2005), or physician assisted suicide (Kalwinsky, 1998).

The attempt made by individual journalists to follow common journalistic news values (including impact, timeliness, prominence, proximity, conflict, and currency) while covering Terri Schiavo was acknowledged in another scholarly article (Hodges, 2006). However, the authors argued that journalists covering the Schiavo story were caught between a rock and a hard

place: hampered by an imbalance between "objective" medical science and "subjective" moral beliefs. As a result, the study revealed that journalists were often inconsistent in their use of terminology when covering Terri Schiavo.

The purpose of this quantitative study is to use framing analysis to discover the presence, valence, and substance of dominant news frames employed by national print news media in the coverage of Terri Schiavo's life and death in the month leading up to her death in 2005. Because the coverage of Terri Schiavo in 2005 made her a household name and since the subject of end-of-life decisions is a serious matter with important consequences, discovering how the media present information that can play a role in forming public opinion merits scholarly attention.

The researcher of this project will first present an overview of previous studies, specifically those that analyzed the news coverage of Terri Schiavo and framing theory. Following this literature review, the researcher will present the methodology, results, and conclusions that this analysis derived.

Literature Review

In order to begin to address the research problems as stated in the introduction, a review of current literature associated with the area of research is appropriate. The question of which print news frames dominate in the coverage of the Terri Schiavo story involves two main areas of literature. The first concerns the elements that make up the person, Terri Schiavo, including her background, collapse, and the legal events spanning twelve years that lead up to her death. This will be followed by a review of the extent of her media coverage, the public perception of her situation in 2005, and a review of studies that have already analyzed the media coverage of Terri Schiavo, both qualitatively and quantitatively.

The second main area of literature concerns the theory with which Terri Schiavo's print news media coverage will be analyzed. This study will specifically examine the use of framing theory to identify dominant perspectives in American print media's coverage of Terri Schiavo during the month of her death. In order to complete this analysis, there must be an understanding of the origins, development, and current uses of framing.

<div align="center">The Person, Terri Schiavo</div>

Background (before 1990)

Theresa (Terri) Marie Schiavo was born to Bob and Mary Schindler on December 3, 1963 (Campo-Flores, 2005). Terri Schiavo grew up as the oldest of three children, in a middle-class subdivision outside Philadelphia. There are a few known details about Terri Schiavo's early life that play a significant role in the debate over her end-of-life decision. The Schindler family was Roman Catholic and Terri Schiavo attended an all-girls Catholic high school. As a high schooler, she was on the outskirts of the social circle, battling insecurity about her self-image. At 5 feet, 3 inches tall (Kollas & Boyer-Kollas, 2006), she reached 250 pounds as a high school

senior. She went on the NutriSystem diet and quickly lost 100 pounds. Not long after her weight

loss, she met her first boyfriend, Michael Schiavo, at Bucks County Community College

(Campo-Flores, 2005).

After dating for five months, Michael Schiavo proposed and they married in 1984. The

couple moved to St. Petersburg, Florida in 1986, shortly after the Schindlers moved to Florida

(Associated Press, 2005). Terri Schiavo worked as an insurance-claims clerk and her husband

managed a restaurant (Campo-Flores, 2005). While most court documents indicate that the

couple was happily married, some sources state that their marriage had some trouble areas just

before her collapse, with reports of Michael Schiavo acting in a controlling manner and the

couple experiencing stress over Terri Schiavo's inability to get pregnant. Terri Schiavo went to

an obstetrician for fertility therapy. At this point in her life, Terri Schiavo was 110 pounds, but

her close friends and family did not suspect she had an eating disorder (although they looked

back after her collapse and saw that there was evidence of a disorder) (Campo-Flores, 2005).

Collapse (1990)

Terri Schiavo collapsed in her home at approximately 4:30 a.m. on February 25, 1990.

Her brain was deprived of oxygen for five minutes which ultimately led to her brain damage

(Gruberg, 2007). Paramedics revived her, but five minutes of oxygen deprivation had already

produced severe brain damage (Dresser, 2004). She collapsed due to a cardiac arrest, the cause of

which, to this day, is still unknown. Many suspect that it was provoked by bulimic purging that

generated a severe potassium deficiency (Campo-Flores, 2005).

Doctors diagnosed her as a person in a "persistent vegetative state" (PVS) which formed

the basis for the entire controversy. News coverage, however, did not primarily center on the

details of her medical state. Content analysis centering on Schiavo was conducted by Dr. Éric

Racine of the Institut de recherches cliniques de Montréal and others from Stanford University and the University of British Columbia. They reviewed 1141 articles and over 400 letters to the editor and found that only 1% of the articles defined persistent vegetative state. According to Novella in his August 7, 2008 article on NeurologicaBlog: "They also found that 21% of reports indicated that there was hope of recovery. That was the very crux of the controversy. Someone who has been in a PVS for 15 years has no meaningful chance of recovery" (Novella, 2008).

While most specialists appeared to side with Novella regarding Schiavo's state as PVS, they were challenged by other doctors. According to Michael Egnor, M.D., a professor of neurosurgery and pediatrics at State University of New York, "PVS is the medical assertion that a human being is an object, but not a subject. PVS is the only modern medical diagnosis that denies the personhood of a patient, and thus is fraught with logical and ethical problems… I believe that many of the medical opinions offered publicly by physicians who favored withdrawal of Ms. Schiavo's hydration and nourishment were rank pseudoscience" (Egnor, 2008).

In the first three years after her collapse, the Schindler family and her husband worked together in hopes that she would recover. However, in 1993 the family relationships disintegrated (Gruberg, 2007). Valentine's Day in 1993 stands out as the point at which the Schindlers and Michael Schiavo became strongly opposed (Campo-Flores, 2005). Michael Schiavo had sued Terri Schiavo's obstetrician who oversaw her fertility therapy for malpractice, believing that the obstetrician should have discovered Terri Schiavo's potassium imbalance, and consequently her eating disorder (Campo-Flores, 2005). He won and received over $700,000 to be used for Terri Schiavo's medical care, and on February 14, Michael Schiavo met with the Schindlers in Terri Schiavo's hospital room to discuss how to spend the money. Disagreement as

to how the money should have been spent led to a violent discussion and all parties left the room, never to make up (Campo-Flores, 2005).

Legal Events (1990 through 2005)

A brief summary of the legal events leading up to Terri Schiavo's death is needed in order to understand the issues covered by the print news media. After the Schindlers feuded with Terri Schiavo's husband, they challenged his guardianship for the first time. Three years later, their request was dismissed (Kollas & Boyer-Kollas, 2006). In May 1998, Michael Schiavo submitted the first of many court petitions to withdraw Terri Schiavo's feeding tube. Terri Schiavo had left no living will or advance medical directive as to her desires if she were ever to find herself under such circumstances. Florida law allowed the spouse of a person in a permanent vegetative state to apply to a court for an order that the spouse be allowed to die if there was satisfactory "clear and convincing evidence" that this was the wish of the injured party (Paulsen, 2005). In response to Michael Schiavo's petition, Judge George Greer, of the Circuit Court of the Sixth Judicial Court of Florida in Pinellas County, ordered the removal of Terri Schiavo's feeding tube for the first time in 2001. Thus began the long battle that moved the question of whether Terri Schiavo should be kept alive from courts to the Florida legislature and ultimately to the U.S. Congress and the U.S. Supreme Court.

In October 2003, Terri Schiavo's feeding tube was removed, but the Florida legislature passed "Terri's Law," giving Governor Jeb Bush permission to order doctors to reinsert the feeding tube through Florida law enforcement. The Florida Supreme Court struck down "Terri's Law" in September 2004. March 2005 marks the final month when court action played out on the federal level. A partisan debate on the case began in Congress. It was split between more

conservative, largely Republican, politicians, who sided with the Schindlers, and the more moderate, liberal and largely Democrat politicians siding with Michael Schiavo.

On March 21, Congress passed a bill titled "For the Relief of the Parents of Theresa Marie Schiavo." It was signed into law by President George W. Bush, and became the "Protection of Incapacitated Persons Act of 2005." It allowed the case to move to the federal courts, but the United States Supreme Court refused to reverse any lower court decision. On March 30 the Supreme Court rejected Terri Schiavo's parents' final appeal of the Florida court that allowed removal of her feeding tube. On March 31, Terri Schiavo passed away thirteen days after the removal of her feeding tube.

Media Coverage and Terri Schiavo

One of the most remarkable aspects of the Terri Schiavo story is the massive and "unprecedented" amount of media coverage she and her family received (Roscoe, Osman, and Haley, 2006). Scholars often speculate as to why the media focused solely on Terri Schiavo when there were an estimated 15,000 patients in the U.S. who were in a PVS in 2005 and more than 100,000 others who were in a minimally conscious state (Hirsch, 2005).

Pellicano and Gross (2007) point out that a study done by Green and Jarvis (2007) revealed that there was a consistent and growing pattern of media coverage on physician assisted suicide. "It took the Terri Schiavo case to reenergize the media to cover these issues" (Pellicano and Gross, 2007, p. 6). The reasons behind the wide publicity of Terri Schiavo's case are up to interpretation. Many commentators and researchers point to political, legal, and family public battle factors that contributed to the large amount of media coverage. Regardless of why the coverage was so great, the fact remains that the media did cover the story, and they covered it on

the local, national, and international level. Local news coverage was heavy in 2003, and widespread national coverage began in 2004 (Gray, 2007).

It has been established that a news story can have a persuasive effect on its audience in regards to an issue or event simply due to the frame implemented. Some researchers have looked to determine what reactions the American public had to the coverage of the Terri Schiavo story. According to Hefner, Drogos, & Bond (2006), "Schiavo's mass media coverage effectively influenced behavior and interpersonal communication" (p. 18). Their study revealed that the intense media coverage created attitudinal perceptions of importance and also influenced people's behaviors to take action by creating a living will of their own. "This can be seen through the participant's open-ended responses that displayed a clear indication that Schiavo's case served as an apparent "safe" catalyst for having an EOL [end of life] conversation" (p. 18).

The public perception of Terri Schiavo may be linked to the frames the media used to describe her condition. Discovering causation or corroborative correlation is not the purpose of this study, but it is important to note the views of the American public on the issue of Terri Schiavo. During the Schiavo debate, public opinion was often measured and analyzed through media polls. While the debate raged between Terri Schiavo's parents and her husband, the world took sides. As stated by Hoffman (2005), "[M]any of us agonized, argued, and wept as the human drama of Terri Schiavo's life and death played out on our television screens and in practically every form of media available" (p. 323). Public polls predominantly showed support for Michael Schiavo and the removal of Terri Schiavo's feeding tube. For instance, an ABC News poll from March 20, 2005 indicated that more than 6 in 10 Americans favored the removal of Terri Schiavo's feeding tube (Pellicano and Gross, 2007).

Due to the large amount of media attention and the element of family battle and public

perception, a number of communication scholars have analyzed the construction of news stories

on Terri Schiavo. The purposes, results, and methodologies of such studies are useful in forming

a background and framework for the current study. But first, an understanding of framing theory

is in order.

Framing theory

The first section of this chapter has sought to review literature defining the person of

Terri Schiavo, her background, collapse, and legal events leading up to her death, as well as her

media coverage and popularity. This study will analyze the media coverage of Terri Schiavo

through the use of framing theory, often termed framing analysis. As stated *in Journalism and

Mass Communication Quarterly*, "One of the most fertile areas of current research in journalism

and mass communication involves the concept of 'framing'" (Riffe, 2004). To properly

understand framing, one must comprehend its origins, development, and current uses.

Origins

Acknowledged by most scholars as the originator of framing analysis, Erving Goffman

(1922-1982) wrote his book titled *Frame Analysis* which set the foundation for the framing

theory as it is understood today. Goffman has been called the best-known sociologist of the

second half of the twentieth century and his version of framing analysis has become widely

accepted in the field of linguistics, including psychology and psychotherapy (Smith, 2006). In

broad terms, framing analysis addresses the organization and analysis of human experience and

the individual (Goffman, 1974). Simply put, frames are cognitive structures. They include

elements of organization and subjectivity that help guide representations and perceptions of

reality (Goffman, 1974; Holody, 2006).

Of use to communication scholars is the application of framing theory to published media. In "Erving Goffman" Gregory Smith stated: "In a very general way, Goffman's concepts of framing… provide analytic resources to address the important distinction between what is said and what is meant. Frames could be said to provide the appropriate context to make appropriate sense of what is said" (p. 66). Framing provides a practical way in which to analyze content for dominant themes or central ideas through an empirical framework. Frame analysis basically "allows its user to locate, perceive, identify, and label a seemingly infinite number of concrete occurrences defined it its terms" (Goffman, 1974, p. 21).

Goffman's frame analysis provides a general basis for the discovery and interpretation of frames through content analysis. However, his works have been studied by communication scholars who, in turn, have interpreted, extended, and applied his theory.

Development

One of the most well-known studies of framing theory was done by Robert Entman. He is particularly relevant to the current study as he broke down the framing theory to apply to mass media analysis. Entman defined media framing as a process by which media "select some aspect of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text in a way that can promote a certain definition, interpretation, moral evaluation or treatment recommendation" (p. 52).

It is important to note that framing, by its very nature, is intrinsically connected with persuasion, bias, and audience perception. "Ultimately, framing has implications for the worldview of those exposed to it… a media frame can be described as an organizing mechanism for media content. As such, it provides immediate context to the recipient of the frame, through

the selection, emphasis or exclusion of specific facts or ideas" (Dimitrova & Connelly-Ahern, 2007, p. 155).

Because a publication or author chooses (consciously or unconsciously) to frame an issue in a specific way, a news story may very well persuade its audience on an issue simply due to the frame implemented.

Media framing is critical to studies of news and social movements because the ways in which journalists present a movement can influence public willingness to lend support. Research demonstrates that manipulation of media frames can produce different attitudes toward the same issue among a single group of respondents. Given the majority of citizens' lack of personal ties to emerging social movements, media frames can be a powerful influence in the construction of public opinion and can have direct consequences for mobilization efforts (Bronstein, 2005, p. 786).

Studies often institute framing in order to determine the effects that perspectives of media have on the public:

In numerous studies… issue framing… has shown its ability to influence distributions of opinion, at least if the messages are one-sided with only a single dominant frame. Based on the empirical evidence from the last decade and a half, Sniderman and Theriault (2004) summarize that by now it is "widely agreed that citizens in large numbers can be readily blown from one side of an issue to the very opposite depending on how the issue is specifically framed (Slothuus, 2008, p. 1).

Thus, framing has been shown to have the potential to highly influence the public. The ability to investigate media frames allows scholars to determine either of the following: if

dominant frames exist thematically or if those dominant frames have an effect on public opinion. As stated above, the current quantitative study concerns itself with the first question.

Entman identified four functions of frames in media: to define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgments, and suggest remedies. "A single sentence may perform more than one of these four framing functions, although many sentences in a text may perform none of them. And a frame in any particular text may not necessarily include all four functions" (p. 52).

Entman contributed greatly to the study of media frames as he broke down framing theory into a workable system of analysis. He emphasized that framing related closely with the salience of a work. In the same way that the concept of agenda setting determines which news items are salient enough to cover, agenda extension–a category in which framing falls (Denton & Kuypers, 2008)–determines which parts within a news story are more salient than others.

> Frames highlight some bits of information about an item that is the subject of a communication, thereby elevating them in salience. The word salience itself needs to be defined: It means making a piece of information more noticeable, meaningful, or memorable to audiences. An increase in salience enhances the probability that receivers will perceive the information, discern meaning and thus process it, and store it in memory (Entman, 1993, p. 53).

Over the past several decades, other scholars have expanded upon the concept of media framing. Tankard stated that media framing is "a central organizing idea for news content that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion and elaboration" (Tankard, 2003, p. 100). In effect, this means that the researcher using these frames essentially teaches the reader how to think and what to conclude. Thus any sense of journalistic objectivity or fairness is left by the wayside. The difficulty about framing is

the very fact that a journalist may, indeed, incorporate a frame unconsciously. And yet, a journalist may also approach an issue or event with an agenda (carefully selecting sources, for instance), in a conscious framing effort. Thus, the level of unconsciousness in using a frame is always present and may be combined with conscious framing.

For the purpose of this study, it will be necessary to gather the needed information empirically in a textual analysis. In order to determine the dominant frames in a piece of news, certain "framing devices" have been outlined by various scholars. According to Gamson and Modigliani, framing devices often employed by media organizations include metaphors, exemplars (i.e. historical examples from which lessons are drawn), catchphrases, depictions, and visual images (1989, p. 3). Thus, framing news stories in national newspapers, which is the focus of this study, can be done through a systematic analysis of the content.

Current Uses

Since Goffman introduced the concept of frames, and specifically since Entman applied framing to analysis of mass media, scholars have utilized it to understand how print media presents information. However, it must be understood that framing research is often employed for various purposes. Because of this, current framing research is often varied and diverse. Framing analysis is still growing and scholars often disagree as to the application of framing as well as a proper methodology (Scheufele, 2004). Scholars often employ different research methods when utilizing framing. Some scholars use quantitative methods and others approach it with qualitative methods, some use a discourse analysis and others utilize an empirical analysis. The focus of this study is narrowed to simply discovering the nature of the media frames in national newspapers. Consequently, an empirical content analysis will be employed. Other studies on the same subject would, perhaps, take it a step further to discover if or how the

identified dominant frames actually affected audience thought. This could be done through a quantitative study coupled with a qualitative study, such as a survey of newspaper readers.

The topics commonly analyzed through print news media frames often relate to social issues. For instance, one study analyzed the British news media to specifically determine how they frame older mothers (Shaw & Giles, 2009). The researcher first identified representation of older mothers in the media as one potential source of social anxiety around older motherhood. Through a framing analysis, dominant frames emerged, including "motherhood on ice" and "older mothers as unnatural." The study then made a connection between the frames and the beliefs and conversation about older mothers in U.K., by first citing former research that explored the role that media have played in helping to shape public opinion about health through news broadcasts and print media (Shaw & Giles, 2009).

Another study focused on a social issue covered by five United States newspapers. A content analysis of 209 news stories sought to discover the level of fairness and balance in the coverage of same-sex marriage (Xigen & Xudong, 2010). It was found that stories framed as thematic were more likely to be fair and balanced than stories framed as episodic. Source selection played a role in the framing analysis. Some studies choose to make source selection a part of the methodology.

In "A Tale of Two Wars: Framing Analysis of Online News Sites in Coalition Countries and the Arab World during the Iraq War" a quantitative content analysis was applied to the website of *The New York Times* in the U.S. as well as web media in U.K., Egypt and Qatar (Dimitrova & Connelly-Ahern, 2007). In a comparative analysis, the researchers found that online journalism shares many of the same characteristics as traditional journalism. The coverage of wars differed in countries with different political and media systems and the dominant frames

were generally consistent with the national political environment of the respective online news sites.

"O Captain, My Captain! U.S Newspaper Framing of the Death of Captain America" (Serge, 2009) explored the presence of various frames through a content analysis of 139 newspaper articles (taken from a LexisNexus search of all U.S newspapers, including *The New York Times*) covering the end of the comic book character "Captain America". The study coded for both frame substance and valence. It divided frames into two categories: generic/recurring frames (Conflict, Human Interest, Economic Consequences, Morality, Responsibility, Metacommunication, Speculation, Cynicism, Political Consequences, Game, Societal Impact/ National Identity) and issue-specific/recurring frames (Decline of America, Comic Book Death as Temporary, Comic Book Death as Publicity Generator). Results of the study revealed that frames were most likely to be neutral in valence and ambiguous in substance. Interestingly, frames possessing negative valence were more likely to be ambiguous than frames possessing positive valence.

Another study examined newspaper coverage of the Democratic and Republican presidential and vice presidential candidates in the 2008 U.S. election (O'Gara, 2009). A total of 225 newspaper articles collected from *The New York Times*, the *Chicago Tribune* and *USA Today* were analyzed for dominant frames and candidate focus. The study coded for three dominant frames: experience, race, and viability. The results revealed that the newspapers placed a greater importance on candidate image and viability than on policy issues, paying little attention to the subject of age. Instead, articles focused on a more thorough coverage of race, gender, and experience.

Some studies on framing include coding for dominant frames as well as source usage. As stated previously, many factors contribute to framing. Certain researchers seek to identify possible links between sources and dominant frames. One such study aimed to determine the frames used during the South Dakota news media coverage of the Elijah Page death penalty case and detect patterns of frame usage, valence of news coverage and source usage (Haley, 2010). Haley instituted a content analysis of 163 South Dakota news reports from three years of media coverage. The study coded for three frames: procedural justice, morality, and distributive justice. Results revealed that the procedural frame was used most often, followed by the morality frame and then the distributive justice frame. Valence was found to be mostly neutral although positive and negative valence increased as the death penalty case entered its final year of coverage. Results also revealed that news media relied most heavily on official sources and the study concluded that frames shifted depending on the source cited. Thus, news frames affect source use (Haley, 2010). Once a frame is implemented, that frame determines the level of importance given to certain aspects of an issue or event and thus dictates sources used.

Studies such as these reveal that social topics are often analyzed through framing. Health and medical topics also receive a high percentage of framing analysis. Since Terri Schiavo was a medical-related issue as well as a social issue, it is helpful to review current framing literature that analyzed medical issues in the print news, specifically medical issues that relate to the Schiavo case. In a framing analysis of *The New York Times* and London's *The Guardian*, Haller and Ralph (2001) distinguished a number of major news frames associated with physician-assisted suicide between 1996 and 1998 "many of which embody long-held cultural beliefs about disability" (p. 417). These frames consisted of the following:

1. The issue is about being for or against Jack Kevorkian.

2. Kevorkian associates are prominent news sources and crucial to defining the assisted suicide issue.

3. Physician-assisted suicide is presented as an ambiguous legal and religious issue rather than a human rights issue.

4. Disability issues are medicalized in the assisted-suicide debate.

5. Better dead than disabled.

6. Modern assisted deaths are different from past euthanasia of disabled people (p. 416).

The researchers were unhappy with their findings. "The general public through this coverage receives the message that when people are disabled their quality of life is so poor and undignified that they are 'better off dead'" (p. 418). Of interest to this study, Haller and Ralph specifically studied 375 hard and soft news stories from *The New York Times*. The main thesis that physician-assisted suicide was not framed as a disability issue was confirmed by the lack of disability-related terminology in most of *The New York Times*' coverage. Thus, Haller and Ralph's study revealed a strong emergence of frames from *The New York Times* (and *The Guardian*) that pointed away from defining assisted suicide as a disability issue. It found that assisted suicide "is presented as an ambiguous issue, involving physical, religious, moral, and legal uncertainties. In the United States specifically, the anti-assisted suicide movement is linked to the anti-abortion, "right-to-life" movement" (p. 414).

Pellicano and Gross (2007) reviewed the current literature associated with physician assisted suicide and discovered that much of the research revealed two distinct frames. "Similarly for physician-assisted suicide, participants were subject to either of two frames, one stressing a pro-life sentiment and the other the right to individually choose when to end one's life" (p. 9). These two frames were found to compete for dominance in American mass media.

In a study titled "Neither Hearth Nor Home: The (Un)Making of Elder Care Responsibility" (Gadson, 2003), two national U.S. newspapers dealing with various aspects of elder care were analyzed during the 10-year period from 1987 to 1997. Two dominant frames emerged: "the burden of elder care on the U.S. economy" and "the role of personal obligations in undertaking care responsibilities for the elderly." In addition, the researchers concluded that elder care was an elusive concept for the national news media. Their interesting conclusion revealed that national news media are better suited, in regards to neutrality, to cover events rather than issues. Studies such as these reveal that the current uses of framing theory fall neatly in line with the purpose of this study.

As stated in the first section of the literature review, some studies have already directly analyzed Terri Schiavo's news coverage. Some, however, did not utilize framing at all or combined framing with another theory. Miller and Niven (2007) used content analysis to code for the tone of the Schiavo debate, the tone of coverage of religious and activist voices, and the frame of the article, with a focus on the debate and vote in Congress authorizing federal court intervention. Two frames were discovered: a dominant consequence frame (one in which a personal or moral question was at stake), and a less prevalent process frame (dealing with legal or political questions) (Pellicano and Gross, 2007).

Pellicano and Gross's study analyzed *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post, USA Today* and *The St. Petersburg Times*, a local Florida paper to see how Terri Schiavo was described (Pellicano and Gross, 2007). The researchers coded for five descriptions: 1) brain dead; 2) brain-damaged; 3) brain-damaged with a disability; 4) persistent vegetative state (PVS), found in the text verbatim; and 5) the theme of "better dead than alive." The results of the study reveal that "Schiavo was described most as being in a Persistent Vegetative State (31%) and as

brain-damaged (29%), although other descriptions fall close behind (brain-damaged with a disability: 22%; brain-dead: 18%). Note that less than one percent describe Schiavo's life as one not worth living" (Pellicano and Gross, 2007, p. 13).

They also coded for three frames: moral, legal, and medical. Pellicano and Gross originally hypothesized that the media would cover the moral aspects of the case most often, since it seemed to be a big issue for the religious right. But, instead, they found that the media reported on the legal aspects of the case more than the moral aspects.

They concluded their study by suggesting that the case of Terri Schiavo be viewed in terms of "a broader set of moral, religious, legal and medical issues that may have an effect on opinion as frames, or as mediators of the frames themselves, while also taking account for citizen's core values as they relate to end-of-life care—such as religiosity, ideology, political partisanship and morality" (p. 26). Thus, people may be impacted by frames, but there are also many other important factors that play a role in establishing beliefs about end-of-life care.

Framing analysis has risen in popularity since Goffman and Entman and extensive amounts of scholarly work have been devoted to discovering frames through content analysis. It is evident that the Terri Schiavo's collapse and the aftermath leading eventually to her death have been highly documented throughout mass media, specifically print media. A large body of research certainly exists for a study of this nature.

Methodology

The literature review discussed the amount of scholarly work that has been devoted to discovering frames through content analysis. This chapter presents the methodology of the content analysis undertaken in the current study. It will establish the hypothesis, research questions, and the foundations provided by the framing theory. It will then provide details of the content analysis to be used. Finally, it will present the way in which the results of the surveys will be processed and formulated.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The purpose of this quantitative study is to use framing analysis to discover the dominant news frames employed by national print news media in the coverage of Terri Schiavo's life and death in 2005. As reviewed in the literature review, the debate over whether to remove Terri Schiavo's feeding tube included many different issues. A medical issue created family conflict which escalated into a legal battle. This battle had political consequences that involved the moral definition of life. But how do the articles in two distinct national newspapers choose to frame her final month? The literature review explored the extent of Terri Schiavo's media coverage as well as the public perception of her situation in the last month of her life, March through April of 2005. As stated by Holody (2006), the overall history of framing theory suggests that frames have the very powerful effect of influencing how people view the world, by influencing how it comes to be understood (p. 9). It is out of the scope of the study to determine a causal relationship between the way in which the media covered her case and the way in which the public perceived it. As stated earlier, qualitative studies have set out to answer that question. However, readers may draw correlations between media and opinion based on the study. This content analysis of newspaper articles was conducted to test the following research questions

(RQ), the answers to which were used to discuss the hypotheses (H) that flow from the research questions.

The dominant frames in the print news media's coverage of Terri Schiavo are addressed by the following research questions:

RQ1: What were the dominant frames used by specific mainstream print news media organizations to cover the Terri Schiavo case?

In addition to identifying frames alone, the study identified the types of sources used to help determine dominant frames. "Whether a source's preferred frame is adopted or not, journalists rely heavily on these sources for information. Winners or losers, these sources are able to influence how an issue is presented to the public" (Holody, 2006, p. 14).

RQ2:   What are the sources cited in the media coverage of each newspaper?

The hypotheses, based upon the literature review, are as follows:

H1: Legal frames and frames with positive valence are more dominant in articles in *The New York Times*.

H2: Moral frames and frames with negative valence are more dominant in articles in the *New York Post*.

<div align="center">Method</div>

Since the nature of the study is empirical, personally analyzing texts provided the collection of data. Framing theory is subjective in nature. Thus, the process needs to be systematic and replicable. It is important to understand the nature of a content analysis:

Content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use.… Techniques are expected to be reliable. More specifically, research techniques should result in findings that are

replicable. That is, researchers working at different points in time and perhaps under different circumstances should get the same results when applying the same technique to the same data (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 18).

McMillan (2000) established five primary steps taken to conduct proper content analysis. The first step is to develop research questions, which has already been done. The second step is to select a sample from which to draw data. The third step is to operationalize the coding units to be used to answer the research questions. The fourth step is to code the data, after training has been provided to all coders to establish sufficient reliability. The fifth and final step of content analysis is to analyze and interpret the data gathered (Holody, 2006). The last four steps are presented below.

Sample

The current study analyzed a sample of articles from *The New York Times* and the *New York Post*. The study selected print news media because "there is significant evidence showing that newspapers in particular regularly serve to shape popular attitudes and beliefs, act as agents of public education, and can even play an important role in determining policy" (Baillie, 1996). These two papers have been chosen in part because of their established nature, location, and the substantial audience sizes. *The New York Times* is the third largest newspaper in the country. Nicknamed "The Gray Lady," it has been known as a national newspaper of record as it has been continuously published in New York City since 1859. The *New York Post* possesses deep roots in American tradition as well. As the thirteenth-oldest newspaper published in the United States, it is widely acknowledged as the oldest daily newspaper to have been published continuously. The scope of these two print news media outlets should indicate how newspapers across the United States covered the topic of Terri Schiavo.

Both publications were also chosen for their religious and political leanings. *The New York Times* and the *New York Post* are believed to represent more liberal and conservative perspectives respectively. The *New York Post* is owned by Rupert Murdoch, the founder, chairman, and CEO of News Corporation and the owner of Fox News Channel. *The New York Times* is owned by The New York Times Company. In 2007, a Rasmussen Reports survey of public perceptions of major media outlets revealed that 40% believe *The New York Times* possesses a liberal slant while only 11% think it has a conservative slant. A 2004 study measuring media bias in national news media outlets gave *The New York Times* a rating of 73.7 on a 100 point scale, with 0 representing most conservative and 100 representing most liberal. The study also ranked *The New York Times* a 19 out of 20, with 20 being the publication that was farthest away from center, or the average voter's ADA scores (Groseclose, 2005).

The newspaper articles were found using the Lexis-Nexis database by imputing the search term "Schiavo" and restricting the search to article headlines or lead paragraphs—HLEAD(Schiavo). Date restrictions were applied to the sample, beginning on March 17, 2005, the day before Schiavo's feeding tube was ordered to be removed, and ending on April 1, 2005, the day after she passed away. Both hard news and soft news (news reports, analysis, feature stories and editorial and opinion pieces) were analyzed in the data set. The reasoning behind including editorial and opinion pieces included the fact that each publication's editors selected that specific content to be published along with hard news. As such, editorial and opinion pieces identify each newspaper.

In addition, only substantive news coverage of the Terri Schiavo case was analyzed. To determine a substantive article, articles could not mention Schiavo in passing. Duplicate articles and news summaries were removed as it was determined that these types of articles were not

substantively about the Schiavo case. The initial query for the *New York Post* resulted in 49

articles. 11 articles were deemed unsubstantial by the main coder—the majority only mentioned

Schiavo in passing—and were taken from the sample. The initial query for *The New York Times*

resulted in 175 articles. 105 unsubstantial articles, primarily consisting of letters to the editor and

news summaries, were removed. 70 articles remained to be coded. In order to analyze similar

sample sizes, half of the 70 articles were coded, generated using the RAND function on an Excel

spreadsheet. A total of 35 articles from the *New York Post* and 35 articles from *The New York

Times* were then analyzed.

Operationalization

According to Holody (2006), "Frames are central organizing ideas that reflect, through

their presence, valence, and level of substance, how a journalist intends an issue to be

understood" (p. 23). In order for coding to take place, framing devices must first be identified.

The framing devices utilized in this study were based off of Gamson & Modigliani's (1989)

framing devices often employed by media organizations include metaphors, exemplars (i.e.

historical examples from which lessons are drawn), catchphrases, and depictions (1989, p. 3). As

a result of a thorough review of the literature, the researcher chose five generic frames with

which to analyze the newspaper coverage of Terri Schiavo's last month. These frames are as

follows: (1) political consequences frame, (2) legal process frame, (3) medical frame, (4) moral

frame, and (5) family/relational conflict frame. These frames have been proven to exist in

national newspaper coverage of social issues and events similar to the Terri Schiavo case. The

frames are defined as follows:

(1) Political Consequences Frame: Defined as a focus on any short or long-term political

consequences that would come from the outcome of the Schiavo story. Political consequences

may involve normal political events such as elections. The consequences may be either positive or negative, and may be for an individual (e.g., a politician; physician) or a group (e.g., Republicans, Democrats) (Serge, 2009).

(2) Legal Process Frame: Defined as a focus on the legality of any steps intended to keep or remove Schiavo's feeding tube. For example, the rise of the Schiavo case from state to federal jurisdiction; the authority and action of judges. Such legal action may be positive (pro-feeding tube removal) or negative (anti-feeding tube removal) (Pellicano and Gross, 2008).

(3) Medical Frame: Defined as a focus on the medical nature of the case. There must be an argument offered to code for this, not just description, i.e., Terri Schiavo is brain-dead, there is too much brain-damage to recover/persistent vegetative state prevents recovery and Terri Schiavo is brain-damage but can recover (Pellicano and Gross, 2008).

(4) Moral Frame: Defined as a focus on any moral or religious beliefs dealing with the outcome of the Schiavo story. Such beliefs may be positive (pro-feeding tube removal) or negative (anti-feeding tube removal), and can be secular in nature. Does the story contain a moral message? Does the story make reference to morality, God, or other religious tenets? Does the story offer specific (social) prescriptions or solutions about how to behave/act (Serge, 2009)?

(5) Family/Relational Conflict Frame: Defined as the direct mention of any conflict dealing with the Schiavo story between individuals (e.g., between Schiavo's parents or siblings and husband). This kind of coverage makes winning and losing the central concern and may be diagnostic in nature or focus on who is seemingly triumphant in this conflict. Does the story reflect disagreement between family and husband? Does one party/individual reproach another? Does the story refer to two sides or to more than two sides of the problem/issue (Serge, 2009)?

Coders were asked not only to code for the frames' presence or absence, but the valence (positive, neutral, negative) and substance (substantive, ambiguous) given to each. Valence involves the tone of a particular frame. A frame can be classified by its valence – whether it inherently stressed positive, negative, or both positive and negative aspects of a given issue or person, particularly a controversial issue or person. Valence was measured in this study to indicate the overall tone of the news frame toward the removal of Schiavo's feeding tube. The Pellicano and Gross (2007) study reviewed the current literature associated with physician assisted suicide and discovered that much of the research revealed two distinct frames: "one stressing pro-life sentiment and the other the right to individually choose when to end one's life" (p. 9). This researcher utilized similar valence definitions in this study in order to analyze Terri Schiavo's specific case:

1 = positive (pro-removal claim) described news reports that depicted the removal of Schiavo's feeding tube in a good light. This included explicit argument favoring removing the feeding tube and/or in relation to ceding full legal rights to Michael Schiavo (for him to then remove the feeding tube). 2 = neutral included news reports that demonstrated both a positive and negative stance toward the removal of Schiavo's feeding tube. A news report whose valence cannot be deciphered as positive or negative also fell under this category. 3 = negative (against-removal claim) described news reports that depicted the removal of Schiavo's feeding tube in a bad light. This included explicit argument against the removal of the feeding tube, thus keeping it in, and/or not ceding full legal rights to Michael Schiavo. It could be to give legal rights back to Schiavo's parents, or to let the courts decide and lends itself to the Schiavos family's side of the story (Pellicano and Gross, 2008, p. 29).

In light of the purpose of this study, multiple frames can be found within a single article. Frames do not necessarily appear in the same degree, however. One article may include a variety of substantive and ambiguous frames. For example, as stated by Holody (2006):

> While conflict may be mentioned in an off-handed, rather insubstantial manner in a newspaper story, the very fact that the journalist chose to mention it is indicative of a frame and was coded for. Although a "human interest" frame might dominate the article, the ambiguous "conflict" frame is still considered present. Whether intentionally used or not, the presence of such a frame indicates in part how readers are meant to understand the issue being discussed (p. 23).

Thus, each frame was coded as either substantive or ambiguous in order to indicate the amount of coverage devoted to that particular frame. Holody (2008) measured substance and his definition was used as a guide for the current study. Substantive frames met the following criteria: "Does the story provide adequate context surrounding discussion of the particular frame? The frame being coded for is prominent throughout at least one third of the overall story. Although the frame may not be the sole focus of the release, the author does utilize significant time or effort in discussing it" (Holody, p. 80). Ambiguous frames met the following criteria: "Is the frame being coded for vague and lacking in context surrounding discussion of the particular frame? The frame is present but is featured with negligible to moderate prominence. The author may not focus on the frame but it is present in some form" (Holody, p. 80). Coders were also asked to provide a noteworthy statement from each article. This enabled the theme, or dominant frame, of each article to be captured in a single sentence.

To address RQ2, each article was coded as having a specific source. These included: 1) Michael Schiavo; 2) the Schindler parents and family; 3) lawyers; 4) doctors; 5) journalists; 6)

elected and government officials; 7) courts; 8) religious groups and leaders; 9) man on street; and 10) all other sources (Pellicano and Gross, 2007). Each source was coded for valence (positive, neutral, negative).

Coding

Based on prior research addressed in the literature review, and on the research questions, code sheets were developed. After the researcher finished the coding process, roughly 10% of the articles from each newspaper was randomly chosen and analyzed by a second coder. The second coder was a college graduate with a degree in Engineering. Four articles from the *New York Post* and four articles from *The New York Times* were coded by the second coder. This coder received basic training on the coding scheme and the concepts of framing theory. Questions based on coder opinion, such as providing a noteworthy statement from each article, were not tested for reliability. The coder's analysis was used to calculate the intercoder reliability, using Holsti's (Saris-gallhofer, 1978) intercoder reliability (IR) formula. An agreement of 76.6% was reached between coders. After intercoder reliability was established, data were analyzed.

In summary, the quantitative design was chosen as the method for this study due to its congruence with easily-measured, content analysis. Data was collected from *The New York Times* and the *New York Post*. Articles were coded for the presence, valence, and substance of frames. The use of sources was analyzed to determine how they contributed to frames. The researcher coded, clustered, and compared collected data to reveal themes that manifested themselves.

Results

This study examined the *New York Post* and *The New York Times* news coverage of the

Terri Schiavo case over a one-month period. It aimed to determine 1) what frames were used in

the news coverage, 2) if the frames used differed between the two newspapers, and 3) who or

what were the sources used in the news media coverage. Each article was analyzed for the

prevalence (present or absent), level of substance (substantive or ambiguous), and valence

(positive, neutral, or negative) of frames, and then compared using tests for frequency and chi-

square significance.

Results

The total sample population for this study was 70 articles (35 from each newspaper).

Story classification was divided into two categories: hard news and soft news. Soft news

included features, editorial pieces, and opinion pieces. The sample from the *New York Post*

included 62.9% hard news (*n* = 22) and 37.1% soft news (*n* = 13). The sample from *The New*

York Times consisted of 71.4% hard news (*n* = 25) and 28.6% soft news (*n* = 10).

Story Classification

	New York Post (N=35)	%	New York Times (N=35)	%
Story Classification				
Hard News	22	62.9%	25	71.4%
Soft News/Features/Editorial/Opinion	13	37.1%	10	28.6%
Total	35		35	

Frames Present

RQ1 asked which dominant frames were used by specific mainstream print news media

organizations to cover the Terri Schiavo case. To answer this question, the *New York Post* and

The New York Times articles were analyzed for five frames: political consequences frame, legal

process frame, medical frame, moral frame, and family conflict frame. Frequency of all frames present in the sample was calculated.

Analysis revealed that most articles included 2-4 frames. A total of 81 frames were identified in the *New York Post* articles and a total of 67 frames were identified in *The New York Times* articles. The political consequences frame was present in 37.1% of *New York Post* articles ($n = 13$) and 37.1% of *The New York Times* articles ($n = 13$). The legal process frame was present in 71.4% of the *New York Post* articles ($n = 25$) and 54.3% of *The New York Times* articles ($n = 19$). The medical frame was only present in 34.3% of the *New York Post* articles ($n = 12$) and 22.9% of *The New York Times* articles ($n = 8$). The moral frame was present in 57.1% of the *New York Post* articles ($n = 20$) and 60% of *The New York Times* articles ($n = 21$). Finally, the family/relational conflict frame existed in 31.4% of the *New York Post* articles ($n = 11$) and 17.1% of *The New York Times* articles ($n = 6$).

Number of Frames

New York Post **Frames**	**N**	*The New York Times* **Frames**	**N**
Legal Process Frame	25	Moral Frame	21
Moral Frame	20	Legal Process Frame	19
Political Consequences Frame	13	Political Consequences Frame	13
Medical Frame	12	Medical Frame	8
Family/Relational Conflict Frame	11	Family/Relational Conflict Frame	6

Valence of Frames

Both hypotheses concern the valence of frames (positive, negative, or neutral). To determine each frame's valence, frequency of the number of positive, negative, and neutral frames was calculated. Neutral frames were most prominent in the sample from *New York Post* (53.1%, $n = 43$), followed by negative frames (29.6%, $n = 24$) and positive frames (17.3%, $n = 14$). Neutral frames were also most prominent in *The New York Times* (50.7%, $n = 34$), followed by positive frames (46.3%, $n = 31$) and negative frames (3%, $n = 2$).

Among individual frames, most followed this overall trend, although there was variation among some frames. The political consequences frame possessed positive valence only 1 of the 13 times it occurred in the *New York Post* selection (2.9%, *n* = 1) but 8 of 13 times in *The New York Times* (22.9%, *n* = 8). The political consequences frame was tested for chi-square significant differences in its valence between the two newspapers. The result was chi-square=9.59 and the difference of proportions was significant at p = 0.022. The frame possessed negative valence 3 of the 13 times it occurred (8.6%, n = 3) in the *New York Post* while it did not exist at all (0%) in *The New York Times*.

Frame Valence

	New York Post (N=35)	%	New York Times (N=35)	%
Political Consequences Frame				
Positive: Pro-feeding tube removal	1	2.9%	8	22.9%
Neutral: Both sides evenly represented	9	25.7%	5	14.3%
Negative: Anti-feeding tube removal	3	8.6%	0	0.0%
Not present (0) Frame does not appear in article	22	62.9%	22	62.9%
Total	35	100%	35	100%
chi-square=9.59; p=0.022				

The legal process frame was tested for chi-square significant differences in its valence between the two newspapers. The result was chi-square=10.0 and the difference in valence was significant at p = 0.018. The legal process frame possessed positive valence 6 of the 25 times it occurred in the *New York Post* selection (17.1%, *n* = 6) and 9 of the 19 times it occurred in *The New York Times* (25.7%, *n* = 9). A legal process frame with neutral valence occurred most frequently in both the *New York Post* (31.4%, n = 11) and *The New York Times* (28.6%, n = 10) while a negative legal process frame occurred in 8 of the 25 times in the *New York Post* (22.9%, n = 8) and no times in *The New York Times* (0%).

Frame Valence

	New York Post (N=35)	%	New York Times (N=35)	%
Legal Process Frame				
Positive: Pro-feeding tube removal	6	17.1%	9	25.7%
Neutral: Both sides evenly represented	11	31.4%	10	28.6%
Negative: Anti-feeding tube removal	8	22.9%	0	0.0%
Not present: Frame does not appear in article	10	28.6%	16	45.7%
Total	35	100.0%	35	100.0%
*chi-square=10.0; p=0.018				

The medical frame was tested for chi-square significant differences in the valence between the two newspapers. The result was chi-square = 5.57 and the difference in valence was approaching significance at p = 0.056. The medical frame possessed positive valence 3 of the 12 times it occurred in the *New York Post* selection (9%, *n* = 3) and 6 of the 8 times it occurred in *The New York Times* (17.1%, *n* = 3). It possessed neutral valence 9 of the 12 times it occurred in the *New York Post* (25.7%, *n* = 9) and 2 of the 8 times it occurred in *The New York Times* (5.7%, *n* = 2). A medical frame with a negative valence did not occur in either publication. 65.7% of the *New York Post* articles (*n* = 23) did not possess a medical frame and 77.1% of *The New York Times* articles (*n* = 27) did not possess a medical frame.

Frame Valence

	New York Post (N=35)	%	New York Times (N=35)	%
Medical Frame				
Positive: Pro-feeding tube removal	3	8.6%	6	17.1%
Neutral: Both sides evenly represented	9	25.7%	2	5.7%
Negative: Anti-feeding tube removal	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Not present: Frame does not appear in article	23	65.7%	27	77.1%
Total	35	100.0%	35	100.0%
*chi-square=5.57; p=0.056				

The moral frame was tested for chi-square significant differences in frame valence between the two newspapers. The result was chi-square = 6.89 and the difference in valence was p = 0.076. The moral frame possessed positive valence 3 of the 25 times it occurred in the *New*

York Post selection (8.6%, *n* = 3) and 7 of the 26 times it occurred in The *New York Post* (20%, *n*

= 7). It possessed a negative valence 9 of the 25 times it occurred in the *New York Post* (25.7%, *n*

= 9) and 2 of the 26 times it occurred in *The New York Times* (5.7%, *n* = 2).

Frame Valence

	New York Post (N=35)	%	New York Times (N=35)	%
Moral Frame				
Positive: Pro-feeding tube removal	3	8.6%	7	20.0%
Neutral: Both sides evenly represented	8	22.9%	12	34.3%
Negative: Anti-feeding tube removal	9	25.7%	2	5.7%
Not present: Frame does not appear in article	15	42.9%	14	40.0%
Total	35	100.0%	35	100.0%
*chi-square=6.89; p=0.076				

The family/relational conflict frame was tested for chi-square significant differences in

frame valence between the two newspapers. The result was chi-square = 27.6 and the difference

in valence was significant at p = 0.00. Family/relational conflict frame possessed equal positive

valence in both the *New York Post* and *The New York Times* (2.86%, *n* = 1). A family/relational

conflict frame with negative valence occurred 4 of the 11 times in the *New York Post* (11.4%, *n* =

4) and did not appear in *The New York Times* (0%). It was not present in 68.6% of the *New York

Post* and 82.9% of *The New York Times*.

Frame Valence

	New York Post (N=35)	%	New York Times (N=35)	%
Family/Relational Conflict Frame				
Positive: Pro-feeding tube removal	1	2.9%	1	2.86%
Neutral: Both sides evenly represented	6	17.1%	5	14.3%
Negative: Anti-feeding tube removal	4	11.4%	0	0%
Not present: Frame does not appear in article	24	68.6%	29	82.9%
Total	35	100.0%	35	100.00%
*chi-square=27.6; p=0.00				

Substance of Frames

Research question 1 (RQ1) asked which dominant frames were used by specific mainstream print news media organizations to cover the Terri Schiavo case. To answer this question, frequency of the number of ambiguous and substantive frames was calculated along with frame presence/absence and valence. Overall, ambiguous frames (56.8%, $n = 46$) were more prevalent than substantive frames (43.2%, $n = 35$) in the *New York Post* sample. Substantive frames (62.7%, $n = 42$) were more prevalent than ambiguous frames (37.3%, $n = 25$) in *The New York Times* sample.

Frame Substance

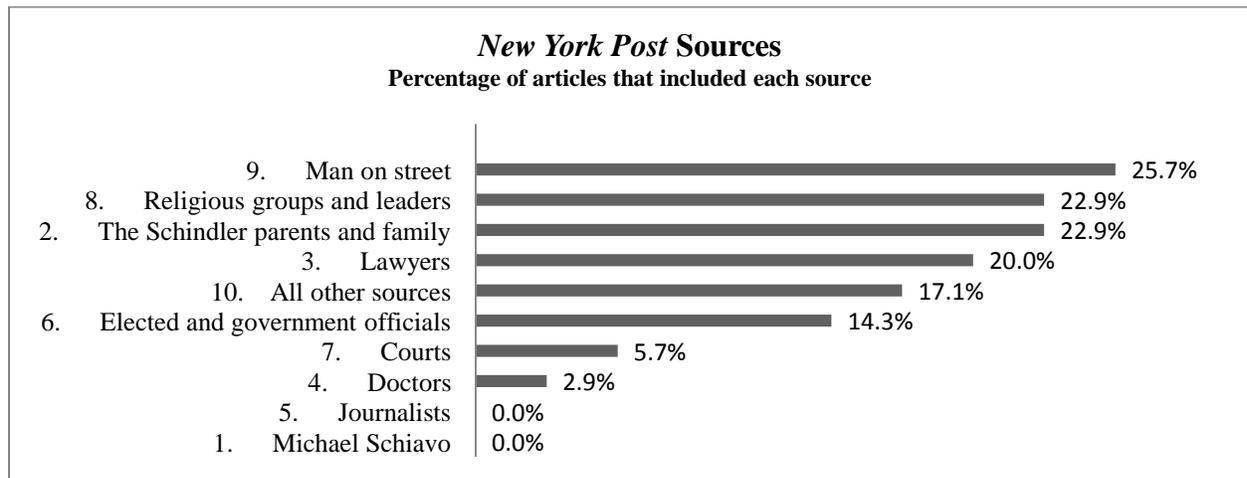|	New York Post (N=35)	%	New York Times (N=35)	%
Political Consequences Frame				
Substantive	7	20.0%	8	22.9%
Ambiguous	6	17.1%	5	14.3%
Total	13	37.1%	13	37.1%
Legal Process Frame				
Substantive	10	28.6%	12	34.3%
Ambiguous	15	42.9%	7	20.0%
Total	25	71.4%	19	54.3%
Medical Frame				
Substantive	3	8.6%	7	20.0%
Ambiguous	9	25.7%	1	2.9%
Total	12	34.3%	8	22.9%
Moral Frame				
Substantive	11	31.4%	12	34.3%
Ambiguous	9	25.7%	9	25.7%
Total	20	57.1%	21	60.0%
Family/Relational Conflict Frame				
Substantive	4	11.4%	3	8.6%
Ambiguous	7	20.0%	3	8.6%
Total	11	31.4%	6	17.1%

Each frame was analyzed individually to determine whether significant differences existed in substance within frames. In the *New York Post* sample, the frame that was most substantive ($n = 11$) more than ambiguous ($n = 9$) was the moral frame, followed closely by the political consequences frame which was also substantive ($n = 7$) more than ambiguous ($n = 6$). All other frames were more ambiguous. In *The New York Times* sample, all frames were found to
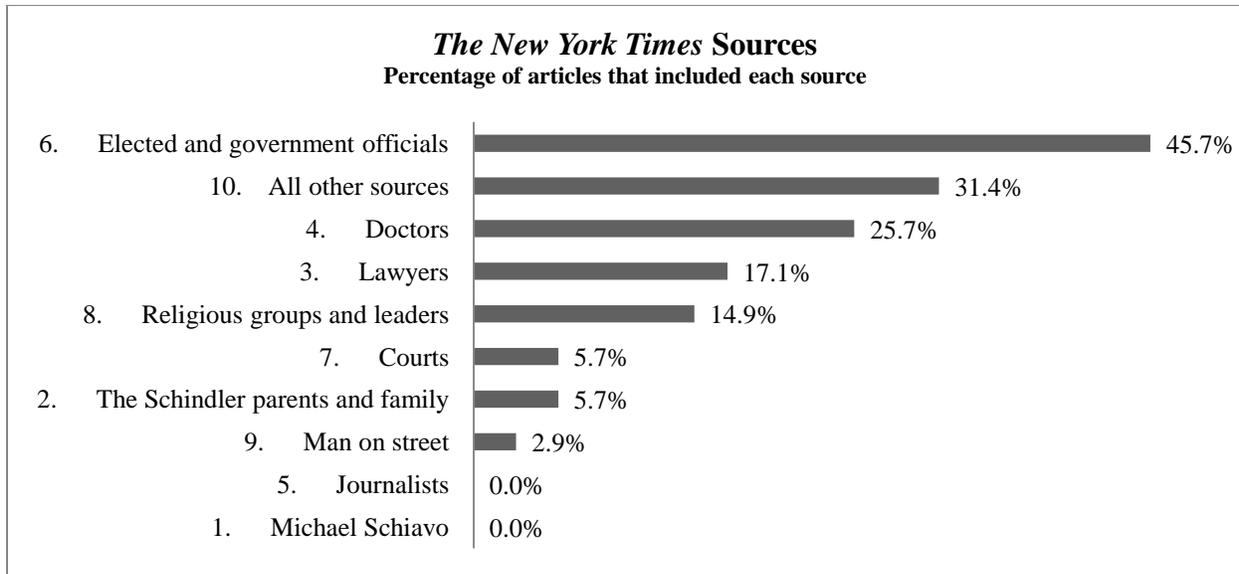
be substantive, with the exception of the family/relational conflict frame with equal substantive and ambiguous frames (8.6%, $n = 3$).

Sources Cited

Along with identifying and analyzing frames, the use of sources was analyzed to determine how they contributed to existing frames. A total of ten categories were chosen with which to analyze the first and second source cited in each article. The sources were tested for chi-square significant differences in sources. The result was chi-square $= 25.3$ and the difference was significant at $p = 0.001$. Results revealed that the sources with the highest percentages (used most frequently) in the *New York Post* were man on street (25.7%, $n = 9$), the Schindler parents and family (22.9%, $n = 8$), religious groups and leaders (22.9%, $n = 8$), and lawyers (20%, $n = 7$).

New York Post Sources
Percentage of articles that included each source

|	
9. Man on street	25.7%
8. Religious groups and leaders	22.9%
2. The Schindler parents and family	22.9%
3. Lawyers	20.0%
10. All other sources	17.1%
6. Elected and government officials	14.3%
7. Courts	5.7%
4. Doctors	2.9%
5. Journalists	0.0%
1. Michael Schiavo	0.0%

The most frequently cited sources in *The New York Times* were elected government officials (45.7%, $n = 16$), doctors (25.7%, $n = 9$), lawyers (17.1%, $n = 6$), and religious groups and leaders (14.9%, $n = 5$).

The New York Times Sources
Percentage of articles that included each source

Source	%
6. Elected and government officials	45.7%
10. All other sources	31.4%
4. Doctors	25.7%
3. Lawyers	17.1%
8. Religious groups and leaders	14.9%
7. Courts	5.7%
2. The Schindler parents and family	5.7%
9. Man on street	2.9%
5. Journalists	0.0%
1. Michael Schiavo	0.0%

Neither Michael Schiavo nor journalists were cited as the first two sources in either newspaper. The source with the lowest percentage in the *New York Post* sample was doctors (2.9%, $n = 1$) and the source with the lowest percentage in *The New York Times* was man on street (2.9%, $n = 1$). 24 articles in the *New York Post* sample and 18 articles in *The New York Times* did not include any sources.

Sources

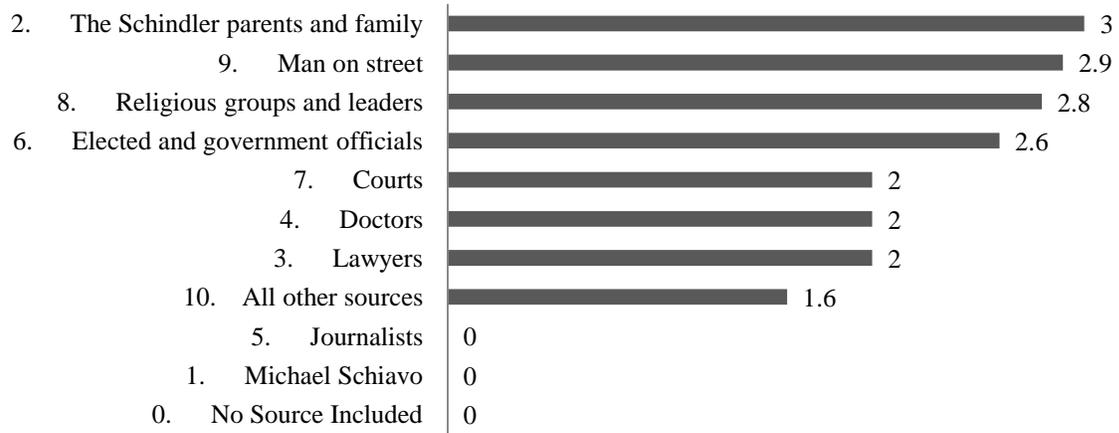| Sources		New York Post			New York Times		
		Number	%	Score	Number	%	Score
0.	No Source Included	24	68.6%	0	18	51.4%	0
1.	Michael Schiavo	0	0%	0	0	0%	0
2.	The Schindler parents and family	8	22.9%	3	2	5.7%	3
3.	Lawyers	7	20.0%	2	6	17.1%	1.5
4.	Doctors	1	2.9%	2	9	25.7%	1.6
5.	Journalists	0	0%	0	0	0%	0
6.	Elected and government officials	5	14.3%	2.6	16	45.7%	2.5
7.	Courts	2	5.7%	2	2	5.7%	1.5
8.	Religious groups and leaders	8	22.9%	2.8	5	14.90%	2.6
9.	Man on street	9	25.7%	2.9	1	2.9%	2
10.	All other sources	6	17.1%	1.6	11	31.4%	1.9
	*chi-square=25.3; df=8; p=0.001						

Each source was given a score to enable coding for valence. The average score for the *New York Post* articles was 2.3625 and the average score for *The New York Times* articles was 2.075. The score maps the valence of the sources within each article on a scale from 1 to 3, with 1 representing positive valence and 3 representing negative valence.
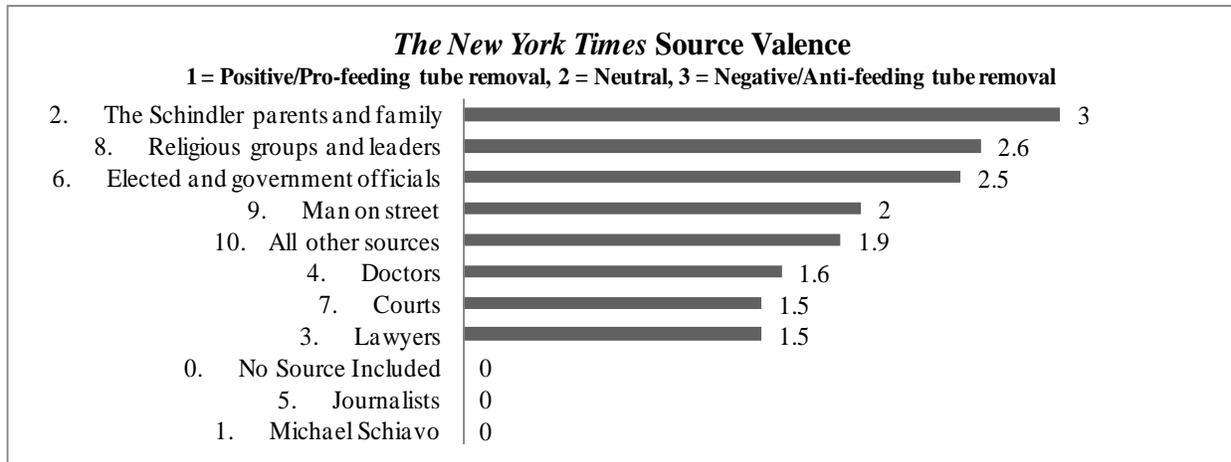
The New York Times Source Valence
1 = Positive/Pro-feeding tube removal, 2 = Neutral, 3 = Negative/Anti-feeding tube removal

2. The Schindler parents and family	3
8. Religious groups and leaders	2.6
6. Elected and government officials	2.5
9. Man on street	2
10. All other sources	1.9
4. Doctors	1.6
7. Courts	1.5
3. Lawyers	1.5
0. No Source Included	0
5. Journalists	0
1. Michael Schiavo	0

The scores in eight of the categories reveal that the *New York Post* was higher (closer to negative valence) than the score in The *New York Post* of the same category. The exception was the Schindler parents and family category in which both newspapers matched scores (3) as well as the all other sources category, in which *The New York Times* received a score of 1.9 and the *New York Post* received a score of 1.6.

New York Post **Source Valence**
1 = Positive/Pro-feeding tube removal, 2 = Neutral, 3 = Negative/Anti-feeding tube removal

Source	Value
2. The Schindler parents and family	3
9. Man on street	2.9
8. Religious groups and leaders	2.8
6. Elected and government officials	2.6
7. Courts	2
4. Doctors	2
3. Lawyers	2
10. All other sources	1.6
5. Journalists	0
1. Michael Schiavo	0
0. No Source Included	0

Conclusions

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the framing of the Terri Schiavo case in the month leading up to her death. The study examined how newspaper coverage depicted her case with a focus on extracting dominant frames. All data was analyzed for the prevalence (present or absent), level of substance (substantive or ambiguous), and valence (positive, neutral, or negative) of frames. Sources were additionally analyzed since a review of the literature revealed a possible relation between source use and framing. The content analysis of two leading U.S. national newspapers, *The New York Times* and *New York Post,* revealed that the case of Terri Schiavo was, in fact, a rich area for research. Answering the research questions and testing the hypotheses resulted in insightful areas for discussion. Possibly the area of most interest is the apparent difference between the frames (including valence, substance, and sources) of the two publications. The possible implications of this are important due to the very nature of the framing concept. "[T]he overall history of framing theory suggests that frames have the very powerful effect of influencing how people view the world, by influencing how it comes to be understood" (Holody, 2006, p. 9). Finally, specific limitations arose as this study was conducted as well as ideas for further research.

Articles classified as both hard news and soft news were included in the sample. The *New York Post* sample contained more soft news pieces than *The New York Times*. This is not surprising as the *New York Post* is known for its generous amount of feature stories and opinion pieces. As stated by Anthony Ventre, "*New York Post* [is] tabloid sized, consisting of about 130 pages including the ads. [It appeals to] a blue-collar working class and middle-educated sports minded readership which dwells in the boroughs and has neither time nor patience for *The New*

York Times nor the Wall Street Journal" (2007). However, the difference between the hard news articles and soft news articles present in the two newspapers was not significant.

Dominant Frames

This study supports prior research about the prevalence of generic frames. RQ1 asked "What were the dominant frames used by specific mainstream print news media organizations to cover the Terri Schiavo case?" All articles were analyzed for five frames and all five frames were found in each newspaper. The two frames that occurred most frequently were the legal process frame and moral frame. Statements in the newspapers such as, "'This is heart-wrenching for all Americans,' Mr. Wexler said. 'But the issue before this Congress is not an emotional one. It is simply one that respects the rule of law'" (*The New York Times*, article no. 12) demonstrate the article's attempt to brand the issue within the idea of legality, rather than morality. Statements such as, "Those who have sided with her parents in seeking the reinsertion of her feeding tube have a view of life that is profoundly different from those who have sided with her husband's quest to have her die" (*New York Post*, article no. 29) reveal the moral frame.

H1 and H2 stated that legal frames would be more dominant in articles in *The New York Times* and moral frames would be more dominant in the *New York Post*. This, however, was not the case. *The New York Times* had fewer legal frames (54.3%, $n = 19$) than the *New York Post* (71.4%, $n = 25$) and more moral frames (60%, $n = 21$) than the *New York Post* (57.1%, $n = 20$). This shows that *The New York Times* did approach the issue of Terri Schiavo's final days as a moral issue the majority of the time. However, this does not necessarily mean that articles explicitly or implicitly contained a moral message or made reference to morality, God or other religious tenets. The moral frame does include frames with moral messages and faith references, but it also includes the offer of specific (social) prescriptions or solutions about how to

behave/act (Serge, 2009). In addition, *The New York Times* possessed only one more moral

frame than the *New York Post*.

Legal frames were more dominant in the *New York Post*. This reveals that issues such as

constitutionality, Schiavo's legal rights, government obligation, and jurisdiction were more

prevalent in the *New York Post* sample. The significance of these findings regarding moral

frames (arguably consequence-oriented) and legal frames (arguably process-oriented) exists

mainly when combined with frame valence.

Frame Valence

Both H1 and H2 involve frame valence. This study also supports prior research about

frames possessing either a positive, neutral, or negative valence (de Vreese & Boomgaarden,

2006). H1 states that frames with positive valence will be more dominant in articles in *The New*

York Times and H2 states that frames with negative valence will be more dominant in articles in

the *New York Post*. A previous study that centered on framing the death with dignity debate

(Holody, 2006) revealed an important finding. Holody states that the mere use of frames is not

indicative of coverage driving coverage. "The ways in which the subject was talked about were

very similar, but how the newspapers actually discussed the issue, significantly, was not (p. 54).

Since both *The New York Times* and the *New York Post* utilized the same frames (with a slight

differing in presence) an added difference lies in valence and substance.

A frame can be classified by its valence—whether it inherently stressed positive,

negative, or both positive and negative aspects of a given issue or person, particularly a

controversial issue or person. Valence was measured in this study to indicate the overall tone of

the news frame toward the removal of Schiavo's feeding tube. Studies have shown that valence

has the ability to impact people's opinion. Controversial issues, specifically, are often laden with

valence and the news media's ability to impact public opinion on a topic of national interest (i.e. moral, legal, or political) has many implications. As stated by De Vreese and Boomgaarden (2003), a study by Nelson and Oxley (1999) and Tewksbury et al. (2000) "specifically found that exposure to news frames with an inherent valence affected public support for political issues such as agriculture regulation and land development" (p. 366). Thus, the discovery of news valences in the coverage of Terri Schiavo's final month can lead to an understanding of a possible correlation between frames and impact on public opinion.

Neutral frames were most prominent (over 50%) in the sample from both publications. However, the similarity ends here. The *New York Post* possessed 24 (29.6%) frames with a negative valence, followed by 14 (17.3%) positive frames. In contrast, *The New York Times* possessed 31 positive frames (46.3%) and only 2 negative frames (both of the 2 frames existing in the moral frame at 3% of the total article population). Thus, 4 of the 5 frames in *The New York Times* sample had a negative valence of 0%. This difference in overall valence is markedly telling of the way in which each paper framed the Schiavo case. As discovered by Holody (2006) "What these findings mean is that, although the individual newspapers are using the same frames to discuss physician-assisted suicide [in this case, Terri Schiavo's feeding tube removal] and are using these frames at similar levels of substance, the newspapers are not using frames with the same valence" (p. 54).

Quotes, facts, word choice, and stories all play into creating a theme (and thus, a frame). The *New York Post* possessed almost ten times the amount of negative valence in regards to Terri Schiavo than *The New York Times*. This is an overall measuring, meaning that across all five frames in general, *The New York Times* was almost ten times less likely to present an anti-feeding tube removal frame. An example of such a frame can be shown in this noteworthy

statement pulled from hard news article no. 65 from *The New York Times*, "But in 2003, Mr.

King, then president of the Senate, bowed to intense pressure to take legislative action that he

now says violated the principles of the earlier statute." This positive, pro-removal frame is in

strong contrast with the 46.3% positive, anti-removal frames of the *New York Post*. An example

would be hard news article no. 26 with the key quote, "The frantic race to save Terri Schiavo is

nearing a heartbreaking dead end." These findings directly support the second half of H1 and H2:

frames with positive valence are more dominant in articles in *The New York Times* and frames

with negative valence are more dominant in articles in the *New York Post*. A finding that was not

identified in either hypothesis was the wide difference in the negative and positive frames in *The*

New York Times. While the *New York Post*'s negative and positive frames had a 12.3%

difference between them, *The New York Time*'s negative and positive frames had a 43.3%

difference. This, along with the fact that *The New York Post* only included a negative valence in

one frame, shows lean of a much larger degree toward the positive, pro-feeding tube removal

valence in *The New York Times* than the *New York Post's* more balanced, less extreme, lean

toward the anti-feeding tube removal valence.

Political Consequences Valence

Among individual frames, most followed the overall trend in valence. The most notable

results in regards to the political consequences frame were the frequency with which a frame

with positive valence occurred in both publications. The *New York Post* possessed positive

valence only 1 of the 13 times it occurred (2.9%, $n = 1$) while occurring 8 of 13 times in *The*

New York Times (22.9%, $n = 8$). Thus, close to 3% of the *New York Post* articles displayed a

frame that put the political consequences of the Schiavo case in a pro-feeding tube removal, pro-

Michael Schiavo light while almost 23% of *The New York Times* articles did the same. This is

hardly surprising as the political track record of each newspaper has been analyzed in the past

and found to be far removed ideologically and politically. For instance, it is historical fact that

The New York Times has openly endorsed a Democratic presidential candidate every election

cycle since John F. Kennedy in 1960 (NYTimes.com). This, of course, includes Barack Obama

in 2008. The *New York Post*, on the other hand, endorsed George Bush (Republican) in 2004 and

John McCain (Republican) in 2008 (NYPost.com).

There is evidence that the Terri Schiavo debate was divided deeply down the line

between Democrats (pro-feeding tube removal) and Republicans (anti-feeding tube removal), as

shown in this political consequences frame from the *New York Post*:

So the idea of Congress convening a weekend session to push through a potentially

precedent-setting law for one single individual, with little regard to the long-term

consequences, is profoundly troubling. Political opportunism? No question about it. And

if you don't believe that, just look at the Republican memo discovered by ABC News: It

talks about how 'excited' the 'pro-life' base will be because 'an important moral issue' is

being debated. Or look at House Democrats who opposed the new law: Suddenly, they've

embraced what amounts to states'-rights federalism (no. 42).

Thus, the idea that almost 23% of the political consequences frames in *The New York*

Times were positive (pro-feeding tube removal) and 0% negative while only 2.9% of the *New*

York Post articles were positive (with 8.6% negative), is consistent with each publication's

political leaning. In fact, the only semi-surprising outcome is the fact that the *New York Post* had

such a small number of negative frames (when compared to the 25.7% neutral). These findings

support the second half of H1 and H2: frames with positive valence are more dominant in articles

in *The New York Times* and frames with negative valence are more dominant in articles in the *New York Post*.

Legal Process Valence

The most notable difference between newspaper articles containing the legal process frame was the existence (or non-existence, as the case may be) of the legal process frame with negative valence. 28.6% of the *New York Post* articles contained a negative valence while 0% percent of *The New York Times* articles contained a negative valence. Hence, not a single article defined as a focus on the legality of any steps intended to keep or remove Schiavo's feeding tube was included in *The New York Times* sample. This means that none of the following themes were solely represented: Constitutional rights have been violated/need to be protected, legal rights belong to Terri Schiavo's parents, government obligation to intervene: make sure family has right to be heard, and attempts for jurisdiction have failed (Sean, 2009).

These findings directly support the second half of H1 and H2: frames with positive valence are more dominant in articles in *The New York Times* and frames with negative valence are more dominant in articles in the *New York Post*.

Medical Valence

The most important item in regards to the results of the existence of the medical frame in both publications is the limited mention of either theme. This is consistent with findings in the Pellicano and Gross (2007) content analysis of coverage of the Terri Schiavo case in *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *USA Today* as well as the *St. Petersburg Times*. They stated, "We hardly see the inclusion of medical frames at all (2%)" (p. 14).

65.7% of the *New York Post* articles ($n = 23$) and 77.1% of *The New York Times* articles ($n = 27$) did not possess a medical frame. This is interesting considering that much of the debate

centered on the definition of Terri Schiavo's condition. As stated in a *New York Times* article, no. 39, "At the center of the debate over Terri Schiavo's fate is the question of her diagnosis: Is she in a persistent vegetative state, or in a milder state of brain damage called minimal consciousness?" Two things of interest rise to the surface when considering the valence of the medical frame. First, neither publication possessed a negative medical frame (0%). Second, the *New York Post* predominantly featured neutral frames (9 of the 12 frames were neutral) while *The New York Times* predominantly featured positive frames (6 of the 8 frames). This is consistent with the overarching frame valence as well as the individual valences of almost all other frames. *The New York Times* used the medical frame to support a pro-feeding tube removal claim (positive). These findings support the second half of H1 but do not directly support the second half of H2.

Moral Valence

The most statistically significant difference between the valence of moral frames in the *New York Post* and *The New York Times* is in the presence of negative valence. The moral frame possessed a negative valence 9 of the 25 times it occurred in the *New York Post* and 2 of the 26 times it occurred in *The New York Times*. As stated previously, *The New York Times* contained a larger percentage of moral frames throughout the sample than did the *New York Post*. This did not support the first half of H2. However, the second half of H2 pertaining to the valence of frames was fully supported. 33.3% of all moral frames found in *The New York Times* were positive compared to 9.5% negative. The second half of H1 was also fully supported in that 45% of all moral frames were negative and only 15% positive. A *New York Post* article (n. 45) stated the reasoning behind the difference well: "The passion surrounding the Schiavo case is a perfect

reflection of the cultural divide between those Americans in whose life faith plays a central role and those who fancy themselves the heirs of Enlightenment reason."

The valence findings within the moral frame are consistent with other valence framings and reveal the way in which each newspaper decides to present the multi-faceted issue of Terri Schiavo. While *The New York Times* did possess more moral frames, the largest statistical significance was in the difference between the use of a negative valence (a difference of 20% between the two publications).

Family/Relational Conflict Valence

Only 11 occurrences of the family/relational conflict frame were found in the *New York Post* and 6 in *The New York Times*. As such, the frame was not shown to be as prominent as the previous frames. These findings directly support the second half of H1 and H2: frames with positive valence are more dominant in articles in *The New York Times* and frames with negative valence are more dominant in articles in the *New York Post*.

Frame Substance

Research question 1 (RQ1) asked which dominant frames were used by specific mainstream print news media organizations to cover the Terri Schiavo case. Overall, ambiguous frames were more prevalent than substantive frames in the *New York Post* sample. Substantive frames were more prevalent than ambiguous frames in *The New York Times* sample. The implications of the substance in each frame make for an interesting study. In light of the purpose of most framing research, which is to identify possible correlations between journalism and public opinion, it is important to understand the possible affect of a substantive or ambiguous frame. By its very nature, "a substantive frame is detailed and informative, offering detailed information and context while an ambiguous frame is vague and indistinct, providing little to no

context and lacking in clear information. This type of frame serves strictly as a map for its audience to follow" (Holody, 2006, p. 9).

According to Moldoff's (2007) findings in a study that sought to determine whether the frame valence and/or level of frame substance of a news article about youth voting would influence the attitudes of young people, frame substance may have a positive relationship with information retention. The more substantive a frame, the more information is likely to be retained regarding a certain news article. The study also found that the political attitudes measured remained unfazed by exposure to ambiguous frames. With this in mind, the use of ambiguous frames over substantive frames may have less of an effect on public opinion. The *New York Post* utilized more ambiguous frames and *The New York Times* utilized more substantive frames. The valence of frames found in *The New York Times* did more closely match public opinion as measured by various polls. (Public polls predominantly showed support for Michael Schiavo and the removal of Terri Schiavo's feeding tube) (Pellicano and Gross, 2007). Framing substance in national print media may have affected the impact on public opinion. This is, of course, only one of many factors, including the impact of multiple print news media utilizing the same frames and substance.

Sources Cited

RQ2 asked "What are the sources cited in the media coverage of each newspaper?" As the results showed, both publications utilized the same sources on a variety of levels (with a few exceptions). Disregarding the category of "no sources cited," which existed due to the inclusion of editorials in the sample, the top categories were man on street and government officials for the *New York Post* and *The New York Times* respectively. Interestingly, this matches previous research in a 1980 content analysis. The study compared the two newspapers and discovered that

The New York Times was more likely to refer to official reactions and the *New York Post* more frequently described unofficial reactions (Fenichel and Dan, 1980).

The valence of each source was also ascertained and provided insight into the valence of present frames in each publication. The scores in eight of the categories reveal that the *New York Post* was higher (closer to negative valence) than the score in The *New York Post* of the same category. Thus, the valence of sources overall matched the valence of overall frames for each publication and supported both RQ1 and RQ2. The sources used by each publication were consistent with the pro-feeding tube removal or anti-feeding tube removal trend of the dominant frames.

Implications

National newspapers have been shown to shape attitudes and beliefs, act as agents of public education, and play a role in determining policy (Baillie, 1996 as cited in Holody, 2006). More specifically, the framing theory suggests that news frames have a powerful effect on influencing public opinion—what is true and how truth should be understood. Content analysis as a research method allows communication scholars to make inferences about the impact of national media on society (Lowry, 2008). Framing moves the discussion. It directs attention and can even go a step further to direct attention either positively or negatively.

The frames identified in the *New York Post* and *The New York Times* revealed that five generic frames were present and each frame possessed inherent valence and a certain level of substance. Sources were identified and found to support the dominant frames. The decision to keep or remove Terri Schiavo's feeding tube was one with national and personal implications: legal, political, moral, and medical. The month leading up to Terri Schiavo's death was filled with controversy and conflict between two distinct, opposing sides. While national print news

media maintain that hard news coverage is objective and unbiased, this study reveals that both the *New York Post* and *The New York Times* framed the case of Terri Schiavo with negative, positive, or neutral tones. While neutral frames were most dominant in both publications, frames with positive valence existed as a close second in *The New York Times* and were present over frames with negative valence in all five frames. This reveals that *The New York Times* maintained a consistent and strong lean toward removing Terri Schiavo's feeding tube. Conversely, the *New York Post* revealed frames with a negative valence followed by positive valence. The trend toward keeping Terri Schiavo's feeding tube and supporting her parents was not as extreme as the trends found in *The New York Times*.

Thus, whether print media would like to admit it, "frames privilege certain interpretations of events and issues by emphasizing some aspects of a perceived reality rather than others" (Bullock, 2008, p. 7). Each journalist utilizes certain frames to interpret life. Each newspaper, in turn, publishes articles with particular life interpretations. Causation is not the purpose of this study, but framing theory flirts with possible correlations between the worldview of journalists and liberal or conservative ideologies of publications and the media they produce. This study revealed that measurable, valenced frames do, indeed, exist within national print news media. The very existence of such frames in the coverage of issues and events where life itself is at stake implies the potential of news media to powerfully impact people and policy in the United States for both good… and evil.

<div align="center">Limitations</div>

The issue of objectivity is always present when a content analysis is conducted. The limitations of the researcher concern objectivity which, for any researcher, is difficult to perfectly attain. In order to overcome this limitation, it is important to understand that the issue

of objectivity exists and to respond accordingly. Utilizing a second coder, testing for intercoder reliability, and creating a measureable coding system are three ways in which this researcher attempted to overcome potential problems in objectivity.

The next limitation concerns the sample. First, the sample size was relatively small when compared to other content analyses of news media. The time span could have been expanded to include more than a month prior to Terri Schiavo's death (three months, for instance). Second, the sample included both hard news and soft news. Soft news is generally laden with blatant opinion and, as such, may have the potential to skew a framing analysis. This was taken into account since the researcher believed that each publication still makes the choice to include soft news, which reflects the publication's overall stance.

Another limitation of this study is its methodology. The framing analysis used a deductive method. Frames were identified in prior research and coded for accordingly. This leaves little room for emerging frames. However, one of the strengths of using predetermined frames is repeatability and reliability. The frames were narrowed down to five choices. This is certainly a limitation to the study as there were a number of other frames with which the newspapers could have been coded. These frames could have then affected the results (including levels of substance and valence). As a part of the methodology, the analysis of sources was also a limitation. The researcher analyzed the first two sources in each article, believing them to set the tone for the rest of the article. If all sources in each article were analyzed, the results could be affected. In addition, each article was coded as a whole. Other content analyses code for each paragraph within a given article in order to capture frames in detail.

Future Research

There are several avenues for future research regarding this topic. This study measured frame presence, valence, and substance. Analyzing the same issue, but with the use of different frames, would make for an addition to research. Issue-specific frames unique to the feeding tube removal debate could be identified or even broader frames could be used. The relationship between substance and valence could be drawn upon to determine the effects of substance on a frame's inherent valence. The correlation between frame substance and other frame classifications could also be explored.

More framing analyses of the *New York Post* and *The New York Times* exploring other controversial issues or events should be conducted. More recent related issues or events would make for an interesting study to determine whether frames and valences have changed. Coverage of Terri Schiavo and coverage in the *New York Post* and *The New York Times* of another similar, but more recent, case would also make for an interesting study.

This study focused only on news coverage contained in two national newspapers. Instead, there could be a comparison between three or more newspapers of different demographics across the country. *The St. Petersburg Times* could be included in a future analysis since it featured local coverage of the Terri Schiavo case. In addition, future analyses of Terri Schiavo's death should include coverage in other media. Future studies could examine the coverage of Terri Schiavo's final month in television news (for instance Fox News and MSNBC), the Internet, and other media. News coverage of Terri Schiavo in international media could also prove informative.

This study has shown that there is a relationship between cited sources and present frames. But the question remains, how does framing affect an audience? If a source is paraphrased, does it have as much of an impact as a quote? If a source is given without much

background, does that limit its impact on the frames? Which sources are deemed by audiences as the most trustworthy? Why? How exactly do sources affect the valence of a frame? Is it what they say or the way in which they say it? What is the impact of an official source versus a man on the street? Future studies should attempt to answer these questions to better discover the deeper impact that sources, and framing, have on controversial issues and events.

References

(2005). The Rapture. *New Republic*, *232*(16/17), 25-27. Retrieved from Academic Search

Complete database.

(2010). Putting your money where your mouse is. *Economist*, *396*(8698), 13. Retrieved from

Academic Search Complete database <

http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail?vid=55&hid=10&sid=1c3c4bac-55a2-4a7e-905a

54a52339f9c1%40sessionmgr13&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZSZzY29wZT1zaX

Rl#db=a9h&AN=53461506>

Altheide, D. (1996). Qualitative media analysis (Vol. 38). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Annas, G. (2005). Culture of Life.•Politics at the Bedside: The Case of Terri Schiavo. *New

England Journal of Medicine*, *352*(16), 1710-1715. doi:10.1056/NEJMlim050643.

Baillie, R. (1996). Determining the effects of media portrayals of alcohol: Going beyond short

term influence. *Alcohol and Alcoholism*, 31(3), 235-242.

Bronstein, C. (2005). Representing the third wave: Mainstream print media framing of a new

feminist movement. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *82*(4), 783-803.

Retrieved from Academic Search Complete database.

Czuchry, M., & Gray, B. (2009). Influence of message sidedness, pictures, and need for

cognition on beliefs and behavior: The Terri Schiavo case 1. *Journal of Applied Social

Psychology*, 39(3), 762-789. Retrieved from EBSCO*host*.

Campo-Flores, A., Sinderbrand, R., Underwood, A., Bailey, H., Lipper, T., Gegax, T., et al.

(2005). The legacy of Terri Schiavo. *Newsweek*, *145*(14), 22-28. Retrieved from

Academic Search Complete database

Dimitrova, D., & Connolly-Ahern, C. (2007). A tale of two wars: framing analysis of online

news sites in coalition countries and the Arab world during the Iraq war. *Howard Journal*

of Communications, *18*(2), 153-168. doi:10.1080/10646170701309973.

Ditto, P. (2006). What would Terri want? On the psychological challenges of surrogate decision

making. *Death Studies*, *30*(2), 135-148. doi:10.1080/07481180500455624.

Dresser, R. (2004). At law: Schiavo: A hard case makes questionable law. *The Hastings Center*

Report, pp. 8-9. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3528413>

Egnor, M. (2008, August 12). Terri Schiavo's death and the misdiagnosis of a persistent

vegetative state. *Life News*, Retrieved from http://www.lifenews.com/2008/08/12/bio-

2544/

Entman, R. (1993). Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of*

Communication, *43*(4), p.p. 51-58. Retrieved from Academic Search Complete database.

Fenichel, M., & Dan, P. (1980). Heads from post and times on Three-Mile Island. *Journalism*

Quarterly, 57(2), 338-368. Retrieved from EBSCO*host*.

Gadson, A. (2003). Neither hearth nor home: the (un)making of elder care responsibility. *Journal*

of Aging Studies, *17*(1), 17. doi:10.1016/S0890-4065(02)00087-7.

Gamson, W. (1985). Goffman's Legacy to Political Sociology. *Theory & Society*, *14*(5), 605-622.

Retrieved from Academic Search Complete database.

Gamson, W. & Modigliani, A. (1989). Media discourse and public opinion on nuclear power: A

constructionist approach. *American Journal of Sociology*, 95(1), 1 – 37.

George, R. (2005). Terri Schiavo a right to life denied or a right to die honored? *Constitutional*

Commentary, pp. 419-426. Retrieved from Legal Collection database.

Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*. New York: Harper & Row.

Gray, J. (2007). "Quality of Life" or "Right to Life": Analysis of Response to the Terri Schiavo Case in Blogs. *Conference Papers -- National Communication Association*, 1. Retrieved from Communication & Mass Media Complete database.

Groseclose, T. (2005). A measure of media bias. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 120(4), 1191-1237. Retrieved from

http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/polisci/faculty/groseclose/pdfs/MediaBias.pdf

Gruberg, M. (2007). Symbolic politics out of florida: Elian Gonzalez and Terri Schiavo. *Conference Papers -- Midwestern Political Science Association*, 1-7. Retrieved from Academic Search Complete database.

Haley, H.(2011). A comparison of media frames in print vs. television news: An examination of the Elijah Page death penalty case in South Dakota. M.S. dissertation, Iowa State University, United States -- Iowa. Retrieved March 1, 2011, from Dissertations & Theses: Full Text.(Publication No. AAT 1476297).s

Haller, B., & Ralph, S. (2001). Not worth keeping alive? *Journalism Studies*, *2*, 407-421.

Hefner, V., Drogos, K., & Bond, B. (2006). The Terri Schiavo case: Media effects on end-of-life decision making. *Conference Papers -- International Communication Association*, 1-29. Retrieved from Communication & Mass Media Complete database.

Hirsch, J. (2005). Raising consciousness. *Journal of Clinical Investigation*, pp. 1102-1103. Retrieved from Academic Search Complete database.

Hodges, L., Douglas, M., Kenney, R., Dellert, C., & Caplan, A. (2006). An ethics of caring and media coverage of Terri Schiavo. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, *21*(2/3), 215-228.

Hoffmann, G. (2005). Symbolism and the Terri Schiavo case. *ETC: A Review of General Semantics*, *62*(3), 323-326. Retrieved from Academic Search Complete database.

Holody, K. J. (2006). *Framing Death: The Use Of Frames In Newspaper Coverage Of And Press Releases About Death With Dignity*. Saarbrücken: VDM Verlag Dr. Müller.

Kalwinsky, R. (1998). Framing life and death: Physician-assisted suicide and The New York Times from 1991 to 1996. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, *22*(1), 93. Retrieved from Communication Abstracts database.

Kaylor, B. T. (2010). Coverage of Terri Schiavo controversy not found to be anti-Christian. *Newspaper Research Journal*, 31(2), 69-76. Retrieved from EBSCO*host*.

Kollas, C., & Boyer-Kollas, B. (2006). Closing the Schiavo case: An analysis of legal reasoning. *Journal of Palliative Medicine*, *9*(5), 1145-1163. doi:10.1089/jpm.2006.9.1145.

Krippendorff, K. (1980). *Content Analysis: An Introduction to its Methodology*. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.

Matthes, J. (2009). What's in a frame? A content analysis of media framing studies in the world's leading communication journals, 1990-2005. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *86*(2), 349-367. Retrieved from Academic Search Complete database.

McMillan, S. (2000). The microscope and the moving target: The challenge of applying content analysis to the World Wide Web. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 77, 80-98.

Miller, M. W. & Niven, D. (2007). Whose life is it anyway? Religion, politics, and process in media coverage of "end of life" controversies. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, IL, April 12-15.

Moldoff, J. (2007). A tale of two turnouts: Effects of news frame valence and substance on college students' levels of trust, cynicism, and political information efficacy. Unpublished master's thesis, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA.

New York Times endorsements through the ages. (2010, November 1). *New York Times*, Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2008/10/23/opinion/20081024-endorse.html

New York Times, Washington Post, and local newspapers seen as having liberal bias. (2007, July 15). *Rasmussen Reports*, archived from the original on March 7, 2008. Retrieved from http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public_content/politics/current_events/media/newyork_times_washington_post_and_local_newspapers_seen_as_having_liberal_bias

Novella, S. (2008, August 7). Schiavo revisited. *Neurologica Blog*, Retrieved from http://theness.com/neurologicablog/?p=351#more-351

Paulsen, M. (2005). Killing Terri Schiavo. *Constitutional Commentary*, pp. 585-597. Retrieved from Legal Collection database.

Pellicano, L., & Gross, K. (2008). The case of Terri Schiavo: Effects and consequences. *Conference Papers -- Midwestern Political Science Association*, 1-35. Retrieved from Academic Search Complete database.

R. E. Denton, Jr. & J. A. Kuypers (2008). *Politics and Communication in America.* Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, Inc.

Riffe, D. (2010). An editorial comment. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 87(3/4), 462-463. Retrieved from EBSCO*host*.

Roscoe, L., Osman, H., & Haley, W. (2006). Implications of the Schiavo case for understanding family caregiving issues at the end of life. *Death Studies*, 30(2), 149-161. Retrieved from EBSCO*host*.

Saris-gallhofer, I. N., Saris, W. E., & Morton, E. L. (1978). A validation study of Holsti's content analysis procedure. *Quality & Quantity*, 12(2), 131. Retrieved from EBSCO*host*.

Scheufele, B. (2004). Framing-effects approach: A theoretical and methodological critique. Communications, 29, 401–428.

Serge, E. (2009). O captain, my captain! U.S. newspaper framing of the death of Captain America. *Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.* Retrieved from EBSCO*host.*

Shaw, R., & Giles, D. (2009). Motherhood on ice? A media framing analysis of older mothers in the UK news. *Psychology & Health*, *24*(2), 221-236. doi:10.1080/08870440701601625.

Slothuus, R. (2008). More than weighting cognitive importance: a dual-process model of issue framing effects. *Political Psychology*, *29*(1), 1-28. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9221.2007.00610.x.

Smith, G. W. H. (2006). *Erving Goffman*. London: Routledge.

Sofka, C. (2009). News and Notes. *Death Studies*, *33*(8), 775-779. doi:10.1080/07481180903113127.

Tankard, J. W., Reese, S. D., Gandy, J. H., & Grant, A. E. (2001). The empirical approach to the study of media framing. In , *Framing Public Life: Perspectives on Media & Our Understanding of the Social World* (pp. 95-106). Retrieved from EBSCO*host*.

The Associated Press, (2005). *Key dates in the Terri Schiavo Case* (2005, June 16). Retrieved from LexisNexis Academic Universe.

Tutt, B. (2009). Frames in reports and in reporting: how framing affects global warming

information in the intergovernmental panel on climate change's "summary for

policymakers" and in documents written about the report. *Journal of Technical Writing &*

Communication, *39*(1), 43-55. doi:10.2190/TW.39.1.d.

Ventre, Anthony. (2007, May 15). Wall Street Journal vs. New York Times vs. New Tork Post

vs. New York Daily news. *Associated Content*, Retrieved from

http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/243112/wall_street_journal_vs_new_york_tim

es.html?cat=9

William J., W. (2007). Severe brain injury: Recognizing the limits of treatment and exploring the

frontiers of research. *Cambridge Quarterly of Healthcare Ethics*, *16*(2), 161-168.

Retrieved from Academic Search Complete database.

Xigen, L., & Xudong, L. (2010). Framing and coverage of same-sex marriage in U.S.

newspapers. *Howard Journal of Communications*, *21*(1), 72-91.

doi:10.1080/10646170903501161.

APPENDICES

Code Sheet

Coder ID

Article Number

Article Headline

Publication

☐ The New York Post (1)

☐ The New York Times (2)

Story Classification

☐ Hard News (1)

☐ Soft News (Features/Editorial/Opinion) (2)

Political Consequences Frame

☐ Present (1)

☐ Absent (2)

☐ Substantive (1)

☐ Ambiguous (2)

☐ Positive—Pro-feeding tube removal (1)

☐ Neutral—Both sides evenly represented (2)

☐ Negative—Anti-feeding tube removal (3)

Legal Process Frame

- ☐ Present (1)

- ☐ Absent (2)

- ☐ Substantive (1)

- ☐ Ambiguous (2)

- ☐ Positive (1)

- ☐ Neutral (2)

- ☐ Negative (3)

Medical Frame

- ☐ Present (1)

- ☐ Absent (2)

- ☐ Substantive (1)

- ☐ Ambiguous (2)

- ☐ Positive (1)

- ☐ Neutral (2)

- ☐ Negative (3)

Moral Frame

☐ Present (1)

☐ Absent (2)

☐ Substantive (1)

☐ Ambiguous (2)

☐ Positive (1)

☐ Neutral (2)

☐ Negative (3)

Family/Relational Conflict Frame

☐ Present (1)

☐ Absent (2)

☐ Substantive (1)

☐ Ambiguous (2)

☐ Positive (1)

☐ Neutral (2)

☐ Negative (3)

Provide a noteworthy statement that is most indicative of the overall story.

Sources

Article cited the following sources of information to support positive frames (pro-removal), negative frames (anti-removal), or neither positive nor negative frames (neutral). Record ONLY the first and second source:

1. Michael Schiavo; (1) (2) (3)

2. the Schindler parents and family; (1) (2) (3)

3. lawyers; (1) (2) (3)

4. doctors; (1) (2) (3)

5. journalists; (1) (2) (3)

6. elected and government officials; (1) (2) (3)

7. courts; (1) (2) (3)

8. religious groups and leaders; (1) (2) (3)

9. man on street; (1) (2) (3)

10. all other sources (1) (2) (3)

Codebook

Coder ID

Coders will input their first, middle, and last initials for identification purposes.

Story Number

Input the three or four digit number identifying each story.

Story Headline

Provide the exact headline that was associated with each story. Subheadings are not needed.

Story Classification

Answers must be constrained to one of the following answers:

Hard News: defined as a story likely to be featured in a hard news section of a media outlet (e.g., the front page). Such a story would consist primarily of facts and information.

Soft News (Features): defined as a story likely to be featured in a soft news section of a media outlet (e.g., the features page; entertainment page) consisting primarily of biographies, narratives, and areas of interest.

Frames

A frame is defined as the "underlying assumptions, beliefs and ideologies that serve as heuristics for how a particular story should be understood" (Clegg Smith et al., 2002). Each frame listed below has the following options through which to provide a description. These choices are divided into three sections for each frame.

Answers must be constrained to one of the following answers:

Presence

Present: The frame being coded for is present in the story content. Coders should mark the frame as present no matter its level of prominence.

Absent: The frame being coded for does not exist in the story content.

Answers must be constrained to one of the following answers:

Substance: Indicate the amount of coverage devoted to a particular frame. Choose 1 (substantive) or 2 (ambiguous).

1: Does the story provide adequate context surrounding discussion of the particular frame? The frame being coded for is prominent throughout at least one third of the overall story. Although the frame may not be the sole focus of the release, the author does utilize significant time or effort in discussing it.

2: Is the frame being coded for vague and lacking in context surrounding discussion of the particular frame? The frame is present but is featured with negligible to moderate prominence. The author may not focus on the frame but it is present in some form. (Holody, 2006, p. 80)

Answers must be constrained to one of the following:

Valence: Indicate the overall tone of the news frame toward the removal of Schiavo's feeding tube. Choose 1 (positive/pro-removal claim), 2 (neutral) or 3 (negative/against-removal claim).

Answers may consist of any of the following:

Political Consequences Frame: Defined as a focus on any short or long-term political consequences that would come from the outcome of the Schiavo story. Political consequences may involve normal political events such as elections. The consequences may be either positive

or negative, and may be for an individual (e.g., a politician; physician) or a group (e.g., Republicans, Democrats). Divided into positive consequences due to removal of feeding tube and negative consequences due to removal of feeding tube.

Moral Frame: Defined as a focus on any moral or religious beliefs dealing with the outcome of the Schiavo story. Such beliefs may be positive (for it) or negative (against it), and can be secular in nature. Does the story contain a moral message? Does the story make reference to morality, God, or other religious tenets? Does the story offer specific (social) prescriptions or solutions about how to behave/act (Serge, 2009)?

Family Conflict Frame: Defined as the direct mention of any conflict dealing with the Schiavo story between individuals (e.g., between Schiavo's parents or siblings and husband). This kind of coverage makes winning and losing the central concern and may be diagnostic in nature or focus on who is seemingly triumphant in this conflict. Does the story reflect disagreement between family and husband? Does one party/individual reproach another? Does the story refer to two sides or to more than two sides of the problem/issue (Serge, 2009)?

Legal Process Frame: Defined as a focus on the legality of any steps intended to keep or remove Schiavo's feeding tube. For example, the rise of the Schiavo case from state to federal jurisdiction; the authority and action of judges. Such legal action may be positive (for euthanasia) or negative (against euthanasia) (Pellicano and Gross, 2008).

Medical Frame: Defined as a focus on the medical nature of the case. There must be an argument offered to code for this, not just description, i.e., Terri Schiavo is brain-dead, there is too much brain-damage to recover/ persistent vegetative state prevents recovery and Terri Schiavo is brain-damage but can recover (Pellicano and Gross, 2008).

Coders were then asked to specify what sources were cited in the news coverage of the Terri Schiavo case.

Source 1: Indicate the name and valence of the person or group that is cited or quoted first in the article.

Source 2: Indicate the name and valence of the person or group that is cited or quoted second in the article

1. Michael Schiavo; (1) (2) (3)

2. the Schindler parents and family; (1) (2) (3)

3. lawyers; (1) (2) (3)

4. doctors; (1) (2) (3)

5. journalists; (1) (2) (3)

6. elected and government officials; (1) (2) (3)

7. courts; (1) (2) (3)

8. religious groups and leaders; (1) (2) (3)

9. man on street; (1) (2) (3)

10. all other sources (1) (2) (3)