To my husband, Samuel Kim and my son, Dyson Kim.
And in memory of my mother, Sandra Barber.
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On February 25, 1990, 26-year-old Terri Schiavo collapsed in her Florida home, suffering respiratory and cardiac arrest apparently caused by a potassium imbalance and leading to brain damage due to lack of oxygen. In the beginning, all of her joint medical decisions were made by her husband, Michael Schiavo and her parents, Bob and Mary Schindler. After a falling out over several disagreements, the family became further estranged when Michael Schiavo petitioned the court to remove the feeding tube that was sustaining Terri Schiavo, so that she may pass on. By then Terri Schiavo had spent three years in a persistive vegetative state with no hope of recovery.

The court fight between Michael Schiavo and the Schindlers continued for another seven years, finally ending when the U.S. Supreme Court refused to review the final ruling from the eleventh circuit court of appeals upholding the withdrawal of Terri Schiavo’s feeding tube. Despite political efforts to bring “Terri’s Law” before the house and the senate in early March, Terri Schiavo expired almost two weeks after her feeding tube had been removed on March 31, 2005 at 9:05 a.m.

Using content analysis, this study coded for the frames used by two different newspapers, the St. Petersburg Times and The Oregonian, in their coverage of the Terri Schiavo and the
disagreement between her husband Michael Schiavo and her parents, Bob and Mary Schindler, over whether to remove her feeding tube. It was found that frames in the two newspapers differed in that the articles in *The Oregonian* were predominately framed for self-determination of end-of-life issues. Articles in the *St. Petersburg Times* were predominately framed to focus on injury to Terri Schiavo and the battle between her parents and her husband or battles between the courts, lawmakers and any involved parties. It was also found that the Schindler family re-framed their daughter’s condition to the *St. Petersburg Times* from a patient in a persistive vegetative state with no hope of recovery to a patient who was merely disabled. This study also discovered that valence toward Michael Schiavo was negative in the *St. Petersburg Times* and, to a lesser extent, positive in *The Oregonian*. 
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

On March 31, 2005, 41-year-old Terri Schiavo passed away, 13 days after her feeding tube was discontinued and at the end of a nearly seven years long battle between her husband and her parents over the removal of the feeding tube. Ms. Schiavo had been in a persistive vegetative state (PVS) for almost 15 years, with no hope of improving and no signs of consciousness. End-of-life issues have been featured in the press and in public opinion but none have so galvanized the media and advocacy groups like the case of Terri Schiavo. In the beginning, this was a private matter, as are most end-of-life issues involving patients, their family members, social workers and the medical personnel involved in their care. With few exceptions, these cases never make the news, much less end up with an appeal to the federal government or a lobbying effort including the President, a governor and finally the Supreme Court. They are painful decisions, resolved in private by the immediate participants. And like Schiavo, often the patient is not able to participate in the decision to abate medical care and the family must rely on past implied wishes that the patient may have desired.

The purpose of this study is to examine the possible bias that the Terri Schiavo issue was presented in two newspapers: *The Oregonian* (Portland, OR) and the *St. Petersburg Times* (Florida). Terri Schiavo lived and died in Pinellas County, Florida, which is served by the *St. Petersburg Times*. Then Florida Governor Jeb Bush was personally involved in the court battle to stop the removal of Ms. Schiavo’s tube. The right-to-life groups and the Christian Coalition came to the aid of Terri’s parents, Robert and Mary Schindler, in their fight to keep the feeding tube on the grounds that Ms. Schiavo was merely disabled, and not in a PVS. Florida resident and Operation Rescue founder, Randall Terry, became the Schindlers spokesperson. (Cerminara & Goodman, November, 2007). *The Oregonian* was chosen due to the activist past of the Death
with Dignity National Center, an Oregon-based social movement group that claims responsibility for passing the Death with Dignity Act into Oregon law in 1997. During this seven-year battle, the issue was covered by the Portland, Oregon newspaper, *The Oregonian* and by the *St. Petersburg Times*, the newspaper of Pinellas County and home of Terry Schiavo.

To frame an issue involves selection and salience by making some aspect of a reality more salient in such a way as to promote a definition, solution and interpretation in a communicating text (Entman, 1993). What propelled the Terri Schiavo case to salience was the interjection of the familiar antagonism of so many issues in our politics, the ‘for us or against us issues’: religion vs. secularism, pro-life vs. pro-choice, liberal vs. conservatives (Burt, 2005). By the time Terri Schiavo died, the conflict had escalated beyond any sensible possibility of resolving her case.

The conflict for removing or keeping Ms. Schiavo’s feeding tube was covered extensively by the media. A review of leading communication journals by Pollock and Yullis (2004), found a lack of communications research on end-of-life care and physician-assisted suicide. A search for similar studies examining the language and frames used by the two differing views also revealed a scarcity of research. There were previous framing studies on euthanasia or physician-assisted suicide that referenced Terri Schiavo (Lauffer, 2000 and Holody, 2006). Due to the extremely controversial nature of the Terri Schiavo case, a call for research is needed to see how the issue was framed by two newspapers in two regions known for their divergent views on end-of-life issues.

To further communication scholarship, this study explores, by content analysis, the frames used by these two newspapers from November 2003 through March 2005 to discover if such a polarizing issues produced thematic differences in two politically divergent states.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Framing Theory

The term framing has been used by media scholars to explain how a message is shaped by the message-maker to influence public opinion. In media theory research, framing scholarship explores how the media decision of salience impacts public opinion, policy influence, and political outcomes among others.

According to Entman, one of the early framing scholars, framing is simply a process of selection and salience by the message makers. It is selecting frames that will “highlight some bits of information ... thereby elevating it to salience” at the expense of other information (Entman 1993, p. 52). By studying the framing of media messages, we can describe the power of a communicating text. It is the media that actively set our frames of reference so that we may interpret and discuss public events (Tuchman, 1978, p.ix).

Because framing is used by other fields of study, including media research, and has been paired with other theories such as agenda setting, a clear model of “framing” is incomplete. Entman (1993) acknowledged as such that framing is fractured and vague, lacking clear definitions with which to guide research due to its use by different theorists leading to different interpretations of what framing is and how it works (p.51). Media researcher, Dietram Scheufele (1999), conceptualized four key links to understanding framing research: frame building, frame setting, individual-level framing processes and journalists as audiences.

Frame building begins with the professional judgment of the journalist during the news selection process and by the influence of “organizational routines” whereby a story is influenced by the organizational requirements of the media organization. Another source of influence in framing a message is the external influences from political participants, interest groups, and
other outside sources (Gans, 1979, p.78-79). In a study of the framing of press releases around the late-term abortion issue, Andsager (2000), found that the rhetoric used by opposing interests groups strongly influenced journalists covering the bill of the “Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act of 1995.” The pro-choice press releases referred to patients who may have abortions as “women” and emphasized words such as rights, choice and freedom from government intrusion. Pro-life press release preferred the term “mothers” and their press releases used term like baby, kill, and defenseless (p.582).

Andsager’s study concluded that the pro-life rhetoric neutralized the traditional pro-choice rhetoric and gave pro-life groups the advantage in framing this fight. For an emerging story, an opportunity for framing an issue can influence not just public perception but policy decisions in the future (p. 578).

Scheufele labels the second process of framing theory as frame setting. If framing is to select some aspect of a perceived reality and make it salient (Entman, 1993) then setting the frame is to telling us how to think about an issue. McCombs, Llamas, Lopez-Escobar and Rey (1997) refer to frame setting as second-level agenda setting where the first level is the transmission of object salience and second level is the transmission of attribute salience (p.704). By attribute salience, McCombs et al are referring to the emphasis on the picture that is created when we think about an object. By including these into the media’s agenda, the media are not telling us what to think but rather what to focus on when we do think about an issue.

Frame prominence can ebb and flow in the media due to the change of political conditions. In the Columbine shootings of 20 April 1999, Chyi and McCombs (2004) found that frame-changing, that is reframing an event by the media to keep a story fresh, made a story more salient and kept it on the media agenda. The authors examined articles from The New York
Times for frame-changing and found that this story was kept alive for more than a month by changing the frame of the story to keep it “moving and fresh” and of interest to their reader (p.30). A story that could be summed up as “On 20 April 1999, two gunmen in Littleton, Colorado, killed twelve fellow students and a teacher before turning the gun on themselves” went on to encompass 170 stories on the background of the shooters, community reactions, societal concerns, social phenomena and international reactions (p.27).

Individual-level effects of framing, that is assuming a direct link between media frames and how the individual interprets it and acts on the information, focuses on input-output variables but with scant evidence of how it works (Scheufele, 1999). According to Scheufele, more research is needed to describe how the variables, the input from the media and the output from the public, are linked. Shanto Iyengar (1996) theorized this link by examining how the public assigns societal responsibility of social issues, such as poverty and terrorism, depending on how the news frames an issue as either episodic or thematic. Episodic-themed news reports, essentially an illustration of issues, shield society and the government from responsibility. Thematic-themed news reports, a form of backgrounder-type reports that add context to the story, are more likely to place responsibility with society and the government. For example, Iyengar cites how depicting African Americans in the media as perpetrators of crime and poverty encouraged and justified racial prejudices (p. 70). An alternative to an episodic crime story or poverty story that reinforces such racial stereo-types would be a thematic story to show the pervasive daily difficulties, including racism, that the African American community must face.

Gamson and Modigliani (1989) suggest that public opinion is a product of media discourse that both draws on and reflects our culture. It is not just one frame but rather several
using a “deft metaphor, catchphrase or other symbolic device” that is used for telling a story that the public understands and can use to make sense out of relevant events.

If the public is susceptible to the influence of media frames, are not the creators of the original media also susceptible? Scheufele argues that journalists are just susceptible “to perpetuating the very frames they use to describe events and issues” (p.118). Entman (1993) proposes that journalists can be educated to construct stories making opposing ideas equally salient and informative by eschewing “scattered oppositional facts and challenging the dominant frame” (p.57).

Van Gorp (2007) says that as journalists are personal witnesses to an event, they will make sense of a “chaotic stream of impressions” by choosing what is salient (p.67). And salience, according to Entman, is a part of framing, where information is elevated in importance at the expense of other information. As others do, journalists select frames based on their witness to an event, cultural references and interpretation of what they see. The journalist selects the frame, perhaps unaware of their selection, but over time the frame becomes embedded in the message (Van Gorp, 2007).

**Analysis of Attributes of Framing**

Analysis of what is salient in the news, what themes or stories stand out, is how researchers uncover frames. Framing involves salience; the process of highlighting a piece of information to make it more noticeable, meaningful and memorable to an audience (Entman, p. 53). Some frames have inherent valence in a message, i.e. putting information in either a negative or a positive light. Another variable associated with framing besides valence are a frames attributes. McCombs et al (1997) argues that the media are effective at not only raising the salience of a topic but also creating attributes related to issues or people. McCombs labeled
the media’s ability to create salience and attributes about a topic second-level agenda setting (p. 704).

Second-level agenda setting, a derivative of framing according to McCombs et al, adds the exploration of valence and attribute to frame exploration. We can analyze a frame’s valence for positive, negative or neutral tones (p. 706). A valence in a news frame depicts an issue in positive or negative terms, and can affect our attitudes on an issue. For example, De Vreese and Boomgaarden (2003) analyzed media coverage on support of the European Union (EU) and EU enlargement for valence and found that media frames with a negative valence of the EU, contributed to a loss of support for enlargement and for the EU in general (p.376). In this way they were able to show that the valence of a frame can influence policy evaluation in the public and lend weight to the hypothesis that valence is more important than previously thought.

The second attribute is whether a frame is substantive or ambiguous. Williams and Kaid’s (2006) definition of substantive frames as one having great detail and information and ambiguous frames as the opposite of substantive, giving little or no detail to a story is similar to McCombs et al’s substantive attributes of the images of candidates in various local Spanish elections of 1995.

Another aspect affecting how an issue is framed are the sources used in putting together a story. Source selection for a story is another way of providing information to the public about an issue. And, according to Entman (1989), “the media do not control what people prefer; they influence public opinion by providing much of the information people think about and by shaping how they think about it” (p.361).

Even Aristotle understood that the highest rhetorical proof of credibility rests with the listener believing the speaker is of “good character, good will and intelligence.” Without that
innate credibility of character, the listener will not believe the message and the speaker will not be able to sway the listener to their beliefs. (Roberts, 1954 as cited in Delia, 1976, p. 361).

Direct quotes and source credibility can influence the perception the public has on an issue. In an early study of source credibility and its effect on public opinion, Hovland and Weiss (1951) found that sources with “high trustworthiness” or “trustworthy” were believed by readers over sources deemed “low trustworthiness” or “untrustworthy.” For their study, their definition for “trustworthy” was a source from a medical group or government organization, e.g. *New England Journal of Medicine*. An “untrustworthy” source came from popular magazines or freelance writers, such as those found in opinion pages of a newspaper. Hovland and Weiss found in their study that switching from an “untrustworthy” source to a credible “trustworthy” source could change previous opinions held about a subject. Gibson and Zillman (1993) showed that direct quotation “is a powerful journalistic tool” that can be used to influence the perception of reality and judgment of an issue. In their experiment, they found that negative, one-sided, direct quotes influenced a negative perception about amusement park safety in readers than indirect quotes or no quotes at all.

Newspaper writers, according to Tuchman (1972) view quotes as supporting evidence that they are being objective and letting the “facts” speak for themselves (p. 668). Powerful, knowledgeable or official sources are more valued by journalists, according to Tuchman (1972) and are believed by journalists to know more than other people in that organization (p.672). In their survey of journalists’ perception of most influential sources, Powers and Fico (1994) found that source credibility, source accessibility and time pressure influenced source usage. Advertising pressures, source gender and organizational issues such as newspaper policy were
the least influential on source usage and in fact, it was the journalists own assessment and
selection of sources that shaped their attitudes toward source qualities (p.94).

End of Life Issues

On February 25, 1990, 26-year-old Terri Schiavo collapsed in her Florida home, suffering respiratory and cardiac arrest supposedly caused by a potassium imbalance and leading to brain damage due to lack of oxygen. She was taken to the Humana Northside Hospital and was later given a percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy (PEG) tube to provide nutrition and hydration. She then spent 15 years in a PVS. During this time of institutionalization, Schiavo received experimental thalamic stimulation treatments to induce consciousness, various rehabilitation therapies and was moved from a rehab facility to a skilled nursing facility where she received 24-hour care. In November 1992, Terri Schiavo was awarded an out-of-court malpractice settlement against the two physicians who treated her when she was first admitted to the hospital, one for $250,000 and another for $1 million dollars, most which went into a trust for her care. This trust would be handled by her husband Michael Schiavo and he would be the ultimate beneficiary upon her death (Cerminara & Goodman, 2006).

In the beginning, Terri’s parents, Robert and Mary Schindler, and her husband Michael Schiavo were getting along, even living together, and making joint decisions related to her care. The first falling out occurred in February 1993 when Michael Schiavo and the Schindlers disagreed over the course of Terri Schiavo’s care and the disbursement of the malpractice funds. The Schindlers acted first to remove Mr. Schiavo as their daughter’s guardian in July 1993. That suit was dismissed and Mr. Schiavo was found by the court to be serving in the best interests of his wife (Cerminara & Goodman, 2006).
Then Michael Schiavo petitioned the court to remove Terri’s PEG tube and let her pass on stating to the court that Terri said she would not want to be kept alive ‘like a vegetable’ for years and years (Cerminara & Goodman, 2006).

From then on the fight continued for seven years, finally ending when the U.S. Supreme Court refused to review the final ruling from the 11th circuit court of appeals upholding the withdrawal of the PEG tube. Despite efforts to bring “Terri’s Bill” before the United States House and the Senate in early March, Terri Schiavo died on March 31, 2005, at 9:05 a.m., almost two weeks after her feeding tube was removed on March 18, 2005 (Cerminara & Goodman, 2006).

A literature review for similar studies was conducted and the most similar to this topic was a thesis by Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University masters student, Kyle J. Holody, *Framing Death: The use of frames in newspaper coverage of and press releases about Death with Dignity* (2006, May 9). Holody’s thesis looked at press releases from the Death with Dignity National Center (DDNC) social movement and elite newspapers and analyzed the frames related to the “death with dignity” social movement. The Death with Dignity act was passed in Oregon in 1997, with the help of the Death with Dignity National Center, a special interest group who has championed this issue as one of self-determination and states rights (Holody, 2006). The Oregon law allows an adult of sound mind suffering from terminal illness with less than six months to live request from their doctor a prescription for a lethal dose of medication. Doctors may prescribe lethal doses but may not administer them (Halloran, 2005).

Holody conducted an analysis of press releases from the DDNC and articles from *The New York Times, The Washington Post, USA Today* and *The Oregonian* over a five-year period (November 6, 2001 to January 17, 2006). The above newspapers were chosen in order to focus
on “how the issue was covered within that state (Oregon) and at the national level” (p.57).

DDNC focused on physician-assisted suicide as a civil right, owed to a patient making end-of-life decisions related to their care. Holody’s questions sought to show a correlation between frames found in DDNC press releases and newspaper coverage of the physician-assisted suicide movement (p.19). He found that the DDNC press releases were sent out sporadically “when it had news” and that its frames correlated with media coverage with corresponding frames in the four newspapers.

For each chosen media, Holody examined and named twelve frames, by order of prevalence (most to least): conflict, patient’s rights/choice/dignity, political consequences, states rights/big government, legality, responsibility, morality/values, societal impact/national identity, human interest, sympathy/empathy, economic consequences and apathy/disinterest. Of the frames that Holody found that may be present or similar to those in this paper, conflict was the most prevalent followed by patient’s rights and states. Conflict referred to not just the legal maneuverings of both sides but also conflict between families and between the states wishes and those of the patient.

A dissertation by Kimberly Lauffer (2000) compared local Michigan newspapers for a framing analysis of physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia. Lauffer’s dissertation referenced the Terri Schiavo case when discussing how the movement to legalize physician-assisted suicide was framed in four Michigan newspapers, January 1996 to June 1999. The major frames Lauffer found in her content analysis were blame, dichotomy, and fear. For example, one blame-frame referred to Dr. Jack Kevorkian’s (not the topic of Lauffer’s thesis but featured in several stories) work in helping 120 terminally ill patients suicide and his trials. He was to blame in causing the patients’ deaths instead of merely giving them the means to suicide. An example of
‘dichotomy,’ referring to good v. evil, pitted the portrayal of good doctors who obeyed the Hippocratic Oath of ‘first do no harm’ against bad doctors, like Kevorkian, who would assist in doing harm. Fear referred to social movement activists for disabled persons who wanted to make sure we knew they were ‘not dead yet’ versus terminally ill patients looking for a solution to their untenable situation.

The use of framing an issue to influence public opinion has also been the examined in the sociological fields. The partial birth abortion (PBA) debate, an area of scholarly interest in sociology, shows how changing the words, or the “frame,” changed the public narrative in the favor of abortion rights opponents. Anne Escacove (2004) examined how the opponents of PBA changed the use of medical terms such as dilatation and extraction, a very sterile sounding term, to ‘partial-birth.’ What was left was the “yuck factor” and comparing the fetus with premature infants just moments from viability (p.75).

The rhetoric for or against an issue can be dependent on which side framed an issue first and how effective the other side is at re-framing an issue. Counter framing is used when the opposing side has already framed an issue and embedded it into public awareness. An analysis of news letters from the National Organization for Women (NOW) for rhetoric and content around abortion shows how one group can use frame saving techniques to re-frame the phrase ‘pro-abortion’ to ‘pro-choice’ for Americans who are interested in family planning and birth control (Keys & McCaffrey, 2000 p. 54).

By re-framing Terri Schiavo from a patient in a persistent vegetative state to one who is disabled, her parents, Bob and Mary Schindler, galvanized disability groups to their cause. Diane Coleman, J.D. founder of Not Dead Yet, a disability rights group, spoke out for Terri
Schiavo’s rights as a disabled person by filing two friend-of-the-court briefs to protect her from state-sanctioned murder behind closed doors (Florida Today, August 31, 2004).

Terri Schiavo’s case was not the first right-to-die case to wend its way through the court system. The first case involving the right to terminate medical treatment was the case of Karen Ann Quinlan in 1976. After ingesting alcohol and Valium at a party April 14, 1975, Ms. Quinlan, at the age of twenty-two, was rushed to the hospital, placed on a respirator. Her physicians later determined her to be in a state of PVS due to prolonged lack of oxygen to the brain. It was determined that she would never be restored to any form of cognitive life. Her parents wanted to remove her from life support as they stated that Karen had said she would never have wanted to be kept alive in this manner, but the physicians at the hospital where Karen remained refused to disconnect her respirator. There were mob scenes at the hospital and threats against the Quinlans for their decision to discontinue Karen Ann’s life support. Ms. Quinlan’s parents went to court, and the New Jersey Supreme court determined that there is a constitutional right to die based on the right of privacy guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. This was a unanimous decision by all seven of the court’s justices, and Ms. Quinlan’s respirator was then disconnected. From this decision, the term “pulling the plug” was equated with withholding life-sustaining medical treatment (Eisenberg, 2005).

Robert W. Kenny (2005) explored the rhetoric that was used to shape public opinion around Karen Ann Quinlan’s life and the battle to discontinue her respirator. She became a figure head for this issue, a rhetorical icon, for while she could not speak for herself, others could use her to speak for them. A certain style of story was told about Karen, depending upon whether the teller thought she had the right to die or to live. Karen Ann Quinlan was a “good-girl-gone-bad” and her coma was a fitting punishment for her sins, for going against the
traditional life she had been raised. Because she was so irresponsible, regardless of her coma, she did not have the ability to make her own choices. This rhetoric was so strong that the state convened a grand jury to examine her life style leading up the coma (p. 19-24).

Normally, these decisions never went beyond the hospital and were decided amongst the family and care team of doctors, nurses and social workers. But when the decision was contrary to the wishes of another family member or the medical team, then the case went to court. A severe head injury in car accident left 37-year-old Michael Martin in a minimally conscious state. His wife and children went to court to withhold his feedings through his gastronomy tube. His mother and sister opposed their decision, and the case eventually landed in the Michigan Supreme Court, (In re Martin, 1995). Again, like Terri Schiavo, family members and co-workers came forward to testify that he had once said he would never want to “live like a vegetable” but nothing was put in writing expressing his desires. The court decided on the side of preserving life due to his ability to occasionally respond to commands, and the feeding tube remained in (Eisenberg, 2005). It is cases like In re Martin that served as a template for the Schindler’s fight to keep Terri’s feeding tube in.

**Research Questions**

Framing gives us a way to analyze and describe text and such shows us how framing influences our perception of a message. It defines problems, diagnoses causes, makes moral judgments and suggests remedies (Entman, 1993). Media scholars of framing have established that framing can influence perception of an event or extend coverage of an event. Chyi and McCombs (2004) have shown that reframing an event keeps a story fresh for re-use long after the original event has ceased. Iyengar (1991) theorized that the way the media covers and event influences the public perception of assigning responsibility for an event or issue. Gamson and Modigliani (1989) show that public opinion can be shaped by media discourse.
As mentioned earlier, two previous papers that looked at the framing of end-of-life conflicts in local and national media were Lauffer, 2000 and Holody, 2006. Both papers found frames of various dichotomies to be prevalent. Dichotomies could be human such as the works of a ‘good doctor’ trying to alleviate a terminal patient in pain versus a ‘bad doctor’ going against the Hippocratic Oath by assisting in the suicide of a terminally ill patient (Lauffer, 2000). There were dichotomies in the will of the people (states rights) versus the will of big government (Holody, 2006).

With the following previous frames in mind, and the earlier discussion of framing, the following research questions are offered:

- **RQ1:** What are the prevalent frames found within the two newspapers, the *St. Petersburg Times* and *The Oregonian*, and is there any difference in their frames?

  Oregon is the only state to pass a physician-assisted suicide law, also known as the ‘Death with Dignity Act,’ and despite efforts to repeal it and challenges to the U.S. Supreme Court, the law remains in effect. Even former U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft lost his fight to repeal the law when the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the law on January 2006. Personally determining end of life issues is important enough that Oregon voters rejected a ballot measure to repeal the law in 1997 (Christie, 2006).

  St. Petersburg, Florida is where Terri Schiavo lived and passed away. The conservative nature of the county, the proximity to the event, and the personal involvement of Florida Governor Jeb Bush in the Schiavo situation were covered by the newspaper of that area, the *St. Petersburg Times*. The dichotomy of the two areas of the United States, one with a precedent-setting law that legally allows a terminally ill patient to end their life with the aid of a physician and the other with a conservative governor and the actual home of protests, leads to this question.
If a news frame can affect how the public views an issue, can the tone or valence of a news frames affect our attitudes about a person? Kiousis (2004) has suggested that an effective element in news such as the valence, can affect audience perceptions of those attributes (p. 76). Michael Schiavo was the key player in this drama. While it is documented that Schiavo and the Schindlers disagreed on several areas regarding Terri Schiavo’s care, it wasn’t until Michael Schiavo petitioned the court to remove Terri’s feeding tube and let her die that the court battle ensued (Ceminara & Goodman, 2006). In an interview with National Public Radio, Schindler lawyer Jay Sekulow remarked that if Michael Schiavo had just walked away and relinquished Terri’s care to her parents, this conflict would’ve never happened (Talk of the Nation, 2006). By using the court system to pursue the removal of Terri’s feeding tube, Michael Schiavo became an iconic symbol, representing either the right or the wrong course of action for Terri Schiavo.

• **RQ2:** Is there any difference between the valences of news coverage toward Michael Schiavo between the two newspapers?

In newspaper stories, direct quotation can influence and sway reader’s opinions to one-side of an issue versus another (Gibson and Zillman, 1993). Slater and Rouner (1996) found that sources are perceived as credible when they represent an organization with a history of expertise related to that message. For example, a well known environmental group, such as Sierra Club, is associated with delivering a credible message due to their history of environmental stewardship.

If a source is available, has a prior history of credibility and professionalism, then it stands to reason that a particular source may be used again for the same or similar story by a journalist. Powers and Fico (1994) showed that the judgment of the reporter in choosing a dominant source over other sources, such as peer or organizational pressures. With the selection of a source as a reflection of each journalist, the following research questions are posed:

• **RQ3:** What are the prevalent sources in each of the two newspapers?
Reporters rely on news sources for story topics and content. This interaction is important for shaping a news story. Bendix and Liebler (1996) found that journalists that favored sources in the logging of North West United States old growth forests framed their stories to favor the “procut” viewpoint over the “prosave” and anti-logging view. The dominance of one news source can effect how the media frame an issue, environmental or otherwise. To further explore source and influence for this topic, the next research question is posed:

- **RQ4:** What sources are frequently used for each frame in the two newspapers?
The quantitative assessment of media analysis is content analysis, “a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication” (Berelson, 1952, p.18). In content analysis, the researcher is looking for trends or patterns in media content, comparing media content with the real-world indicators, assessing how groups are represented and drawing inferences from media effects (Jensen, p. 220).

McMillan (2000) established five steps researchers must take to conduct content analysis. Researchers must first develop their research question. Rather than looking at data and then formulating a question, the research question comes first. The second step is to select a sample from which to draw data. The third step is to operationalize the coding units that are used to answer the research question. Fourth is to train your coders to establish inter-coder reliability and then code the data. And finally, the fifth step is to analyze and interpret the data.

This study is designed to analyze the frames found in articles about Terri Schiavo in two newspapers, the St. Petersburg Times, with an average circulation of 361,895, and The Oregonian, with an average circulation of 315,772 (Audit Bureau of Circulation, 2007 & 2008).

The two newspapers, The Oregonian (Portland, OR) and the St. Petersburg Times (Florida), were chosen to represent the two divergent views in this subject based on a past activist history. Portland, Oregon, a metropolitan area in Multnomah County and the most populous city in Oregon, was chosen because The Oregonian is the largest metropolitan newspaper read not just in Portland but all over the state. Oregon is also the only state to pass a physician-assisted suicide law, also known as the ‘Death with Dignity Act,’ and despite efforts to repeal it by voter measure and challenges to the U.S. Supreme Court, the law remains in effect. Even former U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft lost his fight to repeal the law when the U.S.
Supreme Court upheld the law on January 2006. Personally determining end of life issues is important enough that Oregon voters rejected a ballot measure to repeal the law in 1997 (Christie, 2006). The St. Petersburg Times, the main newspaper for Pinellas County where Terri Schiavo lived and passed away, was chosen due to the conservative nature of the county, the proximity to the event, and the personal involvement of Florida Governor Jeb Bush in the Schiavo situation.

Newspaper coverage was highest between November 2003 and June 2005. By November 2003, then Governor of Florida Jeb Bush had filed his first federal court brief on behalf of the Schindlers to prevent the removal of their daughter’s feeding tube. Newspaper coverage continued, covering the legal back and forth in the court system to remove or stay the feeding tube up. Ms. Schiavo passed away on March 31, 2005 (Cerminara & Goodman, 2006). The St. Petersburg Times revealed earlier articles about Terri Schiavo, starting with the first removal of her feeding tube in February 2000. However, a Lexis-Nexis search for articles in The Oregonian did not return results until November 2003.

While the St. Petersburg Times continued to run articles related to Ms. Schiavo after her death until December 2005, coverage by The Oregonian ended after June 2005.

Newspaper articles were gathered using the Lexis-Nexis online database. Articles were searched with key word “Terri Schiavo.” The unit of analysis is each individual article. The types of articles selected were hard news or features written by local writers, and no wire service, editorials or letters to the editor were included as the focus on how the local news media framed the issue. After careful consideration of all articles pulled, 17 articles were retrieved from the Oregonian and 165 articles were located from the St. Petersburg Times. The entire universe of 17 articles from The Oregonian was coded and analyzed. For the St. Petersburg Times, the
universe was 110 articles and the majority of the articles were clustered in the six months of 2005. The universe for 2003 comprised two months, November and December and totaled 18 articles. In the year 2004, the universe was 24 articles. Due to the large amount of articles for 2005, a stratified sample was used where I constructed the six months (January- June 2005), by randomly assigning a number to each article per month and selecting four articles per month to represent that month. The months of January had two articles and the month of May had one article total. This gave us a total of 19 articles for 2005. The total number of articles assembled as our sample from the *St. Petersburg Times* will be 61, a construct of the 19 articles from 2005 and the universe from 2003-2004.

Articles less than 300 words were rejected because shorter pieces may not have an appropriate amount of detail to develop frames adequately. Articles that contain the search term, but did not focus on Terri Schiavo per se, was also excluded. There were several examples of these insubstantial articles where Terri Schiavo’s name was mentioned briefly included many references to the 2006 Florida gubernatorial elections between then attorney general, Charlie Crist, and fellow Republican challenger, Tom Gallagher. In this case, Ms. Schiavo’s name was mentioned once and was not germane to the story.

**Measurement**

Code books and code sheets were designed to assist coders to ascertain the frames of each article. The units of analysis were each individual article. Each article’s primary frame, story type, and valence were measured.

**Frame**

Each article may have more than one frame in a story but a dominant frame was reported from each article. The following frames were developed after reviewing the Holody and Lauffer studies and by preliminary frame-finding research. Each article was read initially for themes.
The researcher is also interested in finding previously unidentified frames to reveal themselves during the coding process.

The \textit{Quality of Life} frame specifically refers to the quality of life for a person in a PVS or any other coma-type illness where improvement is impossible.

\textit{Confusion/Communication} frame refers to any lack of information leading to confusion or conflicting thoughts and emotions related to Ms. Schiavo’s condition, the decision to terminate tube feedings, and supposed misleading information from any source. It can also refer to confusion about what to communicate to family members about end of life issues or drawing up of legal documents such as a living will was a residual topic found in many media after Schiavo’s passing.

\textit{Self Determination/Patients Rights} is a frame seen in other framing analysis of physician assisted suicide, especially in the Death with Dignity social movement out of Oregon. This frame refers to the right to decide when to terminate care, including the patient’s right or a medical decision made by a patient’s family or guardian to honor a patient’s wish when the patient is no longer able to speak for himself or herself.

\textit{Political Consequences} frame can refer to any political repercussion related to political or legal maneuverings by politicians related to Ms. Schiavo.

The \textit{Personal Injury} frame refers to harming Ms. Schiavo by another person, including murder or abuse. It also refers to any threatening action, or word perpetuated against anyone involved with the Terri Schiavo case.

\textit{Battle} frame refers to a warrior stance. It is the battle waged to keep Ms. Schiavo alive and also describing Terri Schiavo’s battle to remain alive.
Culture of Life/Self-Righteous frame refers to their position of preserving life at all costs. This is a frame that was mentioned in previous framing scholarship where the pro-life movement is involved.

There may be frames that do not fit the above categories. An example of this would be frames dealing with emotion such as empathy or quality of life issues. This category, Other, is open to explore new frames that may emerge during the content analysis.

Valence

A valence in a news frame describes the tone of article and depicts an issue in positive or negative terms. Valence can also be neutral, where the tone of the article is not written to portray an issue in either light.

Sources

A source in a newspaper story is the person, or organization represented by a person, who is quoted or paraphrased directly or indirectly for that story. A story can contain more than one source.

Coding and Training of Coders

Each article was assigned an identification number. The articles were divided among two coders, cross referenced and duplicates eliminated. A minimum of two coders are needed to establish intercoder reliability and to work out any conceptual or operational differences. The coders were the researcher and one other graduate student. The graduate student received eight articles, approximately ten percent of the total of 78 articles, to code for intercoder reliability. Coders were trained to code for newspaper source (e.g. The Oregonian) frame, and valence of Michael Schiavo (positive/neutral/negative). Intercoder reliability was calculated using Scott’s Pi. Scott’s Pi was chosen because it corrects for the chance agreement and it takes into account not just the number of categories but how the categories are used by each coder (Scott, 1955).
Eight articles were coded to check for intercoder reliability. Intercoder reliability was at .75 after the first training. Intercoder reliability was lower than expected and re-training of the second coder focused on finding the most prevalent frame in an article as most articles had nuances of more than one frame. The second coder was re-trained by giving further clarification on the definitions of the eight frames and the Other category and the practice of focusing on the predominant frame found in the article. Predominance of a frame was established by noting each frame in an article and noting which one was dominate over all the other frames. The frames coded for intercoder reliability were Self-Determination, Personal Injury, Battle, Disability, Culture of Life and Political Consequences. Valence of Michael Schiavo (positive/neutral/negative) was also coded for intercoder reliability. The frame with the lowest reliability was Personal Injury. The frames with the highest reliability were Self Determination, Battle, Culture of Life and Disability. Out of the eight articles coded for valence of Michael Schiavo, two articles were not applicable for valence as they did not meet the criteria for valence. Of the remaining six articles coded for valence, the two coders were in agreement five out of six times. Reliability was established at .88, and data was entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences and analyzed. (See Appendix B for examples of coded articles.)
CHAPTER 4
RESULTS

Newspaper stories from the *St. Petersburg Times* and *The Oregonian* were analyzed over one time frame of twenty months (November 2003 to June 2005). The data from the content analysis was analyzed for frame prevalence (present or absent), valence toward Michael Schiavo (positive, neutral or negative) and sources used in each article. These were compared using tests for frequency, cross tabulations and chi-square significance tests.

Research question 1 asked, “*What are the prevalent frames of the two newspapers, the St. Petersburg Times and The Oregonian, and is there any difference in their frames?*” While the sample size from *The Oregonian* is smaller than the *St. Petersburg Times*, an obvious framing pattern emerged whereby *The Oregonian* newspaper emphasized Self Determination and the *St. Petersburg Times* emphasized the issues directly related to Terri Schiavo, such as Personal Injury and Battle.

Table 4-1. Prevalent of Frames of Each Newspaper N= 78

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frame</th>
<th>The Oregonian, N=17</th>
<th>St. Petersburg Times, N=61</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Culture of Life</td>
<td>2(11.8%)</td>
<td>8(13.1%)</td>
<td>.022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conf./Communication</td>
<td>2(11.8%)</td>
<td>5(8.2%)</td>
<td>.207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Determination</td>
<td>10(58.8%)</td>
<td>6(9.8%)</td>
<td>19.567*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Consequences</td>
<td>1(5.9%)</td>
<td>3(4.9%)</td>
<td>.025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Injury</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15(24.6%)</td>
<td>5.176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7(11.5%)</td>
<td>2.143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Battle</td>
<td>1(5.9%)</td>
<td>10(16.4%)</td>
<td>1.213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1(5.9%)</td>
<td>7(11.5%)</td>
<td>.452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>17 (100%)</td>
<td>61 (100%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

df=1
***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05

A frequency tabulation of the two newspapers combined gave the Self-Determination Frame the number one spot. The Self-Determination Frame was the top frame for *The Oregonian* and the Battle Frame dominated for *St. Petersburg Times* at number two in frequency.
The Personal Injury Frame and Disability Frame were not found in *The Oregonian*, but only in the *St. Petersburg Times*.

**Self Determination**

The frame for Self Determination references a person’s ability to decide when to end their life without state or religious interference. This frame was the most prevalent one (n=10, 58.8%) in the examined articles of *The Oregonian*.

But because of the high-profile Schiavo case, the center has been getting dozens of calls and e-mails a day from people who are afraid they might end up at the mercy of the courts and politicians. (O’Neill, 3/23/2005, *The Oregonian*, pA01)

The Self Determination Frame was not as prevalent in the *St. Petersburg Times*, and when it was used, it referred to Terri Schiavo’s presumed desire to not be kept alive artificially or to remain connected to her feeding tube:

‘Mr. Schiavo made a promise to his wife like many of us do,’ Felos said. ‘He has been resolute to keep his promise. He promised not to keep her alive artificially.’ (Levesque, 9/2/2004, *St. Petersburg Times*, p. 1A)

**Culture of Life/Self-Righteous**

The frame for Culture of Life/Self-Righteous references the sanctity of life, life at any cost, and the use of religious doctrine as the guideline for determining laws for medical considerations.

This frame was found to be the second most prevalent in *The Oregonian*, although by a smaller margin (n=2, 11.8%) and third most prevalent in the *St. Petersburg Times* (n=8, 13.1%).

In the two articles of *The Oregonian* that contained this frame, the Culture of Life/Self-Righteous was seen as an imposition on how Oregonians view end-of-life issues:

For many on Capitol Hill, the goal of preserving life is not subject to debate. Rallying behind the motto “culture of life” advocates of this view have adopted what they see as an inviolable stand on issues ranging from abortion and stem-cell research to advance directives for the incapacitated and the choice of assisted suicide for the terminally ill. (Barnett & Kosseff, 3/27/2005, *The Oregonian*, p. A01)
In the *St. Petersburg Times*, the Culture of Life/Self-Righteous Frame was more faith-affirming rather than an imposition of religious doctrine on when life should end.

‘Terri has now changed her mind about dying,’ the motion says. ‘As a practicing Catholic at the time of her collapse...Terri does not want to commit a sin of the gravest proportions by forgoing treatment to effect her own death in defiance of her religious faith’s express and recent instruction to the contrary.’ (Levesque, 7/24/2004, *St. Petersburg Times*, p. 3B)

Terri Schiavo’s presumed Catholicism speaks on her behalf, via her parents and their lawyers, to remind us that her life, indeed all life, is sacred and must be preserved no matter the cost or burden to society.

**Personal Injury**

This frame refers to an act of harm toward Ms. Schiavo by another person. This frame was not found in *The Oregonian*. In the *St. Petersburg Times*, the Personal Injury frame was the dominant frame over the others (n=15, 24.6%).

According to the news coverage in *St. Petersburg Times*, many references to the act of discontinuing Ms. Schiavo’s feeding tube were equated with murder.

“The effect of all of this is that Michael Schiavo gets to kill his wife through starvation and dehydration if this order is upheld.” (Levesque, 5/7/2004, *St. Petersburg Times*, p. 1A)

Pat Anderson, attorney for Terri Schiavo’s parents, Bob and Mary Schindler, said her “life continues to be threatened by those forces who want to see her die from starvation and dehydration.” (Virella, 11/16/2003, *St. Petersburg Times*, p. 4B)

**Battle**

The Battle Frame refers to any battle; whether it is the battle or fight to keep Terri Schiavo alive, for Terri fighting to stay alive, fighting over money, fighting in the courtroom. This was the second most prevalent frame for the *St. Petersburg Times*. For *The Oregonian*, it was less prevalent; tying for number five in dominance with two other frames, Confusion/Communication and Other.
The fight to keep Terri Schiavo alive was usually attributed either to her parent’s directly or through their lawyers.

Her parents are fighting to keep her fed at the Pinellas Park hospice facility where she lives. (Kumar, 3/11/2005, *St. Petersburg Times*, p.1A)

The Battle Frame also includes the earlier fight over the malpractice suit money that Michael Schiavo won on behalf of his wife, Terri, but supposedly refused to share with his in-laws, Bob and Mary Schindler.

With an exchange of heated words, some involving that money, Schiavo’s close relationship with the Schindler’s ended. (Levesque, 11/23/2003, *St. Petersburg Times*, p. 1B)

Stories about courtroom battles were usually written as a chronological list of where the case had traveled so far in the legal process. Here, a very frustrated George Felos, lead attorney for Michael Schiavo, expresses his frustration at the legal maneuverings Governor Jeb Bush’s lead counsel took to force the reinsertion of Ms. Schiavo’s feeding tube.

“As an attorney, as an officer of the court, as a lover of the law, to see the governor of our state just playing such low ball, in the gutter, trashy legal maneuvering, it’s pathetic,” Felos said. (Levesque, 11/6/2003, *St. Petersburg Times*, p. 1B)

The Battle Frame can also refer to Ms. Schiavo’s battle to live.

(Suzanne Vitadamo, Terri Schiavo’s sister) She praised Schiavo for setting an example of how to fight. “You have shown the world what perseverance and determination are all about,” Vitadamo said. (Brink, 4/6/2005, *St. Petersburg Times*, p. 1B)

The one article from *The Oregonian* that used the Battle Frame, referred to the battle of Oregon’s lawmakers to prevent members of congress from using legislation to push through Terri’s Law, a law written to over-ride the authority of the Florida courts that had order the removal of Terri Schiavo’s feeding tube. Threatening a filibuster, the congressional version of war, against Terri’s Law, if wording to protect the state of Oregon’s Death with Dignity Law was not included, Rep. Earl Blumenauer said:
“They have been very, very clear – the administration and Congress – that they want to overturn our Death with Dignity law for exactly the same reasons,” Blumenauer said Saturday. (Barnett, 3/21/2005, *The Oregonian*, p. A08)

**Disability**

The Disability Frame refers to when Terri Schiavo’s condition is framed as disabled and not as a patient with persistent vegetative state (PVS). To Mary and Bob Schindler their daughter, Terri Schiavo, is aware of their presence when they visit her in the hospice.

“She changes from day to day,” Schindler said after viewers were shown videos of Mrs. Schiavo. “She cries. She laughs. She follows me around the room. She laughs at her dad’s jokes.” (Levesque, 11/15/2003, *St. Petersburg Times*, p. 1B)

Terri Schiavo, as portrayed by the Governor of Florida;

“The governor is of the view and has asserted all along that the courts don’t have a monopoly on protecting the rights of the frail and disabled.” (Levesque, 5/7/2004, *St. Petersburg Times*, p. 1A)

By the Catholic Church:

(Father Thomas Euteneuer) “There is no law that says we can kill handicapped people.” (Levesque, Brink & Johnson, 2/26/2005, *St. Petersburg Times*, p.1A)

The Disability Frame was number four in prevalence for the *St. Petersburg Times* (n=7, 11.5%). It was not found in the articles from *The Oregonian*.

**Confusion/Communication**

This frame refers to the lack of information leading to confusion regarding Terri Schiavo’s condition. It also refers to the lack of information about how this issue affects ordinary citizens and their own end-of-life decisions or how they perceive Terri Schiavo’s situation and the controversy thereof. A clear example of confusion surrounding the issue follows:

In the women’s room at the local library, they stood arguing near the sinks, their voices echoing off the blue-tile floor. “But she could come out of it,” Barbara Bernstein said. “They showed her father talking and she was gurgling.” “Do babies gurgle?” Linda Braun asked. “Does it mean they understand?”
While this frame was present in both newspapers, neither was predominant, with only two in *The Oregonian* (11.8%) and five (8.2%) in the *St. Petersburg Times*.

**Political Consequences**

This frame refers to possible political consequences, by constituents, who perceive that lawmakers are interfering with decisions that do not concern them. This frame was found once in *The Oregonian* (5.9%) and was in last place (n=3, 4.9%) in the *St. Petersburg Times*. This frame was subtle, rarely stating out-right that someone’s political career will suffer but rather featured ordinary citizens offering their opinion about how they felt about interference in the Terri Schiavo issue:

> “The governor should have kept his nose out of the Terri Schiavo case. It’s ridiculous,” said Darla Murray, a karate teacher and independent voter from St. Petersburg. (Smith, 12/7/2003, *St. Petersburg Times*, p.1A)

Polls differ about public attitudes toward end-of-life care, but they agree that the Schiavo debacle has hurt Congress and the president. (Epps, 4/24/2005, *The Oregonian*, p.E1)

**Other**

To accommodate frames that do not fit the above categories, the category of ‘Other’ was created. This category was created to explore new frames that may emerge during the content analysis.

Seven articles (11.5%) in the *St. Petersburg Times* were in the ‘Other’ category. Of these six, five were hard news stories about the law process involved in pushing through “Terri’s Law” through the Florida legislature and one was a soft feature story listing facts about Terri Schiavo’s life.
In The Oregonian, of the one story that fell into the ‘Other’ category, one was about the “quality of life” versus the economic costs for maintaining life at any costs. (Barnett, 4/8/2005, The Oregonian, p. A01)

Research question two asked, *Is there any difference between the valences of news coverage toward Michael Schiavo between the two newspapers?*

This question focused on how Michael Schiavo was portrayed when his actions were intrinsic to the story. There were many stories where Michael Schiavo was not germane to the story. Those stories were not applicable to the process of determining valence.

Table 4-2. Valence of Michael Schiavo within the two newspapers. N=23

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valence</th>
<th>The Oregonian</th>
<th>St. Petersburg Times</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>.059</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

df=1

***$p<.001$, **$p<.01$, *$p<.05$***

Since forty-one of the stories from the St. Petersburg Times were not applicable for valence for Michael Schiavo that left twenty stories to be coded for valence. In order to get a negative valence, there had to be a preponderance of quotes that reflected negatively on Michael Schiavo. Using this criteria, eleven stories were found that were negative for valence toward Michael Schiavo in the St. Petersburg Times. However, the two stories that met the requirements for valence coding of Michael Schiavo in The Oregonian were positive.

She (Terri Schiavo) has spent 13 brain-damaged years on life support, and the compassionate death sought for her by her husband, Michael, has become a political and religious football, with no end to their tragic story in sight. (Fisher, 2/12/2004, p.12)

Most of the stories in the St. Petersburg Times that met the requirements for valence coding of Michael Schiavo were negative. Especially toward the end of Terri’s life, Michael
Schiavo was portrayed as mean and vindictive. At Terri Schiavo’s death, her husband Michael Schiavo had her body cremated, against the wishes of her parents. At a memorial service, hosted by the Schindler family, their lawyer remarked:

“The (Schindler) family is basically at the mercy of (Mr. Schiavo) showing kindness...If he chooses to inflict additional pain, that is his choice.” (Brink, 4/6/2005, p. 1B)

Research question three asked, *What are the prevalent sources in each of the two newspapers?*

Because more than one source can vie for prevalence in a story, it was decided to include more than one source in coding if the two sources seem equal in weight. An example of such a decision would be a news story reporting about a court procedure where the main sources are the opposing lawyers. If the two opposing lawyers were used equally as sources to write the story, then the two opposing lawyers were listed as the two sources for that story.

There were significant differences in sources in the two newspapers. This may be due to the smaller sample size in *The Oregonian*.

Table 4-3. Sources Found in *The Oregonian* and the *St. Petersburg Times*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th><em>The Oregonian</em>, N=17</th>
<th><em>St. Petersburg Times</em>, N=61</th>
<th>( \chi^2 )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Michael Schiavo</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schiavo lawyers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>16.797*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bob &amp; Mary Schindler</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5.610***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schindler lawyers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8.009**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>.098</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Figures</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordinary Citizen</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1.806</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judges</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>6.546**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gov. Jeb Bush</td>
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<td>2.901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACLU</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.811</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro-life Groups</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>.452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>133</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05

Sources in the *St. Petersburg Times* differed greatly from *The Oregonian*. Michael Schiavo was rarely quoted in the *St. Petersburg Times* but instead allowed his lead Attorney,
George Felos, to speak on his behalf. Therefore, he was sourced five times (8.2%) and Mr. Felos thirty-four times (55.7%) in the *St. Petersburg Times* alone. Terri Schiavo’s parents, Bob and Mary Schindler, were active participants in the *St. Petersburg Times* coverage of their daughter’s situation. They spoke directly to reporters of the *St. Petersburg Times* almost as often (n=16) as their lawyers did (n=21).

“Religious Figures” included the Pope John Paul II, who spoke out on behalf of the Schindler family for preserving Terri Schiavo’s life. Various local religious leaders were interviewed in both the *St. Petersburg Times* and *The Oregonian*, representing other faiths besides the Catholic community.

“Political Figures” sources include Oregon and Florida lawmakers and other interviewed or quoted members of the House and Senate. The category of “Bush” is for then Florida Governor Jeb Bush and any lawyers who spoke on his behalf during his decision to intervene in the removal of Terri Schiavo’s feeding tube on October 15, 2003. This is the second removal of Terri Schiavo’s feeding tube. The first was on April 24, 2001 and it was reinserted on April 26, 2001 (Ceminara & Goodman, 2006). After Terri Schiavo’s feeding tube was removed for the second time on October 15, 2003, Governor Bush ordered the reinsertion of the feeding tube six days later by issuing a one-time stay, called “Terri’s Law.” While the tube was reinserted on October 21, 2003, “Terri’s Law” was declared unconstitutional by the Florida Supreme Court September 2004 and reversed. This unprecedented use of a governor’s power was covered by both newspapers, and was separate from the usual legal proceedings or the later involvement by the United States Congress (Carr & Haider-Markel, 2007).

The source category for “Ordinary Citizen” was used in the many feature stories that included interviews with people expressing their views both for and against the removal of Terri
Schiavo’s feeding tube, thoughts about end-of-life decisions, and beliefs for and against intervening in this decision by law makers. The *St. Petersburg Times* used this source for almost twenty-five percent of their stories (n=15, 24.6%) and *The Oregonian* used this source for almost half of their stories (n=7, 41.2%).

Although analysis of newspaper story type was not one of the original research objectives, it must be noted that *The Oregonian* sample contained more feature stories (n=11, 64.7%) than hard news stories (n=1, 5.9%). The *St. Petersburg Times* sample was larger and therefore able to encompass a broader range of story types, with half going to hard news stories (n=34, 55.7%) and almost half going to feature stories (n=25, 41%). Also the proximity to the actual on-going event, gave the *St. Petersburg Times* a greater opportunity to quote Michael Schiavo, his lawyers, and the Schindlers and their lawyers.

The final two categories, American Civil Liberties Union or “ACLU” and “Pro-life” captured the addition of interest groups who were used as sources for both sides. The “Pro-life” category included interest groups who were speaking out against Michael Schiavo’s court battle to remove his wife Terri’s feeding tube. The one article in *The Oregonian* with this source quoted spokesperson Andy Imparato, from the American Associate of People with Disabilities (Barnett, 4/8/2005, p.A1), expressing why the American Association of People with Disability’s does not approve of assessments based on quality of life.

The *St. Petersburg Times* had seven stories with “Pro-life” sources. Disability groups made up three of those sources, with two from “Not Dead Yet,” a disability rights group working to prevent the acceptance of euthanasia as the way to handle disabled citizens (http://www.notdeadyet.org). The other four sources were pro-life groups such as the National Pro-life Action Center, the Center for Reclaiming America, and Randall Terry, founder of
Operation Rescue, a right-to-life organization. Randall Terry became involved on behalf of the Schindler family, holding a press conference on February 16, 2005 as the date for Terri Schiavo’s final peg tube removal drew near (Ceminara & Goodman, 2006).

The ACLU source was not found in *The Oregonian*, but was found six times in the *St. Petersburg Times*.

All use of the ACLU source centered on Florida Governor Jeb Bush’s introduction of “Terri’s Law.” Michael Schiavo and his lawyer, George Felos, enlisted the support of the Florida ACLU to issue an injunction to block “Terri’s Law.” Howard Simon, executive director of the ACLU, was used as a source in five out of the six articles. The sixth article in the “ACLU” source category quoted Randall Marshall, legal director of the Florida ACLU.

Interestingly, once the ACLU’s role in working to block “Terri’s Law” was complete, the organization wasn’t quoted again in the *St. Petersburg Times*. This time period was from November 15, 2003 through October 5, 2004. However, the “Pro-life” sources were used, though sparingly, from November 15, 2003 until June 4, 2005.

Research question four asked, *What sources are frequently used for each frame in the two newspapers?* In the previous research question, all sources for an article were tabulated in order to give a more complete picture of who the participants were in this situation. For research question five, each article was examined for only one most prevalent source used for that frame. Each article was cross tabulated for frame by source and a chi square was run. Out of the seventeen articles that made up *The Oregonian* sample, the dominate frame was Self-Determination (see Table 4-1) and the most prevalent source was Ordinary Citizen (see Table 4-3). The Self-Determination frame also contained the most prevalent source for the total newspaper sample from *The Oregonian*, the Ordinary Citizen. The second most prevalent frame
in *The Oregonian* is the Culture of Life frame. However, this frame did not contain one dominate source but had two sources: Political Figures and Religious Figures. The most prevalent source, Political Figures was divided between other frames. The rest of the frames found in *The Oregonian* were not statistically significant to rate in order. For example, of the remaining frames that was tied third in prevalence (Political Consequences, Confusion/Communication and Battle), each frame garnered no more than one to two sources because that frame was only found once in the sample of seventeen articles.

The following tables list each frame and the sources found in that frame for each newspaper. Note that the category for Other was not included in the tables below as a correlation between frame and source was not expected to reveal meaning. The *St. Petersburg Times* used four sources and *The Oregonian* used two sources for this category.

Table 4-4. Culture of life/Self Righteous Frame

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th><em>The Oregonian</em></th>
<th><em>St. Petersburg Times</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schindler lawyers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious</td>
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<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Figures</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordinary Citizen</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4-5. Confusion/Communication Frame

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th><em>The Oregonian</em></th>
<th><em>St. Petersburg Times</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ordinary Citizen</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judges</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bush</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4-6. Self Determination Frame

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th><em>The Oregonian</em></th>
<th><em>St. Petersburg Times</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M. Schiavo Lawyers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schindler Family</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Figures</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordinary Citizen</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judges</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4-7. Political Consequences Frame

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>The Oregonian</th>
<th>St. Petersburg Times</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bush</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordinary Citizen</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4-8. Personal Injury Frame*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>The Oregonian</th>
<th>St. Petersburg Times</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M. Schiavo Lawyers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schindler lawyers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bush</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordinary Citizen</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* This frame was not found in *The Oregonian*.

Table 4-9. Disability Frame*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>The Oregonian</th>
<th>St. Petersburg Times</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M. Schiavo</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judge</td>
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<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro-Life</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bush</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* This frame was not found in *The Oregonian*.

Table 4-10. Battle Frame

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>The Oregonian</th>
<th>St. Petersburg Times</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M. Schiavo Lawyers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schindler Family</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schindler Lawyers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Figures</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judge</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bush</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro-Life</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The dominate frame of the *St. Petersburg Times* was the Personal Injury Frame (see Table 4-8) and the most prevalent source for that frame was a close tie between Michael Schiavo’s lawyer speaking on behalf of Michael Schiavo and the Ordinary Citizen.
The second most prevalent frame for the *St. Petersburg Times* is the Battle frame. The prevalent sources used for this frame was a close tie between the Judges and Governor Jeb Bush and his representatives (see Table 4-9).

The frame of Culture of Life, not surprisingly, had Religious figures as the top source for that frame, followed by the Schindler family lawyers (see Table 4-4).

There was a close tie between the following sources for the disability frame: Judges (n=3) and Bush (n=2). After the Disability frame, the prevalence of sources diminishes due to the small sample size fitting the remaining frames. These frame by source tabulations are included here for Other, Confusion/Communication, Political Consequences and Self-Determination frame but no source stands out as most prevalent above the rest.
Communications research is scarce on end-of-life issues, including physician-assisted suicide or withholding medical treatment by request of family members or the patient (Pollock & Yulis, 2004). This topic is divisive as many religious communities believe that life should be sustained no matter the wishes of the patient, family or recommendation from their medical providers. There are also many who believe that the patient or family member has the right to make these decisions in private, without intervention of the government. The question that may never go away is, do terminally ill persons have a right to end care or do their family members have that right by proxy without interference from the government?

Answering this question is the job of the public and our policy makers. Influencing our policy makers and public are the media (Scheufele, 1999, Iyengar 1996). We can start by examining how journalists frame and define issues around end-of-life care, such as Michael Schiavo’s quest to terminate tube feedings for his wife Terri Schiavo. By analyzing two newspapers from two different cities, this study can illuminate how each city reports or views that particular issue.

**Findings: The St. Petersburg Times**

Research question one asked, what are the prevalent frames of the two newspapers, the *St. Petersburg Times* and *The Oregonian*, and is there any difference in their frames? The resulting analysis of the major frames for each newspaper revealed different results for each paper. Out of the sixty-one articles analyzed from the *St. Petersburg Times*, the three most prevalent frames were Personal Injury, Battle and Culture of Life/Self-Righteous. The Personal Injury frame focused on any harm that might come to Terri Schiavo including the portrayal of
her as the murder victim of her husband Michael Schiavo, should he succeed in the removal of her feeding tube.

The Battle frame referred to the battle to save Terri’s life or Terri’s battle to live against the decision to remove her feeding tube. Often the battle was Schindler versus Schiavo but sometimes it was a political figure such as the administration of Florida Governor Jeb Bush against the courts during the fight to pass “Terri’s Law.”

The Culture of Life/Self-Righteous frame referred to those who believed in preserving life at all costs, the sanctity of life and that god should decide when it is time for a patient to pass on. On May 1, 2004, the *St. Petersburg Times* featured the first story of Pope John Paul II remarking that even people in a vegetative state have a right to food and water. However, in his statement the Pope did not mention Terri Schiavo personally but this story implied that his statement was issued with her case in mind. In court papers, reported by the *St. Petersburg Times*, her parents make the argument that as a devout Catholic, Terri Schiavo would not want anything done contrary to church doctrine. The Schindlers speak for Terri in their quotes to the *St. Petersburg Times* that she would disagree with her husband on discontinuing her feeding tube. The Culture of Life/Self-Righteous is a frame that appears when the Schindler re-frame their battle by saying it is morally wrong, per Pope John Paul II, to withdraw food and water from someone in a persistive and vegetative state and that Terri Schiavo would supposedly agree with him. This frame is also echoed by others, such as interviews in the *St. Petersburg Times*, with Ordinary Citizens who may or may not identify as Catholic but support the position of the Schindlers that withholding food and water (by feeding tube) is morally wrong.

The Disability frame is used by the Schindler family and their supporters to re-frame Terri Schiavo’s condition as someone who is disabled and not in a persistive vegetative state.
The American Disability Act of 2005, Title II, requires that State and local governments give people with disabilities an equal opportunity to benefit from all of their programs, services, and activities including health care (http://www.ada.gov/cguide.htm). By re-framing Terri Schiavo as disabled, she would be accorded protected rights through the Department of Justice, including the right to continued care.

The frame of Self Determination found in the *St. Petersburg Times* was different than the same frame in *The Oregonian*, yet both were about a person’s ability to determine when to decide to end their life or refuse life-sustaining treatment. In the *St. Petersburg Times*, it refers to a promise Michael Schiavo made to his wife Terri that he would not artificially prolong her life. Michael Schiavo and his witnesses claimed in the early part of the court battle that Terri Schiavo had verbalized the desire to not end up “kept alive on a machine” (Levesque, November 8, 2003, *St. Petersburg Times*, p.1A). This determination to carry out his wife’s wishes was featured six times in the *St. Petersburg Times*. Similar to the Culture of Life/Self-Righteous frame, this frame involves speaking on behalf of Terri Schiavo and presumes what she would supposedly want since she can no longer speak for herself.

The last three frames found in the *St. Petersburg Times* were Confusion/Communication, Political Consequences and Other. These frames were the least prevalent. The *St. Petersburg Times* findings were similar to *The Oregonian* in that the Confusion/Communication referred to confusion regarding Terri Schiavo’s condition, and confusion about how this issue affects the lives of ordinary citizen. Political Consequences referred to anger the populace felt toward lawmaker’s interference in the Terri Schiavo issue. The Other category for the *St. Petersburg Times* was different than *The Oregonian* in that it contained six articles that did not fit the other frame categories and were hard news stories about the process of pushing through “Terri’s Law.”
Findings: The Oregonian

Out of the seventeen articles examined in *The Oregonian*, the Self Determination frame was found in more than half of the articles (n=10). Unlike the Self Determination frame of the *St. Petersburg Times*, with Michael Schiavo’s concern with carrying out the wishes of his wife Terri, *The Oregonian*’s Self Determination frame reflects a people concerned with keeping the right to physician-assisted suicide. This frame was reflected in articles where the journalist interviewed Ordinary Citizens who talked about the end-of-life decisions they had to make for a loved one or even thinking about their end-of-life decisions. “I don’t want to go through what the Schiavo family’s going through,” said Diane Cullen (O’Neill, March 23, 2005, *The Oregonian*, p.A1). This Ordinary Citizen’s quote is an example of the concern found in the ten articles where the Self Determination frame was found.

It should be noted that during the time that Michael Schiavo and the Schindler’s fought over whether Terri Schiavo’s feeding tube should be removed or remain, U.S. Attorney John Ashcroft tried to dismantle Oregon’s Death with Dignity Act by issuing a directive that prevents the prescribing of drugs for the sole purpose of suicide on November 6, 2001. John Ashcroft ultimately failed in his quest as the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in January 2006 to let stand Oregon’s right to physician-assisted suicide (http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/pas/faqs.shtml#lawsuit).

An editorial from *The Oregonian*, written after Terri Schiavo’s passing and not included in the analyzed sample, noted that the vast majority of Oregonians voted for this law (Death with Dignity) and saw themselves as the “progressives at the forefront of a fast-moving national sea change that manifested itself in Florida's Terri Schiavo case and in movements now under way in other states pursuing assisted-suicide laws of their own.” (Editorial, *The Oregonian*, January 22, 2006, p. B4).
The remaining frames found in *The Oregonian* were one article with the Other frame, one article with the Political Consequences frame and one article with the Battle. The Culture of Life/Self Righteous and the Confusion/Communication frames had two articles, respectively. The seventeen articles of *The Oregonian* did not contain the Personal Injury or Disability frames.

Of the two articles with the Confusion/Communication frame, one addressed confusion surrounding what a living will is, how communication might help in end-of-life decisions and could have prevented the court battle over Terri Schiavo. The other article, written April 3, 2005 after Terri Schiavo had passed away, addressed the confusion around Terri Schiavo’s medical condition and how it was so difficult to grasp an explanation that would clear up the prognosis of a persistive vegetative state.

Of the two articles with the Culture of Life frames found in *The Oregonian*, one article covered the statements by Pope John Paul II on the ‘Culture of Life’ phrase and the other covered Oregon lawmakers who feel that the Death with Dignity act is threatened by a Congress emboldened by the Terri Schiavo fight and a culture of life at any costs. *The Oregonian* reported that ‘Senior House Republicans took a cue from President Bush and repeatedly invoked the phrase “culture of life” in arguing for federal intervention (in Terri Schiavo).’ (Barnett and Kosseff, March 27, 2005, *The Oregonian*, p. A1).

The one article with the Battle frame featured Oregon lawmakers opposing Congress’ decision to push through their own version of “Terri’s Law” after the failure of the administration of Florida Governor, Jeb Bush, to pass a similar law. While “Terri’s Law” did not directly impact Oregon’s Death with Dignity law, Oregon lawmakers still saw it as a threat. Journalist Jim Barnett of *The Oregonian* defined it thusly: Defending Oregon’s law has been a
Like the *St. Petersburg Times*, Political Consequences frame in *The Oregonian* featured one article that discussed the political ramifications of trying to push through legislation to benefit the wishes of Bob and Mary Schindler “in the private death of one woman, Terri Schiavo” (Epps, April 24, 2005, *The Oregonian*, p.E1).

Finally, the one frame found in the Other category was labeled Economic Consequences. The label of Economic Consequences was chosen to reflect an article in *The Oregonian*. This article featured the Oregon Health Plan and its medical care based on the “quality of life” of the patient, rather than a health plan that gave medical treatments regardless of outcome or cost. The article discussed cost effectiveness of health care: Is it cost effective to keep someone alive, such as Terri Schiavo, a patient with low quality of life, (e.g. no hope for improvement)? Or do we have a moral imperative to do everything to sustain life, no matter the cost? Ordinary Citizen, Carl Cranor ended the article with a final quote: “And what do you say? ‘You’re too expensive (to keep alive) and it was the right thing to do?’” (Barnett, April 8, 2005, *The Oregonian*, p. A1)

**Findings: Valence of Michael Schiavo**

Research question two asked if there was a difference between the valences of news coverage toward Michael Schiavo between the two newspapers. *The Oregonian* had only three articles that qualified for valence toward Michael Schiavo and those were positive. The *St. Petersburg Times* had twenty articles that qualified and were coded for valence. Most were negative (n=11), six were neutral and three were positive. Of the three positive valenced articles, two were feature stories on Michael Schiavo and the third was a feature story where Ordinary Citizens gave quotes empathizing with Michael Schiavo’s difficult decision. The articles with
negative valences contained quotes from Ordinary Citizens and the Schindler family. The same articles with negative valences predominately contained the Personal Injury frame (n=4). This suggests that those articles that were negative for valence when the frame was about harm to Terri Schiavo.

**Finding: Sources**

Question three asked, what are the prevalent sources in each of the two newspapers? Powers and Fico (1994) argue that the selection of sources is a reflection of each journalist. It has been shown that sources favored by journalists can influence the framing of an issue (Bendix and Leibler, 1996) and that direct quotes can influence and sway a reader’s opinion from one side of an issue to another (Gibson and Zillman, 1993). According to Ramsey (1999) using multiple sources can lead to more in-depth, multi-faceted coverage of a complex topic (p.95). By listing all of the sources used in the articles of the two newspapers, sources that would never be the most prevalent in an article but added depth to the article were captured.

Sources used by *The Oregonian* were mostly Ordinary Citizen or Political Figures. The Ordinary Citizen talked of having a similar experience as Michael Schiavo, such as also having a loved one in a coma. The Political Figure spoke out against the perceived threat toward the Death with Dignity Act, which was passed by Oregon voters on October 27, 1997.

The sources used by the *St. Petersburg Times* were Michael Schiavo’s lawyers, the Schindler family lawyers, Judges, Governor Jeb Bush or his representatives and Bob and Mary Schindler. It should be noted that Michael Schiavo rarely spoke directly to the *St. Petersburg Times* press but rather issued statements through his lawyer, George Felos. Only one article in the *St. Petersburg Times* did a story interviewing Michael Schiavo and featured his reasons for wanting to discontinue his wife’s feeding tube. The Schindler family was quoted more often, along with their lawyer, and due to their accessibility, may have been more successful in framing
their daughter’s situation as a woman in grave danger from her husband and negatively framing Michael Schiavo. It also gave them the opportunity to re-frame their daughter’s condition from that of a persistive vegetative state to one of disability.

Question four asks, what sources are frequently used for each frame in the two newspapers. The predominant frame in *The Oregonian*, the Self-Determination frame, used the Ordinary Citizens source the most. The three dominant frames in the *St. Petersburg Times* were Personal Injury, Battle and Culture of Life. In the *St. Petersburg Times*, the Personal Injury frame, the dominant source was a tie between Michael Schiavo’s lawyer and the Schindler family lawyers. In the second most prevalent frame in the *St. Petersburg Times*, the Battle frame, the dominant source was a tie between Judges, and Michael Schiavo’s lawyer, followed closely behind by the Schindler family lawyer. And in the Culture of Life/Self Righteous frame, the predominant source used was Religious Figures.

**Limitations**

Because of this limited time period and the focus on only two newspapers, the universe of examined articles was small, especially for *The Oregonian*. An ideal study would’ve included a retrospective content analysis of newspaper coverage of other comatose patients who were the subject of court battles to end treatment. By examining newspapers coverage of other end-of-life court battles, especially local coverage from that time period, the researcher could ascertain if some frames from that case are similar to those found in the coverage of Terri Schiavo. Ideally, this study would’ve examined coverage from states, such as California, who are also considering their own physician-assisted suicide laws. Another limitation was the decision to not include elite newspapers, such as *The New York Times* or *The Washington Post*. The research could also have included the thoughts and feelings of the journalists that reported the stories in an attempt to
uncover what biases they may have had toward the participants in this event; Terri Schiavo, Michael Schiavo, the Schindler family, etc.

McCombs and Shaw (1972) have said that attention and coverage make some topics more noticeable than others, thus affecting how the public perceives those topics. Social issues rarely galvanize people based on technical arguments. However, a figurehead, signifying a public persona for the issue of concern, can awaken the public and the media to action (Kenny, 2005). Terri Schiavo was that public persona in this analysis. However Ms. Schiavo had a predecessor, another young woman who galvanized the media and the public into sides for or against. Karen Ann Quinlan was the public persona that marked a change in how our laws govern end-of-life decisions. Like Terri Schiavo, Ms. Quinlan was in an irreversible coma after ingesting a lethal cocktail of valium, barbiturates and alcohol. Unlike Terri Schiavo, it was Ms. Quinlan’s parents who asked for the respirator to be terminated and the medical community who refused and battled the Quinlan’s in court (Kenny, 2005).

“Is there a point at which incurable illness becomes living death?” (Time, 1975, p. 40). This question was asked during the Quinlan’s battle, in 1975, about how even if we can keep someone alive, “on the border of survival,” should we and who should make that decision? This difficult decision is still germane today because, despite prior end-of-life court battles such as Karen Ann Quinlan, there are still no answers for end-of-life decisions. This is especially true where the patient has not left a record, such as a living will, to give clarity on their wishes. The Battle frame was, not surprisingly, picked up by the St. Petersburg Times and to a smaller extent, by The Oregonian. For the Schindler family, it was a fight to save their daughter from death. For Michael Schiavo, it was a battle to honor his wife’s wishes. “If I ever go like that, just let me go,” Terri supposedly said to her husband, after watching a movie about a person in a coma
following an accident (Levesque, November 8, 2003, *St. Petersburg Times*, p. 1A). Framing the issue of discontinuing Terri Schiavo’s feeding tube as a right to Self Determination for end-of-life issues is very different than framing it as harm to an embattled patient, whose fate of certain death rests in the decision of the courts.

The analysis of the *St. Petersburg Times* newspaper shows that by framing Ms. Schiavo’s condition as a disability and her husband’s actions as harmful to her, even equating removal of the feeding tube to murder, the decision to sanction the removal of the tube puts the decision maker on par with an executioner. Ms. Schiavo died without a living will, only the testimony of her husband, her brother-in-law Scott Schiavo and her sister-in-law Joan Schiavo convinced the court that she would not want to be kept alive when there was no hope for recovery. In *The Oregonian*, Michael’s decision to discontinue tube feedings was an act of privacy, a decision the government had no business interfering. To Michael Schiavo, he was doing the right thing in honoring Terri’s wishes. *The Oregonian* newspaper may not have stated outright that they agreed with him but by framing the issue as one of Self Determination, *The Oregonian* implied agreement.

It is undeniable that end-of-life situations will happen again. The questions posed by Terri Schiavo and other cases mentioned earlier have shown that there are no easy answers, legal or otherwise. Maybe the answers will become easier as life-sustaining technology improves along with the ability to diagnose terminal cerebral atrophy, a fatal condition diagnosed in Ms. Schiavo post mortem and a possible contributor to her terminal persistent vegetative state (*Schiavo Autopsy Report, Medical Examiner, District Six, Pasco and Pinellas Counties, p. 35*).

Media scholars are aware that news coverage of an issue and the frames used by journalists to report the news do play a role in shaping public opinion (Pan and Kosicki, 1993).
It has been shown that when two ideologies compete to frame an issue, counter-framing is used to re-frame the issue to favor that side (Keys and McCaffrey, 2000). For example, in the abortion debate, the terms “pro-choice” refer to an ideology or person for the reproductive choice of abortion and the term “pro-life” refer to an ideology or person against the abortion procedure. The group or person who is successful in framing an issue for the media’s use has influence over politicians and policy making in the future (Andsager, 2000). This study confirmed and added to past framing studies that show that competing frames can emerge and vie for the media’s interest and for shaping a story. In this research study, the two sides endeavored to re-frame Terri Schiavo and her situation to favor one side or the other; either her husband’s claim that she would not want to be kept alive in her current state or her parents claim that she was disabled and in harm’s way. This study also adds to prior framing studies that illustrate how framing an issue in the media can encourage the public and politicians to become involved in the outcome of an issue.

**Future Research**

This paper was written to add to the communication research on end-of-life issues by exploring the idea that there may be a difference in framing a topic that touches on so many issues we take to be private: deciding when to forgo treatment.

As mentioned earlier, there has been prior precedent setting end-of-life cases besides Terri Schiavo. Before beginning this research project, a search for prior content analysis of newspapers for frames around end-of-life issues was conducted by the researcher. As noted by Pollock & Yulis, in 2004, there is a scarcity of communications research about end-of-life issues. This researcher did not find prior framing analysis of newspapers surrounding the issue of terminating care for a patient in a persistive vegetative state, except as noted earlier (Lauffer,
2000 and Holody, 2006). Future framing studies would have to include a retrospective of past cases and local coverage to compare frames. For example, Newton, New Jersey is the town where Karen Ann Quinlan lived and died. The newspaper for Newton is the *New Jersey Herald*, with a small daily circulation of 16,792 (http://www.njinsider.com/newspapers02.htm). The newspaper with the largest circulation for the state of New Jersey is the *Star-Ledger* with a circulation of 345,130, not too far from that of *The Oregonian* (Audit Bureau of Circulation, 2007.) By doing a retrospective content analysis of local New Jersey newspaper coverage, future scholars could uncover if the media is reacting to frames that are already established or if they are actively setting new frames. By understanding what frames are likely to be used by local media, communication scholars can be aware of what policy decisions or public opinion influences are likely to occur.
APPENDIX A
CODEBOOK

Framing Terri Schiavo. A content analysis of two newspapers.
T. Barber Kim copyright 2008.

1. **Coder ID**: Coders will identify themselves by using their three initials.

2. **Story Number**: Coders will provide each story with a unique number.

3. **Story Date**: Coders will indicate the date of the story in a six-digit format (e.g. 010108).

4. **Frames**: Coders will indicate the presence or absence of each of the following frames (central organizing ideas/themes) by selecting 1 for present or 0 for absent from the list.

   1. **Culture of Life/Self-righteous**: This frame specifically refers to the pro-life movement and their culture of life at all costs.

   2. **Confusion/Communication**: This generic frame refers to the lack of information leading to confusion or conflicting thoughts and emotions related to Ms. Schiavo’s condition, the decision to terminate tube feedings, and supposed misleading information from any source. It can also refer to lack of information regarding living wills, lack of communication with family members regarding end of life decisions.

   3. **Self-determination/patients rights**: This frame can refer to the right to decide or chose when to terminate medical care or any end of life decision for oneself. It can also refer to family or medical decisions to honor a patients wishes regarding end of life decisions, even if it is a difficult decision.

   4. **Political Consequences**: This frame can refer to voter backlash due to political intervention, anger from the perception of lawmakers butting into a decision they have no party to or it can be political support for a decision.

   5. **Personal injury** – This frame refers to an act of harm toward Ms. Schiavo by another person, including murder or abuse. It also refers to any threatening action, or word perpetuated against anyone involved with the Terri Schiavo case.

   6. **Disability**: This frame specifically refers Ms. Schiavo’s condition as a disability or that she in not in PVS but is disabled.

   7. **Battle**: This frame refers to the battle to keep Ms. Schiavo alive. It also can refer to Ms. Schiavo’s battle to remain alive.
8. **Other**: There may be frames that do not fit the above categories. An example of this would be frames dealing with emotion such as empathy or quality of life issues. This category is open to explore new frames that may emerge during the content analysis.

5. **Valence: positive, neutral or negative tone of the frame**: After coding for the ambiguous or substantive frames of each of the articles, if Michael Schiavo is germane to the article, note whether the tone or valence toward Michael Schiavo is presented in the story as positive, neutral or negative tone. An example of a negative tone about Michael Schiavo would be referring to him as a murderer. An example of a positive tone would refer to Schiavo as a champion for Terri’s implied wishes against medical intervention. However, the tone may also be neither positive nor negative but rather neutral. An example of a neutral tone will be found in hard news stories where only the facts of the story are reported but no implied tone is given, such as in a court proceeding. Coders will indicate the valence of stories by selecting 1 for negative frames, 2 for neutral frames and 3 for positive frames.

6. **Sources**: Coders will indicate the presence or absence of each of the following sources by selecting 1 for present or 0 for absent from the list of the following sources:

1. Michael Schiavo – Speaking or issuing a statement directly to the reporter.
2. Michael Schiavo’s Lawyer – Speaking or issuing a statement directly to the reporter.
3. Bob and Mary Schindler – Speaking or issuing a statement directly to the reporter.
4. Schindler’s Lawyer – Speaking or issuing a statement directly to the reporter.
5. Religious – Refers to a religious representative, like Pope John Paul II, a reverend, minister, Cardinal or spokesperson for an institution like a church, synagogue or temple.
6. Political figures – Refers to a politician or their spokesperson authorized to speak on their behalf. The politician can be a federal representative such as a Senator or Congressperson, or a local representative such a county commissioner or mayor.
7. Ordinary citizen – Refers to a quote from a person who is not a religious figure, a political figure or an interest group representative. The Ordinary Citizen can be someone who knows either or both of the Schiavo or Schindler participants and is quoted giving their opinion but can not be a designated representative of either family. The Ordinary Citizen is the ‘man on the street’ who can be anyone without ties to either family.
8. Judges – Refers to a person, in the occupation of judge, who is presiding over the Terri Schiavo case. This person may work at the county, circuit court, federal or Supreme Court level.
9. Bush – Refers to Florida Governor Jeb Bush or anyone representing Mr. Bush, such as his lawyers.

10. ACLU – refers to a person who works on behalf of or is representing the American Civil Liberties Union.

11. Pro-life – Refers to an organization or a person representing that organization who title themselves as a pro-life organization, such as Right to Life. This category is written broadly enough to encompass disability rights organizations such as Not Dead Yet, who organize to fight against their perception of state sponsored euthanasia.
OREGON LAWMAKERS OPPOSE SCHIAVO LEGISLATION THE STATE'S DELEGATES SEE CONGRESS' DECISION AS A POTENTIAL THREAT TO OREGON'S DEATH WITH DIGNITY LAW

BYLINE: JIM BARNETI - The Oregonian

SECTION: NORTHWEST; Pg. A08

LENGTH: 643 words

DATELINE: WASHINGTON

Members of Congress from Oregon on Sunday helped temporarily stall legislation overriding the authority of Florida courts in the Terri Schiavo case, saying it could undermine individuals' right to die as they choose.

Early today, the House passed the legislation.

The measure does not directly address the Oregon law that allows physician-assisted suicide. But Rep. Earl Blumenauer, D-Ore., and others said before it was passed that it would set a dangerous precedent for Oregon's law.

"They have been very, very clear -- the administration and Congress -- that they want to overturn our Death With Dignity law for exactly the same reasons," Blumenauer said Sunday.

Republican leaders said they wanted to pass a bill that would let federal courts overrule Florida courts in the Schiavo case. But Rep. David Wu, D-Ore., and others served notice that they would object to the move after most members had left for spring recess. That forced leaders to call members back to Washington on Sunday.

Wu had planned to leave Washington on Saturday but stayed after receiving notice of the Schiavo bill, an aide said. Wu took to the House floor Sunday night to argue that Congress should not interfere in matters best left to families and local authorities.

"The Republican leadership has transformed a profound tragedy for the Schiavo family into a tragedy for the entire nation," Wu said.

Blumenauer said he tried to get a flight to Washington on Sunday, but spring break travelers had taken all the seats. He said he realized his absence might make it more difficult for proponents to reach a quorum of 218 members. However, a quorum was easily reached, as 261 members voted.

Defending Oregon's law has been a long, lonely battle for the state's congressional delegation. In 2000, Congress nearly passed a law to prevent doctors from prescribing federally controlled painkillers in lethal doses, but Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., threatened a filibuster and ended off the effort.

The legislation allows a federal court to review the case of Schiavo, 41, who has been in a vegetative state for 15 years. A federal judge could reverse the rulings of Florida courts and require doctors to insert Schiavo's feeding tube.

In a floor speech last week, Wyden warned Congress against "playing medical czar" because then "there will be thousands of cases just like this."

But Wyden did not threaten a filibuster, said Josh Kardon, his chief of staff. Rather, Wyden worked with other senators to
narrow terms of the bill to deal directly with the Schiavo case.

In the end, the legislation included language specifying that Congress' intervention in the Schiavo case would not be held as a precedent in other cases in which a patient is near death but cannot express his or her intentions.

"Assuming the bill continues to steer clear of Oregon's physician-assisted suicide law, Senator Wyden will not filibuster the bill," Kardon said, before the Senate passed it on a voice vote. "He does not support it, but he will not filibuster it."

Nevertheless, Blumenauer said terms contained in the Schiavo bill are sufficiently vague that they could threaten individuals' "advance directives" and ultimately could lead Congress to interfere in areas of law traditionally left to states.

"I've watched how these people work," Blumenauer said. "You get a teehold, and you push it forward."

Blumenauer said he also objected to Republican leaders' decisions to interfere in federal judicial authority. In other cases, leaders have moved to limit federal jurisdiction when judges have handed down unpopular decisions, he said.

"The courts in Florida have seen fit to render judgment, but that is not good enough for some on Capitol Hill who want to supersede the objection of the parties involved and move this case to the federal courts," Blumenauer said.

Jim Barnett: 503-294-7604; jim.barnett@newhouse.com
Judge orders Schiavo's feeding tube in till Dec. 6

BYLINE: WILLIAM R. LEVESQUE

SECTION: TAMPA & STATE; Pg. 4B

LENGTH: 687 words

DATELINE: CLEARWATER

A judge Friday refused to hold a hearing to determine if recent statements by the pope would lead Catholic Terri Schiavo to reject the removal of the feeding tube that has kept her alive for more than 14 years.

But Pinellas-Pasco Circuit Judge George Greer issued an order preventing Schiavo's husband from removing the feeding tube until at least Dec. 6 so lawyers can appeal his decision.

Meantime, Gov. Jeb Bush's lawyers said in a court filing Friday that they plan to appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court a recent Florida ruling striking down Terri's Law as unconstitutional.

The law, hastily passed by lawmakers a year ago, allowed Bush to order doctors to reinsert Schiavo's feeding tube six days after it was removed. The Florida Supreme Court ruled the law unconstitutional last month and this week refused a request to reconsider.

Questions of Schiavo's faith have dominated recent efforts to keep her alive, a battle led by her parents, Bob and Mary Schindler. Those efforts are based on a March statement by Pope John Paul II that people in vegetative states have the right to nutrition and health care.

Lawyers said that Schiavo, as a devout Catholic, would never want to have anything done to run counter to the pope's words and would want to live.

But Greer rejected a hearing to consider the matter, noting an appeals court previously found that Schiavo did not regularly attend Mass or have a religious adviser who could help the court determine her religious attitude about life support.

"Nothing has changed," Greer wrote in the ruling. "There is nothing new presented regarding Terri Schiavo's religious attitude and there is still no religious adviser to assist this or any other court in weighing her desire to comply with this or any other papal pronouncement."

Despite the dwindling legal options, the lead attorney for the Schindlers said he is still confident they may yet prevail in the courts. "I'm optimistic that once our legal options are fully explored, there will be an avenue for the courts to recognize a way to protect Terri Schiavo's life," said attorney David Gibbs III.

Attorney George Felos, who represents Schiavo's husband, Michael Schiavo, said he was disappointed by the decision to prevent the tube's removal until December. He said the Schindlers and Bash are using the courts to delay removing the feeding tube.

"Without Greer's order, Felos said, Michael Schiavo would be free to seek the tube's immediate removal. Michael Schiavo said his wife made statements before her 1990 collapse indicating she would not want to live as she does now.

"She has been waiting for her constitutional rights to be afforded to her for 4 1/2 years," Felos said. "It's hard to see any
constructive purpose to delay this another seven weeks. This case should be about carrying out her wishes."

Bush, appearing at a political event in South Pasadena, said he hasn't given up hope for Schiavo and still feels strongly about protecting her life.

"I'm totally against frivolous lawsuits," Bush said. "I don't want to use the courts for this purpose unless we have legitimate reasons."

**Terri Schiavo**

family released a statement saying they were thankful for Bush's continued efforts to "save their daughter Terri's life."

"The family's faith remains strong and they are hopeful that their daughter's life will ultimately be spared," a statement from the Schindlers said. "They evert the prayers of others who are concerned about Terri as they continue to pursue their legal options."

Schiavo collapsed in 1990 from a suspected chemical imbalance that some doctors think may have been related to bulimia.

She left no living will, leaving the courts to determine whether she would want to be kept alive. Her husband says her condition is irreversible. Schiavo's parents disagree, saying she could be helped by therapy. Schiavo, 40, lives at a Clearwater nursing home.

Her feeding tube has been removed twice, only to be reinserted after legal developments in a case that has attracted international attention.

Times staff writer Jamie Thompson contributed to this report.
APPENDIX D
PERSONAL INJURY FRAME

St. Petersburg Times (Florida)
March 19, 2005 Saturday 0 South Pinellas Edition

An image to make stomachs tighten

BYLINE: JEAN HELLER

SECTION: NATIONAL; Pg. 14A

LENGTH: 899 words

DATELINE: PINELLAS PARK

Starve.

It is such a graphic word, conjuring images of everything from weakness, dizziness and stomach discomfort to the sad eyes and distended bellies of malnourished children.

No longer do those who want to see Terri Schiavo kept alive refer to the question of removing her feeding tube. Now the language of choice is: "They want to starve Terri Schiavo to death; you wouldn't starve a dog."

Graphic. And compelling.

The tactic has been so effective that it stopped Congress in its legislative tracks in order to address the Schiavo issue.

"Words are defined by concepts, and the concept of starvation is deprivation and pain, of being tortured," said George Lakoff, professor of cognitive science and linguistics at the University of California-Berkeley. "You say someone is being starved, it gets people's attention. Whoever chose that word did so knowing the emotional response it would evoke."

Those who oppose removal of the feeding tube believe Schiavo is sufficiently aware to feel discomfort or worse. They point to what they describe as a smile and to a video that seems to show her open her eyes in response to a doctor's orders and turn her head toward the sound of his voice.

"Even the Nazis were hesitant to use starvation and dehydration as a means of murder," Rob Schenck, president of the National Clergy Council in Washington, D.C., said at a news conference outside Schiavo's Pinellas Park hospice on Friday. "It is untenable to think of food and water being denied to a disabled person."

Donna Kuntz of Lutz, another protester, agreed.

"I could never sit back and let it happen to my daughter," Kuntz said. "You never know if the person is going to feel it or not."

Lakoff and others say they don't believe Schiavo, if aware on any level, is sufficiently conscious to discern anything. Schiavo, 41, has been in a persistent vegetative state for 15 years, according to her doctors.

"It's a big leap to go from seeing some evidence of brain function to a conclusion that the patient is aware," said Dr. Stephen Mernoff, a clinical assistant professor of neurology at Brown University. "In this case, it's way too big a leap."

Lakoff compares the battle over Schiavo's life to the Scopes Monkey Trial, which played out in Dayton, Tenn., in 1925 over the decision of high school teacher John Scopes to teach evolution in defiance of a Tennessee law. It was an era of struggle between traditionalists and modernists over values.
"What's changed?" said Lakoff. "This is a traditional clash between faith and science. **Terri Schiavo** is a dead body. She's not there anymore. But for many Christians, the concept of a soul is that it can think, perceive and feel, just like the person it inhabits. But that isn't possible without a brain. It is folk theory, and the antithesis of science."

The heart of the issue for some is whether Schiavo will suffer as she dies after the feeding tube is removed. Mernoff says she will not.

"People think that's a terrible way to go, but that's because they think of starvation as it would feel to them, people who are totally conscious and aware of their surroundings," he said. "In a case like this, however, the patient will feel nothing at first, then will experience renal failure, lapse quickly and painlessly into a coma and then expire. It is actually very peaceful."

Mernoff also said the hope of Schiavo's parents for a miracle recovery is in vain. "People waking up magically after 15 or 20 years - it just doesn't happen," he said. "If you look into these stories, there is always, always some factor that wasn't made public that is responsible."

Some protesters at Schiavo's hospice said they didn't feel as strongly about disconnecting ventilators - devices that help patients breathe when they can't on their own - as they did about feeding tubes because death comes more quickly.

"There is no more ordinary way to preserve rights than providing food and water," said Father Ron Aubin, a protester from Land O'Lakes.

Mernoff said that often, when a decision is made to turn a ventilator off, there is little or no sign of life left, which makes it easier to accept that the person is ready to die.

Asked why there isn't as much anger at the idea of disconnecting ventilators, Lakoff replied:

"There hasn't, has there? Maybe tomorrow."

Times staff writer Chris Tisch and researcher Kitty Bennett contributed to this report.

DEATH PROCESS AFTER FEEDING TUBE REMOVAL

Doctors removed **Terri Schiavo**'s feeding tube for a third time Friday. The tube was reinserted within days the first two times it was removed. It is expected to take
APPENDIX E
POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES FRAME

St. Petersburg Times (Florida)
March 26, 2005 Saturday 0 South Pinellas Edition

Schiavo furor leaves rips in GOP "big tent"

BYLINE: LUCY MORGAN

SECTION: CITY & STATE, Pg. 5B

LENGTH: 654 words

What ever happened to that Republican "big tent" that was supposed to welcome those with differing ideas?

Some members of the Florida Senate are questioning where the tent went and why they are being made to feel like lepers by the Christian right wing.

Sen. Jim King, R-Jacksonville, and eight others were the targets of extreme pressure over the past week for opposing a measure that could have jeopardized thousands of living wills and violated the wishes of many Floridians who have yet to write down what they want to happen at the end of life.

King and the others were repeatedly accused of being disloyal to the GOP.

"This is very dangerous for our party and our government," King said this week as he struggled to make it past protesters jamming Capitol corridors.

In an effort to pass a bill that might help extend Terri Schiavo's life, some legislative leaders were willing to jeopardize everyone else's wishes. The measure failed to pass the Senate.

Some Republicans are worried that the intolerance shown by Christian conservatives in the Schiavo matter could jeopardize many of the gains the party has made in the past decade.

The GOP captured control of the Legislature only nine years ago and got control of the Governor's Mansion in 1998. Democrats often say the GOP is in the hands of extremists. The Schiavo case supports that notion.

Instead of winning support for a bill aimed at restoring Schiavo's feeding tube, many protesters angered senators who were bombarded with obscene telephone calls and death threats.

It was Sen. Frederica Wilson, D-Miami, who complained the loudest as the Senate engaged in an unusually emotional debate. She said the death threats filled her with fear, but they didn't persuade her to vote for the bill.

King, meanwhile, was not alone in wondering why Christians who believe in a better life after death would work so hard to prolong the suffering of an innocent person who should be going to a better place.

As the week moved toward Easter, the pressure was on Gov. Jeb Bush to do something. Bush didn't do himself a favor when he said he believes he has the authority to seize custody of Schiavo and provide her with treatment.

At a news conference Wednesday, Bush wouldn't answer questions about whether he intended to use the power he thinks he has. That led to mounting speculation that the state might swoop into the hospice and kidnap Schiavo.

Finally Bush surfaced briefly Thursday afternoon to say he would not violate court orders that have denied the state access to Schiavo.
By then it was too late to silence the clamor that was rising among vociferous protesters outside the Capitol.

Loudest among them was Operation Rescue's Randall Terry, who said "there will be hell to pay" if Bush doesn't intervene.

Somewhere in all of this the rule of law must prevail, or we are all lost. Bush's brief flirtation with taking the law into his own hands was a serious mistake that could cost the GOP for years to come.

One by one, Republicans around the state began announcing: "Enough."

"I am a longstanding registered, voting Republican, but after watching this disgusting display, I am gone," wrote Ray Snyder of Crawfordville in a letter to the editor in the Tallahassee Democrat Friday. "I see the dark ages of the Inquisition being born again. Someone needs a large dose of sanity and common sense, but it may already be too late."

Asked about the impact of the case on the GOP, Larry Sabato, professor of politics at the University of Virginia, says he thinks there will be some temporary backlash but voters will have forgotten by the next election.

Republicans in Congress have totally politicized the issue, and shouting protesters have turned the entire tragedy into a circus operating outside the hospice, the courthouses, the Capitol and the Governor's Mansion.

No one wins. And once again Florida looks incredibly stupid.
MORE OREGONIANS SEEK LAST WORD ON OWN CARE

BYLINE: PATRICK O'NEILL - The Oregonian

SECTION: LOCAL STORIES; Pg. A01

LENGTH: 826 words

Summary: More people turn to health officials for answers on controlling end-of-life treatment

At dinner Saturday at her house, Diane Cullen says she'll sit down with eight family members and distribute copies of an advance directive -- a document that specifies what kind of medical care should be given if someone is too sick or injured to communicate.

Cullen, 72, of Beaverton says she doesn't want to wait another minute. She would never want her family to end up in a controversy like that surrounding Terri Schiavo, the Florida woman whose husband and parents are fighting over whether to keep her alive with a feeding tube after 15 years in a vegetative state. Schiavo has become an unwilling pawn in a political battle that has drawn in Congress and the White House.

Cullen says she will insist that her three grown daughters and son and their families follow through in filling out the form -- and she will, too.

"I don't want to go through what the Schiavo family's going through," she said Tuesday.

For 20 years the executive secretary to Edmund Jensen, former vice chairman and chief operating officer of U.S. Bancorp, Cullen is a no-nonsense kind of person. She thinks it's important for each family member to understand what kind of medical care the other wants.

She's sorting through the details of what she would want for herself. She hasn't decided how long she would want to remain in a coma before allowing doctors to end her treatment. "I would think four weeks would be maximum time . . . but I'm not sure," she said. "I need to give that some thought."

Cullen has plenty of company in her newfound interest in end-of-life treatment.

Oregon Health & Science University's Center for Ethics in Health Care generally gets an e-mail a week from someone asking about end-of-life medical options.

But because of the high-profile Schiavo case, the center has been getting dozens of calls and e-mails a day from people who are afraid they might end up at the mercy of the courts and politicians.

Mina Shoehheit, the center's assistant director, said the Schiavo controversy has created fear among those who worry that their final wishes will not be honored. She's fielding requests for forms that let doctors, friends and family members know what to do when a person becomes incapacitated and can't communicate.

"Fear is driving this," Shoehheit said Tuesday. "The inquiries are coming from people who want to make their own decision. They're saying, 'I don't want this experience -- I want to have the last word about my care.'"

Dr. Eric Fromme, an assistant professor of medicine at OHSU and a senior scholar in the ethics center, says the key to getting the end-of-life care you want is to communicate your wishes while you still can.
Greatly complicating the Schiavo case is the lack of any document spelling out her wishes, he said. Her husband has said she wouldn’t want to live in such a condition, relying on a feeding tube. Her parents say her religious beliefs would cause her to choose life, despite her medical condition.

A common way to communicate wishes for care is through an advance directive or a POLST, a physician’s order for life-sustaining treatment, Fromme said.

An advance directive specifies what kind of care you want if you’re too sick or injured to communicate. Under Oregon’s Health Care Decisions Act, you can also specify whom you want to make medical decisions for you if you become incapacitated. The document doesn’t need a doctor’s signature, and you can fill it out yourself.

There can be problems with advance directives, however, Fromme said.

“They get lost. People forget they exist,” he said. “If they’re not looked over frequently, you wonder if people’s attitudes have changed. You wonder whether what’s said (in the directive) is still appropriate. It may be hard to tell.”

He recommends that people with advance directives look them over from time to time and put them in a place where friends and family can find them.

The POLST form, developed by OHSU’s ethics center, is similar to an advance directive but, because it is a physician’s order, carries more weight with medical workers.

The bright pink, two-sided form is normally used by the elderly or people with specific medical problems, Fromme said. The form specifies whether the patient is to be resuscitated, how aggressive medical care should be and whether antibiotics and tube feeding should be used.

The original form is kept with the patient -- ideally in its red envelope on the refrigerator where emergency medical technicians can see it if the patient lives at home, or in the front of the patient’s medical chart in a hospital or nursing home.

Fromme, a palliative care physician who works with dying patients, said the Schiavo case is “unusual and distressing” because decisions are being made by judges and lawyers in courtrooms rather than at the patient’s bedside by doctors and family members.

Patrick O’Neill; 503-221-8233; poneill@news.oregonian.com
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In re Martin, 450 Mich. 204, 538 N.W.2d 399, Michigan supreme Court (1995).


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Teresa Barber Kim was born in Athens, Georgia but moved with her family to Miami, Florida at the age of three. Raised in Miami, Teresa, known as Teri to her family and friends, graduated high school from Miami Palmetto Senior High and earned her associate of arts degree from Miami-Dade Community College. She then transferred to the University of Florida, where she graduated with a bachelor of science in public relations, December 1985. After graduating from the University of Florida, Teri worked in New York City for six years as a production assistant for film and video, and for three years in advertising for Royal Caribbean Cruises, Ltd. in Miami, Florida. With a desire to change careers and a growing interest in health and science spurring her on, Teri then earned a bachelor of science in nursing from Georgetown University, Washington, D.C. After graduation, she served four years active duty in the United States Navy Nurse Corps, working in such diverse settings as oncology, labor and delivery and surgical services. Her last rank achieved was Lieutenant and she was honorably discharged on March 1999. Since then she has worked as a nurse in medical research, public health and case management.

In August 2006, she began her studies for a Master of Arts in Mass Communication, with a specialty in science and health communications. Teri aspires to combine her communication skills with her interest and experience in the medical field as a medical communications professional.