Framing Death:
The Use of Frames in Newspaper Coverage of
and Press Releases about Death with Dignity

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(ABSTRACT)

Since passing its Death with Dignity Act into law in 1997, Oregon remains the only state in America to make physician-assisted suicide an explicit legal right. Currently, the legality of physician-assisted suicide falls under the jurisdiction of each individual state. Had the United States Supreme Court ruled differently in a recent case, however, the issue would have transferred to federal jurisdiction.

The Death with Dignity National Center (DDNC) takes responsibility for developing the original Death with Dignity Act and has since moved on to proposing similar legislation in other states. It also champions states' rights, fearing that placing physician-assisted suicide under federal jurisdiction would severely hinder its goals. The DDNC has led the legal movement for making physician-assisted suicide an end of life choice available in each state, as well as for keeping that decision at the state level.

Utilizing a content analysis, this study coded for frames used by the DDNC in its press releases and frames used in newspaper coverage of death with dignity across the same period of time. It was found that press releases about and newspaper coverage of the death with dignity social movement shared significant correlations in terms of the frames each used, as well as the level of substance given to these frames. Few significant correlations were found, however, for frame valence. It seems as though discussion of this social movement utilizes the same substantive or ambiguous frames, but cannot decide whether these frames are positive, neutral, or negative.

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RATIONALE

In their review of leading communication journals, Pollock and Yulis (2004) found research regarding physician-assisted suicide, or even end of life care in general, to be lacking. The absence of such research is rather shocking, as physician-assisted suicide has been called "one of the most important and controversial issues of our time" (Weir, 1989). Communication scholars would do well to more fully explore the topic, as it continues to garner both public interest and extensive media coverage.

Because of the intensely controversial nature of physician-assisted suicide, communication scholarship needs to keep a more watchful eye on media coverage of the topic. For example, some evidence suggests that reporting on Jack Kevorkian, the controversial Michigan pathologist who euthanized or assisted in the suicides of over 130 patients, shifted across different news frames over time. These frames ranged from portraying him as a modern day mad scientist to a noble egalitarian only interested in helping patients die with dignity and without pain (Kalwinsky, 1998). Kenny's (2000) rhetorical analysis of Kevorkian's writings and statements found that the doctor's own thoughts on suicide were quite distinct, however, from the rhetorical situation to which he was assigned. Kevorkian was actually more interested in studying the deaths of those he helped to die than in relieving their pain. Therefore, the media's shift to framing Kevorkian as a champion of physician-assisted suicide was, to Kenny, "a mistake" (2000). Such framing of Kevorkian by the news media demonstrates the power of communication. By altering the only available means through which Kevorkian was presented to the public, the media were possibly able to control the ways in which their audiences – mistakenly – viewed the former doctor. That media have the ability to wield such power over such a controversial issue is worthy of exploration.

To further communication scholarship, this study explored by way of content analysis the frames used by a special interest group in its press releases and the frames found in newspaper coverage of the "death with dignity" social movement. The special interest group in question was the Death with Dignity National Center (DDNC), a group which has taken responsibility for the successful passing of the original Death with Dignity Act into Oregon law in 1997. After this, the DDNC began proposing similar legislation to be adopted in other states, a goal which it has yet to achieve. Since its

inception, the DDNC has been one of the most vocal advocacy groups fighting for the legalization of physician-assisted suicide. The Oregon-based group also champions states' rights, fearing the placement of physician-assisted suicide under federal jurisdiction. The group's area of interest has remained salient in news media over the past century, and the group itself has initiated much of the most recent debate.

Gamson and Modigliani (1989) define a frame as a "central organizing idea… for making sense of relevant events, suggesting what is at issue." In other words, frames are what people cognitively use to understand what is happening in the world around them. Using frames, people are able to package and position particular issues so that these issues convey meanings more relative to their own experiences (Chapman & Lupton, 1994; Entman, 1993; Iyengar, 1991; Ryan, 1991; Schön & Rein, 1994; Wallack & Dorfman, 1996; Wallack, Dorfman, Jernigan, & Themba, 1993). Frames can be conceptualized in this sense as links to previously learned information that people are able to access when presented with any new ideas or experiences. "Frames" are, simply put, frames of reference. They allow individuals to construct causal relationships within a topic or issue to better understand it (Scheufele, 2000) and how it coincides with what they already know and understand. This study sought to form a better understanding of the controversial issue of physician-assisted suicide through a communication lens, as well as to explore the manner in which special interest groups are able to influence media coverage through the manipulation of frames.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

CONTEXT

The controversy of physician-assisted suicide has grown more and more salient with time, in step with advances in medical technology that have contributed to a growing number of individuals who can now be kept alive "beyond the point which even they themselves would desire" (Ostheimer, 2001; Marty & Hamel, 1991). To proponents of physician-assisted suicide, the act is seen simply as helping a patient "to end his or her life in a more expedient, easier, and [more] humane manner than that allowed for by life-support systems" (Fletcher, 1979). To opponents of physician-assisted suicide, the act is an attack on civil rights and proper medical practice. Although patients do have a

constitutionally protected right to opt for passive euthanasia (Gustaitis, 1988), the intentional termination of a patient's life by a physician is not protected (Thomasma & Graber, 1990). Euthanasia occurs when someone's death is brought about by the actions of another. For example, a doctor who injects her patient with a deadly amount of medicine is practicing euthanasia. If this doctor had simply prescribed the medicine, which was then taken by the patient with no physical assistance, then the doctor only assisted in the suicide. Euthanasia and assisted suicide are typically labeled "passive" when they are confined to the withholding or withdrawing of life-prolonging and life-sustaining technologies. Even though the doctor in this case chooses to facilitate her patient's death, that death is brought about by the patient giving into his or her own confliction. It is when death is the result of any kind of direct intervention that the act is deemed "active" (Hyde, 1993). In other words, while suicide is constitutionally protected, assisting in that suicide is not.

While the topic of physician-assisted suicide has been debated for well over a century, the arguments and justifications on either side have changed very little with time (Emanuel, 1994). These arguments involve patients' right to die, doctors' responsibilities to do no harm, and the separation of state and federal governments. As early as 1870, the use of anesthetics and morphine to intentionally end a patient's life was proposed and debated, and in 1906, an Ohio bill to legalize euthanasia was proposed, only to be eventually defeated (Emanuel, 1994). These events mark some of the earliest milestones in the modern debate over physician-assisted suicide.

In 1976, the New Jersey Supreme Court allowed the parents of a comatose woman named Karen Ann Quinlan to remove the respirator that was keeping her alive, citing that this removal met Quinlan's already held end of life wishes. Interestingly, even after Quinlan's parents were granted and used the right to remove their daughter's breathing tube, Quinlan lived on in her comatose state for another eight years (Halloran, 2005). This was the first time that a state had publicly supported a patient's right to choose death. Ten years later, a woman named Elizabeth Bouvia was granted legal permission to refuse being force-fed nutrients she needed to keep herself alive. Despite gaining this permission, however, Bouvia never took advantage of her legal right to let herself die (http://www.finalexit.org/chronframe.html).

Soon after Bouvia's legal victory, in 1988 the *Journal of the American Medical Association* published an anonymous letter sent to its editor entitled "It's over, Debbie." The letter spelled out in full detail the manner in which its author, a gynecological medical resident, assisted in the suicide of a suffering patient. After the letter was published, local prosecutors served a grand jury subpoena to the journal, demanding all of its documents relating to the letter – a demand the journal refused to follow (Larson, 2000). The next year , a panel of medical ethicists agreed that it was acceptable to help terminal patients commit suicide, as long as these patients had less than six months to live (Wanzer et al., 1989). Although the panel determined that physician-assisted suicide is ethical, it had no authority to decide the issue's legality. In two controversial Supreme Court cases, *Washington v. Glucksberg* and *Vacco v. Quill*, the legality of the issue was discussed, however. In both, the Court ruled that physician-assisted suicide is not a right protected by the Constitution of the United States. These decisions did not make assisted suicide illegal, per se, but did keep the issue under the jurisdiction of each state rather than the federal government (Raymond, 1999; Hyde & Rufo, 2000).

Media interest in physician-assisted suicide was again stoked in early 2005 by the legal battle waged to determine the fate of Terri Schiavo, a woman who had been living in a persistent vegetative state until she died after her husband utilized his right under Florida law to remove the feeding tube keeping her alive (Halloran, 2005). Schiavo's parents appealed to many sources, including President Bush and Governor Bush of Florida, to block her husband's legal right to hasten her death. Media coverage of the Schiavo case intensified in March of 2005 when both houses of Congress approved a case-specific provision that made removal of Schiavo's feeding tube illegal. The provision was signed immediately into law by President Bush but was eventually deemed unconstitutional by the United States Supreme Court, as it made illegal an act considered legal by the state of Florida. Less than two weeks after her law was passed and repealed, Terri Schiavo died (http://www.dwd.org/resources/schiavo.html).

Throughout this same time, a legal battle of wills waged between the federal government and the state of Oregon. In 2001, former Attorney General Ashcroft authorized federal drug enforcement agents to prosecute doctors accused of assisting in patient suicides. Had these doctors been found guilty, they were not to be charged with

crimes; instead, their licenses to prescribe federally controlled medications were to be revoked (http://www.dwd.org/news/news/aptimeline.08.29.05.asp). The state of Oregon sued the federal government and the Drug Enforcement Agency in an attempt to curb the former Attorney General. A hold was placed on Ashcroft's directive until a decision over its legality could be reached. Despite its refusal to allow Congress to supercede Florida's legal authority, the Supreme Court did agree near the end of 2005 to deliberate over the legality of Oregon's controversial Death with Dignity Act (Halloran, 2005).

The Oregon law allows an adult of sound mind suffering from a terminal illness with less than six months to live to request from his or her doctor a prescription for a lethal dose of medication. The law requires that a second oral request be given at least fifteen days after the initial one, in addition to a written request prepared and signed by the patient in the presence of two witnesses. Doctors may then prescribe the lethal doses but are not allowed to administer the medication to the patient; only the patient has the legal right to administer the prescription (Halloran, 2005). The law itself does not contain any mention of the words euthanasia, killing, or suicide, demonstrating "the power of framing the legislation in a benign fashion" (McInerney, 2000). The original authors of the law were careful not to encourage suicide, only to make it a legal choice available to terminally ill patients.

The distinction between the case in Florida and the Oregon law is that Schiavo died from complications stemming from her persistent vegetative state and the starvation brought about by the removal of her feeding tube. This is legally a passive act, because the feeding tube was the only means through which Schiavo was being kept alive. In Oregon, doctors are allowed to prescribe lethal doses of medications to consenting terminal patients. Technically, the medication kills such patients, not the terminal nature of their disease or disability. The debate regarding the Oregon law is not over the constitutional right its citizens have to die, but rather the legality of a doctor prescribing lethal doses of medications. After several appeals, the case – eventually named *Oregon v. Gonzalez* after Alberto Gonzalez, Ashcroft's successor as Attorney General – reached the Supreme Court in late 2005. The Supreme Court ruled six to three that the federal government could not punish doctors under the Controlled Substances Act (http://abcnews.go.com/Health/SupremeCourt/story?id=1514248). This act was created

to combat the use of illegal drugs, but Attorney General Ashcroft had, as ruled by the Supreme Court, illegally wielded its power to punish doctors for legally prescribing drugs in the state of Oregon. The Court did not argue, however, that physician-assisted suicide is constitutionally protected; instead, it again left the decision to individual state governments (Colburn, 2006).

FRAMING THEORY

Entman (1993) characterizes framing as a fractured paradigm, in that it lacks clear conceptual definitions though which to guide research. This is because the concept of framing has been used for understanding and investigating human interaction across a wide range of disciplines (Rendahl, 1995), with little interdisciplinary work having occurred between these schools of though. In his systematic overview of framing theory within communication, Scheufele (1999) notes that because little discussion has taken place between the different fields of research, "the term framing has been used repeatedly to label similar but distinctly different approaches." Because of this repeated use, exactly what makes up "framing" has yet to be properly operationalized (Scheufele, 1999; Coleman & Dysart, 2005). The result of this is that there is no clear agreement about what a frame is, how a frame is identified, or how a frame is used (Fisher, 1997).

Despite this lack of concordance, basic threads are agreed upon throughout most social scientific research. Frames are established and familiar patterns that can be applied to new ideas. Rather than considering every micro- and macroscopic aspect of a new or complex idea, people use frames to simplify it in to an easily understood context. Frames provide clues that humans use in understanding information and do so by limiting or defining a message's meaning in ways that shape the inferences one may make about the message. Because frames facilitate understanding, "framing's ostensible weakness is [actually] one of the concept's inherent strengths. Framing's emphasis on *providing context*… allows framing to be applied across a broad spectrum of communication situations" (Hallahan, 1999). Frames are used to understand new or complex ideas by placing these ideas within an understood context. Framing works through selection and salience, by selecting some aspects of a perceived reality and making them more salient in a communications text. Doing this promotes particular problem definitions, causal

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interpretations, moral evaluations, or treatment recommendations for what is being described (Entman, 1993). In other words, to frame is to convey to an audience what the most important aspects of an issue are. The inherent nature of framing means that some information about an issue is made salient, while other information is brushed aside, in order to provide contextual cues. To better operationalize framing, the following historical description of the communication theory is offered.

To Goffman (1974), frames are definitions of a situation that include organization and subjective elements. They package associated ideas to help guide attention, comprehension, storage, and retrieval of information. Frames evolve out of collective efforts to make sense of problems and to help people "locate, perceive, identify, and label" their experiences (Goffman, 1974; Price, Nir, & Capella, 2005). Frames are cognitive structures that are used to guide both the representations and perceptions of reality. Context informs action, behavior, and understanding, and frames provide that context. Kahneman and Tversky (1979) agree, suggesting that framing operates by providing contextual cues that guide the decision making of and inferences made by message audiences. The cues guide how audiences understand and even react to new information.

While framing has been explored at many levels, from intrapersonal to mass communication, much research has focused on frames used by mass media, particularly the news media. The reason for this is that, as Tuchman (1978) argues, mass media actively set the frames of reference that readers or viewers use to interpret and discuss public events. The news media, through their use of frames, provide the contexts through which audiences may see the world. In other words, the news is often the only way people gain knowledge of new issues, causing the frames used by news media to be the only ways through which people understand those issues. As such, Gitlin (1980) defines frames as "principles of selection, emphasis and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters." Audiences know the world in part because of how it is shown to them.

Gitlin (1980) further defines *media* frames as "persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis, and exclusion, by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse." Media frames are largely considered unspoken

and unacknowledged by both producers and users of the news media (Gitlin, 1980), but serve to organize the world for each. News stories are written in such a way as to guide how readers should interpret events, as well as how they should incorporate this interpretation into their general understanding of the social word (Fishman, 1980; Valkenburg, Semetko, & de Vreese, 1999). For example, media frames are made up of the visual images, metaphors, caricatures, and catchphrases that journalists use when presenting a story (Gamson & Lasch, 1983). These frame attributes act as shortcuts that journalists and audience members alike use to convey and understand new information. These shortcuts allow an audience to quickly comprehend and store new information and are based on the unique experiences of both their producers and users. The ways in which the new information is understood guide how this understanding can be used. For Gamson & Modigliani (1989), the frame of an issue has four major attributes: the description of a problem, the identification of causal agent(s) of the problem, the recommendation of solutions or treatments, and the moral evaluation of the causal agent(s) and its relation to the problem. Frames are used, in part, to identify problems and those who caused them, to offer solutions to these problems, or to judge those who were determined to have caused the problems. This fill-in-the-blank aspect of frames ensures that new information is easily catalogued and later accessed by audience members.

All types of frames highlight through selection and salience particular bits of information about whatever item is the subject of communication, while at the same time disregarding or concealing other information. The acts, agents, or purposes of an issue are either emphasized or hidden when presented through a frame. Entman (1991) differentiates individual frames as the "information-processing schemata" of individuals, from media frames, which are "attributes of the news itself." When used in a mass mediated story, a frame serves to make a particular piece of information more noticeable, meaningful, or memorable to audiences (Entman, 1993). Individual frames are what people use to understand new things. Media frames reside in the specific properties of a news narrative that encourage those perceiving and thinking about events to develop a particular understanding of them (Entman, 1991). For example, rather than publishing a story about affirmative action by using a civil rights framework, a newspaper could

instead emphasize the financial costs involved with the issue. The audience of such a story is encouraged to view affirmative action fiscally, rather than morally.

The media frame is a necessary part of journalism used to efficiently convey to the audience what the journalist feels is most important about the topic of affirmative action. In time, audience members may even adopt this media frame for their individual comprehension of new ideas about affirmative action. Like Gamson and Lasch (1983), Entman (1993) states that frames in the media emerge as the presence or absence of certain key words, sources of information, concepts, metaphors, symbols, visual images, and sentences that form thematic clusters in a news narrative, all of which are used to convey particular ways of understanding information. Frames are literally *how* media present a story. The news media use frames in "news texts as a system of organized signifying elements that both indicate the advocacy of certain ideas and provide devices to encourage certain kinds of audience processing of the texts" (Pan & Kosicki, 1993). Frames tell the audience what is most important or interesting about a new idea and suggest how it should be evaluated.

A more specific interpretation submits that framing is the process by which a communication source, such as a news organization, defines and constructs a political issue or public controversy (Nelson, Clawson, & Oxley, 1997). In this sense, frames work by "activating some ideas, feelings, and values rather than others…" (Price, Tewksbury, & Powers, 1997), meaning that frames allow straightforward understanding of complex ideas by emphasizing what information about them should be considered most important. The controversy of an issue is emphasized by how it is defined and constructed, and through the ways in which it is presented. Frames serve as plot-points or storylines that give coherence to otherwise discrete pieces of information (Nelson, Clawson, & Oxley, 1997), thereby presenting controversial ideas in manageable ways. Presenting a dichotomous issue in one way while avoiding other points of view frames that issue how a message sender wishes it to be known. By providing the context through which an issue should be seen, frames "allow journalists and audiences alike to organize and make sense out of an almost infinite universe of potentially available information" (Karlber, 1997).

Recent framing research has provided further operationalizations from which to draw. Frame valence distinguishes frames as having positive, negative, or even neutral tones (de Vreese & Boomgaarden, 2003). Williams and Kaid (2006) argue that frames can also vary in levels of substance, from ambiguous to substantive. An ambiguous frame is vague and indistinct, providing little to no context and lacking in clear information. This type of frame serves strictly as a map for its audience to follow. A substantive news frame, by contrast, is detailed and informative, offering detailed information and context. Level of substance differs from Iynegar's (1991) classification of frames as being episodic or thematic, however. Episodic and thematic frames deal with *how* the coverage is framed. This line of thinking distinguishes frames as being either generalizable or context-specific in nature. In contrast, ambiguous and substantive frames consider *what* is being framed; frames are distinguished as being either empty or full in nature. Including these new frame definitions, the overall history of framing theory suggests that frames have the very powerful effect of influencing how people view the world, by influencing how it comes to be understood.

FRAMING, INFLUENCE, AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

It seems obvious that when reporting on an issue, journalists would emphasize what they consider its most important features. To make the best use of the time available for gathering data and then presenting that information to the public, journalists inevitably have to resort to existing narrative conventions and news frames when writing news stories (Bird & Dardenne, 1988; Coleman & Dysart, 2005). Despite their common use in journalistic writing, these existing frames do not stem solely from objective journalism. Gamson and Modigliani (1987) argue that the formation of frames can be explained by an interaction between the influence of interest groups and journalists' norms and practices. Players in all realms of public policy utilize frames in order to exert influence; "specifically, pressure groups use these boiled-down packages in an attempt to define the gist of the controversy for the public, the media, and other key political agents" (Terkildsen, Schnell, & Ling, 1998). Outside sources attempt to influence what frames the news media and, eventually, the public use.

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Because journalists are under considerable time constraints, public relations officers intentionally send out press releases that make use of common journalistic practices. Public relations work fundamentally involves the construction of social reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Tuchman, 1978), so it logically follows that different organizations or interest groups would attempt to influence the very powerful mass media to control how issues are discussed in public debate. Press releases that use the triangle method of organization common to journalism, which places what is considered the most important information at the beginning of an article and any auxiliary information near the end, are easily adapted into legitimate news stories. In 1973, Sigal found that press releases, press conferences, and other information subsidies were the primary source for nearly half of all front page news stories in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* from 1949 to 1969. In all likelihood, these releases and conferences were intentionally created to influence media coverage. Disturbingly, Sigal also found that few of these stories at all were gathered through reporter enterprise and initiative. These stories were heavily influenced by people or organizations that had strong interest in controlling how the public comes to know particular issues.

Gamson and Modigliani (1987) define a media frame as "a central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events… The frame suggests what the controversy is about, the essence of the issue." As stated above, news media and journalists are often the only means through which members of the public have access to certain issues and events; thus, media frames strongly impact public understanding of those issues and events (Gans, 1979, 1983; Hallahan, 1999; Pan & Kosicki, 1993; Tuchman, 1978). Although "people actively construct their pictures of reality… they are constrained by the information available to them from mass media and other sources" (McCombs, Einsiedel, & Weaver, 1991). If, for example, the public is only presented with negative coverage of an issue, and if this coverage is the only access the public has to the issue, then the public only knows that issue negatively. This influence over not only what the public thinks about, but also *how* the public thinks gives the media a considerable amount of power (Entman, 1993; Gitlin, 1980; Rosen, 1994). Because the choice of frames is more or less a deliberate process (Bryant & Miron, 2004), it is important to understand who is making that choice. If the media form the

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primary window through which the public may view the world, it is perhaps problematic that how and what information is presented by the media can be influenced.

Through the frames found in news stories, journalists suggest attitudes and opinions for the public to adopt (Andsager, 2000). By influencing media, outside sources are able to control how and what citizens know about particular issues. After similar news stories are repeatedly given the same frames, these news frames eventually become "common-sense" ways of imposing meaning on events (Bird & Dardenne, 1988) for both journalistic practices and for cognitive understanding in audiences. This is perhaps problematic because, as Entman (1993) argues, frames used by the news media are merely imprints of power, indicating the identity of actors or interest groups that were able to successfully topple other competing forces. If an outside organization is able to influence media into adopting a particular frame and if that frame is eventually considered merely common-sense, then a view of the world is adopted by audience members that is entirely built around the needs or wants of a specific organization.

This is exemplified in Entman's (1993) study of the media coverage of two commercial airplanes that were accidentally shot down by the militaries of foreign nations who had mistaken these planes for attacking military jets. In one case, American news media adopted frames that emphasized the moral bankruptcy and guilt of the attacking nation, because it was a political enemy of the United States. For the second downed plane, the media adopted a frame that focused on how complex operating military technology can be. Confusion rather than guilt was emphasized because the perpetrating nation in this case was the United States itself. Two competing news frames were chosen, even though both events could easily have been reported in similar ways (Entman, 1993). It may be disconcerting that two stories that were essentially the same were presented in two very different ways, but it is even more notable that "several political outcomes document the impact of the dominant frames for both stories" (Entman, 1991). In other words, these news frames were able to influence both public policy and opinion. This finding confirms several other studies that have suggested that media framing has substantial impact on public opinion, behavior, or voting (Iyengar, 1991; Sabato, 1991; Jamieson & Waldman, 2002). In fact, there is significant evidence showing that newspapers in particular regularly serve to shape popular attitudes and

beliefs, act as agents of public education, and can even play an important role in determining policy (Baillie, 1996). How the media framed the cases of these two planes was influenced by the needs of a nation and in turn influenced how politicians and voters acted as a result.

It should be of great concern to communication scholars that "news producers do not have complete control over the issues and events that form the raw materials for their product and depend on powerful, self-interested external sources for that material" (Reese, 1991). How journalists and producers package these events and issues can fundamentally affect how audience members understand them (Gamson, 1992a). Mass media display the considerable power they wield when they construct social reality "by framing images of reality… in a predictable and patterned way" (McQuail, 1994). These images of reality *become* reality for audiences, and once a frame for presenting a topic has been adopted, it can be very difficult to view that topic in any other way (Linsky, 1986; Schön and Rein, 1994). How issues are packaged and presented by journalists can in this way fundamentally affect how readers and viewers understand those issues (Price, Tewksbury, & Powers, 1997) because no other points of view are available for consumption.

Through a constructionist lens, media audiences are viewed as active when interpreting and discussing public events. These audiences, however, oftentimes must rely upon mass media to provide common frames of reference that guide their interpretations and discussions (Price, Nir, & Capella, 2005). While the news media do not entirely dictate public opinion, they have been credited with triggering and widening political discussion among citizens (Kim, Wyatt, & Katz, 1999). The idea that media can influence or even control debate on an issue is important because in debate over a social issue, interest groups often play a major role in making the issue salient to both policymakers and the media (Andsager, 2000). Interest groups intentionally make the media aware of issues, and do so using their own preferred frames. If an interest group is able to influence media discussion by presenting the only frames through which to view an issue, then that group is likely able to influence public discussion.

As discussed above, frames may originate within or outside news organizations. Journalists' common reliance on elite sources for quotes, insight analysis, and

information means that the media often serve as conduits for individuals eager to promote a certain perspective to a broad public audience (Nelson, Clawson, & Oxley, 1997). Journalists rely on invested parties when presenting stories about specific issues. For example, a story about tobacco companies would likely feature a representative from one of these companies as a source. Obviously, that representative would want to frame his or her company positively. Because the way a news story is presented suggests to audience members the attitudes and opinions they should adopt, Andsager and Smiley (1998) argue that all forms of media agents, including that tobacco company representative, are capable of impacting the general public's frames of reference.

Framing helps shape the perspectives through which people see the world, leading potential sources to vie for their preferred framing to be featured (Hallahan, 1999). Journalists are able to choose from a variety of "competing frames, some of which are adopted by the media and some of which are overlooked or ignored" (Knight, 1999). Whoever "wins" this battle sponsors their preferred framing of an issue (Ryan, Carragee, & Meinhofer, 2001). Whether a source's preferred frame is adopted or not, journalists rely heavily on these sources for information. Winners or losers, these sources are able to influence how an issue is presented to the public. News stories, then, become a forum for framing contests in which political actors compete by sponsoring their preferred definitions of issues (Carragee & Roefs, 2004). This means that actors with vested interest in influencing how and what the media presents to the public are entirely successful at exercising that influence.

When policy concerning controversial social issues is being developed, groups with vital interests in those issues use the news media in an attempt to sway public opinion to support their particular points of view (Andsager, 2000). Therefore, the news is a vital political resource for interest groups associated with social movements. News media provide the groups' audience members with information, which may then play a fundamental structural role in their decision-making (Gandy, 1982). For example, Gamson (1992b) found that when media portrayed affirmative action under the umbrella term "special interest," as opposed to "an institutional effort for social justice," audiences tended to consider the controversial issue an individualistic moral problem rather than a societal one. Based on this finding, opponents of affirmative action would likely seek to

influence media coverage towards a "special interest" frame. If these groups or individuals are able to successfully manipulate media coverage, then their goals may become more acceptable to the overall public. Similar uses of frames have been used in the debate over abortion (Railsback, 1984): over time, interest groups fighting for or against legalized abortion adapted the frames they were using, and even the frames of their opponents, in an attempt to manipulate media and public discussion of abortion. For example, the concept "pro-life" was adopted and adapted by pro-choice groups to emphasize the importance of a life other than that of a fetus – the life of the mother getting an abortion (Railsback, 1984).

Acceptance of frames is a necessary goal for any group associated with a social movement. According to Blumer (1994), social movements arise from "a condition of unrest and derive their motive power… from dissatisfaction with the current form of life, and … from wishes and hopes for a new scheme or system of living." These movements are built upon identifying and solving problems, goals for which frames are suited. In order to achieve this change, a movement must gain substantial popular acceptance within the society of which it is part. To do this, a social movement must aim "to mobilize popular support for insurgent action" (Klandermans, 1998). This means that interest groups must convince outsiders that the goals of the movement are congruent with their own interests, values, and beliefs (Hunt et al., 1994) and have relevance to them (McInerney, 2000). For Gusfield (1994), the success of a social movement is determined "not only by victory or defeat in legislative, bargaining or legal arenas but also in how the movement has changed the rules that are admissible to public arenas."

Legitimation is another step through which a social movement accomplishes its goals and is gained through how successful awareness of and the content in the movement are. Awareness, according to Blumer (1971) and Hilgartner and Bosk (1988), involves gaining access to public arenas. Defining an issue over time and adapting those definitions to fit changing political and social climates determines an interest group's ability to inspire and mobilize support. To successfully provide these definitions on a mass level, interest groups must rely on the media to have their interpretations of reality inserted into the public debate (Terkildsen, Schnell, & Ling, 1998). In other words, interest groups hoping to carry out a particular social movement must rely on mass media

to raise awareness of their cause and to legitimate their arguments. By utilizing mass media, these groups can potentially influence public debate. At the same time, however, these groups are not guaranteed the coverage they desire. "Therefore, social movements find themselves in a perplexing position. On one hand, they desperately need the media to disseminate their meanings to a larger audience, but on the other hand, they have minimal control [over] the quality or quantity of reported information" (Kensicki, 2001). Interest groups must influence not only the presence of frames, but also the frames' valence and levels of substance.

Over time, interest groups can create terminology that not only clearly conveys their stance on an issue, but also serves to define and categorize the issue at a broader level (Andsager, 2000). For example, a pro-choice group might emphasize a "right to choose" frame. Done effectively, the use of this frame may influence media coverage of abortion in the direction of civil rights rather than towards religious morality. Interest groups cannot be certain, however, that mass media will adopt their particular definitions or frames for discussing an issue. Not only can the media choose to not adopt such frames, they can also choose to present the overall social movement negatively or even completely disregard it (Terkildsen, Schnell, & Ling, 1998). Any chance of an interest group creating a legitimate social movement is removed if media refuse to acknowledge the group, or even choose to take away its credibility (Kensicki, 2001). In an attempt to counteract or avoid this prospect, interest groups use frames to attempt to influence the perceptions, beliefs, and actions of various target groups, including the media, potential allies, constituents, and the general public (McCarthy & Zald, 1994). The media image of a social movement "tends to become 'the movement' for wider publics and institutions who have few alternative sources of information, or not at all, about it" (Gitlin, 1980). Without media coverage, then, many members of the public would not even be aware of a movement's existence (Kensicki, 2001).

MacDonald (1998) identifies proponents of physician-assisted suicide in Oregon as "leaders of social movement organizations," an idea that is reaffirmed by McInerney's (2000) argument that physician-assisted suicide is a legitimate social movement. McInerney's (2000) argument is that, "like other contemporary social movements, [physician-assisted suicide is] concerned with the redefining both the individual's identity

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and [his or her] relationship and control of [his or her] body (Johnston, Laraña, & Gustfield, 1994; Klandermans & Tarrow, 1988) as it approaches death." Advocates of physician-assisted suicide, which include the DDNC, have created a social movement in that their cause has identified a social injustice and has offered solutions to that problem. Physician-assisted suicide is seen as a legitimate end of life choice that must also be a legal one. To gain and maintain legitimacy, this emerging social movement must develop and disseminate the notion that the scope of end of life choices right now is unfit, and both can and should be remedied (Lofland, 1996). Organizations such as the DDNC use framing to create identification with this seemingly unjust situation to secure the legitimacy of the overall physician-assisted suicide social movement.

Hallahan (1999) argues that the theory of framing provides a rich approach through which scholars may analyze what happens in public relations practice. Public relations professionals play central roles in constructing and using frames in the service of groups and organizations. Frames are intentionally created, maintained, and adapted in order to influence media and public debate of an issue. Organizations must develop their own frames of reference about issues in order to establish effective relationships with the public. Frames play strategic roles for social movement organizations, because those frames are how the organizations define and identify with their issue of choice. These frames are used to "inspire action, attract members and resources, and legitimate the group's claims and work" (Snow & Benford, 1992). By acting as common reference points, frames can help link individual and group interpretations, values, and ideologies (Snow, Rochford, Worden, & Benford, 1986) of a controversial issue. In other words, interest groups use framing not only to influence media coverage, but to influence the overall debate over social movements.

This study does not argue that the DDNC or like organizations is representative of an entire social movement. Instead, the organizations is merely one aspect of a wide web of interest groups and policy actors, forming a broad social movement whose existence is based on the goal of making and maintaining physician-assisted suicide a viable end of life choice. Interest groups work together or independently from one another to overcome a situation that is collectively regarded as insufficient or wrong. In this case, the DDNC is merely one aspect of a broader social movement fighting for "death with

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dignity," but is one of more salient and active interest groups tied to the movement. To this idea, Kensicki (2001) argues that discovering how one movement – or in this case, a single interest group – uses framing in an effort to influence media coverage can illuminate ways in which other movements and the organizations with which they are associated may do the same.

CALL FOR FRAME BUILDING RESEARCH

Ideally, framing research examines how frames are sponsored by political actors, how journalists employ frames in the construction of news stories, how these stories articulate frames, and how audience members interpret these frames (Entman, 1991, 1993; Gamson, 1992a; Reese, 2001). Because frames are how individuals include, exclude, and organize information (Bateson, 1972; Goffman, 1974), it is important for researchers to understand how frames are created.

Tankard (2001) argues that framing always implies an active process, and he recommends that analysis "should ask how much 'framing' is going on," because research suggests that the media go beyond telling the public what is important and newsworthy through frames. Rather, they further tell the public what opinions, interpretations, and definitions of controversial issues are most valid (Pan & Kosicki, 1993). Because competing interests operate as news sources, supplying strategically packaged news items and story information to journalists (Scheufele, 1999; Nisbet, Brossard, & Kroepsch, 2003), it is necessary for researchers to understand if organizations are able to manipulate media coverage of an issue. "A comprehensive approach to frame sponsorship needs to examine an issue culture in terms of frames that influence or fail to influence reportage" (Carragee & Roefs, 2004); Sheufele (1999) therefore calls for scholars to address the processes that influence the creation or changing of frames applied by journalists.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In response to this call for research and based upon the above review of scholarship, the following research questions are offered:

RQ1: *What frames are present in Death with Dignity National Center press releases?*

RQ2: *What is the level of substance of frames in Death with Dignity National Center press releases?*

RQ3: *What is the valence of frames in Death with Dignity National Center press releases?*

These first three research questions establish the information needed to find correlations between frames found in an interest group's press releases about a social movement and newspaper coverage of that same movement. Not only does this data provide the information needed to make this comparison, it also demonstrates the ways in which the DDNC frames its arguments about physician-assisted suicide. Operationalizations of the frames and frame attributes being coded for are discussed below.

RQ4: *What frames are present in newspaper coverage of the death with dignity movement, and are there statistically significant correlations between individual newspapers?*

RQ5: *What is the level of substance of frames in newspaper coverage of the death with dignity movement, and are there statistically significant differences between individual newspapers?*

RQ6: *What is the valence of frames in newspaper coverage of the death with dignity movement, and are there statistically significant differences between individual newspapers?*

The second three research questions also establish data necessary to explore the correlations found between press releases and newspaper coverage. These questions will also show whether individual newspapers use distinct frames when discussing the same issue and what frames were used in newspaper coverage in general. The answers to these questions demonstrates not only whether or not individual newspapers use distinct frames, but also if there are any significant frame correlations found between each newspaper. Similarities or differences between the newspapers would demonstrate if individual news media cover the same issue in significantly different ways.

RQ7: *Is there a statistically significant frame correlation between Death with Dignity National Center press releases and newspaper coverage of the death with dignity movement, and are there statistically significant differences between press releases and individual newspaper coverage?*

This question explores whether or not frames used by the DDNC correlate with frames used in newspaper coverage in general, and then if there is any correlation found between the DDNC press releases and individual newspapers. Although demonstrating correlations between press releases and general newspaper coverage is significant, it is also enlightening to know whether the DDNC shares frames with individual media outlets.

RQ8: *Is there a statistically significant frame correlation in newspaper coverage of the death with dignity movement between the national newspapers and the state newspaper?*

Finally, this question addresses the possibility that a local newspaper based in the heart of a social movement might cover that movement differently than more physically removed national newspapers. It is enlightening to find whether coverage of a particular issue changes based upon proximity.

METHODOLOGY

This study used content analysis to explore the frames that a particular interest group, the Death with Dignity National Center, used in its press releases discussing physician-assisted suicide and the frames used in newspaper coverage of the same issue. McMillan (2000) established five primary steps taken to conduct proper content analysis. The first step in this process is for researchers to develop their research questions, which have been provided above. The second step is to select a sample from which to draw data. The third step is to operationalize the coding units to be used to answer the research questions. The fourth step is to code the data, after training has been provided to all coders to establish sufficient reliability. The fifth and final step of content analysis is to analyze and interpret the data gathered. Each of these steps is presented below.

Hallahan (1999) argues that "the establishment of common frames of reference about topics or issues of mutual concern is a necessary condition for effective relations to be established." Public relations resources, such as press releases, are utilized specifically to influence how a particular issue, event, or group is framed in the media. Public relations officers create these releases because frames organize the presentation of facts and opinions within a newspaper article (Nelson, Clawson, & Oxley, 1997). Because of the idea that press releases are created by organizations to in order specifically to influence media coverage, the entire universe of fifty press releases created by the DDNC from November 6, 2001 to January 17, 2006 was coded and analyzed. Each of these releases was available on the DDNC's website.

Recent research suggests that modern communication trends in small and medium-sized cities increasingly resemble those found in large cities (Harry, 2001). For this reason, an analysis of the texts found in major newspapers is indicative of trends found in media of lesser stature or audience size. Analyzing newspaper text also maximizes the correspondence between what coders analyze and what readers actually encounter, thereby increasing the external validity of the current study (Pollock & Yulis, 2004). The newspapers to be analyzed are *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *USA Today*, and *The Oregonian*. The former three were chosen because of their respective statures of respectability and substantial audience sizes. The scope of these three media outlets should indicate how newspapers across the United States cover the topic of physician-assisted suicide. While it is obvious that these newspapers, like any newspaper, are read by only a small fraction of the American population, Gans (1979) has argued that for editors to "prepare themselves… before story selection begins, they will have ready *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*." In other words, although not every person who reads a newspaper reads these three, they are highly influential in the world of journalism. The latter paper, *The Oregonian*, was chosen because of its stature and audience size within the state of Oregon. By analyzing this newspaper, an overall sense of local coverage can be found and compared to national coverage.

Newspaper articles were gathered using the Lexis-Nexis online database. To narrow the scope of the study, only articles containing the exact phrase "death with dignity" were gathered. This exact phrase increased the chance of collecting newspaper stories relating to either the Oregon Death with Dignity Act or the Death with Dignity National Center itself. A time frame of October 6, 2001 – one month before the DDNC's first press release – to February 17, 2006 – one month after the last press release – was placed on this search to establish a single period to study. In addition to hard and soft news stories, letters to the editor and opinions pieces were included in the data set. Although these articles might not always stem from the minds of the newspaper staffs, the articles were still chosen and published by the newspaper, giving them equal credence to traditional news stories within this data set. Through their use of frames, these articles also suggest to an audience ways in which to view physician-assisted suicide. After gathering all articles, careful consideration of the content and substance of each story was done to remove unnecessary or unrelated data. For example, repeated stories, which were identical in every way but printed in more than one edition of the same newspaper, were removed. As Lexis-Nexis caches an overwhelming amount of information, insubstantial articles also had to be removed. Examples of this type of article include previews of what can be found in other sections of a newspaper or captions of stand-alone photographs, untied to any particular story. A final consideration was made to remove any story that mentioned "death with dignity" outside the context of suicide. This type of story would include profiles of recently deceased celebrities who had "died with dignity" of natural causes.

After careful consideration of all stories, the entire universe of stories published in the national newspapers was coded and analyzed. In order to compare like-sized article amounts, a sample of one third of *The Oregonian* stories was coded and analyzed. This sample was taken by coding, by date, every third article. Forty-two articles from *The New York Times*, eighteen articles from *The Washington Post*, twenty-two articles from *USA Today*, and forty-five articles from *The Oregonian* (out of a total of 150) made up the entire newspaper sample.

For the purposes of this study, a frame is operationalized as representing "underlying assumptions, beliefs and ideologies that serve as heuristics for how a particular story should be understood" (Clegg Smith et al., 2002). This means that frames are central organizing ideas that reflect, through their presence, valence, and level of substance, how a journalist intends an issue to be understood. As Gamson and Modigliani (1989) point out, frames can encompass "a range of positions, rather than any single one, allowing for a degree of controversy among those who share a common frame." At the same time, multiple frames can easily fall within a single text. While conflict may be mentioned in an off-handed, rather insubstantial manner in a newspaper story, the very fact that the journalist chose to mention it is indicative of a frame and was coded for. Although a "human interest" frame might dominate the article, the ambiguous "conflict" frame is still considered present. Whether intentionally used or not, the presence of such a frame indicates in part how readers are meant to understand the issue being discussed.

Coding for the following frames was based upon the above review of literature, as well as Hyde's (1993) rhetorical analysis of the physician-assisted suicide debate. Hyde's findings indicated that the primary rhetorical frames used in this debate are: the meaning of life and death, the truth of God's Word, the future of American medicine, the individual's right of choice, and the communal and moral welfare of society. For the purposes of this study, these frames have been adapted to the following: economic consequences, political consequences, conflict, societal impact/national identity, responsibility, human interest, apathy/disinterest, morality/values, patient rights/choice/dignity, state rights/big government, empathy/sympathy, and legality.

Coders were asked not only to state the frames' presence or absence, but also the level of substance (substantive, ambiguous) and the valence (positive, neutral, negative) given to each. Valence does not describe the nature of the information provided, but instead the tone used to describe that information. For example, a political consequence might be negative in nature, but its frame is coded as positive if the article is in favor of the consequence (e.g., support for arresting doctors accused of illegally aiding in suicides).

The *Economic Consequences* frame was operationalized as a focus on any short or long-term economic consequences that would come from, in this case, legalized physician-assisted suicide (Valkenburg, Semetko, & de Vreese, 1999). Such consequences may be either positive or negative, and may be for an individual or a group.

The *Political Consequences* frame was similarly defined as a focus on any short or long-term political consequences that would come from, in this case, legal physician-assisted suicide. These consequences may involve current or potential incarceration, in addition to the results of normal political events such as elections. The consequences also may be either positive or negative, and may be for an individual or a group.

A *Conflict* frame is a focus on any conflict dealing with, in this case, physician-assisted suicide between groups or individuals (Neuman, Just, & Criggler, 1992). This kind of coverage makes winning and losing the central concern. This frame may be diagnostic in nature, or may focus on who is seemingly triumphant in the conflict.

Societal Impact/National Identity concentrates on any impacts made on American society resulting from physician-assisted suicide (e.g., America being seen as a "suicide nation" around the world or Oregon being seen as a "suicide state" across the nation).

Stories and releases containing the *Responsibility* frame focused on the responsibilities held by any party associated with physician-assisted suicide. For example, a story might focus on how the DDNC was responsible for successful passage of the Death with Dignity Act, or, on what responsibilities a patient must carry out to legally commit medical suicide. This frame "presents an issue or problem in such a way as to attribute responsibility for causing or solving a problem to the government or to an individual or to a group" (Valkenburg, Semetko, & de Vreese, 1999).

The *Human Interest* frame focuses on a specific person or group, such as in a biographical piece. Multiple people may be discussed within a single human interest frame. For instance, a human interest frame could emphasize several terminally ill patients or multiple representatives of a single organization. This frame is usually exemplified when an individual's story or an emotional angle is added to the presentation of an event, issue, or problem (Valkenburg, Semetko, & de Vreese, 1999).

Apathy/Disinterest was defined as a focus on a lack of interest in the subject of physician-assisted suicide, held by any group (e.g., disinterest on the part of legislators, the public at large).

The *Morality/Values* frame would include any discussion of morale or religious beliefs either for or against physician-assisted suicide.

Patient Rights/Choice/Dignity was defined as a focus on the rights and choices available to patients in end of life care. Such a focus might, for example, be on a terminal patient who chooses to die quickly rather then to continue suffering. Conversely, the frame may emphasize a disabled person who chooses to live through any setbacks presented by his or her disability. The focus may also be on other options not associated with physician-assisted suicide, such as hospice care or increased pain medication. This frame includes discussion of the choices available to patients, but also of the legal rights patients have to make these choices.

The *State Rights/Big Government* frame was defined as a focus on keeping federal and state jurisdictions separate from one another. For example, federal law could make physician-assisted suicide illegal, even though the state of Oregon has already made it legal. Any discussion of separating or uniting state and federal governmental policies fits into this frame.

Stories featuring a *Sympathy/Empathy* frame contained sympathetic feelings towards any individual or group involved with physician-assisted suicide. Such a focus might coexist with a human interest frame, but may not always do so. For example, this frame may focus on disabled Americans in general, whereas the human interest frame would focus on specific examples. Any negative or positive discussions of pity fit within this frame (e.g., pity for patients; doctors; families; politicians; etc.).

Finally, *Legality* was characterized as a focus on the legality of any steps intended to legalize or criminalize physician-assisted suicide. For example, former Attorney General Ashcroft charged Oregon doctors with misuse of federally-controlled medications when the doctors prescribed lethal doses. Subsequently, Ashcroft was found to have overstepped his legal responsibilities in doing so. Discussions of either side of this issue, or like issues, would fit into the legality frame. This frame may also coexist with patient rights/choice/dignity, but the two are not necessarily tied to one another. The

legality frame may include the legal and illegal choices made by patients, but also includes discussions of legality beyond patient choices.

In addition to these frames, coders also searched for press releases and story attributes such as publication date, headline, word count, classification (hard news, soft news, or editorial/opinions piece), primary focus (the death with dignity issue or the DDNC organization), the level of coverage dedicated to the DDNC (prominent, moderate, or negligible), and if contact information for the DDNC was provided (yes or no). Coders were also asked to include any key words, phrases, quotes, or comments found in the data sample.

CODING PROCESS

Based on prior research addressed in the literature review, and upon the above research questions, codesheets and codebooks were developed. In order to make the coding process as clear as possible for coders who were assisting in the coding of the content for this study, two codesheets and codebooks were developed: one each for newspaper stories and one each for press releases. These coding instruments were identical in all ways, with the sole exception of asking for original publication in the newspaper instruments. The unit of analysis was either each press release or each newspaper story. The units of enumeration were each of the frame attribute listed above.

After two graduate students (one of whom was this researcher) were trained in a series of sessions for press release and newspaper coding, the coding process was implemented. Roughly ten percent of all stories and releases were coded to check intercoder reliability: four (of 42 total) articles from *The New York Times*, two (of 18) articles from *The Washington Post*, two (of 22) articles from *USA Today*, five (of 45) articles from *The Oregonian*, and five (of 50) press releases from the DDNC. Intercoder reliability across all categories for both codesheets ranged from .77 to 1.00 per item. Questions based on coder opinion, such as providing key quotes, were not tested for reliability. Reliability was established for the newspaper coverage at .92 and for the press releases at .94. Intercoder reliability was calculated based on Holsti's formula[i] (North, Holsti, Zaninovich, & Zinnes, 1963). After intercoder reliability was established, data were entered into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences and analyzed.

RESULTS

Press releases and news stories were analyzed over one time frame – roughly five and a half years – because of the small universe of overall texts from which to draw. The data was analyzed for the prevalence (present or absent), level of substance (substantive or ambiguous), and valence (positive, neutral, or negative) of frames, and then compared using tests for frequency, crosstabulations, chi-square significance, and Pearson's test for correlation.

Research question one asked, "*What frames are present in Death with Dignity National Center press releases?*" As seen in Table One, the 263 frames found across fifty press releases ranged in level of overall prevalence from zero (apathy/disinterest) to being present forty-two times (conflict, making up 16% of all frames found). Overall, the conflict and political consequence frames were most prevalent in the press releases. Out of all fifty releases, political consequences were framed thirty-nine times (15%). Economic consequences were found to be least prevalent, being featured in only two press releases (1%). Interestingly, frames discussing rights at both the state and individual (patient) levels were almost equally prevalent – thirty-eight (15%) and thirty-six (14%) times, respectively.

Table One: Prevalence of Frames in DDNC Press Releases

N = 263

Frame	Present
Conflict	42 (16%)
Political Consequences	39 (15%)
State Rights / Big Government	38 (15%)
Patient Rights / Choice / Dignity	36 (14%)
Legality	32 (12%)
Responsibility	31 (12%)
Societal Impact / National Identity	21 (7%)
Morality / Values	10 (4%)
Human Interest	6 (2%)
Sympathy / Empathy	6 (2%)
Economic Consequences	2 (1%)
Apathy / Disinterest	0 (0%)
Total	263 (100%)

Research question two asked, "*What is the level of substance of frames in Death with Dignity National Center press releases?*" Based on the Williams and Kaid's classification above, frames were tested by crosstabulation for chi-square significant differences in their levels of substance and then listed in rank order in Table Two.

Table Two: Level of Substance of Frames in DDNC Press Releases

N = 263

Frame	Substantive	Ambiguous	χ^2
Conflict	24 (57%)	18 (43%)	0.86
Political Consequences	27 (69%)	12 (31%)	5.77*
State Rights / Big Government	22 (58%)	16 (42%)	0.95
Patient Rights / Choice / Dignity	22 (61%)	14 (39%)	1.78
Legality	23 (72%)	9 (28%)	6.13*
Responsibility	23 (74%)	8 (26%)	7.26**
Societal Impact / National Identity	8 (38%)	13 (62%)	1.19
Morality / Values	3 (30%)	7 (70%)	1.60
Human Interest	4 (67%)	2 (33%)	0.67
Sympathy / Empathy	2 (33%)	4 (67%)	0.67
Economic Consequences	2 (100%)	0 (0%)	2.00
Apathy / Disinterest	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1.00
Total	160 (61%)	103 (39%)	12.35***

*** Chi square test indicates differences of frame level of substance at the $p \leq .001$
** Chi square test indicates differences of frame level of substance at the $p \leq .01$
* Chi square test indicates differences of frame level of substance at the $p \leq .05$
Note: These chi square calculations should be interpreted with caution because some cells have values of less than 5.

Despite being found the most prevalent frame, conflict was found to be substantive only fifty-seven percent of the time. Political consequences (substantive 69% of the time), legality (72%), and responsibility (74%), however, were significantly more likely to be substantive than ambiguous. Human interest (67%) and economic consequences (100%) frames were overwhelmingly substantive, but this is likely because they were not featured in many releases to begin with. Societal impact (62%), morality (70%), and sympathy (67%) were actually more often ambiguous in nature, but this finding was not at a statistically significant level. Overall, 160 (61%) frames were found to be substantive, significantly different from the 103 (39%) ambiguous frames found.

Research question three asked, "*What is the valence of frames in Death with Dignity National Center press releases?*" Based on the de Vreese and Boomgaarden (2003) definition above, frames were tested by crosstabulation for chi-square significant differences in their valence and then listed in rank order in Table Three.

Table Three: Valence of Frames in DDNC Press Releases

N = 263

Frame	Positive	Neutral	Negative	χ^2
Conflict	1 (2%)	2 (5%)	39 (93%)	67.00***
Political Consequences	6 (15%)	11 (29%)	22 (56%)	10.31**
State Rights / Big Government	5 (13%)	7 (19%)	26 (68%)	21.21***
Patient Rights / Choice / Dignity	28 (77%)	5 (15%)	3 (8%)	32.17***
Legality	10 (32%)	11 (34%)	11 (34%)	0.06
Responsibility	21 (68%)	5 (16%)	5 (16%)	16.52***
Societal Impact / National Identity	13 (62%)	2 (9%)	6 (29%)	8.86*
Morality / Values	2 (20%)	3 (30%)	5 (50%)	1.40
Human Interest	4 (67%)	0 (0%)	2 (33%)	4.00
Sympathy / Empathy	4 (67%)	2 (33%)	0 (0%)	4.43
Economic Consequences	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	4.00
Apathy / Disinterest	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1.00
Total	94 (36%)	48 (18%)	121 (46%)	31.08***

*** Chi square test indicates differences of frame valence at the $p \leq .001$
** Chi square test indicates differences of frame valence at the $p \leq .01$
* Chi square test indicates differences of frame valence at the $p \leq .05$
Note: These chi square calculations should be interpreted with caution because some cells have values of less than 5.

Of the 263 frames present in the DDNC press releases, ninety-four were found to be positive (36% of all frames found), forty-eight (18%) to be neutral, and 121 (46%) to be negative, a statistically significant difference. In other words, death with dignity was rarely discussed using frames without a negative or positive slant. As shown in Table Three, frames used in this discussion were negative a plurality of the time. A vast majority (thirty-nine times, or 93% overall) of conflict frames were considered negative; in contrast to twenty-eight (77%) patient rights frames being coded as positive. Interestingly, economic consequence frames were all found to be negative. Nearly all frames were predominantly positive or negative, with the exception of legality – which was surprisingly discussed in nearly equally positive (ten times), neutral (eleven), and negative (eleven) ways. The human interest (67%), and sympathy (67%) frames were all

found to be positive a majority of the time, but only the societal impact (62%), responsibility (68%), and patient rights (77%) frames were found to have significant differences. In contrast, morality (50%) and economic consequences (100%) were more often found to be negative. The conflict (93%), political consequences (68%), and state rights (68%) frames were all found to be negative a majority of the time, with statistically significant differences.

Research question four asked, "*What frames are present in newspaper coverage of the death with dignity movement, and are there statistically significant correlations between individual newspapers?*" Unlike in the DDNC press releases, all frames were present in the overall newspaper coverage. As shown in Table Four, these frames were prevalent in almost the same rank order as those found in the DDNC press releases. Conflict was again the most prevalent frame, having been found 103 times (14% of all frames in newspaper stories), but was followed by patient rights (13%), political consequences (12%), and states rights (12%) – ninety-six, ninety, and eighty-three times, respectively. Economic consequences were only present four times (0%) and apathy was present only two times (0%).

Table Four: Prevalence of Frames in Overall Newspaper Coverage

N = 720

Frame	Present
Conflict	103 (14%)
Patient Rights / Choice / Dignity	96 (13%)
Political Consequences	90 (12%)
State Rights / Big Government	83 (12%)
Legality	76 (11%)
Responsibility	71 (10%)
Morality / Values	63 (9%)
Societal Impact / National Identity	54 (8%)
Human Interest	50 (7%)
Sympathy / Empathy	28 (4%)
Economic Consequences	4 (0%)
Apathy / Disinterest	2 (0%)
Total	720 (100%)

Table Five: Overall Prevalence of Frames in All Media

Frame	DDNC	Newspapers	NYT	WP	USAT	Oregonian	National
Conflict	42 (16%)	103 (14%)	33 (14%)	17 (17%)	20 (14%)	33 (14%)	70 (15%)
Political Consequences	39 (15%)	90 (12%)	27 (11%)	11 (11%)	16 (11%)	36 (15%)	54 (11%)
State Rights / Big Government	38 (15%)	83 (12%)	27 (11%)	10 (10%)	16 (11%)	30 (13%)	53 (11%)
Patient Rights / Choice / Dignity	36 (14%)	96 (13%)	33 (14%)	15 (15%)	17 (12%)	31 (13%)	65 (13%)
Legality	32 (12%)	76 (11%)	20 (8%)	13 (13%)	14 (10%)	29 (12%)	47 (10%)
Responsibility	31 (12%)	71 (10%)	27 (11%)	11 (11%)	11 (7%)	22 (10%)	48 (10%)
Societal Impact / National Identity	21 (7%)	54 (8%)	18 (8%)	6 (6%)	13 (9%)	17 (7%)	37 (8%)
Morality/Values	10 (4%)	63 (9%)	26 (11%)	9 (9%)	13 (9%)	15 (6%)	48 (10%)
Human Interest	6 (2%)	50 (7%)	13 (6%)	5 (5%)	16 (11%)	16 (7%)	34 (7%)
Sympathy/Empathy	6 (2%)	28 (4%)	10 (4%)	3 (3%)	10 (6%)	5 (2%)	23 (5%)
Economic Consequences	2 (1%)	4 (0%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	1 (0%)	2 (1%)	2 (0%)
Apathy/Disinterest	0 (0%)	2 (0%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (0%)	1 (0%)
Total	263 (100%)	720 (100%)	236 (100%)	100 (100%)	147 (100%)	237 (100%)	483 (100%)

Table Six: Correlations in Overall Frame Prevalence Between All Media

	DDNC	Total Newspapers	NYT	WP	USAT	Ore.	National
DDNC Press Releases	1.000	.922***	.869***	.901***	.748**	.954***	.875***
Total Newspapers		1.000					
The New York Times			1.000	.941***	.860***	.888***	-
The Washington Post				1.000	.835**	.917***	-
USA Today					1.000	.853***	-
The Oregonian						1.000	.920***
National Newspapers							1.000

*** Pearson *r* Correlation (2-tailed) indicates significance at the p ≤ .001

** Pearson *r* Correlation (2-tailed) indicates significance at the p ≤ .01

* Pearson *r* Correlation (2-tailed) indicates significance at the p ≤ .05

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Table Five shows that conflict and patient rights were found to be the most prevalent frames in 236 *The New York Times* newspaper stories, being present in thirty-three stories each (14% of all frames used in this newspaper). Interestingly, political consequences, state rights, and responsibility were each found in twenty-seven (11%) stories. Economic consequences and apathy were only found in one (1%) article each.

The Washington Post also featured conflict and patient rights most often, seventeen (17%) and fifteen (15%) respective times out of one hundred overall stories. Unlike across overall newspaper coverage, two frames were not present in *The Washington Post* – economic consequences and apathy.

Similarly, *USA Today* featured conflict and patient rights as the most prevalent frames – in twenty (14%) and seventeen (12%) out of 147 times, respectively. Economic consequences were only in one (0%) of all *USA Today* stories, and apathy was completely absent. An interesting discovery was that the political consequences, state rights, and human interest frames were each present sixteen times (11%).

The Oregonian featured economic consequences and apathy frames least often, being present only twice (1%) and once (0%), respectively. Unlike the national newspapers, the Oregon paper featured the political consequences frame most often – thirty-six (15%) times out of 237 total stories. Conflict was the next most prevalent frame, being present in thirty-three (14%) stories.

Using Pearson's test, analysis of the data found a significant correlation between each of the individual newspapers. As seen in Table Six, *The New York Times* was significant in overall frame prevalence with *The Washington Post* at .941, with *USA Today* at .860, and with *The Oregonian* at .888. *The Washington Post* was significant with *USA Today* at .835 and with *The Oregonian* at .917. Finally, *USA Today* was found to be significant with *The Oregonian* at .853.

Research question five asked, "*What is the level of substance of frames in newspaper coverage of the death with dignity movement, and are there statistically significant differences between individual newspapers?*" As presented in Table Seven, out of a total of 720 frames found, sixty-six percent (477 frames) of all frames found using crosstabulation were considered substantive, at a chi-square significant difference

from 243 (34%) ambiguous frames. In other words, eight out of twelve frame categories were presented substantively in overall newspaper coverage. With one exception (morality), each of these eight frame categories – human interest, state rights, patient rights, conflict, legality, responsibility, and political consequences – were determined using crosstabulations to be substantive at a chi-square statistically significant level. Only three types of frames – economic consequences, societal impact, and sympathy – were found to be by majority ambiguous, but none of these was significantly so.

Table Seven: Level of Substance of Frames in Overall Newspaper Coverage

N = 720

Frame	Substantive	Ambiguous	χ^2
Conflict	71 (69%)	32 (31%)	14.77***
Patient Rights / Choice / Dignity	70 (73%)	26 (27%)	20.17***
Political Consequences	55 (61%)	35 (39%)	4.44*
State Rights / Big Government	63 (76%)	20 (24%)	22.28***
Legality	53 (70%)	23 (30%)	11.84***
Responsibility	46 (65%)	25 (35%)	6.21*
Morality / Values	38 (60%)	25 (40%)	2.68
Societal Impact / National Identity	20 (37%)	34 (63%)	3.63
Human Interest	46 (92%)	4 (8%)	35.28***
Sympathy / Empathy	13 (46%)	15 (54%)	0.14
Economic Consequences	1 (25%)	3 (75%)	1.00
Apathy / Disinterest	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	0.00
Total (100%)	477 (66%)	243 (34%)	76.05***

*** Chi square test indicates differences of frame substance at the $p \leq$ .001
** Chi square test indicates differences of frame substance at the $p \leq$ .01
* Chi square test indicates differences of frame substance at the $p \leq$ .05
Note: These chi square calculations should be interpreted with caution since some cells have values of less than 5.

Tables Nine presents the levels of substance found for frames used by the individual newspapers. After these were tested using crosstabulations for chi-square significant differences, the findings for each newspaper were given in Table Eight.

Eight frame categories found in *The New York Times* were presented substantively a majority of the time, although only the patient rights, state rights, and legality frames were statistically significant. The political consequences, societal impact, sympathy, and economic consequences frames were found more often to be ambiguous, but none of these findings was significant. Overall, frames found in *The New York Times*

were substantive sixty-two percent of the time, significantly different from the number of ambiguous frames found.

The Washington Post featured the legality and human interest frames as significantly substantive rather than ambiguous. Despite only two of these frames being statistically significant, a total of nine frame categories were substantive a majority of the time. Only the societal impact frame was presented ambiguously a majority of the time, but this was also not found to be significant. Two frames, economic consequences and apathy, were absent from The Washington Post coverage. Frames found in The Washington Post were significantly substantive sixty-nine percent of the time.

USA Today featured eight frames that were more often substantive than ambiguous. However, of these frames, only state rights and human interest were substantively significant. The societal impact and economic consequences frames were the only frames found more often to be ambiguous in nature, but neither was significantly so. The apathy frame was absent in USA Today. Sixty-eight percent of all frames found in USA Today were substantive, which was found to be statistically significant.

The Oregonian had eight frames that were more often substantive rather than ambiguous; six of these – conflict, patient rights, political consequences, state rights, legality, and human interest – were significantly so. Societal impact, sympathy, and apathy were all presented more often ambiguously than substantively, but none of these findings was statistically significant. Similarly to USA Today coverage, frames used in The Oregonian were significantly substantive sixty-eight percent of the time.

Using Pearson's test, analysis of the data found a significant 1.000 correlation between each of the individual newspapers for level of substance of overall frames, as shown below in Table Ten.

The conflict, patient rights/choice/dignity, political consequences, state rights/big government responsibility, morality/values, societal impact/national identity, human interest, and sympathy were each individually substantive at a significant 1.000 correlation between all four newspapers. For example, The New York Times significantly correlated with each of the other newspapers in terms of the level of substance given to the human interest frame. This same significant correlation existed across all nine frame categories listed above, between each of the four newspapers. The New York Times was

Table Eight: Differences in Level of Substance of Frames by Individual Newspaper

N = 720

Frame	The New York Times Sub.	Amb.	The Washington Post Sub.	Amb.	USA Today Sub.	Amb.	The Oregonian Sub.	Amb.
Conflict	2.46		2.88		1.80		8.76**	
Patient Rights / Choice / Dignity	13.36**	0.04	0.07		2.88		7.26**	
Political Consequences			0.82		1.00		5.44*	
State Rights / Big Government	8.33**		3.60		4.00*		6.53*	
Legality	5.00*		6.23*			0.00	4.17*	
Responsibility	3.00		0.82		2.27		0.73	
Morality / Values	0.15		1.00		1.92		0.60	
Societal Impact / National Identity		3.56		0.67		0.07		0.53
Human Interest	3.77		5.00*		16.00***		12.25***	
Sympathy / Empathy		3.60	3.00		1.60			1.80
Economic Consequences		1.00		0.00		1.00		0.00
Apathy / Disinterest	1.00			0.00		0.00		1.00
Total	14.25***		14.44***		19.11***		30.49***	

*** Chi square test indicates differences of frame substance at the $p \leq .001$
** Chi square test indicates differences of frame substance at the $p \leq .01$
* Chi square test indicates differences of frame substance at the $p \leq .05$
Note: These chi square calculations should be interpreted with caution since some cells have values of less than 5.

Table Nine: Levels of Substance of Frames by Individual Newspaper

N = 720

Frame	The New York Times Sub.	Amb.	The Washington Post Sub.	Amb.	USA Today Sub.	Amb.	The Oregonian Sub.	Amb.
Conflict	21 (64%)	12 (36%)	12 (71%)	5 (29%)	13 (65%)	7 (35%)	25 (76%)	8 (24%)
Patient Rights / Choice / Dignity	27 (82%)	6 (18%)	8 (53%)	7 (47%)	12 (71%)	5 (29%)	23 (74%)	8 (26%)
Political Consequences	13 (48%)	14 (52%)	7 (64%)	4 (36%)	10 (62%)	6 (38%)	25 (69%)	11 (31%)
State Rights / Big Government	21 (78%)	6 (22%)	8 (80%)	2 (20%)	12 (75%)	4 (25%)	22 (73%)	8 (27%)
Legality	15 (75%)	5 (25%)	11 (85%)	2 (15%)	7 (50%)	7 (50%)	20 (69%)	9 (31%)
Responsibility	18 (67%)	9 (33%)	7 (64%)	4 (36%)	8 (73%)	3 (27%)	13 (59%)	9 (41%)
Morality / Values	14 (54%)	12 (46%)	6 (67%)	3 (33%)	9 (69%)	4 (31%)	9 (60%)	6 (40%)
Societal Impact / National Identity	5 (28%)	13 (72%)	2 (33%)	4 (67%)	6 (46%)	7 (54%)	7 (41%)	10 (59%)
Human Interest	10 (77%)	3 (23%)	5 (100%)	0 (0%)	16 (100%)	0 (0%)	15 (94%)	1 (6%)
Sympathy / Empathy	2 (20%)	8 (80%)	3 (100%)	0 (0%)	7 (70%)	3 (30%)	1 (20%)	4 (80%)
Economic Consequences	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	1 (50%)	1 (50%)
Apathy / Disinterest	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)
Total	147 (62%)	89 (38%)	69 (69%)	31 (31%)	100 (68%)	47 (32%)	161 (68%)	76 (32%)

Table Ten: Correlations in Overall Levels of Substance of Frames Between Individual Newspapers

	The New York Times	The Washington Post	USA Today	The Oregonian
The New York Times	1.000	1.000***	1.000***	1.000***
The Washington Post		1.000	1.000***	1.000***
USA Today			1.000	1.000***
The Oregonian				1.000

*** Pearson r Correlation (2-tailed) indicates significance at the p ≤ .001

** Pearson r Correlation (2-tailed) indicates significance at the p ≤ .01

* Pearson r Correlation (2-tailed) indicates significance at the p ≤ .05

significantly correlated at 1.000 with *USA Today* for level of substance for the economic consequences frame, but no other correlations could be found because at least one variable between each newspaper was constant. In other words, correlations could not be found based upon the complete absence of particular frames from individual newspapers.

Similarly, the apathy frame was significantly substantive at 1.000 between *The New York Times* and *The Oregonian*, but no other correlations could be computed because at least one of the variables between each of the newspapers was constant. *The New York Times* significantly correlated with *The Washington Post* and *The Oregonian*, and these with each other, at 1.000 for the legality frame, but no other correlations could be computed.

Research question six asked, "*What is the valence of frames in newspaper coverage of the death with dignity movement, and are there statistically significant differences between individual newspapers?*"

Table Eleven: Valence of Frames in Overall Newspaper Coverage

N = 720

Frame	Positive	Neutral	Negative	χ^2
Conflict	0 (0%)	9 (9%)	94 (91%)	156.72***
Patient Rights / Choice / Dignity	45 (47%)	28 (29%)	23 (24%)	8.31*
Political Consequences	6 (7%)	22 (24%)	62 (69%)	55.47***
State Rights / Big Government	5 (6%)	20 (24%)	58 (70%)	53.95***
Legality	6 (8%)	38 (50%)	32 (42%)	22.84***
Responsibility	27 (38%)	14 (20%)	30 (42%)	6.11*
Morality / Values	11 (17%)	15 (24%)	37 (59%)	18.67***
Societal Impact / National Identity	8 (15%)	19 (35%)	27 (50%)	10.11**
Human Interest	25 (50%)	13 (26%)	12 (24%)	6.28*
Sympathy / Empathy	16 (57%)	4 (14%)	8 (29%)	2.74
Economic Consequences	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	3 (50%)	3.50
Apathy / Disinterest	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	4.00
Total (100%)	149 (21%)	183 (25%)	388 (54%)	139.31***

*** Chi square test indicates differences of frame valence at the $p \leq .001$
** Chi square test indicates differences of frame valence at the $p \leq .01$
* Chi square test indicates differences of frame valence at the $p \leq .05$
Note: These chi square calculations should be interpreted with caution since some cells have values of less than 5.

Out of 720 total frames found in newspaper coverage, eight frame categories were presented negatively in at least a plurality of the time. Shown in Table Eleven, six of these categories – conflict, state rights, political consequences, morality, societal impact, and responsibility – were negative at chi-square significance after being tested through crosstabulation. Three frame categories were more often presented positively overall, but only human interest and patient rights were statistically proven significant. Only one category was significantly presented in a neutral light – legality, fifty percent of the time. Overall, frames were presented negatively in newspaper coverage at a statistically significant fifty-four percent of the time.

Table Thirteen presents the valence found for frames used by the individual newspapers. After these were tested using crosstabulations for chi-square significant differences, the findings for each newspaper were given in Table Twelve.

Eight frame categories were coded as negative a plurality or majority of the times they were found in *The New York Times*. Of these, however, only the conflict, political consequences, state rights and morality frames were statistically significant. Economic consequences and legality were more often framed in a neutral light, while patient rights and human interest frames each were positive a plurality of the time – although none of these findings was significant. Overall, the negative frames found in *The New York Times* were statistically different (58% of the time) from either the positive or neutral.

The Washington Post featured the conflict and political consequences frames as significantly negative a majority of the times they were utilized. Despite only two of these being statistically significant, four frames were found to be negative more often than positive or neutral. Interestingly, four out of the twelve frame categories were more often found as being neutral, but only the legality frame was significantly so. Human interest and sympathy were almost exclusively presented positively while two more frames, economic consequences and apathy, were absent from *The Washington Post* coverage entirely. Frames found in *The Washington Post* were significantly negative forty-eight percent of the time.

USA Today featured mostly negative frames, as eight categories were presented negatively more often then positively or neutrally – despite the absence of the apathy frame in its overall coverage. Of these negative frames, conflict, political consequences,

and legality were statistically significant. Only sympathy was presented positively in *USA Today*, and the state rights frame was found to be significantly neutral, but no other findings were statistically significant. The societal impact frame was presented equally with neutral and negative valence – six times each and only once positively. A significant majority (53%) of the frames found in *USA Today* were negative. Seven frames were found in *The Oregonian* to be mostly negative, but the conflict, political consequences, state rights, and morality frames were the only of these to be significant. Legality was the only frame found to be neutral a plurality of the time, but this finding was not significant. Most interestingly, patient rights, responsibility, human interest, and sympathy were all presented as significantly positive. In fact, all positive frames found in *The Oregonian* were significantly so. Despite this, 125 frames (53%) out of the 237 present in *The Oregonian* coverage were presented negatively, a statistically significant finding.

Using Pearson's test, analysis of the data found the following correlations between each of the individual newspapers for their overall frame valences. As shown in Table Fourteen, *The New York Times* correlated with *The Washington Post* at .890, with *USA Today* at .919, and with *The Oregonian* at .952; *The Washington Post* correlated with *USA Today* at .998 and with *The Oregonian* at .708; and *USA Today* correlated with *The Oregonian* at .755. Only the correlation (.998) between *The Washington Post* and *USA Today* was found to be statistically significant.

The conflict frame correlated in valence between newspapers twice at a significant level, between *The New York Times* and *The Oregonian* (at .998) and between *The Washington Post* and *The Oregonian* (.998). *The New York Times* correlated with *The Washington Post* at .992 and with *USA Today* at .945. *USA Today* correlated with *The Washington Post* at .978 and with *The Oregonian* at .962. This frame was found to be negative a significant majority of the time across each newspaper.

The patient rights/choice/dignity frame was significantly different between *The New York Times* and *USA Today*, at -.999. *The Washington Post* correlated with *The New York Times* at .359, and was different from *USA Today* at -.397 and from *The Oregonian* at -.060. *USA Today* differed from *The Oregonian* at -.892 and *The Oregonian* correlated with *The New York Times* at .910.

Table Twelve: Differences in Valence of Frames by Individual Newspaper

N = 720

Frame	The New York Times Pos.	Neu.	Neg.	The Washington Post Pos.	Neu.	Neg.	USA Today Pos.	Neu.	Neg.	The Oregonian Pos.	Neu.	Neg.
Conflict	5.63		66.00***			23.41***			17.50***			54.73***
Patient Rights / Choice / Dignity					1.60				2.24	13.61**		
Political Consequences			22.89***			8.91*			14.00***			12.67**
State Rights / Big Government			32.89***			2.60		6.13*				29.60***
Legality	4.20				7.54*						5.45	
Responsibility			3.56		0.73				2.36	6.91*		
Morality / Values			12.54**			0.67			2.92			6.40*
Societal Impact / National Identity			3.00			3.00		3.85				2.94
Human Interest	2.00			5.20			1.40		0.88	9.12*		
Sympathy / Empathy				2.00						10.00**		
Economic Consequences		2.00	2.60		0.00				2.00			4.00
Apathy / Disinterest			2.00		0.00			0.00				2.00
Total			65.40***			13.52**			33.18***			42.23***

*** Chi square test indicates differences of frame valence at the $p \leq .001$
** Chi square test indicates differences of frame valence at the $p \leq .01$
* Chi square test indicates differences of frame valence at the $p \leq .05$
Note: These chi square calculations should be interpreted with caution since some cells have values of less than 5.

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Table Thirteen: Valence of Frames by Individual Newspaper

N = 720

Frame	The New York Times Pos.	Neu.	Neg.	The Washington Post Pos.	Neu.	Neg.	USA Today Pos.	Neu.	Neg.	The Oregonian Pos.	Neu.	Neg.
Conflict	0	0	33	0	2	15	0	5	15	0	2	31
Patient Rights / Choice / Dignity	17	10	6	5	7	3	3	6	8	20	5	6
Political Consequences	0	7	20	0	3	8	0	4	12	6	8	22
State Rights / Big Government	1	3	23	1	4	5	1	9	6	2	4	24
Legality	2	10	8	0	8	5	0	6	8	4	14	11
Responsibility	9	5	13	3	5	3	3	2	6	12	2	8
Morality / Values	3	6	17	3	2	4	4	2	7	1	5	9
Societal Impact / National Identity	3	6	9	0	3	3	1	6	6	4	4	9
Human Interest	6	5	2	4	0	1	4	5	7	11	3	2
Sympathy / Empathy	4	1	5	2	0	1	5	3	2	5	0	0
Economic Consequences	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
Apathy / Disinterest	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	45	54	137	18	34	48	21	48	78	65	47	125

Table Fourteen: Correlations in Overall Valence of Frames Between Individual Newspapers

	The New York Times	The Washington Post	USA Today	The Oregonian
The New York Times	1.000	.890	.919	.952
The Washington Post		1.000	.998*	.708
USA Today			1.000	.755
The Oregonian				1.000

*** Pearson *r* Correlation (2-tailed) indicates significance at the p ≤ .001
** Pearson *r* Correlation (2-tailed) indicates significance at the p ≤ .01
* Pearson *r* Correlation (2-tailed) indicates significance at the p ≤ .05

Political consequences correlated significantly between *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* (at 1.000), between *The New York Times* and *USA Today* (1.000), and between *The Washington Post* and *USA Today* (1.000). *The Oregonian* correlated with *The New York Times* at .972, with *The Washington Post* at .965, and with *USA Today* at .976, although none of these correlations was statistically significant. This frame was found to be negative a significant majority of the time across each newspaper.

The valence of the states rights/big government frame was significant only between *The New York Times* and *The Oregonian*, at 1.000. *The Washington Post* correlated with *The New York Times* at .750, *USA Today* at .812, and *The Oregonian* at .750. *USA Today* correlated with both *The Oregonian* and *The New York Times* at only .224 each.

The legality frame also only correlated significantly in valence between *The New York Times* and *The Oregonian*, at .999. *The Oregonian* correlated with *The Washington Post* at .997 and *USA Today* at .858, while *The Washington Post* correlated with *The New York Times* at .991 and *USA Today* at .812. *USA Today* correlated with *The New York Times* at .885.

There were no significant correlations between individual newspapers for the valence found in responsibility frames. *The New York Times* differed from *The Washington Post* at -.866, and correlated with *USA Today* at .961 and with *The Oregonian* at .596. *USA Today* differed from *The Washington Post* at -.963 and correlated with *The Oregonian* at only .350. *The Washington Post* and *The Oregonian* differed at -.918.

The morality/values frame also enjoyed no significant correlations between newspapers. For this frame, *The Oregonian* correlated with *USA Today* at .596, *The Washington Post* at .500, and with *The New York Times* at .950. *The New York Times* correlated with *USA Today* at .818 and at .746 with *The Washington Post*. Finally, *USA Today* correlated with *The Washington Post* at .993. This frame was found to be negative a majority of the time across each newspaper, but this finding was only significant for *The New York Times* and *The Oregonian*.

The societal impact/national identity frame experienced a significant correlation between *The Washington Post* and *USA Today*, at 1.000. Interestingly, *The New York*

Times correlated with *The Washington Post*, *The Oregonian*, and *USA Today*, all at .866; and *The Oregonian* correlated with both *The Washington Post* and *USA Today* at .500.

The human interest frame was not significantly correlated between any of the newspapers. *The New York Times* correlated with *The Washington Post* at .500, differed from *USA Today* at -.996, and correlated with *The Oregonian* at .763. *The Oregonian* correlated with *The Washington Post* at .941 and differed from *USA Today* at -.818. *The Washington Post* differed from *USA Today* at -.577.

The sympathy frame was also not significantly correlated between any of the newspapers. *The Oregonian* correlated with *The New York Times* at only .277, with *The Washington Post* at .866, and with *USA Today* at .945. *The Washington Post* differed from *The New York Times* at -.052 and correlated with *USA Today* at .655. Finally, *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* correlated at .721.

The economic consequence frame significantly correlated between *USA Today* and *The Oregonian* at 1.000. *The New York Times* differed from both *USA Today* and *The Oregonian* at -.500. No other correlations could be found because at least one of the variables between the newspapers was constant.

The apathy frame only correlated between *The New York Times* and *The Oregonian*, at a significant 1.000. No other correlations existed because at least one of the variables was constant.

Research question seven asked, "*Is there a statistically significant frame correlation between Death with Dignity National Center press releases and newspaper coverage of the death with dignity movement, and are there statistically significant differences between press releases and individual newspaper coverage?*" Analysis of the data found significant frame prevalence correlations across all media, as shown in Table Six. The press releases were found using Pearson's test to be significantly correlated with overall newspaper coverage at .922, and more specifically with *The New York Times* at .869, with *The Washington Post* at .901, with *USA Today* at .748, and with *The Oregonian* at .954.

The overall level of substance given to the frames in overall newspaper coverage correlated with that found in press releases at a statistically significant 1.000.

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Interestingly, this same correlation existed between the press releases and each of the individual newspapers for all frame categories.

At the same time, however, the overall valence given to the frames in overall newspaper coverage correlated with that found in press releases at only .693. The overall valence given to frames did not significantly correlate between the press releases and any of the individual newspapers. The press releases correlated with *The New York Times* at .724 for overall frame valence, with *The Washington Post* at .330, with *USA Today* at .394, and, interestingly, with *The Oregonian* at .900.

The conflict frame correlated significantly in its level of substance between the press releases and each of the newspapers at 1.000. The press releases were significantly correlated in terms of conflict valence with *The New York Times* at 1.000 and with *The Oregonian* at .999. The press releases did not significantly correlate with either *The Washington Post* (.995) or *USA Today* (.952) in terms of the valence used in conflict frames.

The level of substance given to patient rights/choice/dignity framed in the press releases was significant at 1.000 between all newspapers. The valence used within these frames, however, was not statistically significant within any relationship. The press releases correlated with *The New York Times* at .957, with *The Washington Post* at .072, differed from *USA Today* at -.944, and correlated with *The Oregonian* at .991.

The political consequences frame correlated significantly in terms of its level of substance between the press releases and all of the newspapers at 1.000, except for *The New York Times*, from which it significantly differed at -1.000. The valence of the frame was also significant between the press releases and *The New York Times* at .999, *The Washington Post* at .998, and *USA Today* at 1.000. The press releases correlated with *The Oregonian* at .981, but this was not a statistically significant finding.

The state rights/big government frame had a significant level of substance correlation between the press releases and all of the newspapers. It also had a significant valence correlation between the press releases and *The New York Times* (at 1.000) and between the press releases and *The Oregonian* (also at 1.000). The press releases correlated, but not significantly, at .753 with *The Washington Post* and at .228 with *USA Today*.

The legality frame was found to have a significant correlation of its level of substance between the press releases and *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Oregonian* at 1.000. No correlation could be computed between the press releases and *USA Today* because at one least variable between the two was constant. The valence of the legality frame was not found to have a significant correlation between the press releases and any of the newspapers: with *The New York Times* at .971, with *The Washington Post* at .929, with *USA Today* at .971, and with *The Oregonian* at .956.

The press releases significantly correlated over the level of substance given to the responsibility frames with all newspapers at a significant 1.000. The valence of this frame, however, did not correlate significantly between the newspapers and any of the newspapers. In fact, the press releases correlated with *The New York Times* at .000. The press releases differed from *The Washington Post* at -.500, from *USA Today* at -.277, and correlated with *The Oregonian* at .803.

Morality/values was significantly different in the level of its substance given by the press releases and the level given by all four newspapers at -1.000 each. The valence given to this frame did not significantly correlate between the press releases and the newspapers. *The New York Times* correlated with the press releases at .992, *The Washington Post* correlated at .655, *USA Today* correlated at .737, and *The Oregonian* correlated at .982.

Similarly, the societal impact/national identity frame only correlated significantly in terms of its level of substance. The press releases and all four newspapers correlated at 1.000 for level of substance. The press releases differed in valence, however, with *The New York Times* at -.629, with both *The Washington Post* and *USA Today* at -.933, and with *The Oregonian* at -.156.

The human interest frame was also only significantly correlated for its level of substance, at 1.000 between the press releases and all four newspapers. *The New York Times* correlated with the press releases at .240 for the human interest frame's valence; *The Washington Post* correlated at .961, *USA Today* differed at -.327, and *The Oregonian* correlated at .811.

The level of substance given to the sympathy frame significantly differed between the press releases and *The Washington Post* and *USA Today* at -1.000, and correlated

between the press releases and *The New York Times* and *The Oregonian* at 1.000. The valence used within this frame, however, was not significantly correlated between the press releases and any of the newspapers. The press releases differed from *The New York Times* at a -.240 correlation, and correlated with *The Washington Post* at .500, with *USA Today* at .982, and with *The Oregonian* at .866.

The press releases significantly differed for the economic consequences frame's level of substance with both *The Washington Post* and *The Oregonian* at -1.000. No level of substance correlations could not be computed between the press releases and either *The New York Times* or *USA Today*. Similarly, no valence correlation could be computed between the press releases and *The Washington Post*. While the press releases differed with *The New York Times* at -.500, they correlated over frame valence with both *USA Today* and *The Oregonian* at 1.000.

Research question eight asked, "*Is there a statistically significant frame correlation in newspaper coverage of the death with dignity movement between the national newspapers and the state newspaper?*" Analysis of the data found that there is a significant correlation (.920) between the prevalence of frames used in national newspaper coverage and those found in the state newspaper.

With few exceptions, all frames correlated significantly in their levels of substance between the national and Oregon newspapers. In fact, the correlation between these types of newspapers was 1.000 for all frames save the economic consequences frame, which could not be computed, and the apathy/disinterest and sympathy/empathy frames, which were significantly differed at -1.000. The level of substance for frames overall between the national and state newspapers was also at 1.000

Only two frames were significantly correlated between national and state newspapers in regards to their valence – conflict at .999 and apathy at 1.000. The patient rights/choice/dignity frame correlated at .649, political consequences at .972, state rights/big government at .940, legality at .985, responsibility at .400, morality/values at .866, societal impact/national identity at .666, human interest at .995, sympathy/empathy at .822, and economic consequences at .500. Overall, frame valence did not correlate

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significantly between the national and state newspapers, having a correlation of only .874.

DISCUSSION

Research question one asked, "*What frames are present in Death with Dignity National Center press releases?*" The conflict frame was most the most prevalent category in these press releases. This is not an unexpected finding because the very essence of a social movement is based upon exacting change to overcome a perceived wrong (Blumer, 1994). Conflict is likely to be present any time a controversial issue such as physician-assisted suicide is discussed.

It was found that the DDNC focuses little of its framing on either human interest or sympathy (each 2% of the DDNC's total number of frames). Instead, a noteworthy number of frames focused on state (15%) and patient rights (14%). This is perhaps an attempt to move away from personifying suicide, to marking it as a civil right. Framing moved the discussion away from individual patients and towards the rights owed to those patients. By framing physician-assisted suicide as a right, the DDNC can avoid the use of vivid pictures of the people attempting to use that right. Statements in the press releases such as, "The Court should reject this unprecedented attempt by an agency official to resolve a disputed issue of social and medical policy that is reserved to the States and should reemphasize the vital role State sovereignty plays in our federal system… " and, "Legal experts questioned Ashcroft's intrusion into a state-regulated medical practice" demonstrate the group's attempt to brand the issue within the idea of legality, rather than morality (http://www.dwd.org/news/releases/04.17.02.asp; http://www.dwd.org/news/releases/release07.25.05.asp).

Suicide is a controversial issue, even outside the context of medicinal legality, so the DDNC would do well to move away from any moral discussion of the issue. Potential supporters may actually be dissuaded from rallying behind the group's cause if all they are able to see are unfortunate souls trying to die. Fighting to help someone die is perhaps not as easy as fighting for that person's civil rights, and the frames used by the DDNC in its press releases seem to show that its members are aware of this.

Research question two asked, "*What is the level of substance of frames in Death with Dignity National Center press releases?*" Only three frames were statistically significant in the DDNC press releases – political consequences, legality, and responsibility – and all of these were significantly substantive. Two of these frames are demonstrated in the quote, "'Just how many times must the Attorney General see the democratic and legal processes demonstrated? The people have voted twice. The courts have ruled twice. This law has been a catalyst to improved end-of-life care – in Oregon and nationally. Tax payer dollars are being squandered in Ashcroft's crusade,' said Scott Blaine Swenson, Executive Director of the Oregon Death with Dignity Center" (http://www.dwd.org/news/releases/05.20.02.asp). Both the legality of Attorney General Ashcroft's actions and the resulting political consequences (squandered tax dollars) are featured prominently in this release, which was created in response to the Attorney General's appeal of a judge's ruling that Ashcroft had no right to strip Oregon physicians of their licenses to prescribe medicine if found guilty of assisting in a suicide. These frames are used substantively throughout this release, measured through their placement in the article. Each was featured prominently for more than two thirds of the article and both were discussed in detail, rather than being used as basic cognitive building blocks. This release is representative of appeals made by the DDNC throughout all of its press releases; appeals to fight encroachment on civil and state rights. The legality and political consequence frames were used substantively in this case to rally support to fight such encroachment.

The six most prevalent frames in the DDNC press releases were all substantive a majority of the time, which is encouraging. It is discouraging, however, that only sixty-one percent of the overall frames were substantive in nature. This means that over one third of the frames used by the DDNC were ambiguous in nature, meant only to simplify information rather than explain it. Because the group focused most of its frames on the rights held by patients in end of life care, it is not surprising that the more prevalent frames were presented substantively while the less prevalent frames were more ambiguous in nature.

Research question three asked, "*What is the valence of frames in Death with Dignity National Center press releases?*" Overall, frames found in the press releases were negative a significant plurality of the time. This is perhaps because negative frames are more likely to gain media coverage than positive ones. It is unlikely that the DDNC would be able to garner any media attention if it focused only on its accomplishments. Thus, the group is more likely to focus on accomplishments yet to come. At the same time, focusing on what has been done instead of what needs to be done is counteractive to the needs of a social movement.

Out of the twelve frame categories, six were found to have significant valence. Three of these – conflict, political consequences, and state rights/big government – were found to be significantly negative. The DDNC framed conflict, political consequences, and state rights negatively in an attempt to emphasize how its supporters have been negatively affected by "former Attorney General John Ashcroft and the Bush Administration, who have increasingly thrust themselves into the private lives of American citizens" (http://www.dwd.org/news/releases/ddncprepared.01.10.06.asp). It is interesting that the state rights/big government frame was found to be negative sixty-eight percent of the times it was present. Rather than focusing positively on the rights held by the state of Oregon, the DDNC instead focused on how these rights were being taken away. This again goes along with the notion that social movements need to fight against something: had the DDNC focused more positively on how successful Oregon has been utilizing its right to control medical practice, then perhaps its audiences would not have been aware that this right could have been taken away.

The patient rights, responsibility, and societal impact frames were found to be significantly positive. The group argues that "one reason so many people consider using the law and then choose not to use it is that doctors are able to identify and resolve other issues. By making death with dignity a legal option of last resort, Oregon proves that responsible implementation of a death with dignity law can improve end-of-life care, pain management, hospice utilization, and doctor-patient communication. These improvements benefit every Oregonian, not just the terminally ill" (http://www.dwd.org/news/releases/08.20.04.asp). The rights afforded to patients in Oregon, the DDNC argues, are used responsibly and have far-reaching benefits.

Although the positive frames are not as prevalent as the negative, it is interesting to see how they back up the negative arguments given by the DDNC. These negative frames were likely used to identify the problems involved with physician-assisted suicide, while positive frames were used to not only offer solutions but to also acknowledge that solutions to these problems in fact exist. It is necessary for an interest group involved with a social movement to not emphasize how easy solutions are if it intends to garner support. By emphasizing negative rather than positive frames, the DDNC was likely attempting to highlight the stripping of civil rights it perceived to be occurring while still offering difficult but viable answers to this situation. The problem must be difficult but possible to overcome, in order to give any potential supporters of the social movement a common goal they can feel compelled to accomplish.

Research question four asked, "*What frames are present in newspaper coverage of the death with dignity movement, and are there statistically significant correlations between individual newspapers?*" Interestingly, the frames found in newspaper coverage of the death with dignity movement, when placed in rank order according to prevalence, are at similar positions with those found in DDNC press releases. These findings also show that the same frames were being used, and used in similar amounts, by all of the newspapers explored. Despite their differences, each of the newspapers utilized the same frames in their coverage of death with dignity.

The conflict, patient rights, political consequences, and state rights frames were featured most prominently. The conflict frame was most prevalent in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *USA Today*, all of which used the patient rights frame second most prevalently. *The Oregonian* was the lone exception to this, using the political consequences and conflict frames most and second most often, respectively. Despite this difference, all newspapers were found to correlate significantly with one another in terms of the frames each used. Not only were certain frames used prevalently across all newspaper coverage, other frames were utilized in lesser amounts. Newspaper coverage, like the DDNC press releases, focused less of its attention on frames such as economic consequences, apathy, sympathy, and human interest.

The conflict frame is exemplified by this statement, originally published in *The New York Times*: "but outside the courtroom, on the plaza in front of the building, the focus was broader: on the passion and the outrage that have fueled the debate over assisted suicide and other emotionally charged questions about the end of life" (Schwartz, 2005). The conflict frame was defined as a focus on any conflict between any groups or individuals. In this case, the newspaper coverage of a Supreme Court hearing over the legality of Oregon's law featured a frame exploring the conflict that existed between different protestors outside of the Supreme Court building. This conflict was not the primary focus of the article, but is indicative of how the story's author wanted his or her audience to think about the issue.

An article in *The Oregonian* that published letters to its editor provides examples of other types of frames. The patient rights/choice/dignity frame is utilized in the statement, "I applaud the U.S. Supreme Court for recognizing the right of Oregonians to choose assisted suicide when the suffering from terminal illness is too much to bear… I would not presume to tell anyone what is the right or wrong choice at one of the most profound and sacred moments of their life. I bristle at the thought of the federal government doing so" (Dorn, 2006). The author of this letter frames his argument in a positive, substantive way. The available choices of Oregonian citizen's are applauded, rather than the right of the state to allow such choices. In a different letter, the state rights/big government frame is used: "The Supreme Court has spoken: The federal government overstepped its authority in trying a back-door approach to quashing Oregon's assisted suicide law" (Costa, 2006). Unlike in the previous example, this author is exploring the issue of physician-assisted suicide as it pertains to Oregon's right to allow it, rather than Oregonians' right to choose it.

Finally, a combination of frames is used here: "Sadly, Oregon's Death With Dignity Act is still vulnerable. Congress will attempt to outlaw our physician-assisted suicide law. The will of Oregonians in two elections will be preserved only if the U.S. Senate or House changes political hands this November" (Delmazzo, 2006). This statement identifies how the right to choose assisted suicide is currently available to certain Oregon citizens. At the same time, it explores the potential political

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consequences that are inherent in this debate. The revocation of the law is a political consequence that, in this case, is tied to the patient rights/choice/dignity frame.

With few exceptions, each of the individual newspapers used the same frames categories, and in very similar rank orders. Without knowing the reasons why these frames were used by each newspaper, it can only be observed that the individual newspapers were heavily and significantly correlated with one another in their frame prevalence.

Research question five asked, "*What is the level of substance of frames in newspaper coverage of the death with dignity movement, and are there statistically significant differences between individual newspapers?*" The level of substance found in frames used in newspaper coverage was an interesting finding. Seven out of twelve frames were significantly substantive – six of these being the most prevalent frames: conflict, patient rights, political consequences, state rights, legality, and responsibility – meaning that nearly all substantive frames were found to be significantly so. Such findings were similar to those of Williams and Kaid (2006), who found that the issue-specific frames coded for in their study were generally more likely to be found to be substantive in newspaper coverage, whereas more generic frames were generally ambiguous. Each newspaper was significantly correlated with one another in its overall level of frame substance; an unsurprising finding given that nearly every individual frame was also found to be significantly correlated between each newspaper and because each newspaper was significantly more likely to present substantial rather than ambiguous frames. In fact, *The Oregonian* was significantly substantive in the use of half of its frame categories.

Despite these remarkable correlations, however, only sixty-six percent of the overall frames were substantive. This is a statistically significant finding, but is indicative of newspaper coverage that is ambiguous one third of the time. This is similar to the level of ambiguity used in DDNC press release frames. This lack of substance is disheartening, as it shows that newspapers are at least somewhat guilty of covering the issue of physician-assisted suicide using pedestrian rather than thorough frames. Even

though substantive frames were used a majority of the time, the amount of ambiguous frames cannot be ignored.

The patient rights/choice/dignity frame is exemplified in a statement found in *The Washington Post*, "The Oregon Death with Dignity Act makes that choice much easier for patients and their families. But it does not preclude people from making a different choice. People who prefer a longer life to an easier death are not prevented from choosing that" (Angell, 2002). Patient rights are substantively framed in this article, but they are featured throughout the story of the author's elderly father who had shot himself to avoid becoming a burden on his family. Although the story's dominant frame was human interest, the patient rights frame was substantively utilized to convince the audience that Oregon's law is a morally necessary decree.

An article in *The New York Times* provides an example of both the legality and state rights/big government frames: "A federal judge in Oregon yesterday rejected an effort by the Justice Department to block the state's assisted suicide law. In a decision sharply critical of Attorney General John Ashcroft, the judge said Mr. Ashcroft lacked the authority to decide 'what constitutes the legitimate practice of medicine'" (Liptak, 2002). The audience of this story is encouraged to explore the issue of physician-assisted suicide by focusing on whether or not Attorney General Ashcroft legally had the ability to punish Oregon doctors for assisting in suicides. At the same time, the audience is also encouraged to consider this potential punishment as an attack on the entire state of Oregon, rather than on certain doctors or patients. Because these frames of reference are utilized throughout the article to explain a complex notion, the frames are substantial in nature.

Research question six asked, "*What is the valence of frames in newspaper coverage of the death with dignity movement, and are there statistically significant differences between individual newspapers?*" Out of twelve frame categories, six frames were presented as significantly negative throughout the overall newspaper coverage. These findings are similar to those of de Vreese and Boomgaarden (2003), which showed that frames used by newspapers are generally negative in valence. Interestingly, two

more frames were significantly positive (including the second-most prevalent newspaper frame, patient rights) and the legality frame was significantly neutral in its valence. Despite these significant findings, the overall use of frames in newspaper coverage was negative at a statistically significant level. The individual newspapers were all significantly negative in their frame use, but only one significant correlation, between *The Washington Post* and *USA Today*, was found between any of the newspapers. Another interesting finding was that *The Oregonian* coverage featured significantly positive frame categories – patient rights (the second most prevalent frame category), responsibility, human interest, and sympathy – the same number it did negative – conflict, political consequences, state rights, and morality.

What these findings mean is that, although the individual newspapers are using the same frames to discuss physician-assisted suicide and are using these frames at similar levels of substance, the newspapers are not using frames with the same valence. This is an important finding, because it shows that the mere use of frames is not indicative of coverage driving coverage. The ways in which the subject was talked about were very similar, but how the newspapers actually discussed the issue, significantly, was not.

A positive patient rights frame is exemplified in *The Oregonian* statement, "Patients such as Mr. G, who consider but ultimately reject doctor-assisted suicide, are much more common than those who actually die of a lethal drug prescription under Oregon law. They either change their mind or their disease takes over before they have a chance to commit suicide" (Colburn, 2002). This statement is considered positive because as the frame it exemplified continues through the article, it explained in a positive way that the Death with Dignity law does not encourage patients to commit suicide but instead actually encourages them to explore other end of life choices.

Morality is explored in that same article: "When Mr. G's symptoms worsened, he asked his doctor, Dr. R, for a hastened death. Dr. R, morally opposed to physician-assisted suicide, referred the patient to hospice care without exploring the concerns behind his request. That was bad medicine, the OHSU team concluded in an article in today's Journal of the American Medical Association" (Colburn, 2002). The doctor in question was presented in a negative light because of his recklessness in supposedly

trying to aid his patient. The patient's end of life choices, framed positively throughout this article, were not properly explained to him. The doctor, then, avoided his moral duty to aid his patient to the best of his abilities. In the frame utilized in this article, the doctor was negatively shown as acting in a morally negligent manner.

Research question seven asked, "*Is there a statistically significant frame correlation between Death with Dignity National Center press releases and newspaper coverage of the death with dignity movement, and are there statistically significant differences between press releases and individual newspaper coverage?*" A rather interesting finding unearthed in the answer to research question seven was that, although the prevalence and level of substance the overall frames correlated significantly between the press releases and newspaper coverage in general, the valence associated with each frame did not. In fact, the same results were found when comparing the press releases to individual newspapers. Both the prevalence and level of substance of frames used overall in press releases correlated significantly with each of the individual newspapers; the valence of these frames, however, did not correlate.

This finding is very interesting, especially when compared to results of research questions four, five, and six. The four newspapers did not correlate, save once, with each other in their use of frame valence. At the same time, however, none of the newspapers correlated at all with the DDNC press releases. The same frames are being used by all media sources to discuss the issue of physician-assisted suicide, but how these frames are used is different – at least significantly. All four newspapers might use a substantive conflict frame to explain a certain aspect of the overall topic of physician-assisted suicide, but it seems that no correlation exists between these outlets as to how positively, neutrally, or negatively the conflict frame will be presented in each.

Research question eight asked, "*Is there a statistically significant frame correlation in newspaper coverage of the death with dignity movement between the national newspapers and the state newspaper?*" Similar to research question seven's findings, there are significant correlations between national and state newspapers only in regards to frame prevalence and level of substance. The national newspapers correlated

with *The Oregonian* at .920 in terms of their overall frame prevalence, and at 1.000 in terms of their overall level of frame substance. In fact, every individual frame – save economic consequences, which could not be computed – also significantly correlated between the two levels of coverage. Despite these significant findings, only two individual frames correlated significantly in valence, and overall frame valence did not correlate at all.

Taken on their own, research question eight's findings seem to imply that national and local coverage of a controversial issue do not correlate in terms of the valence used to discuss that issue. The above findings, however, found that no media outlet correlated with any other when looking at frame valence. Therefore, no true findings can be claimed from this research question. The findings located by this research question simply fit the trends established across all media explored within this study.

CONCLUSIONS

As in all scholarship, limitations existed in this study. While the issue of physician-assisted suicide has been consistently present in public debate, it has only recently become salient in mediated discourse. For this reason, the current study was based upon a rather small universe of newspaper coverage. In addition, the small number of press releases produced by the DDNC made it necessary to find frame correlations between them and newspaper coverage across a single time period, rather than allowing for the exploration of frame influence across multiple periods of time. The DDNC has produced press releases sparingly throughout its existence, and oftentimes many of the releases analyzed here were produced within a small amount of time. The group sent out press releases in spurts – when it had news – rather than in attempt to maintain consistent coverage. This left vast time periods in which the group made no attempts to influence media coverage by way of its press releases. The group is active in its attempt to influence *policy* in addition to coverage, so its primary concern many not have been its media image. Therefore, the group was perhaps not influencing media coverage because it was not attempting to do so at all times. In is interesting to note, however, that the group's frames still correlated with media coverage, implying that the communication-inactive organization was aware of how physician-assisted suicide was being discussed.

Future scholars could gather similar data to those found in this study to find whether the DDNC or other interest groups are able to successfully influence media coverage, rather than simply moving in correlation with it. In other words, is a group like this actually setting the frames used in media coverage of a given issue, or is it reacting to those already established? Additionally, only newspaper coverage featuring the exact phrase "death with dignity" was gathered because this phrase ensured that coverage of the Oregon law, the special interest group, and of physician-assisted suicide could all be found. This still allowed for a sufficient data set, but future research would do well to explore the issue of physician-assisted suicide in broader terms – this could include adding coverage of euthanasia, end of life choices, or suicide in general. Future scholarship could also utilize smaller data samples to explore more effectively the minute differences and similarities that exist between the media to create a better understanding of each.

Because Oregon is the only state to currently allow physician-assisted suicide, this study focused primarily on how the issue was covered within that state and at the national level. There are current attempts to pass similar legislation in other states across the nation, so future studies could potentially explore the issue more robustly than possible here. It would also be interesting to discover how multiple state or local media outlets within a single geographical location cover the issue, rather than a single newspaper within the state of Oregon. This study addressed the notion of frame building and explored how a special interest group within a social movement utilizes frames; these ideas, however, have not been and should not be put to rest. Future researchers should explore along this line of research the notion that different interest groups compete with one another. It would be fruitful to compare the frames used by multiple interest groups in order to examine how these actors successfully "win" the battle for the adoption of their frames by the news media. By comparing the frames used within multiple state and local media outlets to discuss a single controversial issue to the frames used by a special interest group or multiple competing interest groups intimately involved with the issue, scholars can more richly understand the influence that such groups have over the mediated discussion.

Additionally, communication practitioners can benefit from knowing what frames and frame attributes are likely to be adopted by state and local media outlets, especially if these practitioners intend to specifically influence public opinion in a concentrated manner. Rather than trying to change the national public opinion of a controversial issue, interest groups could utilize frames to gradually gain converts at a smaller scale. Another interesting way to continue this area of research is to compare the frames used by multiple media outlets to the political disposition of that outlet and its editorial staff. Is a conservative newspaper more likely to use certain frames than a more liberal newspaper would avoid? Are state newspapers more likely to frame the federal government negatively than national ones? These questions by easily be answered and extrapolated upon by future framing scholarship.

Williams and Kaid (2006) found in their study of the frames used in American media coverage of the 2004 European parliamentary elections that issue-specific frames were generally substantive in nature, whereas generic frames were generally ambiguous. Issue-specific frames that were found to be ambiguous were likely so because of overuse – the frames had become "common-sense," allowing journalists to use them as mere patterns for conveying information rather than as tools for imparting true understanding. The current study had similar findings, in that issue-specific frames were generally substantive and generic frames were generally ambiguous in nature. It will be interesting to note if future studies show similar findings.

Additionally, de Vreese and Boomgaarden (2003) found that frames used to by the national news outlets Great Britain, Germany, and The Netherlands when discussing the European Union were generally negative in their valence. Similar findings were found in the current study. This is perhaps because "news" is inherently combative in nature. Information is not usually newsworthy unless it discusses a new threat or the comeuppance of something generally seen as iniquitous. While the previous study explored the notion of frame valence in news media and its effects on public support of the European Union, the current study was concerned with the ways in which that valence was set. Because "frames are not merely different ways of telling a news story… [but] may cause changes in public opinion by inviting certain definitions and interpretations of political issues" (de Vreese & Boomgaarden, 2003), if interest groups

are able to set both the frames and their attributes used by news media, then the effects of such frames are potentially troublesome.

The notion that frames have levels of substance can still be considered a new line of research, one certainly worthy of continued scholarship. Combined with the idea of frame valence, the substantive nature of frames must be explored in order to broaden and deepen research in framing theory and its many applications. Future scholarship would do well to incorporate levels of frame substance into all areas of framing, and more specifically frame building, in order to create a more substantial idea of what is presented by the media to audiences. This study's findings imply that much more is occurring than the simple passing of frames. By exploring minute aspects of framing, researchers can more richly explore the notion of framing and its effects in communication.

This study was designed based upon calls for scholarship exploring the creation of the frames that are utilized by journalists (Scheufele, 1999; Carragee & Roefs, 2004) and on the surprising lack of communication scholarship focused on physician-assisted suicide (Pollock & Yulis, 2004). By finding and describing the frames used by the interest group the Death with Dignity National Center and finding correlating frames in newspaper coverage of physician-assisted suicide, this study has opened up the idea that framing theory should explore more than there mere presence of frames. Although scholarship such as Williams and Kaid (2006) and de Vreese and Boomgaarden (2003) has established multiple ways of further investigating the theory, this study has been among the first to use framing to explore the ways in which members of an interest group intentionally set the framework for how a controversial issue is understood. This study is also among the first works of scholarship to look at the intentional manipulation of specific frame attributes, rather than the mere presence and transference of frames. This intentional use of frames, along with the combination of frame attributes introduced here, can help to guide research across framing theory by extending the theory in rich and meaningful ways.

If frames are what audiences use to understand controversial ideas and if frames are, more often than not, given to these audiences by the mass media, then it is important to explore the various interested parties that seek to influence these media. It is important not only to know that frames are present, but also to know the level of substance given to

these frames, the valence each is awarded, and the parties responsible for the adoption of these frame attributes. Frame building research has just begun, and its reigns must be picked up to continue this important addition to communication scholarship. Future scholars are called to explore the idea that frames are intentionally created and utilized by competing actors in order to gain influence over public and mediated debate.

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Coder ID

Release Number (1.00)

Release Date (1.00)

Release Headline

Release Length (1.00)

Release Classification (.80)
- ❑ *Hard News*
- ❑ *Soft News (Features)*
- ❑ *Editorial or Opinions Piece*

Primary Release Focus (1.00)
- ❑ *Issue*
- ❑ *Organization*

What is the level of coverage dedicated to the DDNC in the release? (1.00)
- ❑ *Prominent*
- ❑ *Moderate*
- ❑ *Negligible*

Does the release offer contact information for the DDNC? (1.00)
- ❑ *Yes*
- ❑ *No*

Economic Consequences Frame (1.00)
- ❑ *Present*
- ❑ *Absent*

Economic Consequences Frame (1.00)
- ❑ *Positive*
- ❑ *Neutral*
- ❑ *Negative*

Economic Consequences Frame (1.00)
- ❑ *Substantive*
- ❑ *Ambiguous*

Political Consequences Frame (1.00)
- ❑ *Present*
- ❑ *Absent*

Political Consequences Frame (.80)
- ❑ *Positive*
- ❑ *Neutral*
- ❑ *Negative*

Political Consequences Frame (.80)
- ❑ *Substantive*
- ❑ *Ambiguous*

Conflict Frame (1.00)
- ❑ *Present*
- ❑ *Absent*

Conflict Frame (1.00)
- ❑ *Positive*
- ❑ *Neutral*
- ❑ *Negative*

Conflict Frame (.80)
- ❑ *Substantive*
- ❑ *Ambiguous*

Societal Impact/National Identity Frame (1.00)
- ❑ *Present*
- ❑ *Absent*

Societal Impact/National Identity Frame (1.00)
- ❑ *Positive*
- ❑ *Neutral*
- ❑ *Negative*

Societal Impact/National Identity Frame (1.00)
- ❑ *Substantive*
- ❑ *Ambiguous*

Responsibility Frame (.80)
- ❑ *Present*
- ❑ *Absent*

Responsibility Frame (.80)
- ❑ *Positive*
- ❑ *Neutral*
- ❑ *Negative*

Responsibility Frame   (.80)
- ❑ *Substantive*
- ❑ *Ambiguous*

Human Interest Frame   (1.00)
- ❑ *Present*
- ❑ *Absent*

Human Interest Frame   (1.00)
- ❑ *Positive*
- ❑ *Neutral*
- ❑ *Negative*

Human Interest Frame   (1.00)
- ❑ *Substantive*
- ❑ *Ambiguous*

Apathy/Disinterest Frame   (1.00)
- ❑ *Present*
- ❑ *Absent*

Apathy/Disinterest Frame   (1.00)
- ❑ *Positive*
- ❑ *Neutral*
- ❑ *Negative*

Apathy/Disinterest Frame   (1.00)
- ❑ *Substantive*
- ❑ *Ambiguous*

Morality/Values Frame   (.80)
- ❑ *Present*
- ❑ *Absent*

Morality/Values Frame   (.80)
- ❑ *Positive*
- ❑ *Neutral*
- ❑ *Negative*

Morality/Values Frame   (.80)
- ❑ *Substantive*
- ❑ *Ambiguous*

Patient Rights/Choice/Dignity Frame   (1.00)
- ❑ *Present*

❑ *Absent*

Patient Rights/Choice/Dignity Frame (.80)
- ❑ *Positive*
- ❑ *Neutral*
- ❑ *Negative*

Patient Rights/Choice/Dignity Frame (1.00)
- ❑ *Substantive*
- ❑ *Ambiguous*

State Rights/Big Government Frame (1.00)
- ❑ *Present*
- ❑ *Absent*

State Rights/Big Government Frame (1.00)
- ❑ *Positive*
- ❑ *Neutral*
- ❑ *Negative*

State Rights/Big Government Frame (.80)
- ❑ *Substantive*
- ❑ *Ambiguous*

Sympathy/Empathy Frame (1.00)
- ❑ *Present*
- ❑ *Absent*

Sympathy/Empathy Frame (1.00)
- ❑ *Positive*
- ❑ *Neutral*
- ❑ *Negative*

Sympathy/Empathy Frame (1.00)
- ❑ *Substantive*
- ❑ *Ambiguous*

Legality Frame (1.00)
- ❑ *Present*
- ❑ *Absent*

Legality Frame (.80)
- ❑ *Positive*
- ❑ *Neutral*
- ❑ *Negative*

Legality Frame   (.80)
- *Substantive*
- *Ambiguous*

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

List any key words or phrases.

DDNC CODEBOOK

Coder ID

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

Release Number

      Input the three or four digit number identifying each release.

Release Date

      Indicate the original date on which the release ran using an eight-digit number divided by forward slashes (e.g., 04/02/2003 for April 2, 2003).

Release Headline

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

Release Length

      Provide the length of the release based upon total word count, including any headlines and subheads.

Release Classification

      Answers must be constrained to one of the following answers:

- *Hard News* – defined as a release likely to be featured in a hard news section of a media outlet (e.g., the front page). Such a release would consist primarily of facts and information.
- *Soft News (Features)* – defined as a release likely to be featured in a soft news section of a media outlet (e.g., the features page; entertainment page) consisting primarily of biographies, narratives, and areas of interest.
- *Editorial or Opinions Piece* – defined as releases likely to be featured in the editorial section of a media outlet consisting primarily of an individual's or a group's opinion but which might include characteristics of both hard and soft news. Such a release might be attributed to a single person or an organization, such as the DDNC or an outside group.

Primary Release Focus

      Answers must be constrained to one of the following answers:

- *Issue* – defined as featuring coverage that focuses primarily on the issues of physician-assisted suicide, death with dignity, or the laws dealing with both.
- *Organization* – defined as featuring coverage that focuses primarily on the DDNC.

What is the level of coverage dedicated to the DDNC in the release?

      Answers must be constrained to one of the following answers:

- *Prominent* – defined as featuring coverage of the organization as the primary focus of the release. The organization is mentioned within the first two paragraphs of the release and is featured throughout the overall release length. The overall release is about the organization, but may include other information.
- *Moderate* – defined as featuring coverage of the organization as a primary, but not exclusive focus of the release. The organization is mentioned within the first third of the release and is featured in less than two-thirds of the overall release length. For example, a representative of the organization might be quoted, followed by space given to explain the nature and purpose of the organization.
- *Negligible* – defined as featuring minimal coverage of the organization within the release. The organization is featured in less than a third of the overall release length, perhaps even in passing. For example, the organization is mentioned only in the final paragraph or has a single quote attributed to one of its representatives. "Negligible" also describes no mention of the organization at all.

Does the release offer contact information for the DDNC?

Contact information consists of any means made available for contacting any representative body of the DDNC. Answers must be constrained to one of the following answers:

- *Yes*
- *No*

Frames:

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

- *Present* – The frame being coded for is present in the release content. Coders should mark the frame as present no matter its level of prominence.
- *Absent* – The frame being coded for does not exist in the release content.

Answers must be constrained to one of the following answers:

- *Positive* – The frame or information contained within the frame is presented in a positive manner by either the author or a source. Such a positive manner may come across by information or word choice.
- *Neutral* – The frame is presented neither positively nor negatively way, or is presented as both equally.
- *Negative* – The frame or information contained within the frame is presented in a negative manner by either the author or a source. Such a negative manner may come across by information provided or word choice.

Answers must be constrained to one of the following answers:

- *Substantive* – The frame being coded for is prominent throughout at least one-third of the overall release. Although the frame may not be the sole focus of the release, the author does utilize significant time or effort in discussing it.
- *Ambiguous* – The frame being coded for is present but is featured with negligible to moderate prominence. The author may not focus on the frame but it is present in some form.

Answers may consist of any of the following answers:

- *Economic Consequences* – defined as a focus on any short or long-term economic consequences that would come from legal physician-assisted suicide. The consequences may be either positive or negative, and may be for an individual (e.g., a politician; physician) or a group (e.g., the DDNC).
- *Political Consequences* – defined as a focus on any short or long-term political consequences that would come from legal physician-assisted suicide. Political consequences may involve current or potential incarceration in addition to normal political events such as elections. The consequences may be either positive or negative, and may be for an individual (e.g., a politician; physician) or a group (e.g., the DDNC).
- *Conflict* – defined as the direct mention on any conflict dealing with physician-assisted suicide between groups or individuals (e.g., between the DDNC and politicians; between the DDNC and Not Dead Yet). This kind of coverage makes winning and losing the central concern and may be diagnostic in nature or focus on who is seemingly triumphant in this conflict.
- *Societal Impact/National Identity* – defined as a focus on American societal impacts of physician-assisted suicide (e.g., America being seen as a 'suicide nation' around the world; Oregon being seen as a 'suicide state' around the nation).
- *Responsibility* – defined as a focus on responsibility held by any party associated with physician-assisted suicide (e.g., responsibilities of the patients; doctors; families; legislators). Such responsibilities may include obligations held by patients (e.g., steps needed to gain legal permission to commit suicide) or attributions held by organizations (e.g., claiming to have passed legislation).
- *Human Interest* – defined as a focus on a specific person, such as in a biographical piece. Multiple people may be discussed within a single human interest frame. This frame might be exemplified by an individual's story or an emotional angle being added to the presentation of a particular event, issue, or problem.
- *Apathy/Disinterest* – defined as a focus on the lack of interest in the subject of physician-assisted suicide, held by any group (e.g., disinterest on the part of legislators; the average citizen).
- *Morality/Values* – defined as a focus on any moral or religious beliefs dealing with physician-assisted suicide. Such beliefs may be positive (for it) or negative (against it), and can be secular in nature.

□ *Patient Rights/Choice/Dignity* – defined as a focus on the rights and choices available to patients in end of life care. Such a focus might, for example, be on a terminal patient who chooses to die quickly rather then to continue suffering. Conversely, the frame may emphasize a disabled person who chooses to live through any setbacks presented by his or her disability. The focus may also be on other options not associated with physician-assisted suicide, such as hospice care or increased pain medication.

□ *State Rights/Big Government* – defined as a focus on keeping the federal and state jurisdictions separate. For example, federal law could make physician-assisted suicide illegal, negating an Oregon law that deems it not so. Any discussion of separating or uniting state and federal governments fits into this frame.

□ *Sympathy/Empathy* – defined as a focus on sympathetic feelings towards any individual or group involved with physician-assisted suicide. Such a focus might coexist with a human interest frame, but may not always do so. Any negative or positive discussions of pity fit within this frame (e.g., pity for patients; doctors; families; politicians; etc.).

□ *Legality* – defined as a focus the legality of any steps intended to legalize or criminalize physician-assisted suicide. For example, former Attorney General Ashcroft charged Oregon doctors with misuse of federally-controlled medications when the doctors prescribed lethal doses. Subsequently, Ashcroft was found to have overstepped his legal responsibilities in doing so. The legality frame may include the legal and illegal choices made by patients, but also includes discussions of legality beyond patient choices.

Provide a single **noteworthy statement that is most indicative of the overall release.**
Coders will provide the statement exactly as written. Outside attribution is not necessary. The quote or statement should be different, if possible, from any quoted text listed above (i.e., indicative of information provided).

List any key words or phrases.
Defined as any key words or phrases that seem to be specialized jargon or uniquely linked to the topic at hand. For example, *physician-assisted suicide*, *death with dignity*, *euthanasia*, *persistent vegetative state*, *end of life choices*, or *living will* might be considered key words or phrases.

NEWSPAPER CODESHEET

Coder ID

Story Number (1.00)

Story Date (1.00)

Story Headline

Story Length (1.00)

Original Publication (1.00)
- ❏ *The Oregonian*
- ❏ *The Washington Post*
- ❏ *USA Today*
- ❏ *The New York Times*

Story Classification (.85)
- ❏ *Hard News*
- ❏ *Soft News (Features)*
- ❏ *Editorial or Opinions Piece*

Primary Story Focus (1.00)
- ❏ *Issue*
- ❏ *Organization*

What is the level of coverage dedicated to the DDNC in the story? (.92)
- ❏ *Prominent*
- ❏ *Moderate*
- ❏ *Negligible*

Does the story offer contact information for the DDNC? (1.00)
- ❏ *Yes*
- ❏ *No*

Economic Consequences Frame (1.00)
- ❏ *Present*
- ❏ *Absent*

Economic Consequences Frame (1.00)
- ❏ *Positive*
- ❏ *Neutral*
- ❏ *Negative*

Economic Consequences Frame (1.00)
- ❑ *Substantive*
- ❑ *Ambiguous*

Political Consequences Frame (1.00)
- ❑ *Present*
- ❑ *Absent*

Political Consequences Frame (.85)
- ❑ *Positive*
- ❑ *Neutral*
- ❑ *Negative*

Political Consequences Frame (.77)
- ❑ *Substantive*
- ❑ *Ambiguous*

Conflict Frame (.92)
- ❑ *Present*
- ❑ *Absent*

Conflict Frame (.85)
- ❑ *Positive*
- ❑ *Neutral*
- ❑ *Negative*

Conflict Frame (.77)
- ❑ *Substantive*
- ❑ *Ambiguous*

Societal Impact/National Identity Frame (.85)
- ❑ *Present*
- ❑ *Absent*

Societal Impact/National Identity Frame (.85)
- ❑ *Positive*
- ❑ *Neutral*
- ❑ *Negative*

Societal Impact/National Identity Frame (.85)
- ❑ *Substantive*
- ❑ *Ambiguous*

Responsibility Frame (.85)
- ❑ *Present*

❑ *Absent*

Responsibility Frame (.85)
  ❑ *Positive*
  ❑ *Neutral*
  ❑ *Negative*

Responsibility Frame (.85)
  ❑ *Substantive*
  ❑ *Ambiguous*

Human Interest Frame (1.00)
  ❑ *Present*
  ❑ *Absent*

Human Interest Frame (1.00)
  ❑ *Positive*
  ❑ *Neutral*
  ❑ *Negative*

Human Interest Frame (1.00)
  ❑ *Substantive*
  ❑ *Ambiguous*

Apathy/Disinterest Frame (1.00)
  ❑ *Present*
  ❑ *Absent*

Apathy/Disinterest Frame (1.00)
  ❑ *Positive*
  ❑ *Neutral*
  ❑ *Negative*

Apathy/Disinterest Frame (1.00)
  ❑ *Substantive*
  ❑ *Ambiguous*

Morality/Values Frame (.85)
  ❑ *Present*
  ❑ *Absent*

Morality/Values Frame (.85)
  ❑ *Positive*
  ❑ *Neutral*
  ❑ *Negative*

Morality/Values Frame (.77)
- ❑ *Substantive*
- ❑ *Ambiguous*

Patient Rights/Choice/Dignity Frame (1.00)
- ❑ *Present*
- ❑ *Absent*

Patient Rights/Choice/Dignity Frame (.77)
- ❑ *Positive*
- ❑ *Neutral*
- ❑ *Negative*

Patient Rights/Choice/Dignity Frame (1.00)
- ❑ *Substantive*
- ❑ *Ambiguous*

State Rights/Big Government Frame (1.00)
- ❑ *Present*
- ❑ *Absent*

State Rights/Big Government Frame (1.00)
- ❑ *Positive*
- ❑ *Neutral*
- ❑ *Negative*

State Rights/Big Government Frame (.92)
- ❑ *Substantive*
- ❑ *Ambiguous*

Sympathy/Empathy Frame (.85)
- ❑ *Present*
- ❑ *Absent*

Sympathy/Empathy Frame (.85)
- ❑ *Positive*
- ❑ *Neutral*
- ❑ *Negative*

Sympathy/Empathy Frame (.85)
- ❑ *Substantive*
- ❑ *Ambiguous*

Legality Frame (1.00)
- ❑ *Present*

❏ *Absent*

Legality Frame (.85)
❏ *Positive*
❏ *Neutral*
❏ *Negative*

Legality Frame (.92)
❏ *Substantive*
❏ *Ambiguous*

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

List any key words or phrases.

NEWSPAPER CODEBOOK

Coder ID

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

Story Number

> Input the three or four digit number identifying each story.

Story Date

> Indicate the original date on which the story ran using an eight-digit number divided by forward slashes (e.g., 04/02/2003 for April 2, 2003).

Story Headline

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

Story Length

> Provide the length of the story based upon total word count, including any headlines and subheads.

Original Publication

> Answers must be constrained to one of the following answers:

- ❑ *The Oregonian*
- ❑ *The Washington Post*
- ❑ *USA Today*
- ❑ *The New York Times*

Story Classification

> Answers must be constrained to one of the following answers:

- ❑ *Hard News* – defined as a story likely to be featured in a hard news section of a media outlet (e.g., the front page). Such a story would consist primarily of facts and information.
- ❑ *Soft News (Features)* – defined as a story likely to be featured in a soft news section of a media outlet (e.g., the features page; entertainment page) consisting primarily of biographies, narratives, and areas of interest.
- ❑ *Editorial or Opinions Piece* – defined as stories likely to be featured in the editorial section of a media outlet consisting primarily of an individual's or a group's opinion but which might include characteristics of both hard and soft news. Such a story might be attributed to a single person or an organization, such as the DDNC or an outside group. Letters to the editor should also be classified as editorial or opinions pieces.

Primary Story Focus

Answers must be constrained to one of the following answers:

- ❑ *Issue* – defined as featuring coverage that focuses primarily on the issues of physician-assisted suicide, death with dignity, or the laws dealing with both.
- ❑ *Organization* – defined as featuring coverage that focuses primarily on the DDNC.

What is the level of coverage dedicated to the DDNC in the story?
Answers must be constrained to one of the following answers:

- ❑ *Prominent* – defined as featuring coverage of the organization as the primary focus of the story. The organization is mentioned within the first two paragraphs of the story and is featured throughout the overall story length. The overall story is about the organization, but may include other information.
- ❑ *Moderate* – defined as featuring coverage of the organization as a primary, but not exclusive focus of the story. The organization is mentioned within the first third of the story and is featured in less than two-thirds of the overall story length. For example, a representative of the organization might be quoted, followed by space given to explain the nature and purpose of the organization.
- ❑ *Negligible* – defined as featuring minimal coverage of the organization within the story. The organization is featured in less than a third of the overall story length, perhaps even in passing. For example, the organization is mentioned only in the final paragraph or has a single quote attributed to one of its representatives. "Negligible" also describes no mention of the organization at all.

Does the story offer contact information for the DDNC?
Contact information consists of any means made available for contacting any representative body of the DDNC. Answers must be constrained to one of the following answers:

- ❑ *Yes*
- ❑ *No*

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

- ❑ *Present* – The frame being coded for is present in the story content. Coders should mark the frame as present no matter its level of prominence.
- ❑ *Absent* – The frame being coded for does not exist in the story content.

Answers must be constrained to one of the following answers:

- *Positive* – The frame or information contained within the frame is presented in a positive manner by either the author or a source. Such a positive manner may come across by information or word choice.
- *Neutral* – The frame is presented neither positively nor negatively way, or is presented as both equally.
- *Negative* – The frame or information contained within the frame is presented in a negative manner by either the author or a source. Such a negative manner may come across by information provided or word choice.

Answers must be constrained to one of the following answers:

- *Substantive* – The frame being coded for is prominent throughout at least one-third of the overall story. Although the frame may not be the sole focus of the story, the author does utilize significant time or effort in discussing it.
- *Ambiguous* – The frame being coded for is present but is featured with negligible to moderate prominence. The author may not focus on the frame but it is present in some form.

Answers may consist of any of the following answers:

- *Economic Consequences* – defined as a focus on any short or long-term economic consequences that would come from legal physician-assisted suicide. The consequences may be either positive or negative, and may be for an individual (e.g., a politician; physician) or a group (e.g., the DDNC).
- *Political Consequences* – defined as a focus on any short or long-term political consequences that would come from legal physician-assisted suicide. Political consequences may involve current or potential incarceration in addition to normal political events such as elections. The consequences may be either positive or negative, and may be for an individual (e.g., a politician; physician) or a group (e.g., the DDNC).
- *Conflict* – defined as the direct mention on any conflict dealing with physician-assisted suicide between groups or individuals (e.g., between the DDNC and politicians; between the DDNC and Not Dead Yet). This kind of coverage makes winning and losing the central concern and may be diagnostic in nature or focus on who is seemingly triumphant in this conflict.
- *Societal Impact/National Identity* – defined as a focus on American societal impacts of physician-assisted suicide (e.g., America being seen as a 'suicide nation' around the world; Oregon being seen as a 'suicide state' around the nation).
- *Responsibility* – defined as a focus on responsibility held by any party associated with physician-assisted suicide (e.g., responsibilities of the patients; doctors; families; legislators). Such responsibilities may include obligations held by patients (e.g., steps needed to gain legal permission to commit suicide) or attributions held by organizations (e.g., claiming to have passed legislation).
- *Human Interest* – defined as a focus on a specific person, such as in a biographical piece. Multiple people may be discussed within a single human

interest frame. This frame might be exemplified by an individual's story or an emotional angle being added to the presentation of a particular event, issue, or problem.

- ❑ *Apathy/Disinterest* – defined as a focus on the lack of interest in the subject of physician-assisted suicide, held by any group (e.g., disinterest on the part of legislators; the average citizen).

- ❑ *Morality/Values* – defined as a focus on any moral or religious beliefs dealing with physician-assisted suicide. Such beliefs may be positive (for it) or negative (against it), and can be secular in nature.

- ❑ *Patient Rights/Choice/Dignity* – defined as a focus on the rights and choices available to patients in end of life care. Such a focus might, for example, be on a terminal patient who chooses to die quickly rather then to continue suffering. Conversely, the frame may emphasize a disabled person who chooses to live through any setbacks presented by his or her disability. The focus may also be on other options not associated with physician-assisted suicide, such as hospice care or increased pain medication.

- ❑ *State Rights/Big Government* – defined as a focus on keeping the federal and state jurisdictions separate. For example, federal law could make physician-assisted suicide illegal, negating an Oregon law that deems it not so. Any discussion of separating or uniting state and federal governments fits into this frame.

- ❑ *Sympathy/Empathy* – defined as a focus on sympathetic feelings towards any individual or group involved with physician-assisted suicide. Such a focus might coexist with a human interest frame, but may not always do so. Any negative or positive discussions of pity fit within this frame (e.g., pity for patients; doctors; families; politicians; etc.).

- ❑ *Legality* – defined as a focus the legality of any steps intended to legalize or criminalize physician-assisted suicide. For example, former Attorney General Ashcroft charged Oregon doctors with misuse of federally-controlled medications when the doctors prescribed lethal doses. Subsequently, Ashcroft was found to have overstepped his legal responsibilities in doing so. The legality frame may include the legal and illegal choices made by patients, but also includes discussions of legality beyond patient choices.

Provide a single **noteworthy statement that is most indicative of the overall story.**
Coders will provide the statement exactly as written. Outside attribution is not necessary. The quote or statement should be different, if possible, from any quoted text listed above (i.e., indicative of information provided).

List any key words or phrases.
Defined as any key words or phrases that seem to be specialized jargon or uniquely linked to the topic at hand. For example, *physician-assisted suicide*, *death with dignity*, *euthanasia*, *persistent vegetative state*, *end of life choices*, or *living will* might be considered key words or phrases.

[i] IR=2M/(N1+N2), where M is the number of agreements between the coders, N1 is the total number of coding decisions made by Coder 1 and N2 is the total number of coding decisions made by Coder 2.