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Media Coverage of Tennessee's Amendment 1

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Media Coverage of Tennessee's Amendment 1

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College Scholars Program

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

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Introduction

In 2014, Tennesseans went to the polls to vote on a controversial abortion amendment to the state constitution that was years in the making. Two organizations – *Yes on 1* and *No on One* – spent millions of dollars on advertising to insert their rhetoric into the public debate and sway voter opinion. To some, Amendment 1 represented a chance for Tennesseans to take back control over abortion regulations in the state and protect women and girls. To others, the measure went too far and constituted unnecessary government interference into private decisions. For many, the issue set two deeply-held values against one another: personal privacy rights and disapproval of abortion. The fierce – and expensive – battle over Amendment 1 played out on social media, in television ads, and in news media coverage of the issue.

Legal Background

The state of Tennessee has had abortion regulations on the books since at least 1883, when the state outlawed all abortion except to save the life of the mother. This remained the prevailing law until *Roe v. Wade* recognized the right to an abortion in 1973. In the years following *Roe*, Tennessee revised its criminal abortion statutes, introducing mandatory two-day waiting periods, informed consent requirements, and other regulations. In *Planned Parenthood v. Sundquist* (Tenn., 2000), in which several of these abortion regulations were contested, the state argued that Tennessee should follow the federal Supreme Court ruling in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* (1992). In that case, the U.S. Supreme Court abandoned the "strict scrutiny" constitutional standard of review used in *Roe* and adopted a lower "undue burden" standard. This undue burden test gave states broader powers in enacting abortion regulations.

The Tennessee Supreme Court ultimately decided in *Sundquist* that the state constitution guaranteed a broader right to privacy than the federal constitution and abortion regulations

should be reviewed under the "strict scrutiny" test. The court concluded that "a woman's right to terminate her pregnancy is a vital part of the right to privacy under the Tennessee Constitution" (*Planned Parenthood v. Sundquist*, 2000). Moreover, the court ruled that the abortion regulations at issue – requirements for second trimester hospitalizations, informed consent, physician-only counseling, mandatory two-day waiting period, and medical emergency exceptions – did not pass the strict scrutiny test.

Amendment One

In his dissenting opinion in the *Sundquist* case, Justice William Barker wrote that the ruling effectively removed "from the people all power, except by constitutional amendment, to enact reasonable regulations of abortion" (*Planned Parenthood v. Sundquist*, 2000). The ruling caused many in the state to believe that any new abortion regulations would be struck down and the court had opened the door for abortion providers to operate without licensing or regulation (Doyle, 2015). David Fowler, president of the Family Action Council of Tennessee and Republican state senator, read Justice Barker's dissent and decided to create the kind of amendment he wrote about. Though Fowler filed the amendment the year after the *Sundquist* ruling, it was not approved by the legislature until 2011.

The full text of the amendment reads:

"Nothing in this Constitution secures or protects a right to abortion or requires the funding of an abortion. The people retain the right through their elected state representatives and state senators to enact, amend, or repeal statutes regarding abortion, including, but not limited to, circumstances of pregnancy resulting from rape or incest or when necessary to save the life of the mother."

Political campaigns

Once the amendment was on the ballot for the 2014 election, two campaigns formed to fight for public opinion on the issue: *Yes on 1* and *No on One*. To disseminate their views, each side spent an enormous amount of money on advertising buys in media markets throughout the state. The fight over Amendment 1 became one of the most expensive referendum ballots in recent state history (Wadhvani, 2014). A total of 8,079 television ad spots ran in the months leading up to Election Day, with *Yes on 1* spending a total of \$1,301,906.25 and *No on One* spending \$2,462,637 on ads (Jasperson, Kelley, & Bennett, 2016). Both campaigns also launched social media accounts and websites to house their platforms. They also enlisted faith leaders, medical professionals, community leaders, and politicians to act as spokespeople.

The *Yes on 1* campaign was launched on November 4, 2013 – exactly one year before the mid-term election – at a "Heartbeats for Life" event at Cornerstone Church in Madison, Tennessee (Jasperson et al., 2016). The group gained support from politicians such as Governor Bill Haslam and Senator Lamar Alexander, organizations like Tennessee Right to Life, and individuals like Jim Bob Duggar ("Yes on 1"). It was funded primarily by large churches in Tennessee, businesses, and pro-life organizations (TN Bureau of Ethics and Campaign Finance, 2014). For *Yes on 1*, the amendment represented a chance for the state legislature to restore "common sense" laws to "protect the health and safety of women and girls considering abortion" ("Yes on 1"). They hoped that passage of Amendment 1 would "open the door" for abortion policies such as informed consent, inspection of abortion clinics, and hospitalization for late-term abortions – policies they said "each of Tennessee's 8 border states" already had ("Yes on 1"). *Yes on 1* argued that the lack of abortion regulations had caused Tennessee to become an "abortion

destination." The campaign also said that Amendment 1 would return the state constitution to neutral on the question of tax payer funding of abortion ("Yes on 1").

"Vote NO on One Tennessee, Inc." was created to oppose Amendment 1 and gained support from the Democratic Party of Tennessee, Planned Parenthood, the ACLU, and other organizations. The group's largest donor was Planned Parenthood of the Great Northwest, which contributed \$800,000 to the effort (Jaspersen et al., 2016). *No on One* called Amendment 1 "dangerous" and confusingly written. The group campaigned against what they claimed was "government interference" into "personal, private medical decisions" ("No on One"). *No on One's* website said Amendment 1 would allow the state legislature to pass unnecessary restrictions to abortion access and "could even ban abortion without exceptions for rape, incest, or health of the woman" ("No on One"). *No on One* argued that decisions about abortion were best left up to women in consultation with their doctors, faith, and family, and one did not need to be pro-choice to agree that Amendment 1 "goes too far" ("No on One").

On November 4, 2014 – after months of debate over the contentious issue and 14 years post-*Sundquist* – Tennesseans went to the polls to vote on Amendment 1. The divisive amendment passed with 53 percent of those who voted in the governor's race – 728,751 votes in favor and 656,427 votes against the amendment (Wadhvani, 2014).

Literature Review

The battle over Tennessee's Amendment 1 can be situated in a larger discussion of the news coverage of abortion issues and the influence of campaign messaging on the work of journalists. There is a wide variety of existing research on the way abortion issues are approached and framed by media outlets and the role of media in public policy debates.

Research shows that the public is dependent on media for political information. Media outlets are not merely "common carriers" of information (Price, 1992), but have the ability to shape public policy and either reinforce the status quo or promote societal changes (Spitzer, 1992). By setting the agenda and elevating certain concerns over others, media has the power to influence the importance citizens place on reported issues (Krosnick & Brannon, 1993). News discourse plays an important role in framing public policy issues and shaping public debate (Gamson, 1988).

Of particular importance is the way that journalists frame issues in news coverage. Frames function as a way to "select and highlight some features of reality and obscure others in a way that tells a consistent story about problems, their causes, moral implications, and remedies" (Entman, 1996). Frames highlight certain information about an issue, elevating it in salience and making that information more likely that the audience will perceive the information, discern meaning, and process it (Fiske and Taylor, 1991). While frames call attention to certain aspects of the reality they describe, they necessarily take attention away from other aspects.

The manner in which journalists approach news stories and the sources that they use can be affected by professional norms and standards. For example, reporters in the United States are more likely to have been trained to approach stories with "journalistic objectivity," or reporting without the intervention of the biased or partisan views of the writer (Washbourne, 2010).

Valuing objectivity, however, does not always lead to the best or most legitimate news coverage. Rather, it tends to systematically favor coverage of the predominant or official perspective on issues (Bennett, 2005). Journalists, whether or not they are aware of it, often reinforce dominant ideology as natural and universal (Akhavan-Majid & Ramaprasad, 2000). Rohlinger (2007) looked at media coverage of abortion issues by analyzing 1,424 stories on abortion in nine U.S. media outlets and interviewing journalists, editors, and producers. She found that political media outlets provide higher quality discourse than that of mainstream outlets and mainstream journalists assume that the general public is familiar with, and has already taken a firm stance on, abortion.

Experts have debated whether it is appropriate for journalists to provide commentary and context in their stories or simply stick to the facts. Fink and Schudson (2013) traced the rise of contextual reporting, or journalists providing context and analysis rather than relying solely on frames from external sources, from the 1950s to 2000s. Their content analysis of three major newspapers revealed that contextual reporting grew from just under 10% of articles in 1955 to about 40% in 2003.

Another important aspect of reporting is the selection of sources and story subjects. In general, reporters are solely responsible for choosing sources and conducting interviews for articles. Source selection can depend on a variety of factors, including access, audience considerations, and the source's availability and willingness to act as a representative. Powers and Fico (1994) surveyed 121 reporters at major U.S. newspapers and found that the most influential variables in source selection were source credibility, source accessibility, and time pressure. They concluded that the most powerful influence in shaping news content was journalists' own personal judgements and views on source qualities. Stocking and LaMarca

(1990) suggest that reporters do not tend to seek out or select sources who refute their ideas. In D'Angelo's (2002) constructionist paradigm, media producers are conceptualized as information processors who rely on sources they deem "credible" to make substantive contributions to the "issue culture" on a given topic. Journalists are part of the same cultural system as the public and therefore rely on the frames that resonate with them and with media consumers.

The make-up and background of newsmakers also significantly influences media coverage. Research shows that women are the subjects of news stories in about the same proportion that they appear in positions as newsmakers (Silver, 1986). When women are in the byline of a story, it is likely that women will also appear within the article as a source or subject (Armstrong, 2004). Armstrong (2004) found that "female writers were more likely to write about women and showcase women in news coverage, whereas male writers were more likely to include males in their stories." Women are still underrepresented as both newsmakers and sources of news coverage. A 2015 report from Global Media Monitoring found that in the U.S. women were outnumbered by men as newsmakers in every major news topic and only make up 24% of people in the news (Global Media Monitoring, 2015). Women are also underrepresented in politics and government reporting, with only 30% of these stories being written by women (Global Media Monitoring, 2015).

Frames and messaging disseminated by outside pressure or advocacy groups can influence reporting, especially with a contentious and oppositional issue like abortion. News coverage can legitimize frames put forward by interest groups and other political actors. Interest groups have a "dependent yet competitive" relationship with media and rely on media to insert their rhetoric and issue frames into the public debate (Terkildsen, 1998). Barnett (2005) found that the National Organization for Women strategically framed its news releases to correct

frames used by journalists that ignored or disregarded the work of social movement organizations. Interest group rhetoric can also influence and develop the public vocabulary used to talk about an issue (Condit, 1990). Whether interest groups are successful at gaining representation in media depends on a variety of factors. By analyzing print media coverage of abortion issues over 20 years, Terkildsen (1998) found that the way coverage is structured is influenced by professional norms, journalists' personal values, technical considerations, and marketplace constraints

Both sides of the debate over Tennessee's Amendment 1 disseminated strategic political messages – through social media, online news, and advertising – in an effort to influence media coverage of the issue and, ultimately, the outcome of the vote. Past research illustrates the conflict between the right to privacy and the right to life in the abortion debate (Alvarez and Brehm, 1995). Jasperson, Kelley, and Bennett (2016) studied the competing media frames in the battle over Amendment 1. They collected ad buys and online news coverage from across the state to provide measures of each campaign's messaging strategy and the degree to which these messages were reflected in press coverage. They found that the power of particular message frames could make a difference in persuading voters which way to vote or whether to vote. Their analysis showed that while the majority of news coverage was balanced, the *No on One* campaign had a slight advantage over the *Yes on 1* campaign in framing the debate in traditional online media. This study also analyzed the social media posts of both campaigns and determined that the most prevalent frames were: Religion/faith, life, individual privacy, government regulation, and medical/health (Jasperson, Kelley, & Bennett, 2016). Their study took a quantitative approach to coverage and analyzed articles for their “balance” between the two sides' messaging. My study takes a qualitative approach and analyzes how the frames themselves

were used in media coverage. Their analysis of news coverage of Amendment One illustrates how often stories could be deemed “balanced” or skewed in favor of one campaign or the other. However, this assumes that news coverage of this issue should be a balance between political views and does not tell the full story of the complex relationship between the messaging of political campaigns and the extent to which journalists adopt existing frames.

Methodology

For this study, I aimed to analyze the news coverage of Amendment 1 from a variety of media outlets across the state of Tennessee. I conducted a theoretical thematic analysis of 109 news articles from 11 Tennessee newspapers and one wire service. I also conducted a quantitative content analysis of the sources and authors of this sample. Before I began work, I developed a series of primary and secondary research questions to guide my study:

Primary research questions

- How did Tennessee media outlets frame the debate surrounding Amendment 1? What themes were represented across the data set?
- How did journalists process and interpret messages from political campaigns for and against Amendment 1?

Secondary research questions:

- What kind of sources were most frequently represented in media coverage of Amendment 1?
- To what extent did journalists engage in critique as opposed to simple representation of either side of the debate over Amendment 1? When and how did they engage in this critique?
- How did journalists engage in the production of balance in their coverage?
- Were there differences in the coverage of Amendment 1 across different types of media outlets (major, local, alternative, and wire service)?

Sampling procedure

For my data sample, I looked at the news coverage of Amendment 1 from 12 Tennessee newspapers and the state *Associated Press* wire service. My sample includes four "major" daily newspapers in the state (*The Tennessean*, *Knoxville News Sentinel*, *The Commercial Appeal*, *Chattanooga Times Free Press*) that serve populations of over 100,000 people (and therefore have larger circulation numbers). I differentiate this from "local" papers (*The Daily Times*, *Cleveland Daily Banner*, *Herald-Citizen*, *Paris Post-Intelligencer*, *Lebanon Democrat*) located in towns with populations of under 100,000 people. A third category of media I included in my sample is "alternative weekly" newspapers (*Nashville Scene*, *Memphis Flyer*), which can be differentiated from major and local newspapers by their focus, stylized reporting, and issue frequency. The last category in my sample is "wire services," which includes the *Associated Press* wire for the state.

I wanted to ensure that my sample would be representative of the state of Tennessee as a whole, so I included newspapers from Middle (4), West (3), and East (5) Tennessee. I was somewhat limited in the newspaper archives that I could fully access online, and some of the newspapers I wanted to include (e.g., *The Jackson Sun*) were not available to me without a subscription. I accessed the majority of the newspaper archives through the "Newsbank Access World News" database. To access articles from *The Tennessean*, I used the "Tennessee Electronic Library" database for the newspaper. For one newspaper (*Memphis Flyer*), I accessed article archives through the search function on the newspaper's website.

Table 1*Selected Media Outlets*

<i>Media Outlet</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Population Served</i>
<i>The Tennessean</i>	Major	Nashville	654,610
<i>Knoxville News Sentinel</i>	Major	Knoxville	185,291
<i>The Commercial Appeal</i>	Major	Memphis	655,770
<i>Chattanooga Times Free Press</i>	Major	Chattanooga	176,588
<i>The Daily Times</i>	Local	Maryville	28,464
<i>The Cleveland Daily Banner</i>	Local	Cleveland	43,898
<i>Herald Citizen</i>	Local	Cookeville	32,113
<i>Paris Post-Intelligencer</i>	Local	Paris	10,150
<i>Lebanon Democrat</i>	Local	Lebanon	30,262
<i>Nashville Scene</i>	Alternative Weekly	Nashville	654,610
<i>Memphis Flyer</i>	Alternative Weekly	Memphis	655,770
<i>Associated Press Tennessee Wire</i>	Wire Service	Statewide	n/a

*Table 1 Population data from the U.S. Census (2015)**Article search terms*

For each newspaper, I searched the archives for "Amendment One OR Amendment 1" to account for possible variation in spelling. I limited the time period of the search to November 2013 to November 4, 2014, or the month that the amendment was greenlit for the ballot until Election

Day. I recorded the number of articles that resulted from each search and analyzed each article to determine whether it met my sample criteria. Before I began going through articles, I decided that my sample would include:

- Articles about Amendment 1 that include a substantive discussion of the issue. A "substantive discussion" consists of:

- At least three paragraphs devoted to Amendment 1 specifically
- A discussion of the debate over Amendment 1
- More than just voting information or the text of the amendment
- Preferably at least two sources quoted discussing the amendment

- Editorials and op-eds about Amendment 1 specifically (or, if not solely about the amendment, at least contain a substantive discussion of it)

I also determined which articles I would exclude from my sample:

- Letters to the editor
- Articles about the midterm election or voting in general (that do not contain a substantive discussion of Amendment 1)
- Any article that mentions Amendment 1 but does not provide a substantive discussion

I went through 488 articles, and an example of my rationale for including or excluding articles is available in Appendix A. I excluded several articles that contained only the text of the amendment; focused on Amendment 1 campaign spending or opinion polling, but did not contain a substantive discussion of the debate surrounding the amendment; or contained just a brief

mention of the amendment. Once I narrowed down my sample, I was left with 109 articles on Amendment 1 that met my criteria.

Analytical procedure

To analyze my data set, I took a theoretical thematic approach following the guidelines put forward by Braun and Clarke (2006). Thematic analysis is a method of "identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns within data" and organizing them into themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This method allowed me to search across the data set for repeated patterns of meaning created by journalists in the news coverage of Amendment 1. I took a constructionist approach with my analysis, examining the sociocultural context that my data set is situated in and the ways it is a product of surrounding events, realities, and experiences. My analysis was also guided by Baptiste's (2001) description of the qualitative data analysis process, which includes classifying the data through tagging and labeling.

First, I familiarized myself with the data sample through repeated readings of the articles. Then, I generated an initial list of codes from a close reading of the texts. Codes "identify a feature of the data (semantic content or latent) that appears interesting to the analyst..." (Braun & Clarke, 2006). To create this list, I printed out all 109 articles, highlighted themes and ideas, and made notes in the margins (See Appendix B for examples of this process). In my first reading, I was as inclusive as possible and pulled out any salient ideas, frames, arguments, or perspectives on Amendment 1 in the data set. I tagged any information that would be relevant to my research questions. Then, I analyzed these codes, searching for, reviewing, and defining themes.

Quantitative content analysis

For this section of my analysis, I first coded each article for whether the author was a man or woman. Some articles were written by newspaper staff or did not specify an author. These articles were labeled as "Staff/Other." To determine the sex of the authors, I first labeled "man" or "woman" for the author names that were obviously masculine (e.g. "John" or "Greg") or feminine (e.g. "Katie" or "Anita"). If there was any ambiguity about the name, I researched the author, tried to locate first-person writing in which they expressed their own pronouns, and looked for photos of them. Although names are not conclusive determinants of gender identity, they are a reliable estimation. It was beyond the scope of this study to reach out to each author for confirmation.

Next, I created criteria for the sources that would be included in my analysis. I decided that sources would be included if:

- They were individuals or organizations that were directly quoted or paraphrased
- The source discussed Amendment 1 directly (not just abortion in general, polling results, or election procedures)

Sources that would not be included:

- Those that were not directly quoted or paraphrased
- Those that did not directly talk about Amendment 1 (i.e. sources discussing other amendments on the ballot or other issues)
- Data, research, and studies that were not directly related to Amendment 1 (i.e. a study on national abortion trends would not be included)

I coded each source for their stance on Amendment 1, including Pro-Amendment 1, Anti-Amendment 1, and neutral, based **only** on the statements they made in the article. Next, I coded

each source as man, woman, or organization/group, using the same method for determining sex that I used for authors. Finally, I coded each source for type: faith leader, medical professional, campaign spokesperson, politician/government official, statement from an organization, individual with a personal story, academic/professor, or other. I only tagged sources as "medical professional" if their primary profession was as a nurse, doctor, or other medical worker. So, for example, the executive director of a clinic would not be tagged as a medical professional because their role is largely administrative. Campaign spokespeople included any sources that were affiliated with the *Yes on 1* or *No on One* campaigns. Some sources were tagged in more than one category.

Results

Thematic analysis

After creating an initial list of codes from my data set, I organized the most common codes into six broader themes: The role and power of government; decision-making power; values/belief systems; national attention and regional reputation; confusion over Amendment 1; and protecting women.

The Role and Power of Government

Throughout the data set, differing perspectives on the proper role and function of government emerged. Those in support of and in opposition to Amendment 1 both expressed issues with the way the state government was functioning with regard to abortion policies.

On the *Yes on 1* side, sources across the data set said that the Tennessee Supreme Court ruling in 2000 was too "extreme" and resulted in "a few judges" dictating the outcome of abortion policies for the state. In several articles, a dichotomy was set up between "appointed judges" who do not represent the views of most Tennesseans and "elected representatives" who can act in the best interest of voters. For example, in a *Commercial Appeal* article titled "Constitution preoccupies ballot drama," *Yes on 1* advocate Sue Parker said: "[Amendment 1] basically would restore the Tennessee Constitution to what it was before the Tennessee Supreme Court justices threw out all common-sense regulation on abortion. We feel strongly this is not a reflection of the people of Tennessee, only of a few judges."

The passage of Amendment 1 – to those who supported it – would result in the restoration of power to voters who had been "silenced" by the court ruling. *Yes on 1*'s first television ad, which promoted this idea, was specifically covered by two news outlets. The 30-second spot featured a group of people with black tape over their mouths, with a voice-over

saying the state Supreme Court ruling "silenced the right of the people to enforce reasonable regulation of abortion in our state."

Yes on 1 advocates also espoused the idea that after the *Sundquist* ruling, the state legislature lost all "legal basis" for licensing or regulating abortion clinics and was restricted in its ability to pass policies regarding abortion. A columnist in the *Cleveland Daily Banner* claimed that the court ruling "left our state with no legal authority to pass measures that ensure the health and safety of women who may use these medical facilities." Another recurring idea was that Amendment 1 would simply restore the Tennessee Constitution to a "neutral" position on abortion – a sentiment that was repeated by sources like Governor Bill Haslam.

Those who opposed Amendment 1 said the measure would put too much power over abortion in the hands of the legislature and allow politicians to control women. *No on One* advocates stressed the importance of privacy rights and argued that politically-motivated actors should not be involved in personal medical decisions. Frequently, the amendment was characterized as "government interference" in private matters. In one *Knoxville News Sentinel* article, Hedy Weinberg, executive director of the ACLU of Tennessee, said: "Forty-one years after *Roe*, some politicians are still trying to take a woman's right to abortion away. In November, Tennesseans have the opportunity to vote against government interference in our personal, private reproductive health care decisions."

Another pervading view was that Amendment 1 would cause a slippery slope, with politicians passing enough "arbitrary" restrictions to make abortion technically legal, but effectively inaccessible. Opponents also claimed that Amendment 1 could give legislators the power to outlaw abortion altogether if *Roe v. Wade* was overturned. Two papers (*Herald-Citizen* and *Cleveland Daily Banner*) used the same statement from Planned Parenthood of Middle and

East Tennessee summing up this viewpoint: “Amendment 1 is an attempt to remove the ‘fundamental right to privacy’ from Tennessee’s Constitution and to give anti-abortion politicians in the General Assembly unlimited authority to pass burdensome and unnecessary restrictions and regulations on abortion, including banning all abortions.”

Table 2

Theme 1: The Role and Power of Government

<i>Included Codes</i>	<i>Examples</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amendment 1 would give legislature "ultimate authority" over abortion • The 2000 court ruling lessened restrictions on abortion • "Government interference" • Slippery slope, politicians could go too far • Legislature passes "arbitrary" laws on abortion • Legislature could pass laws previously ruled unconstitutional • Politicians don't understand • Legislature controlling women • Legislature should focus on other things • Judges, not legislature, are deciding policies • Ruling by "a few judges" is not representative of TN • Court ruling took power away from people on abortion, "silenced" voters • Restoring power to voters • 2000 ruling was "extreme" • State lacks "legal basis" for licensing/inspecting clinics • Escape the "grasp" of the court that legislated "from the bench" • Returning state constitution to neutral 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "No politician has the right to legislate these personal and private decisions, but that's what Amendment 1 would do," she adds. "Amendment 1 is just government interference." • "Four Tennessee Supreme Court justices, instead of your elected representatives, decided abortion policies for all of Tennessee." • "Politicians should not be interfering in personal medical decisions when they do not understand the medical basis of those decisions or the physical, emotional or economic impact of each individual pregnancy." • "The last thing I want is the legislature to tell my wife or my daughters whether they can or cannot have an abortion." • "Campaign officials say they hope to convince voters that Tennessee lawmakers cannot be trusted to make reasonable rules."

Decision-making power

“Politicians or doctors. Who decides what’s best for a woman’s health?” asked Rabbi Micah Greenstein in the *Memphis Commercial Appeal*. The debate surrounding Amendment 1 was centered, in part, around this question of decision-making power.

For the *No on One* camp, the answer was clear: the choice to have an abortion is a private medical decision best left up to women. Amendment 1, for this side, represented a majority-male legislature trying to make decisions for women and roll back "hard-won" abortion rights. In the *Commercial Appeal*, for example, a *No on One* supporter said: “Brave men and women sacrificed, and yes, some even died for us to gain our rights. Yet these rights today are being threatened by those who wish to control our personal decisions that only a woman is entitled to make.” In the *Lebanon Democrat*, a *No on One* advocate said Amendment 1 "basically puts the decision back in the hands of those very politically motivated actors who are worried about re-election, rather than real, reproductive health care for women.”

In articles from at least five outlets, however, statements about decision-making were qualified by saying women will make the decision "in consultation" with their faith, doctor, and/or family. In the *Times-Free Press*, Jeff Teague, the president and CEO of Planned Parenthood of Middle and East Tennessee, said "pretty much any Tennessean is going to agree that these are private medical decisions best left to a woman in consultation with her family, her faith, and her doctors..." The *No on One* side also claimed that the amendment would allow the legislature to regulate abortion with no exceptions for rape, incest, or the life of the mother – possibly severely limiting personal decision-making power in those circumstances.

For *Yes on 1* supporters, Amendment 1 was thought to give decision-making power on abortion policy back to Tennesseans through their elected representatives. There was less focus

on the choice to get an abortion and more discussion of decision-making in abortion policy. In the *Cleveland Daily Banner*, for example, one Amendment 1 supporter said the measure would "return to the voice of the people, through their elected representatives, the ability to manage the issue that is abortion in Tennessee." Some amendment supporters also said they were "speaking for the unborn" or advocating "civil rights" for the unborn.

Both sides made references to the difficulty of making the decision to have an abortion. Some opponents of the amendment called it a "painful," "heartbreaking," or "lonely" choice that women do not take lightly. One *No on One* supporter in the *Tennessean*, for example, told the story of one woman who "spoke with her family, clergy and several doctors around the country. At the end of that research, she made the painful decision to terminate the pregnancy." In a *Times Free Press* column, a *No on One* advocate wrote that in "tragic circumstances, families deserve to make their own difficult, private decisions." Proponents of Amendment 1 said that women often "regret" their decision to get an abortion and need to be given more information on the procedure. One *Yes on 1* supporter in the *Cleveland Daily Banner* said that if the amendment passed, "options and protections can be in place that will make [the mother's] future safer, brighter, and free of guilt."

Table 3*Theme 2: Decision-Making Power*

<i>Included Codes</i>	<i>Examples</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Men making decisions for/restricting women • Women facing tough situations • Privacy issue, private decision • Women know best • Amendment wouldn't affect abortion immediately • Abortion is a "lonely and difficult" decision • Abortion is never a preferred choice • Abortion is a difficult/painful/heartbreaking decision • Decision should be made by women in consultation with family, Dr. and faith • Women don't take decision lightly • Amendment will help to prevent "on-demand abortions" • Amendment 1 is a threat to civil rights • Women "regret" their decision to get an abortion • Women need more info on the procedure • Defending "hard-won" abortion rights • Leaves no room for exceptions • Speaking out for the unborn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Do we want our legislators to be making our medical decisions for us or do we want the women and doctor with the counsel of her faith and her family to be making medical decisions?" • Amendment 1 would "return to the voice of the people, through their elected representatives, the ability to manage the issue that is abortion in Tennessee." • "This basically puts the decision back in the hands of those very politically motivated actors who are worried about re-election," she said, "rather than real, reproductive health care for women." • "Martin spoke with her family, clergy and several doctors around the country. At the end of that research, she made the painful decision to terminate the pregnancy." • "She believes it is better that each woman make her own private decision, in consultation with her family, doctor and faith."

Values and Belief Systems

Throughout the data set, personal values, beliefs, and faith played a prominent role in the debate over Amendment 1. In several articles, there was discussion of conflicting values at play in the amendment battle. As one *Associated Press* article put it: "The most hard-fought of four constitutional amendments on the Tennessee ballot Tuesday pits two red state values against each other: disapproval of abortion and dislike of big government."

The *No on One* side emphasized the value of personal privacy and aversion to government interference as main reasons to vote against the amendment. In the *Knoxville News Sentinel*, one columnist wrote: "Tennesseans are a fiercely independent folk, defiantly resistant to government interference in their personal lives, especially in matters of faith and family." Similarly, an opinion writer in the *Commercial Appeal* claimed: "This opposition to government interference in personal and private medical decisions should come as no surprise. Tennesseans have always been independent, and most of us strongly believe in an individual's right and ability to make the best decisions for herself and her family." The amendment was framed as an attempt to remove the fundamental right to privacy in the state constitution.

On the other side, *Yes on 1* focused on the value of life. Joshua Duggar, quoted in the *Tennessean*, claimed that Tennessee is "a pro-life state" and "Amendment 1 is an amendment that anyone who is pro-life must support." *Yes on 1* supporters believed that the amendment would allow state legislators to pass laws that reflected the values of Tennesseans. Another supporter, in the *Cleveland Daily Banner*, said: "Amendment 1 is about life, and more than just the life of the unborn. It is also about the life of the expectant mother." At least four newspapers included descriptions of abortion as "murder" or a "baby holocaust" taking place in Tennessee.

Faith was also used as a framing device in the debate over Amendment 1. Both campaigns gained support from faith leaders across Tennessee, and advocates often claimed that their convictions were rooted in religious or moral principles. *Yes on 1* supporters said Amendment 1 was a "moral and life issue of greatest magnitude" and it would be an "indictment on Christians" if it failed to pass. The *Yes on 1* campaign was launched in a church in Madison, Tennessee. One pastor, Henry Coles Jr., said in the *Tennessean*: "There are certain issues that are

so clear-cut, in terms of who we are. We need to be protective of the life of the unborn...If we do not articulate an injustice, then we are doing a disservice to our community."

Some *No on One* advocates framed opposition to the amendment in terms of religion. One amendment opponent said: "In difficult or tragic circumstances, our religious values affirm that families need compassion, privacy, and respect - not unnecessary barriers to health care." In October 2014, a group of 100 faith leaders from across the state took a stand against the amendment. In the *Daily Times*, Rev. John Gill of Knoxville explained the action: "We are faith leaders from a variety of religious traditions. We do not need to agree on abortion to agree that this amendment would harm women and families in Tennessee by taking privacy protections out of the state constitution. We urge you to join us in voting no on Amendment 1." Another faith leader, Rabbi Laurie Rice, said Amendment 1 would impose "judgement, shame, and political interference (that) violates the Golden Rule, plain and simple."

Table 4

Theme 3: Values and Belief Systems

<i>Included Codes</i>	<i>Examples</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amendment 1 is a moral issue • Faith leaders conflicted/divided • Tennessee is a pro-life state, valuing life • Conflicting "red state values" at play, "hypocrisy" • Religious issue • Failure of Christians if amendment doesn't pass • Pro-amendment people don't represent majority of Tennesseans • Pro-choice and pro-life people alike don't want to criminalize abortion • Valuing personal privacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The most hard-fought of four constitutional amendments on the Tennessee ballot Tuesday pits two red state values against each other: disapproval of abortion and dislike of big government." • "Amendment One is neither a Republican nor Democrat issue, but a moral and life issue of greatest magnitude." • "Tennessee is a pro-life state. Amendment 1 is an amendment that anyone who is pro-life must support." • "Tennesseans face possibly the most monumental vote in our state's 218-year history and it will be an indictment on Christians if Amendment 1 fails to pass."

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amendment would let legislature pass laws that represent only one religious perspective/limit other faiths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "In difficult or tragic circumstances, our religious values affirm that families need compassion, privacy, and respect - not unnecessary barriers to health care."
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National Attention and Regional Reputation

Yes on 1 advocates claimed that Tennessee had become an "abortion destination" after the state Supreme Court struck down several regulations – like waiting periods and informed consent – and paved the way for more "permissive" or "liberal" abortion laws. They noted that this reputation was gaining national attention from publications like the *New York Times*, which ran an article asking if Tennessee had become the "abortion capital of the Bible belt."

Throughout the data set, *Yes on 1* supporters described Tennessee as an "outlier" or out of sync with the rest of the region. This side argued that Amendment 1 would allow the legislature to pass "common-sense restrictions on abortion that exist in surrounding states." For instance, a *Yes on 1* supporter in the *Nashville Scene* claimed: "There are eight states that touch Tennessee, and all of them have a short waiting period. Most of them, I think, are 24 hours. That's an example of where we're inconsistent with our neighboring states." In the same vein, Michelle Duggar from "19 Kids and Counting" was quote in the *Lebanon Democrat*: "Most states acknowledge the need to give women vital information about the seriousness of their decision before they take the life of their baby."

No on One refuted the claim that Tennessee was an "abortion destination." On at least two occasions, *No on One* supporters chose to call the state a "healthcare destination" for women seeking privacy that "their own state legislatures denied them." *No on One* advocates referenced an *Associated Press* review of Tennessee abortion statistics, which found it likely that women coming to the state for abortions were the same women coming to Tennessee to shop, such as the

women living near large border cities. *No on One* focused on the loss of "abortion rights in the South" and the potential ramifications of Amendment 1 nationally. One *No on One* supporter said in the *Tennessean*: "This is the national line in the sand...The bottom line is they don't want women to have access to abortion here – or anywhere in the South." Similarly, a columnist in the *Knoxville News Sentinel* wrote: "If Tennessee becomes a less hospitable place for abortion providers, Tennessee women will go the way of some of their Southern sisters — traveling great distances to receive legal medical services."

Both campaigns attracted the support of famous or notable individuals who spoke out about the issue and elevated it to larger audiences. News coverage shows that *Yes on 1* was supported by several members of the Duggar family from TLC's "19 Kids and Counting" and Alveda King, the niece of Martin Luther King, Jr. The *No on One* campaign was backed by actresses like Connie Britton and Ashley Judd.

Table 5

Theme 4: National Attention and Regional Reputation

<i>Included Codes</i>	<i>Examples</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tennessee's reputation at stake • National attention • "Abortion destination" • "Healthcare destination" • Out of sync with surrounding states • South is losing abortion rights • Women's reproductive rights under attack nationally • Famous/notable supporters • Liberal abortion laws • Amendment will have impact beyond Tennessee, national importance • "Abortion capital of the south" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "In fact, just a few days ago, the New York Times asked in a headline whether Tennessee was the 'abortion capital of the Bible belt.'" • "Amendment 1 can re-establish common-sense restrictions on abortion that exist in surrounding states..." • "'Without basic regulation of abortion practice and facilities in our state, Tennessee has sadly become an abortion destination,' said Beavers."

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same women who come here to shop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "'Abortion rights in the South are going away, and it's tragic,' said Jeff Teague, a director of the Vote No on One campaign..."
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Confusion over Amendment 1

Another pervading theme throughout the data set was confusion over the wording of the amendment itself and the dissemination of misleading or false information. Many commented that the language of the amendment was "too broad," "imperfect," or "confusing." Some went so far as to say the amendment was crafted to be "intentionally deceptive." *No on One* advocates claimed that Amendment 1 was "misleading" and hid a "more radical agenda" than it appeared. One opinion writer put the amendment through a computer program which calculated that it was written to grade level 17.4, or suitable for someone in their second year of graduate school.

Both sides often framed Amendment 1 as a clear choice once the issue was fully understood. For example, one No on One supporter said: "I think when the voters understand that's what [Amendment 1 is] about, then they are going to vote no." In another article, the same sentiment is repeated by *Yes on 1*: "'If people understand this amendment, we will win,' Yes on Amendment 1 supporter Elizabeth Fields said."

Supporters on both campaigns also claimed that misleading information was being spread by the other side. For example, *Yes on 1* said that the opposing campaign was "saturating prime time with ads that are intentionally misleading, creating confusion to the point that it appears a 'no' vote is actually a vote for the sanctity of life." Amendment proponents also claimed that *No on One* was misleading voters to think that the amendment would completely end legal abortion. For example, in an editorial by the staff of the *Free Press* claimed: "The left would have you believe abortion in Tennessee is in danger of being taken away completely, could become more

unsafe and would not be allowed in the cases of rape, incest and the life of the mother. Given current law, all of those are false."

No on One also claimed that the opposing campaign was spreading misinformation, including the idea that the legislature had no power to pass abortion laws. In the *Tennessean*, a *No on One* supporter said the state legislature "has already proven its ability to impose regulations on abortion services not required for other providers of low-risk procedures." *No on One* also argued that the last phrase of the amendment itself – regarding instances of rape, incest, and the life of the mother – misled voters to believe that abortion would be protected in those circumstances. One *Knoxville News Sentinel* columnist wrote: "Read the proposition carefully, however, and you'll see that it really mandates nothing like exceptions. It really empowers our Legislature (if and when federal abortion rights guarantees disappear) to ban abortion entirely."

Table 6

Theme 5: Confusion over Amendment 1

<i>Included Codes</i>	<i>Examples</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imperfect/flawed amendment • Confusion about the amendment among voters • Other side spreading misleading info • Amendment language is too broad, confusing • A matter of voters understanding the issue • Other side promoting "fear and false claims" • Other side spreading inaccurate info • "Arcane legal language" used on the ballot 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "No on 1 is saturating prime time with ads that are intentionally misleading, creating confusion to the point that it appears a "no" vote is actually a vote for the sanctity of life." • "During the legislative debates that put the proposed amendments on the ballot, opponents declared that some were 'intentionally deceptive.'" • "Amendment 1 clearly is misleading and the ballot wording hides a more radical agenda." • "'People are responding to a lot of incorrect information on a very controversial topic,' Rovetti said."

Protecting Women

"Proponents and opponents of Amendment 1 both claim their side is actively protecting the citizens of Tennessee, though their definitions of 'protection' differ," said one article in the *Nashville Scene*. Both sides of the debate over Amendment 1 framed the issue as one of protection, but approached that claim in different ways.

Supporters of *Yes on 1* emphasized that Amendment 1 would allow the state legislature to pass "sensible" or "common-sense" abortion laws, such as 48-hour waiting periods, informed consent, and restrictions on late-term abortions. They claimed that the *Sundquist* ruling had allowed abortion clinics to go unregulated, making them unsafe for women. In several articles, *Yes on 1* advocates said that veterinary clinics, beauty salons, dental practices, tattoo parlors, or other businesses were more highly regulated or inspected than abortion clinics. One physician said in the *Tennessean*: "A lack of licensing and inspections allows these places to be totally unprepared for the horrible things that can go wrong."

Further, *Yes on 1* promoted the idea that abortion had become "more dangerous" because the state legislature lacked the "legal basis" to pass abortion policies. In the *Knoxville News Sentinel*, state Representative Bill Dunn said: "Without Amendment 1 passing, our hands are tied — we can do nothing to save babies or protect women. If it does not pass, it will only embolden those who have no respect for life." Therefore, supporters argued that Amendment 1 was needed to ensure the "health and safety of women and girls." Another amendment supporter in the *Times Free Press* claimed the state had a "stark abortion-on-demand policy which prevents the enforcement of virtually any meaningful safeguards for women and the unborn."

The *No on One* camp claimed that the state constitution — after the *Sundquist* ruling — provided "strong" protections for women's rights and access to abortion, and that Amendment 1

would allow the state legislature to chip away at those protections. They refuted the claim that state lawmakers could not pass abortion regulations, pointing to several laws already in place, such as requiring doctors who perform abortions to have admitting privileges at nearby hospitals; prohibiting health plans under the Affordable Care Act from providing coverage of abortions; and prohibiting "telemedicine" in performing nonsurgical abortions. They stressed that abortion facilities were already regulated, abortion is one of the "safest" medical procedures, and complications from the procedure are "rare." In the *Times Free Press*, Corinne Rovetti, the co-director for the Knoxville Center for Reproductive Health said: "Clinics are already very safe and very regulated. Anything that you hear otherwise is a blatant lie."

No on One supporters also repeated the sentiment that state lawmakers could try to make reproductive access more "burdensome" or "onerous" after Amendment 1, but abortion would not end. One organizer said in the *Commercial Appeal*: "Even if Amendment One goes through, abortions will still be around. It will be less safe for women. Women will die because we can't have access to safe abortions." Passage of the amendment, *No on One* claimed, would open the door for restrictions that had forced the closure of clinics in other states and lead to women getting "backroom abortions." They emphasized that restricting access to reproductive healthcare disproportionately affects poor women and women of color. Another *No on One* supporter in the *Nashville Scene* said: "What [proponents of Amendment 1] really want is to create a situation where abortion would technically still be legal in Tennessee — it would be legal as long as *Roe v. Wade* stands — but to create a situation in which it would be nearly impossible for women to access safe, legal abortion because there will be so many restrictions and regulations in place."

Table 7*Theme 6: Protecting Women*

<i>Included Codes</i>	<i>Examples</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinics lack "licensing and inspections" • Amendment would "harm women and families" • We can all agree – women have right to protect themselves • Veterinary clinics, beauty salons, etc. are more regulated than abortion clinics • Abortion access is a matter of life and death • Women will be forced to get "backroom abortions" • Clinics have closed because of restrictions • Tennessee already regulates abortion • "Sensible" regulations • Protecting reproductive freedom • Making healthcare inaccessible • Lack of access disproportionately hurts poor women and women of color • Women come here because the state protects privacy • Abortions "more dangerous" because legislature can't pass restrictions • Abortion complications are rare • Amendment aimed at protecting women and girls • "Abortion industry" • Abortion can be a "horrible medical experience" • Abortion one of the "safest" medical procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "'A lack of licensing and inspections allows these places to be totally unprepared for the horrible things that can go wrong,' said Murfreesboro physician Brent Boles..." • "'Here we stand with this really strong constitution which is protecting women's rights and access to needed services. If that fails here, where else are women going to go?'" • "'At the current time, beauty salons are more regulated than abortion facilities...'" • "Since the negative impact of Amendment 1 would fall most heavily on low-income women and women of color, we must speak out against this injustice."

Quantitative content analysis

My data set included 109 news articles, editorials, and opinion columns on Amendment 1. My analysis of story bylines revealed that 58.72% of all stories were written by men, 28.44% were written by women, and the remaining 12.84% of articles were written by multiple people or as staff reports.

Table 8

Article bylines by paper type

	<i>Major Papers</i>	<i>Local Papers</i>	<i>Alternative Weeklies</i>	<i>AP Wire</i>	<i>Total</i>
Articles by men	47 (61.84%)	12 (57.14%)	3 (30%)	2 (100%)	64 (58.72%)
Articles by women	22 (28.95%)	2 (9.52%)	7 (70%)	0	31 (28.44%)
Articles by staff/other	7 (9.21%)	7 (33.33%)	0	0	14 (12.84%)
Total	76	21	10	2	109

Sources

I also found that 240 sources that met my selection criteria were used in the data set. Of these sources, 55% were men, 36.67% were women, and 8.33% were organizational or group sources.

Table 9

Men and women as sources

<i>Source Type</i>	<i>Major Papers</i>	<i>Local Papers</i>	<i>Alternative Weeklies</i>	<i>AP Wire</i>	<i>Total</i>
Men	96 (57.14%)	27 (60%)	6 (27.27%)	3 (60%)	132 (55%)
Women	59 (35.12%)	12 (26.67%)	16 (72.73%)	1 (20%)	88 (36.67%)

Organizations/ Groups	13 (7.74%)	6 (13.33%)	0	1 (20%)	20 (8.33%)
Total	168	45	22	5	240

Table 10

Source breakdown by stance on Amendment 1:

<i>Source Type</i>	<i>Major Papers</i>	<i>Local Papers</i>	<i>Alternative Weeklies</i>	<i>AP Wire</i>	<i>Total</i>
Pro-Amendment 1	77 (45.83%)	29 (64.44%)	4 (27.27%)	2 (40%)	112 (46.67%)
Anti-Amendment 1	79 (47.02%)	11 (24.44%)	16 (72.73%)	2 (40%)	108 (45%)
Neutral	12 (7.14%)	5 (11.11%)	2 (9.09%)	1 (10%)	20 (8.33%)
Total	168	45	22	5	240

Table 11

Source breakdown by type (some sources overlap/fit into more than one category):

Source Type	Total of Source Type	Percentage of Total
Faith Leader	30	12.5%
Medical Professional	14	5.83%
Campaign spokesperson/organizer	80	33.33%
Celebrity/Notable Supporter	10	4.17%
Politician/Government Official	54	22.5%
Individual with a Personal Story	4	1.67%
Statement from an organization	14	5.83%
Academic/Professor	13	5.42%

Discussion

The findings of my thematic analysis are especially interesting in light of previous research on Amendment 1 conducted by Jasperson, Kelley, and Bennett (2016). Their analysis of the most prevalent frames used by both campaigns in social media posts reveal the similarities between the frames put forward by *Yes on 1* and *No on One* and the frames adopted by journalists in news coverage of the amendment. Their analysis found four prevalent frames in campaign social media posts: religious faith and the culture of life; individual privacy and personal decision-making; government regulation; and medical/health. These frames – and the specific arguments each campaign made within them – are very similar to the themes that were present throughout the news coverage of Amendment 1 that I analyzed.

For example, their analysis found that 31% of total social media posts referenced "government regulation," with *Yes on 1* arguing for "common sense protections" in 22.5% of posts and *No on One* characterizing the amendment as "interference" that "goes too far" in 60% of their posts (Jasperson et al., 2016). *No on One's* argument that the amendment was extreme "government interference" was frequently used throughout news coverage and makes up a large portion of my "Role and Power of Government" theme. While I categorized the rhetoric about "common sense protections" under a "Protecting Women" theme, this frame for viewing government regulation was still prevalent throughout the data set. In my theme on government, I organized *Yes on 1's* views on the *Sundquist* ruling and the power of the state legislature, which provide context to their argument that Amendment 1 is necessary to pass "common sense protections."

Jasperson, Kelley, and Bennett (2016) also found that 13.4% of social media posts from the two campaigns referenced the personal decisions of women or their right to privacy. The *No*

on One side used this frame in 57% of their posts, while *Yes on 1* did not use this frame at all. *No on One* also used a medical/health frame in 42% of its posts to connect medical decisions made by a woman (in consultation with her doctor) to her right to privacy (Jasperson et al., 2016).

These findings also line up with my analysis. The *Yes on 1* side did not discuss the importance of medical privacy or personal decision-making, while *No on One* made this a central part of its argument against Amendment 1. In news coverage, the *Yes on 1* side only discussed decision-making in referencing the power of voters and elected officials to decide abortion policy for the state. Similarly, *Yes on 1* used a medical/health frame in 9.9% of social media posts to use health and safety as justifications for "common sense" abortion regulations – a frame that was echoed in media coverage and is included in my "Protecting Women" theme. In decision-making and medical frames, *Yes on 1* focused on the government's role in abortion and avoided discussion of the direct choice to have an abortion or the safety of the procedure itself.

One aspect of the rhetoric surrounding Amendment 1 that was present in media coverage but not captured in the medical/health social media frame is the conflict over what constitutes a danger to women. Is abortion more dangerous when the state legislature has its "hands tied" and cannot pass new abortion regulations, or is abortion more dangerous when clinics close because of "onerous" restrictions, reproductive access is cut off, and women are forced to get "backroom abortions"? An important source of conflict between *Yes on 1* and *No on One* that was revealed in the news coverage is that both sides believed they were the ones protecting women.

In addition, the analysis of social media posts revealed that 38% of all posts discussed religious faith, with 86% of *No on One* posts referencing faith in guiding individuals and only 23% of *Yes on 1* posts using a specific faith-based religious frame (Jasperson et al., 2016). More commonly (in 39% of posts), *Yes on 1* used a "life" frame. A focus on religious faith was the

most commonly used frame for the *No on One* campaign's social media posts and "life" was the most frequent frame for *Yes on 1*. Using a faith argument to oppose an abortion amendment in a conservative southern state was clearly a strategic move by the *No on One* side. And the campaign was somewhat successful at inserting this frame of religious faith "guiding" individuals into media coverage. *No on One* sources frequently referred to women deciding to have an abortion after consulting their faith and argued that their religious beliefs led them to opposing an amendment that would cut off access to healthcare. However, it is surprising that faith was the most common frame in *No on One* social media posts because themes such as government interference and privacy rights were much more prevalent in media coverage. Faith was mentioned as a factor, but rarely used as a main argument for opposing the amendment. Why a frame that *No on One* pushed so heavily failed to equally resonate in media coverage could be an interesting line of inquiry for future campaigns. On the other side, *Yes on 1*'s use of a "life" frame in its social media posts also falls in line with my analysis. The amendment was consistently framed as an issue of life for women and "the unborn" and Tennessee was framed as a "pro-life state."

In addition to frames referencing life and faith, my "Values and Belief Systems" theme reveals the way that religious and political views can come into conflict. In the debate over Amendment 1, one major issue that was capitalized on by the *No on One* campaign was the conflict between dislike of government interference into privacy and opposition to abortion. Perhaps one reason why *No on One*'s faith frame resonated less in media coverage than its argument about government interference is that selecting a privacy vs. abortion regulation frame gives journalists a conflict to highlight. For journalists, conflict can seem like an easier and more newsworthy frame than individuals' faiths guiding them to different conclusions on an issue.

One element of the battle over Amendment 1 that is not demonstrated in the analysis of campaign social media posts is the social and political context that these advocacy groups were making their arguments in. I think that two of my themes – "National Attention and Regional Reputation" and "Confusion over Amendment 1" – reveal that *Yes on 1* and *No on One* faced external challenges in controlling the debate and journalists provided context about these factors. The "Confusion over Amendment 1" theme shows that both sides were actively competing to frame the issue in the media and working to correct "misleading" frames spread by the other side. This public battle over meaning-making led to confusion among voters. Media coverage also discussed concerns on both sides about national attention and the state's reputation in the region. *Yes on 1*, for example, used statements about Tennessee being viewed as having "liberal" abortion laws and being out of sync with the surrounding region to support the amendment. These frames, which were not prevalent in campaign Facebook posts, show the distinction between social media messaging and framing issues in news media. The prevalence of claims about "misleading information" being spread could be the result of campaign spokespeople directly responding to claims made by the other side in interviews and trying to "correct the record" in real time.

Overall, comparing the results of Jasperson, Kelley, and Bennett's (2016) analysis of social media posts and the results of my thematic analysis shows just how successful advocacy groups can be at inserting their rhetoric into media coverage. The frames shared on social media by *Yes on 1* and *No on One* were directly echoed in news coverage of the issue. While some frames were less successful than others (i.e. *No on One* using "faith"), the similarities between the way the issue was framed in overtly political messaging and news media coverage should be concerning to journalists who do not want to act as puppets for whichever political group is

better at strategic messaging. For advocacy groups, this information can be useful for determining which frames resonate with reporters.

The influence of advocacy groups on media coverage can also be seen in the vocabulary used to talk about Amendment 1 that is present throughout the data set. Media coverage across regions and paper types talked about Amendment 1 using the phrases "government interference" and "common sense protections," which were ways of framing the debate that originated with the two campaigns. The *Yes on 1* campaign's idea of Tennessee becoming an "abortion destination" for women in surrounding states was also present throughout the coverage. It is important to note that these terms are not neutral, but convey a particular viewpoint. Though they may seem neutral, phrases like "the unborn" implicitly draw conclusions about abortion that can be accepted by journalists and disseminated to their readership. Even if these terms were being used in a direct quote from a source, journalists still have the power to include or reject these political frames. By using the vocabulary developed by the *Yes on 1* and *No on One* campaigns, journalists chose certain definitions of reality over others and contributed to the way readers understood and processed information about Amendment 1. It was also interesting to note the terms that did not catch on in coverage. For example, a few *No on One* supporters tried to reject the frame of Tennessee becoming an "abortion destination" by renaming the state a "healthcare destination" for women seeking privacy they was not guaranteed in their own states. There were only a few mentions of this phrase and it was not as prevalent throughout the data set as "abortion destination" was. Why frames like this are not successful at permeating news coverage can be interesting to note for advocacy groups who are trying to readjust the prevailing narrative.

One of the research questions guiding my work was: How did journalists engage in the production of balance in their coverage? The results of my quantitative analysis show that Pro-

Amendment 1 sources (46.67%) were used in about the same proportion as Anti-Amendment 1 sources (45%) and "neutral" sources were used 8.33% of the time. This shows that journalists, who are taught to value "objectivity," made an effort to balance news coverage of Amendment 1 between the two political campaigns. However, producing a "balance" between two sides of an issue does not lead to the most nuanced coverage and journalists can end up reinforcing the dominant ideology as natural and universal (Akhavan-Majid & Ramaprasad, 2000). Moreover, the types of sources that journalists used most often were overtly political actors. One-third of sources were campaign spokespeople and 22.5% were politicians. Although Amendment 1 was centered around a medical procedure, only 5.83% of sources were medical professionals.

This focus on balancing two political viewpoints affected the way journalists discussed Amendment 1. Instead of countering dubious claims by advocacy groups with facts or quotes from reproductive health professionals, journalists often used a counter-point from the opposing advocacy group. Often, for example, when *Yes on 1* advocates would claim that abortion clinics were unlicensed and unregulated, journalists would provide a source claiming that clinics were already safe and regulated. This set-up, with two sources making opposing claims, gives the impression that the claim is up for debate. Claims like "abortion clinics are unlicensed in Tennessee" can be easily verified or falsified by journalists using sources that are not political.

In addition to the types of sources that are used in stories, the people who make the news influence how issues are framed. Previous research has shown that women are the subjects of news stories in about the same proportion that they act as newsmakers (Silver, 1986). This pattern was reflected in my own analysis of the sex of sources and authors. Overall, women wrote 28.44% of articles on Amendment 1 and were used as sources 36.67% of the time. Men wrote 58.72% of stories and were used as sources 55% of the time. These proportions are very

similar and seem to reflect the idea that newsmakers tend to choose sources that correspond with their sex (Armstrong, 2004). It is interesting to note that this connection remained intact for alternative weekly newspapers, where women wrote 70% of the articles and were used as sources 72.73% of the time.

Journalists have tremendous authority over the sources they use in stories, the quotes they choose to highlight, and the way a story is framed. This room for subjectivity and the power that media coverage can have in influencing public policy make it incredibly important who is creating the news – especially for an issue like abortion. Two frames used throughout Amendment 1 coverage reinforced harmful ideas about power structures and the autonomy of women. First, the idea that the choice to have an abortion is "difficult," "painful," or "heartbreaking" was put forward by both campaigns. This frame implies that abortion must be a life-changing and difficult choice for women in order to be valid. Another frame used frequently by the *No on One* campaign was that women should be able to make private medical decisions, but she does so "in consultation with" her doctors, faith, and family. This framing reinforces a culture of distrust and skepticism towards women.

Conclusion

Studying the media coverage of a contentious state-wide issue like Amendment 1 reveals how complex public policy debates can be and the tremendous influence that advocacy groups can have in forming issue frames. The battle over Amendment 1 became a moral, religious, and ethical issue for many Tennesseans and set closely-held values against one another. The *Yes on 1* and *No on One* campaigns fought to control the narrative over the amendment and some of their frames gained more success in media coverage than others. My analysis of the themes and sources used throughout media coverage of Amendment 1 provides context to this battle over meaning-making.

This research reveals how successful advocacy groups can be at inserting their rhetoric into the public debate. A comparison of the social media posts by these political campaigns and the prevalent themes throughout media coverage reveal that journalists adopted issue frames and vocabulary promoted by *Yes on 1* and *No on One*. Advocacy groups can use this research to better understand what kind of frames are successful, resonate with journalists, and reach voters. The *No on One* campaign in particular can use this information to understand why their frames ultimately did not sway voters.

Journalists should be aware of the frames and strategic messaging put out by these groups, not so they can adopt these frames, but so they can recognize them and avoid mimicking them outright. Journalists should be more critical in the language that they include in their coverage, being aware that terms put forward by advocacy groups – like "abortion destination" – carry political meaning. Whether these terms are used in quotes or directly by the journalist, newsmakers must make choices about which frames they will accept from advocacy groups, which frames they will include but counter with other evidence, and which frames they

will reject outright. Each of these choices affects the resulting coverage of an issue and the way it is interpreted by the public.

Moreover, instead of focusing solely on the balance of political views, journalists should seek out non-political sources to provide accurate information and context to readers. The coverage of Amendment 1 consisted largely of political sources and faith leaders, and very little space was given to medical professionals, academics, or other experts. Focusing on conflict between two political groups instead of countering dubious claims with non-political sources can affect the way that readers process information. Easily falsifiable statements, such as "abortion clinics are unlicensed," become political arguments that seem up for debate when they are countered by other political sources.

This research could be further expanded in a number of ways. It would be interesting to look into the strategies that *Yes on 1* and *No on One* used to insert their frames into media coverage and how they shifted their messaging to respond to claims made by opponents and frames adopted by journalists. My research began looking at the effect of women as newsmakers and sources, but does not delve deeper into the differences in the framing of coverage when reporting is conducted by women. Further research could look at the way that power and autonomy over decision-making were constructed in coverage of Amendment 1 and practices that journalists can develop to frame abortion in a feminist way.

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Appendix A: Example of Article Selection

Chattanooga Times-Free Press

Process:

Using Newsbank Access World News (1990s-present) database

Search terms: "Amendment One OR Amendment 1" AND Nov. 2013-Nov. 4, 2014

Results: 62 articles

Accepted: 19

Articles:

Link	Type	Accepted?	Rationale
http://bit.ly/2IYkiKM	News	Yes	Talks about all amendments, but has substantive discussion of 1
http://bit.ly/2lBctJW	News	No	Mostly about polls, not the amendment itself. Also first published by Commercial appeal?
http://bit.ly/2lB8fCg	Letters	No	Letters to the editor
http://bit.ly/2lVM1xm	Op-Ed	Yes	Substantive discussion of just 1
http://bit.ly/2lBbqdi	Op-Ed	Yes	Substantive discussion of just 1
http://bit.ly/2mvANkB	News	Yes	Does focus on Cohen, but has multiple paragraphs on 1 and discusses the debate over 1
http://bit.ly/2mHp5QV	Letters	No	Letters to the editor
http://bit.ly/2mvCiiG	Op-Ed	Yes	Substantive discussion of just 1
http://bit.ly/2mMX5ui	Op-Ed	Yes	Substantive discussion of just 1
http://bit.ly/2leUnBt	TFP editorial	Yes	Paper endorsement, but has a thorough discussion of their reasoning
http://bit.ly/2mvvjX5	Op-Ed	Yes	Substantive discussion of 1 (and 3)
http://bit.ly/2ltWrAZ	News	Yes	Substantive discussion of 1
http://bit.ly/2mb29eS	News	Yes	Mostly talks about funding, but does discuss debate over amendment
http://bit.ly/2lYrmaz	News	Yes	Substantive discussion of 1
http://bit.ly/2leJ3FL	News	Yes	Discussion of the debate, details of amendment
http://bit.ly/2lufScL	News	Yes	Substantive discussion of 1
http://bit.ly/2lYiMIL	News	Yes	Talks about election issues in general, but discusses amendment 1 and the two campaigns at length
http://bit.ly/2lYzY0K	News	Yes	Substantive discussion of 1
http://bit.ly/2mgr419	News	No	Discusses misleading wording of amendments but does not go into detail about Amendment 1 (mentioned briefly twice)
http://bit.ly/2leRUHI	News	No	Amendment 1 mentioned once briefly

http://bit.ly/2lu4Wfq	TFP endorsements	No	Interesting for endorsement; not a substantive discussion
http://bit.ly/2mN4wln	Op-Ed	No	Doesn't focus on amendment itself, but debate btw legislators
http://bit.ly/2lubVEW	News	Yes	Substantive discussion of just 1
http://bit.ly/2IVJ2Fb	Op-Ed	No	Mostly talks about struggle within commission over 1, but does not provide substantive discussion of it
http://bit.ly/2mvu7mG	Letters	No	Letters to the editor
http://bit.ly/2leXbP0	Letters	No	Letters to the editor
http://bit.ly/2lu3E3U	Op-Ed	No	1 briefly mentioned
http://bit.ly/2mb1ASm	News	No	Briefly mentioned, just a news brief
http://bit.ly/2mvulu2	Letters	No	Letters to the editor
http://bit.ly/2mb5St5	News	No	Discusses ability of religious groups to advocate for/against amendment, not amendment itself
http://bit.ly/2IBISRQ	Letters	No	Letters to the editor
http://bit.ly/2mvHKm0	Letters	No	Letters to the editor
http://bit.ly/2mggKPW	News	Yes	Substantive discussion of just 1
http://bit.ly/2lBbqdg	Letters	No	Letters to the editor
http://bit.ly/2mHh12q	News	No	About election in general, 1 only briefly mentioned
http://bit.ly/2mvJJ9E	Letters	No	Letters to the editor
http://bit.ly/2mgiBLg	Letters	No	Letters to the editor
http://bit.ly/2mNIWy9	Letters	No	Letters to the editor
http://bit.ly/2lBlfb7	News	Yes	Substantive discussion of 1 in broader context of abortion in area
http://bit.ly/2lYsFpM	Letters	No	Letters to the editor
http://bit.ly/2lYx8sw	News	No	News brief, not a substantive discussion
http://bit.ly/2mvHxPG	News	Yes	Focuses on one viewpoint, but does provide several paragraphs on 1
http://bit.ly/2lYrFBW	Letters	No	Letters to the editor
http://bit.ly/2lBhq5G	Letters	No	Letters to the editor
http://bit.ly/2mbf3JP	Letters	No	Letters to the editor
http://bit.ly/2leTE3r	News	No	Mostly about a movie about abortion, just briefly mentions 1
http://bit.ly/2mNbg2n	News	No	About voting in general, 1 only briefly mentioned
http://bit.ly/2lBtR1x	Letters	No	Letters to the editor
http://bit.ly/2mb6u1E	Letters	No	Letters to the editor
http://bit.ly/2mHAMAH	Letters	No	Letters to the editor
http://bit.ly/2lWdpvh	News	No	Briefly mentioned, just a news brief
http://bit.ly/2leKGMb	Letters	No	Letters to the editor

http://bit.ly/2mvFHOS	News	No	Just briefly mentioned in larger story about voting
http://bit.ly/2lBoBLb	Letters	No	Letters to the editor
http://bit.ly/2mgi0cw	News	No	Mostly about Supreme Court/judges, 1 mentioned briefly
http://bit.ly/2lYBbVU	Letters	No	Letters to the editor
http://bit.ly/2lYtH58	Op-Ed	No	Not just about 1, no substantive discussion
http://bit.ly/2lB2rc8	News	No	Mostly about contraception and sex ed in general
http://bit.ly/2mvM5VY	News	No	Amendment 1 only briefly mentioned
http://bit.ly/2mgko2V	News	No	About early voting, 1 briefly mentioned
http://bit.ly/2mgHjez	News	No	Repeat of this article ^
http://bit.ly/2mgBga0	News	No	Mostly about PACs, just briefly mentions 1

Appendix B: Examples of Article Coding



Yes / No

Duggars back Amendment 1
 Chattanooga Times Free Press (TN) - September 30, 2014
 Author/Byline: Andy Sher; Nashville Bureau
 Section: Metro/Region
 Page: 11

NASHVILLE - Conservative Christian reality TV stars Jim Bobb and Michelle Duggar threw their support behind Amendment 1 on abortion Monday, with Michelle Duggar charging the provision is needed to stop a "baby holocaust" taking place in Tennessee.

The Arkansas couple and 17 of their 19 children joined Tennessee social conservatives at a news conference at Legislative Plaza in Nashville where they discussed their support of the amendment on the Nov. 4 ballot.

"We have the responsibility under almighty God to protect innocent lives that cannot yet speak for themselves," said Michelle Duggar, whose family's lives are chronicled on the popular TLC series "19 Kids and Counting." "If we don't speak up and do something to stop this holocaust, the blood of these little ones will be on our hands."

The amendment would reverse a 2000 state Supreme Court decision that said the Tennessee Constitution provides a stronger right to privacy and productive freedom than the U.S. Constitution. The ruling threw out several state laws.

If approved, the amendment would give state lawmakers more power to pass laws such as waiting periods and requiring women to hear detailed information about abortion procedures before obtaining one. It would not impact the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark Roe v. Wade ruling.

One of the Duggars' sons, Joshua Duggar, who is the executive director of Family Research Council Action, the political arm of the same-named national FRC, a religious conservative group, released portions of a Sept. 25-25 survey of 604 Tennesseans.

It says 50 percent back the amendment. Another 22 percent oppose it while 28 percent are undecided. That was based on the amendment simply being read to respondents.

In a follow-up question, respondents were told the amendment "protects the rights of citizens to elect legislators that will pass pro-life legislation as opposed to over-reaching judges legislating personal agendas in the courts." Fifty-five percent then said they support it. The poll, conducted by Remington Research Group, has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.99 percent. The firm employs automated telephone surveys.

But Carol Price, a retired psychiatrist and volunteer for the Vote No On 1 effort, said proponents' use of such phrases as "pro life" and "common sense" regulations are an "example of how the legislative process is being used to confuse the citizenry."

What's at stake, Price said, is "about privacy. It is about a citizen's right to make private medical decisions in consultation with her physician. If this amendment passes it will give legislators that decision-making power, including in the case of rape, incest or a woman's health. And I think when the voters understand that's what it's about, then they are going to vote no."

Contact staff writer Andy Sher
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amendment needed to end "baby holocaust"

Responsibility to protect innocent lives

issue definition

giving leg. more power to pass laws/restrictions

Protecting citizens -> prevent overreach of governors

2

legislative process used to confuse voters

No exceptions

giving leg. decision-making power

private medical decision to be made by woman in consultation w/ Doctor



Amendment 1 / Pastors preach 'making Tenn. Constitution neutral on the issue'

Commercial Appeal, The (Memphis, TN) - October 30, 2014

- Author/Byline: Kyle Veazey veazey@commercialappeal.com 901-529-2799
- Edition: Memphis
- Section: News
- Page: 1

YES 1111
NO 1

Saying he speaks for the unborn, Bellevue Baptist Church pastor Steve Gaines urged voters Wednesday to approve the hotly contested Amendment 1 abortion measure on Tennessee's ballot — a conflict increasingly characterized by faith leaders' dueling views.

"We speak on behalf of those who cannot speak for themselves," Gaines said at an event at St. Michael Catholic Church that was organized by the pro-Amendment 1 group. "We speak for their civil rights. We feel like very few people do speak for their civil rights."

Some three dozen clergy members joined Gaines. They said approving Amendment 1 would allow the state legislature to enact "common-sense" abortion regulations and correct a 2000 Tennessee Supreme Court decision they believe is in error.

Clergy members have come down on both sides of the debate, though.

In Knoxville Wednesday, a group that included ministers held an event urging voters to reject Amendment 1. A similar event of local anti-Amendment 1 clergy was held here on Oct. 1 and ministers have been part of the group's television ads.

At a Monday event, a group of African-American leaders — some of them ministers — urged voters to reject the Amendment 1 on civil rights grounds.

The anti-Amendment 1 group released its own statewide list of supporting clergy members Wednesday; it topped 100. Thirty-eight of those listed were from Memphis.

At the local anti-Amendment 1 clergy event on Oct. 1, Rabbi Micah Greenstein of Temple Israel characterized the amendment as involving politicians in women's health decisions. Asked Greenstein: "Who decides what's best for a woman's health?"

Amendment 1 supporters say 10 denominations support the initiative, including Catholics and the state's Southern Baptist group.

The clergy members at Wednesday's pro-Amendment 1 event were all men. Gaines said women were invited, but said that "the people who came, came." An audience of about 50, which included many women, gave his remarks a standing ovation at the end.

Jim Collier, the pastor of Kirby Woods Baptist Church, said the amendment would correct the Tennessee Supreme Court's "overreaching action" in 2000 that struck down some state laws that placed restrictions on abortion.

"Since 2000, the primary goal of pro-life Tennesseans has been to overturn this wrong court ruling, and restore the ability to citizens and elected officials to decide Tennessee's abortion policies," he said.

Chuck Herring, pastor of First Baptist Church of Collierville, stressed that Amendment 1 would not end abortion, but would enable the General Assembly to implement restrictions such as informed consent and waiting periods.

"It only puts the constitution back where it belongs, where it was before the Tennessee Supreme Court changed it, making the Tennessee Constitution neutral on the issue of abortion," he said.

Danny Siquefield, the pastor of Faith Baptist Church in Bartlett, stressed the amendment would give regulatory powers to elected state legislators, not appointed judges.

Gaines said: "This is not an ethnic issue, this is not a gender issue, it is not a political issue. This is a moral issue."

Early voting ends today

Today is the final day to vote early in Tennessee. Polls are open from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. at 21 Shelby County locations. Find yours at shelybvote.com.

Moral issue
not political