

**“It Did Not and Can Not Make Abortion Moral:” Framing of Abortion in Alabama
University Student Newspapers**

by

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Abstract

On January 22, 1973, the Supreme Court handed down one of its most controversial decisions, *Roe v. Wade*. During this time, there was a rise in women's activism, particularly when it came to reproductive rights. Defined by Tuchman, framing theory asserts that news attempts to organize everyday reality through providing meaning to events and allowing for interpretations of political, economic, and social events.¹ As such, news coverage often involves concepts of framing. Therefore, newspapers can be analyzed to understand these concepts. Considering data from the Guttmacher Institute, the average age of those who receive an abortion are the age of the average undergraduate student.² Thus, the student-run newspapers from the two largest universities in the state of Alabama, the University of Alabama and Auburn University, were chosen for analysis. Data from the *Crimson White* and the *Auburn Plainsman* was chosen from July 1, 1972, to July 31, 1973. After the data selection process, thirty-three articles and fifty-six advertisements were analyzed. Based in framing theory, a textual analysis was conducted, and the following themes were found: the morality of abortion, the politicization of abortion, and abortion as healthcare. Analysis revealed the use of generic framing through the themes of conflict, morality, human interest/personalization, and responsibility. Lastly, the analysis of advertisements resulted in the use of emotional appeals. Both the *Crimson White* and the *Auburn Plainsman* built these frames through language used and the authors of the articles.

¹ Gaye Tuchman, *Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality*, (New York: Free Press, 1978), 193

² Isaac Maddow-Zimet and Kathryn Kost, "Pregnancies, Births, and Abortions in the United States, 1973-2017: National and State Trends by Age," Guttmacher Institute, March 2021, <https://www.guttmacher.org/report/pregnancies-births-abortions-in-united-states-1973-2017>.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The 1960s, 70s, and 80s saw a rise in feminist activism in the United States and across the world due to movements such as the Women's Liberation Movement (WLM). As such, a change of goals allowed women to adjust their concept of a just social ordering between men and women.³ Heer & Grossbard-Shectman argue that the advent of the WLM was connected to the revolution of contraceptive technology in 1960.⁴ Up to this point, women had very little control over their own reproductive rights. Berkman describes reproductive rights to include the right to the "social, economic, political, legal, and cultural circumstance that foster voluntary reproductive choices."⁵ This change in contraceptive technology reduced the number of women who chose to go down the traditional path of marriage and motherhood. As a result, a woman's access to reproductive rights became a cornerstone of what second-wave feminists were fighting.⁶

The writing during this time inspired and drove the WLM further.⁷ Discussing this writing as a site of research, it is important to mention the impact that writing, specifically news media, has on individuals. Millions of citizens turn to the news daily as a way to receive information about what is occurring in the world. Mass media shapes public opinion by framing events and issues in particular ways.⁸ Framing theory has become one of the most common

³ David M. Heer and Amyra Grossbard-Shectman, "The Impact of the Female Marriage Squeeze and the Contraceptive Revolution on Sex Roles and the Women's Liberation Movement in the United States, 1960 to 1975," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 43, no. 2 (February 1981): 49. <https://doi.org/10.2307/351416>

⁴ Heer and Grossbard-Shectman, "The Impact of the Female Marriage Squeeze."

⁵ Joyce Berkman, "The Fertility of Scholarship on the History of Reproductive Rights in the United States," *History Compass* 9, no. 5 (2011): 433 <https://doi-org.spot.lib.auburn.edu/10.1111/j.1478-0542.2011.00772.x>

⁶ Heer and Grossbard-Shectman, "The Impact of the Female Marriage Squeeze."; Berkman, "The Fertility of Scholarship."

⁷ Sue Bruly and Laurel Forster, "Historicising the Women's Liberation Movement," *Women's History Review* 25, no. 5 (May 2016): pg. 700. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09612025.2015.1132872>

⁸ Dennis Chong and James Druckman, "Framing Theory," *Annual Review of Political Science* 10 (June 2007): pg 104 <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.10.072805.103054>

studied concepts in the communication discipline, as it allows for the examination of media content and the understanding of the relationship between media and public opinion. According to a study, seventy-seven percent of undergraduates said they read their campus paper at least once a month.⁹ This data indicates that college newspapers have a large reach among students. Thus, framing theory is applicable to this study as it looked at the ways that two university newspapers in the state of Alabama cover the issue of abortion. In her study, Bixler discussed what makes a high school newspaper effective. While this present study examined the use of university newspapers, the criteria is applicable to this study. Bixler states, “It is the paper *of* the school, not just the paper *in* the school. It not only reflects student thinking, but also leads it.”¹⁰ Additionally, university newspapers attempt to bring the school community closer together, as student journalism enables individuals to have their voices heard.¹¹

In relation to college students, Jaschik found that the ideology of a state plays directly into an individual’s choice of college, as one in four high school seniors said they “passed up, out of political concerns, a college they would have initially considered because of the state.”¹² Therefore, it is important to discuss the numbers surrounding abortion in Alabama. In 1973, approximately 616,000 abortions were performed in the United States,¹³ with 4,360 of those in Alabama.¹⁴ During this time, the New York Times reported on the public’s opinion on abortion. In this poll, forty-five percent of Protestants and thirty-six percent of Catholics favored the

⁹ “Study Shows That Most College Students Read Their College Newspaper,” On Campus Advertising, March 29, 2011, <https://oncampusadvertising.com/study-shows-that-most-college-students-read-their-campus-newspaper/>

¹⁰ Frances M. Bixler, “What is a Good High School Newspaper?” *The English Journal* 59, no. 1 (January 1970): pg. 120 <https://doi.org/10.2307/811743>

¹¹ Bixler, “What is a Good High School Newspaper?”

¹² Scott Jaschik, “The Role of Politics in Where Students Want to Go to College,” Inside Higher Ed, March 26, 2023, <https://www.insidehighered.com/admissions/article/2023/03/27/role-politics-where-students-want-go-college>

¹³ “Table 12. Legal Abortions and Legal Abortion Ratios 1973-2007,” Center for Disease Control, accessed June 22, 2023. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hus/2011/012.pdf>

¹⁴ Robert Johnston, “Historical Abortion Statistics, Alabama (USA),” Johnston’s Archive, last modified June 11, 2023, <https://www.johnstonsarchive.net/policy/abortion/usa/ab-usa-AL.html>

legalization of abortion.¹⁵ This is relevant to this study, as the state of Alabama is located within the Bible Belt. From that sample, sixty-eight percent of people interviewed had a college education, further indicating the need to examine university newspapers. Since 1973, data from a Gallup poll shows that public opinion on abortion has remained relatively steady, with ten to twenty percent of Americans believing abortion should always be illegal and twenty to thirty percent believing it should always be legal.¹⁶ In 2014, in the state of Alabama, thirty-seven percent of people believe that abortion should be mostly legal, while fifty-eight percent believe abortion should be mostly illegal.¹⁷ In 1973, according to the Guttmacher Institute, the two largest groups of women receiving abortions were aged 18-19 and 20-24.¹⁸ Further, the Guttmacher Institute found that nearly forty percent of people who receive abortions do so because they worry that having a child could derail their education.¹⁹

According to the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment at the University of Alabama, for the academic year 1972-1973, the university had the most students at 14,938.²⁰ Auburn University's Office of Institutional Research reported that Auburn University ranked second with 14,258.²¹ Being that both schools represent the largest universities in the state, looking at the student-run newspapers from these schools allowed for a more conclusive

¹⁵ "Gallup Poll Finds Public Divided on Abortions in First 3 Months," *The New York Times*, January 28, 1973. <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1973/01/28/103216784.html?pageNumber=45>

¹⁶ "Gallup Poll Finds Public Divided on Abortions."

¹⁷ "Views about Abortion Among Adults in Alabama," Pew Research Center, accessed June 19, 2023, <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/religious-landscape-study/state/alabama/views-about-abortion#views-about-abortion>

¹⁸ Isaac Maddow-Zimet and Kathryn Kost, "Pregnancies, Births, and Abortions in the United States."

¹⁹ Rebecca Kelliher, "Abortion Access and College Students," *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*, September 23, 2021, <https://www.diverseeducation.com/students/article/15114980/abortion-access-and-college-students>.

²⁰ "Total Student Enrollment, 1831 to Present," Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, University of Alabama, accessed June 19, 2023, <https://oira.ua.edu/factbook/reports/student-enrollment/historical/total-student-enrollment-1831-to-present/>

²¹ "Historical Enrollment Fall Terms, 1859-2022," Office of Institutional Research, Auburn University, accessed June 19, 2023, <https://auburn.edu/administration/ir/factbook/enrollment-demographics/historical-summaries/historical-enrollment.html>

understanding of how these student journalists framed articles within their publications. Through understanding the demographics of abortion statistics within the state and the country, analysis of the two largest universities' papers can be better understood.

This study examined the way that two school newspapers in the state of Alabama, traditionally a conservative state, framed the topic of abortion immediately before and after the passing of *Roe v. Wade*. Passed in 1973, *Roe v. Wade* allowed for the constitutional right to abortion, which expanded the rights of women across the United States. Considering the current total abortion ban in place in Alabama, this study will aid in understanding the way that university newspapers in the state framed abortion in the 1970s to shape students' perceptions and everyday reality.²²

Across the literature, studies have examined the use of framing as it relates to newspaper coverage and abortion.²³ Despite this literature, there lies a gap in the discussion of how campus media framed the topic of abortion among college students. Specifically, the purpose of this study was three-fold: (1) to understand the way that the *Crimson White* and the *Auburn Plainsman* framed abortion before and after the *Roe v. Wade* decision, (2) understand the use of generic framing to build frames, and (3) how these papers utilized abortion advertisements framed abortion.

²² Tuchman, *Making News*.

²³ Katie Woodruff, "Coverage of Abortion in Select U.S. Newspapers," *Media Coverage of Health Issues* 29, no. 1 (January 2019): 80-86 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.whi.2018.08.008>; Laura Nixon et. al, "Shaping stigma: An analysis of mainstream print and online news coverage of abortion, 2014-2015," Berkley Media Studies Group, no. 23 (January 2017): 1-36 <https://www.bmsg.org/resources/publications/issue-23-shaping-stigma-an-analysis-of-mainstream-print-and-online-news-coverage-of-abortion-2014-2015/>.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Roe v. Wade

Women's liberation questioned and challenged traditional ideals about American women, as women were frustrated and angry by their second-class status in the post-war world.²⁴ For centuries, conversations surrounding reproductive responsibilities and rights have been the forefront of discussion.²⁵ The fight for reproductive rights in women began as early as the 1820s, when women used herbs and fungi, such as pennyroyal and ergot, to perform abortion techniques.²⁶ As both of these herbs are poisonous when taken by mouth, they were often deadly to women.²⁷ In response to the use of these herbs as abortion control, states began to pass the first abortion-regulation statutes as "poison control measures."²⁸ In 1821, Connecticut became the first state to instill a statutory abortion regulation, by banning the use of poison to induce an abortion. Those who did so were subject to potential life sentences in prison.²⁹ By the late 1850s, the American Medical Association, led by Horatio Robison Storer, launched a campaign in an attempt to criminalize abortion.³⁰ At this point, twenty states had laws limiting abortion.

²⁴ Sylvia Clavan, "Women's Liberation and the Family," *The Family Coordinator* 19, no. 4 (October 1970): 317-323, <https://doi-org.spot.lib.auburn.edu/10.2307/582313>

²⁵ Donald H. Regan, "Rewriting *Roe v. Wade*," *Michigan Law Review* 77, (1979): 1569-1646, <https://repository.law.umich.edu/articles/345>

²⁶ "Reproductive Rights in History," Duke University, 2019, <https://Duke University, 2009/womenandadvertising/exhibits/reproductive-v-pressure-motherhood/reproductive-rights-in-history/>

²⁷ National Institute of Health, *Pennyroyal Oil*, March 28, 2020, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK548673/#:~:text=Pennyroyal%20is%20an%20herbal%20extract,toxic%20liver%20injury%20and%20death>; American Society for Microbiology, *From Poisoning to Pharmacy: A Tale of Two Ergots*, November 2, 2018, <https://asm.org/Articles/2018/November/From-Poisoning-to-Pharmacy-A-Tale-of-Two-Ergots>.

²⁸ Duke University, "Reproductive Rights."

²⁹ Duke University, "Reproductive Rights."

³⁰ Ryan Johnson, "A Movement for Change: Horatio Robinson Storer and Physicians' Crusade Against Abortion," *James Madison Undergraduate Research Journal* 4, no. 1 (2017): 13-23, <http://commons.lib.jmu.edu/jmurj/vol4/iss1/2>

The Catholic church publicly condemned the act of abortion at any stage of pregnancy in 1869.³¹ Up to this point, the termination of a pregnancy was the main focus of laws being passed, but by 1873, the use of contraceptives began to be discussed. Congress passed the Comstock Law in 1873 banning the distribution of contraceptives.³² Twenty-four states followed, creating similar laws that would regulate the sale and use of contraceptives.³³ By the 1880s, almost all states had laws criminalizing abortion.

After the turn of the twentieth century, Margaret Sanger began to fight for the use of contraception. In 1914, Sanger published a pamphlet, *Family Limitation*, using the term “birth control,” resulting in her indictment for violating the Comstock Law.³⁴ By 1916, Sanger opened the first birth control clinic in Brooklyn, New York, which later became Planned Parenthood. Ten days later, she was arrested and spent thirty days in prison. By this time, abortion techniques were being regarded as dangerous and deadly to women. Thirty-five years after Sanger opened Planned Parenthood in New York, she began working with a scientist, Gregory Pincus, in 1951 to develop the first oral contraceptive.³⁵ The first contraceptive, Envoid, was approved by the Food and Drug Administration in 1961. At this time, however, thirty states still had Comstock Laws in place, despite the conversations of contraception becoming more common. It was becoming so common that, in 1965, the case of *Griswold v. Connecticut* made its way to the Supreme Court, where they ruled that married couples had the right to contraception due to their

³¹ Patsy McGarry, “Catholic Church teaching on abortion dates from 1869,” *The Irish Times*, July 1, 2013, <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/religion-and-beliefs/catholic-church-teaching-on-abortion-dates-from-1869-1.1449517>

³² Brandon Burnette, “Comstock Act of 1873,” in *The First Amendment Encyclopedia*, last modified 2009, <https://www.mtsu.edu/first-amendment/article/1038/comstock-act-of-1873>

³³ Duke University, “Reproductive Rights.”

³⁴ Dorothy Wardell, “Margaret Sanger: Birth Control’s Successful Revolutionary,” *American Journal of Public Health* 70, no. 7 (July 1980): 736-742, <https://doi.org/10.2105%2Fajph.70.7.736>

³⁵ Duke University, “Reproductive Rights.”

right to privacy.³⁶ Unbeknownst to the rest of Americans, this ruling set the precedent for what would become *Roe v. Wade*. In 1967, Colorado was the first state to allow abortion in cases of incest, fetal defects, or for mental-health reasons.³⁷ Hawaii followed suit in 1970, making abortion available at the request of a woman and her doctor. Alaska, New York, and Washington followed soon. *Eisenstadt v. Baird* reached the Supreme Court in 1972, ruling that a Massachusetts law prohibiting the sale of contraceptives to unmarried women to be unconstitutional.³⁸

On January 22, 1973, the Supreme Court announced its decision in *Roe v. Wade*, which established the constitutional right to an abortion. Jane Roe, a pregnant single woman, challenged the constitutionality of Texas criminal abortion laws.³⁹ Texas abortion laws prohibited abortion except for the purpose of saving a mother's life. Allowed to intervene in Roe's action was James Hallford, a licensed physician, who had two state abortion prosecutions pending against him.⁴⁰ Wanting to sue, a district court held that they had standing to move forward. Ruling that declaratory relief was warranted, the Court declared abortion statutes void as "vague and overbroadly infringing on those plaintiffs' Ninth and Fourteenth Amendment rights."⁴¹ Seven of the nine justices on the Supreme Court agreed that the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment implied a right to privacy. This due process clause states that no state shall "deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law."⁴² The justices decided that each state could place some limits on an abortion if necessary to further a state's

³⁶ *Griswold v. Connecticut*, 381 U.S. 479 (1965)

³⁷ Duke University, "Reproductive Rights."

³⁸ *Eisenstadt v. Baird*, 405 U.S. 438 (1972)

³⁹ Regan, "Rewriting *Roe v. Wade*."

⁴⁰ Sarah A. Morgan Smith, "Roe v. Wade," Teaching American History, accessed June 19, 2023, <https://teachingamericanhistory.org/document/roe-v-wade-3/>.

⁴¹ *Roe v. Wade*, 410 U.S. 113 (1973)

⁴² U.S. Const. Amend. XIV §2

interest. A state's ability to regulate abortion increased as a pregnancy progressed. The state could prohibit abortion once a fetus has reached viability, except when necessary to protect the mother's health or life. The notion of a constitutional right to privacy deeply resonated with public consciousness.⁴³ However, this landmark decision was not the end of the controversy surrounding abortion.

Four years after the passing, in 1977, Congress passed the Hyde Amendment, which banned the use of Medicaid and other federal funding for abortions except for in the case of rape, incest, or when harmful to the mother's physical health.⁴⁴ The Abortion Control Act was passed in Pennsylvania in 1982, requiring a 24-hour waiting period making married women inform their husbands, while also mandating parental consent for minors.⁴⁵ That same year, the FDA approved the distribution of the cooper IUD, but distribution was halted for four years because no distributors agreed to make it available to women.⁴⁶

In 1992 in *Planned Parenthood of Southeast Pennsylvania v. Casey*, the Supreme Court placed new limits on the rights to state-level abortions restrictions in Pennsylvania.⁴⁷ This case became the first serious test of *Roe*'s precedent. In 2003, by a twist of events, *Roe* (of *Roe v. Wade*) filed a motion with the federal court to have her case dismissed, arguing that it hurt women.⁴⁸ In 2004, the U.S. Court of Appeals dismissed *Roe*'s motion.

During 2016, in its strongest defense of abortion in 25 years, the Supreme Court struck down a Texas ruling that forced clinics to meet hospital-like standards.⁴⁹ In Donald Trump's

⁴³ Alan Freeman and Elizabeth Mensch, "The Public-Private Distinction in American Law and Life," *Buffalo Law Review* 36, no. 2 (April 1987): 237-257 <https://digitalcommons.law.buffalo.edu/buffalolawreview/vol36/iss2/5>

⁴⁴ Congress.gov. "S.142 - 113th Congress (2013-2014): Hyde Amendment Codification Act." January 24, 2013. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/senate-bill/142>.

⁴⁵ Duke University, "Reproductive Rights."

⁴⁶ Duke University, "Reproductive Rights."

⁴⁷ *Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pa. v. Casey*, 505 U.S. 833 (1992)

⁴⁸ Duke University, "Reproductive Rights."

⁴⁹ Duke University, "Reproductive Rights."

presidency, he appointed three conservative judges to the Supreme Court, Neil Gorsuch, Brett Kavanaugh, and Amy Coney Barrett, confirming a conservative majority on the court. In December 2021, *Dobbs v. Jackson's Women's Health Organization* was brought to the Supreme Court, dealing with a Mississippi law that would ban abortion after 15 weeks.⁵⁰ Upholding this ban would result in the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*. By May 2022, a Politico report was leaked, showing a Supreme Court draft opinion that indicated the court would overturn *Roe*.⁵¹ On June 24, 2022, the court ruled 6-3 to uphold Mississippi's law, with the decision to overturn *Roe* a 5-4 vote.⁵² Forty-nine years, five months, and one day after the passing of *Roe v. Wade*, it is no longer in force today.

The Religious Right and Roe v. Wade

According to Minkenberg, politics and religion has always been a challenging issue.⁵³ While the United States Constitution established the separation of church and state, as well as the ability to exercise religion, Rucht concluded that there is a visible impact of religion on public policy.⁵⁴ Often, religion plays a part in public policy areas such as foreign affairs and education and family policies.⁵⁵ However, very few of these policy areas include religion and morality the way that abortion does. Rahn furthers the conversation, arguing that the abortion debate occupies the space between the private and public spheres.⁵⁶ With this, she means that they reside in the

⁵⁰ *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, 597 U.S. ____ (2022)

⁵¹ Josh Gerstein and Alexander Ward, "Supreme Court has voted to overturn abortion rights, draft opinion shows," *Politico*, May 5, 2022, <https://www.politico.com/news/2022/05/02/supreme-court-abortion-draft-opinion-00029473>

⁵² Duke University, "Reproductive Rights."

⁵³ Michael Minkenberg, "Religion and Public Policy: Institutional, Cultural, and Political Impact on the Shaping of Abortion Policies in Western Democracies," *Comparative Political Studies* 35, no. 2 (March 2002): 221-247, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414002035002004>

⁵⁴ Dieter Rucht, "Modernization and new social movements: Germany, France, and the USA in comparison," *Theory and Society* 32, (1994).

⁵⁵ Minkenberg, "Religion and Public Policy."

⁵⁶ Natalie Rahn, "Funding Abortion as Facilitating It: The Complicity Argument in Religious Right Legal Efforts to Control Reproductive Choice in the United States" (undergraduate honor thesis, Seattle University, 2021), 1-48

space between the constitutionality of protected rights due to religious and reproductive freedom. Rahn goes even further, stating that few scholars understand the claims the Religious Right makes.

The Religious Right claims against abortion is not a blatant disregard for people with uteruses' reproductive rights agency and autonomy. Instead, the Religious Right operates under the notion that their actions (or inactions) have influence in reproductive care outcomes, and with that, their actions (or inactions) are also capable of making them complicit in the conduct that they believe to be morally abhorrent.⁵⁷

In her 2016 article, Holland touched on the modern anti-abortion movement, and the way that religion plays a role in it. According to Holland, the modern anti-abortion movement began with a small group of Catholic doctors, nurses, lawyers, and housewives who worked together to combat the legalization of abortion.⁵⁸ The National Council of Catholic Bishops, now the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, was established in 1966 to address issues that “concern the Church as part of the larger society.”⁵⁹ As such, they began a campaign to raise money to form the National Right to Life Committee. While the National Right to Life Committee is still an active organization, many of the early groups formed to stop abortion were unsuccessful in making changes to their state's abortion laws.⁶⁰

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, evangelical Christians joined the anti-abortion movement. The joining of these Christians eventually radicalized the movement, as many evangelical Christians opposed the legalization of abortion.⁶¹ Some joined existing anti-abortion groups; others worked to form new, more radical groups. One of the most radical groups was the

⁵⁷ Rahn, “Funding Abortion,” p. 10

⁵⁸ Jennifer Holland, “Abolishing Abortion: The History of the Pro-Life Movement in America,” *Organization of American Historians*, accessed June 19, 2023, <https://www.oah.org/tah/issues/2016/november/abolishing-abortion-the-history-of-the-pro-life-movement-in-america/>

⁵⁹ “Our Story,” United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, accessed June 19, 2023, <https://www.usccb.org/about>

⁶⁰ Holland, “Abolishing Abortion.”

⁶¹ Holland, “Abolishing Abortion.”

formation of Operation Rescue, whose goal was to end abortion by “any means necessary.”⁶² According to the Operation Rescue website, the group was formed in 1986 and has become “one of the most outspoken groups opposing abortion in the United States.”⁶³ This group pioneered the pro-life rescue⁶⁴ by having anti-abortion activists form human barricades in front of abortion clinics.⁶⁵ While the Operation Rescue website states that they led the “largest movement involving peaceful civil disobedience in American history,” the National Abortion Federation (NAF) says otherwise.⁶⁶ Between the late 1970s and early 2000s, there were 179 assaults, 406 death threats, 4 kidnappings, 27 attempted murders, and 4 murders related to abortion providers.⁶⁷ The data presented in the study by the NAF does not explicitly state that these incidents occurred directly by Operation Rescue, but the Feminist Majority Federation states that there were similar events that targeted clinics planned by groups such as Operation Rescue, Operation Save America, and Created Equal.⁶⁸

Roe v. Wade in Alabama

As of March 2023, total abortion bans are in place in at least 12 states: Idaho, South Dakota, Wisconsin, West Virginia, Kentucky, Missouri, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Alabama.⁶⁹ Therefore, Alabama has some of the most restrictive abortion laws in place. The legality and accessibility of abortion in Alabama has a long history

⁶² Holland, “Abolishing Abortion.”

⁶³ “History,” Operation Rescue, accessed June 19, 2023, <https://www.operationrescue.org/about-us/history/>

⁶⁴ Holland, “Abolishing Abortion.”

⁶⁵ “History,” Operation Rescue.

⁶⁶ “NAF Violence and Disruption Statistics: Incidents of Violence & Disruption Against Abortion Providers in the U.S. & Canada,” National Abortion Federation, April 2009, https://www.prochoice.org/pubs_research/publications/downloads/about_abortion/violence_stats.pdf

⁶⁷ National Abortion Federation, “Violence and Disruption Statistics.”

⁶⁸ “Walking the Gauntlet: Daily Harassment of Women Patients, Clinics, and Healthcare Workers,” Feminist Majority Federation, 2019. <https://feminist.org/anti-abortion-violence/harassment.html>

⁶⁹ “Tracking the States Where Abortion is Now Banned,” *New York Times*, last modified June 26, 2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/us/abortion-laws-roe-v-wade.html>

that dates back to the 1840s, when abortion was first banned in the state.⁷⁰ In 1951, the Alabama Legislature revised the abortion laws. This revision led to the application of fines ranging from \$100 to \$1000, while also reducing the crime to a misdemeanor. Twenty years later, the University of Alabama Medical Center began pushing the limits of the restrictive laws in Alabama. By 1980, the legislature in Alabama passed a resolution considering banning abortion except for instances where abortion was medically necessary. In 2019, Alabama passed a bill, the Human Life Protection Act, that would set a near-total abortion ban in the state.⁷¹ The law attempted to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, but a U.S. District Judge, Myron Thompson, blocked the law from taking effect. In 2022, Planned Parenthood halted abortion services, leaving only three operational clinics in the state.

After the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, Alabama began enforcing a total abortion ban, prohibiting abortion at any stage of pregnancy. Under Alabama state law, a pregnant person is required to undergo a mandatory 48-hour waiting period, biased counseling, as well as undergo an ultrasound.⁷² The Center for Reproductive Rights defines biased counseling as counseling that is used to discourage women from receiving abortion services through using stigmatizing or medically inaccurate information about abortion.⁷³ The state law also prohibits both public funding and private insurance coverage of abortion, while also requiring parental, legal guardian or a judge's consent to a minor's abortion. TRAP laws (targeted regulation of abortion providers)

⁷⁰ Brian Lyman and Evan Mealins, "A History of Abortion Law and Abortion Access in Alabama," *Montgomery Advertiser*, June 24, 2022, <https://www.montgomeryadvertiser.com/story/news/2022/06/24/abortion-law-access-alabama-roe-vs-wade-history/7702753001/>

⁷¹ Antonella Napolitano and Maria Cristina Aiezza, "Pro-Life vs. Pro-Choice: A CDA of Discourses on the Alabama Human Life Protection Act," *Medical Discourse and Communication*, (2023): 131-160, <https://www.cambridgescholars.com/product/978-1-5275-9471-5>

⁷² "After Roe Fell: Abortion Laws by State," Center for Reproductive Rights, 2023, <https://reproductiverights.org/maps/state/alabama/>

⁷³ "Mandatory Waiting Periods and Biased Counseling Requirements in Central and Eastern Europe," Center for Reproductive Rights, 2023, https://reproductiverights.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/CRR_Fact-Sheet_Abortion_MWP-and-Biased-Counseling_CEE_Final_0.pdf

are still in place, restricting the provision of abortion care to licensed physicians. The Alabama Constitution does not include express constitutional or statutory protections for abortion. The Alabama Constitution says that the state “acknowledges, declares, and affirms that it is the public policy of the state to recognize and support the sanctity of unborn life and the rights of unborn children, including the right to life.”⁷⁴

History of Auburn University and the University of Alabama

The two largest universities in the state of Alabama, the University of Alabama and Auburn University, both have rich histories. The University of Alabama was established first. In 1819, the Board of Trustees met to begin planning the new university that was created through an act of the Alabama legislature.⁷⁵ Tuscaloosa, then the state capital, was selected for the new university in 1827. Purchasing land just outside the city limits, the school opened three years later on April 18, 1831.⁷⁶ By 1863, six buildings and residence halls had been constructed.

Previously, while only accepting white men, the University of Alabama admitted Bessie Parker and Anna Adams in 1893, paving the way for women to enroll at the school. Decades later, the University of Alabama found itself as the site of a significant social and civil rights protest. After a three-year court case in 1956, the University of Alabama admitted Autherine Lucy, its first African American student. On February 6, approximately 500 people protested her admission, throwing rocks at Lucy. Later the next morning, the university’s Board of Trustees suspended her for her own safety. In 1963, Vivian Malone and James Hood again attempted to integrate the university, gaining admittance to the university.⁷⁷ However, Governor George C.

⁷⁴ Ala. Const. Amend. 930

⁷⁵ “University of Alabama,” Encyclopedia of Alabama, accessed June 19, 2023, <http://encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-1678>.

⁷⁶ Encyclopedia of Alabama, “University of Alabama.”

⁷⁷ Encyclopedia of Alabama, “University of Alabama.”

Wallace vowed to “prevent the integration of the school by blocking the doorway, if necessary.” After Wallace read a statement reiterating that he would not allow the students to pass, Deputy Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach informed Wallace that the students would register, go to school, then withdraw. Later that afternoon, President John F. Kennedy federalized the Alabama National Guard. Brigadier General Henry Graham of the Thirty-First Division of the National Guard, in addition to the two students, ordered Wallace to “step aside on orders from the President of the United States.”⁷⁸ Wallace then thanked the people of Alabama for their restraint before stepping aside. Malone and Hood then registered.

The University of Alabama website states, that in 1973, 8,475 students were male, while 6,463 were women.⁷⁹ Today, according to the University of Alabama website, the university offers bachelors, masters, and doctoral degrees in nearly 200 different degree programs.⁸⁰ The mission of the university is to “advance the intellectual and social condition of the people of the state, nation, and the world through the creation, translation, and dissemination of knowledge with an emphasis on quality programs in the areas of teaching, research, and science.”⁸¹

Auburn University was established as a land-grant university, as agriculture played a large part in the economies of states in the South.⁸² As such, the Morrill Act was passed in July 1862, establishing the ability for states to build public colleges funded by the development of associated federal land grants.⁸³ These land-grant institutions emphasized agriculture and

⁷⁸ Encyclopedia of Alabama, “University of Alabama.”

⁷⁹ “Our Mission & Vision,” University of Alabama, accessed June 19, 2023, <https://www.ua.edu/strategicplan/mission-vision#:~:text=The%20University%20of%20Alabama%20will,of%20teaching%2C%20research%20and%20service>

⁸⁰ University of Alabama, “Our Mission & Vision.”

⁸¹ University of Alabama, “Our Mission & Vision.”

⁸² Kathryn Wade, “The Intent and Fulfillment of the Morrill Act of 1862: A Review of the History of Auburn University and the University of Georgia” (master’s thesis, Auburn University, 2005), <https://etd.auburn.edu/handle/10415/677>

⁸³ “Morrill Act (1862),” National Archives, last modified May 10, 2022, <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/morrill-act>

mechanic arts, allowing those who had been previously excluded from higher education, such as farmers and working people, the opportunity to invest in higher education.⁸⁴ Therefore, Auburn University got its start under the passing of the Morrill Act, leading to a future with many name changes.

After debates surrounding where to place this land grant institution, legislators settled on the city of Auburn offering buildings and 13 acres for the East Alabama Male College, a Methodist institution that was established in 1856.⁸⁵ Opening its doors in 1859 as a private liberal arts institution, the church transferred legal control of the institution to the state in 1872, making it the first land-grant college in the South to be established separately from the state university.⁸⁶ This change led the institution to its first name change to the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Alabama.

In the midst of name changes, then Agricultural and Mechanical College of Alabama was the first to make a step towards gender equality in Alabama.⁸⁷ Julia Tutwiler initiated this step, petitioning the Alabama Education Association and the University of Alabama's board for women's enrollment. While originally petitioning for this enrollment at the University of Alabama, it was Auburn University that saw the first enrollment of women. Three women, Katherine Broun, Margaret Teague, and Willie Little, were admitted in 1892.

As the curricula began to focus more on science and research, the Alabama Legislature voted in 1899 to formally change the name, again, to the Alabama Polytechnic Institute (API).⁸⁸

⁸⁴ National Archives, "Morrill Act (1862)."

⁸⁵ Wade, "The Intent and Fulfillment."

⁸⁶ "Our Mission," Auburn University, 2023,

<https://auburn.edu/about/visionandmission.php#:~:text=As%20a%20land%2Dgrant%20institution,and%20scholarship%2C%20and%20selfless%20service>

⁸⁷ Derek Herscovici, "Women at Auburn: 1892-1900," Auburn Alumni Association, March 7, 2017,

<https://www.alumni.auburn.edu/women-at-auburn-1892-1900/>.

⁸⁸ Wade, "The Intent and Fulfillment."

By 1960, under President Ralph B. Draughon, the transition to a scholarly purpose was complete. Reflecting this transition, the Board of Trustees decided the name “Auburn – Land Grant University” would better describe the institution and its mission.⁸⁹ Agreeing with this, the Alabama Legislature approved the January 1960 name change to Auburn University.⁹⁰ According to Auburn University’s website, the total number of students in 1973 was 15,705, with 5,922 being women.⁹¹ Today, in 2023, the university offers more than 150 formal undergraduate degrees, housed in 12 different colleges and schools.⁹² The mission of Auburn remains the same. Dedicated to improving the lives of people in Alabama, the nation, and the world through “forward thinking education, life-enhancing research and scholarship, and selfless service,” Auburn aims to be the best among land-grant universities.⁹³ They aim to do so through three responsibilities: “leveraging the synergy found in the interchange of education, research, and service.”⁹⁴

The student papers at both schools have a history that date back to the mid-1800s. Founded in 1859, Auburn University established a way for students to share their “intellectual and oratorical development.”⁹⁵ This led to the establishment of the *Orange and Blue*, the first student-run publication at Auburn. By November 7, 1894, the paper’s name had officially been changed to the *Auburn Plainsman*. For the University of Alabama, the *Alabama University Monthly*, or the *Monthly*, was the main student publication in the 1870s. Ceasing publication due

⁸⁹ Wade, “The Intent and Fulfillment.”

⁹⁰ Wade, “The Intent and Fulfillment.”

⁹¹ Office of Institutional Research, “Historical Enrollment Fall Terms, 1859-2022.”

⁹² Auburn University, “Our Mission.”

⁹³ Auburn University, “Our Mission.”

⁹⁴ Auburn University, “Our Mission.”

⁹⁵ Derek Herscovici, “125 Years of the Auburn Plainsman,” Auburn Alumni Association, February 22, 2019, <https://www.alumni.auburn.edu/125-years-of-the-auburn-plainsman/>

to the strict control of the editors, the *Monthly* saw its last publication in May 1887.⁹⁶ By 1891, students tried to start a new student-run publication, the *Journal*. The *Journal* only lasted three years, leading to the *Crimson White* being first published on November 23, 1894. Since settling on names, papers at both schools have regularly been in publication, where both have continuously reported on controversial issues, such as abortion, integration, and women's equality. The *Auburn Plainsman* has been named the fifth-winningest student media by the Associated College Press.⁹⁷ In 2019, the *Crimson White* won a Newspaper Pacemaker Award.⁹⁸ According to Atkin and DeJong, college newspapers have the potential to influence their readers to due high credibility on campus.⁹⁹ In this study, public service advertisements regarding anti-drunk driving were ran in college newspapers, finding that these ads can promote prevention.

Framing Theory

In 1997, Frank Luntz sent a memo to Congress, which eventually made its way to journalists.¹⁰⁰ In this memo, the message Luntz was attempting to send was clear: "It's not what you say, it's what people hear."¹⁰¹ Arguably, framing theory reflects this statement. Goffman argued that individuals often struggle to understand their life experiences, in turn, utilizing the

⁹⁶ William Shivers, "The Crimson White: A Changing Tradition," in *The Tides of Tradition: Culture and Reform at the University of Alabama* (2023): 40-56, files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED476569.pdf

⁹⁷ Amy Shugart, "The Auburn Plainsman named fifth-winningest student media outlet in country," Office of Communications and Marketing, Auburn University, November 2, 2022 https://ocm.auburn.edu/newsroom/campus_notices/2022/11/2258-plainsman-fifth-winningest.php.

⁹⁸ Richard LeComte, "Crimson White, Vida Win student Pacemaker Awards," UA News Center, University of Alabama, December 18, 2019, <https://news.ua.edu/2019/12/crimson-white-vida-win-student-pacemaker-awards/>

⁹⁹ Charles K. Atkin and William DeJong, "News Coverage of Alcohol and Other Drugs in U.S. College Newspapers," *J. Drug Education* 30, no. 4 (2000): 453-465, https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.2190/QV88-D0DV-P0YM-6EF4?casa_token=FrVd1JSutCUAAAAA:lyYa0ZRLs4-emCfer85xN6II3wDIHAPbhnhv-nKAn3ORTMMwBwzLeTbnE9rStzRCt-1m4rrChvim

¹⁰⁰ Dietram A. Scheufele and David Tewskbury, "Framing, Agenda Setting, and Priming: The Evolution of Three Media Effects Models," *Journal of Communication* 57, no. 1 (November 2006): 9-20, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0021-9916.2007.00326.x>

¹⁰¹ Frank Luntz, *Words that Work: It's Not What You Say, It's What People Hear*, (New York: Hachette Books, 2005).

news to do so.¹⁰² As a result, he argues that individuals use this interpretation to classify information and interpret it meaningfully. Gitlin defined frames as “principles of selection, emphasis and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters.”¹⁰³ Scholars began to further study the relationship between framing and the way it was used in the media.¹⁰⁴ While other definitions of framing exist, Entman defined one of the most common definition, citing framing as taking “some aspects of perceived reality and make them more salient in communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular definition of a problem, casual interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described.”¹⁰⁵ Further, framing attempts to organize everyday reality by providing meaning to events and promoting definitions and interpretations of political, economic, and social events.¹⁰⁶

Luntz’s statement comes into the equation when Scheufele argued that framing assumes that how an issue is characterized in the news can impact how it is understood by the audience.¹⁰⁷ Therefore, making it not what the media says, but what the audience hears. As such, journalists often use frames in a way to present information that reflects the existing audiences’ attitudes.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰² Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1974)

¹⁰³ Todd Gitlin, *The Whole World is Watching: Mass Media in the Making and Unmaking of the New Left*, (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1980), 7

¹⁰⁴ William A. Gamson et al., “Media Images and the Social Construction of Reality,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 18, (August 1992): 373-393, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.so.18.080192.002105>; Robert D. Benford and David Snow, “Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 26, (2000): 611-639. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/223459>

¹⁰⁵ Robert M. Entman, “Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm,” *Journal of Communication* 43, no. 4 (December 1993): 52, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1993.tb01304.x>

¹⁰⁶ Tuchman, *Making News*.

¹⁰⁷ Dietram Scheufele, “Framing as a Theory of Media Effects,” *Journal of Communication* 49, no. 1 (March 1999): 103-122, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1999.tb02784.x>

¹⁰⁸ Pamela J. Shoemaker and Stephen D. Reese, *Mediating the Message in the 21st Century: A Media Sociology Perspective*, chap. 2, (New York: Routledge, 2014), 38, <https://psipp.itb-ad.ac.id/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Pamela-J.-Shoemaker-Stephen-D.-Reese-Mediating-the-Message-in-the-21st-Century -A-Media-Sociology-Perspective-2013-Routledge.pdf>

Scheufele clarifies, saying that framing is not the attempt of most journalists to deceive their audiences.¹⁰⁹ Instead, he argues that it is a necessary tool to help simplify an issue.

Chong & Druckman present framing as a process through which individuals develop a conceptualization of an issue.¹¹⁰ De Vreese maintained that the concept of framing was a key part of the communicative process.¹¹¹ The communicative process is a dynamic process that involves both frame building and frame setting. According to de Vreese, frame building refers to the factors that influence the structure of news stories.¹¹² As a result of frame building, frames manifest themselves in the text. Another process worth mentioning is frame setting, which is the interaction between media frames and individuals' prior knowledge. Consequently, framing can occur on an individual or societal level. An individual level consequence may alter attitudes about an issue based on exposure to certain frames. On the societal level, frames may contribute to shaping societal level processes, such as political socialization and collective actions.¹¹³

De Vreese also mentions the use of "issue-specific" and "generic" frames that journalists often use.¹¹⁴ Issue specific frames are typically tied to a specific issue, whereas generic frames can be applied to any news coverage. The most often used examples of generic frames are identified by Semetko and Valkenburg: conflict, human interest, economic consequences, morality, and responsibility.¹¹⁵ To begin, the conflict frame emphasizes a disagreement between individuals, groups, or institutions. These frames are often employed within political news

¹⁰⁹ Scheufele, "Framing as a Theory."

¹¹⁰ Chong and Druckman, "Framing Theory."

¹¹¹ Claes de Vreese, "News Framing: Theory and Typology," *Information Design Journal* 13, no. 1 (April 2005): 51-62, DOI: 10.1075/idjdd.13.1.06vre

¹¹² De Vreese, "News Framing."

¹¹³ De Vreese, "News Framing."

¹¹⁴ De Vreese, "News Framing."

¹¹⁵ Holli A. Semetko and Patti M. Valkenburg, "Framing European Politics: A Content Analysis of Press and Television News," *Journal of Communication* 50, no. 2 (June 2000): 93-109, DOI: 10.1111/j.1460-2466.2000.tb02843.x

coverage. Next, the human interest frame tends to bring an emotional angle to the organization of an issue within the news. Bennett argues that with the competitive nature of journalists, editors attempt to produce content that will capture an audience's attention.¹¹⁶ Economic consequence frames often report on the impact that a problem or issue will have on the economy.¹¹⁷ Fourth, morality frames report issues in a way that is based on religion or moral perspectives. This frame is often employed indirectly, through quotations or inference. Lastly, the responsibility frame is used when an issue is presented to attribute responsibility for the cause to an individual or a group.

Framing & Controversial Issues

As seen, framing can be used by news outlets to influence the perception audiences may have on a particular topic. Gamson & Modigilani argue that framing is a way that journalists use both words and quotes to emphasize a topic so that the reader can see it that way, too.¹¹⁸ While certain factors such as social values and organizational restrictions impact frames, a specific journalist's values and beliefs can also play an important role in how news stories are framed.¹¹⁹ Therefore, Schmid et al. argue that the discussion of abortion is not one that only occurs in politics, it is also visible in the media.¹²⁰ For example, Carmines argues that media coverage has ultimately politicized abortion through aligning pro-life ideals with the Republican party and

¹¹⁶ W. Lance Bennett, *News: The Politics of Illusion* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016) <https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/N/bo22723661.html>

¹¹⁷ Semetko and Valkenburg, "Framing European Politics."

¹¹⁸ William A. Gamson and Andre Modigilani, "Media Discourse and Public Opinion on Nuclear Power: A Constructionist Approach," *American Journal of Sociology* 95, no. 1 (July 1989): 1-37, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2780405>

¹¹⁹ Gitlin, *The Whole World is Watching*; Scheufele, "Framing as a Theory."

¹²⁰ Anna Theresa Schmid, Avery Veldhouse, and Shahin Payam, "A press(ing) issue: analysing local news coverage of abortion in the US South during the COVID-19 pandemic," *Culture, health & sexuality* 25, no. 1 (January 2023): 1-15, doi: 10.1080/13691058.2022.2164064.

pro-choice ideals with the Democratic party.¹²¹ Woodruff argued that this news coverage can impact public policy.¹²² She makes this argument through studying the ways that three U.S. newspapers covered and framed abortion. In her analysis, she found that abortion was discussed more often through mere mentions, rather than substantively. Additionally, she found this coverage to discuss abortion more as a political issue, than an issue of health. Further, Purcell et al. studied abortion coverage in Great Britain newspapers, finding that abortion was typically covered in conjunction with negative and stigmatizing language.¹²³ The authors also found that coverage was rarely included from the perspective of a woman who has received an abortion. Nixon et al. studied the stigma surrounding abortion in news coverage, finding that the more in-depth the coverage, the more stigmatizing the language.¹²⁴ Further, in a study analyzing right-wing media, Kann & Tulbert found that Fox News dominated conversations surrounding abortion and reproductive rights.¹²⁵ However, they found that despite this domination, coverage of abortion was wrong 77% of the time. All of these studies analyzed how national news outlets were framing abortion. There is little research on how campus news media have covered framing of abortion. However, scholars have examined how student journalists have reported on other controversial topics, such as the #MeToo movement.

¹²¹ Edward G. Carmines, Jessica C. Gerrity, and Michael W. Wagner, "How Abortion Became a Partisan Issue: Media Coverage of the Interest Group-Political Party Connection," *Politics and Policy* 3, no. 6 (2010): 1135-1158, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-1346.2010.00272.x>

¹²² Woodruff, "Coverage of Abortion."

¹²³ Carrie Purcell, Shona Hilton, and Lisa McDaid, "The Stigmatisation of Abortion: A Qualitative Analysis of Print Media in Great Britain in 2010," *Culture, Health, & Sexuality* 16, no. 9 (2014): 1141-1155, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13691058.2014.937463>

¹²⁴ Nixon et al., "Shaping Stigma."

¹²⁵ Sharon Kann and Julie Tulbert, "Right-wing Media are Filling a Void of Abortion-Related Coverage with Misinformation," Media Matters for America, May 21, 2018, <https://www.mediamatters.org/tucker-carlson/right-wing-media-are-filling-void-abortion-related-coverage-misinformation>.

O'Boyle & Jo-Yun Li studied the effects of framing on college campus during the #MeToo movement.¹²⁶ They argue that the journalists who cover these stories are typically not members of the campus community, making them unaware of the climate and culture on campus. Despite this argument, Bockino¹²⁷ found that college newspapers are an important tool for the development of journalists. Further, Bockino draws on Williams' argument that college newspapers (as an apprenticeship) allow for learning a job in the exact context that it will be performed.¹²⁸ Thus, studying the way that not only student journalists framed the topic of abortion, but the way that other students expressed their opinions, can be crucial to understand how they interpret abortion and the discourses surrounding it. As such, it is important to explore how abortion is framed in the media, as the news can shape public opinion.¹²⁹ Specifically, Kumar argues that understanding local news discussion of a particular topic can aid in understanding the views and stigma surrounding abortion within a local community.¹³⁰

Abortion Advertisements

In an article by Bouchard, she analyzed abortion culture in China by studying the use of abortion advertisements in public.¹³¹ One subject stated that she doesn't think women were respected in these advertisements. Others felt that these advertisements should be kept in a doctor's office, not in public place. Despite this, the subjects who were doctors acknowledge that

¹²⁶ Jane O'Boyle and Queenie Jo-Yun Li, "#MeToo is different for college students: Media framing of campus sexual assault, its causes, and proposed solutions," *Newspaper Research Journal* 40, no. 4 (August 2019): 431-450, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0739532919856127>

¹²⁷ Bockino, "Preparatory Journalism."

¹²⁸ Susan M. Williams, "Putting Case-Based Instruction into Context: Examples from Legal and Medical Education," *The Journal of the Learning Sciences* 2, no. 4 (1992): 367-427, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1466615>.

¹²⁹ Schmid, Veldhouse, and Payam, "A press(ing) issue."

¹³⁰ Anuradha Kumar, Leila Hessini, and Ellen Mitchell, "Conceptualising abortion stigma," *Culture, Health, & Sexuality* 11, no. 6 (2009): 625-639, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13691050902842741>

¹³¹ Naomi Bouchard, "Women's Health and Abortion Culture in China: Policy, Perception and Practice," *Independent Study Project (ISP)*, (December 2014): 1-39, https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp_collection/1951?utm_source=digitalcollections.sit.edu%2Fisp_collection%2F1951&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages

these advertisements being in a public place informed more people that abortion was a viable option. In another study done on abortion ads in China, Chen argued that few consumers have the knowledge to fully understand these ads.¹³² However, E and Goodall argue that Chen's validity and credibility in saying this was questionable.¹³³ As a result, E and Goodall utilized emotions as a frame to analyze abortion advertisements.¹³⁴ To appeal to emotions, the authors found that response efficacy messaging was used in over ninety-eight percent of these ads. In response efficacy messaging, the study looked to see if the ads were advertising the effectiveness of abortion services. Often these messages appeared by amplifying the efficacy of the advertised service as a natural and accessible way to avoid an unplanned pregnancy. Sisson and Kimport argue that the use of this advertising pattern can skew viewers perceptions of abortion services, prohibiting them from fully understanding the costs and risks associated with abortion.¹³⁵ When it comes to college newspapers advertising services, Bockino argues that these papers are more reliant on the advertising revenue than industry newspapers.¹³⁶ This finding from Bockino indicates that college newspapers were more concerned with changing economic habits, making these papers more interested in income than actually providing services to students.

To fill the gap in the literature regarding the way that student newspapers framed the passing of *Roe v. Wade* in the state of Alabama the following research questions were proposed:

¹³² N. Chen, "Painless Abortion Advertising Research Under the Perspective of Communication," *Journalism Lover* 3, (April 2013), <http://media.people.com.cn/n/2013/0401/c360068-20991134.html>.

¹³³ Qinyu E and Catherine Goodall, "Creating Demand for Abortion Service: A Content Analysis of Online Advertising Videos for Abortion Care in Mainland China," *Asian Women* 34, no. 4 (December 2018): 25-51, <https://doi.org/10.14431/aw.2018.12.34.4.25>.

¹³⁴ E and Goodall, "Creating Demand for Abortion Service."

¹³⁵ Gretchen Sisson and Katrina Kimport, "Depicting Abortion Access on American Television, 2005-2015," *Feminism and Psychology* 27, no. 1 (February 2017): 56-71, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0959353516681245>.

¹³⁶ David Bockino, "Preparatory Journalism: The College Newspaper as a Pedagogical Tool," *Journalism and Mass Communication Educator* 73, no. 1 (January 2017): 67-82, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077695816687608>.

RQ1: What emergent frames did *the Auburn Plainsman* and *the Crimson White* use in their coverage of abortion immediately before and after the *Roe v. Wade* decision?

RQ2: How did *the Auburn Plainsman* and *the Crimson White* utilize generic framing in their coverage of abortion before and after the *Roe v. Wade* decision?

RQ3: How did the *Auburn Plainsman* and the *Crimson White* utilize abortion advertisements to frame the topic of abortion?

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this study was to examine the way that school newspapers at the two largest universities in the state of Alabama framed abortion in the wake of the landmark Supreme Court decision *Roe v. Wade*. With the recent court decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, this study provides understanding into the way that society, particularly college-aged students in a conservative state, responded to the original passage of this court case. This understanding can be accomplished through looking at the way that newspapers frame this case. Using framing theory framework, along with a textual analysis methodology, this study examined *the Crimson White* and *the Auburn Plainsman* in which student journalists share news about abortion or *Roe v. Wade*. The methodology of this study is presented here, including the research design, data collection process, and data analysis process.

Textual Analysis

The term textual analysis is often used generically for any study of text. Therefore, textual analysis theorists claim meaning resides in the dialectical process between the text and the reader, which takes place in a social and historical context.¹³⁷ Thus, the purpose of this study is to understand the way in which the text was used to find the way that student journalists framed abortion.

Within a textual analysis, there is not “a” message to be found. The purpose is to make sense of an event to readers through understanding the relationship to the text. The analysis must determine all layers of meaning in a text, identifying the alternative readings. Texts can be labeled as open or closed, depending on the readings.¹³⁸ The text is the means to the study in

¹³⁷ Patricia A. Curtin, “Textual Analysis in Mass Communication Studies: Theory and Methodology,” AJEMC National Convention, Washington D.C., August 1995, <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED389018>

¹³⁸ Curtin, “Textual Analysis in Mass Communication Studies.”

textual analysis; of interest is not the text itself, but what the text signifies. As this study explored the text, a textual analysis methodology provides for a close reading of the text for analysis.

Research Design and Methodology

In order to properly explore the proposed research questions, a textual analysis was conducted. Although uniform measurement standards for framing do not exist, Chong and Druckman tend to take the following steps.¹³⁹ First, a frame in communication can be defined only in relation to a specific issue, event, or political actor.¹⁴⁰ The specific issue analyzed within this study is the framing of abortion. Second, if the goal is to understand how frames in communication affect public opinions, specific attitudes need to be isolated.¹⁴¹ While specific attitudes will not be looked at, it is important to understand that the way journalists frame the news can impact the attitudes of the public, therefore impacting the way that journalists report on topics. Third, an set of frames is identified to create a coding scheme.¹⁴² For the purpose of this study, the following data collection criteria were set: relevance to the topic, mentioning of set keywords, and how the topic is discussed. These criteria were set to exclude any irrelevant data from analysis. Additionally, the following keywords were determined to locate as many publications as possible: abortion, *Roe v. Wade*, unwanted pregnancy, problem pregnancy, and terminate (termination) of pregnancy. Further, these key words were also used in the plural context: abortions, unwanted pregnancies, problem pregnancies, and termination of pregnancies. Fourth, once an initial set of frames was identified, the next step was to select sources for textual analysis.¹⁴³ Articles or stories were identified via searches and serve as the unit of analysis. Two

¹³⁹ Chong and Druckman, "Framing Theory."

¹⁴⁰ Chong and Druckman, "Framing Theory."

¹⁴¹ Chong and Druckman, "Framing Theory."

¹⁴² Chong and Druckman, "Framing Theory."

¹⁴³ Chong and Druckman, "Framing Theory."

sources were determined for this analysis: *The Crimson White* and *The Auburn Plainsman*, both student-run papers at the two largest universities in Alabama. Another important aspect of selecting sources is selecting the time period to be analyzed. *Roe v. Wade* was passed on January 22, 1973. Based on this information, the following time period was determined, July 1, 1972, to July 31, 1973. The hope with setting this time frame was to determine if the topic of abortion was being discussed before the passing, as well as to see what was being discussed up to six months after the passing.

Coding Process/Data Collection

The data collection process consisted of several stages. Data for this study was collected in March 2023 through two online archive databases, Auburn University Digital Library and The University of Alabama Libraries Special Collection. From a preliminary search, the keyword, “*Roe v. Wade*” generated no publications. From there, other keywords were searched, while some generated nothing, others such as “abortion(s)” and “unwanted pregnancy” generated more. The University of Alabama database originally generated 45 articles, whereas the Auburn University database generated 17 articles. Based on the set coding scheme, some articles were removed from analysis, as there was either no relevance to the topic, or the article included a brief mention of abortion, with no context of pregnancy around it. This data collection process resulted in the analysis of thirty-three articles and fifty-six advertisements. No coding software was used. Instead, articles were assigned a relevant number, then logged in a Google Sheets form.

Fourteen articles were coded as straight news pieces, ten were editorials, and nine were coded as other. During analysis, articles were assigned a number 1, 2, or 3. The number 1 was assigned to straight news pieces. These were articles written by staff/student writers that strictly

included information regarding abortion. The number 2 was assigned to editorials written by members of the editorial board. Number 3 was assigned to the “other” category. This category included articles that were not written by members of the other two categories. This category was broken down to include (a) 2 literary collections, (b) 3 exchange editors, (c) 2 commentaries by students, and (d) 3 commentaries by members of the outside community (non-students).

A similar process was utilized to code the advertisements. Each advertisement was assigned a number 1 through 6. The advertisements were coded as following, with the number of times each one ran. Advertisement (4) ran a total of 24 times, advertisement (1) ran 15 times, advertisement (2) ran 6 times, advertisement (3) ran 5 times, advertisement (5) ran 4 times, and advertisement (6) ran 2 times.

After coding each article and advertisement, the entire sample was analyzed through a close reading of the text to address each research question. For RQ1, inductive coding was implemented, as major themes were extracted after reading. RQ2 utilized deductive coding, as Semetko and Valkenburg identified five prevalent ways that news can be framed.¹⁴⁴ These themes were adapted and utilized within the analysis of this study. RQ3 also utilized deductive coding, adapting E and Goodall’s finding of response efficacy messaging in advertisements.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁴ Semetko and Valkenburg, “Framing European Politics.”

¹⁴⁵ E and Goodall, “Creating Demand for Abortion Services.”

Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion

This section presents the findings of the study. Fourteen straight news pieces, ten editorials, and nine others were analyzed. Additionally, 56 advertisements were analyzed. Each research question will be discussed, with direct quotations to support each theme. Within the analysis, the language was analyzed, in addition to who was writing these articles.

What emergent frames did the *Auburn Plainsman* and the *Crimson White* use in their coverage of abortion immediately before and after the *Roe v. Wade* decision?

The Morality of Abortion

One of the most noticeable of the three themes was the morality of abortion. While typically acknowledging the passing and liberalization of abortion, some questioned the morality of those who chose to receive an abortion. Rod Sinclair, who was the chaplain of the Auburn Episcopal Student Center and pregnancy counselor, stated, “There is no greater conflict of moral principles in our society today than on the subject of abortion.”¹⁴⁶ In a later straight-news piece, Sinclair stated, “As abortion becomes more accessible, it will become less expensive and a little less taboo.”¹⁴⁷ University of Alabama student, Christina Price, expressed similar feelings in a commentary about the morality of abortion, stating that the court’s ruling cannot make abortion moral.¹⁴⁸ Price goes even further, saying, “Finally, there is the question of morality. Can a nation which kills its own children survive in the moral sense. We sing ‘America, America, God shed his grace on thee.’ Will he? And what will be the verdict of history on a nation which reached the highest level of civilization be only to adopt the barbaric practice of abortion.”¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ “Alternatives to Abortion Offered,” *The Auburn Plainsman*, November 9, 1972, <https://content.lib.auburn.edu/digital/collection/plainsman/id/2244/rec/13>

¹⁴⁷ Greg Lisby, “Abortion Liberalized; Little Effect in Auburn Foreseen,” *The Auburn Plainsman*, January 25, 1973, <https://content.lib.auburn.edu/digital/collection/plainsman/id/2243/rec/28>

¹⁴⁸ Christina Price, “Abortion Decision to Deny Right to Life,” *The Crimson White* (Tuscaloosa), March 1, 1973, https://digitalcollections.libraries.ua.edu/digital/collection/u0002_0000007/id/1972/rec/1.

¹⁴⁹ Price, “Abortion Decision.”

John Saxon, Auburn University alumni, expressed his opinion on the morality of abortion in response to an editorial published by Thom Botsford on February 1, 1973. Saxon's commentary was published on February 8, 1973, arguing that abortion does not go hand in hand with morality. In this commentary, he says that morals are not "written in the sky" and that abortion in the first three months is not "murder in the womb."¹⁵⁰

There was a large portion of commentaries and editorials that explicitly mentioned the morality of abortion, however, several straight-news pieces implicitly discussed the morality of abortion through the implication that abortion is wrong. The discussion of abortion as morally wrong was often paired with the discussion of exploring other alternatives to abortion. Thom Botsford, editor of the *Auburn Plainsman*, discussed his thoughts on abortion in an editorial published on February 1, 1973. In this editorial, he claimed that abortion is similar to a "freckle-faced kid disposing of his appendix."¹⁵¹

Christina Price echoed Botsford's thoughts in a *Crimson White* commentary published just one month later, March 1, 1973. She said, "The right to privacy like any other right must cease when it hinders a more basic right. The right to privacy in contraceptive matters ceases for a woman the moment that she conceives, and a new life begins, because that life has rights, too."

¹⁵² Defined by Semetko and Valkenburg, morality coverage reports on issues that are based on religious or moral perspectives, typically through quotes or inferences. The morality of abortion was often equated with religion, as seen in Price and Botsford's quote. Specifically, by using phrases such as "barbaric" and "kills its own children," abortion was framed as an uncivilized

¹⁵⁰ John Saxon, "Alumnus Finds Reasoning of Abortion Column Vague," *The Auburn Plainsman*, February 8, 1973, <https://content.lib.auburn.edu/digital/collection/plainsman/id/2246/rec/1>

¹⁵¹ Thom Botsford, "Murder in the Womb and Plans for the Future," *The Auburn Plainsman*, February 1, 1973, <https://content.lib.auburn.edu/digital/collection/plainsman/id/2258/rec/3>

¹⁵² Price, "Abortion Decision."

and repulsive practice, implying that the practice goes against American values. Further, the use of the phrase “America, America, God shed his grace on thee,” implies that abortion is a betrayal of Christian values. Both Minkenberg and Rahn found that religion can play a part in the question of morality and abortion.¹⁵³ For the *Crimson White* and the *Auburn Plainsman*, placing the morality of abortion within a religious context was not surprising, as Alabama is located in the Bible belt, a region in the Southern United States that prioritizes Protestant Christianity.¹⁵⁴ Specifically, protestant Christianity emphasizes morality, particularly by questioning the morals of those who have considered abortion as a viable option to an unwanted pregnancy.¹⁵⁵

While the majority of straight news pieces within this frame indicated a negative connotation surrounding the morality of abortion, Saxon argued that abortion was not as black and white as some think, indicating that it is a much more complex issue with valid arguments on both sides. This is in line with Gamson et al. who argues that in the news, varying opinions are often hidden.¹⁵⁶ Lastly, Woodruff found that the majority of articles in her sample personified a fetus. While that was not the case in this study, personifying of the fetus occurred in Botsford’s editorial. Bostford’s editorial rejected the idea that a developing embryo is not human, implying that a developing embryo has the same moral status as a fully developed human. In this editorial, the morality of abortion emphasized that there was no clear distinction between a developing embryo and a fully developed human in terms of their moral worth. The emphasis on this frame indicates that individuals, specifically college-aged students, have the topic of abortion on their minds. This can be attributed to individuals seeking out news coverage about moral issues.

¹⁵³ Minkenberg, “Religion and Public Policy.”; Rahn, “Funding Abortion.”

¹⁵⁴ Jessica Hobby, “What is the Bible Belt?” *United States Now*, last modified June 10, 2023, <https://www.unitedstatesnow.org/what-is-the-bible-belt.htm>

¹⁵⁵ Hobby, “What is the Bible Belt?”

¹⁵⁶ Gamson et al., “Media Images.”

The Politicization of Abortion

Both the *Crimson White* and the *Auburn Plainsman* framed abortion in a way that implied the politicization of abortion. This politicization was most often seen in the coverage of political debates that occurred on campus. The University of Alabama hosted Wayne Thurborn of the Young Americans for Freedom and Mary Jo Vogel of the Young Socialists Alliance where they debated ideals held by both conservatives and socialists. Discussing topics such as the economy and race, abortion made its way into the conversation.

In all of the coverage, abortion was discussed as a polarizing topic amongst other hot-button, controversial issues. Within these debates, those who were anti-abortion used the topic of abortion as an insult to the other, calling those who were pro-choice “militant female libbers” or lacking “sound morality” for the sanctity of life. As a politically divisive topic, abortion is often met with discussion of both the rights of women and the unborn. Authors’ writing in both school papers expressed opinions on these rights. A November 9, 1972, straight-news piece with the *Auburn Plainsman* discussed the alternatives to abortion, stating that the right to life is not absolute.¹⁵⁷

While Reich reinforced his opinion on the right to life, University of Alabama student, Vickie Poor, expressed the opposite opinion.

“The recent Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion is basically an acknowledgement that women do have the right to control their own lives. Pregnancy for a woman all too often means giving up or postponing a life of her own in order to devote herself to her children. Freedom from such domination is a step forward helping women realize their potentialities in areas other than childrearing. This decision also reaffirms certain fundamental rights guaranteed in this country.”¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁷ “Alternatives to Abortion Offered.”

¹⁵⁸ Vickie Poor, “Decision to Reinforce Rights of Women,” *The Crimson White* (Tuscaloosa), March 1, 1973, https://digitalcollections.libraries.ua.edu/digital/collection/u0002_0000007/id/1972/rec/1

In her 2019 study analyzing mainstream news coverage of abortion, Woodruff found that the majority of articles framed abortion as a political issue. Consistent with the literature, several articles in this study framed abortion through politicization. The theme of the politicization of abortion illustrates how different perspectives on abortion can be framed in terms of political positions and values. The University of Alabama hosted a debate with two people on different ends of the political spectrum, emphasizing that there are two sides to a topic that need to be discussed. In agreement with Carmines et al., the articles analyzed often discussed abortion in a highly controversial and politicized way. As framing attempts to organize everyday reality by providing meaning to events, it became clear that both papers framed abortion through a political lens to help individuals understand how they viewed abortion in a political sense.

Abortion as Healthcare

The last prominent way that these papers framed the liberalization of abortion was the discussion of abortion as healthcare. This was first seen in the text, not through discussion of the mother's health, but through the question of when life begins. Often a complex question, it is often asked as: does life begin at conception or once the baby leaves the mother's womb? Despite attempts for medical professionals to answer this question, the moment life begins was discussed in these two student publications. For Auburn, this was discussed in their "Alternatives to Abortion Offered" article, where there was agreement that when life begins is hard to define.¹⁵⁹

In a commentary from the *Crimson White*, Price discussed Justice Harry Blackmun's opinion on the right to life. The commentary states,

"Justice Blackmun passed over the question of the child's possible constitutional right to life by saying: 'We need not resolve the difficult question of when life begins. When those trained in the respective disciplines of medicine, philosophy, and theology are

¹⁵⁹ "Alternatives to Abortion Offered."

unable to arrive at any consensus, the judiciary, at this point in the development of man's knowledge, is not in a position to speculate as to the answer.' Medical and religious experts have already determined that life begins at conception."¹⁶⁰

While the majority of individuals quoted throughout both papers disapproved of the ability to receive an abortion "on demand," it was clear that both papers framed as some form of healthcare. This was seen in the way that both papers covered topics such as the alternatives to abortion or the way campus groups informed students about access to abortion or contraceptives.

With the decision of *Roe v. Wade* in January 1973, the *Auburn Plainsman* published a straight-news piece discussing the effect the judicial decision would have on the Auburn community. While "little immediate effect" was forecasted for Auburn, this piece stated that the local hospital would be equipped to perform an abortion.¹⁶¹ This coverage was published just two days after the passing of *Roe v. Wade*. The *Crimson White* did not address the passing until almost a month later, on February 26, 1973. In this straight news piece, the *Crimson White* interviewed a Tuscaloosa doctor on the history of abortion and what this decision means for the state of Alabama. Duncan wrote, "We're on the verge of seeing rapoutis [sic] abortions become as much a part of the female patient's care as an annual pap smear, announced Dr. Louis Payne Thursday night in a talk about abortion to the university."¹⁶² The implication of this quote implies that abortion is a normal part of women's healthcare and should be treated as such.

This coverage implies that students would be able to access abortion as a part of their regular healthcare. As such, both universities set up counseling services for those who were

¹⁶⁰ Price, "Abortion Decision."

¹⁶¹ Lisby, "Abortion Liberalized."

¹⁶² Cathy Duncan, "Tuscaloosa Doctor Discusses Abortion; History and Practices," *The Crimson White* (Tuscaloosa), February 26, 1973, https://digitalcollections.libraries.ua.edu/digital/collection/u0002_0000007/id/1017/rec/1.

pregnant. For the University of Alabama, the Associated Women Students (AWS) set up a pregnancy counseling group stating, “The service is an attempt to provide women faced with problem pregnancies with counselling by a trained woman who has herself experienced an unwanted pregnancy.”¹⁶³ Auburn University did something similar with the Alabama Clergy Consultation Service (ACCS). In an article published on January 11, 1973 (11 days before the passing of *Roe v. Wade*), Sinclair stated,

“When a woman consults a member of the ACCS, together they explore the possibilities open to her. There are at least four alternatives. She may choose to remain single, carry the pregnancy to term and keep the child or she may place the child up for adoption. She may also choose to marry and keep the child, or so may choose to terminate the pregnancy.”¹⁶⁴

The frame of abortion as healthcare indicated that abortion is a complex medical issue that can be treated as a legitimate form of healthcare. These articles and quotes suggest the importance of an individual choice when it comes to decision making. Considering the political climate of the state of Alabama, this theme proved to be a bit surprising. However, this finding was one that disagreed with Woodruff’s finding, who found that the majority of her sample rarely discussed abortion as a health issue. This was not the case for Schmid et al., who found that in times of health issues, abortion news coverage as healthcare increases.¹⁶⁵ In both studies, Schmid et al. and Woodruff found that when abortion was covered as a health issue, women’s experiences were dismissed or not included.¹⁶⁶ In this sample, Duncan’s article was the only one that emphasized the perspective of other women who have experienced an unwanted pregnancy.

¹⁶³ Duncan, “Tuscaloosa Doctor Discusses Abortion.”

¹⁶⁴ Jules Davis, “Clergy Help Women with Pregnancies,” *The Auburn Plainsman*, January 11, 1973, <https://content.lib.auburn.edu/digital/collection/plainsman/id/2219/rec/8>.

¹⁶⁵ Schmid, Veldhouse, and Payam, “A press(ing) issue.”

¹⁶⁶ Schmid Veldhouse, and Payam, “A press(ing) issue.”

However, the inclusion of a woman's personal experience with abortion was entirely absent from the sample. Largely, articles discussing abortion included quotes from men about abortion.

How did the *Auburn Plainsman* and the *Crimson White* utilize generic framing in their coverage of abortion before and after the *Roe v. Wade* decision?

As mentioned previously, Semetko and Valkenburg identified some of the most frequent ways that frames are built conflict, morality, human interest/personalization, economic consequences, and responsibilities.¹⁶⁷ Three of these concepts proved to prominent throughout this analysis.

Conflict

First, the practice of building frames through conflict was persistent. As conflict refers to the prioritization between parties, as opposed to the actual decision made, the use of this concept was not surprising. It came as no surprise due to the political climate in 1973: the United States ending its involvement with the Vietnam War, Richard Nixon's inauguration, and the passing of *Roe v. Wade*. All either controversial at the time (Vietnam War, *Roe v. Wade*) or later in life (Watergate), conflict was present as a way to build frames. This was seen when Jerry Bruno, a political campaigner, was invited to speak at the University of Alabama. Discussing his differing experiences with political campaigns, the *Crimson White* framed conflict through Bruno's discussion of the different political campaigns used in earlier years as compared to the year 1973. The coverage implies that the Democratic nominee had to sacrifice personal beliefs in order to win support.¹⁶⁸ Additionally, at the University of Alabama, controversy between the AWS and the SGA began when then SGA president, Roger Lee, proposed a Women's Resource Center. Up

¹⁶⁷ Semetko and Valkenburg, "Framing European Politics."

¹⁶⁸ Johnson, "Conservative, Socialist Debate."

to this point, the AWS was overseeing policies that concerned women, while also building a pregnancy counseling group.

While the AWS-SGA piece explicitly stated the word “conflict” in the headline, Johnson’s coverage with Bruno implicitly framed the conflict of a man’s personal beliefs on abortion and the ability to achieve success if values are compromised. Based on the definition of conflict mentioned earlier, the *Crimson White* employed the use of conflict as a way to prioritize the difference between two sides of an issue. While the *Auburn Plainsman* did not frame content through conflict as frequently as the *Crimson White*, the *Auburn Plainsman* did still utilize it. In a January 25, 1973, article discussing the liberalization of abortion, Rod Sinclair touched on the conflict that pregnant women could potentially have.

“Fewer women may possibly seek help from the Problem Pregnancy Counseling Service,’ he said, ‘but I would encourage them to talk with us anyway, even though they know they want an abortion.’ The Problem Pregnancy Counseling Service is a counseling program involving several Auburn ministers. The ruling has a capacity to be misused, he noted. ‘But what else is new? Every law is this way,’ Sinclair added. Sinclair admitted he was surprised that ‘a conservative court has taken such a liberal stand.’”¹⁶⁹

Johnson, the author of this straight-news piece, is using conflict to highlight disputes between principles and practicality, specifically highlighting the use of compromising one’s beliefs in order to win an election. By including Bruno’s statement about McGovern’s comprising his beliefs on abortion, the conflict frame suggests that there is a conflict between holding true to one’s beliefs (here, abortion) and achieving success.

Gamson et al. found that in the news, varying public opinions often remain hidden.¹⁷⁰ In turn, Condit argues that including views from both sides of a debate can create more balanced coverage, as dualism in the media can create “mutually exclusive (and radical) positions”

¹⁶⁹ Lisby, “Abortion Liberalized.”

¹⁷⁰ Gamson et al., “Media Images.”

harming any potential compromise on the topic of abortion.¹⁷¹ As such, a generic frame of conflict proved to be prominent. Johnson wrote an article which reported on a political campaigner who touched on the conflict McGovern had in his run for president. In this article, it is stated that McGovern compromised his own beliefs in order to win the election, suggesting that there is a conflict between holding true to one's beliefs and achieving success. The Auburn Plainsman utilized this frame when a pregnancy counselor implied the conflict that pregnant women have to deal with when facing an unwanted pregnancy. Defined by de Vreese, generic framing can be used in relation to different topics.¹⁷² Here, conflict framing worked in conjunction with the frame of the politicization of abortion. Through having political debates among college students and the discussion of abortion as a polarizing issue, both school papers built frames in a way that utilized the generic frame of conflict.

Human Interest/Personalization

Another characteristic of ways to build frames was present through the use of human interest or personalization coverage. Semetko and Valkenburg described human interest or personalization coverage to include the presentation of a story with human face, as personality is promoted over other more important aspects.¹⁷³ While typically a human-interest frame includes a real-life perspective on a topic, women's experiences with abortion were absent from the sample. As such, both schools approached this frame in a non-traditional context. While both schools published commentaries and opinion pieces from students, the *Crimson White* did so more frequently when it came to discussing the topic of abortion. Christina Price and Vickie Poor, both University of Alabama students, submitted commentaries to the *Crimson White*,

¹⁷¹ Celeste Michelle Condit, "Two Sides to Every Question: The Impact of News Formulas on Abortion Policy Options," *Argumentation* 8, (November 1994): 327-336, <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/BF00733476>

¹⁷² De Vreese, "News Framing."

¹⁷³ Semetko and Valkenburg, "Framing European Politics."

where they were published on March 1, 1973. While the student journalists of the paper were not employing their own journalistic frames in these commentaries, these students participated in the use of this concept to build a frame around human interest or personalization by presenting a general argument surrounding abortion through a woman's perspective.

Approaching the human interest and personalization frame a bit differently than the *Crimson White*, the *Auburn Plainsman* used this concept through the inclusion of literary collections that directly discussed abortions. Of the time frame analyzed, two of these collections were published. First published on March 8, 1973, by "art fourier," the author tells a short story of a woman facing an unexpected pregnancy. In this story, the pregnant woman and her friend go to an abortion clinic where the woman's intention is to terminate a pregnancy. The second literary collection was published on May 24, 1973, also talking about a different woman who was facing an unexpected pregnancy. In this story, the pregnant woman is trying to decide what she is going to do. It is never clearly stated whether the characters within the stories actually received an abortion. Additionally, abortion is never framed as immoral or wrong within these stories, but rather as an option that a woman has when deciding the future of the pregnancy. Through the inclusion of these two literary collections, the *Auburn Plainsman* is framing abortion through the concept of human personalization. Whether these collections were based on fact or fiction is unknown, but these stories attempt to frame abortion in a way that humanizes it.

Goffman laid the foundation for what would become framing theory, asserting that individuals who struggle to understand the world to interpret their life experiences rely on news frames. As a result, a human-interest frame can be used to allow individuals to relate their experiences to a particular topic. As Schmid found that personal abortion experiences were absent from their sample, this frame was difficult to find, but was included in this analysis.

Similar to the way that a generic frame of conflict worked in conjunction with the politicization of abortion, so did human interest and healthcare.

Responsibility

The last prominent way that frames were built was through responsibility. In O’Boyle and Jo-Yun Li’s study of news coverage of the #MeToo movement, they found that there was a focus on individual responsibility, rather than societal responsibility. Disagreeing with this finding, both papers tended to frame abortion as a response to societal responsibility. Societal level consequences work to shape social level processes such as political socialization, decision-making, and collective actions.¹⁷⁴ Collectively, both papers framed abortion in a way that could lead to societal level consequences. To begin with, Auburn published several straight-news pieces discussing abortion with Rev. Rod Sinclair, a minister and pregnancy counselor. Within this coverage, he talked about creating a group for women who are experiencing unwanted pregnancies and facing the decision of an abortion. While this is not explicitly stated, Sinclair is taking on the responsibility of providing a resource to these women. The same can be argued with the University of Alabama and the AWS’s women resource center. The use of the frame of responsibility often placed the responsibility of abortion onto society. In an article discussing the alternatives to abortion, pregnancy counselor Reich stated that it was “society’s fault” that many women feel pressured to get an abortion.¹⁷⁵ Saxon backs Reich up in a different article, saying, “Assuming that this society did put a premium on the ‘sanctity of life,’ there is no factual evidence that hundreds of thousands of abortions, legal and illegal, in the past years have shredded the moral fiber of society.”¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁴ De Vreese, “News Framing.”

¹⁷⁵ “Alternatives to Abortion Offered.”

¹⁷⁶ Saxon, “Alumnus Finds Reasoning Vague.”

Lastly, an anonymous physician stated that, as a physician, his primary responsibility was for the mother's health, indicating that there is a source of individual responsibility when it comes to abortion.

How did the *Auburn Plainsman* and the *Crimson White* utilize abortion advertisements to frame the topic of abortion?

Prominent throughout the *Crimson White* was the use of abortion advertisements. Throughout the time period analyzed (one year), the *Crimson White* ran a total of fifty-six advertisements detailing ways to obtain abortion services. E and Goodall identified several emotional appeals that abortion advertisements in China used.¹⁷⁷ Consistent with their findings, the text in these advertisements indicate the use of emotional appeals. The most frequently run advertisement during this time was run by a non-profit organization whose name was never mentioned. Instead, a toll-free number was provided for women to call. Stating that “an abortion can be arranged within 24 hours, and you can return home the same day you leave,” reiterates the fact that the *Crimson White* included advertisements that detailed ways to obtain an abortion. More specifically, the most frequent advertisement stated,

“Abortion: Information Abortion Guidance. An abortion can be arranged within 24 hours, and you can return home the same day you leave! Call toll free. (800) 523-4436. A Non-Profit Organization open 7 days a week”¹⁷⁸

The second most frequent advertisement stated,

“Abortion. Pregnancies terminated up to 24 weeks. All information confidential. Legal and safe. Operations performed in approved hospitals under care of certified physician.

¹⁷⁷ E and Goodall, “Creating Demand for Abortion Service.”

¹⁷⁸ The *Crimson White*, advertisement, *The Crimson White*, February 26, 1973, https://digitalcollections.libraries.ua.edu/digital/collection/u0002_0000007/id/1020/rec/19

Under 12 weeks pregnant. Total time in hospital will be 3 hours. Pregnancy testing. No need to miss more than 1 day from work or can be done Sat. or Sun. National Family Planning Council LTD. (215)452-4139”¹⁷⁹

Both of these advertisements frame abortion as a medical procedure that is legal, safe, and confidential. They also emphasize convenience and the minimal amount of time required to complete the procedure. The first advertisement highlights the speed and ease of the procedure, whereas the second advertisement emphasizes the affordability of the procedure, promising the “lowest prices” and the convenience of arranging everything by phone.

When asked why the *Crimson White* was running these advertisements, the editor responded, saying, “Abortion ads will continue to run because such material provides a crisis-oriented service which may at some point prevent a personal tragedy. However, before such advertising is allowed to be perfect, we must have every assurance that the solicitor is reputable and operates under the strictest legal and professional codes.”¹⁸⁰

By stating that they make sure the advertiser is “reputable and operates under the strictest legal and professional codes,” the newspaper leadership is taking accountability to ensure that students who utilize these abortion services do so safely.

What is interesting about the use of abortion advertisements is that, in this study, it was specific to the *Crimson White*. The *Auburn Plainsman* never once ran an advertisement explicitly stating the word “abortion.” This proves to be intriguing as other schools, such as the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire and the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, also ran these ads. While this was the case, the *Crimson White* ran multiple advertisements in each edition, while

¹⁷⁹ National Family Planning Council, advertisement, *The Crimson White*, November 17, 1972, https://digitalcollections.libraries.ua.edu/digital/collection/u0002_0000007/id/10005/rec/1

¹⁸⁰ Ron Casey, “1972 C-W Policy,” *The Crimson White* (Tuscaloosa), August 31, 1972, https://digitalcollections.libraries.ua.edu/digital/collection/u0002_0000007/id/10428/rec/1

advertising more times than there are weeks in the year. The *Crimson White*'s use of these advertisements to are consistent with E and Goodall's finding that response efficacy messages were most often used.¹⁸¹ Each advertisement that ran highlighted the ease and cost-effective way that an individual could receive an abortion.

Overall Discussion

This study aimed to understand the way that the *Crimson White* and the *Auburn Plainsman* framed the topic of abortion before and after the *Roe v. Wade* decision. One of the most recognizable ways that these papers incorporated frames into their coverage was through the use of language. While the *Crimson White* tended to use more emotionally charged language, the *Auburn Plainsman* did not utilize it as often. As discussed in the literature review, mainstream news coverage of abortion often used negative and stigmatizing language¹⁸² Similarly, the dominant frames in this study were accompanied with negative language. For example, the frame of the morality of abortion was made clear through the use of emotionally charged language and analogies. By using phrases such as “barbaric” and “murder in the womb,” these papers are framing abortion as uncivilized and morally repulsive. Additionally, within the frame of abortion as healthcare, the use of the term “crude” further indicates that negative language was used in association with abortion.

Despite the overwhelming use of negative language, there were a few outliers that utilized positive language to frame abortion. For instance, in Poor's article, her language suggested positive framing through the use of phrases such as “control their own lives” and “realizes their potentialities” when describing why women may choose abortion. Additionally, the advertisements published within the *Crimson White* used positive language to put potential

¹⁸¹ E and Goodall, “Creating Demand for Abortion Service.”

¹⁸² Purcell, Hilton and McDaid, “The Stigmatisation of Abortion.”

patients at ease and make abortion procedures seem like routine medical care. The use of non-negative language confirms Purcell et al.'s finding that despite there being a dominant social narrative of negativity towards abortion, others feel differently.¹⁸³

According to Scheufele, journalists actively construct frames to structure and make sense of information.¹⁸⁴ As such, framing can be influenced by external sources to be incorporated within coverage of an issue or event. Therefore, it is important to mention the author of articles. The *Crimson White* tended to rely on commentaries and editorials, whereas the *Auburn Plainsman* relied on straight-news pieces. Despite this, at both schools, students submitted commentaries and opinion pieces discussing their views of abortion. The inclusion of these commentaries implies the importance of the topic of abortion among college students. This is reinforced by the data from the Guttmacher Institute that found that the largest percentage of abortions occur in those who are the age of the average undergraduate student. Kensicki found that the media works through a series of networks in an attempt to distribute ideologies throughout the public.¹⁸⁵ In agreement with the literature, there is a connection to be made between those who wrote articles for these papers, and the public.

By submitting commentaries, students expressed their opinions through the media outlet that was available to them by being students. While these two students were not members of the newspapers staff, arguably, they worked with the student journalists to potentially distribute their own ideologies and beliefs on abortion to the public. Editorials represent the views of the newspaper leadership, signaling to the readers that the leadership of these papers consider the

¹⁸³ Purcell, Hilton, and McDaid, "The Stigmatisation of Abortion."

¹⁸⁴ Scheufele, "Framing as a Theory."

¹⁸⁵ Linda Jean Kensicki, "Deaf President Now! Positive Media Framing of a Social Movement within a Hegemonic Political Environment," *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 25, no. 2 (April 2001): 147-166, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0196859901025002005>

topic of abortion to be worth discussing. The inclusion of editorials confirms Gitlin's finding that media frames can serve as part of a journalistic routine.¹⁸⁶ Lastly, O'Boyle and Jo-Yun Li argue that outside sources are often unaware of both the campus culture and climate.¹⁸⁷ However, in this study, outside sources were aware of the climate on campus. Therefore, outside sources were often quoted indicating that the topic of abortion is not only important to students on campus, but to the general population as well.

¹⁸⁶ Gitlin, *The Whole World is Watching*

¹⁸⁷ O'Boyle and Jo-Yun Li, "#MeToo is Different for College Students."

Chapter 5: Conclusion

On January 22, 1973, the constitutional right to abortion was established. In the almost fifty years since the Supreme Court's decision, *Roe v. Wade* is no longer in effect today. This study conducted a textual analysis of two student-run newspapers in the state of Alabama regarding the way that they framed abortion during the time *Roe v. Wade* was decided. Three research questions were proposed and answered. The first research question addressed the frames that these student journalists employed, resulting in three themes: the morality of abortion, the politicization of abortion, and abortion as healthcare. The second research question addressed the utilization of generic framing in their coverage. Three were discussed: conflict, human interest/personalization, and responsibility. The third research question revealed abortion advertisements were framed through response efficacy messaging. The results of this study indicate a few significant things.

First, much like abortion is still a hotly debated and controversial issue today, it also was during the 1970s. This was seen through the university papers coverage of political campaigners, debates, editorials, commentaries, and advertisements. While neither school paper expressed strong opinions on the topic of abortion, it is still important to understand the way these students viewed and held discourses of abortion in their lives. It is particularly important with the recent overturning of *Roe v. Wade*. Being able to connect the topic of abortion to students past and students present would allow researchers to further understand and recognize patterns among college newspapers. Additionally, as this was a historical study, it also helps us understand how this event made society the way it is today.

Second, this study attempts to enrich the literature on the ways that student newspapers framed abortion during *Roe v. Wade*. While the literature surrounding the use of framing on

campus media and topics such as abortion is limited, previous literature suggests that framing is a crucial aspect of public discourse. How issues are framed can have a significant impact on how people perceive and understand issues. Schmid et al. touched on the structural barriers that impact a woman's ability to "choose" to abort, in turn stressing the need to understand the social, political, and economic environment in which this choice takes place.¹⁸⁸

In this case, the framing of abortion was done by the *Crimson White* and the *Auburn Plainsman*. By analyzing both the text for frames, as well as the concepts of framing, this study allows for a better understanding of how framing is used by student journalists. This allows readers to be aware of the potential of framing. Additionally, it allows for both journalists and consumers of the news to understand how the media on a college campus impacts a student's interpretation of the world around them. Through examining the media framing of abortion, findings from this study have the potential to facilitate more critical reflection and discussion on the topic of abortion, especially among college-aged students. Further, it has the potential to effect journalistic framing of abortion, as well as health and social policies. Exploring student journalists and students' perceptions of abortion can be crucial to understanding how these students interpret and experience abortion discourses in their everyday life. Specifically, this study has the potential to provide insight into how these frames have either increased or decreased over the years. As the frame of abortion as healthcare was prominent in the 1970s, studies looking at more recent news coverage find that the news does not frame abortion as a health issue as often.

Future Research/Limitations

¹⁸⁸ Schmid, Veldhouse, and Payam, "A press(ing) issue."

There are some limitations to this study. First, only thirty-three articles and fifty-six advertisements were analyzed. While a smaller sample size allows for more in-depth analysis, a larger sample size would allow for broader findings. Second, this study only analyzes student papers from two universities in the state of Alabama. As there are more universities in the state of Alabama, opening the study to other schools could result in a more complete understanding of how college-aged students thought of *Roe v. Wade*. Lastly, I only analyzed data from the mainstream newspapers. It is likely that both schools have alternative or underground newspapers, especially during this time frame.

This study provides the potential for future implications. As such, future research can continue to explore how university newspapers framed the passage of *Roe v. Wade*. More specifically, this future research can continue to analyze student media in states that exhibit more conservative traditions and ideals. Further, there is still research to be done regarding the way that student media (in all forms) frames the topic of abortion. Lastly, due to the recent overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, a comparison study could be conducted regarding the way that university newspapers framed both the passing and overturning. Chisholm said, “No matter what men think, abortion is a fact of life. Women have always had them; they always have, and they always will. Are they going to have good or bad ones?”¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁹ Shirley Chisholm, *Unbought and Unbossed*, (North Carolina: Take Root Media, 2010)

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Appendix 1

Table 1: Frequency of News Articles

Article Type	Description	Frequency of Articles	Subcategories
Straight News Pieces	Articles written by staff/student writers that strictly included information regarding abortion	14	
Editorials	Articles written by members of the editorial board	10	
Other	Articles that were not written by members of the other two categories	9	a. Literary collections b. Exchange editors c. Student commentaries d. Commentaries by non-students

Appendix 2

Table 2: Frequency of Advertisements

Code	Advertisement	Frequency
1	Abortion. Pregnancies terminated up to 24 weeks. All information confidential. Legal and safe. Operations performed in approved hospitals under care of certified physician. Under 12 weeks pregnant. Total time in hospital will be 3 hours. Pregnancy testing. No need to miss more than 1 day from work or can be done Sat. or Sun. National Family Planning Council LTD.	15
2	H-E-L-P. Abortion & Pregnancy information. Free Pregnancy Test in your area. (201)567-0758. 10 A.M. to 7 P.M. Call collect.	6
3	The finest medical care at the lowest prices for a safe legal one-day abortion. Everything can be provided for your care, comfort, and convenience by phone by our understanding counselors. Time is important – call toll free today. AIC services. 800-523-4436.	5
4	Abortion: Information abortion guidance. An abortion can be arranged within 24 hours, and you can return home the same day you leave! Call toll free. (800) 523-4436. A non-profit organization open 7 days a week.	24
5	Abortion. Free placement. Free preg test. Medicaid accepted. Call 595-4220. Controlled Parenthood Suite 55 200 W. 72 nd St. N.Y.C., N.Y. Safe, low-cost confidential. A non-profit organization.	4
6	Abortion. Everything can be provided for your care, comfort and convenience by phone by our understanding counselors. Time is import – call toll free today. AIC Services. 800-423-5208	2