

**“PERHAPS THE NATION’S MOST DIVISIVE SOCIAL
ISSUE” - A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF
ABORTION COVERAGE IN TWO U.S.
ONLINE NEWSPAPERS**

Fanni Alakarhu
Bachelor’s Thesis
English
Department of Language and
Communication Studies
University of Jyväskylä
Autumn 2024

UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

Tiedekunta – Faculty Humanistis-yhteiskuntatieteellinen tiedekunta	Laitos – Department Kieli- ja viestintätieteiden laitos
Tekijä – Author Fanni Alakarhu	
Työn nimi – Title “Perhaps the nation’s most divisive social issue” – A critical discourse analysis of abortion coverage in two U.S. online newspapers	
Oppiaine – Subject Englanti	Työn laji – Level Kandidaatintutkielma
Aika – Month and year Joulukuu 2024	Sivumäärä – Number of pages 31
Tiivistelmä – Abstract <p>Siitä huolimatta, että abortti on yleinen ja turvallinen toimenpide, aborttikeskustelu Yhdysvalloissa on tyypillisesti poliittisesti latautunutta ja kahtiajakautunutta. Kansallisen aborttioikeuden mahdollistanut oikeustapaus Roe v. Wade kumottiin vuonna 2022, minkä seurauksena aborttilait ovat tiukentuneet useissa osavaltioissa. Aborttikeskustelun ajankohtaisuus Yhdysvaltain nykytilanteessa ilmenee esimerkiksi siinä, että aihe on jatkuvasti esillä uutismediassa. Se, millaista kieltä uutismediassa käytetään ja mitä näkökulmia ylipäätään tuodaan esille vaikuttaa lukijoiden käsitykseen aiheesta. Tutkimalla aborttiin liittyviä diskursseja on mahdollista selvittää, millaisia ideologioita tekstien taustalla on ja miten ne sekä heijastavat että muokkaavat yleisiä käsityksiä abortista. Tämän tutkielman tarkoituksena on tarkastella, millaisia teemoja ja diskursseja nousee esille aborttikeskustelussa kahden yhdysvaltalaisen uutislehden uutisoinnissa. Tutkimusmenetelmänä hyödynnetään kriittistä diskurssianalyysia ja tarkemmin Fairclough’n kolmitasoista mallia, joiden avulla tarkastellaan kielenkäyttöä sekä siinä ilmeneviä diskursseja niiden laajemmassa sosiaalisessa kontekstissa. Aineistosta löydetty yleisimmät diskurssit jaettiin analyysissa kahteen osioon: poliittiset teemat ja terveydenhuoltoon liittyvät diskurssit. Kolmas analyysiosio käsittelee sitä, miten abortti joko oikeutetaan tai tuomitaan artikkeleissa. Tutkimuksesta selviää, että abortti on stigmatisoitu puheenaihe ja että siitä käyty keskustelu kytkeytyy laajalti politiikkaan. Lisäksi diskurssit korostavat aborttiin liittyvää vastakkainasettelua sekä aborttien saatavuuden tärkeyttä. Aborttikeskusteluun liittyvien diskurssien tutkiminen on tärkeää, sillä uutismediassa luotu kuva voi muokata yleisön käsitystä abortista.</p>	
Asiasanat – Keywords Abortion, CDA, critical discourse analysis, news, news media, representation, United States	
Säilytyspaikka – Depository JYX	
Muita tietoja – Additional information	

TABLES

TABLE 1	Articles and publication dates	8
---------	--------------------------------------	---

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION.....	1
2	BACKGROUND	2
	2.1 Critical discourse analysis.....	2
	2.2 News media, discourse, and representation	3
	2.3 News coverage of abortion.....	4
3	THE PRESENT STUDY.....	7
	3.1 Research aim and questions	7
	3.2 Data and data collection.....	7
	3.3 Methodology.....	9
4	ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION.....	10
	4.1 Abortion as a controversial political issue.....	10
	4.2 Healthcare discourses on abortion	15
	4.3 Justifications for abortion.....	18
5	CONCLUSION	22
	REFERENCES.....	24

1 INTRODUCTION

The role of mass media and specifically news is significant in creating influential representations. News coverage plays an important part in shaping and construing public opinion, which can consequently affect policymaking nationally and locally (Woodruff, 2019). How topics such as abortion are presented in the news thus shapes people's views and dictates public discussion surrounding the issue.

Abortion policies in the United States are in constant fluctuation. In 2022, the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, a legal case dating back to 1973, led to the current situation in which there is no federal constitutional right to abortion in the country and abortion legislation is instead mandated separately in each state (*Roe v. Wade*, n.d.). After *Roe v. Wade* was overturned, a 15-week ban was written into law in Arizona, under which it is possible to have an abortion until 15 weeks of pregnancy and afterwards only in medical emergency cases. However, on April 9, 2024, the Arizona Supreme Court ruled that a near-total abortion ban dating back to 1864 would be enforceable again in the state. Later, the Supreme Court's ruling was challenged with a repeal signed by Arizona Governor Katie Hobbs, and the law was not enforced. The *Roe v. Wade* case is still raised frequently in news related to abortion, and the topicality of the abortion issue has been particularly notable in the leadup to the November 2024 elections.

Previous research on abortion news coverage has been conducted mostly during the time when *Roe v. Wade* was still in effect and thus reproductive rights were constitutional. In this thesis, I inspect news coverage of abortion-related issues after the Arizona Supreme Court's decision, relying on critical discourse analysis and specifically Fairclough's three-dimensional model as the base for my analysis. The aim of my research is to find out what kinds of themes and discourses are present in two U.S. news outlets' coverage of abortion at the time and to further discuss the underlying ideologies behind these discourses. This thesis contributes to our understanding of how abortion is represented in news media and what underlies these representations, which is especially important during a time when stricter bans are discussed, and questions of women's autonomy are topical.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Critical discourse analysis

The term *discourse* is an ambiguous one, and there is no single definition for it in the field of discourse studies. In this study, I will follow Johnstone's (2018, pp. xvii-xviii) account, according to which discourses are "conventional ways of talking that both create and are created by conventional ways of thinking." In the linguistic sense, discourses can be seen as "conventionalized sets of choices" for talk, through which ideologies are transmitted (Johnstone, 2018, p. xviii). Moreover, Blommaert (2005, pp. 2-4) defines discourse as language-in-action and emphasises its social nature. Fairclough (1992, pp. 55-56) summarises some of Foucault's basic principles of discourse in the following way: Firstly, all discursive practices are shaped by their relations with others. Secondly, discourse is political in nature, and power relations both are present in discourse and occur through it. Lastly, discourse and changing discursive practices are a significant part of social change. An important notion in discourse studies is that there is a dialectical relationship between discourse and social reality, meaning that discourse both shapes and is shaped by its context and the social practices surrounding it (Fairclough, 1992, p. 64; van Dijk, 2008, pp. 86-87). In the news context, this essentially means that what we see on the news is produced by specific people under certain social circumstances and, on the other hand, can impact society.

Critical discourse analysis (from now on referred to as CDA) is a theoretical approach that examines how "social power abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted" in language use in different contexts (van Dijk, 2008, p. 85). In short, CDA offers interpretations of the meaning of a text rather than merely doing quantitative textual analysis, examines the text and what is said in its context, and argues that meaning is created through an interaction between the text, its

producer, and its reader (Richardson, 2007, p. 15). What is central in CDA is the focus on the social power certain groups or institutions possess (van Dijk, 2008, p. 88) and the relationships between discrimination, power, and control through language use (Wodak 1995, p. 204). As van Dijk (2008, pp. 93–96) shows, CDA has been applied to studies on, for example, gender inequality, media discourse, and political discourse. In the field of media discourse specifically, CDA has been used to discover the use of language as a tool for power in news coverage of riots, racism, and international affairs, among other topics (van Dijk, 2008, pp. 95–96). In this study, CDA will be used to examine themes and discourses in the context of abortion-related news.

2.2 News media, discourse, and representation

The role of news and other media in creating influential representations and addressing socio-political issues has been studied extensively. News media are a form of mass communication, which differ from other forms in two major ways: they are *spatial* and *temporal*, meaning that the message is consumed in a different time and place from where it is conducted (Fairclough, 1995, p. 36). Moreover, the technologies used by mass communication enable its global reach (Fairclough, 1995, pp. 36–37). News platforms are important sites for discourse (Miao et al., 2022), and more emphasis should be put on the discourses that are created in and conveyed through news media. Media surround us in our everyday lives, and by examining dominant discourses, we gain important information about its influence. According to Fairclough (1995, pp. 63–64), analysing media discourses also offers us insights into changes in culture and society, as media discourse has an effect on social discourses of order and vice versa. Previous critical research on media discourse has revealed biased and stereotypical ideas in media texts and pictures (van Dijk, 2008, p. 94).

Different media possess the power to represent things in certain ways, for instance with their use of language. The meanings created in media discourse imply certain power relations through choices like who or what is included or excluded (Fairclough, 1995, p. 106; see also Fairclough, 2001a.) Framing in the context of mass media is the process in which certain aspects of an issue are emphasised in order to exclude others (Gamson, 1992, as cited in Shen et al., 2014). The way news is framed can influence audiences' interpretation and understanding of issues and have a vast impact on their decision-making since information portrayed on the media is easily accessible (Shen et al., 2014). Various scholars (as cited in van Dijk, 2008, p. 36) have established that in news media, strategic control of knowledge – that is, what is shared, how, and to what extent – occurs through the portrayal of “specific reconstructions of social and political realities.” Attention tends to be given to certain, often privileged

groups, nations, and institutions, which reflects common values and ideologies related to news and news worthiness (Galtung & Ruge, 1965).

Prevailing social climates and power imbalances can be revealed by analysing what kinds of views, perspectives, and wordings are present or absent in a text (Fairclough, 2001b). Richardson (2007, p. 89) argues that biases in news reporting emerge for example in the form of presenting “contextualising facts supporting one political perspective/interpretation.” Underlying ideologies can also be inferred from lexical choice, for example when certain words are used to describe certain social groups (van Dijk, 1988, p. 177). Another way ideologies are shown in media texts is through using syntactic elements such as passive constructions and nominalisation to forego certain people or groups’ agency and responsibility (van Dijk, 2008, p. 95). Similarly, through our use of language, we both give meaning to and extract meaning from our actions (Richardson, 2007, p. 10). Thus, the ideological representations in media texts are not explicit but often implicit, in the sense that they are embedded in the language used by reporters and audiences alike (Fairclough, 1995, pp. 44–45).

2.3 News coverage of abortion

Abortion is a topic that is raised frequently on the news, often in a healthcare, human rights, or political context. Studies on different aspects of abortion coverage have been conducted in various countries, including studies on abortion and gender, abortion in relation to other topics, and abortion and intersectionality. For example, Feltham-King and Macleod’s (2015) study on abortion commentary in South African newsprint media shows gendered differences in abortion stances. According to their study, women were more likely to adopt a pro-abortion stance both before and after major political changes in South Africa in the late 1900s. Men, on the other hand, often reacted to abortion either in a neutral or negative way. Moreover, their study comments on this dualistic and simplified way views on abortion are often portrayed on news media as either “pro-life” or “pro-choice” (Feltham-King & Macleod, 2015). This dualistic representation can result in generalisation and the erasure of more complex views.

Discourses related to abortion have been studied in the context of social media, television news, and newspaper articles. In Larsson et al.’s (2015) study on abortion discourses in Ugandan daily newspapers, two major discourses were found. Firstly, they found a discourse related to religion and more specifically the sanctity of the foetus and its life. Secondly, they identified a discourse that centres around human rights: the right to live of the unborn child and, additionally, women’s right to health and independent decisions. Similar discourses are presented in Woodruff’s (2019)

study, in which for example the personification of the foetus as a human being was present in a third of the substantive data. Moreover, they found that in U.S. news articles covering abortion, merely a tenth of substantive texts referred to a woman's personal abortion story, most of which were tragic in nature.

Miao et al. (2022) studied news coverage of abortion in the United States from an intersectional perspective. Their discourse analysis shows that in articles covering abortion in major U.S. newspapers in 2021, three recurring themes were present: stigmatisation of abortion, a connection between poverty and racial minorities, and systematic racism. Purcell et al.'s (2014) qualitative study on abortion coverage in print media in Great Britain also showed that the language used to discuss abortion often associated it with other stigmatised topics. In their data, abortion discourses related to morality were common. Moreover, abortion was contrasted with the idea of family to imply the mutual exclusivity of these two topics (Purcell et al., 2014).

In news coverage of abortion, contraception, and similar issues, the focus tends to shift to political and social aspects rather than the medical and public health perspective (Conti & Cahill, 2017). Woodruff's (2019) study on abortion coverage in U.S. newspapers also showed that in half of their data, the main focus was on electoral politics. Other commonly emerging topics that abortion was discussed in relation to were the Roman Catholic Church and the Pope, other strongly debated issues such as gun control, and international abortion policies. Conti and Cahill (2017) point out that framing abortion discussions through these "political and social lenses" draws attention away from the public health aspect of the issue and thus misguides people's understanding of reproductive health. Moreover, this kind of framing influences what is covered on the news, what aspects are considered important, and who is chosen as a trustworthy source for information, which in turn results in limited perspectives (Patton et al., 2017).

The different justifications for abortion that are presented in news media result in ideas of "good and bad abortion" (Rapp, 2000, as cited in Purcell et al., 2014). As mentioned by Purcell et al. (2014), this kind of dichotomy is a common characteristic in news stories, as is emphasising the controversy of certain issues. Certain journalistic practices are thus to blame for the common portrayals of abortion in news media. However, Purcell et al. (2014) also point out that these journalistic practices do not have a role in the 'evaluation' of the personal reproductive choices women make. The framing and other choices that journalists make – word choice, sources, and so on – are what create the particular, often harmful discourses we encounter.

In sum, previous studies have touched on various issues concerning abortion news coverage, for example political themes and intersectionality. There is still a lack of research on abortion discourses in news after the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*. This study aims to find out what kinds of themes and discourses are present and how

abortion is justified in U.S. news coverage of abortion during a time when significant changes in state-level abortion laws are discussed and executed. Through examining what discourses are present in news coverage, we can reveal current underlying ideologies concerning abortion and reproductive questions.

3 THE PRESENT STUDY

3.1 Research aim and questions

The discourses we encounter in news media create certain kinds of representations of events and people, and we can find potential ideological implications by examining choices such as what is said and how (Fairclough, 1995, p. 25). Although journalistic texts are never exempt from biases (Richardson, 2007, p. 86), abortion especially has been seen as a difficult topic to cover objectively (Conti & Cahill, 2017). Abortion is a current issue that still causes debate and holds stigma, and the way it is represented in the news can affect the public's perception of it. Thus, the aim of this study is to examine what discourses are present in abortion coverage and discuss what ideologies might underlie these implications. I intend to answer the following research questions:

1. What kinds of themes and discourses are present in the news coverage of abortion after the Arizona Supreme Court's ruling in the United States, and what underlying ideologies do these discourses reveal?
2. In what ways is abortion justified or condemned in the articles and what does this reveal about discourses surrounding abortion?

3.2 Data and data collection

The data for this research consist of ten articles collected from two U.S. online news sites, CNN and Fox News. Both newspapers are widespread within the United States, and they also have international reach, hence why they are included in this study.

According to Statista (2024), in July 2024, CNN and Fox News were the most and third most visited online news sites in the United States, respectively. In addition to their popularity, the selection was affected by free access to news content on both sites and the number of relevant articles.

Although this study does not aim to draw comparisons between the news sites unless it is relevant, it is worth briefly discussing possible political affiliations since they are likely reflected in news coverage of certain issues. On their website, Fox News is described as “an alternative to the left-of-center offerings of the news marketplace” (Fox News Media, n.d.), thus hinting at their right-wing political standing. CNN, on the other hand, does not explicitly position themselves on the political spectrum on their website. However, the majority of the people who get their political news from CNN lean toward the Democratic party (Pew Research Center, 2020), which points to the news outlet’s more liberal political standing. The political affiliation of each news site can influence what topics get covered and from which perspectives.

Five articles were chosen from each site, all of them published between April 9, 2024, and May 9, 2024, from the day of and a month following the Arizona Supreme Court’s decision. The timeframe was chosen to see what themes and discourses were brought up in news coverage after the ruling about the 1864 ban was announced. The articles are presented in Table 1, with reference codes (F1-F5 and C1-C5) that I will use in my analysis and discussion.

TABLE 1 Articles and publication dates

	Article headline	Publication date	Website
F1	What to know about the Arizona Supreme Court’s reinstatement of an 1864 near-total abortion ban	2024, April 10	Fox News
F2	Biden makes sign of the cross during pro-abortion speech in Florida	2024, April 24	Fox News
F3	Arizona House lawmakers pass bill to repeal 1864 abortion ban	2024, April 24	Fox News
F4	Supreme Court sharply at odds over emergency room abortion access in states’ rights challenge	2024, April 24	Fox News
F5	For a Louisiana lawmaker, exempting incest and rape from the state’s abortion ban is personal	2024, May 6	Fox News
C1	Arizona Supreme Court rules state must adhere to century-old law banning nearly all abortions	2024, April 9	CNN
C2	Civil War-era abortion ban rises again, which is exactly what some Roe opponents wanted	2024, April 9	CNN
C3	Arizona ruling puts abortion politics in the spotlight in battleground state	2024, April 10	CNN
C4	Greater numbers of younger people got permanent contraception after Dobbs decision, study finds	2024, April 12	CNN
C5	One Florida abortion clinic confronts a new six-week ban with a last-minute push and long-term plans	2024, May 1	CNN

The search word used for finding the articles was simply 'abortion' to give an overall image of abortion news coverage and not further limit the themes present. Instead of choosing only articles where Arizona's abortion ban was directly discussed, I wanted to see what other topics were brought up during the time. Articles were first skimmed through and then picked based on topics relevant for this research, with the intention of presenting a variety of different themes. Articles in video format were excluded from the data. The data was limited to five articles from both news sites as these texts were enough to give an overall image of the discussion.

3.3 Methodology

The main methodological tool used in my research is critical discourse analysis. CDA is not an analytical method per se, but rather a critical perspective through which discourse and social interaction can be analysed (van Dijk, 2015). In CDA, the focus is on the social and political contexts of a text and its discourse structures (van Dijk, 2015). An important part of critical discourse studies is understanding who is in control of topics and what this means for different social groups (van Dijk, 2015; Fairclough, 2001a, p. 39). In the context of news content, this is related to what topics are covered, how, and from which perspectives.

For my methodology, I utilise Fairclough's three-dimensional model for CDA, as described by Blommaert (2005, pp. 29–30). According to Blommaert, the process in Fairclough's approach can be divided into three steps: *description*, *interpretation*, and *explanation*. In the first stage, the linguistic features of the text are examined. The second stage examines how the linguistic features of the text produce discourses and how these discourses are distributed and consumed. In this phase, the text is related to its wider social context by considering aspects such as coherence and intertextuality. The third stage, *explanation*, aims to reveal underlying ideologies present in the text by drawing on social theory. Incorporating social theory and providing a larger context for the text enable the critical analysis of discourse (Blommaert, pp. 29–30).

Following Fairclough's three-dimensional approach, I analysed the data by first reading through the articles and making notes of prominent themes. The themes were then organised into three main categories: political themes, healthcare aspects, and justifications for abortion. In the interpretation stage, I examined how the themes and perspectives present in the articles are used to create discourses and transmit them to readers. The third stage, *explanation*, includes discussion of the common discourses in a wider social context and with references to relevant research. My aim in this stage is to draw connections between prominent discourses and their underlying ideologies.

4 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This section is divided into three subsections based on the themes and discourses present in the data. The first subsection deals with abortion as a controversial political issue, the second with healthcare-related discourses, and the third with justifications for abortion. Politics is a notable theme in the data, with a focus on electoral politics and the controversy often assimilated with abortion. Healthcare is another common theme, and discussion mainly focusses on two groups' perspectives: healthcare professionals and people who are seeking or have had an abortion. The third section shows common ways in which abortion is either justified or condemned in the data.

Other themes are also visible in the articles, some of which have been recognised by previous research on abortion news coverage. These other themes include, for example, the Catholic church and their idea of abortion as something sacrilegious, similar to the findings of Woodruff's (2019) study. Larsson et al. (2015) also have similar findings regarding Ugandan newspapers, where the sanctity of the foetus's life was often emphasised. In my data, these topics arise in discussion related to the justifiability of abortion, which I will address in the third subsection. Moreover, women's rights and reproductive freedom in general are discussed mostly in the context of healthcare, which is covered in the respective section as well. In my analysis, I focus on the themes of politics, healthcare, and justifications for abortion as they are the most prominent in the data.

4.1 Abortion as a controversial political issue

Political aspects in the data are visible for example in present themes and the number of politicians and decision-makers cited as part of the discussion. This section shows that the majority of the articles discuss abortion in the context of state and national politics and the November 2024 elections. Moreover, dichotomy is created between

different political parties and their representatives by emphasising opposite views on abortion. Woodruff's (2019) study confirms previous findings that abortion coverage in the news is more common during presidential election years. While the current study cannot be used to draw such conclusions, it can be argued that as a consequence, political themes are more common in abortion news coverage in the lead-up to elections. This could in part explain the dominance of political aspects in the data.

The abortion debate is seen as a defining factor for election results in many states. As shown below in Example 1, abortion is named as a key issue for voters in Arizona in article C3.

Example 1:

The ruling could have the biggest impact in the presidential race, with Joe Biden and Donald Trump set for a rematch this fall. (John, 2024, April 10)

The use of the superlative adjective "biggest" implies that the Arizona abortion ban is the most significant factor in the election results (see Example 1). The same article also refers to the ruling and its consequences as "a huge political earthquake in Arizona," further implying the political nature and importance of the issue.

The Supreme Court's decision is presented as a positive when it comes to the Democratic party's potential success in the November elections. In article C2, it is said that the abortion rights issue could be advantageous for Democrats to "mobilize voters in November." On the other hand, Example 2 shows that the ruling is presented as a divider for the Republican party in article C3.

Example 2:

... in Arizona, where the state Supreme Court's decision this week to revive a Civil War-era total abortion ban has sent Republicans scrambling to distance themselves and given Democrats new hope they can make gains in the battleground state. (John, 2024, April 10)

It is presented that the decision to revive the near-total abortion ban has gained support from some Republican representatives and drawn negative reactions from others (see Example 2). Similarly, in article C2, it is said the "controversial Republican Senate candidate" Kari Lake's "campaigns have shown her that Arizonans want a more modern law." On the one hand, the assumption that all members of one political party share the same views is present. On the other hand, this inclusion of differing views within a group works to counter this assumption.

The then-current presidential candidates' positions are mentioned several times in the data. Trump's stance is discussed in three out of ten articles. It is said that he supports states' right to decide on abortion policies and that he would not sign a federal abortion ban if re-elected. Trump's altering stance on abortion was discussed

in a considerable number of the articles also in Woodruff's (2019) study on abortion coverage around the 2016 presidential elections.

Biden and his campaign's pro-abortion efforts are mentioned in five articles. One article (F2) focusses almost entirely on how the then-current president's views on abortion are contradictory with his religion. The article discusses an instance in which Biden made the sign of the cross during Democratic representative Nikki Fried's pro-abortion speech. As shown in Example 3, the gesture is described as disgraceful towards Christian people.

Example 3:

Critics of the president, who is a practicing Catholic, said his actions mocked Christians. (Catenacci, 2024, April 24)

Simultaneously, as presented in Example 4 and Example 5, Biden's religious standing is questioned with references to poll results.

Example 4:

"There is no divine support for destroying the lives of innocent children, and he should know better," [CatholicVote President Brian Burch] added. (Catenacci, 2024, April 24)

Example 5:

The incident comes shortly after a Pew Research poll showed a large majority of Americans are not convinced by Biden's representation of himself as a "devout Catholic." (Catenacci, 2024, April 24)

These statements are possibly used in order to position Biden and others who support abortions outside the religion and appeal to the "millions of Christians in America" mentioned in the article. News content is always produced with an ideal subject in mind (Fairclough, 2001a, p. 41). Given the knowledge we have on Fox News Media's political affiliation and the position of religion in the United States, also in the context of politics, including criticism over Biden's religious values can be seen as a form of influencing voters. Moreover, a clear understanding of the presidential candidates' views on abortion is presented to readers, which further highlights the fact that the abortion issue is seen as an important one in relation to election results.

Woodruff's (2019) study showed that also in their data, emphasis was often put on presidential candidates' stances and election poll data while "substantive policy issues" were disregarded. Abortion policies were instead covered more in depth on the state level, with stories on both restrictive policies and abortion rights efforts in different states. In the present study, most articles discussing abortion policies take

into consideration state policies specifically, which connects to the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* and the current lack of a federal right to abortion.

In the articles, dichotomy and controversy are created also outside of the presidential candidates' views. Both anti-abortion and pro-abortion stances are explicitly presented. This can be seen for example in that the people included in the discussion are often members of anti-abortion or pro-abortion groups. In cases where the spokesperson is a representative of either the Republican or the Democratic party, their stance is made explicitly clear. If their stance differs from the one generally assimilated with their political standing, it is also stated.

Example 6 shows that anti-abortion views are raised in article F2. Supporting abortion is referred to as "extremism" in a quote from CatholicVote President Brian Burch (see Example 6).

Example 6:

"Biden's decision to make the sign of the cross in support of abortion extremism is a despicable charade that attempts to co-opt a sacred practice in support of his new abortion religion." (Catenacci, 2024, April 24)

In Example 6, abortion is referred to as "[Biden's] new abortion religion," a statement which emphasises the controversial nature of the issue in the religious context and suggests that one cannot simultaneously practice a religion, in this case Catholicism, and support women's right to abortion. Additionally, the article implies that all members of the Catholic church oppose abortion and see it as sacrilegious, excluding differing views individuals within the group might have. Presenting abortion as morally wrong might pressure members of the Catholic church to agree on the church's general position and limit abortion discussion within the group. Moreover, this positioning can influence how Catholics who have had or are planning to have an abortion are viewed by other members of the church and themselves. As Larsson et al. (2015) state, abortion stigma and the fear of disclosing abortion intentions to medical professionals or family members can further endanger the person's health.

Few articles take into consideration individual views regarding abortion that might differ from the general stances of the two major political parties. Instead, the assumption that all supporters of the Republican party are opposed to and Democrats in favour of abortions is present in the data. For example, in article F5, the fact that *even* some Democrats oppose abortions is presented as abnormal (Example 7).

Example 7:

But Boyd faces an uphill battle in Louisiana, a reliably red state firmly ensconced in the Bible Belt, where even some Democrats oppose abortions. (Fox News, 2024, May 6)

Although evidence shows that since the 1990s, the majority of Democrats identify with pro-abortion and Republicans with anti-abortion stances (Carmines et al., 2010), it cannot be assumed that all people conform to the norm of the political party they support. Creating this kind of simple dichotomy between the two political parties' stances simplifies the issue and excludes abortion views that do not fit in either political extreme. Diverging from the general stance of one's political party is presented as something undesirable, which might restrict how abortion is discussed both within and between different groups and lead to further division.

Dichotomy is also created between different states. In article C2, it is said that the Dobbs decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade* has resulted in the formation of "abortion rights states and abortion ban states." A statement like this summarises the differences between states and their abortion policies, but in turn, it also creates a simplified image of the different abortion laws that are in force. For example, it cannot be said that people in so-called "abortion rights states" face no problems in regard to abortion restrictions. Similarly, the abortion policies in "abortion ban states" might differ largely from state to state and affect some people more than others.

In conclusion, the controversial nature of abortion is mostly stated implicitly through the presentation of differing, even extremist stances, related topics, and word choice. However, the controversiality and continuity of the abortion debate in the United States are also stated explicitly, for example in article F4 (see Example 8).

Example 8:

The latest debate comes as the court again confronts perhaps the nation's most divisive social issue... (Bream & Mears, 2024, April 24)

Abortion was portrayed as a controversial issue also in Purcell et al.'s (2014) data. They add that presenting abortion as something abnormal and emphasising dualistic views enforces the stigma and controversy surrounding the issue. It is also worth pointing out that, as Feltham-King and Macleod (2015) state, creating notable dichotomy between pro-abortion and anti-abortion stances in news media serves the purpose of an interesting news story. According to them, this dichotomy can be created for example by quoting people with clear and explicit stances on abortion, whether they are for or against it, as is seen in the present data as well. Thus, dichotomy is also created for the purpose of the news story, regardless of the wider social effects this dualistic presentation can have.

4.2 Healthcare discourses on abortion

As Conti and Cahill (2017) found in their study on abortion in the media, it is common that in news coverage of abortion, the emphasis is often put on political rather than healthcare aspects. The present data show similar tendencies, as abortion is often discussed in relation to politics. However, the public health side of the abortion discussion is also present. Most commonly, healthcare is discussed in relation to increasingly strict abortion bans' effects from two groups' perspectives: healthcare professionals and patients who are seeking or have had an abortion.

The 1864 abortion ban would have criminalised performing abortions, thus putting abortion providers at risk of getting prosecuted. This is visible in the inclusion of healthcare professionals' perspectives in three of the analysed articles (C1, F1, and F4). For example, as shown in Example 9, article C1 cites a doctor who criticises the inclusion of people who are not affected by the procedure in decision-making.

Example 9:

The ruling forces "us as physicians to have to consult legislators, lawyers and hospital administrators - not doctors - to determine if someone can receive life-saving abortion services," Koyama said. "It forces non-physicians into conversations that should be between a doctor and a patient whose life is at risk." (Von Quednow, Maxouris & Mascarenhas, 2024, April 9)

It is presented that abortion-related decisions should be made by patients and doctors rather than lawmakers (Example 9). This is an important notion since it emphasises the need for women to be able to make autonomic decisions. Similarly, as shown in Example 10, article C4 discusses the *need* to listen to the patient and rely on medicine and science in questions of reproductive health.

Example 10:

Even though young women are more likely to experience sterilization regret, they need to be trusted and supported in their contraceptive decision-making. (Holcombe, 2024, April 12)

In the data, women's reproductive rights are mostly raised by referring to healthcare professionals. Authorities are appealed to in order to convince readers, as including a reliable professional perspective supports the argument that strict abortion laws threaten both the health and rights of women. Moreover, referring to authoritative sources is a way of maintaining objectivity in news reporting (Richardson, 2007, p. 88). However, emphasising the voices of healthcare professionals and policymakers can direct attention away from other relevant issues, such as women's personal stories.

Concern over pregnant people's access to reproductive healthcare under strict laws is expressed in seven articles. In article C1, it is said that the Arizona abortion ban "fails to protect women." Article C2 mentions "more immediate repercussions in [Arizona and Florida] as women face the prospect of suddenly losing access to care." In these two articles, the repercussions in question are not explicitly stated. Article F4 cites an unnamed doctor who raises concern over complications such as infection and sepsis in cases where access to emergency abortion is delayed. Article C4 discusses the abortion issue in relation to young people who are increasingly often turning towards permanent contraception, a phenomenon that is suggested to stem from anxiety over new abortion laws and poor access to reproductive care after *Roe v. Wade*.

Out of the ten articles, only three explicitly raise a woman's personal story about abortion. As shown in Example 11, in article C3, the person affected is Arizona Senator Eva Burch.

Example 11:

"A couple of weeks ago, I had an abortion – a safe, legal abortion here in Arizona... And now we're talking about whether or not we should put that doctor in jail." (Von Quednow, Maxouris & Mascarenhas, 2024, April 9)

Although brought up from the perspective of someone who has personally undergone an abortion, the focus in the story is put on the effects the ban could have on doctors. A similar pattern can be seen in other articles as well, with abortion bans' effects on doctors being raised over their direct effects on women.

Article C5 discusses what a day at a Florida abortion clinic looks like a day before the implementation of a new 6-week ban. As presented in Example 12, the effects of the ban on the clinic's patients are brought up for example by discussing the personal story of a Florida resident who is seeking an abortion.

Example 12:

The new time limit raises fear in Candace, who has experienced high-risk pregnancies and traumatic births, including the death of a newborn. (McPhillips, 2024, May 1)

Having poor access to abortion is presented as something that induces fear in the person (see Example 12). Attention is also brought to the fact that pregnancies can be risky or traumatic as well, which responds to the assumption many have that abortion is risky and potentially causes trauma beyond the procedure. Common discourses on abortion emphasise the difficulty women might face when considering and going through with the procedure (Purcell et al., 2014); stories in which the decision causes little or no conflict are fewer.

Representations of women with personal experiences of abortion are thus scarce in comparison to other perspectives. Nevertheless, the personal stories in the data are mainly positive in the sense that they are used to justify the need for less strict bans. These findings partly differ from Larsson et al.'s (2015) study: in their data, individual stories were often used as "cautionary tales" to deter other people from doing the same, that is, seeking unsafe abortions. On the other hand, some of the stories were used to bring attention to abortion stigma and the consequences women might face under strict abortion bans. Including positive abortion stories in news media can work to reduce stigma around abortion and lead to a better understanding of the procedure.

It is worth noting that out of the ten articles, only one (C5) gives details on the abortion process, and more specifically on the first stages of *seeking* an abortion. Example 13 shows that the article uses a story-like narrative and emphasises that abortion is a common procedure needed by many. The first stages of the process are described as shown in Example 14.

Example 13:

On Tuesday afternoon, Mikenzie Buchanan scooped up an armful of clipboards piled behind the front desk at A Woman's Choice, an abortion clinic here; it was almost too many to hold. On each clipboard... were documents and charts for patients who had visited the clinic to receive a medication abortion that day. (McPhillips, 2024, May 1)

Example 14:

Florida law requires that people seeking an abortion have an in-person visit for an ultrasound, lab work and meeting with a physician at least 24 hours before their appointment to receive the procedure or medication. (McPhillips, 2024, May 1)

Details are given to show that the abortion process requires consultation with a physician in order to be performed safely (Example 14). Focus is drawn to the safety of the procedure when performed under adequate conditions, a point that emphasises the importance of access to safe abortions but is scarcely mentioned in the other articles. However, the fact that no details regarding the procedure itself are given also applies to article C5.

In the data, the possible consequences of strict abortion bans on women are thus acknowledged to a large extent. However, these repercussions are not stated explicitly. One explanation for this is the journalistic need both to create quality news stories that meet the "structural and financial pressures of the market" (Richardson, 2007, p. 83) and to avoid bias, since abortion-related scientific facts tend to favour pro-abortion stances (Conti & Cahill, 2017). On the other hand, this superficial portrayal can be connected to abortion stigma. Woodruff's (2019) study has similar findings, and they conclude that superficial news coverage of abortion can lead to misunderstandings of the safety of the procedure as well as emphasise its controversiality. Leaving out

relevant scientifically proven information about abortions can easily shift the focus to other aspects and work in the disadvantage of women and their reproductive rights.

This section has dealt with common healthcare-related discourses in the data, focussing on whose perspectives are included and in which ways. According to various authors, the way both “the public and policymakers understand [the abortion] issue and possible policy responses” is shaped by the public abortion discourse we encounter (Woodruff, 2019). Thus, the fact that abortion is mostly portrayed superficially in the news can impact policies as well as the public’s understanding of the procedure.

4.3 Justifications for abortion

In this section, I discuss how abortion is justified in the data and what reasons for it are in turn refuted or excluded entirely. The discourses show that abortion is often presented as a moral issue that is acceptable mainly in two situations: in cases of rape or incest and for critical medical reasons.

It is generally agreed in the data that abortion should be acceptable when it is necessary to preserve the pregnant person’s life. This justification can be found in six out of the seven articles that discuss possible reasons for getting an abortion. Other physiological reasons are also given that justify the procedure (see Example 15).

Example 15:

Dr. Atsuko Koyama said thousands of patients need the procedures because of miscarriages, ectopic pregnancies, domestic violence and other circumstances. (Von Quednow, Maxouris & Mascarenhas, 2024, April 9)

Other studies on abortion coverage in news media have found a corresponding pattern: getting an abortion for physiological reasons such as illness is presented as more acceptable than for reasons related to social factors or mental health (Purcell et al., 2014; Larsson et al., 2015).

Article F5 tells the story of Louisiana Republican Lawmaker Delisha Boyd and more specifically her mother, who became pregnant after a man raped her. The article emphasises that women and particularly young people who are victims of rape or incest need to be able to decide on abortion themselves (see Examples 16 and 17).

Example 16:

[Boyd] has decided to publicly share her own story to underscore the importance of letting rape and incest survivors decide their own fates. (FOX News Network, 2024, May 6)

Example 17:

Boyd said she plans to amend her proposal so that rape and incest exceptions would only apply to those 17 and younger. (FOX News Network, 2024, May 6)

Having an abortion in cases of rape and incest is directly justified in four of the seven articles that discuss possible justifications (C1, C5, F4, and F5). These findings differ from those of Larsson et al. (2015), according to whose data, people who are opposed to abortions condemn it also in cases where the pregnancy is caused by rape. In the present study, only one article (F2) openly condemns all abortions, in the name of religion. It is possible this difference partly stems from differing norms and policies in the United States and in Uganda, where Larsson et al.'s (2015) study took place.

Article F3 shows both Democrat and Republican representatives' views on abortion restrictions and repealing the Arizona Supreme Court's ruling. For example, quotes by Arizona House Speaker Ben Toma which condemn all abortions are raised in Example 18 and Example 19.

Example 18:

"Abortions are not healthcare. Abortion kills life." (Stimson, 2024, April 24)

Example 19:

"Just because the mother of that child may not want that child, does not mean that the child is not precious and have inherent value." (Stimson, 2024, April 24)

Abortion is presented not as a medical procedure but as murder, as the foetus is implied to be a living being. The other quotes from Toma that are included in the article also appeal to life as "one of the tenets of our Republican platform" and condemn abortion because it kills "unborn children" who are "precious and have inherent value." Similarly, article F2 presents abortion as a moral issue based on what the Catholic church teaches. The article for example cites the Catechism of the Catholic Church, emphasising that all abortions are unjustifiable (Example 20) and that the teaching "remains unchangeable."

Example 20:

... the church has "affirmed the moral evil of every procured abortion" for centuries. (Catenacci, 2024, April 24)

The article cites CatholicVote President Burch, according to whom the condemnation of abortion, or "destroying the lives of innocent children," relates to "the foundational beliefs of millions of Christians in America," such as "the Christian belief in the

sanctity of life.” Thus, women’s right to abortion is opposed to on the basis of an interpretation of what is said in the Bible about the sanctity of the foetus, similar to the findings of Larsson et al. (2015). The personification of the foetus is a theme that has arisen in other studies on abortion news coverage as well. For instance, Woodruff (2019) mentions that in one-third of the substantive stories in their data, the foetus was personified as a human being through the use of language and that the personification of the foetus was a more common occurrence than depictions of women’s personal stories on abortion.

In addition to these prominent justifications, other situations in which one might seek an abortion are also discussed. Article F4 discusses the debate over whether state law also applies to emergency room abortion access in cases where the patient’s life is at risk due to the pregnancy. As shown in Example 21, the question of whether mental health can also be a reason for abortion is raised in a reference to Justice Samuel Alito’s argument.

Example 21:

Alito also pressed the Justice Department lawyer on whether federal law also requires abortions for mental health reasons, not just to protect a woman’s physical health. (Bream & Mears, 2024, April 24)

The fact that mental health is presented as a possible justification for abortion reveals the relevance of the topic to abortion discussion. However, the idea is immediately reversed in the following sentence, as shown in Example 22.

Example 22:

Speaking for the federal government, Prelogar conceded mental health can never be the basis for an abortion. (Bream & Mears, 2024, April 24)

Although the statement in Example 22 references a Justice Department lawyer and is not directly made by the author, it is not rebuked in the article, thus imposing the idea that mental health indeed is not an acceptable reason to seek an abortion. Further discussion on mental health being a reason for abortion is not included in the articles, which possibly reveals stigma surrounding both mental health and abortion, as well as implies that mental health is not a heavy enough reason to make such a decision.

When examining present discourses, it is worth also discussing what reasons for abortion are excluded entirely. The possibility of wanting to get an abortion because of financial struggles or social reasons is scarcely discussed in the articles. Article C1 does mention domestic violence as one reason, but it is not further discussed. These notions align with the findings of Larsson et al. (2015), according to whom aspects like the person’s financial and social situation and mental health were not taken into

consideration when discussing abortion. The prospect that someone simply does not want to have the child is excluded as well, similarly to Purcell et al.'s (2014) data.

This section has dealt with the ways in which abortion is either justified or condemned in the data. To conclude, the discourses reveal that abortion is mostly seen as acceptable in cases where it is absolutely necessary, for instance to preserve the pregnant person's life. In most articles, abortion is also justified in cases where the pregnancy resulted from rape or incest. It is important that physiological reasons and sexual assault cases are brought up in abortion news coverage as they emphasise that women need to have access to safe reproductive care. However, it is also worth noting that excluding reasons such as mental health, financial situation, or simply not wanting to have a child implies that the right to autonomic reproductive decisions only applies to certain people in certain situations. Strict abortion laws take this right to decide away from many women. It ought to be considered what effects going through with an unwanted pregnancy might have on the mother or the child also in cases where the pregnancy itself is safe.

5 CONCLUSION

This study has shown how abortion is portrayed in news articles and explored the implications these representations might have in a larger social context. The role of news media and discourses in creating influential representations and conveying biases has been noted in previous research (Miao et al., 2022; van Dijk, 2008, p. 94). Thus, examining what themes and discourses are present in abortion news coverage also helps us understand what might underlie these choices. Two major themes are visible in the data: abortion as a controversial political issue and healthcare discourses on abortion. Moreover, the discourses present in the data reveal that only certain justifications for abortion are considered valid.

Political themes are present in all of the articles, with frequent mentions of the effects overturning *Roe v. Wade* has had, politicians' differing stances, and the abortion debate's impact on election results. Abortion is presented as a controversial issue with two political extremes, and its role in defining political outcomes is emphasised. These kinds of political framings in the news can shift the attention away from other relevant aspects such as public health and women's personal experiences.

Healthcare aspects are discussed in relation to how current changes in abortion laws affect healthcare professionals and patients. Healthcare discourses on abortion reveal that access to safe abortion is seen as vital and that it is generally agreed that women should be able to make autonomous reproductive decisions with the help of doctors. Details and scientific research on the procedure and its safety, on the other hand, are scarce. Overall, the amount of political discussion dominates public health perspectives, as has also been noted by Conti and Cahill (2017). This can be a result of many factors, the most apparent ones being the increased amount of abortion-related news content during presidential elections years (Woodruff, 2019) and the topicality of the issue as stricter laws are being implemented. When the discussion circles around political topics and controversiality, the voices of those who are directly affected by abortion restrictions are less likely to be included.

When it comes to justifications for abortion in the data, the procedure is not entirely condemned per se. However, when abortion is presented as acceptable, the reasons are almost always related to physical health or sexual assault cases. These justifications are discussed mostly in relation to state-level abortion bans that, in some states, criminalise abortion in all cases. Other reasons such as mental health and social factors are mentioned in passing, but they are not supported in the discourse. Having an abortion on the basis of not wanting to have the child or because of other personal reasons is not justified in any of the articles. These findings hint at abortion-related stigma and show that women's reproductive rights continue to be under debate.

The present study examines discourses on abortion after the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* and during a time when abortion rights are widely under debate in the context of the study. Previous research has mainly taken place before the right to decide on abortion legislation moved to individual states, and the current study thus offers information in an entirely different context. The findings of this study can be used in the fields of CDA and media studies to reveal how common discourses are maintained through media and how they enforce the stigma surrounding abortion and contribute to possible misunderstandings. As the findings of Purcell et al. (2014) and Larsson et al. (2015) show, the stigmatisation of abortion can for example influence a person's decision to have an abortion or disclose information to their doctor, lead to distorted views on abortion safety, and encourage discrimination. Thus, the findings are also of interest when it comes to media literacy skills and education.

The present study has certain limitations. For instance, it does not consider who the authors of the articles are nor the political inclinations of the news outlets past a certain extent. Additionally, the study only focusses on the most prominent discourses, which could be resolved in future research. Moreover, the number of articles selected for this study is limited, and a more thorough understanding of present discourses would require a larger pool of articles from more than two news sources.

Future research could focus on how abortion is portrayed on different news sites, with an emphasis on how different political inclinations might affect coverage of the issue. It would be useful to study abortion news coverage over a longer period to compare, for example, discourses in news media before and after the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*. This could reveal potential differences in what themes abortion is discussed in relation to, for example whether political themes were as prominent when a federal constitutional right to abortion was in place. Moreover, the healthcare aspect of abortion news coverage is an important one, and future studies ought to focus more specifically on how abortion is and should be covered from a public health perspective. Research on these aspects would broaden our understanding of the procedure and possibly help reduce the stigma surrounding abortion.

REFERENCES

Primary sources

Fox News articles:

- Bream, S., & Mears, B. (2024, April 24). *Supreme Court sharply at odds over emergency room abortion access in states' rights challenge*. Fox News. Retrieved on September 22, 2024, from <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/supreme-court-sharply-at-odds-over-emergency-room-abortion-access-in-states-rights-challenge>
- Catenacci, T. (2024, April 24). *Biden makes sign of the cross during pro-abortion speech in Florida*. Fox News. Retrieved on September 22, 2024, from <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/biden-makes-sign-of-the-cross-during-pro-abortion-speech-in-florida>
- FOX News Network. (2024, May 6). *For a Louisiana lawmaker, exempting incest and rape from the state's abortion ban is personal*. Fox News. Retrieved on September 22, 2024, from <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/louisiana-lawmaker-exempting-incest-rape-states-abortion-ban-personal>
- Stimson, B. (2024, April 24). *Arizona House lawmakers pass bill to repeal 1864 abortion ban*. Fox News. Retrieved on September 22, 2024, from <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/arizona-house-lawmakers-pass-bill-repeal-1864-abortion-ban>
- FOX News Network. (2024, April 10). *What to know about the Arizona Supreme Court's reinstatement of an 1864 near-total abortion ban*. Fox News. Retrieved on September 22, 2024, from <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/what-know-arizona-supreme-courts-reinstatement-1864-near-total-abortion-ban>

CNN articles:

- Holcombe, M. (2024, April 12). *Greater numbers of younger people got permanent contraception after Dobbs decision, study finds*. CNN. Retrieved on September 22, 2024, from <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/04/12/health/permanent-contraception-dobbs-wellness/index.html>
- John, A. (2024, April 10). *Arizona ruling puts abortion politics in the spotlight in battleground state*. CNN. Retrieved on September 22, 2024, from <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/04/10/politics/arizona-abortion-politics/index.html>
- McPhillips, D. (2024, May 1). *One Florida abortion clinic confronts a new six-week ban with a last-minute push and long-term plans*. CNN. Retrieved on September 22, 2024, from <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/05/01/health/florida-abortion-ban-clinic/index.html>

- Von Quednow, C., Maxouris, C., & Mascarenhas, L. (2024, April 9). *Arizona Supreme Court rules state must adhere to century-old law banning nearly all abortions*. CNN. Retrieved on September 22, 2024, from <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/04/08/us/arizona-supreme-court-abortion-access-tuesday/index.html>
- Wolf, Z. B. (2024, April 9). *Civil War-era abortion ban rises again, which is exactly what some Roe opponents wanted*. CNN. Retrieved on September 22, 2024, from <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/04/09/politics/abortion-ban-arizona-what-matters/index.html>

Secondary sources

- Blommaert, J. (2005). *Discourse: A critical introduction*. Cambridge University Press.
- Carmines, E. G., Gerrity, J. C., & Wagner, M. W. (2010). How abortion became a partisan issue: Media coverage of the interest group-political party connection. *Politics & Policy*, 38(6), 1135–1158. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-1346.2010.00272.x>
- Conti, J., & Cahill, E. (2017). Abortion in the media. *Current Opinion in Obstetrics and Gynecology*, 29(6), 427–430. <https://doi.org/10.1097/GCO.0000000000000412>
- Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and social change*. Polity Press.
- Fairclough, N. (1995). *Media discourse*. Hodder Education.
- Fairclough, N. (2001a). *Language and power* (2nd ed.). Pearson Education Limited.
- Fairclough, N. (2001b). The discourse of New Labour. In M. Wetherell, S. Taylor, & S. J. Yates (Eds.), *Discourse as data. A guide for analysis* (pp. 229–266). Sage Publications.
- Feltham-King, T., & Macleod, C. (2015). Gender, abortion and substantive representation in the South African newsprint media. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 51, 10–18. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2015.04.001>
- Fox News Media. (n.d.). *About*. Retrieved on November 7, 2024, from <https://www.foxnews.com/about>
- Gamson, W. A. (1992). *Talking politics*. Cambridge University Press.
- Johnstone, B. (2018). *Discourse analysis* (3rd ed.). John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated.
- Larsson, S., Eliasson, M., Klingberg Allvin, M., Faxelid, E., Atuyambe, L., & Fritzell, S. (2015). The discourses on induced abortion in Ugandan daily newspapers: a discourse analysis. *Reproductive Health*, 12(58). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12978-015-0049-0>
- Miao, L., Zhang, H., Tian, L., & Wang, Y. (2022). News coverage of abortion in relation to race and class in the United States in 2021. *The American Journal of Bioethics*, 22(8), 88–90. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15265161.2022.2089279>
- Patton, E. W., Moniz, M. H., Hughes, L. S., Buis, L., & Howell, J. (2017). National network television news coverage of contraception – a content analysis. *Contraception*, 95(1), 98–104. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.contraception.2016.07.005>

- Pew Research Center. (2020, January 24). *U.S. Media Polarization and the 2020 Election: A Nation Divided* [Report]. https://www.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/20/2020/01/PJ_2020.01.24_Media-Polarization_FINAL.pdf
- Purcell, C., Hilton, S., & McDaid, L. (2014). The stigmatisation of abortion: a qualitative analysis of print media in Great Britain in 2010. *An International Journal for Research, Intervention and Care*, 16(9), 1141–1155. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13691058.2014.937463>
- Rapp, R. (1999). *Testing women, testing the fetus: The social impact of amniocentesis in America*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203011348>
- Richardson, J. E. (2007). *Analysing newspapers: An approach from critical discourse analysis*. Red Globe Press.
- Roe v. Wade. (n.d.). *Britannica*. Retrieved on September 26, 2024, from <https://www.britannica.com/event/Roe-v-Wade>
- Shen, F., Ahern, L., & Baker, M. (2014). Stories that count: Influence of news narratives on issue attitudes. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 91(1), 98–117. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077699013514414>
- Statista. (August 3, 2024). *Leading global English-language news websites in the United States in July 2024, by monthly visits* [Graph]. Retrieved on September 15, 2024, from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/381569/leading-news-and-media-sites-usa-by-share-of-visits/>
- van Dijk, T. A. (1988). *News as discourse*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- van Dijk, T. A. (2008). *Discourse and power*. Palgrave Mcmillan.
- van Dijk, T. A. (2015). Critical discourse analysis. In D. Tannen, H. E. Hamilton, & D. Schiffrin (Eds.), *The handbook of discourse analysis* (2nd ed.) (pp. 466–485). John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Wodak, R. (1995). Critical linguistics and critical discourse analysis. In J. Verschueren, J.-O. Östman, & J. Blommaert (Eds.), *Handbook of pragmatics: Manual* (pp. 204–210). John Benjamins.
- Woodruff, K. (2019). Coverage of abortion in select U.S. newspapers. *Women's Health Issues*, 29(1), 80–86. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.whi.2018.08.008>
- World Health Organization. (May 17, 2024). *Abortion*. Retrieved on November 1, 2024, from <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/abortion>

