

## CODE BOOK: FRAMING OF SUBSTANTIVE PRIORITY

Wiebke Marie Junk, Anne Rasmussen, Linda Flöthe, Jeroen Romeijn

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### Overview and objectives

One can argue that lobbying is, in fact, a struggle over how to understand and define policy problems. In the end, influence on both policy makers and publics may depend vitally on the understandings of the issues that can be communicated and become more dominant in comparison to others. For this reason we code frames employed (strategically or subconsciously) in the statements of the actors.

Frames can be defined as “schemata of interpretation” (Goffman, 1974: 21), which help people structure complex reality by emphasising some aspects rather than others. In this sense, as Entman (1993: 52) summarises, framing is about selection and salience: “To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text”. [...]

[As one element of this, we code] the **substantive priority** voiced by the speaker in terms of a subject matter that is placed centrally, e.g. economic prosperity, the environment, safety etc. This substantive element answers the question of “What is at stake in this case?”. Hence, it goes beyond the mere policy field, but hints at what (political) field or goal the speaker finds most important. [...]

Below you find the coding instructions for this framing coding. Please read them carefully. If in doubt about any of them, please contact your coding supervisor.

## CODING RULES

### Personal Bias and Signalling words

It is indispensable to acknowledge that you as coders, most probably also hold personal understandings of an issue, which may lead you to find certain frames more appealing or logical than others when it comes to a specific issue. In order to ensure we really capture what is said by the actors, rather than biasing the results by our own frames, it is absolutely crucial that you only code frames that are explicitly articulated by the respective actor in direct speech. For this reason we use **signalling words**, which always need to be the reason for attaching a code. You must always be able to pinpoint the code to a word or an expression, which signals a certain frame.

### Identification and attribution of frames

For a similar reason, we only code frames in **direct quotations** by the respective speaker. Otherwise it could be that we capture the frame of the journalist, rather than the group or expert making the statement. Usually the direct quote should be in quotation marks, i.e. (“ ...”) or (‘...’). If

the format of quoting varies in your newspaper sources (and no quotation marks are used ever), contact your coding supervisor or myself and we will discuss the coding rule.

As in the previous coding we code only frames expressed by (representatives of) interest groups, firms or experts or individuals, but not members of political parties, governments or the like.

In all articles in which at least one positional statement (positive, negative or neutral) on the specific policy issue was made, you code all frames expressed in direct quotations by all interest groups and/or experts.

This means:

- You may capture frames by groups or individuals who have voiced a position. However, the frame need not be in the previously coded statement. It can be anywhere in the article, as long as it is a direct quotation by the actor.
- And/or you may capture frames by actors who do not voice a position, but participate in the broader debate (by framing the issue in a certain way, connecting it to other issues or questions etc.). Again the rule is that this needs to be a direct quote.

For actors that have voiced the position, you just add the new framing variables. For “new actors” (who did not voice a position in the article), you have to classify the actor according to the previous coding rules.

*Text box 1: Excerpt from previous coding scheme*

9. Identify the source (i.e. the actor) of the statement.

- 1 – Interest association (this requires that a specific interest group is mentioned rather than a reference to collections of actors such as "employers" or "workers")
- 2 – Expert
- 3 – Private company – management
- 4 – Private company - employees
- 5 – Individuals who are not representing any of the other "collective actors" mentioned
- 6 – International organisations/agencies
- 7 – Other actors / not specified

10. In case the source is an interest group, identify what kind of interest group(s) (see separate, detailed coding scheme).

11. Note down the following information about the source: organization name, possibly the name of the actor representing the organization (e.g. the name of an official speaking on behalf of an interest group), link to the organization's website plus its email address.

More specifically, you follow the following **coding process**:

1. Open the articles in Word and search for “ (or ‘, depending on newspaper format). The occurrences will be highlighted in yellow, helping you to find direct quotes.
2. Skip articles without any policy positions voiced by anyone.

3. Within articles where at least one position was previously coded, thoroughly apply the **framing codes** (substantive priority) to direct speech by any actor falling under the categories 1-6 above) . Highlight the signalling word you pin the coding to [...] in **blue** (priority) [...] within the document. **Add a comment** at the end of the quotation and write all the framescodes you have selected down here (e.g. [...] 1.2 economy etc.)
4. When you are done, transfer all the information into the **Excel file** you have been provided with, which also contains the previously collected data.
5. If the actor has not voiced a position in the article, add the actor and source information as well. (Email information is not required). For position write **FRAME ONLY**.
6. (Note: If a positional claim has been overlooked previously, you also need to add this in correspondence with the old code book.
7. In case of interviews, only code one response by the interviewee, namely the one that most directly concerns the policy issue at hand. If the entire interview is on this, code the first answer for frames. Opinion pieces/letters or not coded.

## FRAMING CODES

[...]

### 1. **SUBSTANTIVE PRIORITY FRAME** [renumbered from 2. in this shortened version of the codebook]

This [...] aspect of framing looks at the policy content in abstract terms. What is presented to be at stake here? Put differently: What is the central underlying substantive priority voiced by the claimant? If the issue was agricultural subsidies, for instance, the speaking actor could prioritise the economy, the environment or even the national culture, requiring action in a specific direction.

Chose from the categories below, or add a category, if necessary because you discover a different frame in (similarly) abstract terms. If so, add it in the [Google docs document](#). Signalling words are necessary, but synonyms or other signifiers for the broad substantive themes will equally work and just have to be noted in the file when used. These may come in different grammatical forms. However, the signalling words are not sufficient to denote the substantive priority frame, as this entails that the speaker places value on the category. If the speaker is saying that something is not an economic problem, but a safety issue, then this (safety) should be captured.

### **Priority rules**

- Chose only one the of these frames, namely the one that is mentioned first, unless there is clear priority verbally attached to one (e.g. “but most importantly, we need to ensure that our economy does not collapse”).

- Hence, the substantive frame is one categorical variable (currently with 5 different categories). It may be that no substantive frame can be identified, then note 0 in the Excel file.[...]

1.1 SAFETY: This refers to the integrity of persons, states or other bodies from threats like violence, persecution, extinction. This captures most ‘security’ concerns and survival arguments as well as threats to public or consumer health.

*Signalling words: danger, threat, ruin, extinction, safety, violence, terrorism, war, peace, safety, security, survival, health risk*

1.2 (HUMAN) RIGHTS: All statements prioritising the protection or promotion of human, civil or social rights. This includes frames in terms of human suffering that has to be alleviated.

*Signalling words: right (to), protection (of people, not the environment), personal freedom, dignity, human suffering, poverty.*

1.3 ECONOMY: All statements presented to foster wealth, prosperity, economic growth or safeguarding people, states or other groups from facing adverse economic effects (such as joblessness, economic decline).

*Signalling words: wealth, prosperity, , economy, growth, profit, jobs, labour market , unemployment, earnings*

1.4 ENVIRONMENT: All claims that are about safeguarding the environment or protecting the climate.

*Signalling words: conservation, environment, planet, nature, climate change, low-carbon, clean coal*  
*(If the term is “green growth”, and no other environmental signal is included, code ECONOMY)*

1.5 CULTURE: Statements calling on upholding traditions, acting in accordance with habits etc.

*Signalling words: culture, heritage, tradition, our values, habits, the way we do things*

1.6 OTHER: Add a new frame, if the substantive priority is not captured by any of the above claims. Ponder about signalling words and add them in our common documents.

[...]

## CODING EXAMPLES

Example 1: Germany, Arcantor rescue

*“Arcantor cannot be rescued, because this would mean making tax payers subsidise an unprofitable firm. Even if this means 50 000 jobs are lost, this is what needs to happen.”*

[...]

**Substantive frame:** 1.3 Economic prosperity (signals: profit (unprofitable), jobs)

[...]

#### EXAMPLE 2: Germany, Arcantor rescue

*"If the grant is not given, the company will be insolvent. The biographies of over 50 000 employees will be shattered, including their families, this means releasing leaving over 100 000 people to face an uncertain future. This would plainly be wrong."*

[...]

**Substantive frame:** None. It is not clearly expressed, whether it is about economic ruin, or personal safety or well-being. Rights or human dignity not only implicit and not mentioned. To be conservative, no frame should be coded.

[...]

#### EXAMPLE 3: UK, air passenger tax

*"This report falls well short of what is required to help tackle climate change. Last month Gordon Brown said that he wanted Britain to lead in developing a low-carbon economy," said Tony Juniper, director of Friends of the Earth. "This was a golden opportunity for the chancellor to produce a range of green incentives to encourage people to go green. But yet again the government has not delivered."*

[...]

**Substantive frame:** 1.4 Environment (signals: "climate change", "low-carbon economy")

[...]

#### EXAMPLE 5: UK, A substantial reduction in corporation tax

*But TUC general secretary Brendan Barber said: "The chancellor must use his budget to give a firm no to this special pleading and strongly rebuff the business lobbying for a U-turn on the inadequate proposals to levy non-doms." The CBI's call for a big reduction in corporation tax would increase opportunities for big businesses and the super-rich to avoid paying their fair share of tax. "It would lead to tax hikes for ordinary people, damaging cuts to public services and abandoning commitments on child poverty," he said. "The CBI might as well hang a giant 'tax is for the little people' banner from their office windows."*

[...]

**Substantive frame:** 1.2 Human rights (signalling word: "child poverty")

[...]



## **Bibliography**

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Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*. Cambridge, MA, US: Harvard University Press.