Guidelines for the coding of actor statements reported in newspapers

For the set of selected policy issues, i.e. 4, you are provided with word file that contains all the articles related to each of our policy issues. Each article in the documents is to be content-coded with respect to reported statements and actions by actors that address the policy in question. The unit of analysis is a "statement or action related to the public policy item" (Burstein, 2014:90, Page et. al., 1987: 26, Bruycker & Beyers, forthcoming: 11) rather than an article.

The coding is based on the following procedures and rules:

1. Determine whether the article relates to the policy issue in question. If it is loosely related to the policy issue, it shall be included and scanned for relevant statements. However, if the article is entirely unrelated (or something else is wrong - for instance if the content is missing), it is to be excluded from the coding and you should indicate that the article is irrelevant within the word document.

2. Identify the statements in the article and assign a statement id to each statement. A statement is defined as the supply of information or the presentation of the opinion of an actor. It includes direct and indirect quotes as well as more general information about statements made by actors (e.g. if the article states that an actor has "said" or "holds a view" on something, it is to be considered a statement).

   Variable to be coded: statementid

3. Determine whether the statement relates to the policy issue. Statements that are relevant to the wider topic but not to the specific policy issue, or to a related but distinct policy issue, are to be excluded. Statements broadly referring to types of policies that include the specific policy are to be included (examples are listed in Appendix C). However, statements and actions by political parties, party officials, and the government (actors with public office) are to be excluded.

4. Determine whether the statement or action emanates from an actor who has not yet been coded as the source of a statement or action in the article. If an article includes several statements or actions by the same actor, it is to be coded as only one statement or action, respectively.

   If the same actor makes several statements with different content (e.g. a neutral statement and one in favour), the statement that takes a position is to be coded. If there are statements in favour and against the policy by the same actor, a statement with the view that represents the majority of displayed views is to be coded. If there are equal numbers of positive and negative statements, they are to be coded as neutral.

   If a statement is made by several actors jointly, the variables pertaining to the source outlined below (source type, type of interest group, and information about source) are to be recorded for each actor separately. In other words, if several actors are mentioned in relation to one statement or action, then the statement or action appears as many times in the data as there are actors associated with it. All of the statements will have the same ID, but the actor IDs will be different.

5. Assign an actor id to a source

   If an actor states another actor's opinion, the former is to be counted as the source (e.g. a company referring to public opinion) – unless the source is a media outlet that simply cites the statement of an actor, in which case this actor is the source.

   Statements by actors in articles not written by journalists are to be attributed to the actor. In this case we do not record positions of third actors mentioned.

   Assign an actorid to each coded source. Actorid's are continuous across articles and issues, i.e. a given actor has the same id every times it appears on all four issues.

   Variable to be coded: actorid

6. 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

   If several sources are linked to a statement, each is to be recorded, including the source-related variables listed below (type of interest group and information). If a given source has two affiliations (e.g. because he represents both an interest group and a firm) the coder selects on behalf of which source he primarily speaks but makes a note on this. In a scenario in which one of the two affiliations is not a source coded here (e.g. an actor that represents both a governmental entity and an interest group of governmental actors), we register the actor under the source coded here (e.g. the interest group category).

   * We apply a broad definition to experts and define an expert as someone who has working experience in the field and as such knows the rules and procedures (Farrington-Darby & Wilson, 2006, 18), as someone who is moreover able to define problems and create solutions (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 2005, 787) or as someone who is in the possession of specialized knowledge (Schudson, 2006, 499). That means, if the policy issue is on a new school reform, the principal of a school has to be coded as an expert and not an individual, because the principal is working in this field and has very specialized knowledge about the school system and is also able to identify problems and solutions. The same holds true if the issue is on whether to prolong the mandate of the army in Afghanistan and individual soldiers give their opinion on that issue. Again, these actors have sufficient experience in that field and highly specialized knowledge on the operation

and as such have to be coded as experts. Finally, note that we regard advisory boards and committees to the government as experts.

**Agencies which belong to the national government are not to be coded

Variable to be coded: source

7. Identify whether the statement expressing the position of an actor/group of actors on a given issue can be linked to some sort of activity, e.g. a demonstration, participation in a hearing or a letter sent.

   0 – statement only
   1 – action

   Variable to be coded: action

8. If the statement can be linked to an activity, select the kind of action based on the list below.

   Variable to be coded: action_type

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

   Variable to be coded: interestgrouptype

10. Note down the following information about the source (if they are available): organization name and possibly the individual name of the actor representing the organization and her/his position.

    Variable to be coded:

    Org_name, Ind_name, Ind_position

11. If the article does not provide the name of the actor please indicate that the respective actor is an unspecified source. For instance, an article may cite an unknown expert about a particular policy reform.

    Variable to be coded: Unspecified source

    Unknown sources can be of different types, e.g. experts and individuals.

12. Identify the position conveyed in the statement by the source (note that the position conveyed in a statement may be different from the known position of the source, e.g. it might be neutral information even though the source is known to have a certain opinion). If it is only known that an actor made a statement, but unclear whether the statement was pro, against or neutral (i.e. the content is unknown), the position should be coded as missing.

    0 – in favour of the policy action in question
    1 – uncertain or neutral
    2 – against the policy action in question
    99 - missing

Variable to be coded: position

13. Reports about results from polls are not to be counted as public statements. However, we are still interested in whether reports about results of polls appear in the articles.

    Thus, please code the variable “ref_po” with a "1" if the article refers to a poll but only if the poll is related to the policy issue under consideration. In addition please use the variable “ref_po_name” to list the name of the poll(s) and/or polling company/companies if it is mentioned in the article (e.g. Gallup).

    Please note that given that the “ref_po” and “ref_po_name” variables are at the article level, all statements from a given article will have the same values in these two variables.

    Moreover, if a particular actor statement to an article refers to a poll please code the actor specific variable “ref_po_actor” with a 1 and provide the name of the respective polling company in the actor specific variable “ref_po_actor_name” (if it is mentioned).

    Variables to be coded: ref_po, ref_po_name, ref_po_actor, ref_po_actor_name

    Please note that we also code information about references to opinion polls for articles that do not contain any actor statements. In such a case fill in actor name as PO and use actorid 99 plus leave all other variables empty.

Notes:

If the article is written by someone other than a journalist or political actor, e.g. an expert or representative of an interest group, then opinions (for or against) given by the author are to be counted as statements. Neutral statements, which will constitute the rest of the article, are to be excluded. If the author cites statements by other actors, they are to be attributed to the actor rather than the author (cf. point (7)).

The resulting variables to be recorded in the dataset are:

1. Country (country)
2. Coder ID (coderid)
3. Policy issue ID (policyid)
4. Article ID (articleid)
5. Date of the article in DD,MM,YYYY format (date)
6. Year of the article (year)
7. Statement ID (within issues, continuous across articles) (statementid)
8. Actor ID (actorid)
9. Source type, indicates the actor type (source)
10. Action (yes or no) (action)

11. Type of action (action_type)
12. Type of interest group (interestgrouptype)
13. Name of the organisation (Org_name)
14. Name of the individual actor (Ind_name)
15. Position of the individual actor (Ind_position)
16. Unspecified source, i.e. a dummy if source (actor) is not specified (Unspecified source)
17. Position (position)
18. Reference to a poll in the article (ref_po)
19. Name of the polling company mentioned in the article (ref_po_name)
20. Actor specific reference to a poll (ref_po_actor)
21. Name of the polling company mentioned by an actor (ref_po_actor_name)

Appendix A: List of actions

1 – Civil disobedience and illegal activities
2 – Demonstrations (lawful and illegal)
3 – Petitions
4 – Debate meetings and conferences
5 – Press release or press conference
6 – Publication of analyses and studies
7 – Participation in hearings
8 – Participation in public boards, councils, and committees
9 – Judicial action (e.g. file a law suit)
10 – Letter to politician
11 – Article or comment in newspaper
12 - Other events/not specified

Appendix B: List of group types[1]

1 Labour groups
11 Blue-collar union
12 White-collar union
13 Other labour groups (i.e. think tanks related to unions)
14 Employee representative committee

[1] In the case of labour groups, business groups, and institutional associations, the subgroup does not need to be specified – they are only listed here to facilitate the classification of interest associations.

2 Business groups
21 Peak-level business group
22 Sector-wide business group
23 Breed associations
24 Technical Associations
25 Other business group

3 Institutional Associations
31 Associations of local authorities
32 Associations of other public institutions
33 Associations of managers of public institutions
34 Other Institutional associations

Occupational associations
41 Doctors' associations
42 Other medical professions
43 Teachers' associations
44 Other occupational associations

Identity Groups
51 Patients
52 Elderly
53 Students
54 Friendship groups (i.e. non-specific groups related to a country)
55 Racial or ethnic
56 Other – undefined - identity group
57 Women
58 Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transsexual

Hobby/Leisure groups
61 Sport
62 Other hobby/leisure

Religious groups
71 Associated with the protestant church
73 Other religious group
74 Roman/Catholic groups

Public interest groups
81 Environment and animal welfare
82 Humanitarian – international
83 Humanitarian – national
84 Consumer Group
85 Other – undefined – public interest
86 Government reform

87 Civil liberties
88 Citizen Empowerment

90 Think Tanks

99 Missing / uncodeable

Appendix C: Examples

Policy item: "Food manufacturers should be made to reduce the fat/salt content in their products by government regulation."

Article 1: Burnham calls for legal limits on salt, sugar and fat in food

Food firms should face legal limits on how much fat, salt and sugar they can put in their products to save the NHS money and help tackle illness, Labour's health spokesman has proposed. […]

Burnham said: "Voluntary efforts [by producers to reformulate] have not worked and it's time for a different approach. There are some products on the market that are so full of salt, sugar or fat they are unacceptable. The amount of sugar in many cereals is shocking."

He said he was worried that large amounts of sugar and fat, in foods such as bread and breakfast cereals, were fuelling the UK's rising obesity levels. Research in February by the consumer group Which? found that the breakfast cereal Kellogg's Frosties was made up of 37% sugar, while Waitrose's Honey Nut Corn Flakes were 33.6% sugar, and Special K, marketed by Kellogg's as a healthy choice, had a 17% sugar content. "If you have maximum amounts and reduce the sugar or salt in the formulated product then people can choose if they want to sprinkle some on top - they are conscious of what they are doing - whereas if it's in the formulated product it's much harder to control," said Burnham. […]

The statement marked in yellow refers to sugar content and is therefore to be excluded. If it referred to salt or fat content, it would need to be included.

Article 2: Comment: The corporate grip on public life is a threat to democracy: The revelation that health policy has been handed to the private sector exposes a crony capitalism that has to be overturned

The onward march of corporate power is a long established fact of British life. We've become familiar with the relentless privatisation of public assets and services, the creeping colonisation of Whitehall, and the revolving doors that see politicians, lobbyists, executives and civil servants swap places and exchange contracts with bewildering speed.

But the Guardian's revelation that fast food and drinks companies such as McDonald's, PepsiCo, Unilever and Diageo have now been asked by ministers to draw up public health policy shows the corporate takeover of politics has reached a new level. This isn't an issue of government consulting

business. We're talking about the same vested interests that have fuelled the obesity and alcohol abuse crises as good as dictating terms at the heart of government.

Naturally their first demand is that there will be no *regulation* to tackle those crises: no tax or price control to reduce consumption, or even traffic-light labelling of high sugar or *fat content*.

The statement marked in yellow is to be included since it pertains to types of policies that include the policy in question – even though the general topic of the article is a different one. Note that the statement is made by four companies, all of which need to be included as sources.