

Media content analysis

European Election Study

2004

Coder Version 23.06.2004

Codebook

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Study overview

Element	Tentative var #	Questions/ Variables / comments
Visibility campaign	V4-5-6	Stories about politics and about EP elections (share length of program for TV; absolute # for NPs)
Topics	V7	What is the news about the elections about? What other topics are in the news? Primary and secondary topics coded"
Location	V8	To be linked to 'Europeanness of campaign'; link can be made to 1999 and even 1979!
<i>SELECTION I</i>	--	<i>ONLY POLITICAL STORIES ARE CODED (defined as presence of political actor (party or politician) or political institution.</i>
Actors	V9-18	Actor list (up to 10 actors per story)
Actor evaluation	V19-28	Evaluation actor 1-10
Conflict and strategy news frames	V29-37	

Additional documents:

List of News Outlets (see separate list. In each country: 2 television news programs for 2 weeks, 2 broadsheets and 1 tabloid for 3 weeks)

List of Topics (see separate list)

List of Locations (see separate list)

List of Actors (see separate list)

1. General instructions

1.1 Object of examination, in general

Newspapers: All news stories on the front page, a randomly selected second page and all stories containing information about the **European Union** have to be coded in the following sections in print media: Political/News section, Editorial (including Opinion/Comment) and Business Section. **Do not** code Sport, Culture, Fashion or Entertainment (...) section. **TV news shows** have to be coded entirely.

1.2. Object of examination, in particular

Front/Head Sheet

Code a front/head sheet for every article on the front page, on a second randomly selected page and all other news stories that fit to the rules above.

Besides the formal aspects like “Section”, “Style” and “Source” code the main aspect of the article; the main aspect is the one that gets the most space. Chose it from the list of aspects that pops up if you click on the white field.

In the field “Who” code up to 10 actors (persons or organizations), code the main protagonist in the head sheet of the article.

The variable is split in two: first code the general protagonist, in the second field “specify” the protagonist; here you have to code the name of the company, politician or the country.

European Election Sheet

Code the extra sheet for all stories containing information about **political actors** (politicians, political parties or governments) and/or the **European Union**.

1.3 Analysed units (each of whom requires a separate form):

Definition: News story

A news story is an article in a newspaper and a news item in a TV newscast.

Television

- a) A news item is defined by its **topic**. Caution: Several (sub)topics may be combined into one “package” about an overarching topic. This package then looks like one long story, but consists of several shorter stories (ie. When background/backdrop of the anchorperson changes (e.g., the headline or the graph/photograph) *and/ or* once a topic is explicitly announced as different by the anchor: e.g., “Also today ...,” “Now to ...”.)

- *Note:* Headlines and summaries, announcements of other programs and commercials within the newscast are **not** coded.

Newspapers

- *Note:* If an article **explicitly** says that it is continued on another page, its continuation on the other page has to be coded as well. But: Articles that only consist of a headline or are only announced in an index/table of contents are **not** coded inside the newspaper – only the announcement on the front page itself.

Note: New headlines **within** the text of an article do **not** constitute a new article.

1.4 Length standards

Article length standards are in cm. Normal column width constitutes a width standard.

If the column width is double the normal width, double the length; if the column width is ~1.5 times the normal width, multiply the length by 1.5.

Do not consider the headline or pictures for this.

1.5 Topics and Aspects

To be chosen from the enclosed list. Should more than one single topic be represented, pick up the one which prevails. Selecting topics involves clicking through 3 levels of listed topics available:

- Level 1: Crime, domestic security (13)
- Level 2: non-politically motivate crime (1313)
- Level 3: murder (131325)

Coded-Country-Rule:

It is to be seen from the point of view of the coded country (e.g. Clinton's presidential campaign will be coded under "Home affairs" and not "Foreign affairs").

In case the topic cannot be found on the list, a brief remark in space provided on the right side will be required, after entering /999999/. Refrain from using the code other topics, only in case of emergency.

1.5.1 Main protagonist/who

An individual, group of people, organisation, company or institution can be presented as a main protagonist, usually in form of descriptions, but also quotations. Should more than one single protagonist be presented, choose the one which prevails. Selecting protagonists involves clicking through 3 levels of listed protagonists available and remember to choose the relevant country, for example:

- Level 1: Government of SA (61)
- Level 2: SA:President (6161)
- Level 3: Mbeki, Thabo (616103)

and

- Level 1: Government of USA (51)
- Level 2: US: President (5161)
- Level 3: Bush, George. W (516143)

Some protagonists you have to specify, e.g. companies: for Microsoft chose 57 (US-economy) in level 1, then 5730 (US-company) and 573003. In the field "specify" you enter the name of the company ("Microsoft").

If article, in terms of quantity, focuses equally on two protagonists, the one which is presented rather than quoted is to be chosen (e.g. an actor speaking about another: the latter is here the main protagonist).

In case the main protagonist cannot be found on the list, a concise remark in space provided on the right side will be required, after entering /999999/. Refrain from using this code, only in case of emergency.

1.6 Coding of Tone

Refers to tendency/bias contained in the presentation by a journalist, protagonist or his partners, competitors, independent sources (e.g. politicians, businessmen, scientists)

The tendency can be expressed

* explicitly, by using terms of clearly positive or negative JUDGEMENT (e.g. "good", "promising", "ominous", "disappointing").

* implicitly, if the presented contents is embedded in a positive or negative CONTEXT.

Example: financial improvements for employees are depicted as mere election campaign strategy. Implicit tendency is involved if the described circumstances are generally understood to be negative or positive (e.g. losses of a company, party's membership shrinking)

Explicit and implicit tendency of a presentation can vary, therefore both are to be coded separately. Please note, however, that particular care should be exercised while recording the tendencies and only undoubtedly positive or negative ones should be coded as such

In case no tendency can be assumed choose NEUTRAL.

Where both positive and negative tendencies apply, the dominating aspects are to be determined and coded either as /2/ or /4/. "Rather positive" /2/ or "rather negative".

/4/ should also be used where definitely positive/negative tendencies are outnumbered by neutral ones. In case positive and negative tendencies are roughly in balance, choose /3/ "ambivalent".

0 =	neutral
1 =	positive
2 =	rather positive
3 =	ambivalent
4 =	rather negative
5 =	negative

2. Special coding instructions

- V1** **News outlet**
 ⇐ List of news outlets (Appendix)
- V2** **Date**
 The first digit represents the date, the second the month
 Example: June 2 = 0206
- V3** **Coder ID**
 ⇐ List of coders
- V4a** **Story number (TV only)**
 i.e. the number of the story within the newscast in the order of its appearance or of an article on the front page.
- V4b** **Page number (NP only)**
 i.e. the number of the page on which the story appeared.
- V5a (TV)** **Length of TV news item** (in min : sec; four digits), incl. its introduction by the anchorperson.
 Example: 1 minute and 58 seconds are coded as 0158, 42 seconds are coded as 0042
- V5b (NP)** **Placement:** Article begins on upper half of the page

 1 = Yes
- V6** **Type of story**
Choose only one!
- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| - Print Media | |
| 0 = headline news only | 7 = opinion, brief (less than 20 cm) |
| 1 = news (up to 10 cm) | 8 = opinion, long (more than 20 cm) |
| 2 = brief report (10-20 cm) | 9 = satirical text |
| 3 = report (more than 20 cm) | 10 = interview |
| 4 = account, reportage | 11 = guest story |
| 5 = feature | 12 = portrait |
| 6 = documentary | 13 = quotation |
| | 14 = correction |
| | 15 = editorial |

16 =	graphics, table	25 =	details of the television program
17 =	caricature	26 =	television criticism
24 =	Cartoon	29 =	Obituary
18 =	photograph	19 =	other
20 =	debate, discussion	91 =	if to be coded: letters
-TV news			
41 =	brief report (newsreader only)	50 =	interview
42 =	brief report (film)	51 =	statement, citation
43 =	film report	52 =	portrait
44 =	report by a corresponden t (live)	54 =	correction
45 =	feature/ documentary	60 =	presentation
46 =	background report	65 =	program note
47 =	opinion	66 =	television criticism in advance
49 =	satirical contribution	67 =	television criticism in retrospect
		69	other

V7**Topic of the story**

(i.e. major subject of the story = taking the most space or time – often mentioned in the headline)

⇐ List of topics (Appendix)

Note: If there is more than one appropriate category, always choose the most specific one.

V8**Main location** of the story

Where does the story or the actions it depicts (mainly) take place (in terms of prominence in the story or length)?

⇐ List of locations (Appendix)

Note: If there are two equally important locations, code the one mentioned *first* in the story.

Note for newspapers: Headlines, bullets, cartoons, and pictures/ graphs may not contain enough information to code this category. In this case, you may code “0 – no country/unknown”.

Example: An article about a speech held by Tony Blair in Germany would be coded with Germany.

V9 Main Actor

⇐ List of actors (appendix)

Up to TEN different **persons, groups, institutions or organizations** that are

- mentioned verbally at least twice (synonyms or personal pronouns also count)
- or**
- verbally mentioned once **and** quoted (Blair said: "Britain...") / quoted without quotation marks (i.e. reported speech: Blair said that...)
- or**
- mentioned verbally at least once **and** depicted at least once.

Exception: If an article in a newspaper only consists of a headline/ bullet/ picture/ cartoon, **one** mentioning or depiction of politicians, political groups, institutions or organizations is sufficient!

1. Actors are **not necessarily persons**. A government, an institution, an organization, even a country as a whole can be an actor if the story depicts so. An actor does **not necessarily have to act**, either. Actors can also be **objects** or **targets** of actions—they can be attacked or criticized, for instance.
2. **Journalists** are actors only if they are reported **about or used as sources**.
3. An actor can only be coded once – although she/he/it/they may appear at several places and with different functions in the story. Then, choose the category depicting the most important role of that actor in the story. If more than one code applies to one actor, choose the most specific one (e.g. a farmer is not to be coded as ordinary citizen, but as member of a professional group). There may be cases in which the same code has to be assigned to different actors, e.g. when two members of the same party are quarreling with each other. The reference point for deciding how to code an actor is always the story. If, for example, an minister is a *candidate* running for the EP, use the relevant EP Candidate Actor List code. If the story is about the person as member of the government, use the relevant minister code.

4. Criteria for selecting actors

*If there is more than **one** actor:*

Actor 1 = the main actor, the most important actor **of the story**.

Indicators of importance are:

- duration, space of information about the actor
- frequency of being mentioned
- visibility (film, photographs etc.)
- quotes, statements of the actor.

Note: Actors do **not** become important in a story because of their position, their rank or prestige!

Note: Different actors may have the same code. Thus, the same code may be assigned several times.

*If there are more than **two** actors that are sufficiently (see above) present in the story:*

Code the other actors (except the main actor) in the order of their appearance in the story.

V9b If the actor is a person: Is the actor male or female? (If the actor is no person or the gender is not discernible, code “neutral”)

V9c Is the actor 1-10 evaluated favorably or unfavorably (irregardless of the source)?

Refers to tendency/bias contained in the presentation by a journalist, protagonist or his partners, competitors, independent sources (e.g. politicians, businessmen, scientists)

The tendency can be expressed

* explicitly, by using terms of clearly positive or negative JUDGEMENT (e.g. “good”, “promising”, “ominous”, “disappointing”).

* implicitly, if the presented contents is embedded in a positive or negative CONTEXT. Example: financial improvements for employees are depicted as mere election campaign strategy. Implicit tendency is involved if the described circumstances are generally understood to be negative or positive (e.g. losses of a company, party’s membership shrinking)

Explicit and implicit tendency of a presentation can vary, therefore both are to be coded separately. Please note, however, that particular care should be exercised while recording the tendencies and only undoubtedly positive or negative ones should be coded as such

In case no tendency can be assumed choose NEUTRAL.

Where both positive and negative tendencies apply, the dominating aspects are to be determined and coded either as /2/ or /4/. "Rather positive" /2/ or "rather negative" /4/ should also be used where definitely positive/negative tendencies are outnumbered by neutral ones. In case positive and negative tendencies are roughly in balance, choose /3/ "ambivalent".

- 0 neutral
- 1 positive
- 2 rather positive
- 3 ambivalent
- 4 rather negative
- 5 negative

V9c If the actor is not the main actor, the importance of the actor is measured by the extent of his description or quotation

- 0 = less than 5 lines seconds
- 1 = at least 5 lines seconds

 SCREENING SELECTION I:
 THE ABOVE ARE CODED FOR ALL STORIES IN A NEWS PROGRAM AND IN THE
 NEWSPAPER

NOW ONLY CODE STORIES THAT ARE POLITICAL
(DEFINITION: “mentions or makes reference politicians, political parties and or
nationalregional governments”)

FRAMING

V29 **Explicitly (only if the story or somebody in the story says so):** Does the story mention **poll results** (= survey results)?

- 1 = Yes; survey public opinion mentioned in general
 2 = Yes; specific survey mentioned discussed

V29a **Explicitly (only if the story or somebody in the story says so):** Does the story mention **interviews of persons in the street** (= vox populi)?

- 1 = Yes; people interviewed in the street

V30 **Explicitly (only if the story or somebody in the story says so):** Are one or more actors called (potential) **“winners”** or **“losers”**? (e.g., “The winner of the day was politician xxx”)

Note: Has to be mentioned explicitly – not victims, refugees that are not **called** “losers” or dictators that are not **called** “winners”, for instance.

- 1 = Yes

V31 **Explicitly (only if the story or somebody in the story says so):** Does the story mention a person’s, group’s, institution’s or organization’s **presentation and style** – of how, in which way, in which manner they handle an issue? (e.g., competently, nervously, proudly, elegantly, badly, ill-prepared, hastily etc.).

- 1 = Yes

V32 **Explicitly (only if the story or somebody in the story says so):** Does the story mention that an action of a person, group, institution or organization was taken in order to **stabilize, consolidate or enhance hisits position, in order to make himherit look better** in public opinion or in the political arena? (i.e., a tactic or strategic move with a certain motivation)

1 = Yes

V33 **Explicitly (only if the story or somebody in the story says so):** Does the story use one or more metaphors from the **language of games, sport andor war?** (e.g., race, fight, clash, blow up, bombing, battle, attack, throwing in the towel, betting on the right horse, taking the bull by the horns, a good team-player, a good sportsman, etc.)

Note: Every country has its own sports metaphors. Please take them into account.

1 = Yes

V34 **Explicitly (only if the story or somebody in the story says depicts so):** Does the story (or somebody in the story) mention **two or more sides** of a problem or issue?

Note: These “sides” do not necessarily indicate a conflict or disagreement.
Example: “The tax increase might look good on the budget but it might slow down demand as citizens will be left with less money to spend”

1 = Yes

V35 **Explicitly (only if the story or somebody in the story says so):** Does the story mention any **conflictdisagreement?**

1 = Yes

V36 **Explicitly (only if the story or somebody in the story says so):** Does the story say that one person, group, institution or organization **reproachesblamescriticizes** another?

1 = Yes

V37

Explicitly: Does a journalist distance himself explicitly (e.g. by using disdainful language [German: abfaellig, French: dedain]) from the described actor? Does he rate the actions as pseudo-events? Does the journalist describe the event as a result of the wish of the protagonist to be “seen”? Does the journalist contrast the event explicitly with the real actions behind the stage? Does the reporter correct statements or information given by the actor?

Note: Example: “Today’s press conference was conveniently staged in front of the European Parliament so that politician xxx could remind the crowd that he was also a candidate for the Parliamentary elections”

1 = Yes, the journalist distances himself from actions of the protagonist or corrects statements from the actor