

DFG research project

Mediated Contestation in Comparative Perspective

CODEBOOK (version 7.7)

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General preliminary notes:

perform the following steps for each news item to be coded. Observing the sequence of steps described in this codebook will facilitate coding.

Open codes should be made primarily in English. If this is not possible, code in German.

2. CODING STEP: CREATION OF THE ACTOR LIST [ACTOR_NAME]

Preliminary note: *in this step, create a separate list of all actors **mentioned** in the text for each article you are coding. The order of the actors' occurrence in the **main text of the article** defines their order of listing.*

An actor is understood here as an at least potentially acting subject who is able to at least potentially participate actively in a discourse and must be identifiable as such in the text. Actors can be individuals (e.g. Angela Merkel) or collective actors (e.g. the Federal Government).

If both a **collective actor** (e.g. an institution or organization) and an individual **representative or speaker of this collective actor** are mentioned in an article, they are listed separately.

Note that incidentally mentioned individual or collective actors are also included. A **single, incidental mention of an actor, also in the form of background information or personal characteristics, is sufficient to code them**.

The aim of this coding step is to capture **all mentioned potential discourse participants**.

Note: there are two key criteria with corresponding key questions for the creation of the actor list:

- (a) **Identifiability:** is there any information in the text that allows for **finding out more information about the potential actor** or can this information be obtained with the help of an online search engine in 5 minutes or less?
 - An actor must be an **identifiable**, acting subject. For example, ‘many’ or ‘others’ do not count as actors, because they are not identifiable. An actor is considered as identifiable if the information provided about the actor allows the reader to find out more information about them (either in the present text but also beyond, by means of a simple search, e.g. with an online search engine).
- (b) **Potential discourse participation:** could the potential actor **at least potentially participate in a discourse**?
 - An actor must be a **potential participant in the discourse**. An identifiable individual or collective actor must be able to potentially participate as such in the discussion on the article's topic. This also means that non-organized groups of individuals and collectives (such as ‘Christians’, ‘Muslims’, ‘German farmers’) are not coded as actors, because they are unable to participate as such in the public debate. Organized actors, groups and collectives (such as ‘the church’ as an institution, not as a place, the ‘Central Council of Muslims in Germany’, ‘farmers' associations’), however, are coded as actors because they are able to participate as such in the public discourse.

Coding instruction:

Text files: if you code an article in txt format, mark each actor appearing in the text and subsequently click on the yellow button labelled ‘Actor’.

PDF files: if you code an article in PDF format, print it and mark each actor mentioned with a yellow highlighter. In a consensus discussion with a second coder, actors appearing several times are summarized and the final list is created. This list is saved in Excel format. The description of each actor on the final list is entered manually in Angrist for further actor coding.

Caution: for individual actors, the description will usually be equivalent to the name of the respective actor; functional descriptions or affiliations to organizations should be added only if the actor's name would otherwise be ambiguous. For collective actors, the name of the actor is usually the name of the respective institution/organization.

Add an English translation of the actor description in the field ‘Description’. If you are not able to translate into English, enter a German description .

Caution: the author of the article is always the first actor to be coded. The author is not recorded by name but is referred to only as the ‘author of the article’. By default, Angrist suggests the author of the article as the first entry on the actor list (also without prior marking). If you code an article in txt format, you therefore do not need to mark the author.

Treatment of borderline cases:

- **Demonstrating and other protesting groups of persons** are coded as identifiable collective actors if they appear organized as such (e.g. evangelical Christians demonstrating against abortion laws).
- Actors who can act both as **geographical reference** or **source of information** and as **discourse participants**, such as **countries, cities, churches or the media**, are coded as actors only if it is **clear from the context of the reference** that they act as **independent potential participants in the discourse**. They are not coded if, in the context of their mention, they only point to a place.
- **‘The state’** should be interpreted as equivalent to the current government of the respective country and therefore included as collective actor in the actor list (caution: this also includes mentions of countries as states (e.g. ‘Israel announced XY’) but not mentions of countries without a clearly identifiable reference to the state).
- **Fictitious actors** (e.g. characters from film and literature) are not coded.
- **Deceased actors, i.e. also historical actors (for example, Muhammed, Jesus, Maria)** are not coded.
- **Anonymously cited actors** (e.g. actors whose name was changed by the journalist for their protection or who are not named at all and cannot be identified by other means) are not coded as actors.

Example 1: *‘The head of the British government today commented on the recent events in London.’*
→ The actor is identifiable because he/she also represents an actual discourse participant (see (b))

on whom additional information can be sought and found based on the information given in the article ('The head of the British government'; see (a)).

Example 2: *'The federal government', 'The Greens', 'The opposition' or 'The army' each are collective actors and are therefore coded as actors.*

In case of doubt: shouldn't it be clear from the context of the article whether the criteria for the identification of actors are met (identifiability and potential discourse participation), code conservatively, i.e. do not include them in the actor list.

Example 3: *'Last week, after Republican governors in South Carolina and Alabama had pressed for the removal of the Confederate battle flag at their capitals, Southern Republicans in the House moved to preserve the right to lay those flags on Confederate graves at federal cemeteries, prompting an uproar led by African-American House members.' → 'Republican governors in South Carolina and Alabama' are two identifiable individual actors. However: it is not clear from the context of the article whether 'Southern Republicans in the House' and 'African-American House members' refer to groups as a whole (and therefore are coded as actors) or if these designations are used as characterizations of several individual persons, who would then be not further identifiable. Therefore, they both should not be coded as actors.*