

DFG research project

Mediated Contestation in Comparative Perspective

CODEBOOK (version 7.7)

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Preliminary note: the following coding steps record whether an explicit reference to

- (a) an **actor** (actor reference) (**coding step 8**),
 - (b) a **position** (position reference) (**coding step 9**) and
 - (c) a **justification** (justification reference) (**coding step 10**)
- is given.

A reference here represents a unique object–originator constellation. As described above, reference objects may be **actors** (coding step 8), **positions** (coding step 9), or **justifications** (coding step 10). By contrast, originators of references are always actors.

References to actors, positions, or justifications may be neutral, positive (e.g. approving), or negative (e.g. offensive) depending on the dominant overall impression of the reference.

Important: when identifying references, consider the entire article that is currently coded. This means, you should include the **entire presentation of the actor, position, or justification** in the article (and not only at its first mention) as a basis for your coding decisions.

8. CODING STEP: ACTOR REFERENCES

In this coding step, the actor references are coded. An actor reference represents a unique object–originator constellation. For each of these constellations, the coding steps 8.4 through 8.9 must be performed.

Coding steps 8.1 to 8.3 record whether an actor (reference originator) establishes a relation to another actor (reference object) and in which passage the reference is made. Coding steps 8.4 to 8.9 contain characteristics of each individual reference.

8.1 ACTORS REFERENCES: REFERENCE OBJECT ACTOR [ACTREF_REFOBJ_ACTOR_ID]

A reference is defined here as a communicative act (linguistic or non-linguistic), which in its content is contingent upon another communicative act. Note that the communicative act referred to does not need to appear in the article itself. It must only be recognisable as a necessary prerequisite for the referring communicative act.

This also means that dialogues between actors are basically coded as references. Comparisons are coded as references only if they can be understood by the reader as such. Speaker changes, on the other hand, are coded as references only if the speakers address each other.

An actor can be referred to in various forms:

- 1) by **directly quoting** another actor,
- 2) by **indirectly quoting** another actor,

- 3) by performing **acts** that are directly aimed at another actor (e.g. pat on the back, attacks, demonstrations, etc.),
- 4) by **characterizing** another actor (e.g. in order to degrade them),
- 5) by **commenting** on or **evaluating** other actors.

Such reference to another actor may be neutral, positive (e.g. approving), or negative (e.g. offensive).

Caution: also unlisted actors (see coding step 6.2), who do not appear on the actor list of the currently coded article, may be a reference object (i.e. the reference object may also be an unidentifiable potential discourse participant)!

Coding instruction:

From the displayed list, in turn select **one of the actors who are explicitly referred to by another actor in the main text of the article**.

In doing so, adhere to the order in which the actors appear on the actor list. That is, you first code all actor references to the author, then those references made to the actor listed second, third, fourth, etc. Finally, code the actor references that are made to unlisted actors.

If no actor is referred to or if the reference is only implicit, code ‘No, no other actor reference’.

Example 1: *an article contains the following sentence: ‘In his yesterday’s speech, the party leader sharply condemned the church for its attempts to proselytize, comparing it to radical Islamism.’ Here, the ‘party leader’ refers to the community → select ‘reference to community’.*

Example 2: *an article in the Süddeutsche Zeitung contains the following sentence: ‘Gauck should just as clearly name the chances of immigration. Because Germany is less cosmopolitan than he seems to assume.’ Here, the author of the article refers to the actor Gauck → select ‘reference to President Joachim Gauck’.*

8.2 ACTOR REFERENCES: REFERENCE ACTOR OTHER [ACTREF_REF_ACTOR_TEXT]

For each actor reference, copy the passage in which the reference is made to the text box provided by marking it in Angrist and clicking on ‘Get selection’. If an actor refers to the same actor several times in the text, select the passage in which the reference becomes particularly clear. If you code an article in PDF format, enter the text manually.

Example: *an article in the Tages Anzeiger contains the following passage: ‘Even the media are not always aware of their responsibility: “They prefer to show exotic persons with long beards,” Hakimi says. This refers to, for example, the members of the Islamic Central Council of Switzerland (IZRS), mostly converts with Swiss roots’. → Here, select the passage ‘the members of the Islamic Central Council of Switzerland (IZRS), mostly converts with Swiss roots.’ and copy it to the text box provided for this purpose by clicking on ‘Get selection’.*

8.3 ACTOR REFERENCES: REFERENCE ORIGINATOR ACTOR

[ACTREF_REFORIG_ACTOR]

Code the actor/s who refer to the actor selected in the previous coding step (8.1. REFERENCE OBJECT_ACTOR).

Coding instruction:

From the displayed list, select the actor who refers to the actor chosen in the previous coding step (8.1. REFERENCE OBJECT ACTOR).

If several actors refer to the actor selected in the previous coding step (8.1. REFERENCE OBJECT ACTOR), code the individual references separately! Do not select more than one reference originator from the list.

For the **author** of an article, the following **special rule** applies: a reference to an actor made by the author is not given only by an actor being mentioned in the text. Even a direct or indirect quote, taken by itself, is not automatically understood as a reference. However, there may be explicit reactions to or comments on quotes or evaluations from actors that are coded as actor reference.

Caution: also unlisted actors (see coding step 6.2), who do not appear on the actor list of the currently coded article, may make a reference (i.e. the reference object may also be a non-identifiable potential discourse participant)!

Example 1: *an article contains the following sentence: ‘In his yesterday’s speech, the party leader sharply condemned the church for its attempts to proselytize, comparing it to radical Islamism.’ Here, the ‘party leader’ refers to the community → select ‘reference originator: party leader’.*

Example 2: *an article in the Süddeutsche Zeitung contains the following sentence: ‘Gauck should just as clearly name the chances of immigration. Because Germany is less cosmopolitan than he seems to assume.’¹² Here, the author of the article refers to the actor Gauck → select ‘reference originator: author’.*

8.4 ACTOR REFERENCES: GENUINE CONSTRUCTED RESPONSIVENESS ACTOR

[ACTREF_GENUINE_CONSTRUCTED_RESP_ACTOR]

Code whether the actor reference currently coded is created by the referring actor or the author of the article.

Genuine responsiveness towards an actor is given if the referring actor establishes the reference to an actor. This can be done either by direct speech (direct quote) or by indirect speech (indirect quote).

Constructed responsiveness towards an actor is given if not the referring actor establishes the reference to another actor. Instead, the reference between the actors is created **exclusively** by the author of the article. Constructed responsiveness is given only if both actors involved in an actor reference have **not** referred to each other in a recognisable way to the reader.

If it is not clear whether the reference was made by the actors themselves or by the author of the article, code ‘-99 Unclear’.

0 **Genuine** responsiveness

1 **Constructed** responsiveness

-99 **Unclear**

Note: not every reference by the author of an article necessarily is a form of constructed responsiveness. The author, as an independent actor themselves, may themselves refer to other actors. Such references are coded as genuine responsiveness.

Example: an article in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* contains the following section: ‘Federal Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble (CDU) demonstratively supported de Maizière. “I think de Maizière’s move is necessary. We have to check individually whether a Syrian refugee is actually persecuted”, the CDU politician said in the ARD program “Report from Berlin”’.

☐ Here, Wolfgang Schäuble himself makes a direct reference to a) another actor (de Maizière) and b) a different position (the initiative of de Maizière to restrict the family reunification of refugees) ☐ code 1: genuine responsiveness given.

8.5 ACTOR REFERENCES: VALENCE ACTOR [ACTREF_VALENCE_ACTOR]

Code whether the reference to an actor contains an **explicit evaluation**. Here, we want to identify whether the actor who is referred to is evaluated positively or negatively. Such an evaluation must be **explicitly** mentioned in the text and clearly recognisable, but it does not have to be particularly strong for positive or negative coding. The evaluation has to refer to the actor as a person, not to their positions or justifications. Evaluations of positions and actors often appear together. Here, only code the evaluation of the actor, not of their positions (where applicable).

Note 1: it is possible that actors are explicitly evaluated positively or negatively due to their positions. This must be clear from the context of the article. In such cases, code the evaluation of both the actor and the position (see coding step 9.4).

Note 2: if an actor is evaluated both positively and negatively in several references in the text (which are produced by the same actor in each case), then the dominant positive or negative overall impression is coded. Code ‘-99 Unclear’ only if there is no tendency towards a positive or negative evaluation and a clearly identifiable balance.

1 No evaluation

2 Positive

3 Negative

-99 Unclear

Example 1: ‘In the Saxon CDU base, resistance is forming in many places. Blame is on the Chancellor and her refugee policy, many criticize within the Saxon Union. Accordingly, for example, the resignation of Merkel from the party presidency is quite openly demanded in Freiberg.’

Here, the actor Angela Merkel is evaluated negatively due to her position in the refugee policy. → code 2: negative

Example 2: *‘When CSU chairman Alexander Dobrindt arrives around noon, the activists of the environmental organization Greenpeace are already waiting behind the barriers. “Stop animal factories,” they shout to Dobrindt, who will speak for the first time this Wednesday about the government’s agricultural policy.’*

Here, the position of the actor Alexander Dobrindt, but not Dobrindt himself, is evaluated negatively by the actor Greenpeace → code 0: No evaluation

8.6 ACTOR REFERENCES: RECOGNITION ACTOR [ACTREF_RECOGNITION_ACTOR]

Code whether the reference contains explicit communicative acts (including the description of gestures) that serve to express **recognition** and/or **respect** towards other actors and/or to **legitimize** them as participants in the debate. Code the dominant overall expression of the reference to the respective actor.

Recognizing, respecting, or legitimizing communicative acts can take various forms. Here are some examples:

- an actor is characterized as an individual or group with special needs
- an actor is granted the same rights and scopes of freedom as other members of society
- an actor is attributed a positive role or positive contribution to society

Note that this list of examples is not exhaustive and that recognizing, respecting, or legitimizing communicative acts may occur in forms other than those listed here.

Note 1: respect, recognition or legitimation do not necessarily mean acceptance or approval!

Note2: the explicit recognition of actors always goes along with a positive evaluation of the actor (see coding step 8.5.); conversely, not every positive evaluation of an actor is an explicit recognition.

Note 3: coding recognition and outrage at the same time is not possible, as these categories exclude each other.

Note 4: code conservatively, i.e. code positively (‘1 Yes, explicit recognition given’) only if you are sure that this is the case.

1 No, no explicit recognition given

2 Yes, explicit recognition given → copy expression of recognition to text box

Example: *an article in the Süddeutsche Zeitung contains the following direct quote: ‘Even though I really appreciate the colleague Seehofer, I generally do not agree with...’*

In this example, the actor Seehofer is explicitly respected. → code 1

8.7 ACTOR REFERENCES: RECOGNITION ACTOR OTHER

[ACTREF_RECOGNITION_TEXT]

If you have coded the previous variable with ‘Yes, explicit recognition given’, then transfer the utterance to the provided text box by marking the text in Angrist and clicking on ‘Get selection’. If you code an article in PDF format, enter the text manually.

Example: *an article in the Süddeutsche Zeitung contains the following direct quote: ‘Even though I really appreciate the colleague Seehofer, I generally do not agree with...’*

☐ Copy ‘Even though I really appreciate the colleague Seehofer’

8.8 ACTOR REFERENCES: OUTRAGE ACTOR (adapted from (Berry & Sobieraj, 2014)¹) [ACTREF_OUTRAGE_ACTOR]

Code whether the reference contains explicit communicative acts (including the description of gestures) that are recognizable to a generally educated reader as an attempt to provoke an **emotional response** from the audience, usually in the form of anger, fear, or moral righteousness. Outrage is often, but not always, accomplished through the use of categorical statements, exaggerations, and partial truths about opponents which may take the form of individuals, organizations, or entire communities of interest (e.g., progressives or conservatives) or circumstance (e.g., immigrants). Outrage sidesteps the messy nuances of complex political issues in favor of ad hominem attacks, overgeneralizations, mockery, and dire forecasts of impending doom.

Outrage is given if the currently coded reference to an actor makes use of at least one of the following rhetorical means:

- (1) insulting language,
- (2) name calling,
- (3) emotional display,
- (4) emotional language,
- (5) verbal fighting/sparring,
- (6) character assassination,
- (7) misrepresentative exaggeration,
- (8) mockery,
- (9) conflagration,
- (10) ideologically extremizing language,
- (11) 'slippery slope' arguments,
- (12) belittling,
- (13) obscene language.

A brief description of each of these forms of outrage can be found in Appendix 3. For coding, refer exclusively to the descriptions available there.

¹ Berry, J. M., & Sobieraj, S. (2014). *The outrage industry: Political opinion media and the new incivility*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.

Note 1: explicit outrage always goes along with a negative evaluation of the actor!

Note 2: coding recognition and outrage at the same time is not possible, as these categories exclude each other.

Note3: code conservatively, i.e. code positively (‘1 Yes, explicit outrage given’) only if you are sure that this is the case.

- 1 No, no explicit outrage given
- 2 Yes, explicit outrage given → copy expression of outrage to text box

Example 1: *an article in the Süddeutsche Zeitung contains the following passage: ‘People in Oberwil-Lieli are satisfied with Glarner; on the Internet, he is hailed as a hero, and he receives enthusiastic letters that praise him for his hard line on “suckers and parasites”—what he presents proudly to the German reporter.’*

In this passage, the communicative behavior of the Swiss Mayor Glarner is reported, which contains insults to asylum seekers → code 1

In this passage, the Swiss mayor Glarner refers to asylum seekers. Glarner’s communicative behavior is reported, containing (1) insulting language, (2) name calling and (13) obscene language concerning asylum seekers → code 1

Example 2: *an article in the Süddeutsche Zeitung contains the following passage: ‘You betrayed yourselves. What is so great about your life? I am whole; you are only a heap of broken glass.’*

This passage contains (4) emotional language and (10) ideologically extremizing language (‘What is so great about your life?’) and (1) insulting language (‘you are only a heap of broken glass’) → code 1

Example 3: *A comment on an article on süddeutsche.de contains the following passage: ‘This is all the same! It is totally absurd to respond to the outcry of these hysterical politicians, we should rather...’*

This passage contains (4) emotional language (‘all the same’) and (7) misrepresentative exaggeration (politicians are called ‘hysterical’) → code 1

8.9 ACTOR REFERENCES: OUTRAGE ACTOR OTHER [ACTREF_OUTRAGE_TEXT]

If you have coded the previous variable with ‘Yes, explicit outrage given’, then transfer the utterance to the provided text box by marking the text in Angrist and clicking on ‘Get selection’. If you code an article in PDF format, enter the text manually.

Example 1: *an article in the Süddeutsche Zeitung contains the following passage: ‘People in Oberwil-Lieli are satisfied with Glarner; on the Internet, he is hailed as a hero, and he receives enthusiastic letters that praise him for his hard line on “suckers and parasites”—what he presents proudly to the German reporter.’*

→ Copy ‚sucker’ and ‚parasite’

Appendix 3: forms of outrage (adapted from Berry & Sobieraj, 2014) (coding steps 8.8 & 9.8)

1. *Insulting language*

This variable is intended to measure whether the author or speaker uses insulting words in reference to a person, group of people (e.g., immigrants, journalists, Democrats), branch of the government, political party, or other organization or their behaviors, planned behaviors, policies, or views. This variable should specifically capture insulting words (stupid, pompous, idiot), not all insults more generally speaking. For example, describing someone as “a child” is insulting, but does not use insulting words so should not be counted as insulting language. For example, “asinine” in reference to a person or group’s behavior is “insulting language,” but if the person or group is called “asinine,” reserve this for the “name calling” variable.

Examples:

- “He needs to shut up.”
- “The whole idea was asinine.”
- “The policy was stupid, plain and simple.”

2. *Name calling*

This variable is intended to measure whether the author or speaker engages in name calling in reference to a person, group of people (e.g., immigrants, journalists, Democrats), branch of the government, political party or other organization. Affectionate, light-hearted teasing should be weeded out. Instead, look for name-calling that is used to make the subject look foolish/inept, hypocritical, deceitful, or dangerous.

Examples:

- “He’s asinine.”
- “You are a lunatic.”

3. *Emotional display*

This variable is unlikely to appear in printed text (e.g., blog posts, webpages), but would most likely be communicated through “shouting” via the deliberate use of all caps, multiple exclamation points, enlarged text, etc. Emotional display is about the FORM of expression, see Emotional language for emotional content, although the two will often present concurrently and each should be noted.

Example:

- Use of all capital letters in a written document (for dramatic emphasis)

4. *Emotional language*

This variable is intended to measure whether the author or speaker engages in verbal or written expressions of emotion in reference to a person, group of people (e.g., immigrants, journalists, Democrats), branch of the government, political party or other organization. Emotion words related to anger, fear, and sadness are the key indicators. Emotional language is about the literal content of what is said/written, rather than how it is communicated. Emotional display, on the other hand, is about the way something is said/written of expression.

Examples:

- “I’m furious!”
- “I’m infuriated!”
- “This is an outrage!”
- “This makes me sick!”

5. ***Verbal fighting/sparring***

This variable is intended to capture aggressive jousting between speakers. In interviews it may take the form of dismissive interruptions or rude exchanges between the interviewer and the interviewed characterized by a lack of civility.

Examples:

- Dismissive interruptions
- Talking over someone in an aggressive manner
- Saying things like “give me a break” or “come on” while someone else is speaking

6. ***Character assassination***

These are ad hominem attacks. This variable is intended to measure whether the author attempts to damage the reputation of a person, group of people (e.g., immigrants, journalists, Democrats), branch of the government, political party, or other organization by attacking their character. In politics, questioning the veracity of a statement is common, and should not be confused with character assassination, which is more extreme. Saying someone was not honest in a reply to a journalist is not character assassination, but saying that someone is a liar who cannot be trusted is character assassination.

Examples:

- “He is corrupt.”
- “McCain is a pure lying bastard! If he had a red tie on, he'd look you straight in the eye and insist it was blue.”

7. ***Misrepresentative exaggeration***

This variable is intended to measure whether the author or speaker engages in very dramatic negative exaggeration in reference to the behaviors, planned behaviors, policies, or views of a person, group of people (e.g., immigrants, journalists, Democrats), branch of the government, political party, or other organization, such that it significantly misrepresents or obscures the truth.

Examples:

- “Obama is ‘Left of Lenin’.”
- “Democrats have designs on planting the seeds of socialism in the US.”
- “Obama backs a freedom of choice act to abolish every restriction on abortion in every state.”

8. ***Mockery***

This variable is intended to measure whether the author or speaker makes fun of the behaviors, planned behaviors, policies, or views of a person, group of people (e.g., immigrants, journalists, Democrats), branch of the government, political party or other organization to make the subject look bad or to rally others in criticism of the subject. Affectionate, light-hearted teasing should be weeded out. Instead, look for humor that is

used to make the subject look foolish/inept, hypocritical, deceitful, or dangerous. It might also come in the form of a physical impersonation intended to make others laugh at the expense of the subject.

Examples:

- “Funny idea: that a politician is declared crazy when he talks about the state of the schools, the New Year's Eve in Cologne, or the traffic jam. The traffic jam, the great, misunderstood niche topic of our time that nobody else dares to talk about. Except Christian Lindner. Which is why he is tired. Very attractively tired.”
- “When Charlie Gibson asked about her foreign policy credentials, Sarah Palin said-- with a straight face--she lives near Russia. Yesterday, the McCain campaign said-- with a straight face--that by sitting next to foreigners for a few minutes while paparazzi took pictures, Palin was "boosting her foreign policy credentials" and giving herself "experience with foreign leaders...I think this new proximity approach to building a resume is brilliant! We should all do it; it saves so much time and effort. Why go to school and struggle with learning stuff and then have to spend years working your way up a career when you can simply plop yourself down next to something and get the same results? I could become a pediatric surgeon by having a latte in the Children's Hospital coffee shop. I could watch the Space Shuttle take off from that viewing spot across the water and become an astronaut.” (ridiculous/inept person)
- “If the subject matter weren't so serious and dire, this would be a comedy. This is a bunch of Senator Blowhards and Foghorns all giving their opening statements. We're looking at a Bunch of Colonel Sanders telling the chickens that they shouldn't have come into the coop. I mean these are the guys that screwed this up in many cases.” (ridiculous/hypocritical group)
- “Our illustrious leader reads from his teleprompter to tell us how our economy reached this point. It has nothing to do with policy over the last 7 years. It is because of "investors from abroad." He's so sweet. Just read or listen and make your own assumptions about these "justifications." Isn't our leader so sweet? I just want to pinch him on the cheeks and ask, "you do have Scotch nearby?" (note: also belittling)

9. **Conflagration**

This variable is intended to capture attempts made to escalate non-scandals into scandals. In this variable, record speech that overstates or dramatizes the importance or implications of minor gaffes, oversights, or improprieties. By non-scandal we refer to an episode, event, or trend that a learned, dispassionate observer would not consider significant or scandalous.

Examples:

- The relationship between Ayers and Obama, which was discussed during the 2008 election campaign. Ayers is a pedagogue and the founder of a left-wing radical organization. Later, it came out that they had no close relationship with each other, but knew each other only fleetingly because they lived in the same neighbourhood.
- In 2015, Syrian refugee Anas Modamani took a selfie with German Chancellor Angela Merkel. Shortly thereafter, several photomontages are published showing Modamani as a terrorist. In the attacks in Brussels or in Berlin, these images were

published on social networks again and again, although the man cannot be associated with any of these attacks.

10. ***Ideologically extremizing language***

This variable is intended to capture extremist language used to critically describe a person, group of people (e.g., immigrants, journalists, Democrats), branch of the government, political party or other organization or their behaviors, planned behaviors, policies, or views. Usually the descriptive language will be used as an implicit slur rather than as a simple description.

Examples:

- Left-wing
- Right-wing
- Far right
- Far left
- Radical
- Extreme
- Reactionary

11. ***‚Slippery slope‘ arguments***

This variable is intended to capture fatalistic arguments, which suggest that some behavior, policy, or decision is a small step that will inevitably pave the way for much more extreme behaviors, policies, or decisions. Slippery slope arguments make dire forecasts about the future. When in doubt, do not use this code. True slippery slope arguments should be easy to identify.

Example:

- “...the far Left couldn't care less about gay "marriage." They want to see the abolition of marriage as an institution and radical social change to redefine the human experience itself. This is precisely what we see in Scandinavian countries where this nonsense has played out to its logical extension: The rates of cohabitation are skyrocketing, and the institution of marriage is rapidly dying off. Girls and boys grow up in a culture and see no picture of marriage to emulate or aspire to. There is really no end to the aberrant forms of human sexuality that will come to the courthouse also demanding "marriage." And when marriage can mean anything, marriage means nothing.”

12. ***Belittling***

This variable is intended to measure whether the author or speaker demeans a person, group of people (e.g., immigrants, journalists, Democrats), branch of the government, political party or other organization (or their behaviors, planned behaviors, policies, or views). Belittling generally attempts to deflate or undercut a person's status. For example, the speaker/author may suggest that an adult is childlike/immature, suggest someone fairly accomplished is of low class status, or imply that a man is in some way feminine. This may be done in the context of mockery or exaggeration.

Example:

- Dave Letterman's joke, "So John McCain calls up and says I'm not going to be there kids, because everything is going to hell, but the funny thing is that no one told his vice presidential candidate, Sarah Palin, and honest to God, right now she's still circling the theater in a white minivan. She's gonna pick him up later..."

13. *Obscene language*

This variable is intended to measure whether the author or speaker uses obscene language in reference to a person, group of people (e.g., immigrants, journalists, Democrats), branch of the government, political party or other organization (or their behaviors, planned behaviors, policies, or views). For the purposes of this study, obscenities include:

- **F-word derivatives:** Words based on, or incorporating, the F-word. Examples include fucker and motherfucker.
- **Scatological terms:** Words that have to do with feces, urine and defecation. Examples include "shit," "bullshit," "shithead," and piss.
- **Anatomical terms:** Words referring to parts of the human anatomy, mostly the private parts, and are considered crude. Examples include "ass," "asshole," "dick," "dickhead," and "tits."
- **Mild obscenities:** Words used in everyday language, but that may be offensive to some. Examples include "damn," "hell," as well as milder forms of anatomical terms like "boobs."
- **Derogatory terms:** Words or expressions that are used to denigrate and insult one's racial or ethnic background, gender or sexual orientation: Examples include the N-word, whore/ho/slut, various anti-Semitic terms, and anti-homosexual terms like faggot.