

Generic frames (Climate & Environment Coverage)

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KEYWORDS

framing, generic frames, climate change-related coverage, environmental communication

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Generic frames represent typical layers of contextualization in stories and are broadly applicable to a range of different news topics (i.e., across topics). Examples of generic frames are the human interest or responsibility frames (e.g., Dirikx & Gelders, 2010; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000).

FIELD OF APPLICATION/THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Generic frames are used in different traditions of framing: (a) sociological tradition, such as frames in external news or images (e.g., Entman, 1993; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989), (b) psychological tradition, such as frames in people's minds (e.g., Tversky & Kahneman, 1981), and (3) communication science tradition, such as frame production (communicators or journalists develop frames), frame setting or frame building (journalists adopt frames from communicators) (e.g., Matthes, 2014; see Borah, 2011 for a systematic examination of framing research).

REFERENCES/COMBINATION WITH OTHER**METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION**

Research has conducted experimental studies to investigate how generic frames (e.g., conflict, morality or economics) affect selective exposure to climate change news (e.g., Feldman & Hart, 2018) or what impact gain and loss frames have on the perception of the threat posed by the consequences of climate change (Bilandzic et al.,

2017).

EXAMPLE STUDIES

Bilandzic et al. (2017); Dirikx & Gelders (2010); Feldman & Hart (2018)

INFORMATION ON DIRIKX & GELDERS, 2010

Authors: Astrid Dirikx & Dave Gelders

Research question: This study examines the way Dutch and French newspapers frame climate change during the annual United Nations Conferences of the Parties (COPs)

Object of analysis: The study analyzed a total of 257 news articles in Dutch and French quality newspapers: De Volkskrant (N = 52) and NRC Handelsblad (N = 61) for the Netherlands and Le Monde (N = 77) and Le Figaro (N = 67) for France.

Time frame of analysis: The analysis covers the annual meetings of the United Nations Conferences of the Parties (COPs) from 2001 until 2007

INFO ABOUT VARIABLES**Variables:***Frames*

- Attribution of responsibility: This frame presents an issue or problem in such a way that the responsibility or blame for the cause or the solution is placed on political authorities, individuals or groups
- Conflict frame: This frame emphasizes conflicts between parties/individuals and stresses the points of divergence between the opponents
- (Economic) consequences frame: This frame emphasizes the manner in which an issue will (economically) affect people
- Human interest frame: This frame presents an issue from a more emotional point of view; it personalizes a problem



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- **Morality frame:** This frame presents situations from a religious/moral angle

Level of analysis: Each of the four newspapers was first screened entirely for articles mentioning “climate change,” “global warming” or “greenhouse effect” in their title or lead. In an additional screening articles not matching these criteria but whose core content was related to climate change were selected. Different article types were taken into account: columns, interviews, commentaries and “classic” news articles. The unit of analysis was the whole article.

Variables and values:

The authors used a standard set of content analytic indicators to measure the prevalence of the five generic frames developed by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000). They developed a series of 20 questions that can be answered with “don’t agree”, “largely agree” and “completely agree”. Each question was meant to measure one of five news media frames.

Attribution of responsibility

- Does the story suggest that some level of government has the ability to alleviate the problem?
- Does the story suggest that some level of the government is responsible for the issue/problem?
- Does the story suggest solution(s) to the problem/issue?
- Does the story suggest that an individual (or group of people in society) is responsible for the issue-problem?
- Does the story suggest the problem requires urgent action?

Human interest frame

- Does the story provide a human example or “human face” on the issue?
- Does the story employ adjectives or personal vignettes that generate feelings of outrage, empathy-caring, sympathy, or compassion?
- Does the story emphasize how individuals and groups are affected by the issue/problem?
- Does the story go into the private or personal lives of the actors?
- Does the story contain visual information that might generate feelings of outrage, empathy-caring, sympathy, or compassion?

Conflict frame

- Does the story reflect disagreement between parties/individuals/groups/countries?
- Does one party/individual/group/country re-proach another?
- Does the story refer to two sides or to more than two sides of the problem or issue?
- Does the story refer to winners and losers?

Morality frame

- Does the story contain any moral message?
- Does the story make reference to morality, God, and other religious tenets?
- Does the story offer specific social prescriptions about how to behave?

(Economic) consequences frame

- Is there a mention of financial losses or gains now or in the future?
- Is there a mention of the costs/degree of expense involved?
- Is there a reference to economic consequences of pursuing or not pursuing a course of action?

Reliability: -

Codebook: Table 1 in Dirikx & Gelders (2010)

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