

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/241880311>

Strategies to take subjectivity out of framing analysis

Article in *Work and Stress* · January 2010

CITATIONS

141

READS

3,997

1 author:



Baldwin Van Gorp

KU Leuven

97 PUBLICATIONS 1,890 CITATIONS

[SEE PROFILE](#)

Some of the authors of this publication are also working on these related projects:



Euro Crisis in the News [View project](#)



Visualizing Online Networks of Turkish Diaspora in Three European Countries: Testing the Role of Network Structure and Dynamics in Social Capital Building and integration, Using Evidence from the Gezi Park Protests in Turkey [View project](#)

To cite this paper: Van Gorp, B. (2010). Strategies to take subjectivity out of framing analysis. In: D'Angelo P., Kuypers J. (Eds.), *Doing news framing analysis: Empirical and theoretical perspectives*. New York: Routledge, 84-109.

Strategies to Take Subjectivity out of Framing Analysis

Baldwin Van Gorp

My interest in the framing concept is rooted in my background as a journalist. When I returned to academic research and began a Ph.D. project on my former professional occupation, Watson (1998) directed me to the work of Entman (1991, 1993), which highlighted the functionality of frames in the news, namely, “to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communication text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation” (1993, p. 52). Over time, I realized what I had been dealing with as a journalist: looking for frames that could turn events into news stories by suggesting an explanation for what happened in the surrounding world.

The line of thought that is the basis of my conceptualization of framing was developed in these key works: James (1890/1950, pp. 283-324), Schutz (1945/1964), Bateson (1955/1972), Goffman (1975), Tuchman (1978), Gamson and Modigliani (1989), and Entman (1991, 1993). The decisive *Aha-Erlebnis* came when I tried to merge insights of narrative analysis with the constructionist approach to framing as formulated by Gamson and colleagues (Gamson, 1992; Gamson, Croteau, Hoynes, & Sasson, 1992; Gamson & Lasch, 1983; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). Constructionism deals with the process in which individuals and groups actively create social reality from different information sources (Neuman, Just, & Crigler, 1992; Wicks, 2005). Journalists are in the middle of this dynamic process of meaning construction in that they present additional layers of interpretation of issues and events in the form of a news story. They cannot tell stories effectively without

preconceived notions about how to order story elements and about what meanings they could or should impose upon those story elements.

Another conceptualization of framing that informs my work comes from Swidler's (1986) conceptualization of 'culture' as a 'tool kit' of symbols from which people may select some to construct strategies and to solve problems. By situating frames at the cultural level, they also are conceptualized as a 'tool kit' from which journalists draw upon to do their job, much as individuals use news stories as a 'tool kit' to understand their social and political environments (cf. D'Angelo, 2002, p. 877). Thus, one way of approaching news framing *analysis*—the approach taken in my work—is to understand journalistic practice by identifying the cultural notions that working journalists apply in order to frame the behaviors and motivations of news sources and to explain the origins of an issue, both of which suggest to the audience how an event can be interpreted.

Various scholars have argued that journalists employ common understandings to cover news events, such as myths and archetypes (e.g., Bird & Dardenne, 1997; Coman, 2005; Lule, 2001), narratives (e.g., Bennett & Edelman, 1985; Roeh, 1989), and values (e.g., Gans, 1979). These authors did not yet situate their thoughts within the framing tradition, but you cannot but conclude that, for instance, the "situation-defining symbolic forms" (Bennett & Edelman, 1985, p. 156), the "macroanalytic features of narrative" (Gurevitch & Kavoori, 1994, p. 14), and "platforms, frameworks, and rules" (Manoff & Schudson, 1986, p. 5) are in fact news frames.

As a result, my research focuses on news frames that express culturally shared notions with symbolic significance, such as stereotypes, values, archetypes, myths, and narratives. These phenomena are interwoven with each other, but they refer to different aspects of a news story. Myths are related to narratives, but whereas a myth deals with "the *deep truth* of human experience" (Silverblatt, Ferry, & Finan, 1999, p. 144, italics in original), a narrative

stands for a script structure with a development in different stages, from problem to resolution. Values are reproduced in myths and embodied by archetypes. Archetypes are motifs and characters that help to structure stories, and stereotypes refer to the simplified characteristics of a group of actors.

My contribution to this book explicitly elaborates on a theoretical essay in which I expound upon a constructionist view of framing (see Van Gorp, 2007)—a view that weaves together these strands of literature and clarifies what culturally embedded frames are. Locating frames on this level would seem to be an inherently subjective enterprise, owing to their latent presence in news texts. However, in this chapter, I wish to present some methodological guidelines for doing framing analysis that will help to take the subjectivity out of finding these sorts of frames in news discourses. I argue for an approach that combines, on the one hand, inductive framing analysis, in which a repertoire of frame packages is reconstructed, and, on the other hand, techniques for validating the reliability of the results in a deductively executed content analysis.

Culturally Embedded Frames

I'll first illustrate culturally embedded frames by describing an ongoing study on poverty in the news (see, e.g., Van Gorp, Blow, & Van de Velde, 2005). The news frames we identified are all rooted in common cultural themes, such as the archetypes of villain, victim, and tragic hero, the stereotype of the vagabond, and the conviction that each individual has a pre-given destiny. In this study, my colleagues and I hold that journalists express these frames in news discourse, and that the meaning of the issue changes fundamentally according to the chosen frame.

Specifically, a number of archetypes may function as a frame. If the archetype of the villain is used, poverty is the result of certain individuals who make use of, or abuse, the social welfare system to which they do not financially contribute. The poor lack the will to

work and that is why they live in poor conditions. A more positive usage of this frame results in a stereotypical portrayal of the jolly vagabond who feels very strongly about complete freedom and opts for voluntary poverty. Next, poor people can be portrayed as victims of a demanding socio-economical system. Some succeed in beating the system and become heroes when they combat poverty. Other poor people do not succeed, because they try to change what is unalterable and fight in vain a pitiless and demanding society. Persons who are familiar with Cervantes' novel may recognize in these idealistic poor Don Quixote, who frequently appears in the media in many guises. Seen from this perspective, poor people dispose of the will to escape poverty, but they fail because they do not benefit from equal opportunities. The popular wisdom that 'fate will catch up with you' is a second type of frame that leads to an interpretation of poverty as the result of misfortune and repeated setbacks, such as a bankruptcy, an accident, or sickness. To lead a poor existence is the result of an inescapable destiny that can turn anyone into poverty.

The examples demonstrate that journalists have at their disposal a repertoire of frames that can be useful to construct a news story—in this case, a story about poverty. Organizational factors, external conditions, and journalistic sources may influence the selection of a frame. As such, the sequential use of frames may follow a framing cycle, with an emergence phase, a conflict phase, and a resolution phase (Miller & Riechert, 2001). For instance, in our analysis we found that in the news homeless people are less blamed for poverty during the cold December month than in summer time when they may bother tourists (Van Gorp, Blow, & Van de Velde, 2005). Other contextual factors may influence the selection of a frame. Further, in a framing analysis of news on asylum-seekers I noted that journalists particularly tend to adopt the frames from their sources with regard to unfamiliar and unexpected topics (Van Gorp, 2005). However, soon after the first coverage, news media introduced their own frames and apparently neglected the frame as offered by their sources.

Thus, the process of frame-building, in which media frames are formed and change over time (Scheufele, 1999), can be understood as a process in which journalists frame events and issues not only by applying news values, but also by being sensitive to cultural themes.

Values, narratives, and archetypes are couched in almost any form of communication, both popular and informative, “because they embody the fears, hopes, and prejudices of the cultures in which their audiences live” (Bennett & Edelman, 1985, pp. 157-158). Journalists already make themselves familiar with these culturally shared elements in the process of socialization that precedes their journalistic training and experience. Therefore, they are often not aware of adopting, using, and reproducing them in the news.

Culturally embedded frames are appealing for journalists because they are ready for use. On the basis of their narrative ingredients it is possible to assign roles to the principal actors of an issue (e.g., good-bad, advocate-opponent), specify what the problem is and who is responsible, and so forth, all of which contributes to the dramatization and the emotional appeal of the news (Van Os, Van Gorp, & Wester, 2008). As a result, frames sometimes ‘over-problematize’ an event, which adds to the endurance of an issue. On the other hand, the selection of a particular frame can contribute to the perceived solution of a problem, in the sense that the media attention for an issue decreases. I noted such a resolution phase in the Belgian newspaper coverage of asylum when there was a shift in frames from the intruder frame to the victim frame, whereas the objective conditions, reflected in the number of asylum applications, did not follow that trend (Van Gorp, 2005).

There are two reasons why I give preference to these types of frames over issue-specific frames and generic frames, such as the omnipresent conflict frame. First, they possess an outspoken defining capacity. By placing new events in these familiar molds constructive insights can be introduced into social life. Second, frames that resonate with cultural themes have a natural advantage above other types of frames (Gamson & Modigliani,

1989, p. 5). Because such frames make an appeal to ideas the receiver is already familiar with, their use appears to be natural to those who are member of a particular culture or society. Such 'cultural resonance' makes the association between a frame and the issue seem transparent and obvious (Benford & Snow, 2000; Schudson, 1989). In this vein, Hertog and McLeod (2001, p. 141) invoked a cultural explanation of the power of news frames by emphasizing their symbolic meaning, their potential to evoke other familiar stories, and their widespread recognition. In sum, culturally embedded frames form universally understood codes that implicitly influence the receiver's message interpretation, which lends meaning, coherence, and ready explanations for complex issues.

Because the organizational routines of journalistic practice encourage the use of culturally embedded frames to tell stories about many topics and issues, their capacity to define issues and events remains largely unnoticed both within news culture and, to an extent, within the scholarly study of news framing (Gamson et al., 1992). This causes a problem for the frame analyst, precisely because the person who does a frame analysis belongs most often to the same culture as in which the news is produced. Conceivably, the most obvious frames are overlooked. Therefore, in classroom situations, I advise students to start their framing analyses by looking at some newspaper articles or TV news items about the issue covered years ago. As weird and unusual the use of these former frames may look today, so normal and obvious they were at that time. The same is true for the frames the news media employ today.

Between Constructionism and Constructivism

The approach to frames as cultural phenomena does not imply that all cultural concepts are frames by definition (cf. Fisher, 1997). They only become frames when someone applies them for their defining capacity. Accordingly, each culture or subculture has a limited set of commonly used frames that are institutionalized in various ways and prized and protected for

their ability to explain important issues (Entman, 1993, p. 53; cf. Goffman, 1981, p. 63). In Western societies, for instance, the idea that each person must have will power and is able to exercise control over the body has become a norm that governs our social behavior and forms the basis of parenting, education, and jurisdiction (cf. Lakoff, 1995). Thus, frame-building in the media, including (and perhaps, especially) in the news media, is at its core a process in which cultural values and norms are reproduced.

Not only do journalists draw upon the stock of frames that culture provides to them, so do their sources and audiences. Although the cultural repertoire is formed and reformed in the interaction between groups of people, some parts of it may be rarely employed or ignored (cf. Swidler, 1986). In that respect one could state that some alternative frames already exist and wait to be used or reused (cf. Hartley, 1982, p. 28).

The idea of a cultural repertoire of frames seems to situate frames outside the individual. In line with their constructionist approach to framing, Gamson and Modigliani (1989) argued that this cultural level indeed follows a logic of its own, which runs parallel to the cognitive level of individual meaning construction. They conclude that the social construction of meaning resides in the interaction of the cultural system and the individual system, but also that the first can be examined in its own right, regardless of its causal effect on individual opinion formation. However, Pan and Kosicki (1993, p. 58), who adhere to the constructivist approach, do not assume that the presence of frames in the news can be analyzed independent of the interpreting individual. This apparent ontological contradistinction is rooted in the debate between structuralism and symbolic interactionism that followed from Goffman's *Frame analysis* (Goffman, 1975; see, e.g., Denzin & Keller, 1981; Hazelrigg, 1992). As seen from the first perspective, news texts are complex systems of meaningful elements, whereas in the second perspective this meaning structure only reveals itself in the interaction between the text and its reader.

To return to the poverty example, a TV report about a homeless person who was sleeping on a bench in a public park with a bottle of liquor in his hand led to a discussion during the analysis in which we tried to relate the TV reports to the question who is to blame for poverty (Van Gorp, Blow, & Van de Velde, 2005). One interpretation started from the particular individual and his apparent alcohol addiction, which may be the cause of the poor conditions. Also, the degradation and dangerous nature of public spaces may be evoked by the image. My colleagues, however, exercised restraint in blaming a homeless man for his poverty. For them, structural circumstances are ultimately the cause for poverty. From a constructionist approach, however, there is some inherent structure in the portrayal: the homeless man, the bottle, and the park tell the story of someone who is not willing to work. From a constructivist perspective there is both a victim and a villain who are sleeping on that bench. It depends on the interaction between the receiver's prior knowledge and the TV report whether the victim frame or the villain frame is used to put a meaning on the report.

In earlier work I suggest a middle position (Van Gorp, 2007). On the one hand, frames are part of a culture and not purely individual, and, on the other hand, individuals are needed as an agent to make a connection between a text and the cultural stock of frames. Thus, the cultural stock of frames is not above people but among them, because culture originates through communication and it is articulated in the mass media and in discourse. The theoretical decision to opt for a somewhat external positioning beyond the individual rests on the incapacity of the individual to change or create myths, stereotypes, values, and so forth. For the most part, the life spans of cultural motifs exceed the life expectancy of the individual. Furthermore, the extra-individual conception of culture gives more power to culture than when it is internalized (Kubal, 1998; Swidler, 1995). However, individuals can mediate the persuasive power of frames by *using* them: by articulating cultural themes in socially situated conversations individuals can indeed re-configure these themes. Talking with frames (not

about them per se) integrates these frames with personal experiences and associations, not all of which are consistent with the external manifestations of the cultural theme (cf. Edy & Meirick, 2007). Thus, the social and cultural claim made by the constructionist approach held here does not completely rule out a psychological mechanism within framing. Quite the reverse, it acknowledges that the individual cognitive level and the social cultural level are interdependent and mutually responsive.

Content Analysis in Framing Analysis

A concern about the reliability and validity in framing research on the basis of content analysis is regularly expressed in the literature (e.g., Matthes & Kohring, 2008; Tankard, 2001). This concern is to a large extent caused by the difficulty to demonstrate the relationship between the abstract frame and the pattern of elements within a news text that are able to evoke the core frame on the side of the receiver. In fact, frames do not need to be explicitly mentioned in the news to generate an effect (Hertog & McLeod, 2001).

From the position that there is an underlying meaning structure, which can be observed independently from the interpreting subject, it is possible to turn to content analysis to reveal this hidden structure. If this structuralistic perspective is rejected, you cannot but turn to the receivers and regard each personal interpretation as an additional 'insert' into the original text. In that case, you also need to scrap the ambition to reveal what journalists say between the lines on the basis of a content analysis.

The very first attempt I ever did to do a framing analysis was labeled as being too 'impressionistic'. Therefore, much of my further effort was devoted to meet the standards of validity and reliability that are traditionally expected from a content analysis. Although I tried to do this by systematically taking into account all techniques to assure that the results are sufficiently reliable, I found out that some level of subjectivity is unavoidable. After all, the linkage between the explicit elements of the news text and the central framing idea, which

is part of a larger cultural level, requires some interpretation by the person who is doing the analysis. The researchers who are doing a frame analysis are also individuals for whom it is difficult to withdraw themselves from their own cognitive knowledge. Taking this into account, the aim of the chapter is to present a number of methodological considerations and a practical guide that can be helpful to systematically reconstruct the frames that are applied in the news. Techniques for doing content analysis can help to limit the subjective involvement of the person who is doing the framing analysis and improve the reliability and validity of the results.

The Reconstruction of Frame Packages

In framing research a deductive strategy is regularly used, namely, a predefined and limited set of frames is invoked and the empirical aim of the study is to decide to what extent these frames are applied in the news, in campaigns, in TV series, on websites, in political communication, and so forth, and which effects they produce (for an overview of approaches see Matthes & Kohring, 2008). But where do those frames come from? On what level and by which techniques are they to be observed? These are questions that are frequently left open in deductive analyses. They can be satisfactorily answered via an inductive framing analysis in which the spectrum of conceivable frames that are relevant for the topic under scrutiny is identified.

Gamson and colleagues (Gamson & Lasch, 1983; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989) coined the notion of 'media package', but as it suggests that the package is a product of media routines, and not of a broader culture or society, I prefer the term 'frame package' (Van Gorp, 2007). Each reconstructed frame is presented by a frame package, that is, an integrated structure of framing devices and a logical chain of reasoning devices that demonstrates how the frame functions to represent a certain issue. The manifest elements in a text that function as demonstrable indicators of the frame are the framing devices. Metaphors, historical

examples from which lessons are drawn, catchphrases, depictions, and visual images are five framing devices Gamson and Modigliani (1989) referred to. Other devices that can be taken into account are themes and subthemes, types of actors, actions and settings, lines of reasoning and causal connections, contrasts, lexical choices, sources, quantifications and statistics, charts and graphs, appeals (emotional, logical, and ethical), all of which contribute to the narrative and rhetorical structure of a text (see Kitzinger, 2007; Pan & Kosicki, 1993; Tankard, 2001). The number of words and pictures, the lay-out of a text, the placement of a news article on a page, and the editing of an audio-visual production, are not considered as being framing devices but are, rather, formatting devices. These, too, are important, as they provide cues about how readers and viewers of news perceive the salience and importance of the topic being framed.

The reasoning devices refer to the defining functions of frames, as identified by Entman (1993), and they form a route of causal reasoning which may be evoked when an issue is associated with a particular frame. The most important difference between framing devices and reasoning devices is that the reasoning devices do not need to be explicitly included in a mediated message. During the interpretation of the message, when a mental connection is made between the text, the frame, and the individual schema, the reader may come-up with causal inferences that are in line with the reasoning devices.

A core function of framing is to define issues—some as being problematic, and others as not problematic. To make this point clear, Edelman (1988) refers to the social issues of racism and sexism that remained unproblematic for a long period of time, until the application of certain frames altered the situation. Other crucial defining functions of framing are to indicate what the cause of the problem is, what has to be done, why and who is responsible for causes, consequences, and solutions, and to convey moral judgments (Entman,

1993). A frame may be more suitable to indicate the origins of an issue, others the consequences, but they all have the ability to promote a specific interpretation.

The example of poverty can further exemplify the importance of these reasoning devices. For this topic, the most important reasoning device regards who is to blame for poverty. This can be an abstraction, such as faith or structural and societal forces, or a human agent, in extremity the poor people themselves. Most often, this causal reasoning is not explicitly touched upon in the news. However, the incorporation of explicit framing devices in the news may implicitly promote a certain causal reasoning. For instance, Iyengar (1991) demonstrated that viewers are inclined to blame the victim when poverty is portrayed in an episodic news format, without a thematic elaboration of the issue. They hold the portrayed poor responsible for their poverty-stricken position.

In a framing analysis of the American youth series *The O.C.* we found the value of self-control as an important frame in the portrayal of alcohol consumption (Van den Bulck, Simons, & Van Gorp, 2008). The idea expressed through the frame sounds that a person needs always to be able to exercise control over the body, and therefore it is a matter of will-power to stand the temptation of alcohol. The same holds true for the homeless man sleeping on a bench in the park with a bottle of French brandy in his hand.

In my conceptualization, the heart of a framing analysis is to identify the framing and reasoning devices and to relate them to a condensing symbol, which is part of a shared culture. The frame molds the frame package to an internally consistent whole. The intention of an inductive framing analysis is to reconstruct the frames that are useful to define a certain topic. A systematic analysis of the framing and reasoning devices that relate to a specific frame makes it possible to instruct independent coders to identify the presence of the frame in a subsequent deductive phase, thus limiting, or even eliminating, subjectivity from the

framing analysis. Procedures that can be useful in the reconstruction of frame packages and in their verification are explained in the following paragraphs.

Inductive Phase

The construction of a frame matrix

The end product of the inductive phase is a *frame matrix* (Gamson & Lasch, 1983; for examples see Pan, Lee, Man Chan, & So, 1999; Van den Bulck, Simons, & Van Gorp, 2008; Van Gorp, 2005; Van Os, Van Gorp, & Wester, 2008). Each row in the matrix represents a frame package and each column an enumeration of framing and reasoning devices by which the frame manifests itself. I defined the moral basis of the victim frame as the duty to help people in affliction, whereas compassion forms the emotional basis (Van Gorp, 2005). With regard to the issue of undocumented immigration the frame matrix can be completed with the type and role of the illegal immigrant who frequently falls into the hands of human traffickers and who is in need of help. The problem definition is oriented towards the question how to receive these anxious refugees who are forced to leave their country. The main problem source is the gap between rich and poor countries. The countries that live in comfort shoulder the responsibility to develop a flexible, cautiously, and effectively applied migration policy.

During a simultaneous process of collecting, coding, and analyzing of texts the frame packages gradually take shape. I use the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967/1971) as the central methodological principle. The repeated examination of the source material offers the opportunity to support and to document the preliminary findings. The inductive coding takes place during three coding procedures: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (cf. Strauss & Corbin, 1990). These steps are not necessarily sequential, but rather are iterative. For instance, the use of a certain frame can be dominant and the constituent elements obvious, thus allowing the frame matrix to be filled in an early stage of

the analysis. Other frames may be nascent or may have escaped notice during the first steps of the analysis. I have found that it is regularly necessary to go back to the source material already dealt with, reexamine it, and to do some additional observations in order to gain further insight in the newly identified frame.

Because the purpose is to reconstruct the underlying culturally embedded frames in a text, the question is raised as to whether the researcher should be a member of a cultural group. All the examples in this chapter stem from my West-European cultural background and reflect the usefulness of a level of familiarity with this cultural heritage. Still, it is important to maintain some distance from the personal thinking patterns in order to grasp the striking and natural characteristics of a (sub)culture. Ideally, therefore, members that belong to a cultural group and outsiders to that group should work together to do the job. For instance, I can benefit as a Belgian citizen working at a university in the Netherlands to discuss Dutch media messages with the students by bringing in my perspective of a relative outsider.

Procedures of analysis

Step 1: Collect source material. Because frames are part of a culture they enjoy wider circulation than simply being in news stories. Certain frames that circulate in public debate may not be picked-up by the news media, whereas other frames are typically applied by the media or by a specific frame advocate. Therefore, do not limit this phase of the analysis to the news media. Frames are used in different places, in different circumstances, and in different periods of time. Some frames are applied only by advocates, others only by their opponents. It is also possible that the one time a frame is used to argue in favor of an issue, the other it is used to argue against the issue.

It is advisable to strategically collect sources of ‘frame sponsors’ who use frames for strategic purposes, including, for instance, pressure groups, NGOs, and political parties (see

also Kruse, 2001). In press releases, pamphlets, and brochures of frame advocates often one frame dominates and can be more easily identified. I experienced that the news media, in contrast, may apply more than one frame to cover a certain issue (Van Gorp, 2005).

Step 2: Open coding of the texts. To do an open coding means that texts are analyzed without the use of a predefined coding instrument. The different elements of the strategically collected set of texts are compared to make an inventory of empirical indicators that may contribute to the readers' interpretation of the text. The most important guideline is not to focus on what a text is about, but on how it is told. Essentially, creating a story is the making of choices. With regard to the news, framing is not about the core facts of a news event, but about what selections the journalist has made. When a news story is just about core facts and the journalist's only choice is whether to write the story or not, there is probably no frame applied. It depends on how frames are conceptualized, but if they are reflected in how a news story is told, news packed in a rudimentary news format, such as the inverted pyramid, is frameless. In newspapers, this concerns most often short informative messages—for instance, those about car accidents. Even if the number of casualties is mentioned, this does not necessarily mean the victim frame has been used.

Table 1 contains a short excerpt taken from a newspaper article published in the Canadian daily *National Post*. It shows that some elements are worth listing as feasible framing or reasoning devices. Defining with which frame package they belong is part of the next steps in the analysis.

[INSERT TABLE 1 HERE]

Step 3: Arranging the codes around 'axes' of meaning. The next step of the analysis is to look for patterns of devices by linking them to overarching ideas. Whereas in the second step the inventory of devices is made for each separate text, in the third step similarities, differences, and contrasts between the devices are indicated and reduced to dimensions. The

level of abstraction increases as soon as the framing devices and the reasoning devices are separated from the specific news stories. The coded elements in the example in Table 1 could result in at least one dimension, namely, there are poor people who deserve our help and others don't. Furthermore, the metaphor of the 'rising tide' suggests that poverty can turn into something that is unstoppable and threatening.

In this phase, it is also advisable to turn to the literature. During open coding this should be avoided, because it may obscure the open mind. By contrast, during the axial coding, the distinction between *God's poor*, who deserve our charity, and the *devil's poor*, the undeserving poor (cf. Gamson & Lasch, 1983; Golding & Middleton, 1982) is helpful to identify which textual elements coming from the open coding are indicative of what is at stake with regard to the drug users in the example.

Step 4: Selective coding. The next step in the analysis is to sort out the codes by filling in the cells of a frame matrix. Ultimately, the row entries should represent a frame package and the column entries should refer to the central reasoning and framing devices. Each row is a logically and integrated cluster of devices that refers to the same organizing frame. Each column summarizes the diversity of a framing function, for instance, definitions of an issue. Some elements from the axial coding will be left out; others are included in the matrix because they can adequately reflect the frame. Therefore, the first task is to complete the matrix one column after another. Then, search for logical combinations across the columns: definition, causal responsibility, solutions, treatment responsibility, and so on. The purpose is to look for a limited number of frame packages that are mutually exclusive and in which each link is meaningful.

Most often, the analysis of only one text is not sufficient to complete the entire matrix. However, the news story that serves as our example (see Table 1) contains an interesting pair of competing frames. The journalist has chosen to bring the story as a fight between good

and evil. The drug users are framed as the villains or as the Devil's poor, a stereotype that rather naturally conflicts with the Christian value of charity that is used as a frame for the event. The value of charity is put into question. Unselfish intentions are criticized because the Devil's poor benefit. The charitable institution is responsible and should be more critically to whom it distributes a free breakfast.

Naming the frame package involves the researcher in making an association with a cultural motive that can function as the core idea, thus fusing the framing devices to a coherent unit. Students experience this step as being the most difficult one to take. Mainly, this is because the subjective interpretation of the frame analysis—to express the central structuring idea in a frame package—is introduced in the analysis. Indeed, giving a name to a frame involves a kind of framing on the part of the researcher (Tankard, 2001, p. 89).

In some instances, naming a frame can be rather easily done when the journalist explicitly mentions the frame. For instance, in a newspaper article genetically engineered trees are called “Frankentrees” (Little, 2008). Frankenstein's monster, who has become an internationally applied symbol for the threats associated with genetic engineering (Hitchcock, 2007), suggests that something that is intended to be beautiful turns out to be something dangerous and unmanageable. With this famous fictional character it is easy to suggest that these trees can endanger life on earth, even without explaining how exactly the trees may cross-breed with natural forests and endanger biodiversity. Also, a journalist of *The Washington Post* (Spivack, 2008) conjures with the David vs. Goliath frame by suggesting that huge developers clash with players in the real estate market when plans for city extension are unfolded. As the journalist suggests, sometimes it is a struggle among two giants, “Goliath vs., well, Goliath.” Most often, however, journalists are rather inexplicit about the applied frame; to be otherwise they would first need to be aware that the selection of frames

is part of their daily routines. Table 2 provides a list of culturally embedded frames that can be useful to identify the core concept at the heart of a frame.

[INSERT TABLE 2 HERE]

Evaluation criteria

Once a repertoire of frames is defined, two questions need to be answered. First, is the list of frames complete? Second, are these frames the most dominant ones?. An exercise that can be helpful to examine the need to carry out an additional coding cycle is to sort the texts according to the applied frame. A text that cannot be put on any pile is either frameless or can point to a frame that has not yet been identified.

There are three criteria that can be helpful to evaluate the suitability of a frame: (a) the thickness of the frame description; (b) the degree of abstraction; and (c) the applicability of a frame to define other issues. First, can the frame package be fully described with an extensive list of framing and reasoning devices? If the answer is ‘yes,’ then the frame potentially promotes a specific meaning. The thickness of the description is also an indicator for the dominance of the frame in the news. Second, is the chain of reasoning devices, from problem definition to (policy) solution, complete and logically consistent? Some frames have the ability to define an issue as not being problematic and, as a matter of course, to absolve some agents of responsibility. For instance, the location of a new reception centre for asylum seekers in a residential area can be framed as a ‘gift’ of the government (the donor) to the neighborhood because it creates jobs, enables storekeepers to gain customers, and stimulates cultural exchange (Van Gorp, 2006). A third question is: Are the frames sufficiently abstract? The main challenge here is to decide upon the appropriate level of abstraction. To meet this criterion the frames must be applicable to define other issues. An issue or event can be presented from different perspectives (i.e., framed differently), and each frame may be used to give meaning to different issues or events. This is a rule of thumb that I always keep

in mind when evaluating a frame analysis. Each frame has to be abstract enough in order to be applicable to other issues that likely lie beyond the scope of the specific research topic.

Deductive Phase

Validation of the inductively reconstructed frames

The framing devices and the manifest reasoning devices are crucial in the deductive phase of a framing analysis because they are recognizable, demonstrable, and countable, and because they can be arranged and manipulated (Pan & Kosicki, 1993). The deductive phase is based on the principles of a quantitative content analysis in order to measure to what extent the inductively reconstructed frame packages are actually applied in a representative sample of texts. In stead of taking a random sample it can be sensible to focus on the news coverage of particular key events which can cause a frame shift.

Procedures of analysis

Step 1: Make a codebook of the frame matrix. One way to put down the frame in coding instructions is to think of a limited number of questions that grasp the core idea expressed by the frame. Although the procedures are meant to take subjectivity out, it is inevitable to sacrifice some reliability, because frames are ‘hidden’ meaning structures. Reliability is a necessary condition for validity, but for a framing analysis to be valid it cannot be limited to just the most easily quantifiable aspects of a text.

Experience leads me to conclude that there are four rules of thumb for securing the reliability of the results. First, limit the deductive phase to frames that are clearly mutually exclusive. Tankard (2001) even suggested taking just two frames in order to reach acceptable levels of intercoder reliability.

Second, to achieve good reliability restrict the coders’ need to interpret the material to a minimum. Simple yes/no questions seem to work out the best. Semetko and Valkenburg (2000; see also d’Haenens & de Lange, 2001) made up a list of questions—such as, “Does

the story suggest that some level of the government is responsible for the issue/problem?” — in order to identify a number of generic frames in the news. Although such questions require some interpretation, those researchers reported good levels of reliability.

Excellent coding instructions are indispensable. Therefore, and third, provide for sufficient time to train coders. To rephrase this advice in framing terminology: training sessions are used to bring to coders' minds the cognitive schemas that are in line with the propositional content of the frame. The best results seem to be attained when only two coders are able to do all the work. During the training they write down memos of their coding experiences and discuss them thoroughly. After coders reach satisfactory agreement on coding protocols they can commence to independently code the complete sample.

Fourth, do not expect to reach a high level of coder agreement for framing devices that are only occasionally applied in a text. This is especially so when using Cohen's kappa, which overcorrects for chance agreement when the distribution of the categories (present – not present) diverges from 50/50 (Potter & Levine-Donnerstein, 1999). Therefore, try to focus on framing devices that are regularly used in texts, such as lexical choices and metaphors. However, these framing devices may turn out to be not the strongest indicators to identify a frame. For instance, in a frame analysis of asylum seekers I expected that the lexical choice of 'asylum seeker' would be a negative portrayal, as if asylum seekers ask for something they are not entitled to. This contrasts with the notion of 'refugee,' which evokes a positive and legitimate connotation (Kaye, 2001). Ultimately, this hypothesis was rejected because both terms were equally applied in the news, both in which asylum seekers were portrayed as innocent victims as well as in stories which implicitly portrayed them as intruders (Van Gorp, 2005).

Step 2: Look for clusters in the coded devices. Instead of formulating a coding instruction for each framing device and reasoning device separately, it is worth considering

the possibility of simultaneously coding those framing devices. This means that coders should be trained to recognize the framing and reasoning devices and to code not for the individual devices but for the frame package as a whole (see Van Os, Van Gorp, & Wester, 2008). In that way this second step of the deductive phase could be skipped. However, to find out to what extent the elements within the identified frame packages actually constitute clusters, held together by a latent frame, an exploratory cluster or a factor analysis is indispensable. The most convincing way to do that is by using coders that are blind to the manner in which the distinct framing devices and reasoning devices on the coding sheet refer to the core frame. The coders determine whether an unordered list of characteristics shows up in a text. Afterwards, a factor analysis is applied to ascertain that the variables relate to some underlying dimensions. Ideally, these underlying dimensions should correspond to the predefined frames.

For example, Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) used a factor analysis (principal components, varimax rotation) to determine whether the underlying questions reflect the presence of the frame in the study material. Matthes and Kohring (2008) applied a hierarchical cluster analysis by which they identified clusters of topics, definitions, causal attributions, moral and treatment evaluations with regard to biotechnology.

An alternative method is provided by multiple dimensional scaling (Van Gorp, 2005). A homogeneity analysis generates a plot by calculating for each framing or reasoning device coordinates on at least two dimensions. The distance between the devices indicates the strength of their relationship. Devices that occur regularly simultaneously within one text are plotted close to each other, whereas devices that do not show up simultaneously in any of the texts are plotted far apart. Subsequently, it is possible to determine whether or not the frame packages stand for actual clusters of textual elements. Graphical representations of factors can be helpful to succeed in the final evaluation of the frame matrix. If the factor or cluster

analysis does not show the same underlying dimensions as assumed, the frame analyst can reinterpret the elements that do form a factor and define some alternative frames.

Step 3: Considering the 'weight' of the frame packages. A next step consists of determining the extent to which the identified frame packages are found in the data collection. This step is taken by counting for each item the number of framing and reasoning devices that belong to a particular frame package, as confirmed by the cluster analysis. The higher the number the higher the chance the different devices within a particular text are able to evoke a schema in the mind of the reader that is in line with the frame to which the devices refer.

The result of this calculation is a number of indexes per item in the data set that can be used to determine whether only one frame dominates or whether multiple frames are encoded in a (news) text. For instance, an analysis of the use of the intruder frame and the victim frame in the Belgian press showed that in about 50% of the newspaper articles only one of both frames was applied, whereas the other half of the sample held devices of both frames (Van Gorp, 2005). Further, it is possible to compare averages and to determine, for instance, in which kind of medium or in what period of time the application of the identified frames comes into vogue, increases, diminishes, or fades away. In that respect, the analysis can offer insight in frame attention cycles (Miller & Riechert, 2001).

In sum, the suggestion is simply to count the number of devices within a frame package that shows up in a text. There are, however, at least three conceptual questions with which the frame analyst has to deal with before doing the calculations. Each question engenders a different approach. First, is it necessary to factor in the relative frequency of a single framing device? Second, what to do with the relative position of the texts in the dataset, because some texts may attract the attention more easily than others? Third, does a framing device applied by the producer of the text, for instance a journalist, carry more weight than the

devices that slip into the text because they are mentioned by a source, for instance an interviewee? I will answer these questions in order, arguing from a theoretical point-of-view.

It is not necessary for a framing device to be frequently repeated in order to be capable of activating a frame. Entman (2004, p. 6) argued that this is particularly true for frames that are highly salient in a culture. Still, in other cases, the impact of a frame will stem from the prominence and repetition of its framing devices. The strategic integration of a single framing device can be sufficient to evoke a complex narrative of which, except that one element, nothing is explicitly mentioned in the text (cf. Lippmann, 1922/1997). For instance, stating that Saddam Hussein was even worse than Adolf Hitler sufficed for President George Bush to explain what was going on in Iraq (The Museum at the George Bush Presidential Library, 1990).

It seems reasonable to take into account the prominence of the particular framing and reasoning devices in a news story. The difficulty, however, is to determine what stylistic aspects are able to make a framing device more salient, because salience is not a characteristic of a text but an attribution in the mind of the reader. One way to manage this is to code, for each item in the data set, the extent to which demonstrable style characteristics increase the chance that the framing devices become salient in the perception of the audience member. For instance, a front-page newspaper article that is located 'above the fold,' has an eye-catching headline, and is illustrated with photographs, receives a higher score on the scale than a small un-illustrated article at the bottom of the page. This scale score can be used as a weight coefficient in further calculations for determining the prominence of the frame package in the data set.

An additional weight coefficient that can be used to calculate the indexes is the source of the framing devices. Sources make the news, perhaps particularly so when they disagree. Some frames have been processed in communication utterances by frame sponsors and other

actors, which is a matter of framing *through* the media (Van Gorp, 2007). In that instance it may be unfair to conclude that a medium uses a particular frame. In order to make a distinction between, for instance, the statements made by frame advocates and the journalistic handling, the coders need to answer additional questions, such as whether or not the journalist agrees with the point of view expressed by their sources. The affected framing devices may then get a negative sign in the calculation. However, I personally hold the position that framing devices originating from a source that are included in the news make a positive contribution in the evocation of a frame. A statement or element originating from an external source and the prominence the journalist gives to it in a news story are part of the framing process and have to be included in the analysis regardless of its origin.

Conclusion

The title of this contribution suggests, first, that a distinctive characteristic of framing analyses is that they are to a certain extent subjective; second, that it is advisable to phase out this subjectivity; and, third, that it is possible to achieve this goal when certain procedures are strictly followed. Some may even argue that this cultural approach to framing brings subjectivity *in* rather than it takes subjectivity *out*, as the title suggests. Indeed, some degree of subjectivity is inevitable. Moreover, in an inductive framing analysis, I strongly advise researchers to make the most of the analysts' gifts of observation and perceptive mind, precisely to get a grip on the subtlety of some frames. In this first stage, reading between the lines is permitted and even indispensable. In the next stage, however, additional procedures have to be followed to take subjectivity out of the identification and to attain acceptable levels of reliability.

Despite some useful exceptions (e.g., Kitzinger, 2007; Pan & Kosicki, 1993; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; Tankard, 2001), the framing literature offers rather little on which to draw to objectively identify frames. The procedures presented in this chapter are designed to

aid framing researchers in conducting more systematic inquiry into the content of frames in news stories.

Specifically, the main purpose of the technique is to gain insight into the simultaneous manifestation of multiple textual characteristics that fit together. Here the main difference with a linguistic approach such as discourse analysis is to be found. To determine how framing devices and reasoning devices work together under the heading of an overarching idea is the core of a framing analysis. Further, from the perspective of discourse analysis, frames would stand for the interests of political and economic elites. As D'Angelo (2002) argued, the constructionist approach does not link news framing to a form of media bias or label it as contributing to hegemonic processes. Each frame provides a viewpoint that can help to understand issues. Therefore, the aim of a framing analysis should always be to identify a variety of alternative frames. When an important social issue is dominated by just a single frame, there should be some alternatives that lead to a better understanding of what the issue is about. Only in case multiple frames are identified framing becomes socially relevant.

The procedures as expounded in this chapter, however, do have certain drawbacks. The strategies put forward, particularly those for the inductive procedures, are difficult to repeat, as Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) indicated, partly because they are based on principles for qualitative research. Furthermore, the approach is time consuming, especially because the researcher has to start with an inductive frame analysis in order to construct a repertoire of frames. When advising graduate students, I impress them that a qualitative framing analysis of a specific issue is both challenging and time-consuming. I tell them, as well as undergraduate students, to begin a framing analysis with a limit number of news articles in order to inductively reconstruct the applied frames. This is a valuable experience

that familiarizes students with the framing approach. Going through the admittedly inductive stage is necessary in order to then ‘take subjectivity out’ in later stages.

The idea that there is a cultural stock of frames and the goal of reliably reconstructing those frames by means of a framing analysis ultimately underlies my conceptualization of framing. Although an anonymous reviewer once ridiculed this idea a “Wal-Mart in the sky” from which journalists and individuals would pick whatever frame they like, I still believe that the identification of a repertoire of frames offers some opportunities. First, it is helpful to gain new insights into the coverage of certain socially relevant issues in the news. Second, it opens the door to alternative perspectives, which, in turn, can be used to convince journalists that how they cover the news is not suggested by the events themselves, but rather, by the result of *their* choices. The reason why journalists are unconsciously using frames is that they are unfamiliar with alternatives to it. Third, a pluralistic repertoire of frames implies a larger ‘tool-kit’ or a broader range of perspectives through which citizens understand issues and events. Not only journalists, but also professional communicators, policy makers, advocate groups, and scientists can be provided with alternative points of view to communicate about an issue. By redefining the terms of the debate they can constructively contribute to the public understanding of complex issues. Undocumented immigration, poverty, and genetic engineering are only some of the issues that rank high on the public agenda, which are so complex that they go beyond the understanding of lay people. However, people require a clear explanation why things happen, partly because they want to have the feeling that they can control their environment. Frames can help to fulfill this need.

References

- Aubrun, A. & Grady, J. E. (2006). *Towards a cross-cultural simplifying model for food systems: Findings from French talkback research*. Brussels: King Baudouin Foundation.
- Bateson, G. (1972), A theory of play and fantasy. In G. Bateson, *Steps to an ecology of mind: A revolutionary approach to man's understanding of himself* (pp. 177–193). New York: Ballantine Books. (Original work published in 1955).
- Bartlett, F.C. (1964). *Remembering: A study in experimental and social psychology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Original work published in 1932).
- Benford, R. D., & Snow, D. A. (2000). Framing processes and social movements: An overview and assessment. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 26, 611–639.
- Bennett, W. L., & Edelman, M. (1985). Toward a new political narrative. *Journal of Communication*, 35(4), 156–172.
- Berns, N. (2004). *Framing the victim: Domestic violence, media, and social problems*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.
- Bird, S. E. & Dardenne, R. W. (1997). Myth, chronicle and story: Exploring the narrative qualities of news. In D. Berkowitz (Ed.), *Social meanings of news: A text reader* (pp. 333–350). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Brewer, P. R. (2002). Framing, value words, and citizens explanations of their issue opinions. *Political Communication*, 19, 303–316.
- Cohen, S. (1976). Mods and rockers: The inventory as manufactured news. In S. Cohen & J. Young (Eds.), *The manufacture of news: Social problems, deviance, and the mass media* (pp. 226–241). London: Constable.
- Coman, M. (2005). News stories and myth—the impossible reunion? In E. W. Rothenbuhler & M. Coman (Eds.), *Media anthropology*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

- Dahinden, U. (2002). Biotechnology in Switzerland: Frames in a heated debate. *Science Communication, 24*, 184–197.
- D'Angelo (2002). News framing as a multiparadigmatic research program: A response to Entman. *Journal of Communication, 52*, 870–888.
- Denzin, N. K., & Keller, C. M. (1981). Frame analysis reconsidered. *Contemporary Sociology, 10*(1), 52–60.
- d'Haenens, L., & de Lange, M. (2001). Framing of asylum seekers in Dutch regional newspapers. *Media, Culture and Society, 23*, 847–860.
- Edelman, M. (1988). *Constructing the political spectacle*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Edy, J. A., & Meirick, P. C. (2007). Wanted, dead or alive: Media frames, frame adoption, and support for the war in Afghanistan. *Journal of Communication, 57*, 119–141.
- Entman, R. M. (1991). Framing U.S. coverage of international news: Contrasts in narratives of the KAL and Iran Air incidents. *Journal of Communication, 41*(4), 6–28.
- Entman, R. M. (1993). Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication, 43*(4), 51–58.
- Entman, R.M. (2004). *Projections of power: Framing news, public opinion, and U.S. foreign policy*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Fisher, W. R. (1984). Narration as a human communications paradigm: The case of public moral argument. *Communication Monographs, 51*, 1–22.
- Fisher, K. (1997). Locating frames in the discursive universe. *Sociological Research Online, 2*(3), Article 4. Retrieved May, 18, 2000, from <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/socresonline/2/3/4.html>
- Gamson, W.A. (1992). *Talking politics*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

- Gamson, W. A., & Lasch, K. E. (1983). The political culture of social welfare policy. In S. E. Spiro & E. Yuchtman-Yaar (Eds.), *Evaluating the welfare state: Social and political perspectives* (pp. 397–415). New York: Academic Press.
- Gamson, W. A., Croteau, D., Hoynes, W., & Sasson, T. (1992). Media images and the social construction of reality. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 18, 373–393.
- Gamson, W. A., & Modigliani, A. (1989). Media discourse and public opinion on nuclear power: A constructionist approach. *American Journal of Sociology*, 95, 1–37.
- Gans, H. J. (1979). *Deciding what's news: A study of CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, Newsweek, and Time*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1971). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Chicago: Aldine-Atherton. (Original work published in 1967).
- Goffman, E. (1975) *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*. Boston: Northeastern University Press.
- Goffman, E. (1981). A reply to Denzin and Keller. *Contemporary Sociology*, 10(1), 60–68.
- Golding, P., & Middleton, S. (1982). *Images of welfare: Press and public attitudes to poverty*. Oxford, UK: Martin Robertson.
- Gurevitch, M., & Kavoori, A. P. (1994). Global texts, narrativity and the construction of local and global meanings in television news. *Journal of Narrative and Life History*, 4(1-2), 9–24.
- Handley, R. L. (2008, May). “*This is a workfree smokeplace*”: Public policy change and the resilience of cultural frames. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, Montréal, Canada.
- Hartley, J. (1982). *Understanding news*. London: Methuen.
- Hazelrigg, L. (1992). Reading Goffman’s framing as provocation of discipline. *Human Studies*, 15, 239–264.

- Hertog, J. K., & McLeod, D. M. (2001) A multiperspectival approach to framing analysis: A field guide. In S. D. Reese, O. H. Gandy, & A. E. Grant (Eds.), *Framing public life: Perspectives on media and our understanding of the social world* (pp. 139–161). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Hitchcock, S. T. (2007). *Frankenstein: A cultural history*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- Iyengar, S. (1991). *Is anyone responsible? How television frames political issues*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- James, W. (1950). *The principles of psychology* (Vol. 2). New York: Dover Publications. (Original work published in 1890).
- Kahneman, D., & Tversky, A. (1979). Prospect theory: An analysis of decision under risk. *Econometrica*, 47: 263–291.
- Kaye, R. (2001). ‘Blaming the victim’: An analysis of press representation of refugees and asylum-seekers in the United Kingdom in the 1990’s. In R. King & N. Wood (Eds.), *Media and migration: Constructions of mobility and difference* (pp. 53–70). London: Routledge.
- Kitzinger, J. (2007). Framing and frame analysis. In E. Devereux (Ed.), *Media studies: Key issues and debates*. Los Angeles: Sage.
- Knight, P. (2000). *Conspiracy culture: From Kennedy to “the X-Files”*. New York: Routledge.
- Kruse, C. R. (2001). The movement and the media: Framing the debate over animal experimentation. *Political Communication*, 18, 67–88.
- Kubal, T. J. (1998). The presentation of political self: Cultural resonance and the construction of collective action frames. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 39, 539–554.

- Lakoff, G. (1995). Metaphor, morality, and politics or, why conservatives have left liberals in the dust. *Social Research*, 62(2), 177–213.
- Lippmann, W. (1997) *Public opinion* (2nd ed.). New Brunswick: Transaction. (Original work published in 1922).
- Little, M. (2008, May 30). Canada blocks bid to outlaw ‘Frankentrees’. *The Epoch Times*, p. 1.
- Lule, J. (2001). *Daily news, external studies: The mythological role of journalism*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Manoff, R. K., & Schudson, M. (1986). Reading the news. In R. K. Manoff & M. Schudson (Eds.), *Reading the news* (pp. 3–8). New York: Pantheon Books.
- Matthes, J., & Kohring, M. (2008). The content analysis of media frames: Toward improving reliability and validity. *Journal of Communication*, 58, 258–279.
- Miller, M. M., & Riechert, B. P. (2001). The spiral of opportunity and frame resonance: Mapping the issue cycle in news and public discourse. In S. D. Reese, O. H. Gandy, & A. E. Grant (Eds.), *Framing public life: Perspectives on media and our understanding of the social world* (pp. 107–121). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- The Museum at the George Bush Presidential Library (1990). Remarks at a Republican party fundraising breakfast in Burlington, Massachusetts 1990-11-01 (online). Retrieved June 2008 from http://bushlibrary.tamu.edu/research/public_papers.php?id=2379&year=1990&month=11
- Nelson, T. E., Clawson, R. A., & Oxley, Z. M. (1997). Media framing of a civil liberties conflict and its effect on tolerance. *American Political Science Review*, 91, 567–583.
- Neuman, W. R., Just, M. R., & Crigler, A. A. (1992). *Common knowledge. News and the construction of political meaning*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

- Nisbet, M. C. (2005). The competition for worldviews: Values, information, and public support for stem cell research. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 17, 90–112.
- Pan, Z., Lee, C.-C., Man Chan, L., & So, C. Y. K. (1999). One event, three stories: Media narratives of the handover of Hong Kong in cultural China. *Gazette*, 61, 99–112.
- Pan, Z. P., & Kosicki, G. M. (1993). Framing analysis: An approach to news discourse. *Political Communication*, 10, 55–75.
- Potter, W. J., & Levine-Donnerstein, D. (1999). Rethinking validity and reliability in content analysis. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 27, 258–284.
- Propp, V. J. (1958). *Morphology of the folktale*. Bloomington: Indiana University. (Original work published in 1928).
- Roeh, I. (1989). Journalism as storytelling, coverage as narrative. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 33(2), 162–168.
- Scheufele, D. A. (1999). Framing as a theory of media effects. *Journal of Communication*, 49(1), 103–122.
- Schudson, M. (1989). How culture works: Perspectives from media studies on the efficacy of symbols. *Theory and Society*, 18, 153–180.
- Schutz, A. (1964). On multiple realities. In A. Schutz, A., *Collected papers* (Vol. 1). Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff. (Original work published in 1945).
- Semetko, H. A., & Valkenburg, P. M. (2000). Framing European politics: A content analysis of press and television news. *Journal of Communication*, 50(2), 93–109.
- Silverblatt, A., Ferry, J., & Finan, B. (1999). *Approaches to media literacy: A handbook*. Armonk: M.E. Sharpe.
- Spivack, M. S. (2008, April 29). Bethesda Zoning Dispute is case of Goliath vs., well, Goliath. *The Washington Post*, p. B01.

- Strauss, A. L., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded Theory procedures and techniques*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Swidler, A. (1986). Culture in action: Symbols and strategies. *American Sociological Review*, 51(2), 273–286.
- Swidler, A. (1995). Cultural power and social movements. In H. Johnston & B. Klandermans (Eds.), *Social movements and culture* (pp. 25–40). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Tankard, J. W. (2001). The empirical approach to the study of media framing. In S. D. Reese, O. H. Gandy, & A. E. Grant (Eds.), *Framing public life: Perspectives on media and our understanding of the social world* (pp. 95–106). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Tuchman, G. (1978). *Making news: A study in the construction of reality*. New York: The Free Press.
- Van den Bulck, H., Simons, N., & Van Gorp, B. (2008). Let's drink and be merry: The framing of alcohol in the prime time American youth series *The OC*. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*, 69(6).
- Van Gorp, B. (2005). Where is the frame? Victims and intruders in the Belgian press coverage of the asylum issue. *European Journal of Communication*, 20, 485–508.
- Van Gorp, B. (2006). *Framing asiel: Indringers en slachtoffers in de pers*. Leuven: Acco.
- Van Gorp, B. (2007). The constructionist approach to framing: Bringing culture back in. *Journal of Communication*, 57, 60–78.
- Van Gorp, B., Blow, H., & Van de Velde, M. (May, 2005). *Representation of poverty in TV reports in Belgium: Who is to blame?* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, New York.
- Van Os, R., Van Gorp, B., & Wester, F. (2008). Successful joint venture or out of control? Framing Europe on French and Dutch websites / Une intreprise commune réussi ou

non? Cadrer l'Europe sur les sites web français et hollandais (on line).

Electronic Journal of Communication / La Revue Electronique de Communication,
18(1).

Watson, J. (1998). *Media communication: An introduction to theory and process*. London:
McMillan.

Wicks, R. H. (2005). Message framing and constructing meaning: An emerging paradigm in
mass communication research. In P. Kalbfleish (Ed.), *Communication Yearbook 29* (pp.
333–360). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Table 1

Framing and Reasoning Devices in a Newspaper Article About Poverty

| Source text | Framing devices | Reasoning devices |
|---|---|---|
| [...] The Christians and the crack addicts meet for breakfast every Thursday in a downtown park. [...] | Contrast of actors: Christians vs. crack addicts; description of visual scene: heaving breakfast as an everyday activity | |
| It is not a happy scene. Sadly, it is too familiar. [...] | Emotional appeal: sadness, compassion | 'Familiar' refers to omnipresence of poverty |
| But here in B[ritish] C[olumbia]'s bible belt, feeding the poor and the afflicted is cause for concern. [...] | Context: bible belt refers to the ascetic Protestants. Lexical choice: afflicted | Feeding the poor as iconic and ultimate act of charity |
| "Cheerios build relationships." According to others, Cheerios cause trouble. [...] | Symbol / synecdoche: A brand of cereals is used as 'pars pro toto', a symbol for charity | Seemingly illogical causal relationship between harmless charity and problems |
| The place is overrun with pushers and drug users. [...] | Lexical choices: overrun, pushers, and drug users | Drug users cause problems just by being there (no actual examples of they causing trouble are given); |

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| | | do drug users belong to the poor people? |
| Even with its stunning scenery, the mountains and the rich farmland that surround it, it is like any other community in Canada: Threatened by drug user use and uncomfortable with the rising tide of homeless. | Description of visual scene with contrast: idyllic scenery vs. misery; metaphor 'rising tide' that refers to an unstoppable overwhelming force | Drug users but also homeless people are perceived as threatening |

Note. From "Please don't feed the homeless," by B. Hutchinson, May 24, 2008, *National Post*, pp. A7, A8.

Table 2

Overview of Cultural Frames

| Type of frame | Examples of frames | Example of application |
|---------------|---|--|
| Metaphor | the building, the runaway train, the flood, the game, war, disease and recovery | Current food production methods <i>undermine the foundations</i> of the food system which puts the worldwide ecological system at risk (Aubrun & Grady, 2006) |
| Value or norm | altruistic democracy, responsible capitalism (Gans, 1979); free speech vs. disruption of public order (Nelson, Clawson, & Oxley, 1997); good governance, sacredness of life | All people have equal rights, so the same is true for gay people, for example with regard to marriage and the adoption of children. Perceived from the idea that only what is ‘natural’ is normal, gay people or abnormal and cannot claim equal rights (Brewer, 2002) |
| Virtue or sin | sexual restraint, temperance, satisfaction with one’s lot, “punishment can be good for you” (Lakoff, 1995) | People who get drunk do not have the power to exercise self control, this internal evil has to be overcome (cf. Van den Bulck, Simons, & Van Gorp, 2008) |
| Myth | the myth of science, the American dream, the pact with God, the Apocalypse, | Biotechnology will lead to catastrophes, just as Pandora opened the box that contained all |

| | | |
|------------|---|--|
| | Oedipus, the Tower of Babel, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Pandora's box, good vs. evil, heaven and hell (see Silverblatt, Ferry, & Finan, 1992) | the evils of mankind (Dahinden, 2002). Scientists who do stem cell research destroy human life. They take on the role of God and violate divine will (Nisbet, 2005) |
| Narrative | man's inhumanity to man (Gurevitch & Kavoori, 1994); Cinderella, Frankenstein, Snow white, the Beauty and the Beast, Faust | The cigarette brought the smoker to a higher-class position, but with the workplace smoking ban, smoking 'Cinderella' would lose her class position (Handley, 2008) |
| Archetype | the victim, the villain, the hero, the donor (Propp, 1928/1958); the Good Mother (Lule, 2001); the angry wife, the invisible, the wise one, the merciless warrior | Mods and rockers, two youth cultures from the sixties, became synonymous with villains, from the moment the British press used a melodramatic vocabulary to portray the youngsters as a mob of "folk devils" that "besieged" and "destroyed" a small coastal village (Cohen, 1976) |
| Stereotype | a deep distrust of anything official (Knight, 2000); the foreigner as barbarian, women as being helpless, the innocent child, the stingy | In women's magazines the victims are blamed for domestic violence, first, because, the women seem to provoke the abuse, and, second, because it is a matter of courage to |

Dutchman

get out the abusive relationship

(Berns, 2004).
