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Framing dimensions and framing strategies: contrasting ideal- and real-type frames

Collective actors can influence political decision-making processes in different ways. Public political communication through the articulation of concerns and interests is one way to put pressure on the political system. Social movements and interest groups know of these opportunities and frequently have trained experts in specialized departments who work with the public, launch issues, define problems and attempt to influence public opinion. Indeed, it is widely assumed that the importance of these public relations efforts has increased in western industrial societies in recent years. On the one hand, the need for political legitimation has expanded with growing governmental activity and simultaneously increasing demands from citizens for participation in political decisions (Sarcinelli, 1987: 27); on the other, the weakening of traditional social milieus and a loosening of party ties have increased the necessity for generating public approval (Klingemann and Wattenberg, 1990).

Compared with other collective actors, social movements are especially dependent on public communication. One main characteristic of social movements is the relative absence of other means of influencing the political system, such as money, power and contacts with decision-makers. Their main instrument of political pressure lies in the number of people or groups they can mobilize for protest. Mobilization requires defining the problem for participants, attributing responsibility for it and specifying solutions. If

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social movements want to persuade others of the urgency of a problem, of the merits of their own position, and of the possible solutions they offer, then they need well-framed “arguments” and interpretations of the subject being discussed. The “quality” of the frames is one of the crucial factors which determine the success of the mobilization of social movements (McAdam et al., 1988).

Different suggestions for analysing this qualitative aspect of frames have recently been developed in the literature on social movements. Snow and Benford (1988) and Snow et al. (1986) differentiate between different framing strategies, such as frame-bridging, frame-amplification, frame-extension and frame-transformation, without, however, systematically differentiating between subject areas to which the framing strategies refer. Klandermans (1988) differentiates between “consensus mobilization” and “consensus activation”, and attempts to define different strategies for the two processes. Consensus mobilization refers to the creation of a mobilization potential and involves creating a common view of a problem. Consensus activation means convincing the members of the mobilization potential that they have to participate in protest activities to solve the problem. This means turning potential actors into dedicated participants. Klandermans’s categories can be further analysed in terms of subject areas appropriate to the two functions. Consensus mobilization refers, first of all, to the definition of issues and problems, and then to causes, causal agents and addressees. Consensus activation refers primarily to the definition of goals and means. In both functions, a self-legitimation of the protest actor must also occur. Finally, William A. Gamson has introduced the concept of packages into the discussion of framing processes (Gamson, 1988; Gamson, 1992; Gamson and Modigliani, 1989). Packages are developed structures for interpreting events that are entwined around a central organizing idea. His “packages-theory” remains conceptually weak, however; packages represent only one element, albeit an important one, of the interpretative processes gone through by movement actors.

The following remarks have two goals: the first is to attempt to systematize the literature on framing, and to develop an ideal-type — in the Weberian sense — for a social movement frame. To do this, I differentiate between framing dimensions and framing strategies. The subject areas to which the framing refers are called framing dimensions, of which I distinguish five. The techniques for interpreting these subject areas are called framing strategies. The

extent to which movements are successful in mobilizing other people and groups depends on the techniques they provide for interpreting the different subject areas. Framing dimensions and framing strategies together build up the structure of an ideal-type of frame. An ideal-type of frame would include all framing dimensions and framing strategies, so that the mobilizing capacity of the frame would reach its maximum. Empirical frames are real-types, which differ more or less from the ideal-type. The greater the difference between the structure of an ideal-type frame and an empirical frame, the weaker is the mobilization capacity of the empirical frame. The function of building an ideal-type and contrasting empirical frames with it is to generate hypotheses. "[An] ideal-type is not a hypothesis, but it will show the direction for developing hypotheses" (Weber, 1904/1988: 190). By contrasting empirical frames with the ideal-type of a frame one can formulate hypotheses about successful or less successful framing elements. A comparison between the ideal-type and the real-type frame requires an empirical method to make comparison possible.

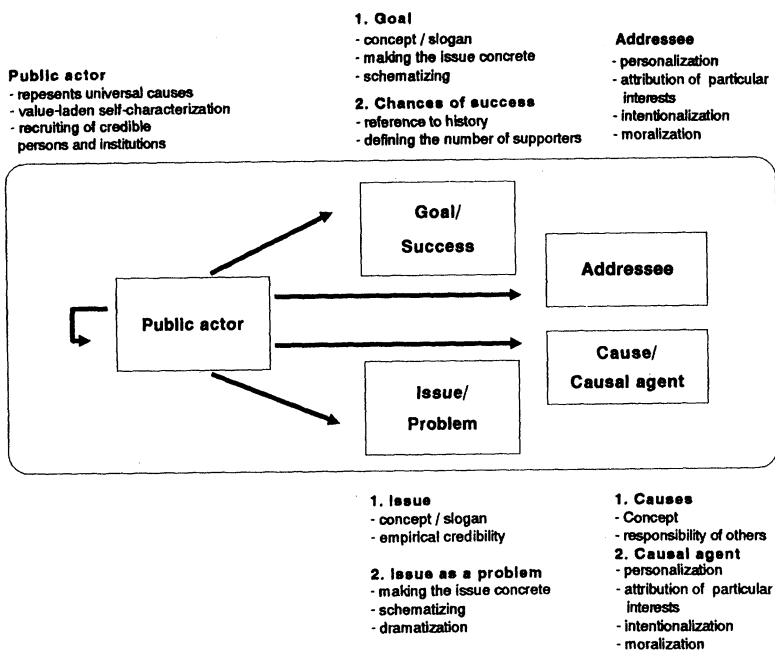
The second goal is to demonstrate how frame analysis can be done empirically. Although the importance of framing for mobilization processes has been emphasized time and again in recent years, there are almost no empirical analyses of frames and framing processes. In the pages that follow, I make an initial attempt to fill this gap. The material is drawn from an analysis of a mobilization campaign in Germany, the anti-IMF campaign, which is examined in more detail elsewhere (Gerhards, 1993).

Dimensions and strategies of an ideal-type of frame

A number of framing dimensions can be distinguished. According to my thesis, if protest actors want to mobilize effectively for their concerns they must:

1. find an *issue* and interpret it as a social *problem*,
2. locate *causes and causal agents* for the problem,
3. interpret *goals and the chances of success* of their efforts,
4. find and label an *addressee* for their protest, and
5. justify themselves as *legitimate actors*.

The subject areas and the different strategies for making them plausible are summarized in Figure 1. The structure of Figure 1 is

**FIGURE 1**

Framing dimensions and framing strategies: an ideal-type of frame

an ideal-type of frame. The five framing dimensions and framing strategies of an ideal-type of frame will be explained step by step in the five sections that follow.

1. Interpreting an issue and defining it as a problem

If actors want to mobilize for protests they must first define the empirical phenomenon, fact or occurrence as an issue, then label the phenomenon as a problem that the political system should deal with. For an issue to become a publicly discussed topic, a concept is needed which designates the subject area in question. Not every concept for denoting an issue is well suited. If a complex subject can be conceptually simplified (Nedelmann, 1986), then communication is made easier. In the panorama of social movements in Germany,

there are a number of examples: "Rentenlüge" (old-age pension lie), "Asylantenwelle" (wave of people asking for asylum), "AKW" (nuclear power plant). These slogans summarize contexts which extend far beyond the short form itself and bring a complex subject to a conceptual point, concentrating attention and thus simplifying communication about the topic. At the same time the topic must be as credible as possible. Indicators for an "empirical test" must be found or constructed which can also "verify" the frames of a topic.¹ It must be empirically evident or made evident that the topic has a real reference.²

Redefining a topic in these terms is not a sufficient precondition for mobilization, however. A topic becomes a public issue only when it appears as a problem.³ Problems are characterized as discrepancies between what is and what should be: people want peace, missile bases would seem to lead to war; people do not want unemployment, the economic policy is leading to a higher unemployment rate; people want to preserve the environment, acid rain is destroying the forests. Gamson (1992: 31) has called these discrepancy frames "injustice frames". He argues that their mobilization capacity increases if affective components — so-called "hot cognitions" — are included in the frame.

Injustice frames have a built-in preference for one side of the dichotomy in the sense that the correct position on the topic is, naturally, already provided. A binary coding of topics must at the same time give preference to one side of the dichotomy (Garfinkel, 1976: 35). This can be achieved through two different strategies: first, making the issue more *concrete* by generating personal concern through a specific life-world reference (a); and second, the reverse process of embedding the issue in a more abstract context — a broader schema — by tying the issue into a larger value context (b).

(a) A problem can be made more concrete by creating a reference to everyday experience. Research into the effects of mass media has shown that so-called "obtrusive issues" have a greater chance of finding a reception than "non-obtrusive issues" (cf. the summary in Schenk, 1987: 437f). The closer the framing of a problem is to the individual's own life-world experience, the greater the awareness of the "obtrusiveness" of the problem and the greater the individual's concern. If the problem being considered can be made plausible to the public, and if direct negative effect on their daily lives can be demonstrated (e.g. that the man in the street has to pay the costs

of the reunification of Germany), then the individual concern increases,⁴ and the willingness to accept the public definition is increased.⁵ The deforestation of the tropical rain forest can be better launched as a public issue in western countries if the actors can plausibly argue that deforestation will have a direct impact on the life conditions of people in the West (for example, increase of cancer rates caused by thinning of the ozone layer).

(b) Complementary to making problems more concrete is their interpretative embedding in a broader context or scheme. These are "higher order knowledge structures (frames, schemata, scripts etc.) that embody expectations guiding lower order processing of the stimulus complex" (Abelson, 1981: 715). If the individual phenomena can be interpreted in the context of universal values or ideological frameworks, then they receive a "normative loading". If a problem can be attached to a value pattern shared by and deeply ingrained in the public, then there is an urgency to the solution of the problem. These patterns of values can be general codes that are constituted along structured political cleavages. The interpretation of new phenomena along the Left/Right scale is such a form of loading an issue which is frequently used by political parties (Fuchs and Klingemann, 1989). Cognitive psychology teaches us that people perceive the world through structured schemata rather than as randomly distributed information (for an overview see Schissler and Tuschhoff, 1988). If new information "fits" existing schemata, the chances are higher that it will be perceived and stored in memory, and not ignored as general "noise". In this way, mobilization chances are increased when a problem is integrated into a broader value system.

If a problem is attached to a larger value horizon, this then has a "halo effect" on the problem itself.⁶ The importance of the topic and problem increases and, correspondingly, the awareness that it is something that needs solving.⁷ For example, if a threat to humanity is seen in the armament policy of the USA, then it must be opposed; or if the construction of nuclear power plants can be connected to the ideology of progress, then the acceptance of the power plants increases (Gamson and Modigliani, 1989); or if a one-month-old fetus is considered to be a complete human being, then abortion must be opposed.⁸ The urgency of these problems and of their solutions is increased further if the heightening of the problems in the future can be implied. An implied crescendo dramatizes a problem and suggests that rapid action is necessary.

In all of this, the form in which the topic and problem are discussed is not unimportant. The creation of news-value factors — unusual measures, extraordinary press conferences, civil disobedience — are means, first, to concentrate public attention on the topic, and, second, to make plausible the interpretations and solutions proposed.⁹

2. Causal attribution: definition of cause and agents

If it is possible convincingly to define a topic as a problem, then the most important step for mobilizing people has been taken. Mobilization can be further focused if it is possible to label causes and causal agents for the problems defined. The designation of causes in turn calls for a concept: Stalinism, neofascism and late capitalism are such concepts. For causes to mobilize effectively, however, they need a special kind of definition. What strategies can be distinguished here?

The cause for the emergence of a problem should not be individualized as self-responsibility, but must be attributed to an external collective actor with outside responsibility (Ferreë and Miller, 1985). If an individual feels personally responsible for a deplorable state of affairs, then there is no reason for public excitement. If unemployment can be labelled as an individual failure, then the chances that it will be seen as a societal problem are small. If movement activists want to mobilize people on a problem, they must externalize the causes of the defined problem and attribute the causes to external collective actors.

The mobilization process can be expanded if it is possible to identify concrete persons as causal agents. The process of *personalization* links the problem with concrete and vulnerable causal agents. If it is possible to go beyond personalization and to impute intention to the causal agent (intentionalization), then the mobilizing power of the interpretation can be increased again. Intentionalization means that the problem was deliberately caused by the causal agent. Intentionalization is particularly heightened if the intention of the causal agent's action was the pursuit of a particular interest, such as personal enrichment, and thus opposed to the collective good. A further stage in the stigmatization of the causal agent can be called moralization. Moralization means transforming a difference in opinion on an issue into discrimination against those

persons who have expressed the opinion. In this sense, to moralize an opponent means to deprive him or her of the respect usually accorded to a communication partner (Luhmann, 1978: 51). The opponent is defined as standing outside the community of legitimate communication partners.

If the emergence of a social problem can be attributed to a causal agent, if the causal agent can simultaneously be personalized and moralized, and if his actions can be interpreted as intentional and connected with particular interests, then the chances to mobilize a great number of people are increased.

3. Framing the goals and chances for success

When a problem becomes publicly defined as an issue it is generally connected with an objective or a goal that includes its solution. Environmental protection, disarmament, observance of human rights, justice and wage increases are all goals that presuppose that not fulfilling them presents a problem which mobilizes people. The same framing strategies that make problems into plausible issues also hold true for framing goals: finding a concept; loading the value of the goal by tying it to higher values; making the goal more concrete by showing the practical benefits for those affected.

In addition to making goals plausible, Klandermans (1984) has shown that the greater their chances of success, the more willing people will be to take part in protest activities. It makes sense, therefore, that convincing people of the probable success of a mobilization is an important focus for framing work. Comparisons with and references to historical precursors, which were considered by contemporaries to be just as hopeless at the outset, but were successful in the end, belong to the standard repertoire for increasing the hypothetical chances of success. The struggle to define the number of possible supporters is another common arena of framing activity: the greater the number that can be defined, the higher the probability of a successful mobilization, and the greater the willingness of others to join in the protests. The reading of greetings at demonstrations is one common strategy for documenting the size of the mobilization.

4. *Framing the addressees of demands*

One can distinguish analytically between addressees who are expected to solve the problem and the causes and causal agents of social problems (Tarrow, 1989: 101–4). The addressee for protest activities in most modern societies is generally the political system. Nation-building processes, the centralization and monopolization of force in the hands of the state and the expansion of the areas for which the political system is held responsible have led to the political system being solely responsible for making all collectively binding decisions. Politics has become the universal agent of societal control and, correspondingly, the addressee of political demands, although it is frequently not the cause of the problem being considered (e.g. unemployment in a capitalist economy). Solutions for societal problems are therefore expected to come from the political system and, above all, from the government in power.

If social movements want to mobilize successfully and to convince supporters of their world-view, they must show that the political system, and the government in particular, is not willing to provide or not capable of providing solutions on its own. The counterpart to a movement's legitimating its own justification for appearing as a collective actor and making demands is the delegitimization of functional alternatives. Correspondingly, discrediting the government is frequently a part of the framing work of social movements. Delegitimizing the addressees also calls upon the strategy already described for interpreting causes and causal agents: personalizing the addressees, imputing an intentional action which pursues particular interests and the moralization of the addressees. The result is frequently the suspicion of corruption.

5. *Self-legitimation of social movements*

Actors who pursue a mobilization increase their chances of success if they are able to present themselves as trustworthy. They need the approval of supporters, and therefore must make it plausible to their supporters that they are not acting in their own interest — e.g. to acquire wealth or power — but mobilizing for the sake of the cause and representing collective or even universal interests (Turner, 1972; Garfinkel, 1976). There are various strategies for the self-legitimation of actors.

First, activists need a *conception of themselves*. If it is possible for them to occupy a societally shared value, then their credibility is increased. To label oneself as a “peace movement” does not make it easy for the opponents of this movement to take up a position, as they quickly face the danger of being labelled “enemies of peace”.¹⁰ The American movement against abortion attempted a similar fusion of self-definition with a central value in its self-description as a “pro-life movement”.

Second, the initiators attempt to recruit *prominent* and at the same time *trustworthy* persons, and hope that their charisma can be transferred to the movement (Klandermans, 1988: 185). Prominent persons who come from segments of society where universal interests are represented and questions of the meaning of life are posed and answered are especially likely to be trustworthy. Church representatives, scientists and artists are particularly important here, because credibility is virtually part of their professional standing. This effect does not hold true only for individuals, but for entire institutions as well. If it is possible to involve trustworthy institutions, then the credibility of the collective actor as a whole is increased.

Third, credibility refers not only to the movements themselves, but also to their specific topics and framing of the problem. If these are interpreted as correct, then this rubs off on the credibility of the movement. Furthermore, if the movement is believed to have predicted a dramatic occurrence, this is interpreted as proof of the correctness of its general scheme of interpretation and can have positive effects for the credibility of the movement. Accidents, having led to increased pollution of the environment, have increased the credibility of the ecology movement, which predicted them (Klandermans, 1988: 185). The German Social Democrats boast of having predicted the economic problems of the reunification of Germany, and this increases their competence and credibility in the eyes of the public.

The framing of a topic and construction of the problem, labelling of causal agents and addressees, interpreting of goals and the possibility of success, and self-legitimation as an actor are the most important framing dimensions which social movements must focus on if they want to mobilize as many people as possible. However, the mobilization capacity of a frame is not determined by these dimensions alone, but also by the way the dimensions are combined. We assume that the better these dimensions are integrated, i.e. the higher the degree of interrelatedness of the frames' dimensions, the higher their mobilization capacity (Snow and Benford, 1988: 199).

In this section I have tried to develop an ideal-type of frame. One

can assume that the mobilization capacity of any real-type increases with closeness to the ideal-type frame. In the following section, I compare an empirical frame with these ideal-typical framing dimensions and framing strategies. Our data are taken from an analysis of the frame underlying the Berlin anti-IMF campaign.

Framing dimensions and framing strategies: a real-type frame

1. The anti-IMF campaign: a descriptive account

In September 1988, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank held their yearly congress in Berlin. All established parties in Germany greeted the two bodies as welcome guests of the city of Berlin. However, protest groups began preparations for a mobilization against this congress 2 years prior to the event. The planned protests were designed to emphasize that the IMF and the World Bank were not welcome in Berlin, because they represented a world economic order which actively promotes the exploitation of Third World countries. In the process of mobilization and the protest campaign itself, we recorded a total of 475 different public actions, including two large events: a counter-congress, with experts speaking against the policies of the World Bank and the IMF, and a large demonstration. One hundred and thirty-three groups called for a demonstration against the IMF congress, and some 80,000 people responded to the call.

The mobilizing structure for the protest activities was twofold (Gerhards and Rucht, 1993). The campaign was supported by a wide range of political, humanitarian, religious, and cultural groups. On the next higher level of organization there were specially founded organizations, which established an effective umbrella structure by organizationally integrating the wide array of different groups. This structure of mobilization was accompanied by a framing process. The "umbrella organizations" developed a master frame, which allowed for interpreting the topic at hand and for linking specific concerns of the different groups to the master frame, and I concentrate on the framing aspects of mobilization, on the master frame of the campaign. The real-type of frame of the anti-IMF campaign is compared with the ideal-type of frame described. Before I begin, however, some methodological reflections are necessary.

The main problems with using empirical methods in analysing

frames arise from the fact that the objects of analysis are texts, and frame analysis refers to the system of meaning represented by these texts. Conventional quantitative content analysis is a reliable procedure for data analysis, but does not do justice to the goal of reconstructing the system of meanings represented by texts, because it breaks up the text into isolated elements – topics, statements, arguments, etc. Hermeneutic qualitative procedures are able to reconstruct the context of meaning of texts, but they are subject to the criticism that their analysis is highly subjective.

I pursue two strategies to compensate for the methodological problems of frame analysis. First, the difficulties of data analysis can be at least partially addressed by the selection of the texts and by accepted sampling procedures. I consider a one-page leaflet signed by all supporting groups as a valid indicator of the groups' common frame (see Appendix). The use of only one leaflet signed by all support groups reduces the text corpus to manageable proportions. At the same time, however, I think that one page can be considered a highly meaningful source. The reduction of the text corpus to limited but highly relevant and meaningful material makes it possible to present not only the interpretation, but also the text itself, so that the reader can check the plausibility of the frame analysis.

The second strategy is to draw on a method for analysing decision-making processes developed by Robert Axelrod (1976). Using this method, the internal structure of frames can be investigated with the help of a graphic presentation of the argumentative structure of the frames (Homer-Dixon and Karapin, 1989). The graphic presentation takes the form of a directed graph of points representing key concepts and the arrows between the points, which represent relationships. The total information of the text is thus reduced to a bare-bones scheme. The advantage of this method is that the relevant framing dimensions and framing strategies, and the logical connection between them, become visible. This facilitates the task of comparison between empirical cases of frames and the ideal-type described earlier.

2. The anti-IMF master frame and its mobilizing capacity

I would describe the general interpretative frame of the anti-IMF campaign as the master frame, to use the terminology of Snow et al.

(1986: 475), developed by the “umbrella organizations” to integrate the different groups and motivate them to participate in the protest campaign. I discuss hypotheses about the factors that influence the mobilizing capacity of master frames in general by comparing the anti-IMF real-type frame with the ideal-type of frame of the last section.

We can reconstruct a relatively complete and highly conceptualized master frame out of the central leaflet. The frame consists of a set of arguments which are linked and which complement each other. Similarly to the manner in which Axelrod (1976) has attempted to identify the structure of decision-making processes of elites by graphical presentations of cognitive maps, the structure of the master frame can be reconstructed and demonstrated schematically (see Figure 2). This enables us to ask which framing dimensions of those ideal-typically possible dimensions apply and which framing strategies are used.

2.1 Interpreting a topic and interpreting a problem. As Figure 2 shows, the master frame of the anti-IMF campaign defines not only one problem, but a wide range of problems. The high indebtedness of Third-World countries is the main problem. Other important problems in the master frame are the misery and death among the people living there; the destruction of the ecological basis of life; the particular burdens on women; the weapon exports to the Third World as a special form of exploitation; the exodus of impoverished people, who then seek asylum in the First World; the destruction of cultural identities; unemployment and reductions in the social-welfare system in the First World as consequences of the capitalist system. Some of these problem definitions use slogans (ecological crisis; exodus; hunger etc.) for contexts which extend far beyond the short form itself and bring a complex subject to a conceptual point, concentrate attention and thus simplify communication about the topic. Each of these defined problems is implicitly characterized as a discrepancy between what is and what should be; these discrepancies have a built-in preference for one side of the dichotomy: the policies of the IMF lead to unemployment, war, loss of cultural identity, etc., but people want employment, peace, cultural identity, and so on. Most of the defined problems have empirical credibility insofar as they are known by an average citizen as problems, as reported by mass media, which really exist in the Third World. Thus far the master frame functions as the assumed ideal-type frame, at

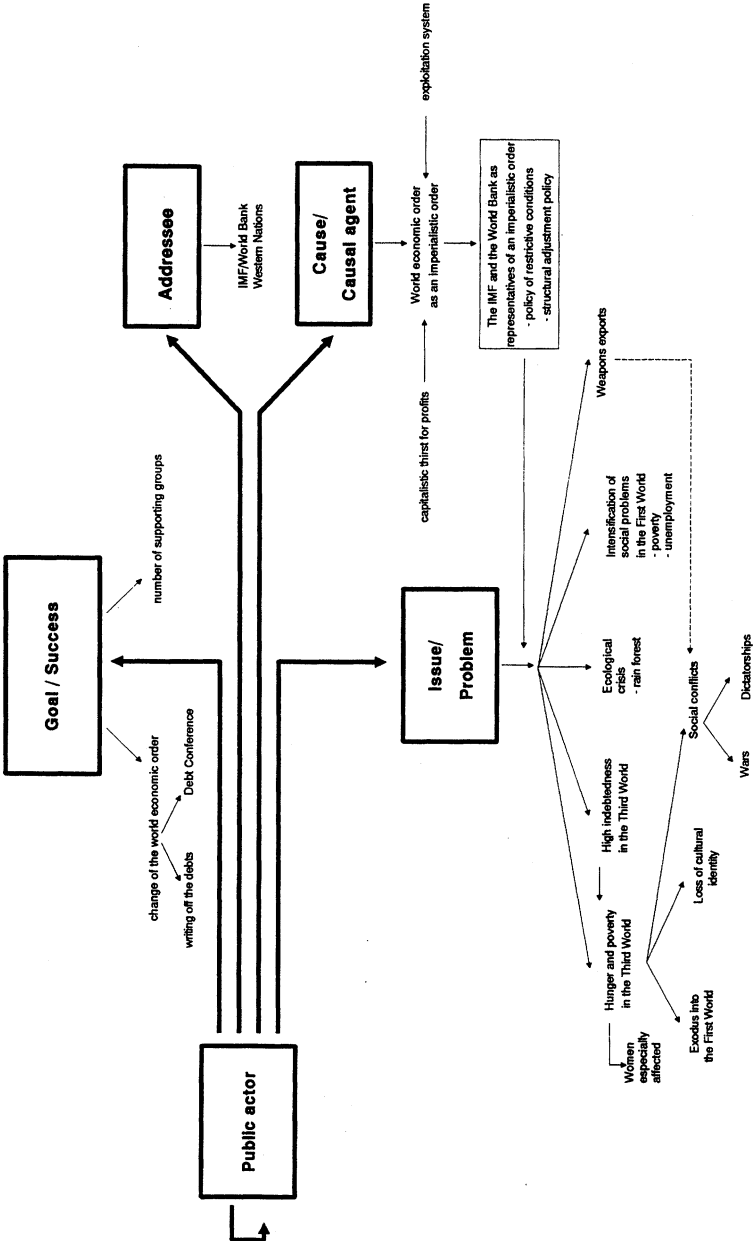


FIGURE 2 Framing dimensions and framing strategies of the master frame of the anti-IMF campaign

least as far as problem definition is concerned. A certain disadvantage of this framing dimension is the fact that the defined problems have little relevance to people's daily lives in modern western societies: "obtrusiveness" is reached only through the topic "unemployment in the First World".

The range and multitude of the problems defined by the master frame create points of leverage for a host of political groups focusing on one or several of these particular problems. In general, one can assume that the larger the range of the problems covered by a frame, the larger the range of groups that can be addressed with the frame and the greater the mobilization capacity of the frame.

But the connection formulated between the range of a frame and its mobilization capacity is valid only under certain conditions. A high mobilization capacity cannot be secured through the sheer range and number of problems enumerated. It is important that these problems can be connected to each other in a plausible way. Otherwise, too broad a range of problems could lead to what Snow and Benford (1988) called an "overextension" of the frame. The different problems defined by the frame of the anti-IMF campaign are not unconnected, but are understood as different consequences of one system. The master frame tries to tie disparate problems together into a meaningful context. The degree of interrelatedness — a term used by Converse (1964: 256) — between the defined problems seems to be high because the individual phenomena are interpreted in an ideological framework, a theory of the world economy. The world economic order is interpreted as an imperialistic order, an order designed for the exploitation of the southern countries by the countries in the northern hemisphere. The heterogeneity of the problems can be interpreted as the different consequences of one and the same cause. Thus, all formerly disconnected problems can be perceived within a scheme, which again increases the frame's mobilization capacity.

This fact is illustrated by the arrow in the graph of Figure 2 between the problems and the causes, which indicates an argumentative connection. The better the variously defined problems can be connected with each other through a master frame, the more plausible the master frame appears and the greater the mobilization capacity of the master frame. Summing up, the comparison between the ideal-type and the real-type frame for the first framing dimension leads to the conclusion that the master frame of the anti-IMF campaign fits almost all criteria of the ideal-type frame for successful mobilization.

2.2 Causal attribution: definition of the cause and the causal agent. In addition to defining problems, the master frame of the anti-IMF campaign allows for labelling causes and causal agents. A congress is an “innocent” event in and of itself. It only becomes a problem if the guests can be labelled as agents causing the problems that have been defined. The causes of the multitude of problems dealt with in the master frame of the anti-IMF campaign are not located in the Third World countries, but in the system, the world economic order itself (“outside responsibility”). Behind the causes are causal agents, in the sense of concrete persons and institutions: the IMF, the World Bank and the large corporations and banks in the First World. Moreover, these institutions intentionally pursue their own particular interests (profitability) at the expense of the Third World. The IMF and the World Bank support the world economic order in two ways. On the one hand, they finance their own projects, grant loans and determine the conditions of repayment. On the other hand, these institutions guide policies for the banks and corporations. Once the World Bank and the IMF have forced a country to pursue a capitalist course, then the banks and corporations follow with their own exploitative projects.

In the context of the mobilization campaign against the World Bank and IMF conference, movement actors attempted to push through the label “IMF = murderers”. The concept “murderer” expresses several different strategies of labelling causes in a single word: only people can be murderers; in contrast to manslaughter, murder implies intent; murderers are people who are outside human society. If both institutions, the IMF and the World Bank, can be successfully labelled as the causal agents for the problems which were highlighted, then the frame gives good reasons to protest against the congress. Hence, if the causes of the identified problems can be defined in a frame and at the same time related to concrete persons, then this increases the mobilization capacity of a frame. Therefore, in the second framing dimension of causal attribution, the anti-IMF frame also fits the ideal-type frame to a large degree.

2.3 Framing of the goals and chances for success. The goals which are defined by the master frame are, in principle, the reversal of the defined problems and causes. The argument is that none of the problems can be solved in the long run if the world economic order itself is not changed, and this is what the protesters call for. This abstract goal should be attained through specific goals: writing off the debts

of the Third-World countries and calling for an international debt conference with the equal participation of all countries. But this framing of goals has little mobilization capacity, because a clear and simple goal definition is lacking and, above all, because there is no direct connection to the citizens' interests. There are no practical benefits that citizens can expect from their participation.

The text of the leaflet does not anticipate mobilization success. Only a list of supporting actors (on the back) implies wide participation. This can be viewed as increasing mobilization, owing to the fact that people are more apt to join a campaign that is likely to be successful. The list thus frames the anticipation of a large demonstration and motivates people to participate.

Though the master frame offers propositions, albeit general and vague, for solving the defined problems, it fails to define the means and methods necessary to attain the ends. Assuming that the definition of means to achieve the ends is an important element of successful mobilization, we can observe a particular weakness of the frame in this respect. The frame identifies and labels problems, causes and causal agents, and potential solutions, but offers little help in finding solutions to the problems.

2.4 Framing of the addressees of demands. Which actors are supposed to solve the problems defined by the master frame? Who are the addressees of the protest? In this dimension, the master frame significantly lacks clear solutions. The addressees and the causes of the defined problems are practically identical: the IMF, the World Bank and the leading western nations. These are explicitly or implicitly addressed, but not labelled more precisely through additional framing strategies. Furthermore, the form in which the addressees are labelled carries with it scant possibility of the realization of the frame's demands: the actors exploit the world intentionally and are themselves part of the capitalist world order and its dominant logic. However, the main thesis of the master frame is that only through massive changes in the free world market can an amelioration of the problems occur. This broad thesis hinders the process of identifying addressees and of labelling them culpable, because the "general structure of the world economic order" is not an actor which can be addressed. This again reduces the frame's mobilizing capacity.

2.5 Self-legitimation of social movements. The leaflet contains no self-definition of the social movement actors, either as a collective

actor or as an actor who advocates universal interests. Furthermore, there is no reference to other, famous actors upon which the frame could draw for legitimacy. Thus, the framing dimension "self-legitimation" remains unclear in the anti-IMF campaign's master frame, probably reducing its mobilizing capacity.

To sum up, by comparing an ideal-type frame with the real-type anti-IMF frame, we come to the following conclusions: in the dimensions "Interpretation of a Topic" and "Interpretation of a Cause", the master frame of the anti-IMF campaign fits almost all criteria of the ideal-type frame for successful mobilization. In addition, the two dimensions are integrated into a broader system of meaning, further increasing the frame's mobilization potential. The dimensions concerning the framing of "addressees", "goals/success" and especially of "self-legitimation of an actor" are not well developed, however, partly because they are not even mentioned (self-legitimation of an actor), and partly because no sufficient strategy is proposed to fill these dimensions.

Prospects

The thesis of the importance of framing processes has been advanced primarily by authors coming from the theoretical school of symbolic interactionism. As impressive as the various analyses referred to in the course of this paper are, this approach appears to be subject to two problems.

(a) Symbolic interactionist approaches theoretically emphasize and show, on the basis of empirical material, that issues and problems are merely constructs created by frames and patterns of interpretation. The statements formulated into framing processes are generally descriptive statements; hypotheses are absent. If we assume that the goal of scientific work is, in addition to formulating descriptive statements, to find explanations, then the formulation of hypotheses makes sense. The point of reference for the formulation of hypotheses is the degree of persuasion of frames. The ideas presented here are to be understood as an initial step toward the formulation of hypotheses. The differentiation of framing dimensions was intended to identify and define the field of possible areas which are important for persuasion and mobilization. The differentiation of framing strategies implies the formulation of hypotheses. I have tried to describe an ideal-type frame and use it as a foil for a real-type frame in order to develop some hypotheses.

(b) The second problem in the development of frame analysis is one of methods: how can empirically sound analyses, according to criteria of intersubjective verifiability, be carried out in the soft area of interpretation analysis? Symbolic interactionist approaches have entered into an alliance with qualitative methods here. The problems are evident. It is frequently possible to describe the contextual meaning of arguments, but the text-analysis operation is still a subjective interpretation of text. The opposite correlation is true for conventional content analysis. Quantitative content analysis is an intersubjectively verifiable procedure for data analysis, but it does not do justice to the goal of the analysis, as it breaks down the text into isolated elements.

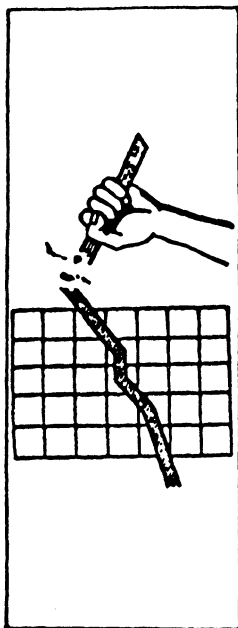
What path can we try between the Scylla of subjective hermeneutics and the Charybdis of quantitative content analysis? I have pursued two strategies to compensate for the methodological problems described earlier. (1) Problems with interpreting data can in part be compensated for by using the sampling procedure to select and reduce the body of text which is to be analysed. The goal is to bring down the body of text to limited, but nevertheless meaningful, material. The reduction of the material to what is meaningful also allows the material itself to be included with the analysis, so that the reader can confirm the plausibility of the interpretation for himself. (2) The graphical methods which Axelrod (1976) used to reconstruct the decision-making processes of elites can be also used to reconstruct the structure of frames. This allows the information of a frame to be reduced to the framework of the argumentation and to be compared with other frames. This is, however, only an initial attempt at finding firm ground in the soft field of frame analysis, and it is in need of further development.

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APPENDIX

World solidarity leaflet *

For the resolution of the debt crisis - for a just world economic order



In September 1988, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank will hold their yearly meeting in Berlin(West). These two top institutions of the international financial system have a key responsibility in connection with the indebtedness crisis of the "third world" which has been worsening since 1982. Through their rigorous conditions and their so-called structural adjustment programs, the leading Western industrial countries are decisively responsible for the economic exploitation of the "third world", for the impoverishment of the people living there and for the brutal destruction of their natural prerequisites for living.

The present foreign debt of the "third world" amounts to the gigantic, prohibitive sum of 1,2 trillion US dollars. The interest and principal payment of these countries far exceed the influx of new capital in the meantime. The debtor countries must expend a larger and larger share of their export income to pay them back, less and less remains for meeting basic internal needs and making domestic investments.

usually deported to face exploitation, torture and death. The circle of impoverishment, underdevelopment and militarization is closed again. Even the people here do not remain unscathed: unemployment, new poverty and the cutback of social services are only other expressions of the same crisis which is driving the "third world" into ruin. We must find the way out. The disastrous development has to be stopped. The prevailing debt management by the IMF, the World Bank, commercial banks and Western governments with refinancing, new loans and case by case treatment does not provide a solution; on the contrary, it strengthens the dependence and intensifies the crisis.

There is no way out without writing off the debts. The burdens must be borne by those who are responsible for the situation. This requires, at the same time, a change in international relations and the balance of power. This is why the political and social movements who have to push through their interests against the power cartel of corporations, banks, the IMF, the World Bank and

The causes for this situation are rooted above all in the existing world economic order which forces the countries in the "third world" to play a subordinate role tailored to the needs of the Western industrial countries. Through a policy of granting initially cheap loans which changed the US high interest policy, the problem of indebtedness and unjust exchange relations was intensified. Each attempt at escaping from underdevelopment, dependence and misery is doomed to fail under these circumstances.

The economic ruin of the "third world" is linked with the dissolution of existing social relations, the destruction of cultural identity and especially affects the women, who have to bear the greatest burden of the devastated living and production structures.

Misery and want lead to societal disruptions. Dictatorship, regional conflicts and wars are the consequences. In many countries in the "third world", almost 2/3 of the national budgets are to purchase weapons and arm the police in the meantime. The weapons manufacturers in the first world earn money from this! More and more people are trying to escape this situation. The borders are closed to them here. As (economic) refugees they are repressed again and

elites need our solidarity.

We support the demand of many countries in the "third world" to lay out the concrete conditions for the debt write-off in the framework of an international debt conference with the equal participation of all countries. The debt payments should be suspended until the negotiations are concluded.

A debt write-off alone will not be able to solve the problems in the long run. As long as the relations between the peoples of the world are regulated by the "free" world market and the principle of the largest possible profit determines political and economic behavior, then the chain of economical crises with their devastating effects will not be broken off.

Resources and finances are tied up world-wide through military armament, both in the "first world" and in the countries of the "third world". We demand concrete arms control and steps toward disarmament. They must be linked with the goal of placing the resources thus freed up at the disposal of the countries in the "third world" for their development.

Disarmament and development must be directly connected.

The establishment of a new, just world economic order is unavoidable.

To mark the yearly meeting of the IMF and the World Bank we are calling for a demonstration and rally on the 25th of September 1988 in Berlin (West)!
11:00, Joachimstaler Straße / corner of Kurfürstendamm
SOLIDARITY WITH THE PEOPLES OF THE "THIRD WORLD"

* [This is a translation from the German of the original leaflet.]

Notes

1. A pure constructivism (e.g. Edelmann, 1988) meets its limits here. All framing dimensions need empirical support or symbolically constructed empirical support.

2. Compare the concept of "empirical credibility" in Snow and Benford (1988: 208).

3. Edelmann (1988) refers to the fact that many current problems (poverty, unemployment, discrimination against minorities), which have become problems because they were defined as such, were taken for granted in the past.

4. The creation of concern can be differentiated further. Runciman (1967, quoted in Klandermans, 1989) distinguishes between "egoistic deprivation" and "fraternalistic deprivation". Egoistic deprivation takes place when the individual believes that only his individual position has deteriorated in comparison with a reference group. Fraternalistic deprivation refers to an interpreted deterioration of the social position for an entire reference group. Movements increase their mobilization possibilities when they can make plausible that not only the position of individuals deteriorates, but that the deterioration represents a collective phenomenon which also affects others. A mobilization thus pursues not only particular motives but universal ones as well.

5. Snow and Benford's (1988: 208) somewhat awkward concept of "experiential commensurability" has a similar implication. Personalization is a second strategy for making problems more concrete: not abstractly discussing nuclear power plants, but showing pictures of radioactive contaminated children; not that the inter-German policy is misguided, but that the Chancellor is incompetent.

6. Snow et al. (1986: 469) call this process of loading "value amplification".

7. The strength of the halo effect is dependent on three conditions (see Snow and Benford, 1988): (1) the centrality of the question, the position in the value hierarchy where the topic can be inserted, (2) the expansion of the respective ideology, and (3) the ties between different values within an ideology.

8. The connection of problems to ideological systems is not always "natural", but is often a conscious process. Collective actors who want to carry out a mobilization attempt to connect problem definitions with value patterns. Snow et al. (1986) have described various "framing" strategies: "frame-bridging" is the creation of a connection between two value complexes; "frame-amplification" makes a general framework more precise in regard to a specific problem; both are variants of the ideological loading of a specific issue.

9. Unusual measures gain their strength through their novelty value. Correspondingly, they are also worn out quickly. In addition, they make exceptional demands on the interpretation of the issue and the self-legitimation of the actors involved. Both must be formidable if their use is to be considered as legitimate. If an unusual measure cannot be made plausible (i.e. why a rule violation is necessary), then the increase in attention is connected with a negative assessment of the goals and the actor. This can be balanced out only through additional efforts at framing the issue, the goal and the credibility of the actor who is breaking the rules. The reference to higher authorities generally serves as legitimation (see Sykes and Matza, 1957).

10. The Bundeswehr attempted to get around the self-definition of the peace movement by publicly labelling itself as the largest peace movement in the Federal Republic.

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