INFOCORE Deliverable D8.1

2014/10

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK: PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

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METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK OF WP8: PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(EXECUTIVE SUMMARY)

Work Package (WP) 8 studies parliamentary discourses concerning the following violent conflicts: Israel-Palestine, Syria, Macedonia, Kosovo, Burundi, and DR Congo. In this regard, WP8 analyzes debates, interpellations, speeches, resolutions, and declarations addressed by parliamentary members of conflict countries, but also of European Parliament (UE), Bundestag (Germany), National Assembly (France), and House of Commons (United Kingdom). Thus, our main research objective is to identify the conceptual categories and semantic structures used to construct the discourses of Members of Parliament (MPs) and which of them may influence the development of conflicts. In this respect, mainly relevant are the flows of contents generated by news media, social media, strategic communications, and those present in the political debates. They seem to be interconnected, so that parliamentary debates and resolutions could influence and also be influenced by the contents spread in the other forums/outlets. In the first case, MPs act as sources of discursive patterns; in the second case, they perform the role of receivers of these patterns which can also be transformed while addressing the Parliament. Analyzing these parliamentary and other WP discursive dynamics (including WP5 -social media, WP6 - strategic communication and WP7 - journalistic contents) is a main objective for INFOCORE. Accordingly, WP8 will study the actual agenda setting and the source/receiver role/function of political actors of the parliaments and parliamentary debates and resolutions. Moreover, we are especially interested in the application of a gender perspective to determine not only how women in conflict are treated during the parliamentary debates, but also the dynamics of participation and relationships in the Parliament arena regarding gender.

The methodological procedure to accomplish these goals is a multi-step, qualitative-quantitative mixed design. In the qualitative pre-study, we search for these key elements of the language used in parliamentary debates that seem to be the main components of the discourse. Our sample consists of the records of the debates developed in parliaments and the institutional declarations and resolutions approved by some of these chambers. In the qualitative pre-study, we investigate each conflict at various stages of its development as it is treated in every parliament we need to study, in order to determine their particularities and diachronic evolutions. So, in this first step of our study, we will identify the main conceptual categories and the most frequent semantic patterns (evidential claims, interpretative frames, and agendas for action) presented in the parliament arena to induce the syntactic and semantic rules that we can use to identify them in the automatized content analysis, which will be the second step in our research.

In the quantitative discourse analysis we will use the JamCat program to study a much larger sample of parliamentary records that will give us large quantities of information about these concepts and patterns. In so doing, we will be able to determine the diachronic evolution and the similarities and differences between and alongside the parliaments and conflicts. Finally, we will conduct an in-depth qualitative

analysis based on the results of the second step. Our in-depth manual analysis of the key texts signaled by the JamCat will pay special attention to variables that are important to our objectives and which are difficult to study using a computer-based content analysis.

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The analysis of the contents of conflict-related discourses is addressed within INFOCORE by four Work Packages (WP5, WP6, WP7, and WP8), which study material coming from social media posting, strategic communication, news content, and parliamentary discourses, respectively. These four groups not only analyze the same conflicts (Israel-Palestine, Syria, Macedonia, Kosovo, Burundi, and DR Congo), but they also use a common methodological framework in order to enable the researcher to conduct a systematic comparison. However, since each WP deals with a different topic, each group needs to implement its own methodological approach. This deliverable aims at specifying how WP8 will apply the common methodology to parliamentary debates.

The paper will initially indicate the conceptual background and formulate the main questions and research interests for the study of parliamentary debates. Furthermore, we will deal with the specifics of the sampling: the difficulties of searching the files and its final composition formed by symbolic and substantive parliamentary agendas. Thereafter, the methodological strategy will be outlined. The first methodological step indicated in the paper is the qualitative pre-study, which will be sub-divided into two phases to identify the main conceptual categories and semantic patterns displayed in parliamentary debates. The automated content analysis is the second methodological step, where evidential claims, interpretative frames, agendas for actions,[1] and other specific material of interest in parliamentary agendas are identified throughout a larger sample. Finally, we will indicate the particularities of our qualitative in-depth analysis.

Conceptual perspective

Parliamentary agendas comprise a wide range of issues and themes between which political actors must choose. Only a few of them are finally discussed in the parliamentary chamber. The agenda building process is the main theoretical paradigm that we will use in order to try to understand why some issues enter into the parliamentary domain while so many others fail this attempt. Several studies conducted during the last 35 years have shown that there are three main categories of factors or circumstances that play a key role determining which issues will receive political attention in the parliament arena. These characteristics are related to the issues themselves (if it has been already discussed, if it impacts on a large number of people or has severe indicators, if it is related to justice or crime, etc.), to the way media react to them (which kind of coverage, which kind of media outlet devotes attention to them, how consonant is the treatment between the different media, etc.), and, finally, to the political context (if it is an election

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[1] To know more about these analytical categories, we recommend reading the Common Methodological Framework for Content Analysis included in Annex 1 (Baden & Stalpouskaya, 2014).

time or not, if the issue is close to personal traits of political actors or if it appears in the party manifesto, the ministerial meetings or the government agreement, etc.).

The study of how the parliamentary agenda is built will also allow us to know which models are more prevalent at different stages, depending on which actors are promoting the issues and what are the dynamics that these follow along the process: outside initiative model, mobilization model, and initiative inside model (Cobb, Ross & Ross, 1976). The theory of agenda building will not be the only one taken into consideration by this WP, to the extent that our aims need to incorporate the knowledge produced in four other theoretical paradigms. First is the politics of attention (Jones & Baumgartner, 2005), which outlines how important it is to assess why political actors allocate this limited resource to some issues and how the attention can vary from a diachronic point of view, identifying the existence of an issue-attention cycle, if possible (Downs, 1972). The second paradigm is the one that analyzes the mediatisation of politics, which should be understood as "a long-term process through which the importance of the media and their spill-over effects on political processes, institutions, organizations and actors have increased" (Strömback & Esser, 2014: 6). This approach addresses how media logic is gradually replacing political logic, making the political activity depending on journalistic professional practices and norms, commercialism, and technological media formats. Third, it is important to consider the agenda-setting model in order to be able to identify which issues are discussed in parliamentary debates, and, finally, the research about frames in communication (Baden, 2010).

The INFOCORE approach to research involves paying attention to different types of agendas: public, formal, media, and policy agendas. This last kind of agenda is, obviously, the most important one for us. It can include both the parliamentary or congressional agenda and the executive or government one. Our WP is researching the first one, distinguishing between two different parliamentary agendas: symbolic and substantive (Walgrave, Soroka & Nuytemans, 2008: 817). The analysis offers a unique opportunity to understand how these two congressional agendas are built looking at violent conflict periods and taking into consideration different national contexts. The research of this material must be oriented toward the analysis of different discourse properties, mainly evidential claims, interpretative frames, and agendas for action, which are explained in the common annex (Annex I).

Formulation of the WP's main questions and research interests

For the study of the dynamics and patterns generating and constructing parliamentary debates and agreements, and, in particular, for the analysis of the reception of news and media influence on the parliamentary arena during violent conflicts, our research interests may be described in the four following points:

1. *Parliamentary agenda-building: how MP decide which issues to discuss.* We will focus on oral and written questions, interpellations, speeches, resolutions, and declarations addressed by parliamentary members of the following institutions: The Knesset (Israel), Palestinian Legislative Council

(Palestine), People's Council (Syria), National Assembly (Serbia), Assembly of Kosovo (Kosovo), Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia (Macedonia), National Assembly (Democratic Republic of the Congo), National Assembly (Burundi), European Parliament (EU), Bundestag (Germany), National Assembly (France), and House of Commons (United Kingdom).

This approach should allow us to answer these questions:

a)   What issues are covered in the parliamentary debates? Which of these issues become material for parliamentary resolutions?

b)   Are these issues stable over time or do they vary from a diachronic point of view?

c)   Which factors related to the issue or the political context favor their inclusion?

d)   Who takes the initiative on an issue in the parliamentary debates and what are the reasons to raise it?

e)   Which parliamentary group supports the main discourse and which introduces marginal discourses?

2. *Discussed issues' main features: evidential claims, frames, and agendas.* It is through the research of these elements that we will have a deeper understanding of how political actors build their own discourse about the issues that have attracted their attention.

This approach should allow us to answer these questions:

f)   Which are the main frames, evidential claims, and agendas for action linked to the main issues discussed in parliamentary debates?

g)   Which factors favor the inclusion of some evidential claims, interpretative frames, and agendas for action, while others are excluded? Do they share specific qualities which enhance their possibility to enter into the parliamentary debates and in parliamentary resolutions?

h)   Are there correlations between these frames and the ones present in media coverage, in social media, and strategic contents? What about evidential claims and agendas for action?

i)   Who promotes them?

j)   What is the diachronic evolution of these semantic patterns? Are they different or do they remain stable over time?

3. *Patterns of information diffusion: any common trend among different countries?* We must analyze if the study of the different regions reveals data that could explain common patterns of how information linked to war situations is diffused and adopted by political actors in parliamentary arenas.

This approach should allow us to answer these questions:

k) How is the issue-attention-cycle of MPs over time frames analyzed? Can we distinguish different phases?

l) Are there common patterns in the way MPs adopt war-related news content among the different countries studied?

m) When do parliamentary debates (symbolic agendas) become parliamentary resolutions and declarations (substantive agendas)? What factors and common patterns across countries and violent conflicts favor the adoption of parliamentary resolutions?

n) Do these patterns of informative diffusion influence the development (increasing or decreasing) of the conflicts?

4. *Gender representation.* Even though INFOCORE does not primarily focus on gender-specific research, we apply a gender-sensitive perspective, meaning gender is consistently taken into account throughout the research cycle.[2] Media contents represent conventional gender stereotypes, and the same pattern is adopted in media coverage of war, where men are traditionally presented as active participants and women as passive sufferers (Fröhlich, 2010). In fact, there exists a hierarchy of victimization, both reflected and reinforced in media discourses. At one extreme, we can identify those crime victims who never acquire legitimate victim status. At the other extreme, there are those who acquire the status of 'ideal victim' (e.g., elderly women and young children), who may attract massive levels of media attention (Greer, 2007: 22). Consequently, women can be understood as a key piece, both in war policies and conflict-related discourses, being used as a justification to initiate specific actions. Precisely, this idea makes relevant the analysis of the representation of gender in parliamentary debates, which adds new research questions:

o) How are women represented in parliamentary debates as part of violent conflicts? Are they presented as victims? Are they presented as part of a specifically vulnerable group of people (children, elderly, disabled, etc.)? Or are they understood to be an active part of the conflict? If so, are they represented as change agents or as new violent agents (for instances, as female suicide bombers)?

p) Is the performance of masculinity a pattern shared by female MPs? Are the traditional masculine characteristics exacerbated by male MPs when they talk about violent conflicts in parliamentary debates?

q) What is the participation level of women in parliamentary debates? Do they take the initiative? Which are their posts? What is the gender composition of parliaments?

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[2] See INFOCORE working paper *"Conceptual Framework for the Gender-Sensitive Perspective of INFOCORE"* (Fröhlich, 2014).

r)   What is the relationship between the genders in parliament? Does gender affect the way MPs interpellate each others?

Sampling Strategy

To outline the sampling strategy in parliamentary debates means taking several variables into consideration: the course of action to search for the right files in each parliament, the language limitations, the periods of recess, and the two types of documents we will study. In this section, we will analyze these variables individually and the challenges posed by each of them.

Procedure to collect the files concerning the conflicts

Although the common methodological strategy (Annex I) states that the collection of the right materials for our research goals will depend on the use of a keyword-based selection procedure, unlike the other WPs, this WP will not follow that method to search most of the parliamentary minutes that must be analyzed. The reason is that not all parliaments' websites have a search engine to access their files, so, in this sense, we can find different options, depending on the parliament we are studying, which will determine the procedure we will follow to search for the minutes that record the debates and the resolutions we are interested in. In Table 1, one can find a summary of the key information about the procedure, resources, and limitations to collecting the right files concerning each conflict from all parliaments. Moreover, in those countries whose language in not familiar for WP8 members, we will consult with native speakers to improve the collection procedure, but also to avoid missing or misreading nuances in the material during the analysis of the documents.

PARLIAMENTS	ONLINE RECORDS	SEARCH ABILITY	OPERATIONALITY	LANGUAGE LIMITATIONS
EU	Yes	Advance search engine	Search date by date or by keywords.	MPs speak in their respective languages. From November 2012 onwards, parliamentary debates are not translated into English. To include these documents in the JamCat, we need to translate the statements into the languages used by our dictionary and to separate the statements by languages.

United Kingdom	Yes	Simple search engine	Search by date or by MP (not useful)	None
France	Yes	Simple search engine	Browse firstly through ordinary /extraordinary sessions, and secondly date by date	None
Germany	Yes	Advance search engine	Search date by date or by keywords	WP8 members do not speak German but will use the INFOCORE dictionary
Serbia	Yes	Advance Search engine	Malfunction. Error while searching for keywords, date range, or activities /documents. We have to search by Serbian keywords on the general search engine.	The general search engine retrieves documents without systematicity. Furthermore, documents are published in Serbian and Bosnian. There are only few documents in English. WP8 members do not speak Serbian but will use the INFOCORE dictionary
Kosovo	Yes	Simple search engine	Search date by date through a calendar.	Only Serbian and Albanian language. WP8 members will use the INFOCORE dictionary.
Macedonia	Yes	Advance search engine	Search date by date through a calendar.	Website is neither actually working in English or French. It will work in Macedonian. INFOCORE dictionary.
Israel	Yes	Simple search engine.	Check date by date through a calendar. In the case of parliamentary committees, it is possible to make a keyword search but it doesn't work properly.	INFOCORE dictionary
Palestine	No parliamentary sessions since 2007	Yes. Advance search engine.	Search by sessions, periods and resolutions.	From 2007 onwards, there are no parliamentary debates. We can retrieve just resolutions.
Syria	No	No actual search engine	Browse in order to search for statements and resolutions	INFOCORE dictionary
Burundi	No	No search engine.	. Browse in order to search for statements and resolutions,	The National Assembly of Burundi records the parliamentary debates just in Kirundi, a Bantu language spoken in Burundi. Above all, there are administrative obstacles to get them.

RD Congo	No.	Browse in order to search for statements and resolutions,	Same case as Burundi Parliament.

Table 1: Procedures and limitations to collect the debates minutes and resolutions on parliaments

Periods of recess

Unlike what happens with media contents or social media materials, parliamentary debates have no regular periodicity. All parliaments studied meet according to a meeting calendar, and the recess dates are usually announced. In this sense, there are two factors that paralyze the activity of MPs. The first is the holidays, usually during the summer and at Christmas, but the parliaments may also have a recess also at Easter or Whitsun (as in the House of Commons). In any case, it usually depends on the culture of each country.

The second factor paralyzing the parliament activities is the holding of legislative elections, when the chambers are dissolved, to be constituted again after voting. Given this state of facts, our documentary corpus will be unavoidably fragmented. This could be considered a disadvantage if highlighted events are developed while parliaments are in a period of recess. As a consequence, WP8 will pay particular attention to those parliamentary sessions after the hiatus and will look for written questions and answers that can be posed by MPs without waiting for parliamentary sittings.

Especially relevant for us are the sessions following the holding of legislative elections because when the new chamber with a potential new government is seated, the discourse about a conflict or about the conflict's actors may also be modified. In this regard, the first sitting of the parliamentary legislature concerning a conflict is usually important, since the foundations of the government's foreign policies are usually laid out and could pose potential new evidential claims, interpretative frames, and agendas for action.

Types of documents

Since debates minutes are not available in all parliaments we are interested in, we determined that the best strategy was to not limit our study to this kind of document, but rather to expand the analysis to other discourses and messages addressed by chambers, which can be obtained from all the parliaments selected. As a result, we distinguished between two different kinds of analysis. On the one hand, we will study the minutes of the parliamentary debates. In these documents, chambers publish their discussions exactly as they are spoken and in a language that the project could deal with. According to some authors (Walgrave,

Soroka & Nuytemans, 2008: 817) in these cases we will study the symbolic political agenda because these debates don't need to have real policy consequences to the extent that, in principle, these discussions merely show concern about a particular matter by asking parliamentary questions or addressing them in a speech. This type of agenda is expected to be more reactive to media coverage than the substantive agendas. This last kind of agenda, which identifies those agendas that are more tangible, like the ones dealing with lawmaking, budgetary allocations, sanctioning, and nominations, would correspond with our second analysis: the study of declarations and resolutions made by the parliament as an institution. Therefore, we will analyze the substantive agendas when it will not be possible to work with the minutes, but also those of the non-conflict's parliaments in order to learn when, how, and why the parliamentary debates become parliamentary resolutions.

- *Debate's minutes.* For research into the symbolic agenda, we will use the automated content analysis to study the records of the debates developed in the parliaments of several countries. Specifically, this type of analysis can be executed on the proceedings of the European countries, whose debates must be analyzed from 2006 to the present (July 2015). WP8 will also access the records of the majority of the parliaments linked to the conflicts we study: Israel Parliament (Knesset, 2006 - present), Kosovo (2010 - present),Macedonia (2011 - present) and Serbia (2010-present). In order to conduct a study of the symbolic agenda of all the countries taken into consideration in this research project we will also study oral and written questions and answers, parliamentary speeches and parliamentary summaries quoting MPs' statements. Some of these documents may be unfit for automated analysis, but they can still be used for the qualitative stage.

- *Resolutions / Declarations.* One of the main objectives of the project is to conduct a comparative analysis between the different contexts and conflicts, so the researchers linked to WP8 believe that it would be useful to consider studying some documents that are common to most of the countries covered by the project (as we have already seen, minutes are not available or cannot be studied for different reasons in some of the parliaments). In this sense, the institutional declarations and resolutions (documents that allow the analysis of the substantive agenda) published by the countries in conflict and European parliaments offers the possibility of studying the contrasts between the different legislative contexts.

Methodological Strategy

As was previously noted, the overall INFOCORE methodological strategy is divided into three phases: (1) qualitative pre-study, (2) automated content analysis, and (3) in-depth qualitative analysis. This methodological design is common for the four Work Packages (WP5, WP6, WP7, and WP8) linked to the analysis of the contents of the conflict-related discourse, but since each of these teams is concerned with

a different discourse material, each methodological strategy will have its own implementation. Throughout this section, we will specify how WP8 will apply the common methodology to the parliamentary debates.

Qualitative Pre-Study

This WP, following the guidelines (Annex I) common to all the teams that will use the technique of automated content analysis, will make a pre-study with objective of preparing the ground. The final result of this pre-study will be the recognition of those key concepts and semantic structures that should guide the rest of the analysis. This pilot study has been designed to be completed in two different stages.

The main objective of the first phase is to carry out an open reading in order to accomplish a preliminary approach to the parliamentary materials. These discursive materials have their own particularities: the use of language, the dynamics of participation and interaction, the MP's different perspectives about events influenced by several politic, economic and social aspects, etc. In this regard, the aim of this first phase of our pre-study is to make contact with our particular material to identify any formal and content idiosyncrasies and, therefore, to have a preliminary view of how the common methodology could be applied to parliamentary debates.

This first step, which has already been successfully finalized, was carried out on two different conflicts, addressing three specific moments related to different years. It also took into consideration two different parliaments, whose languages did not pose obstacles for this first approach to the object of study (UK Parliament and National Assembly of France). Therefore, this pre-preliminary study provided us with the possibility of looking into different conflicts at different points in time to consider. This diachronic design is useful for identifying changes or transformations in conflict discourse over time, but also to discover similar patterns in different conflicts addressed from different parliaments. The selection of these three very precise and specific episodes was facilitated by descriptions of conflicts made by the Conflict Leaders. The episodes were as follows:

- *Gaza Flotilla* (31/05/2010). Israel-Palestine conflict.
  The Gaza flotilla raid was a military operation by Israel against six civilian ships of the "Gaza Freedom Flotilla" on May 31, 2010 in international waters in the Mediterranean Sea. Nine activists were killed in the raid. The flotilla, organized by the Free Gaza Movement and the Turkish Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief (HH), was carrying humanitarian aid and construction materials, with the intention of breaking the Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip.

The British Parliament discussed this incident on June 2 and June 14, 2010. The French Parliament discussed this episode on June 1, 2010.

- *Houla Massacre* (25/05/2012). Syria conflict.

    The Houla massacre took place on May 25, 2012, in the midst of the Syrian civil war, in two opposition-controlled villages in the Houla Region of Syria, a cluster of villages north of Homs. According to the United Nations (U.N.), 108 people were killed, including 34 women and 49 children. While a small proportion of the deaths appeared to have resulted from artillery and tank rounds used against the villages, the U.N. later announced that most of the massacre's victims had been summarily executed in two separate incidents. UN investigators have reported that some witnesses and survivors stated that the massacre was committed by pro-government Shabiha.

    The British Parliament discussed this incident on June 11 and June 19, 2012. The French Parliament discussed this episode on July 24, 2012.

- *Israel-Gaza conflict 'Operation Protective Edge'* (08/07/2014 - 26/07/2014). Israel-Palestine conflict.

    On July 8, 2014, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) launched Operation Protective Edge in the Hamas-governed Gaza Strip. Thereafter, seven weeks of Israeli air strikes and Palestinian rocket attacks, in addition to shelling and fighting in the ground invasion and cross-border tunnel attacks, left more than 2,100 people dead, most of them Palestinians.

    The British Parliament discussed this incident on July 14, July 21, and July 22, 2014. The French Parliament discussed this episode on July 15 and July 23, 2014.

Once this first stage of the qualitative pre-study is achieved and we are able to identify the peculiarities of the language used in parliamentary debates, we need to move to the next stage. In this second step, we will continue collecting key concepts and larger semantic patterns (evidential claims, interpretative frames, agendas for action) and will detect cross-contextual and diachronic variability of semantic contents, as it is explained in Annex I. However, in this stage, we will analyze a larger amount of parliamentary files. For each conflict, we will study at least three documents (debates or resolutions) published in each conflict country's parliaments and three documents in each non-conflict countries' parliaments. These documents must necessarily be related to different moments of the time range.

Table 1 presents the amount and kind of documents corresponding to the different conflicts and parliaments WP8 will analyze throughout this qualitative pre-study. At this research stage, 96 documents will be studied: 36 resolutions/declarations and 60 debate's minutes.

CONFLICT	PARLIAMENTS	TYPE OF DOCUMENTS	AMOUNT OF DOCUMENTS
Syria	People's Council of Syria	Debates' minutes	3
	European Parliament	Debates' minutes	2
		Resolutions / Declarations	1
	House of Commons (UK)	Debates' minutes	2
		Resolutions / Declarations	1
	French National Assembly	Debates' minutes	2
		Resolutions / Declarations	1
	German Bundestag	Debates' minutes	2
		Resolutions / Declarations	1
Israel-Palestine	Knesset	Debates' minutes	3
	Palestinian Legislative Council	Resolutions / Declarations	3
	European Parliament	Debates' minutes	2
		Resolutions / Declarations	1
	House of Commons (UK)	Debates' minutes	2
		Resolutions / Declarations	1
	French National Assembly	Debates' minutes	2
		Resolutions / Declarations	1
	German Bundestag	Debates' minutes	2
		Resolutions / Declarations	1
Kosovo	Kosovar Parliament	Debates' minutes	3
	National Assembly of Serbia	Debates' minutes	3
	European Parliament	Debates' minutes	2
		Resolutions / Declarations	1
	House of Commons (UK)	Debates' minutes	2
		Resolutions / Declarations	1
	French National Assembly	Debates' minutes	2
		Resolutions / Declarations	1
	German Bundestag	Debates' minutes	2
		Resolutions / Declarations	1
Macedonia	Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia	Debates' minutes	3
	European Parliament	Debates' minutes	2
		Resolutions / Declarations	1
	House of Commons (UK)	Debates' minutes	2
		Resolutions / Declarations	1
	French National Assembly	Debates' minutes	2
		Resolutions / Declarations	1
	German Bundestag	Debates' minutes	2
		Resolutions / Declarations	1
R. D. Congo	Congo National Assembly	Resolutions / Declarations	3
	European Parliament	Debates' minutes	2
		Resolutions / Declarations	1
	House of Commons (UK)	Debates' minutes	2
		Resolutions / Declarations	1
	French National Assembly	Debates' minutes	2
		Resolutions / Declarations	1
	German Bundestag	Debates' minutes	2
		Resolutions / Declarations	1
	Burundi National Assembly	Resolutions / Declarations	3
	European Parliament	Debates' minutes	2
		Resolutions / Declarations	1

Burundi	House of Commons (UK)	Debates' minutes	2
		Resolutions / Declarations	1
	French National Assembly	Debates' minutes	2
		Resolutions / Declarations	1
	German Bundestag	Debates' minutes	2
		Resolutions / Declarations	1
Total			96

Table 2: Documents to analyze for each conflict case during the second stage of the pilot study.

In case the debates' minutes of some countries in conflict won't be available, WP8 has outlined a contingency plan consisting of the analysis of the resolutions or of other kinds of documents retrieved from the Parliament at issue.

Additionally to evidential claims, interpretative frames, and agendas for actions, in this qualitative pre-study, WP8 will examine idiosyncrasies shown in parliamentary debates and resolutions, and focus on the consequences of these peculiarities in those semantic patterns. Following are the specific contents of interest concerning parliamentary debates and resolutions.

1. *Specific actors.* Parliamentary debates are characterized by individuals taking the floor to pose questions, making speeches, and discussing the arguments put forward by other MPs. Although the list of actors of interest for each conflict case will be shared between the different WPs, to study the parliaments, it is important to take into account the political positions of its members in order to distinguish the speeches made by a particular MP who is in the opposition from those addressed by another MP who supports the government. We have three different ways to reach this goal:

   a) The MPs themselves sometimes give references about their own political position ("As the Opposition, we are clear not only on the need…", "Those on the Opposition Front Bench say that…", "We on the Opposition Benches…").

   b) The debates' minutes sometimes specify the posts held by the MPs, but the information given is usually not enough to know every actor speaking, since the political charge indicated on the parliamentary documents use to be just the governmental ones. For example, in the UK debate about the Syrian Houla Massacre we can read the post hold by Mr. William Hague (the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs). On the contrary, in the first statement made by Mr. Douglas Alexander (Shadow Foreign Secretary), we are just informed about his political party and constituency seat.

   c) As a main analytical content, this WP will prepare a list comprised of all these individual actors, specifying their political position, where relevant, and party adscription. Annex II collects the methodological criteria we will follow in order to elaborate on the list of MPs for each significant parliamentary legislature.

2. *Sources/content cited.* It is common for MPs' speeches and parliamentary declarations to make references to other actors, declarations or statements in order to support their own points of view and decisions. The different types of references we need to point out to understand the whole meaning of parliamentary discourses is as follow:

    a) Political references.

        •   Statements made by political actors inside and outside parliament. These statements can be reported in direct or indirect speech. ("Il [the Minister of Foreign Affairs in his earlier intervention] a souligné que la position de la France était claire: «Le blocus de Gaza n'est pas tenable»…", "as the right hon. Gentleman said…", "and the language was repeated in the United Nations presidential statement on Monday night…", or "the presidential statement delivered to the council…").

        •   UN and other international agencies' resolutions. Sometimes they are named after their specific numbers, some other times they are called by its name (as it happens with 'Annan Plan' to bring peace between Israel and Palestine). Moreover, these resolutions can be incorporated into the parliamentary discourse in general or specifying a particular reference using quotation marks.

        •   Peace conferences, bilateral conferences and several international meetings in which the international actors are supposed to make agreements and take decisions.

    b) References concerning other conflicts. It is especially relevant the MPs' references to other undergoing or finalized conflicts: Palestine, Bosnia, Arab Spring, Norther Irland, etc. ("Drawing on our colonial experience and recent experience in Northern Ireland, is it not clear that sooner or later, however controversial it may be, Hamas will have to be brought into the circle of discussions?...", "There is a common characteristic, unfortunately, between Bosnia and Syria today –that is, the senseless brutality and unbridled barbarism…").
        It is interesting for our research goals to point out why MPs are using references to other conflicts to support an argumentation or hypothesis. In order to achieve this, we need to identify the concepts and semantic patterns they are communicating. Do they mobilize the same analytical concepts, evidential claims, interpretative frames and agendas for actions? Do they mobilize different patterns? Are these conflicts a common meaning reference to the whole parliament or the conflict has a different meaning depending on the ideological adscription?

    c) Media references. It is not surprising that MPs make references to media contents and mass media themselves, which is one of the key moments for our research. We can identify two different references:

- To media in general. Allusions to television, Youtube, satellite TV, etc. are made to evaluate how the information is spread and how the public opinion is built. ("There is such damage, of course, and not only in the view of leaders in the Arab world, but among the huge populations who now watch the footage of these crimes on satellite TV"…).

- To particular media contents. The quotation or references to some articles means that some of their informative dimensions will be underlined and other ones will be elided. Inevitably, media contents undergo a transformative process at the moment they are appropriated by other speakers, MPs in our case. ("This morning *The Times* reported that…", "Will my right hon. Friend commend the excellent article in *Haaretz* recently by His Highness Prince Turki of Saudi Arabia, which called attention to the need to re-engage the peace process, and praise it not only for who said it but for where it was published?", "The right hon. Gentleman asked about the comments by my noble Friend Lord Ashdown. Form my memory of that article … I do not think he was criticising any of the diplomatic moves we have made. A more extended quotation might have been a good idea at that point...").

3. *Level of agreement/support.* Parliamentary debates may contain specific references to the public support received by some idea or, even, it is possible to evaluate the level of agreement or disagreement achieved by some discourses and opinions expressed in parliament.

   a) Level of popular support referenced by MPs ("Large numbers of my constituents have expressed the view that the people of Gaza are suffering collective punishment...", "The Secretary of State is right to say that one of the only ways to break the cycle of violence is to improve conditions in Gaza, where many of the people whom I represent feel that civilians—women and children—are being collectively punished...").

   b) Level of agreement in parliament. We can identify this variable mainly in two ways:

   - Parliamentary questions: after the parliamentary speeches, MPs usually pose questions which usually let us know the level of (dis)agreement with the government's or other speakers' ideas and indicate their own perception, in this regard introducing new evidential claims, interpretative frames, and agendas for action: "May I press him a little on the international conference proposed by the Russians? In my view, it is well worth persevering with, but what would his attitude be if an invitation were extended to Iran?" It seems right to point out that parliamentary questions do not necessarily contain question marks or subject-verb order inversion: "I have five sets of questions for the Foreign Secretary, the first of which is about …", "the question to ask is why on

earth…". It is also relevant for our goals to identify the answers given to these questions ("The right hon. Gentleman asked about...", "On the question of...").

- Other expressions of support/refusal. The expressions of (dis)agreement may be specifically reflected in the parliamentary text with individual positive or negative exclamations ("Bravo!", "C'est condamanble") or even the text may contain just the appeals for order made by the chair of the parliament. These appeals underline the interruption suffered by the speaker, probably due to the MPs' whispers or complaints ("Mr. Speaker: Order."). Moreover, applauses in some areas of the parliament as support expressions may be reflected in the text (*"(Applaudissement sur les bancs des groups SRC, écologiste, RRDP et GDR)"*). In the case of French National Assembly, these remarks are indicated in the text in brackets and in italics.

4. *Level of diplomacy in discourse.* Diplomacy is a key influencing and specific factor in parliamentary debates, not only because the constant references to diplomatic efforts ("I think that that is to work diplomatically to bring about an agreed ceasefire, to do our utmost to provide humanitarian relief and to work to ensure that the peace process can be revived...") which we can also find in media contents, but also because sometimes the diplomacy becomes a boundary to MPs' expressions and agendas for action ("Of course we often make some criticism of their position, as they do of ours, in public but we have a good working relationship with the Russian leaders. ... We will keep making exactly that case because, as we have been discussing over the past few minutes, all the alternatives to bringing about the full implementation of the Annan plan or something very close to it are extremely bloody and have unknowable consequences.", "The UK is a committed friend of Israel , and a friend to the region…").

5. *Gender representation.* Applying a gender-sensitive perspective means taking into account how women are represented in parliamentary discourse, if they are victimized and associated to other actors traditionally passives ("A similar atrocity appears to have been committed last week in al-Qubair, where 78 people were killed, including women and children…", "We should not equate terrorists firing rockets with a supposedly civilised state systematically killing women and children and elderly and disabled people...") or, on the contrary, if they are represented as subjects able to protect themselves and to take actions forward. Besides, we will identify the parliamentary interventions made by women MPs and how they are contradicted or applauded by his male pairs, paying special attention to the possibility to find gender discrimination in the use of language.

Quantitative Automated Analysis

This quantitative research phase is characterized by the automated analysis of the main concepts and semantic patterns we identified in the qualitative pre-study, but in a larger corpus of parliamentary documents. As it is pointed out in Annex I, at this stage the content material, the specific WP8 codifications obtained from the pre-study, the general dictionary and the WP8 specific dictionary are introduced into an auto-coding software environment, the JamCat, capable of identifying specific semantic structures. As a result of this quantitative automated analysis, every parliamentary text will appear, first of all, as a vector of recognized conceptual contents. After the second step, during which the macro-syntactic structure of each content material is modelled, the texts will be represented by a matrix of detected concept associations. In the third and last step, the matrices will be aggregated and represented as a complex semantic network, the basis for the analysis.

Once the processing commences on the large corpus of documents, every WP will focus primarily on three analytic strategies:

1. *Identification and measurement of evidential claims.* Evidential claims are defined by the presence of an assertive statement about a key concern, ontological information linked with other claims of the same proposition, and epistemic qualifications moderating the status of the claim. To understand the particularities of the evidential claims in parliamentary debates, it will be useful to analyze one of these semantic patterns obtained from the qualitative pilot-study.

   "Our dialogue with Russia on this subject is continuous, and I think it is fair to say that the Russian position has certainly shifted its emphasis and perhaps its substance to some degree, which increasingly emphasises that the Russians are not wedded to Assad and that they want to see stability in Syria."

   First of all, we must note the three compositional elements of one evidential claim:

   a) Key concern: the diplomatic position of Russia with regard to Syria (or at a more abstract level: the strategic allies of the conflict countries).
   b) Ontological information: the Russians are not wedded to Assad.
   c) Epistemic qualifications: perhaps, certainly, increasingly emphasises, to some degree.

   To really understand the meaning and the relevance of this statement, we must first learn who is speaking and why is he or she talking about this subject. Thanks to the second step of this automated phase, where the macro-syntactic structure is evaluated, we will know that the actor speaking is Mr. Hague (the last name in the text in bold). We will also learn that Mr Hague is answering a parliamentary question because in the previous paragraph he started saying: "The right hon. Gentleman asked about...", which is an operational specification of one of our main

contents of interest: parliamentary questions and answers. Moreover, thanks to the automated content analysis, we will automatically know that it is an answer to a question posed by Mr. Douglas Alexander (the previous name in bold to Mr. Hague's). Whether Mr. Hague's post is specifically written in the parliamentary text (Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs), thanks to the development of our Annex II (where we will collect a detailed list with the characteristics of the members of every parliament) we could find out that Mr Alexander was, on such date, the Shadow Foreign Secretary.

At this point, the automated analysis will provide the information about the question posed by Mr. Alexander about Russia and will point out if he (or any other MPs) is introducing a different evidential claim and its epistemic status about this key concern. Moreover, the JamCat, after being fed up with the operational specifications of the specific contents of interest for our WP, will automatically give us the information specified in the text about level of diplomacy, level of (dis)agreement, sources referenced, and so on.

2. *Identification and measurement of interpretative frames.* As it is explained in Annex I, interpretative frames are latent semantic structures which can be identified by a combination of concepts in the discourse. Two or more concepts are assembled with a several frame ingredients which can include actors, regions, issues, and evaluative standards. These concepts are arranged within a frame as focal concerns, causes, and projections and characterized by a range of qualities: the tonality, the emotiveness, the evaluative quality, the epistemic qualifications, etc. Some of these frames, indeed, can be classified according existing theoretical taxonomies, a task which can be conducted automatically by the JamCat. We can see an example found in our pre-pilot study:

"The attack by the Israeli defence forces is the latest in a series of self-defeating and deadly moves by successive Israeli Governments in Gaza. We on the Opposition Benches join the international condemnation of an operation that was not self-defence but defence of failed policy. Israel does have rights to security against terrorism, but we are talking here about a policy that has done nothing to defeat terrorism. Until the people of Gaza can be confident of an education for their children in school not crumbling around them, of being able to feed and clothe their families adequately, and of being able to live without a prescribed list of what the can and cannot use in their kitchens, there is no way that the call of negotiation and peace will be heard."

We must note the compositional elements of this interpretative frame:

a) Concepts: Terrorism. Policy against terrorism. Victims. Peace negotiations.
b) Frame ingredients: Gaza, Israeli defence forces, Israeli Government, people of Gaza.
c) Focal concern: Israeli policy.
d) Causes: Terrorism.

e) Consequences: the suffering of people of Gaza.

f) Projections: impossibility of reaching a peace agreement.

g) Frames' qualities:

- Negative tonality.

- Emotiveness: emotionally charged language ("the people of Gaza can be ... able to feed and clothe their families adequately").

- Evaluative quality: condemnation.

- Epistemic qualification: we are talking here about a policy that has done nothing to defeat terrorism.

This interpretative frame can be measured with others made by the same parliament about the same conflict in a different time range or at the same moment, but stated by a different actor, but also it can be compared with other frames of different conflicts, different parliaments, etc. As happened with evidential claims, whenever possible, the automated analysis of the interpretative frames will add information about the specific contents of interest of WP8: specific actors involved (also as speakers of the discourse), sources referenced, level of (dis)agreement, level of diplomacy and gender representation.

3. *Identification and measurement of agendas for action.* Agendas for action are directive statements postulating specific goals which must be accomplished. Their main components are: (1) a presentation of inacceptable facts/situations, (2) a desirable future state, and (3) specific actions which should be implemented to reach it. The automated content analysis uses a large amount of indicators to identify them, and to point out also the author of an agenda (which, in parliamentary debates, can be the MP speaking, the political party he/she represents, or another political actor referenced by the MP) and the subject (if anyone) to whom the demanded action is addressed. It is useful to notice that agendas for action in parliamentary debates can also be presented as parliamentary questions. Finally, we will proceed to classify the agendas accordingly to specific arenas (military, political, economic, social/humanitarian, psychological, and unspecified) and to the dynamic aimed (de-escalation, maintenance or escalation). We can bring light to agendas for action with an example found in our pre-pilot stage.

"As a result, Syria today is on the edge of civil war. That could lead to thousands more casualties, a humanitarian disaster and human rights violations on an even greater scale, and instability in neighbouring countries. We are working intensively to find a peaceful means of resolving this crisis. Our approach, in close coordination with our European partners is: first, to push for implementation of the Annan plan as the internationally agreed road map to end the violence; secondly, to increase the pressure and isolation felt by the regime; and, thirdly, to ensure justice, accountability and humanitarian assistance for the Syrian people."

The main components of this agenda for action are:

a) Presentation of inacceptable facts: "Syria today is on the edge of civil war. That could lead to thousands more casualties, a humanitarian disaster and human rights violations …"

b) A desirable future state: "to find a peaceful means of resolving this crisis".

c) Specific actions: "implementation of the Annan plan", "to increase the pressure and isolation felt by the regime", "to ensure justice, accountability and humanitarian assistance".

In this regard, the JamCat will likely classify this agenda for action in the political and humanitarian domain aimed at a de-escalation of violence, an agenda which will be compared throughout the parliamentary session, with other sessions concerning the same conflict and with agendas stated for other conflicts. Moreover, as happened with the previous semantic patterns, the JamCat will provide information about our specific contents of interest: sourced referenced, level of (dis)agreement, level of diplomacy in discourse, etc., which will be also comparatively analyzed.

Once these semantic patterns are identified by JamCat throughout the whole corpus of parliamentary documents, we can analyze how a specific issue (Russia as Syria's ally) is constructed. This means to learn which evidential claims, interpretative frames and agendas for actions have been more popular and long-standing, to know their diachronic variability and the similarity of their qualities with other issues and in different countries. This procedure will enable to understand how the topic Russia has been built in parliamentary discourses and how this issue has affected the discourse about Syrian conflict. This way, the semantic network of discourses concerning violent conflicts will be outlined.

However, not every evidential claim, interpretative frame, or agenda for actions can be identified, measured, classified, or compared by the content automated analysis. In this regard, it is necessary to implement the last stage of our research: the qualitative in-depth analysis.

Qualitative in-depth analysis

This third phase of our research methodology is characterized by a deductive logic applied on a selected key parliamentary debates and resolutions. To recognize which are these particular texts we will focus on, we need to pay attention to those texts and patterns identified as critical by the quantitative automated analysis. Hence, this in-depth analysis is based on the results of the previous research stage. As it is pointed out in Annex I, this approximation will add nuance and detail to those findings impossible to reach by the automated analysis and will aim to develop theoretical explanations to our results.

Especially significant for the research goals of INFOCORE's analysis is the identification of key moments and discourses when new semantic patterns are built and the dynamics of debate are modified. Once one of this discursive moment is localized WP8 will aim to trace the line until its origin and its development, trying to explain why a particular event has changed the dynamics of the parliamentary

debate and how that hypothetical new evidential claim, interpretative frame, or agenda for action has been adopted or transformed in other content materials (media contents, social media, or strategic contents).

One of the relevant contents for WP8 concerns the actors' success in modelling the parliamentary discourse, the parliamentary agenda, and, in a broader sense, the discourse concerning violent conflicts. It is not the same that the actor strongly supported is the Secretary of Foreign Office than the Shadow Foreign Secretary, or that a MP asses a successful agenda for action because it was demanded by his or her electorate. This can be related with the political context when the parliamentary debate is taking place (at the beginning or at the end of a parliamentary term, for example) and can help us to study and theorize about the model of parliamentary agenda developed: outside initiative model, mobilization model, or initiative inside mode.

Detecting how parliamentary patterns concerning violent conflicts work not only will be useful to know how a particular semantic pattern has played an important role in the conflict, but also will let us theorize and relate our outcomes with four essential theoretical paradigms:

1. *The political agenda-building process.* This phenomenon refers to how policy agendas are built, which may be influenced by real-world events, media-related, and politics-related issues. We can analyze how and to what extent these variables are affecting the parliamentary debates.

2. *The issue-attention cycle and the politics of attention.* Taking several key discursive moments into account will help us to determinate the different stages of parliamentary attention through which an important issue passes.

3. *The mediatization of politics.* In this case, we will try to figure out and measure the media influence (but also the influence of social media and strategic contents) in political sphere.

4. *The agenda-setting theory and the framing theory.* At this point of the research, items had already been identified but we will focus on the frames. At this regard, WP8 will measure several important variables. These variables concern negativity; the level of interpretation given the facts; the economic, political, or social consequences; the strategy; the emotional/human interest; the episodic or thematic presentation; the responsibility, and the actors balance. Annex III deepens in the variables we will analyze in this in-depth research phase.

This qualitative stage also will let us analyze some main contents of interest which were undertaken in the previous phases but need a qualitative focus. Even if the automated analysis may study the way women are used in discourses about violent conflict, for example, if they are always mentioned next to other typical victims (disabled persons, children, old people, etc.), other hypothetical cases of gender discrimination or unequal representation on the parliamentary discourse can be elided. It is also difficult for automated content to recognize gender discrimination addressed to women MPs, and it is here where the qualitative analysis gains importance.

The relevance of this analytical phase is also evident regarding other main issues for our WP. This is the case of the level of diplomacy of discourse, which can be easily identified in automated stage when the word 'diplomacy' is used, but when the diplomatic relationships are understated, the JamCat can not fully recognize them. This is exactly what happens when MPs are talking about economic and strategic interest in particular areas, a topic which is not usually fully expressed, but referred to with euphemisms, metaphors, and other figures of speech ("The UK is a committed friend of Israel, and a friend to the region…"). Something similar happens with the references to other conflicts, where the automated analyzes can identify them and even to compare the semantic patterns used, but only the qualitative analysis can fully appraise the connotations of these references.

As a result of this last step of the research, where the commonalities and differences of the discourses concerning different conflicts will be outlined, we will have been able to recognize the discursive patterns followed by the parliamentary discourses, media content, social media, and strategic contents, the characteristics of evidential claims, interpretative frames, and agendas for action shaping the discourses and, finally, the informative flows influencing the development of the violent conflicts (increasing or decreasing them).

ANNEX I: COMMON METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK: CONTENT ANALYSIS

ANNEX II: MPs

A key aim of this WP should be to know the actors taking the initiative of an issue in the parliamentary debate. In order to accomplish this task, we must know some parliamentary speakers' characteristics, as their ideological affiliation, or the position they hold in parliament or in government. At this respect, we will develop a detailed list with members of every parliament we will study, which, at this moment, is still undergoing. In this file, we will classify MPs according several qualities:

1. *According the parliament and legislature where MPs develop their activity:* each parliament formed in each legislature will be collected in a different Excel page. That means that for the non-conflict parliaments, we will need to cover every legislature from 2006 to July 2015. For the conflict parliaments, Table 3 collects the time range we will need to cover.

Conflict	March 2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	July 2015
Israel-Palestine	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Syria						■	■	■	■	
Macedonia							■	■	■	■
Kosovo					■	■	■			
Burundi					■	■	■	■	■	■
DRC							■	■	■	

Table 3: Time range of discourse covered for each conflict

2. *According their political party.* The first column of every page will describe the name, surname, and political affiliation of the MPs. The MPs are grouped according to their political party. In this respect, the order displayed will depend on the number of MPs in each party. This meant that the first party collected will be the one with a largest number of seats in the legislature under analysis. For example, regarding 2010-2015 legislature of Britain's House of Commons, it was the Conservative Party which won the largest number of seats (306). Next was Labour Party, with 258 seats. So, the political parties will appear in descending order according to the number of seats obtained.

3. *According the post they hold.* In this regard, and in order to put in practice an effectiveness and utility criterion, in the second column of every page we should collect not every post developed by the MPs, but rather those which can be important in the debates regarding violent conflicts. We can distinguish different kinds of posts:

   a. Posts relatives to the parliamentary career; we need to collect:

      • Ministers of State: we will take into account all charges.

- Secretaries of State and Parliamentary under Secretary of State (Parliamentary Secretaries): we will just collect the posts connected with the select committees (see below) that are important to our goals. We will also add the Cabinet Office.
- Solicitor general and Attorney general.
- Leader of the House of Commons.
- Shadows concerning the prior posts.

b. Membership of a Select Committee: we will only collect the committees which have some relevance for our goals. We offer here the list of committees we understand are important for us in UK Parliament. The criteria for the rest of the parliaments will be the parallelism with the issues concerned.

- Armed Forced Bill Committee (eliminated in 2011)
- Committees on Arms Export Controls
- Culture, Media, and Sport Committee
- Defence Committee
- Foreign Affairs Committee
- Human Rights (Joint Committee)
- Intelligence and Security (Joint Committee)
- International Development Committee
- Joint Committee in Security
- National Security Strategy (Joint Committee)

c. Other posts as:

- Chair or vice-chair of the political parties.
- Father of the House of Commons.
- Member of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly.
- Member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, where we collect the full members, not the substitutes.

4. *According the time frame of MPs' position.* In the third column of every page, we will collect the years during which the MPs held their posts, which are not necessarily coincident with the whole legislature period. Moreover, as the MPs can hold several charges at the same time and different posts in a diachronic line, in the third column will be shown the temporality of every post displayed in the second column, according to its order of appearance.

Problems

The problems we face in order to elaborate the membership of MPs are multiple. It is not always possible to access the exact dates when the MPs start or finish their post. In UK Parliament, we can know the year

but not the month or the day, so, in order to know which is the position of a hypothetical speaker in a particular debate, our knowledge will just be approximated and we will need to corroborate his/her post in the records of parliamentary debates, in the case it would appear. As we have already noticed in the main text, the posts indicated in the parliamentary texts are usually those concerning the Government.

On a separate issue, in every parliament, we find different terminology to designate similar posts —so it is a language problem— but, what is most important, we find different Ministries and Secretariats of State groupings —so, it is much more than a language problem, it is a challenge in order to put in parallel the role played by similar posts in different countries.

ANNEX III: VARIABLES FOR THE IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS

Notes: The following variables can be used in order to analyze parliamentary minutes (WP8), nevertheless other Work Packages could find them useful for their own qualitative analysis.

A) *Concerning negativity.* The negative dimension can be found in statements, paragraphs or on the story level, and it can be actor-related or frame-related. After accomplishing an extensive literature review (Lenguauer, Esser & Berganza, 2011; Patterson, 2010; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; Stromback & Dimitrova, 2006) we have decided to study the following variables:

1. Level of negative tonality: it concerns the overall tone of parliamentary debates and declarations (and other discourses); the positive, negative, balanced, or neutral impression of politics, political records, conditions, or views they report.

   - Indications of negative tonality are characterization of political failure, fiasco, disaster, crisis, frustration, collapse, flop, denial, rejection, neglect, default, deterioration, resignation, skepticism, threats, cynicism, defeatism, or disappointment.

   - Indications of positive tonality are depictions of political success, problem solutions, achievement, improvement, advance, prosperity, accomplishment, enthusiasm, hope, benefit, gain, sustainability, or gratification.

   - Depictions with no indications of negative or positive tonality are possible.

2. Level of pessimistic outlook: it refers primarily to the optimistic, pessimistic, or balanced outlooks on politics.

   - An optimistic depiction is given when the discourse generates the intersubjective impression that positive developments in politics are realistic, possible, or at hand (depictions of optimism, positive outlooks and scenarios, hopeful views, prosperous developments, potential gains, potential solutions, or promising expectations).

   - Pessimistic depictions are given when the discourse generates the impression that negative developments in politics are realistic, possible, likely, or at hand (depictions of pessimism, negative outlooks and scenarios, hopeless views, critical developments, negative expectations, or potential threats).

   - Reports won't necessarily reflect indications of pessimistic or of optimistic outlooks.

3. Level of conflict-centeredness: with regard to the indicators referring to conflictual, consensus-centered or balanced impressions of politics, political records, conditions, and views.

- The conflict dimension refers to at least two-sided depictions of (attempts, initiation, completion of) dispute, disagreement, discordance, confrontation, clashing positions and views, reproaches, or controversy.

- The consensus dimension refers to at least two-sided depictions of (attempts, initiation, completion of) consensus, accordance, consonance, conformities, dispute settlements, agreement, willingness of cooperation, willingness to compromise, approval, or reconciliation.

- Discourses may not reflect any conflict-centered or of consensus-centered depictions.

B) *Concerning the level of interpretation given the facts.* The idea of interpretation can be conceptualized as those facts explained beyond the five Ws of journalism: What, Where, When, Who, and Why. A review of the literature about this topic (Salgado & Strömbäc, 2011; Patterson, 2000: 26; Steel & Barnhurst, 1996) has led us to identify four variables that are interesting to analyze.

4. Level of salience or amount of interpretation and explanation (from journalists, public relations agents, or other actors) without explicit support from verifiable facts or statements by legitimized sources.

   - Primary amount is meant to classify discourses in which interpretation is the main purpose; in other words, if they are mainly focused on speakers' interpretations or explanations, including their statements and/or opinions.

   - Secondary amount refers to those news stories where a balance between facts/events and interpretations and explanations is provided. Statements and/or opinions are provided as an illustration of a fact/idea.

   - Peripheral amount suggests that there is mainly a description and a small portion of interpretation or explanations is included.

   - There might not be any interpretation.

5. Level of journalistic, political or strategic explanations, or interpretations of the reasons behind the actions of the discourse's objects without explicit support from verifiable facts or statements by news/other sources.

   - The discourse may include, or not, explanations or interpretations targeting the reasons behind the actions.

   - Particular attention should be paid to the retrospective speculations about why something has happened or why a social or political actor has acted or said what he or she did or said.

6. Level of contextualization of events or actions.

   - The discourse may include, or not, an attempt to add context to events or actions collected.

7. Level of speculations about future consequences of events.

- The discourse may or may not include speculations about future consequences about events or actions. Any speculation made by an actor about things that may happen in the future as a consequence of something should be counted.

- If the discourse includes this kind of speculation, a study of the next variable would be needed.

C) *Concerning the economic, political or social consequences.* The discourse unfolds in order to outline the political, social or economic consequences of an issue on an individual, group, institution, region or country.

8. Level of salience of economic consequences. If the discourse tries to answer to the degree of expense involved, the economic consequences of pursuing or not pursuing a course of action or to the possibility of financial losses or gains.

9. Level of salience of social consequences. If the discourse relates to the human suffering involved in an action, the social consequences of pursuing or not pursuing a course of action, or the humanitarian losses or gains.

10. Level of salience of political consequences. If the political efforts/cost, the political consequences of pursuing or not pursuing a course of action, or the political losses or gains are mentioned in the discourse.

D) *Concerning the strategy*: The strategic dimension is characterized by a focus on questions related to who is winning and losing, the performances of politicians and parties, and on campaign strategies and tactics (Aalberg, Strömbäck & de Vreese, 2011; Patterson, 1993: 73-74; Binderkrantz & Green-Pedersen, 2009: 177-180; Aalberg & Brekken, 2007: 188). After the literature review, we have decided to study the following variables:

11. Level of focus on issues around politicians' or parties' strategies or tactics for winning elections, legislative debates, governing negotiations, favorable news coverage, or for achieving other forms of political success. The discourse may or may not unfold this variable.

12. Level of focus of the discourse on actors' motives for actions, positions, or behaviours with reference to other aspects than their sincere belief in the policies.

13. Level of focus of the discourse on the media's role in politics or campaigning and/or the relationship between political actors and the media.

E) *Concerning the emotional/human interest.* The emotional/human presentation is oriented by the aim of personalizing, dramatizing, and emotionalizing the news/reports. It usually brings an individual's story or an emotional angle to the presentation of an event, issue, or problem (Valkenburg, Semetko & Vreese, 1999: 551). It points to the efforts towards the evocation of

emotions by expressing anger, excitement, highlighting dramatic consequences, polarization, sensationalization (Lengauer, Höller & Seeber, 2014: 144).

14. Level of qualification of the events unfolded in the discourse as dramatic, exceptional, exciting or thrilling.

15. Level of emphasizing in the discourse of the degree to which individuals and groups are affected by the issue or problem.

16. Level of focus of the discourse on providing a human example or a human face on the issue.

17. Level of use of adjectives showing feelings of outrage, empathy or caring, or sympathy or compassion.

F) *Concerning the episodic or thematic presentation.* News and different discourses about political, economic or social issues usually take either episodic or thematic approximations. The episodic presentation focuses on specific events or particular cases, while the thematic presentation places political issues and events in some general context (Iyengar, 1994: 2). It may be possible, also, to have a balanced episodic and thematic presentation (50%).

18. Level of predominance of episodic presentation: episodically focused items may include: (a) exemplars of an individual citizen, family, person being affected by an event, policy decision, social or policy problem, societal development, etc., and/or (b) personal details given of the citizen, family, person (e.g., name, age, family status, place of residence), (c) visuals, quotes, sound-bites of the individual citizen, family, person reported on; and/or (d) offers no context about the facts it reports.

19. Level of predominance of thematic presentation: oftentimes thematically focused news items include (a) statistics verbally or visually presented and/or (b) experts (including politicians and journalists) explaining the background, causes, past or future development of an event, policy decision, social or policy problem, and/or societal development.

G) *Concerning responsibility.* This discourse dimension attributes responsibility for causing or solving a problem to the government or to an individual or to a group (Valkenburg, Semetko & Vreese, 1999: 552). These are the variables we have decided to study after a literature review:

20. Level of responsibility attribution of an issue or a problem to some particular actor.

21. Level of suggestion of the discourse that some actor has the ability to alleviate the problem or issue.

22. Level of suggestion of the discourse that the problem or issue requires urgent action.

23. Level of suggestion for solution(s) to the problem or issue presented by the text.

H) *Concerning the balance of the discourse concerning actors.* This dimension refers to how political and other actors are mentioned in the discourses.

24. Level of incapability and misconduct: it concerns the presence or absence of indications of incapability, capability or balanced impressions of the actors.

- The misconduct dimension refers to unidirectional and unilateral depictions of critique, criticism, attacks, allegations of misconduct, moralizing accusations, charge of wrongdoing, accusation of incapability or incompetence, affronts, and insults.

- The competence dimension comprises unilateral depictions of commendation, accordance of capability or competence, compliment, acclaim, portrayals of merit, or effectiveness.

- Depictions with no indications of incapability or of capability are possible.

25. Level of negative tone towards political actors (or other type of actors): it refers the presence or absence of a positive/affirmative, negative/critical, or balanced/neutral impression of an actor.

- Indications of a prevalent negative tone toward a specific political actor are depictions of individual failure, fiasco, disaster, crisis, frustration, miscarriage, collapse, flop, rejection, neglect, default, defeat, deterioration, resignation, disdain, received critique, criticism, attacks, scandal, moralizing accusation, allegations of misconduct, charge of wrongdoing, mistrust, accusation of incompetence or negative traits.

- Indications of a prevalent positive tone toward a political actor are depictions of individual victory, win, triumph, success, achievement, accomplishment, problem solutions, improvement, advance, prosperity, laudation, asset, sustainability, commendation, accordance of competence, compliment, portrayals of merit, esteem, trust, or positive traits.

- There might not be any indications of negative tonality or of positive tonality toward the specific actor.

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