

Coding Manual for image analyses in:

- *The Discourse of News Values*, OUP, 2017 [Bednarek & Caple]

To Cite this coding manual:

Caple, H. (2016). 'Coding manual for image analysis', available at: www.newsvaluesanalysis.com

Important note:

This coding manual is supplementary material for the publication listed above. The coding for the analysis described in this publication was based on the framework for visual analysis of news values presented in Chapter 5 of Bednarek & Caple (2017). This manual aims not to repeat too much information from that chapter. Generally, the coding therefore simply applies the framework from the book, but further information on **how** this framework was applied (including modifications/alterations) is provided in this manual (e.g. coding choices for special cases). It is **not** advisable to read or apply this coding manual without first having read Bednarek & Caple (2017).

The coding manual first re-prints the **inventory** of visual resources used to generally guide the analysis (pages 2-4), before providing further information on the **general procedure** (page 5) and more **specific coding decisions** (page 6 onwards).

The inventory can also be downloaded as a separate document from the DNVA website (www.newsvaluesanalysis.com). This inventory can be used to guide any DNVA research. However, the remainder of the coding manual is supplied here primarily because of research ethics (transparency), rather than as a manual to be used in future research. It simply explains how the coding/analysis was undertaken for the project described in this publication, rather than prescribing how any coding/analysis of news values should proceed.

References that are mentioned in the manual are listed at the end of this document.

Inventory of visual devices that often construct newsworthiness in English-language news (general guide to the analysis, as further discussed in Chapter 5 of Bednarek & Caple 2017)

News value	Visual devices
<i>Aesthetic Appeal</i> (aesthetically pleasing)	<p>Content:</p> <p>Represented participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The depiction of people, places, objects, landscapes culturally recognised for their beauty. <p>Capture:</p> <p>Composition: Balance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dynamic, asymmetric composition, making use of diagonal axis; Balanced, symmetrical images where the symmetry is momentarily interrupted. <p>Technical affordances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Movement: blurring and freezing of action; Noise: high level of graininess; Focus: lengthening or reducing depth of field within the image.
<i>Consonance</i> ([stereo]typical)	<p>Content:</p> <p>Represented participants/Attributes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The depiction of people and their attributes that fit with the stereotypical imagery of a person/country etc (e.g. beer and breasts for Germany's Oktoberfest). <p>Activity sequence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staged/highly choreographed depictions of typical activities associated with a person/group/nation.
<i>Eliteness</i> (of high status or fame)	<p>Content:</p> <p>Represented participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Showing known and easily recognizable key figures, e.g. political leaders, celebrities. <p>Attributes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Showing people in elaborate costumes, uniform or with other regalia of officialdom; Showing self-reflexive elements like microphones/cameras. <p>Activity sequence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Showing people flanked by military, police or bodyguards or in a media scrum; Showing people using the specialist equipment associated with elite professions (e.g. surgeon performing an operation). <p>Setting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Showing context associated with an elite profession, e.g. books, lab, police station.
<i>Impact</i> (having significant effects or consequences)	<p>Content:</p> <p>Represented participants/attributes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Showing the after-effects (often negative) of events, e.g. scenes of destruction, injuries, damage to property; Showing emotions caused by an event.

<i>Negativity</i> (negative)	<p>Content:</p> <p>Represented participants/attributes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showing negative events and their effects, e.g. the aftermath of accidents, natural disasters, the injured/wounded, the wreckage/damage done to property; • Showing people experiencing negative emotions. <p>Activity sequence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showing people being arrested or (as defendant) with lawyers/barristers/police; • Showing people attempting to hide their identity, e.g. using an item of clothing to cover the head, or showing aggression towards the camera, e.g. putting a hand up in front of the lens; • Showing people engaging in norm-breaking behaviour, e.g. fighting, vandalising, stealing, attacking. <p>Capture:</p> <p>Technical affordances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Movement/blurring involving negative content, resulting in poor quality images; • Noise: dramatizing and intensifying negative content; • Focus: where extreme circumstances mean unable to provide sharp and detailed image content, e.g. water/rain on the lens; • In moving images: blurring and movement caused by camera-people moving around, running, ducking to avoid projectiles etc (suggesting unstable situation, i.e. danger).
<i>Positivity</i> (positive)	<p>Content:</p> <p>Represented participants/attributes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showing people experiencing positive emotions. <p>Activity sequence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showing people engaging in positively valued behaviour, e.g. being successful at red carpet events, award ceremonies; • Showing actions associated with reconciliation or praise, e.g. shaking hands, hugging.
<i>Personalisation</i> (having a personal/human face)	<p>Content:</p> <p>Represented participants/attributes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showing 'ordinary' individuals, especially when singled out and standing in for a larger group; • People dressed in informal/everyday clothing; • Carrying items such as rucksacks, handbags, shopping bags; • Showing an emotional response. <p>Setting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the home/domestic setting; • On the street. <p>Capture:</p> <p>Composition: Salience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positioning individuals in unequal relation (in terms of textual composition, NOT in terms of social power dynamics) to others in the image frame, e.g. singling out one individual through foregrounding or backgrounding. <p>Composition: Shot length</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using a close-up shot (to focus on a person's emotion, for example). <p>Technical affordances: Focus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing depth of field so that the focus remains on the individual.

<i>Proximity</i> (geographically or culturally near)	<p>Content:</p> <p>Represented participants/Attributes/Setting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Showing well-known or iconic landmarks (Tower Bridge, Sydney Opera House, Golden Gate Bridge), natural features (Uluru) or cultural symbols (flags, national colours/distinctive uniforms). <p>[Verbal text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Showing verbal text indicating relevant place/cultural connection, e.g. signage.]
<i>Superlativeness</i> (of high intensity/large scope)	<p>Content:</p> <p>Represented participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Showing the large-scale repetition of participants in the image frame, e.g. not just one house but an entire street affected; Showing extreme (positive or negative) emotions in participants. <p>Capture:</p> <p>Composition: Shot length</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of very wide angle to exaggerate differences in size/space; Magnification (larger than life representation) through use of extreme close-up or macro lens. <p>Technical affordances: Movement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Camera movement and blurring, combined with camera-people moving around, running, ducking to avoid projectiles etc (suggesting seriousness/high danger, etc).
<i>Timeliness</i> (recent, ongoing, about to happen, new, current, seasonal)	<p>Content:</p> <p>Represented participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural phenomena that indicate time, e.g. the season may be implied in flora or environmental conditions; Inclusion of cultural artefacts, like Christmas trees that are representative of a particular time of year. <p>Activity sequence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Showing the revealing of an item, to be seen for the first time. <p>[Verbal Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Including verbal text indicating relevant time, e.g. signage.]
<i>Unexpectedness</i> (unexpected)	<p>Content:</p> <p>Represented participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Showing people being shocked/surprised; Showing unusual happenings that would be considered outside an established societal norm or expectation. <p>Capture:</p> <p>Composition: Salience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Juxtaposition of elements in the frame that create stark contrast.

General procedure

1. Each image was manually coded using a specially designed Microsoft Access database (see Caple 2013).
2. The coding was based on the framework presented in Chapter 5 of *The Discourse of News Values*, taking into account context of publication.
3. In Chapter 7, the images included in the Facebook posts for each news organisation were coded for news values construction. In Chapter 8, the first photographic image (appearing on the first screen on the story page) was coded, even though all other associated images had also been collected. This included picture galleries embedded in the first screen. The first image in the gallery was coded.
4. Attendant verbal text (captions, titles etc) was captured but not coded, as inconsistencies in the use of verbal text with the images were too large for useful or reliable conclusions to be drawn.
5. Each image was coded for each news value in turn – for Consonance, then for Eliteness, and so on. This allowed a focus on one news value at a time, resulting in more accurate, systematic and consistent analysis.
6. The first step was to code ten images completely, which was used to set up the coding scheme. The remainder of the images were then coded, which resulted in some refinements to the original coding scheme (for example, sub-categories). Every time the coding scheme was changed, *all* files were re-coded from the beginning.¹

¹ A note on inter-coder agreement: While it would have been possible to have several coders use the manual to code the items, and inter-coder agreement could then have been measured, this would only have provided information on the quality of the coding manual – for instance, how easy it is to use consistently. But it would not have reduced the ‘subjectivity’ of the coding *per se*, since the coding manual itself is the result of many decisions – decisions with which other researchers may disagree. Instead, we have chosen to focus on improving the consistency (through coding procedures), transparency (through this document) and persuasiveness (through discussion) of the coding. In other words, we have focused on ensuring that coding is consistent and transparent and that we can justify coding decisions with an argument.

Specific coding decisions for all news values (in alphabetical order)

Aesthetic Appeal

[coded for in Chapter 7 only]

1. For the coding of images, three choices can be selected: 'yes', 'no', and 'possible'.
2. An image is coded 'yes', if the image: depicts a person, place or environmental phenomenon that is culturally recognised for their natural beauty; or makes use of compositional techniques of image capture that construct dynamic asymmetry or interrupted symmetry; or makes use of technical aspects that enhance movement, focus and noise.
3. An image is coded as 'Possible' where it is difficult to assess whether the target audience of the publication would recognise a person, place or natural phenomenon as beautiful.
4. An image is coded as 'no' in all other instances.

Consonance

1. For the coding of images, three choices can be selected: 'yes', 'no', and 'possible'.
2. An image is coded as Consonance ('yes'), if the representation of a particular country/nation, news actor, social group, or organisation conforms to 'obvious', well-known, enduring stereotypes that the target audience is likely to hold (e.g. young boys typically enjoy dressing up as their favourite superheros; mother and child).
3. An image is coded as 'possible', if the representation conforms to a potential stereotype that some members of the target audience may hold (e.g. man and woman in bed together – conforming to heteronormativity; white wedding).
4. In all other cases, the image is coded as 'no'. A 'conservative' approach to coding is taken so that images are coded as 'no' rather than 'possible', and as 'possible' rather than 'yes' if there is an element of doubt. For example, images relating to weather events that are expected to occur in particular geographical locations (e.g. images of flooding after a typhoon) are coded as 'no'.
5. Since Consonance is about stereotypes, rather than expectedness, the same image can be coded as both Consonance and Unexpectedness. For example, a photograph of hundreds of Chinese military marching with precision establishes the news value of Consonance, as it conforms to stereotypes about the size of and levels of discipline in the Chinese military. But if those marching militia were all female and wearing pink uniforms with white knee-length boots, it would at the same time construct the news value of Unexpectedness, because the depiction female soldiers in such large numbers and such brightly coloured uniforms is highly likely to be unusual for most target audience members.

Eliteness

1. For the coding of images, three choices can be selected: 'yes', 'no', and 'possible'.
2. An image is coded as 'yes', if a clearly identifiable elite person is photographed (individuals such as *President Obama*, athletes that represent the nation in a national team, e.g. US football goalkeeper Tim Howard), or if the name/signage of an elite organisation is depicted (such as Aldi, or Burger King). Images with regalia, such as national flags, a podium with an insignia/signage, microphones, or sponsor/advertising boards that may be behind/in front of the person depicted would

also be coded as ‘yes’ for the news value of Eliteness. Other well-known (recognisable) elites would include: stars/celebrities (from the entertainment industry, mainly actors, singers, stars, but including well-known directors); politicians; authority figures such as officials; royals; religious leaders; scientists/academics; writers; athletes; and managers/commercial leaders. Readily identifiable key buildings (housing elite organisations) would also be coded as elite, and such images would usually also include signage that clarifies elite status: e.g. Supreme Court, Police HQ.

3. An image is coded as ‘possible’ where it might construct Eliteness, but the analyst has some doubts (e.g. a personal/happy snap of a politician in casual clothing) or where the elite status might be weaker. This includes images of ‘ordinary’ soldiers/vets (e.g. a photo of the Allied invasion of Normandy), fire-fighters (e.g. image of fire-fighters rescuing young person stuck in a sculpture), and artists/musicians (e.g. a photo of a drummer).
4. In all other cases, the image is coded as ‘no’. Thus, images of groups of activists/protestors are not coded as elites, unless they are well-known or of high status in a given context. Where the image participants are photographed from a very long distance, such that they become very difficult to recognise, then these are coded as ‘no’, even if the caption may then clarify that they are elites.
5. While the *same* entity cannot be coded as both ‘elite’ (Eliteness) and ‘ordinary’ (Personalisation), a photograph may contain both elites and ordinary citizens (e.g. a photograph of the Pope blessing a disfigured man). In such an instance, the photograph would be coded both for Eliteness (the Pope), and for Personalisation (the man), as the disfigured man represents those that are often neglected or ostracised in society.

Impact

1. For the coding of images, three choices can be selected: ‘yes’, ‘no’, and ‘possible’.
2. Code as ‘yes’, if and only if the image depicts the consequences of a reported event *and* these consequences are either ‘significant’ (e.g. of a large scope, affecting many people) or affect the target audience directly (aftermath images of a severe storm directly affecting the district in which the target audience resides). For instance, code images depicting injuries/victims of terrorist attacks or natural disasters as Impact. The extreme emotions of protestors captured in imagery of a demonstration would also construct Impact, as would visual representations of the damage/destruction of a natural disaster, especially if the location affected is easily recognisable to the target audience.
3. An image is coded as ‘possible’ where it might construct Impact, but the analyst has some doubts (e.g. the people/places affected are not clearly identifiable as being from or including potential target audience).
4. An image is coded as ‘no’ in all other instances.

Negativity and Positivity

1. The news values of Negativity and Positivity are coded together using the label *valence*. For the coding of images, three choices can be selected: ‘negative’, ‘positive’ or ‘unclear/none’.
2. An image is coded as ‘negative’ or ‘positive’ if the image depicts the negative or positive emotional states of the image participants, and which are likely to result in similar affective responses in the target audience. Images displaying negative actions

(fighting, destroying or attacking), or negative emotions (crying, screaming) would be coded as 'negative', while images displaying positive actions (e.g. embracing) and emotions (smiling, laughing) would be coded as 'positive'.

3. An image is coded as 'unclear/none' if the researcher is not certain of its valence (e.g. because she is too unfamiliar with the target audience or the target audience is likely to be divided in their attitudinal point of view), or if faces are obscured or turned away from the camera. This coding is also chosen if positivity and negativity are co-present (e.g. in an image where the Pope embraces a disfigured man).

Personalisation

1. For the coding of images, three choices can be selected: 'yes', 'no', and 'possible'.
2. An image is coded as 'yes', if 'ordinary' people are depicted, especially if they are singled out and depicted in relation to others (usually through foregrounding and backgrounding composition techniques).
3. An image is coded as 'possible' if 'ordinary' people are photographed, who have been involved in criminal behaviour (e.g. being interviewed by police on the street, or where their faces have been obscured or cropped out of the image).
4. In all other cases, the image is coded as 'no'. Thus, animals would not be coded for Personalisation (e.g. an image of an oil-covered penguin would be coded as 'no').
5. As noted above under Eliteness, the *same* entity cannot be coded as both 'ordinary' (Personalisation) and 'elite' (Eliteness). However, both elite actors and ordinary citizens may be photographed together, and the image would therefore be coded separately for Eliteness and for Personalisation.

Proximity

1. For the coding of images, three choices can be selected: 'yes', 'no', and 'possible'.
2. An image is coded as 'yes', if it depicts a known landmark or signage or flag representing the location of the news outlet (e.g. the inclusion of 'Surrey Hills Police HQ' signage in a photograph used in the *Sydney Morning Herald*).
3. An image is coded as 'possible' if it depicts neighbouring or culturally close countries (e.g. an image of the Quebec City skyline in an American news outlet). Other cultural references, such as images of famous people (movie stars, musicians, politicians), or images including signage without specific location identifiers (e.g. Aldi, Burger King) construct cultural Proximity, and are coded as 'possible'. However, a politician photographed in front of the national flag or recognisable government building would be coded as 'yes', since the flag/landmark constructs geographical Proximity.
4. In all other cases, an image is coded as 'no'.

Superlativeness

1. For the coding of images, three choices can be selected: 'yes', 'no', and 'possible'.
2. An image is only coded as 'yes' if it depicts (an aspect of) the reported event as being of high intensity or of large scope/scale. For example, where an image of a protest shows hundreds/thousands of people protesting, rather than focusing on one or two protestors; or where a photograph shows extreme emotions – a person expressing agony, devastation, or extreme enthusiasm through facial expression and gesture; or where a wide angle shot may be used to emphasize the scope or scale of an event.

Photographs taken from extreme angles (above, below or wide) tend to distort the image content and thereby emphasize the scope or scale of what is depicted, thus also constructing Superlativeness.

3. An image is coded as 'possible', when the analyst has doubts whether the scale or scope of an event extends beyond the image frame, or involves a significant number of people.
4. In all other cases, the image is coded as 'no'.

Timeliness

1. For the coding of images, three choices can be selected: 'yes', 'no', and 'possible'.
2. An image is coded as 'yes', if it depicts widely known cultural and environmental conditions that correlate with the date of publication, or where there is verbal text in the image that indicates time in relation to the publication date.
3. An image is coded as 'possible' in doubtful or debatable cases.
4. An image is coded as 'no' if there is no explicit indication that the event is timely. In most instances, images would be coded as no.

Unexpectedness

1. For the coding of images, three choices can be selected: 'yes', 'no', and 'possible'.
2. An image is coded as 'yes' if it depicts odd, unusual, weird or rare happenings (e.g. an image of a penguin wearing a pullover). The depiction of shock or surprise on the faces of image participants would also be coded as 'yes' (e.g. when athletes pull off unexpected results and their shocked reaction can be seen in their facial expressions).
3. An image is coded as 'possible' if the depicted event is somewhat likely to be unexpected to most target audience members or likely to be unexpected to some target audience members.
4. In all other cases, an image is coded as 'no'.

References

- Bednarek, M. & H. Caple (2017). *The Discourse of News Values*. New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Caple, H. (2013). *Photojournalism: A Social Semiotic Approach*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.