

## Reflective and Qualitative Coding: Definitions

Reflective coding: Coding that encapsulates and reflects, comment by comment, the attitudes expressed by respondent.

Qualitative coding: Evaluating a set of comments as a contextual whole in an effort to find a certain quality of mind.

### Basic Set-Up for a Reflective Code

1. **Develop a separate master code for each question.**
2. If positive and negative attitudes are called for, **develop a set of separate (but parallel ) codes for the positive and for the negative comments.**
3. **Develop a set of Broad Categories** (similar to setting up major topics in an outline).

#### Example:

##### Major Categories in ANES codes

Experience, ability  
Leadership qualities  
Personal qualities  
Party connections  
Government Management  
Miscellaneous  
Government Activity/Philosophy

Domestic policies  
Foreign policies  
Group connections

##### Broad Categories in My Code

Experience and Abilities  
Performance in Office, Record  
Strength of Leadership, Leadership Qualities  
Personal Qualities  
General Outlook/Philosophy

Party Connections  
The Campaign  
General  
Stands on Domestic Issues  
Stands on Foreign Issues and Defense  
Group references

### Writing Explicit Code Categories

1. **Must be based on examining actual verbatim comments.** Cannot set up codes ahead of time.
2. **Criteria**
  - a. **Short, as few words as possible.**
  - b. **Mutually exclusive.**
  - c. **Clear, unambiguous.**

#### Examples of ambiguous codes:

ANES code: LAW AND ORDER – SOFT-LINE – criminals/organized crime/hoodlums/street crime

ANES code: A politician/political person; (too) much in politics; and good politician; part of Washington crowd; politically motivated; just wants to be re-elected.

ANES code: Reference to management performance in Congress / Supreme Court / other gov't agency

ANES code: Reference to damaging incident in candidate's personal life (sexual escapades) financial problems, substance abuse, etc.

**d. One object per category; no add-ons.**

Examples of “Add-on” codes:

ANES code 0602 in 1972: Bad/Inefficient/Unbusinesslike administration; wasteful; “bureaucratic”

ANES code 0602 in 1976: Bad/Inefficient/Unbusinesslike administration; wasteful; “bureaucratic”;  
deficit budget; higher/increased national debt

ANES code 0602 in 1984: Bad/Inefficient/Unbusinesslike administration; wasteful; “bureaucratic”;  
deficit budget; higher/increased national debt; overspend

ANES code 0505. Reference to his SPEECHES (exc. 0447), campaign tactics, mud-slinging;  
(88) dislike Bush’s stand Pledge of Allegiance issue

**e. Use “layering” sequence to record level of specificity.**

Bad Example – Not Layered

ANES code 1106. Strong Military position/ Preparedness/SDI (“Star Wars”)  
[SDI (“Star Wars”) should have been a separate code]

Good Examples of “Layering”:

My 1992 Clinton Code:

001. Well educated (general)

002. Well educated, went to Oxford (Rhodes Scholar)

Should be used in 2008 McCain Code:

005. Has military experience (non-specific)

006. Was a prisoner in Viet Nam

Should be used in 2008 for both candidates:

102. Would work to reduce gasoline/oil prices (general)

103. Would work to reduce gasoline/oil prices, drill offshore

104. Would work to reduce gasoline/oil prices, drill offshore AND Alaska Wildlife Refuge

**f. Leave many gaps in code numbers.**

**g. Prune out codes that are left over from previous studies**

## Problems with using Computers to Code

### Examples of comments that would baffle a computer

“I think he’s all show and no go. I think he’s theatrical. Puts on a good front.”

[Use my code 220414 and/or 220416]

“If your going to be a US citizen, should stand up and go into service when needed.”

[Use my code 220752]

“People have to work for a living, at least that’s what he says he’s going to do.”

[Use my code 211025]

“Like this Russian thing that’s come up”

[Use my code 220754]

“Like the idea about the insurance”

[Use my code 211055]

All of the following comments refer to Clinton’s extramarital dalliances. Would the computer understand that? How many keywords would have to be programmed?

“extra curricular affairs”

“indiscretions”

“lack of restraint”

“romantic involvements”

“played around”

“promised to be faithful”

“screwed around on his old lady”

“shady moral past”

“who he slept with”

“can’t take care of his own house”



## Pro-Clinton Sample

- 0588 He stands for wanting to get things done for the people. (GE) He will help get people working, get jobs. (AE) No.
- 3098 I feel he's done a good job with Arkansas. (ge) The budget. I'd like to see what he can do with the budget I think it's time for a change and see what he can do. (ae) no
- 0220 Seems to be more oriented toward. Working class. (WM) Interested in their jobs and standard of living. (AE) No.
- 3244 Just the fact that he says he has plans to help reduce our deficit & help our economy. (AE) I believe in women having a choice. I believe the govt. should stay out of personal issues in our lives. (AE) No.
- 2259 He seems like he wants to give people opportunities as far as the job market. (AE) No.
- 2890 I think he honestly wants to keep mid.- class Amer. (TM) He talks about national health care, high welfare costs & what he'd do to change them. He has a (800) no. to call... He's seeing how hard it is for Amer. (AE) I work in a hospital--in billing dept. & I see how jacked up prices are...I think Amer. is a county where if you're ill you're cared for & a lot of people can't afford it. (AE) No.
- 0736 I'm looking for change--health care is a disgrace. The economy needs a change. (AE) Basically, he would be good for country; Reaganomics did not work. I'm willing to try anything. (AE) No.
- 2141 He seems like he's going to help with hospitalization. Seems like he's for the working people. We'll see when he gets in. (AE) He has some good plans--that's more than Bush had. (TM good plans) He has plans on what he's going to do to raise income of working people. Plans on where money will come from for medical. (AE) He seems more down to earth. He heads us to believe he's not for the rich. (AE) No.
- 1073 He's somebody new. Let's see if he doesn't mess it up. (AE) He looks more honest than Bush. (WM) (AE) He's a democrat & I'm a democrat. (AE) That's about it. I haven't seen him in action yet.
- 2298 We need a change--just to get a different person in office. (AE) No.
- 2863 He's a democrat. (AE) No.
- 3166 What he's done in his home state. (WM) Got people back to work and he's trying to get factories rebuilt again. (AE) People think they can stay on welfare when they're eligible to work. (TM) He's going to put those people who are able to work to work. I can see welfare for those who aren't able to work. (AE) I think he's telling the truth. (WM) About when he was supposed to be drafted and besides I'm a Democrat. (AE) That's about it.

## Anti-Clinton Sample

- 0698 He's for abortion--I'm not. He's too smooth. I think he's a liar. (P) Smoking pot, draft dodging, his affair-- he lied about that. (AE) He's too slick. He'll do all these. Give away programs. We can't afford that anymore. (AE) No.
- 2966 Vietnam war--in Russia. I think he's a liar. (AE) No.
- 2896 The debates sound like just works. I'd have to see proof. (GE) He said he's only going to raise taxes for the rich an I don't get that. (WM) I don't understand how that would work. (AE) No.
- 2641 Hasn't has as much experience as Bush. (AE) No.
- 2296 His lack of military experience. He's a liberal and he has already said he will decrease the military. (AE) No.
- 1046 I believe he's wishy washy on a lot of issues, that he's talking out of both sides of his mouth. His lack of international experience disturbs me. the fact that there would be no checks and balances by having a Democratic Congress. I have doubts about his credibility in war time. (AE) No.
- 0608 He's not credible; he changes his story. (AE) He refused to go to combat in Vietnam, but had time to protest in other countries. At least support your country. His extra-marital affairs, and we know he's a snake. His college use of marijuana--why can't he be honest--didn't inhale it, oh sure. He's hollow, nothing inside, all promises. (AE) That about says it.
- 0032 Because he's a draft-dodger. (AE) No.
- 2925 Taxes, the way he talks about medicare. Those in higher income brackets will pay more taxes. I don't agree with that. It will end up affecting everybody anyway. (GE medicare) \_\_\_ & health insurance for the needy--that will raise taxes. (AE) No.
- 2260 I don't like his campaign strategy. I don't believe in campaign. Think he says what he thinks people want to hear. (AE) I think he's in for it as a career. Think it's just a step up the ladder for him. (AE) No.
- 0196 He ... I don't always know where he stands on things. He's trying to please his audience. (GE) Not really. (AE) No.'
- 0778 Go back to overall--general liberal viewpoint. Specifically more taxes, bigger govt-- govt control more & than private sector. Natl Health Care is bad- -like Canada, Europe, it takes it down to its lowest denominator. Gay rights are staying quiet--I'm not thrilled with that. (AE) No.

## LEVEL OF CONCEPTUALIZATION

The following assessment of R's level of conceptualization was based on a reading of responses to Q. 2-10 of the 1956 pre-election interview. Thus it includes the question on "Care" about election outcome and the eight basic master code items on parties and candidates. For fuller description of category content and illustrative materials, see chapter on ideology in the 1960 volume.)

General instructions: code in the highest possible category, given the nature of the master code materials.

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|--|---|
| CLEAR EVIDENCE OF SOME CONCEPTUAL USE OF CONSERVATIVE VS. LIBERAL DISTINCTION or some of more abstract specifics thereof, e.g. local vs. federal power | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <u>Clearest and fullest.</u> Reserve for cases where either<br/>(1) remarks go to heart of liberal-conservative distinction -- receptivity to change, or<br/>(2) clear sense of relative points on a continuum, with motion in from or out toward extremes.</li><li>2. <u>More simple, static view,</u> but still clearly on one of the basic "underlying" questions involved in the liberal-conservative distinction.</li><li>3. <u>Use of concepts or terms,</u> but paucity of differentiation and lack of evidence which gives confidence in breadth or appropriateness of meaning attributed to them.</li><li>4. <u>Misuse of concepts or terms:</u> evidence of misunderstanding of meaning.</li></ol> <hr/> |
|  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>5. <u>Rich specific issue content;</u> differentiated structure without explicit ideological reference. Usually involves cases in which the picture of clash of group interests (a la categories 6 or 7) is so highly differentiated that perhaps only superficial cues missing which would rate a 1-4.</li></ol> <hr/>   |
| POLITICS AS GROUP INTEREST, GROUP BENEFITS e.g. "the party is more for ..."  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>6. <u>Clash of group interest, normal.</u> Includes any perceptions of opposition of interests between groups reflected in active opposition between the parties or candidates. A simple statement that a party is "more for the common man" does not qualify here (is rather an 8) unless there is explicit indication either that the opposing party or candidate favors a natural antagonist (i.e., "the big man") or engages in politics which hurt "the common man."</li></ol>   |

POLITICS AS  
GROUP INTEREST,  
GROUP BENEFITS  
(cont.)

7. Clash of group interest, impoverished. Any statement of opposition of group interest which is very thin, slogan-like, or clearly derivative from others, without much impact for the respondent. Thus, the perception that Democrats are for the working man and the Republicans for big business without further supporting content or prefaced "I've been told that ..." falls in the category. Often this is a wife indicating she doesn't know anything about it but this is what she hears her husband say.
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8. Single-group interest. Party is "for the Negro"; "for labor"; "for poor people"; "for the little man", etc., in the sense that it "gives help to", without explicit indication that the other party is hard on this group or actively favors a natural antagonist.
9. Single-group interest: farm. Parallels category 8.
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0. Generalized economic welfare. E.g., "Times are good when the Democrats are in" - no group differentiation. Use also for any little structure of economic issues which misses 1-9, such as criticism of spending, failure to balance budget.
- . Some issue content, but doesn't fit 1-0. Usually references to war, but also includes extremely isolated reactions to a single economic measure like social security and slogan-like references to peace and prosperity.
- &. No reasonable political issue content at all. Includes complete know-nothings; people fixated on persons or personalities and pseudo-issues such as health, divorce, "time for a change", etc., without further content. These are often the "vote for the man", "parties are all the same", or "I don't follow politics" types.



# David RePass "Levels of Rationality" Study

## Method of Coding

I performed a qualitative analysis of all open-ended material in the 1964 election study. Not only did I evaluate the open-ended answers to the likes and dislikes of parties and candidates questions, but I examined responses to the most important problem question including a question which asked: "What would you like to see the government do about that?" I also evaluated responses to question on the important differences in what the Republicans and Democrat stand for, and the question which asked: "Would you say that either one of the parties is more conservative or more liberal."

I looked for knowledgeable, substantive, unemotional and reasonable content. The top of my scale was reserved for those respondents who knew at least some policy positions of both candidates, who made insightful evaluations about the candidates' skills and abilities to perform in office, and who possessed sophisticated understanding of several issues and knew (correctly) the party positions on those issues. That was my "ideal" citizen. At the bottom of the scale were those citizens who had no substantive knowledge at all (0's). Next to the bottom were those who had only the fuzziest image of the candidates, whose reaction to those images was mostly based on emotion or affect ("I like him"), and who had only a vague or incoherent notion of some issues. Most respondents fell in between these two extremes. I evaluated ("graded") the content of each question separately and then combined the scores into an overall score that ranged from 0 to 8. This I called "levels of rationality". (One might also call it "levels of sophistication".)

A "0" score meant that the respondent knew nothing about either the candidates or the issues.

Levels 0, 1, or 2 represent irrational or non-rational voters.

Level 3 indicates exceedingly shallow responses; it also includes people who showed some disturbing elements of irrationality or inaccuracy in their appraisal of one of the components and who were unable to compensate by achieving a high level of comprehension on the other component. Level 3 people have a very shaky basis for making a voting decision.

At Level 4, respondents begin to have an understanding of the elements of politics; they have passed the threshold of "rationality."

Level 5 indicates the beginnings of an adequate comprehension.

Level 6 constitutes fairly able voters, and Levels 7 and 8 are well qualified.

### Levels of Rationality in the Population and in the Electorate

The table below shows the distribution of Rationality Levels in the sample and among the electorate. A quarter of the 1964 voters fall into the irrational or non-rational levels, while close to 40 percent were solidly rational (Levels 6 through 8), with the remainder somewhere in between. If we wish to add those voters who had a Rationality Level of 5, we observe that over half of the electorate achieved this degree of rationality or higher. Thus, those people in the electorate who have a fairly sound to a solid basis for making a voting decision outnumber the uninformed, floundering, or capricious citizens by two to one.

<u>Level of Rationality</u>	<u>Total Sample</u>	<u>Voted in 1964</u>
0-2	29%	25%
3	10	9
4	14	13
5	16	16
6-8	<u>31</u>	<u>37</u>
	100%	100%

### Levels of Rationality by Levels of Conceptualization, 1964 (Voters only)

	<u>Levels of Rationality</u>					<u>Total</u>	<u>N</u>
	<u>0-2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6-8</u>		
A. Ideologue	3%	4	9	10	74	100%	140
Near-Ideologue	11%	10	14	21	44	100%	135
Rich issue content but without ideological reference	1%	3	7	19	70	100%	77
B. Group Benefits							
Perception of conflict	6%	12	11	14	57	100%	66
Single-group interest	27%	3	14	21	35	100%	88
Shallow group benefit responses	28%	13	16	18	25	100%	160
C. Nature of the times	24%	11	13	22	30	100%	207
D. No issue content	55%	10	15	10	10	100%	248

Table 3

Involvement, Source of Information, and Items of Knowledge by Level of Rationality

Level of Rationality	Involvement (% High-% Low)	Percent Relying on Magazines and Newspapers as Main Source of Campaign News	Percent Saying Democrats Controlled Congress Both Before and After Election	Percent Not Knowing Name of Either Congressional Candidate in District	Percent Who Could Not Think of Any Differences Between Parties
0	-79	10	28	83	88
1	-24	29	45	59	64
2	-22	27	46	56	62
3	+ 2	22	61	53	55
4	+ 8	31	60	51	42
5	+ 9	39	63	45	36
6	+41	40	68	36	37
7	+47	51	72	36	25
8	+53	60	88	23	20