

# Asymmetric Politics: Ideological Republicans and Group Interest Democrats

by Matt Grossmann and David A. Hopkins

## 1) Process for Original Content Analyses

A number of the studies we rely on in this book to substantiate our theory of asymmetric politics stem from original content analyses we performed of political elite texts and transcripts. These corpuses included:

- Democratic and Republican Party Platforms (1948 – 2008),
- Presidential Nomination Acceptance Speeches at the Democratic and Republican Party Conventions (1948 – 2012),
- Congressional Hearing Opening Statements (1961 – 2010),
- Congressional Dear Colleague Letters (2009 – 2015),
- Presidential Primary Debates Transcripts (1999 – 2015),
- Presidential General Election Debates Transcripts (1960 – 2012),
- Presidential State of the Union Speeches (1946 – 2014),
- Think Tank Reports (2008 – 2015),
- Newspaper Editorial Columns (1970 and 1990),
- Fox and MSNBC News and Talk Show Transcripts (2007 – 2015),
- and NBC *Meet the Press* Transcripts (2003 – 2015)

With financial support from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation ([www.hewlett.org](http://www.hewlett.org)), we paid a team of undergraduate-student coders from various disciplines (e.g., political science, communications) to hand-code the frequency and type of political content in these corpuses. More specifically, we asked coders to first read a randomly-selected sample of observations from these documents and then record explicit or implicit: A) ideological or principled statements, B) appeals to social and interest groups, C) proposals or critiques of public policy or acknowledgement of societal problems, D) use of American imagery or symbolism, and E) references to sources or citations to substantiate claims. These foci—ideology, social and interest groups, policy, American imagery, and sources—constituted the coding categories.<sup>1</sup>

To document the content frequency, coders could register up to three or ten mentions for each coding category, depending on the length of the observation, which varied by corpus type (e.g., a few sentences, several paragraphs, many pages). To document content type, coders classified the ideological direction or type of political mentions. More concretely:

- A. For mentions of political principles or philosophy, we asked coders to determine the ideological direction of the statements. Coders could mark the statements as 1) *conservative* (e.g., stricter rule of law, traditional values, individual responsibility, hawkish foreign policy), 2) *moderate* (e.g., compromise, bipartisanship), 3) *liberal* (greater governmental involvement, protection of civil liberties, equality, humanitarianism, dovish foreign policy), 4) *generic* (general mention of

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<sup>1</sup> Depending on the corpus, we also asked coders to record additional elements of the content. For example, for some of the documents we asked coders to mark the particular issue or policy area (e.g., economic, health care, war, foreign relations, etc.) to which the observation pertained, using the Policy Agendas Project issue area codes.

principles or vision for the country), or 5) *unclear* (for unclear, don't know, or unable to categorize).

- B. For appeals to social or interest groups, we asked coders to register the type of group mention as a reference to: 1) *class* (e.g., poor, middle class, welfare recipient, wealthy), 2) *race / ethnicity* (e.g., blacks, Latinos, Hispanics, immigrants), 3) *religion* (e.g., Christian, Catholic, Evangelical, Christian-right), 4) *partisanship* (e.g., Democrats, Republicans, Independents), 5) *interest groups* (e.g., unions, businesses, teachers, Wall Street, bureaucrats), 6) *veterans / military servicemen / servicewomen*, 7) *farmers / ranchers*, 8) *women*, 9) *age* (e.g., youth, students, senior citizens), 10) *other demographic* (e.g., LGBT, rural, urban), or 11) *unclear* (for unclear, don't know, or unable to categorize).
- C. For mentions of public policy, we asked coders to document if the statement: 1) *avored a new, specific policy proposal* (e.g., “need a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants); 2) *criticized a new specific policy proposal* (e.g., oppose a path to citizenship for illegal immigrants); 3) *supported a past or existing policy* (e.g., I will defend Medicare); 4) *opposed a past or existing policy* (e.g., Medicare must be reformed); 5) *addressed a societal problem* (e.g., must help Americans with no health insurance); 6) *offered a broad policy goal* (e.g., must lead the world into space); or 7) *unclear* (for unclear, don't know, or unable to categorize). In addition, for statements that were coded as *avored a new, specific policy proposal* or *criticized a new specific policy proposal*, we also asked coders to record the ideological direction of the statement, using a seven point scale from very conservative to very liberal, depending on whether the policy reduced or expanded the size and scope of government.
- D. For the use of American imagery or symbolism, we asked coders to register the type used to support a claim, including references to: 1) *people* (e.g., Lincoln, Kennedy, Reagan), 2) *symbols* (e.g., American flag), 3) *history* (e.g., World War II, Vietnam, 9/11), 4) *ideas* (e.g., American dream, market patriotism), 5) *American exceptionalism* (e.g., greatest country in the world, home of the brave), 6) *positive comparisons with other countries* (e.g., Canada, England, France), 7) *negative comparisons with other countries* (e.g., Russia, China), 8) *religious or Christian heritage* (e.g., God bless America), 9) *values or virtues* (e.g., courage, leadership), 10) *threat to the nation or American way of life*, or 11) *unclear* (for unclear, don't know, or unable to categorize).
- E. For references to sources or citations, we asked coders to document if the explicit source was stated or provided, and whether the citation was: 1) a *personal anecdote or experience* (e.g., as a doctor, I understand the health care system), 2) a *philosophical text* (e.g., Adam Smith), 3) a *historical figure or person* (e.g., Madison, Hamilton), 4) an *elected or appointed official* (e.g., Romney, Clinton, C. Powell), 5) an *interest group* (e.g., AFL-CIO, NRA, Chamber of Commerce), 6) the *media* (e.g., NBC, New York Times, Drudge Report), 7) a *think tank* (e.g., Center for American Progress, Heritage Foundation, Brookings Institution), 8) a *governmental report* (e.g., CBO, GAO), 9) a *scientific or academic study* (e.g., American Journal of Medicine), or 10) *unclear* (for unclear, don't know, or unable to categorize). We also asked coders to note additional characteristics of source mentions. This included determining whether the source was used to: 1) address broad political principles, 2) evaluate the extent of a social problem, 3) assess the effectiveness of a specific policy, or 4) apply a theory to predict an outcome. And it also included determining how specific the source was, marking whether the source was used: 1) as a general claim, 2) to cite specific data, or 3) to cite causal research findings.

To prepare and train the coders, we provided them with a codebook (provided in the Appendix) detailing how to code the different categories. The codebook also included an extensive list of example political rhetoric, created from the 2004 American National Election Study (ANES) survey categorizing respondents' open-ended statements of likes and dislikes regarding the political parties and candidates. This sample rhetoric was also supplemented with additional examples found after doing a preliminary content analysis of initial corpuses. See Table 1 (below) for specific examples coders relied on to assess corpus content.

**Table 1—Examples of Content Used to Code Political Elite Texts and Transcripts:**

<b>IDEOLOGY</b>	for more (less) government activity, supports social programs, maintain social order or rule of law, favor property rights, government takes too much, socialistic, anti-communist, extreme, moderate, (too) liberal, (too) conservative, progressive, ideological right or left, take steps to ensure equality, everyone should have things equally or have equal chance, some people don't deserve what they are given, believes in people working hard to get ahead, pro-generosity, in favor of separation of church and state, for religious activity in politics or government, defend Constitution or founding principles, do not compromise on principles, compromise to get things done, efficient/businesslike administration, inefficient/wasteful, too much red tape/bureaucratic, (un)patriotic, principles of government, hawkish or dove-like military and foreign policy approaches
<b>SOCIAL AND INTEREST GROUPS</b>	middle class, working people, poor people, unions, big business, corporate, rich, wealthy individuals, Wall Street, upper classes, white collar, farmers, rural people, blacks, people on welfare, senior citizens, young people, students, hippies, women, veterans, racial or ethnic minorities, civil servants, gays or lesbians, whites, Hispanics, Latinos, factory workers, blue collar workers, Native Americans, police, immigrants
<b>POLICY</b>	economy, taxes, welfare, food stamps, Social Security, unemployment, education, housing, Medicare, Medicaid, health care, prescription drugs, monetary policy, research, inflation, programs to aid farmers, law and order, civil rights, affirmative action, right to work laws, strikes, public utilities, energy, environment, help for veterans, public morality, drugs, abortion, birth control, gun control, urban problems, nuclear power, immigration, gay rights, space program, school prayer, day care, campaign finance, defense spending, strong military, foreign aid, war, terrorism, Mideast, China, Russia, European Union, Israel, Iran, Eastern Europe, Latin America, Africa, Asia, India, Vietnam, Persian Gulf, foreign trade, amnesty, security, nuclear proliferation
<b>IMAGERY</b>	Lincoln, Roosevelt, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Reagan, Clinton, bald eagle, American flag, Constitution, Boston Tea Party, World War II, Vietnam, fall of the Berlin Wall, 9/11, American dream, market patriotism, America is greatest country in the world, America is home of the brave, positive comparisons with other countries, negative comparisons with other countries, claim about religious or Christian heritage, importance of values, courage, patriotism, threat to American way of life, threat to America as we know it
<b>SOURCES</b>	personal anecdote, philosophical text, historical figure, government official, media report, interest group study, think tank report, academic research

*Note: These examples of ideological, social and interest groups, policy, American imagery, and source mentions were derived from the 2004 American National Election Study (ANES) survey where respondents' shared likes and dislikes about the political parties and candidates.*

In addition, as coding questions emerged, a “coding hints” document was created and updated to provide tips to coders to address those questions and augment their training. Finally, beginner coders were also asked to submit their initial coding (e.g., first 50 observations) to be reviewed by an expert graduate-student coder with greater familiarity of the project and experience coding political content. The expert coder would evaluate the sample coding, highlight potential coding discrepancies, and provide thorough feedback. The coding hints document can also be found in the Appendix. In addition, project data, codebooks, coding hints document, and additional project details are available at [www.mattg.org](http://www.mattg.org).

## 2) Intercoder Reliability

To assess whether our undergraduate-student coders made identical coding decisions in evaluating the political content across the various corpuses, we performed an intercoder reliability analysis. We selected five student coders (with at least 25 hours of experience) to code the political content in the same random sample of 50 observations from the Presidential State of the Union Speeches (1946 – 2014) dataset. In particular, we asked coders to record the frequency and type of ideological, social and interest group, policy, American imagery, and source mentions. We also instructed student coders to review the codebook and coding hints document.

Since most of the content analyses we performed highlighted differences in the rates Republican and Democratic Party elites invoked certain political content, we opted to compare the number (i.e., count) of mentions across categories that coders reported. We chose two indices of intercoder reliability to assess measurement consistency: pairwise percent agreement and Krippendorff alpha scores. We relied on Freelon’s (2010, 2013) online ReCal reliability calculator (accessed at: <http://dfreelon.org/utis/recalfont/>) to calculate both the percent intercoder agreement and the interval-level inter-rater reliability.

First, we calculated the pairwise agreement between the five student coders and an expert graduate-student coder for the same sample of observations. Pairwise agreement is the agreement between coders on a particular observation, calculated as the proportion of identical judgment pairs out of the total number of judgment pairs for that observation (Fleiss 1971). Given the sizeable number of variables each rater could code within each category, as well as variation in the different corpuses these student raters worked on, we wanted to compare the coding decisions between these student raters and an expert coder.

The pairwise percent agreement between the expert coder and student Coder 1, Coder 2, Coder 3, Coder 4, and Coder 5 across all categories was 76, 70, 79, 83, and 80 percent, respectively. The *average* pairwise percent agreement score between the expert and student coders across all categories was 78 percent. This result suggests a high level of agreement in coding decisions between the expert rater and student coders, especially considering the number of variables and categories, and degree of subjectivity required in coding the political content in these corpuses.

Second, we calculated interval-level Krippendorff alpha scores for the five student coders across each of the categories. A Krippendorff alpha score is a statistical measure of the disagreement achieved between coders compared to the level of disagreement that could be obtained by chance. Krippendorff alpha has become the standard assessment of interrater agreement in content analyses (Krippendorff 2004, Oleinik et al. 2013). Scores range between 0 and 1, with higher values indicating a greater degree of measurement consistency beyond mere chance.

#### Interval-Level Krippendorff Alpha Scores Across all Five Student Coders:

- Principled and Ideological Mentions: 0.30
- Social and Interest Group Mentions: 0.58
- Public Policy Mentions: 0.40
- American Imagery or Symbolism Mentions: 0.34
- Source or Citation Mentions: 0.07
- Average 0.34

These results indicate a fair to moderate level of intercoder reliability. However, it is worth noting that these coefficients are somewhat deflated due to the nature of the data. Both the sizeable number of variables to code within each category, as well as the slightly skewed nature of the data (with most categories coded as zero) can keep alpha scores low even if coders agree on a high proportion of the observations (Artstein and Poesio 2008). For example, even though there was a high-level of agreement (94 percent) between the student coders and expert coder on source mentions, given the low-incidence rate of these mentions, the Krippendorff alpha score is reduced.

Overall, considering the number of coders evaluated, the nature of our data, the extensive coding scheme, and the subjective interpretation required to rate the political content of these corpuses, we believe the pairwise percent agreement and Krippendorff alpha scores indicate an acceptable level of interrater agreement between our coders.

### 3) References

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- Krippendorff, Klaus. 2004. *Content Analysis: An Introduction to its Methodology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Oleinik, Anton, Irina Popova, Svetlana Kirdina, and Tatyana Shatalova. 2013. "On the Choice of Measures of Reliability and Validity in the Content-Analysis of Texts." *Quality & Quantity*, 48(5): 2703–18.

### 4) Appendix

## CODING RUBRIC – PARTY ASYMMETRY PROJECT

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### I. CODING PROCESS VARIABLES:

**coder\_name** What is the coder's name (e.g., Matt Grossmann)?

**coder\_date** What is the date in which the coding was done? Use the following format: DD-month abbreviation-YYYY (e.g., 26-May-2015).

### II. TEXT VARIABLES:

**text\_name** What is the name of a document or text (e.g., Barack Obama 2008 Democratic Party Convention nomination speech)?

**text\_date** What is the date in which the text was published? Use the following format: DD-month abbreviation-YYYY (e.g., 28-Aug-2008).

**text\_type** Which type of text is being analyzed?:

1. Presidential / Vice Presidential nomination speeches at party conventions
2. Presidential debate statements
3. Political Party platforms
4. Congressional committee hearing opening statements
5. Congressional Dear Colleague letters
6. Congressional "One-minute" speeches
7. Newspaper opinion columns
8. Other

**text\_speaker** Who is the text author or speaker (e.g., Democratic Party, John Boehner)?

**text\_party** What is the political party best associated with the text, author, or speaker?

0. Republican
1. Democrat

**paragraph\_no** What is the paragraph number or designated space of the text being analyzed (e.g., 4)?

**NOTE:** Avoid coding anything that is peripherally related or that stretches the obvious meaning. Look for the plain meaning of the categories and text, interpreting in a straightforward fashion. Many cases will have several questions that will not apply or will be unclear; do not try to select a code when none is relevant.

**III. ISSUE AREA:**

**issue** In general, what issue or topic area does the text speak to, reference, or make general statements about (e.g., 1, 6, 13, 16)? (Please note that not all the topic numbers are consecutive):

0. *No policy related topic*
1. *Macroeconomics* (e.g., economic conditions, taxes, unemployment rate, inflation, monetary supply, budget, deficit)
2. *Civil Rights, Minority Issues, Civil Liberties* (e.g., discrimination; voting rights, freedom of speech and religion, privacy)
3. *Health* (e.g., health care reform, prescription drugs, medical liability, diseases, mental illness, alcohol and tobacco)
4. *Agriculture* (e.g., agricultural trade, subsidies, food inspection, animal welfare, agricultural research and development)
5. *Labor and Employment* (e.g., worker safety, employee benefits, employment training, unions, migrant workers)
6. *Education* (e.g., higher education, elementary and secondary education, vocational education, educational excellence)
7. *Environment* (e.g., safe water, air pollution, recycling, waste disposal, climate change, conservation)
8. *Energy* (e.g., nuclear power, coal, natural gas, oil, alternative and renewable energy, research and development)
9. *Immigration* (e.g., legalization, path to citizenship for illegal immigrants, Cuban refugees, visas)
10. *Transportation* (e.g., mass transportation and safety, highways, airports, railroads, maritime, public works)
12. *Law, Crime, and Family Issues* (e.g., DOJ, FBI, white collar crime, drug trafficking, prisons, police, abuse, family issues)
13. *Social Welfare* (e.g., poverty, food stamps, welfare, TANF, AFDC, social security, disability and handicap assistance)
14. *Community Development and Housing Issues* (e.g., urban or rural development, housing, economic development)
15. *Banking, Finance, and Domestic Commerce* (e.g., banking, mortgages, consumer finance, securities, commodities)
16. *Defense* (e.g., military, intelligence, CIA, NATO, DHS, war, conflict, GI Bill, defense contracts, veterans affairs)
17. *Space, Science, Technology and Communications* (e.g., NASA, telecommunications, TV broadcasting, FCC, Internet)
18. *Foreign Trade* (e.g., FTC, NAFTA, trade deals, productivity and competitiveness of US businesses, tariff restrictions)
19. *International Affairs and Foreign Aid* (e.g., terrorism, 9/11, IMF, World Bank, foreign assistance, embassies)
20. *Government Operations* (e.g., federal holidays, bureaucracy, issues with agencies, government employee benefits)
21. *Public Lands and Water Management* (e.g., national parks, memorials, Army Corp of Engineers, river basins, territories)
23. *State and Local Government Administration* (e.g., state and local candidates, urban planning, state political issues)
29. *Other or Miscellaneous*
99. *Multiple issue areas* (includes more than one of the aforementioned issue areas)

**IV. SOCIAL GROUPS**

**group** Does the text, author, or speaker reference or mention any *social groups* or *voting blocs*? This may include any of the following or others similar in kind not listed below.

middle class, working people, poor people, unions, big business, corporate rich, wealthy individuals, Wall Street, upper classes, white collar, farmers, rural people, blacks, people on welfare, senior citizens, young people, hippies, women, veterans, racial or ethnic minorities, civil servants, gays or lesbians, whites, Hispanics, Latinos, factory workers, blue collar workers, Native Americans, police, immigrants, etc.

- 0. No
- 1. Yes
- 98. Unclear / don't know

**group1\_type** If coded 1 for *group*, what is the category or type of the first group referenced or mentioned? Please note that if two or three social groups within the same category are mentioned, each group should be coded separately. For example, if blacks, Latinos, and Asian-Americans are referenced, a 2 should be coded for group1\_type, group2\_type, and group3\_type.

- 1. Class (e.g., poor, welfare recipients, middle class, factory workers, blue collar, white collar, wealthy, rich)
- 2. Racial / Ethnic (e.g., blacks, Latinos, Hispanics, immigrants, Native Americans)
- 3. Religious (e.g., Christian, Catholic, Evangelical, Christian-right)
- 4. Other demographic groups (e.g., LGBT, rural, urban)
- 5. Partisan (e.g., Democrats, Republicans, Independents)
- 6. Interest Groups (e.g., unions, businesses, corporations, teachers, Wall Street, entrepreneurs, civil servants, bureaucrats)
- 7. Veterans / Military servicemen and servicewomen
- 8. Farmers / Ranchers
- 9. Women
- 10. Age (e.g., youth, students, senior citizens, the elderly, juveniles)
- 98. Unclear / don't know

**NOTE:** If you do not know what category of group is mentioned, check to see whether it is of the kind listed above to make sure that it should be coded as a group reference.

<b>group2_type</b>	If there is a second group, what is the category or type of social group / voting bloc referenced or mentioned? Refer to group1_type above.
<b>group3_type</b>	If there is a third group, what is the category or type of social group / voting bloc referenced or mentioned? Refer to group1_type above.
<b>group1_anti</b>	The group reference is explicitly unfavorable or negative towards that group (e.g., illegal aliens, welfare queens, wealthy tax evaders). 0. No 1. Yes
<b>group2_anti</b>	The group reference for the second group is explicitly unfavorable or negative. Refer to group1_anti above.
<b>group3_anti</b>	The group reference for the third group is explicitly unfavorable or negative. Refer to group1_anti above.

## V. IDEOLOGY OR PHILOSOPHY

<b>ideol</b>	Does the text, author, or speaker endorse any <i>political philosophies</i> or <i>ideological principles</i> ? This may include any of the following or others similar in kind not listed below:  government should take care of things, for more government activity, supports social programs, against more government activity, for smaller government, government should leave duties to others, favors social change, maintain social order or rule of law, favor social concerns over property rights, favor property rights, government takes too much, socialistic, anti-socialistic, communistic, fascist, anti-communist, anti-fascist, extreme, moderate, (too) liberal, (too) conservative, progressive, not liberal enough, not conservative enough, ideological right or left, take steps to ensure equality, everyone should have things equally or have equal chance, should work toward social justice, some people don't deserve what they are given, people are responsible for own success, people should be left alone, pro-generosity, pro-individualism, believes in people working hard to get ahead, believes in government benefits, in favor of separation of church and state, for religious activity in politics or government, for revolution or changing current order, defend Constitution or founding principles, evolve principles as circumstances change, have well-defined set of beliefs, do not compromise on principles, compromise to get things done, efficient/businesslike administration, inefficient/wasteful, too much red tape/bureaucratic, patriotic, unpatriotic, political philosophy, principles of government, hawkish or dove-like military and foreign policy approaches
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- 0. No
- 1. Yes
- 98. Unclear / don't know

**ideol1\_type** If ideol is coded 1, what is the type of the first ideological statement or principle endorsed? Code for the perspective advanced by the speaker; if the speaker says someone is too conservative, this should be coded as a liberal statement.

- 1. Conservative (e.g., less government, rule of law, traditional values, individual responsibility, government waste)
- 2. Moderate / Non Directional (e.g., compromise, public-private partnerships)
- 3. Liberal (e.g., more government, humanitarianism, civil liberties, equality, welcoming, favors social change)
- 4. Generic (e.g., generic reference to principles, vision)
- 98. Unclear / don't know

**ideol2\_type** If there is a second ideology or principle endorsed, what is the ideology type? Refer to ideol1\_type above.

**ideol3\_type** If there is a third ideology or principle endorsed, what is the ideology type? Refer to ideol2\_type above.

**ideol1\_political** Is the ideological statement or principle endorsed explicitly about government or politics?

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

**ideol2\_political** If there is a second ideology or principle, is it explicitly about government or politics? Refer to ideol1\_political above.

**ideol3\_political** If there is a second ideology or principle, is it explicitly about government or politics? Refer to ideol1\_political above.

## VI. PUBLIC POLICY

**policy** Does the text, author, or speaker reference any specific current or proposed *domestic or foreign policies*? This may include any of the following or others similar in kind not listed below:

economy, taxes, welfare, TANF, food stamps, SNAP, Social Security, unemployment, education, housing, Medicare, Medicaid, health care, prescription drugs, monetary policy, research, inflation, programs to aid farmers, law and order, civil

rights, affirmative action, right to work laws, strikes, public utilities, energy, environment, veterans, public morality, drugs, abortion, birth control, gun control, urban problems, nuclear power, immigrants, gay rights, space program, school prayer, day care, campaign financing, defense spending, strong military, foreign aid, war, terrorism, Mideast, China, Russia, European Union, Israel, Iran, Eastern Europe, Latin America, Africa, Asia, India, Vietnam, Persian Gulf, foreign trade, amnesty, security, nuclear proliferation

1. No
2. Yes
98. Unclear / don't know

**policy1\_type**

If policy is coded 1, what is the type of the first policy reference or mention? (Note: Please rate the type of mention in relation to the text's date; for example, the individual health care mandate discussed during the 2008 presidential campaign is a policy proposal, while it is existing policy after passage of the ACA in 2010.)

1. Specific policy proposal (for future policy) is **avored** (e.g., need a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants)
2. Specific policy proposal (for future policy) is **opposed** (e.g., oppose a path to citizenship)
3. Only past or existing policy is **supported** (e.g., I will defend Medicare)
4. Only past or existing policy is **critiqued** (e.g., Medicare must be reformed)
5. Only addresses social problem in need of solution (e.g. must help Americans with no health insurance)
6. Only addresses broad policy goal or tool (e.g., must lead the world into space)
98. Unclear / don't know

**policy2\_type**

If there is a second policy mentioned, to what degree is the policy referenced or mentioned? Refer to policy1\_type above.

**policy3\_type**

If there is a third policy mentioned, to what degree is the policy referenced or mentioned? Refer to policy1\_type above.

**policy1\_ideol**

If *policy1\_type* is coded 1 or 2 (for a specific policy proposal that is favored or opposed), what is the ideological direction of the policy proposal or the perspective advanced by the speaker? For example, a policy that expands government funding or regulation should be coded as liberal, even if conservative actors pursue it. Also a liberal policy proposal that is opposed by a conservative actor should be coded as conservative (since the speaker is opposing the government expansion). Many proposals are ideologically ambiguous or have liberal and conservative trade-offs among their components and fall somewhere between the extremes of the liberal-conservative continuum.

1. *Very Conservative* (Eliminates or vastly reduces an existing government program or area of government responsibility)

2. *Conservative* (Makes major reductions in government funding or regulation in an existing area of government or transfers some responsibilities from the government to the private sector or from the federal government to the states)
3. *Slightly Conservative* (Makes minor reductions in government funding or regulation or transfers some minor government responsibilities to the private sector or from the federal government to the states. Also use this category if a proposal has a mix of conservative and liberal components but has larger or stronger conservative components and smaller liberal components (such as legislation that replaces a large government program with a smaller one))
4. *Equally Conservative and Liberal* (Makes no changes to the size or scope of government responsibility, funding, or regulation. Also use this category if a proposal has a mix of conservative and liberal components and it is impossible to tell which are larger or stronger parts)
5. *Slightly Liberal* (Provides minor increases in government funding or regulation or transfers some minor responsibilities from the private sector to the government or from the states to the federal government. Also use this category if a proposal has a mix of conservative and liberal components but has larger or stronger liberal components and smaller conservative components (such as legislation that replaces a small government program with a larger one)).
6. *Liberal* (Provides major increases in government funding or regulation in an existing area of government or transfers some responsibilities from the private sector to the government or from the states to the federal government).
7. *Very Liberal* (Creates a new government program in a new area or vastly increases spending or regulation in a current area of government responsibility).

**policy2\_ideol** If *policy2\_type* is coded 1 or 2, what is the ideological direction of the policy proposal? Refer to policy1\_ideol above.

**policy3\_ideol** If *policy3\_type* is coded 1 or 2, what is the ideological direction of the policy proposal? Refer to policy1\_ideol above.

## VII. AMERICAN IMAGERY:

**imagery** Does the text, author, or speaker use any American imagery (e.g., people, symbols, history, ideas, American exceptionalism, positive or negative comparisons to other countries) to bolster its, his, or her claim?

0. No
1. Yes
98. Unclear / don't know

**imagery1\_type** If coded 1 for *imagery*, what is the first type of imagery used or referenced?

1. People (e.g., Lincoln, FDR, Eisenhower, JFK, Reagan, Bill Clinton)
2. Symbols (e.g., bald eagle, American flag)
3. History (e.g., Boston Tea Party, World War II, Vietnam, fall of the Berlin Wall, 9/11)
4. Ideas (e.g., American dream, market patriotism)
5. American exceptionalism (e.g., greatest country in the world, home of the brave)
6. Positive comparisons with other countries (e.g., Canada, England, France, Russia, China)
7. Negative comparison with other countries
8. Claim about religious or Christian heritage
9. Values or virtues (e.g., courage, patriotism)
10. Threat to the nation or American way of life
98. Unclear / don't know

**imagery2\_type** If there is a second *imagery*, what is the second type used or referenced? Refer to imagery1\_type above.

**imagery3\_type** If there is a third *imagery*, what is the third type used or referenced? Refer to imagery1\_type above.

## VIII. SOURCES AND REFERENCES:

**source** Does the text, author, or speaker reference a source (e.g., personal anecdote, philosophical text, historical figure, other politician, media report, interest group study, think tank report, academic research) to bolster its, his, or her claim?

0. No
1. Yes
98. Unclear / don't know

**source1\_known** Is the source that the text, author, or speaker references known?

0. No
1. Yes
98. Unclear / don't know

**source2\_known** If there is a second source, is the second source known? Refer to source1\_known above.

- source1\_type** If coded 1 for *source1\_known*, what type of reference is the first source that the text, author, or speaker relies on to bolster its, his, or her claim?
1. Personal anecdote or experience (e.g., As a doctor, I understand the healthcare system.)
  2. Political philosophy, philosophical text, (e.g., Adam Smith)
  3. Historical figure or person (e.g., Madison, Hamilton, Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, Roosevelt)
  4. Political elite or elected official (e.g., Mitt Romney, Hillary Clinton, Colin Powell, Sarah Palin)
  5. Interest group (e.g., AFL-CIO, American Federation of Teachers, National Rifle Association, Chamber of Commerce)
  6. Media (e.g., TV, Newspaper, Radio, Internet)
  7. Think tank (e.g., Center for American Progress, Heritage Foundation, American Enterprise Institute)
  8. Governmental report (e.g., CBO estimate, GAO report)
  9. Scientific study or academic research (e.g., American Journal of Medicine, researchers at Michigan State University)
  98. Unclear / don't know
- source2\_type** If coded 1 for *source2\_known*, what type of reference is the second source that the text, author, or speaker relies on to bolster its, his, or her claim? Refer to source1\_type above.
- source1\_ideol** If coded 1 for *source1\_known*, what is the ideological direction of the first source that the text, author, or speaker relies on to bolster its, his, or her claim?
0. None
  1. Conservative (e.g., Adam Smith, Mitt Romney, FOX News, Drudge Report, NY Post, Heritage Foundation)
  2. Moderate (mainstream) (e.g., Jim Webb, NBC, CBS, ABC, NPR, NYT, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal)
  3. Liberal (e.g., Hillary Clinton, MSNBC, Huffington Post, Center for American Progress)
  98. Unclear / don't know
- source2\_ideol** If coded 1 for *source2\_known*, what is the ideological direction of the second source that the text, author, or speaker relies on to bolster its, his, or her claim? Refer to source1\_ideol above.
- source1\_use** If there is a first *source* (whether known or unknown), how does the text, author, or speaker use the source to bolster its, his, or her claim?
1. Addresses broad philosophical or political principles (e.g., quote on timeless lesson)
  2. Evaluates the extent of a social problem (e.g., 40 million Americans have no health insurance)

3. Assesses the effectiveness of a specific policy (e.g., minimum wages increase employment)
  4. Applies a general theory to predict outcomes (e.g., providing incentives makes people work harder)
98. Unclear / don't know

**source2\_use**

If there is a second *source* (whether known or unknown), how does the text, author, or speaker use the source to bolster its, his, or her claim? Refer to source1\_use above.

**source1\_specific**

If there is a first *source* (whether known or unknown), how specific is the reference or mention?

1. General claim (e.g., illegal immigration has increased)
  2. Cites specific data (e.g., a report finds that illegal immigration has risen by 15% in the last decade)
  3. Cites causal research finding (e.g., a study found that increasing immigration reduced Americans' wages).
98. Unclear / don't know.

**source2\_specific**

If there is a second *source* (whether known or unknown), how specific is the reference or mention? Refer to source1\_specific above.

## **CODING HINTS – PARTY ASYMMETRY PROJECT**

Matt Grossmann and David Hopkins

Last Updated: July 25, 2015

#This document is meant to serve as a running compilation of tips to help code for the Party Asymmetry Project.

### **I. GENERAL:**

- 1.) Recent changes have been made to the coding rubric. So, please familiarize yourself with the updated / new categories for coding.
- 2.) Avoid coding anything that is peripherally related or that stretches the obvious meaning. Look for the plain meaning of the categories and text, interpreting in a straightforward fashion. Many cases will have several questions that will not apply or will be unclear; do not try to select a code when none is relevant.
- 3.) The last column of each coding excel sheet should be a Notes column. Feel free to use this column to identify any examples that you think are particularly illustrative of party asymmetry (i.e., put GE in the Notes column), ask any questions, identify any challenges, etc.
- 4.) Columns only get a subcode if the principle code (e.g., group, ideol, policy) is coded as 1. So, for example, if group is coded 0, then no other category for group should receive a code.

### **II. GROUP:**

- 5.) Group mentions (e.g., middle class, businesses, blacks, veterans, farmers, etc.) should be relatively explicit. Importantly, policy mentions concerning Israel, Cuba, or the like, are insufficient to qualify as group mentions (e.g., Jewish Americans, Cuban Americans, etc.)
- 6.) General references to children, parents, people, etc. should not really be considered group mentions. We are really looking for social groups and/or voting blocs.
- 7.) New group categories have been added, including a code for veterans (#7), farmers (#8), women (#9), and age (#10) (e.g., students, our youth, senior citizens, the elderly, Baby Boomers, etc.).
- 8.) Group references to unions, teachers, lawyers, dentists, small businesses, bureaucrats, police officers, and the like should be coded as 6 for interest groups.
- 9.) General references to the Democratic Party, Republican Party, Democratic Administration, Republican Administration (or the like) should not be coded as partisan group mentions. Rather, only when “Republicans” or “Democrats” are mentioned as a voting bloc should they be coded as partisan group mentions.
- 10.) Multiple group mentions also require multiple groupX\_anti codes. For example, if veterans, farmers, and illegals are mentioned, then three group\_anti codes are required (i.e., 0, 0, 1).

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### III. IDEOLOGY:

11.) As mentioned above, try to avoid reading too much into statements. This is especially challenging when trying to gauge *ideology / principal mentions*, since oftentimes we may infer the motivation behind text. Instead code explicit ideology / principal mentions.

12.) Try not to rely on the party affiliation of the speaker to assess the ideological direction of the statement. Quite often, Democratic speakers employ conservative ideological statements, while many Republican speakers actually use liberal ideological statements. While the party affiliation of the speaker may be a clue, it should not serve as a heuristic for the direction of ideological mentions. Rather, the statement should be assessed.

13.) Hawkish and dovish philosophies to security and engaging the world should be coded as conservative and liberal ideological mentions, respectively.

14.) The `ideolX_political` variable asks whether or not the ideological statement or principle endorsed is explicitly about government or politics. Since our list of principles is quite inclusive, we want to flag those that may not be clear political references. For example, generic or vague citations of generosity, equality, sticking to principles, or individualism should be coded as principles but are not explicitly political. Most will likely be political, while only a few will be general principled statements. Put another way, if the speaker just mentions that they have principles, this is a 4 and 0. But, if they specify the advocate a conservative principle this is a 1 and 1.

15.) Multiple ideology mentions also require multiple `ideolX_political` codes. For example, if you code too liberal, wants smaller government, and sticking to my principles in a statement, three separate codes for `ideolX_political` should be entered (i.e., 1, 1, 0).

### IV. POLICY:

16.) Only those policy mentions that are in reference to specific new policies (i.e., coded as a #1 or #2) that are favored or opposed require a `policyX_ideol` code for ideological direction. And specific policies do not necessarily have to mention a bill name, but rather offer some details about what they speaker would do.

17.) Regarding the ideological direction of new specific policies that are opposed (i.e., those coded #2 for `policy_type`), code the perspective advanced by the speaker (not the policy proposed), so if the speaker opposes a law because it is too liberal, this should be coded as a conservative `policy_ideol`. Put another way, the perspective of the speaker matters more than the direction of the actual proposed policy.

18.) Multiple policy mentions also require multiple `policyX_type` codes. For example, if you code pass the DREAM Act, reauthorize the TANF, and Congress needs to generate more revenue, three separate codes for `policyX_type` should be entered (i.e., 1, 3, 5).

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### **V. IMAGERY:**

19.) For imagery and the coding of people, references to the presidential nominee or recent former president should not necessarily be coded. Rather, we are looking for references to historical persons, such as Washington, Lincoln, FDR, etc. Maybe a good guideline to follow is if the person being referenced was prominent 20 years ago or more. Essentially we are looking for a historical component to the people imagery.

20.) Thus far, there have been few examples of imagery ideas. But, a few may include statements such as “the American dream”, “America thrives on innovation,” “market patriotism” (when following 9/11 and the war on terror President Bush promoted spending).

21.) Thus far, imagery mentions of American exceptionalism (#5) and values / virtues (#9) appear to be the most common.

### **VI. SOURCE:**

22.) The purpose of the source coding is if the speaker references any claim or data to bolster an argument. So, references to data (even if by an unknown source) should be coded.

23.) There is a new category to code if a source is known or unknown. If the source is known (i.e., receives a 1 for sourceX\_known), then sourceX\_type and sourceX\_ideol should be coded for the source. If the source is unknown (i.e., receives a 0 for sourceX\_known), then sourceX\_type and sourceX\_ideol should be left blank. Whether the source is known or unknown, sourceX\_use and sourceX\_specific should be coded.

24.) The code of 98 should be used if something is unclear.