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How do grievances become manifestos?

Developing frame analysis in social movement research

Accepted version.

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Abstract: Since the 1980s, social movement researchers have increasingly turned their attention to how activists strategically *frame* their grievances and motivations for collective action. This has served to uncover meaning-making practices in both micro-level mechanisms, such as citizens' engagement in social movements, and meso- and macro-level dynamics, like collective mobilisations and alliances. In this chapter, after presenting the conceptual underpinnings of frame theory in the context of social movements research, we will briefly review leading methodological approaches to study frames in qualitative, quantitative, mixed-, and digital methods designs. Finally, we will illustrate the steps undertaken to examine framing in the context of Italian and Spanish LGBTQIA* collective actions in 2019. By combining theoretical insight, methodological thinking, and practical guidance, this chapter aims to provide key tools to take solid decisions in developing empirical investigations of framing in the context of social contention.

Keywords: collective action frames, frame semantic grammar, methodology, LGBTQIA*

** Introduction: frame analysis in social movement research**

It may sound a bit ironic but, while it is most likely that activists and protest organisers have always spent efforts to articulate their views, it was only in the 1980s that academic research became increasingly interested in *how* ideas are developed and shared in the context of social contention. This ‘cultural turn’ (see, for instance, Mohr 1998) shifted the focus from ideology to symbolic production - from grand and relatively stable sets of values to often fluid interpretations (i.e., *framings*) of issues, grievances and motivations enacted by social movement actors. Ultimately, the concept of ‘frame’ offered a lens to study how beliefs, values, and goals are formulated, negotiated, consolidated or dismissed through processes of signification, namely, through the attribution of meaning in, for instance, written manifestos, logos or the spoken discourses of activists.

In this chapter we aim to provide conceptual, methodological and practical guidance to design frame analysis in the context of social movement research. The chapter is structured as follows. We will first outline the conceptual underpinnings of frame theory and their operationalisation in the context of social contention. This will take us to discuss the wide range of analytical techniques developed to study frames in qualitative, quantitative, mixed-, and digital methods designs. In the second part of the chapter, we will specifically focus on one of such techniques, Vicari’s (2010) linguistic approach to frame analysis, and provide a step-by-step account of the empirical application of this model in Perego’s doctoral research, which investigates the solidarity ties developed by Italian and Spanish LGBTQIA* (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersexual, asexual, and other) civil society organisations during the 2011-2020 decade. By combining theoretical insight, methodological reasoning, and practical guidance, this chapter aims to provide key tools to both critically assess existing frame research and take solid methodological decisions in developing empirical investigations of framing in the context of social contention.

1. Collective action frames: From signification to mobilisation

But what is a frame? Goffman (1974, p. 21) tells us that a frame is a ‘schemata of interpretation’. In shaping the first sociological iteration of ‘frame analysis’, Goffman (1974) drew from Bateson’s (1972) anthropological work on human *cognitive* behaviour: a frame is what allows us to understand what is out there, memorise this understanding and reuse it in the future. Frames have often been analysed as devices through which events, messages, situations, policies or actions are presented to a public, namely, in the ‘packaging work’ that is typical of news or, more broadly, media production. It is then perhaps not surprising that frame analysis has found a very fertile terrain in media and communication studies, often also in relation to the coverage of protest events. To name just two of the most pivotal studies in this camp, Tuchman (1978) studied frames in 1970s news making organisations, while Gitlin (1980) discussed ‘media frames’ in the coverage of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) movement of the 1960s.

In social movements research, however, frame analysis has been used to study processes that transcend this packaging work alone, with the term ‘collective action frame’ coming to label a tripartite process. As discussed by Snow and Benford (1992, pp. 137-8), not only do collective actors use the same mechanisms of the packaging work typical of media and news making to *punctuate*, or ‘single out’, some social conditions and define them as unjust. They also *attribute* responsibilities and solutions for these unjust conditions and *articulate* past events and experiences together to guide future interpretations. In sum, collective action frames are ‘action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns of a social movement organization’ (Benford and Snow 2000, p. 614). When a collective action frame guides more than one movement alone - transcending movement-specific meanings - it is usually referred to as a ‘master frame’ (Snow and Benford 1992, p. 138). A master frame is broad in scope and can guide a number of movements, for instance, through a discourse of rights (rights master frame) or one of hegemony (hegemonic frame).

Collective action frames and master frames have been investigated for over four decades now and it would be impossible to provide here a fully comprehensive picture of the range of theoretical debates and conceptualisations produced in the context of this research. Taking a pragmatic approach, in the following section we will signpost the most referred to concepts used in empirical studies, hoping that the section may work as a ‘conceptual toolkit’ for new

applications of frame analysis in social movement research. Following that, we will discuss how these concepts can be used in practice.

1.1. <c> Theorising collective action frames

Collective action frames perform three core tasks (Benford and Snow 2000, p. 616; Snow and Benford 1988, p. 200). They diagnose problems by identifying issues and attributing blame. They prognose solutions to these problems by suggesting ameliorative action and identifying those who should engage with it. Finally, they provide the motivational drive to prompt this action.

These three framing tasks (i.e., diagnosis, prognosis and motivational) are extremely important because they define a social movement's field of action. In fact, most additional concepts formulated in relation to collective action frames, like 'processes' (Benford and Snow 2000, pp. 624-7; Snow et al., 1986, 467-476) and 'features' (Benford and Snow 2000, pp. 618-622; Snow and Benford 1992, pp. 138-141) are primarily concerned with the articulation and combination of framing tasks within and across collective actors. But how can these tasks, with their processes and features, be studied empirically? The next two sections will provide an overview of the methods and units of analysis commonly used in frame analysis research.

1.2. <c> Analysing collective action frames: Questions, data and operationalisation

Collective action frames are made of cultural fabric - ideas, values, events, traditions, memories and artefacts that circulate and are known in the specific context where they operate (see, for instance, Vicari 2015). This fabric becomes manifest through a range of texts, like protest and movement slogans, logos and manifestos or the spoken discourse of activists (Johnston and Noakes 2005, p. 7). A primary challenge to devising empirical methods to study collective action frames derives exactly from the fact that frame analysis investigates the actual *representation* of the 'system of meaning' (Gerhards and Rucht 1992, p. 573) it aims to explore, focusing on (word and visual) text.

The methods traditionally adopted in empirical frame analyses cover a very wide spectrum. They range from historical case studies to event-history analyses, on to questionnaire surveys, interviews, participant observations, thematic analyses of newspaper articles and official statements, quantitative analyses of newspaper articles or archival resources, graphic representations of argumentative structures, and rhetoric analyses (for a more comprehensive

discussion of these methods and their applications, see Vicari 2010, pp. 508-9). While the study of written and spoken words is at the centre of most of these traditional approaches, analyses of visual materials have also gradually grown (e.g., Doerr and Milman 2014). Furthermore, frame analysis work is increasingly focusing on digital traces, for instance in the websites of activist groups (e.g., Vicari 2015) or in Twitter ‘hashtag publics’ and campaigns (e.g., Meraz and Papacharissi 2013; Vicari 2017; Xiong et al. 2019).

All the above having been considered, two main issues have led to the emergence of the most varied methodological choices in the application of frame analysis for social movement research: 1) frame analysis scholars have spent more efforts in theorising frames than in defining methodological means to study them empirically, and 2) most empirical frame analysis research has developed in the context of case study research (Benford 1997, pp. 411-412). Adopting again a pragmatic approach, in the remainder of the section we will summarise the key textual elements identified across media and communication and sociological research to operationalise the concepts of tasks and components. We are hoping that this will help future researchers get a sense of what specific elements of a text can be studied - namely counted and/or qualitatively explored - to empirically implement frame analysis in social movement research.

1.2.1. <d> What should we look for in a text?

Pivotal work by Gamson and colleagues first suggested that framing dynamics are displayed by textual elements that work as ‘symbolic devices’ - items able to activate interpretative processes (Gamson and Lasch 1983, p. 399; Gamson and Modigliani 1987, p. 143; 1989, p. 3). Drawing on this definition and reviewing existing literature, we summarise these elements in seven macro-categories: *framing devices*, *linguistic characteristics*, *linguistic elements*, *reasoning devices*, *syntactical structures* and *scripts structures* (see **Table x.1**).

We start with the category of ‘framing devices’ because it comprises items broadly identified in frame analysis research as signposting specific meaning. Framing devices range from metaphors, exemplars, catchphrases, depictions, and visual images (Gamson et al. 1992; Gamson and Modigliani 1989; see also ‘rhetorical structures’ in Pan and Kosicki 1993, p. 61) to keywords, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information, and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments (Entman 1993, p. 52), and on to headlines and kickers (i.e., lines above headlines intended to provoke interest), subheads, photographs, photo captions, leads, selection of sources/affiliations, selection of quotes, pull

quotes (i.e., lines in a different typeface intended to provoke interest), logos, statistics/charts and graphs, and concluding statements (Tankard 2001, p. 71). Depending on the specific text being analysed, this list might vary. For instance, in the analysis of website content, Vicari (2010, p. 605) also considers press reviews, URLs, letters, editorials, and public announcements while a growing literature is looking at hashtags (e.g., Dahlberg-Grundberg and Lindgren 2014; Meraz and Papacharissi 2013; Vicari 2017; Xiong et al. 2019).

The category of ‘linguistic characteristics’ broadly concerns stylistic choices in a text. For instance, Tuchman discusses the use of short paragraphs and sentences, insistence upon facts, news as stories, story lines in the past tense and headlines in the present (1978, p. 106). Gitlin (1980, pp. 27-8) focuses on trivialization, polarisation, emphasis on internal dissension, marginalisation, disparagement by numbers and the delegitimizing use of quotation marks (1980, pp. 27-28).

‘Linguistic elements’ are micro-indicators of the social relationships between the producer of the text and their publics. Johnston, in particular, proposes a ‘micro-discourse analysis’, with an emphasis on elements defining the speech situation, elements indicating the social role of the actor producing the text, non-verbal cues of oral texts, interactional elements emerging in dialogical communication exchanges, and cross-references within the text (1995, p. 219).

The category of ‘reasoning devices’ brings together items that are functional to build logic in discourse. They comprise roots (i.e., causes), consequences, appeals to principles, and hypothesis-testing elements. These devices are discussed, for instance, in Gamson and Lasch’s (1983) empirical work, in Pan and Kosicki (1993)’s theorisation of ‘framing analysis’ (although this work labels them as ‘thematic structures’) and in Gerhards and Rucht’s discussion of argumentative structures and thematic components (1992, p. 574).

‘Syntactical structures’ refers to the arrangement of words and phrases into sentences. Pan and Kosicki (1993, p. 59) discuss these structures in relation to framing in newsmaking, explaining the importance of the sequential organisation of structural elements in a text - for instance, the organisation of headline, lead, episodes, background, and closure in a news piece.

Finally, ‘script structures’ categorises the narrative elements of a text and their relationships within the text itself. These relationships are also called ‘semantic (or story) grammars’. Pan and Kosicki (1993, p. 60), for instance, discuss the use of the five Ws and one H in news writing: who, what, when, where, why and how. Johnston also proposes story grammars as a

means to uncover the ‘structural elements’ of a frame in texts, particularly narrative texts (Johnston 2002, p. 82).

Symbolic Devices	Sources
<i>Framing devices</i>	
Metaphors exemplars catch phrases depictions Images	<i>Gamson and Lasch 1983; Gamson and Modigliani 1989; Gamson et al. 1992; Pan and Kosicki 1993</i>
keywords stock phrases stereotyped images sources of information sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments	<i>Entman 1993</i>
headlines and kickers subheads photo captions leads selection of sources selection of quotes pull quotes logos statistics charts and graphs concluding sections	<i>Tankard 2001</i>
press reviews urls letters editorials public announcements	<i>Vicari 2010</i>
hashtags	<i>Dahlberg-Grundberg and Lindgren 2014; Meraz and Papacharissi 2013; Vicari 2017; Xiong et al. 2019</i>
<i>Linguistic Characteristics</i>	
paragraph length sentence length insistence upon facts news as stories	<i>Tuchman 1978</i>
trivialization, polarisation, emphasis, marginalisation, disparagement by numbers delegitimizing by the use of quotation marks	<i>Gitlin 1980</i>

<i>Linguistic elements</i>	items defining the speech situation items showing the social role of the message producer possible nonverbal cues (if oral text) interactive elements elements generating a holistic view of the text	<i>Johnston 1995</i>
<i>Reasoning devices</i>	roots consequences appeals to principles hypothesis/testing elements	<i>Gamson and Lasch 1983; Pan and Kosicki 1993</i>
	thematic components of an argument	<i>Gerhards and Rucht 1992</i>
<i>Syntactical structures</i>	word dispositions phrase dispositions	<i>Pan and Kosicki 1993</i>
<i>Script structures</i>	Semantic (or story) grammars	<i>Pan and Kosicki 1993; Johnston 2002</i>

Table x.1: Symbolic devices studied in empirical frame analyses

In qualitative research, symbolic devices are typically discussed by providing snippets of texts as examples of specific frame elements (e.g., task, component, process). In quantitative work, codes are typically devised to tag and quantify the use of any - or combinations - of the devices listed in **Table x.1**¹. Having produced what we hope is a reasonably comprehensive picture of the possible empirical paths to start designing frame analysis for social movement research, in the remainder of this chapter we discuss a specific example - one that uses the last category of symbolic devices listed in **Table x.1**: script structures in the form of semantic (or story) grammars.

2. Example illustration: studying LGBTQIA* collective action frames in Milan and Madrid using a frame semantic grammar

This section provides an empirical example of how collective action frames may be conceptualised, operationalised, and examined in the context of social contention. This example draws from Aurora Perego's doctoral research, which investigates how solidarity is framed by LGBTQIA* civil society organisations (CSOs) located in Milan and Madrid between 2011 and 2020. To analyse framing processes, the research firstly mapped LGBTQIA* organisations active in the two cities, and then considered their Facebook pages, focusing on posts mentioning and/or promoting collective action events. These posts were collected by means of CrowdTangle (2020), a public insights tool owned and operated by Facebook that allows researchers to retrieve the public posts from a list of public pages in a

given period of time. To illustrate how to conduct frame analysis, this chapter will address one of the sub-questions of Aurora Perego's doctoral research, namely, how do LGBTQIA* actors frame problems, solutions and calls for action (i.e., diagnostic, prognostic, motivational tasks, see **Figure x.1**)? The excerpts analysed below are taken from the manifestos of two events promoted on Facebook by LGBTQIA* organisations in Milan and Madrid in 2019.

The key aim of this section is to discuss the links between research questions, conceptual definitions of frames, and methodological processes in empirical work, with an eye on challenges and potential solutions. Ultimately, we aim to inform future implementations of valid and reliable frame analysis research.

2.1. <c> Conceptualisation, operationalisation, and code development

In line with what discussed in Section 1, the example of frame analysis illustrated below conceptualises collective action frames as clusters of diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational tasks (Matthes and Kohring 2008; Snow and Benford 1988). From a methodological standpoint, this means that, while the unit of analysis is the collective action frame, the coding unit is the framing task per seⁱⁱ.

To identify and code snippets of texts delivering different framing tasks in the Facebook posts, Perego followed Vicari's model of a 'frame semantic grammar' (2010). According to this model (illustrated by **Figure x.1**), the main device to pinpoint framing tasks in a (verbal) text is the clause's semantic structure, understood in terms of subject, verb, and object (Franzosi 2010), namely, the actor performing an action or being described, their action or characteristic, and the target of their action (if present).

Vicari (2010) suggests focusing first on the clause's subject. When this is a 'they' target of blame, the clause is adversarial, and delivers a diagnostic task (Vicari 2010, pp. 510-511). When the subject is a 'we' (i.e., the proponent of the collective action itself or a close ally), the clause is self-referential and can deliver different framing tasks, which can be identified based on its verb (Vicari 2010, p. 511). Modal verbs express obligations (e.g., 'must'), abilities (e.g., 'can') or intentions (e.g., 'will') (Vicari 2010, p. 512). Obligations indicate the moral necessity to perform an action, and as such deliver diagnostic tasks. Abilities and intentions express the possibility of performing ameliorative action, hence delivering a prognosis. Non-modal verbs provide the motivations to mobilise, either by narrating an action (via a verbal predicate, meaning a verb which indicates an action performed by a subject in a given moment, for

instance ‘protest’) or by defining/characterising the ‘we’ proponent of the collective action (via a nominal predicate, meaning a verb composed by a copula - the verb ‘to be’ - and a nominal part that can be either an adjective or a noun, for instance ‘outraged’) (Vicari 2010, p. 514). **Figure x.1** graphically displays the correspondence between clause semantic grammar and framing tasks.

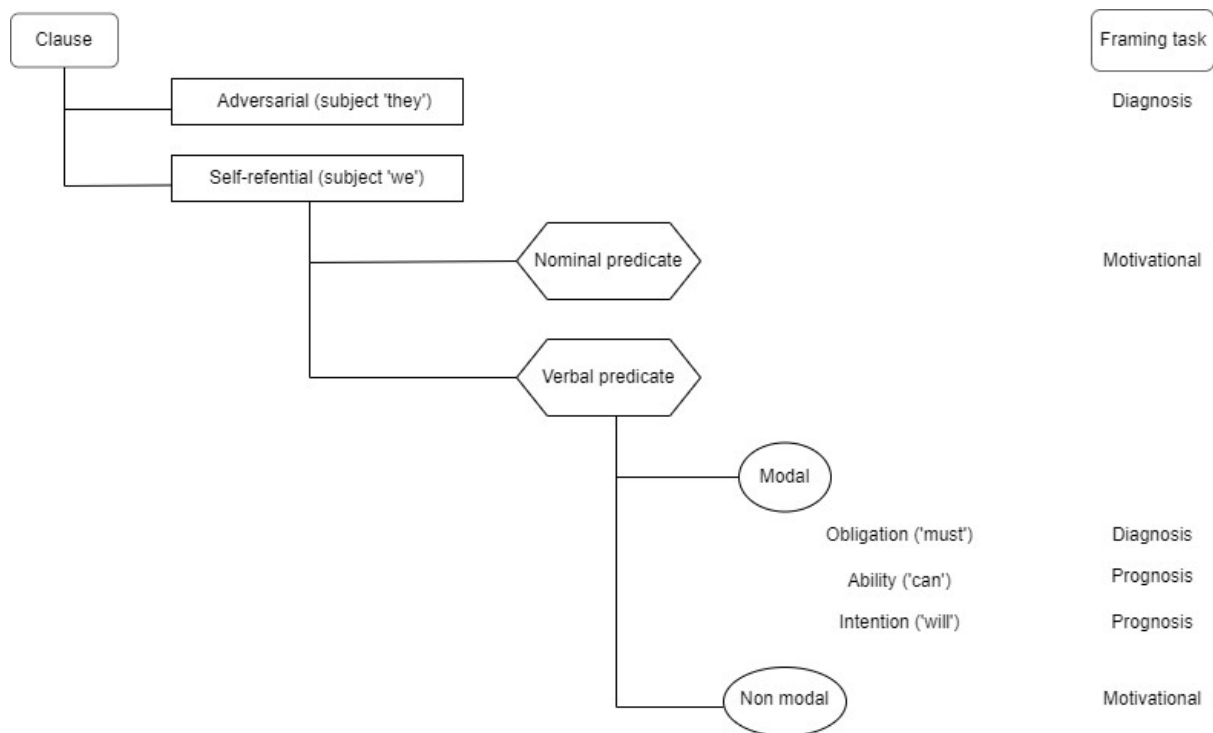


Figure x.1: Tree representation of the correspondence between clause semantic structure and framing tasks - guiding coding process (adapted from Vicari 2010)

The process so far described enables researchers to identify and isolate snippets of text that deliver different framing tasks. Then, to code the content of these snippets of texts - and hence the issues framed as diagnosis, prognosis or motivations, Perego followed Schreir’s guidelines on qualitative content analysis (2012) (see Figure x.2). The coding scheme was generated through a hybrid approach (Saldaña 2009; Schreier 2012), hence combining deductive with inductive coding. In the first phase, a preliminary coding scheme was developed based on previous studies on LGBTQIA* collective action frames (Ghaziani et al. 2016; Valocchi 1999). To assess the validity of this coding scheme, in the second phase a pilot test on a stratified random sample of 10% of the posts was performed. When this test indicated that previously

created codes did not fit the data, inductively generated codes were added to the coding scheme (Schreier 2012). A final round of pilot coding was performed to assess the consistency of the coding scheme and calculate the intra-coder stability (0.86).

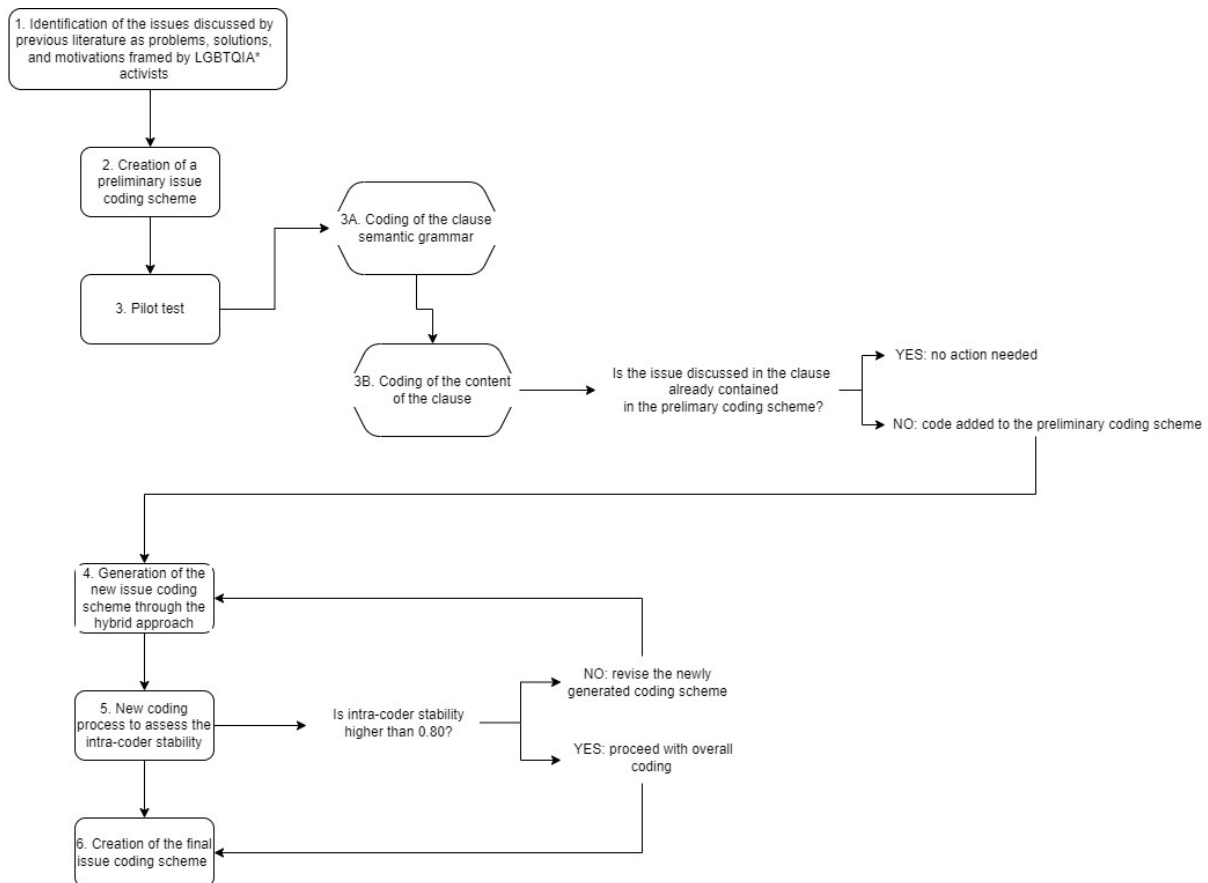


Figure x.2: Generation of issue coding scheme and pilot test

In sum, the coding first focused on the clause semantic grammar to distinguish between snippets of post delivering different framing tasks (i.e., diagnosis, prognosis or motivation). Then, it focused on the content of these snippets (Johnston 2002) to extract the issues populating each task. Both the pilot test and the overall coding were conducted with MAXQDA (2020).

2.2. <c> Coding in action

To illustrate how frame semantic grammars can be used to empirically identify framing tasks, we will illustrate the following excerpts from two events organised and promoted on Facebook

by LGBTQIA* CSOs in 2019. Both events can be considered critical pride events, meaning that they proposed alternatives to pride marches organised in collaboration with institutions and sponsors. The organiser of these events aimed at criticising the mercantilisation of LGBTQIA* struggles (Ghaziani 2008; Rimmerman 2015) and the reproduction of homophobic discourses on LGBTQIA* individuals (Duggan 2003). In the case of Madrid, the considered event promoted a march called ‘Orgullo Crítico’, organised by a platform of LGBTQIA* groups and grassroots activists as a separated demonstration from the official pride march. In the case of Milan, the event invited people to join an informal network of LGBTQIA* groups that participated at the official pride march from a critical standpoint.

As mentioned above, the posts were firstly coded according to their semantic grammar using the tree map shown in **Figure x.1**. To identify snippets of texts differently building diagnosis, prognosis or motivations, this coding process was developed through the following steps:

1. Adversarial clauses (‘us vs. them’ rhetoric) → **diagnostic tasks**;
2. Self-referential clauses, which were further coded as:
 - 2a) clauses containing a nominal predicate → **motivational tasks**;
 - 2c) clauses containing a verbal predicate, which were further coded as:
 - 3) clauses containing a modal verb were differentiated in:
 - 3a) verbs conveying obligation (e.g., ‘must’, ‘ought to’, ‘need to’) → **diagnostic tasks**;
 - 3b) verbs conveying ability (e.g., ‘can’, ‘to be able to’, ‘could’) → **prognostic tasks**;
 - 3c) intention (e.g., ‘will’, ‘shall’, ‘want’) → **prognostic tasks**;
 - 4) clauses not containing a modal verb → **motivational tasks**.

Then, the clauses delivering framing tasks were coded according to the issues reported in the content of each clause. Consider the following clause: “Today **we will march** as a critical block within the critical pride parade as **visible** lesbians and as a **visible** block on our own”. This clause was coded as a self-referential clause (‘We’) containing a modal verb (‘will march’) expressing intention (‘will’), hence delivering a prognostic framing task. The prognosis framed in the clause concerned the will to make marginalised identities and subjectivities, such as lesbians, visible in the public sphere, and was therefore coded as ‘visibility’.

2.3. <c> What can framing tasks tell us?

After discussing frame conceptualisation and operationalisation, as well as illustrating code development and coding in action, this section aims to show how frame analysis can be performed through a frame semantic grammar. However, to make our analytical process more understandable, we will firstly provide a broad contextualisation of LGBTQIA* activism in Madrid and Milan.

Since the early 1970s, Madrid and Milan have been pioneer cities in the emergence of LGBTQIA* mobilisations and of the first LGBTQIA* organisations in their countries (Calvo 2011; Calvo and Trujillo 2011; Prearo 2015; Rossi Barilli 1999; Santos 2013). However, the two cities are embedded in very different national socio-political contexts in terms of LGBTQIA* issues: the Spanish legislation was one of the first ones in Europe to legalise same-sex marriage and recognise LGBTQIA* rights in several institutional areas, while the Italian legislative system fails to protect LGBTQIA* individuals' minimal rights, such as marriage, adoption, and recognition of bias-motivated speech and violence (ILGA Europe 2022).

Within this framework, during the last decade LGBTQIA* activism developed differently in the two cities. In the 2000s, Spain witnessed the emergence of three waves of anti-gender campaignsⁱⁱⁱ (2004-2005; 2008-2009; and 2012-2013), each of them corresponding with legal reforms on LGBTQIA* and women's rights (Cornejo and Pichardo-Galán 2018). The last wave of mobilisations was mainly concerned with abortion and led to the organisation of the World Congress of Families in Madrid (*ibid.*). Against this backdrop, Spanish feminist groups have increasingly built coalitions with trans* and LGBTQIA* organisations (Platero and Ortega-Arjonilla 2016). Such coalitions were fostered by the enactment of austerity measures which enhanced the formation of common grievances between differently marginalised groups, thus encouraging collective actors to overcome divisions (Chironi and Portos 2021). They also supported campaigns organised by trans* and LGBTQIA* organisations to demand a law to protect trans* people's rights (Platero 2020), with Madrid being one of the first communities to enact two laws specifically on trans* rights and anti-discrimination. In Italy, the 2011-2020 decade was similarly characterised by various mobilisations, such as the ones against anti-gender campaigns organised since 2013, and the ones to support the enactment of a national Law on same-sex marriage and stepchild adoption (partially approved in 2016). Furthermore, between 2016 and 2018 Italian LGBTQIA* activism underwent a reconfiguration phase characterised by increasing conflicts on surrogacy, sex work, and trans* rights (Prearo 2020).

However, it also witnessed the renewal of coalitions between LGBTQIA* organisations (ibid.), as well as emergence of new feminist groups that support LGBTQIA* claims (Chironi and Portos 2021; Chironi 2019). Such conflicts and coalitions were particularly visible during Expo 2015, a mega-event that took place in Milan and that was strongly opposed by several movement actors (Bertuzzi 2017), including some LGBTQIA* groups that organised a political campaign known as ‘No Expo Pride’ (ibid.). ‘No Expo Pride’ signed the division between groups organising the official pride parade with the support of the municipality, and groups criticising the municipality for its role in facilitating the organisation of Expo 2015 (ibid.).

With this context in mind, we will now consider the collective action events promoted on Facebook in 2019 by LGBTQIA* organisations based in the two cities. Such events were 615 in Madrid and 1.052 in Milan, respectively. The following brief analysis combines descriptive statistics of the issues framed as problems, solutions, and calls for action (i.e., diagnostic, prognostic and motivational framing tasks), with a qualitative examination of how such issues were collectively discussed and signified. This will give you a sense of how a frame semantic approach could be deployed to examine how collective action frames are articulated in different contentious contexts.

Figures x.3 and x.4 show the issues framed as problems, motivations, and solutions in Madrid and Milan respectively^{iv}. With respect to events containing at least one diagnosis, we can notice that in both cities LGBTQIA* activists discuss a wide range of issues, encompassing conventional LGBTQIA* issues, such as LGBTQIA*-phobia, and cross-sectional concerns, such as patriarchy and sexism, racism, and capitalism (above or close to a 10% threshold of references). An examination of code co-occurrences^v within the same event indicates two patterns: in Madrid, LGBTQIA* and cross-sectional issues are mainly mentioned in separate events), while in Milan they are more often discussed in the same event (21% and 43% of co-occurrences respectively). This suggests that LGBTQIA* activists may frame problems in different ways. Most of the events promoted by organisations based in Madrid frame issues such as racism, patriarchy, and classism as problems that do not directly affect the LGBTQIA* community, but that are still worth fighting against to show solidarity to other groups. On the contrary, most of the events published by organisations based in Milan address different issues as structurally entangled, meaning that one problem cannot be conceived without considering the others.

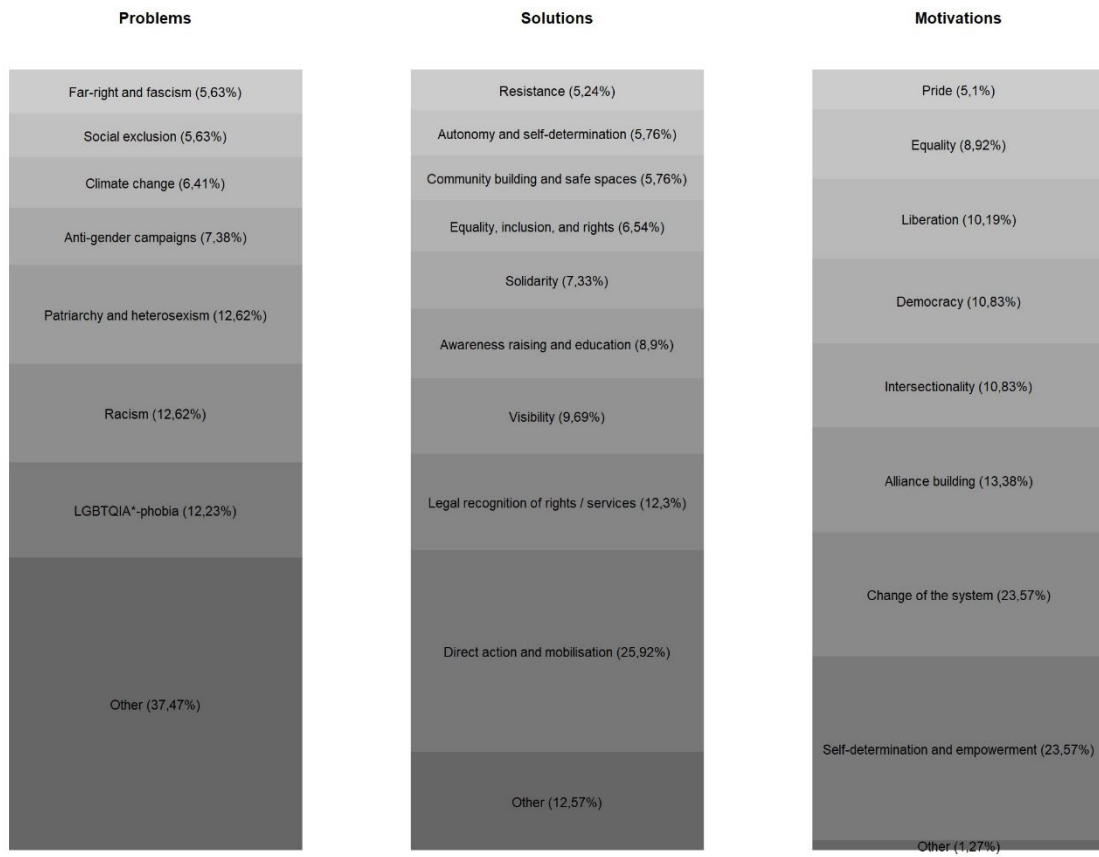


Figure x.3: Issues framed as problems, solutions, and motivations in Milan in 2019. Size by relative frequency

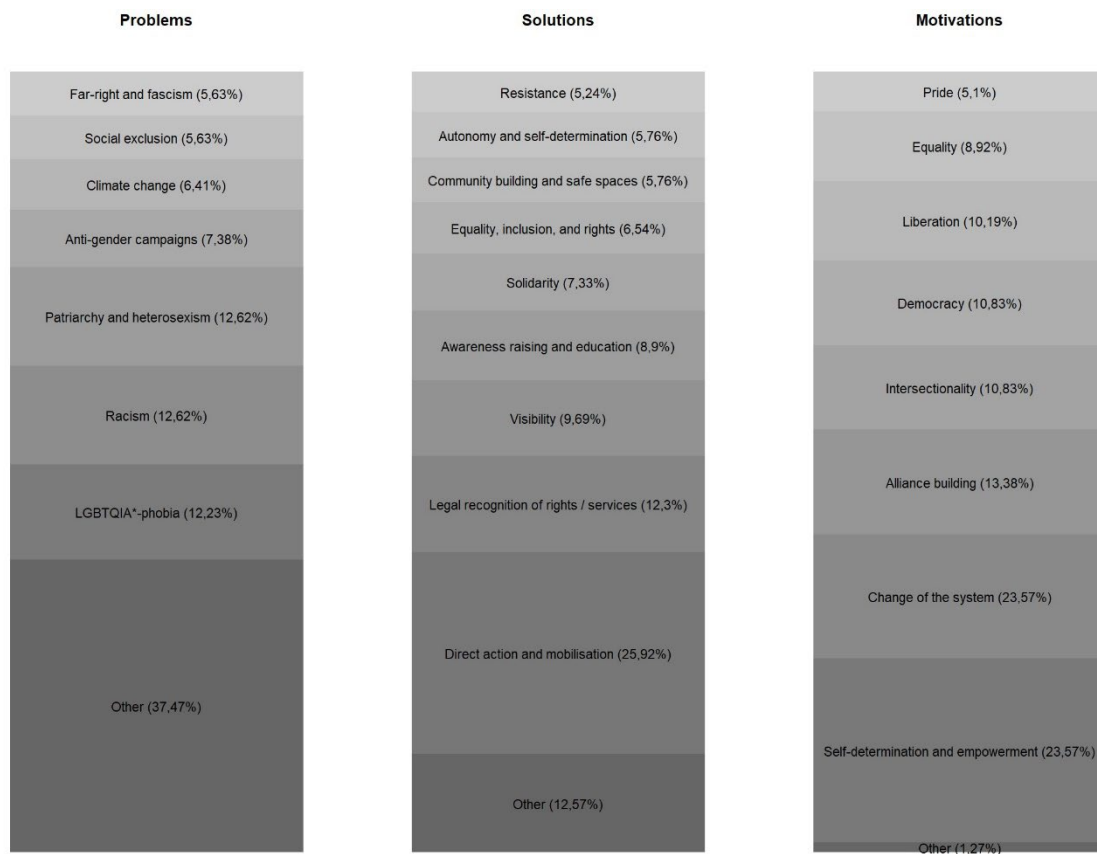


Figure x.4: Issues framed as problems, solutions, and motivations in Milan in 2019. Size by relative frequency

With reference to prognostic tasks, the tables show some differences. Madrid-based organisations mainly frame solutions in terms of community building, the necessity to make LGBTQIA* identities more visible, direct action and resistance (above the 10% threshold). Despite being more or less disruptive, these solutions are similarly narrated as strategies that the local LGBTQIA* field itself should develop in order to overcome its problems. In a different fashion, Milan-based organisations discuss a broader range of solutions, from internal strategies, such as direct action and visibility, to external claims to public authorities, namely the recognition of rights and services, awareness raising, and equality policies.

The heterogeneity of problems and solutions is also reflected in the wide range of issues invoked to motivate collective actions. The narrative of self-determination, empowerment, and alliance building appears to be stronger in Madrid, where activists also often refer to the importance of being proud of LGBTQIA* identities and experiences. In Milan, instead, fewer events frame LGBTQIA* pride as a motivation to engage in collective actions, but more call

for a total liberation and revolutionary change of the system. Another group of events also relate to the values of equality and democracy to orient activists' collective mobilisations.

An examination of how diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing tasks intersect may suggest that, since Madrid-based events tend to frame problems as separated from each other, the proposed solutions are motivated by two main rationales: on the one hand, cross-movement solidarity (Verloo 2013), meaning a call to stand in solidarity with other marginalised communities; on the other hand, self-determination and empowerment for LGBTQIA* individuals, whose different social positionings are acknowledged. In a different fashion, Milan-based events frame problems as interconnected, meaning that the concerns typically faced by LGBTQIA* communities are considered to intersect with sources of inequalities conventionally considered to affect other minorities. Milan-based LGBTQIA* activists frame social reality through an 'intersectional political consciousness' (Greenwood 2008). This entails that they both frame other minorities' concerns as their own grievances and acknowledge the heterogeneity of LGBTQIA* subjectivities - some of which are marginalised along intersecting inequality lines, such as LGBTQIA* racialised individuals. To address these entanglements, the proposed solutions encompass both reformist and disruptive approaches (Valocchi 1999), which could be interpreted along the lines of different calls for action. The former may be inspired by an equality and democracy horizon, while the latter may be motivated by a total change of the system to liberate all individuals marginalised along inequality lines that are framed as structurally bounded.

To conclude, this brief analysis illustrates how frame semantic grammars may be deployed to study collective action frames through an examination of diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing tasks. A frame semantic grammar may also allow researchers to explore the relations between the various issues framed as problems, solutions, or motivations, so as to identify collective action frames encompassing the identified framing tasks. These relations could be further analysed through quantitative approaches such as cluster analysis (Matthes and Kohring 2008) and network analysis (Vicari 2010), or more qualitative approaches (Johnston and Alimi 2013).

2.4. <c> From (digital) texts to framing tasks: dealing with methodological challenges

Designing and implementing a strategy to extract framing tasks from data corpora is never an easy, nor a smooth process. In this subsection, we will briefly discuss the key challenges faced

in the doctoral research briefly presented above. These may be summarised under three main overlapping dimensions: the nature of the concept of collective action frame; the approach to operationalise such a concept; and the data.

With regard to the conceptual nature of collective action frames, the main difficulty was to operationalise them in a rigorous way, hence making sure that both the data and coding units would allow to grasp the latent dimension of framing. In other words: what kind of data should be collected to examine framing? Based on the project's interest in analysing how solidarity is both signified and narrated in the online sphere of collective actions, textual data was chosen with the aim of examining the written outcomes of collective meaning-making practices (Johnston 1995; 2002)^{vi}. Following this methodological decision, a second concern arose: what kind of social media platforms should be selected? To deal with this concern, both theoretical and empirical aspects were considered. Concerning the former, literature on digital activism suggests that Facebook characteristics (e.g., no limitations in the number of characters and possibility to reach a broad public) make it an appropriate platform to analyse framing (Guenther et al. 2020). Furthermore, Facebook provides public pages with a specific function to promote the events they organise or partake in (the so-called 'event links'), thus making it possible to study framing developed in the context of collective actions. With regards to empirical aspects, data on the digital presence of the LGBTQIA* organisations included in the study showed that Facebook was the most commonly used platform in both contexts, with 83% and 87% of the actors^{vii} in Madrid and Milan respectively being active on the platform.

Another fundamental methodological question was: what aspects of the textual data - i.e., symbolic devices (see **Table x.1**) - should be analysed? In other words, what coding units should be selected? This concern was inherently related to the second dimension outlined above, meaning the definition of an empirical approach to investigate framing in the context of collective action events. The main difficulty of this phase concerned the heterogeneity of approaches to study frames outlined in the first section of this chapter. Both previous empirical investigations of collective action frames (e.g., Benford 1993; Ferree et al. 2002; Gerhards and Rucht 1992) and methodological pieces on how to conduct frame analysis (e.g., Johnston 2002, 1995; Johnston and Alimi 2013; Lindekilde 2014; Vicari 2010) were consulted to develop the analytical approach. A linguistic approach to frame analysis (Vicari 2010) was chosen for two main reasons. On the one hand, such an approach identifies clear coding units, thus allowing researchers to compare framing tasks over time and across socio-political contexts. By doing so, it enhances both the reliability of longitudinal interpretations and the comparability across

case studies. On the other hand, it urges researchers to extend the empirical examination of frames beyond textual content, thus allowing for a critical understanding of how the same issue might be framed as a problem, solution, or motivation. This possibility was particularly relevant in this investigation due to a lack of empirical evidence on LGBTQIA* collective action frames developed in Southern Europe. By focusing firstly on the semantic grammar of a clause, and secondly on its content, this approach helped inductively develop a coding scheme that would fit the data more appropriately.

Nonetheless, frame semantic grammars also present some limitations. First, the methodological rigour provided by the identification of clear coding units comes at the expense of analytical complexity. While this approach treats framing tasks as mutually exclusive categories, framing tasks are highly interrelated and activists may refer to problems, solutions, and/or motivations within the same clause (Vicari 2010, p. 521). Secondly, the application of a model based on English modal verbs in the context of two Romance languages, such as Italian and Spanish, is not straightforward. To try and overcome these limitations, text manipulation (Franzosi 2010, p. 40) was implemented. In other words, when a clause seemed to articulate more than one framing task, it would be split to assign different codes to different parts of the sentence. Similarly, modalities were not identified based on modal verbs only, but also based on the narrative of the clause itself. The texts were modified by adding the manipulation in italics. The manipulation process was recorded through specific memos explaining how the sentence was modified and the logical passages behind the coding of diagnostic, prognostic, or motivational tasks.

** Concluding remarks**

Frame analysis focuses on the interpretative dimension of social contention: it aims to extract, map and signify the symbolic aspects of collective actions. In the first part of this chapter, we situated the emergence of frame analysis within the broader ‘cultural shift’ in the social sciences, highlighting how this shift brought new attention to arguably hard-to-grasp elements of social contention: values, meanings, beliefs and symbols. We hope that the definitions and theory-based taxonomies provided in that part of the chapter will help future empirical explorations identify the right conceptual toolkit to meet their specific research objectives.

Possibly due to the ephemeral nature of frame analysis hard-to-grasp elements, the most varied range of methodological approaches has gradually emerged to implement frame analysis research. Again, our discussion and mapping of symbolic devices to be measured and/or

interpreted to study framing is meant to provide an entry point into literature that might help delimit the best unit(s) of analysis, depending on the type of collective action to be analysed, the availability and modality of relevant data and the specific research context.

Finally, we provided a detailed account of the use of frame semantic grammars because, albeit the limitations discussed in the previous section, they offer a way to elaborate a comprehensive picture of collective action framing. Frame semantic grammars, by anchoring interpretative processes to linguistic features, provide a methodological instrument that can be used in comparative and longitudinal research. Ultimately, while enhancing validity and reliability, they also offer opportunities to further quantify or explore both semantic relations in movement manifestos and alliances within and across social movement fields.

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Notes

ⁱ The collection of codes, meaning the words and phrases assigned by researchers to 'tag' different segments of a text, is called a 'coding scheme' (Miles and Huberman 1994).

ⁱⁱ A 'unit of analysis' is defined as the main entity on which your research is focused or, in other words, the phenomenon under study (Babbie 2013; Gerring 2012). It can encompass different analytical levels, ranging from micro-level entities, such as individuals, to meso-level entities, for instance organisations and events, to macro-level entities, namely states (Gerring 2012). A 'coding unit' is defined as a segment of data to which researchers assign a specific code (Miles and Huberman 1994). It can vary in length and depth, and it is identified according to the approach to qualitative coding and analysis developed by the researcher (ibid.).

ⁱⁱⁱ The term 'anti-gender campaigns' is used to define mobilisations organised by conservative religious groups in opposition to gender and sexual equality (Kuhar and Paternotte 2018, p. 3).

^{iv} For the sake of clarity, these figures only show the percentages of the issues that are higher than 5% of all the issues addressed in the events. The less discussed issues were summarised under the category 'other', included in the figures.

^v Code co-occurrences were calculated through the function 'Code relation browser' in MAXQDA (2020).

^{vi} Past studies have shown that visual materials acquire particular importance in the frame analysis of social media content (Doerr and Milman 2014). However, due to manageability purposes, these materials were not included in the investigation. Future research may hence analyse the visual representations of LGBTQIA* collective action events promoted online to further examine the messages conveyed to the audience.

^{vii} Of these, 37.5% and 55% of the organisations based in Madrid and Milan respectively are active on Facebook only.