

Motions Policy Preferences using the Manifesto Project Codes Annotation Guidelines

Introduction

This project aims to use codes developed by the Manifesto Project for the annotation of political parties' manifestos (election programmes) to label the policy positions expressed by Members of the United Kingdom Parliament (MPs) in debate motions.

In the House of Commons (the lower chamber of Parliament), each debate normally begins with a motion, a proposal tabled by an MP. These motions express the MPs' (and usually their parties') policy positions on one or more topics.

The unit of analysis is the *quasi-sentence*, a sentence or sentence clause, that should contain exactly one statement or "message". For each quasi-sentence (henceforth QS), the aim is to find the most suitable code.

Policies and coding

The coding scheme is adapted from the Manifesto Project version four (mp v4 https://manifestoproject.wzb.eu/coding_schemes/mp_v4).

There are 57 codes in the scheme, each of which consists of three digits. 56 of these categories are grouped into seven major policy domains. The 'hundreds' position in each signifies this category, while the 'tens' and 'units' positions indicate the specific policy preference.

- Domain 1: External Relations
- Domain 2: Freedom and Democracy
- Domain 3: Political System
- Domain 4: Economy
- Domain 5: Welfare and Quality of Life
- Domain 6: Fabric of Society
- Domain 7: Social Groups

The 57th code is '000 No meaningful category applies', and is used for 'statements not covered by other categories; sentences devoid of any meaning.' Further information and examples of coded manifesto excerpts are in the Manifesto Project coding Handbook, available at: https://manifestoproject.wzb.eu/down/papers/handbook_2011_version_4.pdf.

Coding notes:

1	
101	Often The USA and Commonwealth countries.
102	Does not appear in UK manifestos.
103	Rarely used. Occasional use in CMP in relation to Russian imperialism in Ukraine.
104	Includes support for the Military Covenant, which supports soldiers and veterans.
105	
106	Where terrorism (e.g., Northern Ireland), is discussed in terms of unlawfulness, do not

	use this code.
107	
108	
109	
110	
2	
201	Use of this code seems broad and extends to e.g. tenants' and hospital patients' rights.
202	Generally positive towards democracy rather than negative about lack of democracy (see 304 Political Corruption).
203	
204	
3	
301	
302	Quite rarely used in UK manifestos.
303	
304	
305	Used to criticise Government or other parties, or to praise own party. Use only when no other code applies i.e., if a reason or outcome of the Govt./parties is mentioned, then use a code corresponding to that rather than 305.
4	
401	
402	Note that this code applies to incentives to <u>businesses</u> , not consumers. Incentives should generally be something positive proposed rather than criticism of a state of affairs.
403	
404	Includes policies aimed at lowering mortgage/interest rate. Consider whether <u>plans</u> or <u>goals</u> (408) are motion's focus. Should refer to economic planning, not spending plans.
405	Can include immigration policies related to protecting jobs.
406	References to balancing the budget, reducing the deficit.
407	
408	Consider whether <u>goals</u> or <u>plans</u> (404) are motion's focus. Should usually not refer to spending plans, which may be a welfare, education etc issue.

409	For this code, the emphasis is on the benefits of spending to the economy.
410	
411	
412	
413	
414	
415	Not used in UK manifestos.
416	
5	
501	
502	
503	503 and 504 are quite similar. For 503, the emphasis is usually on an effect on people...
504	... whereas 504 is concerned with funding of the welfare system. This code does not include education or infrastructure. Note that public transport, the mail service, and flood defences are infrastructure, not welfare issues. "Welfare" is limited to economic and social issues. Support for Sure Start childrens' centres CAN fit this code. Housing should only be included in welfare in the case of public housing, not for general house building to meet demand.
505	
506	
507	
6	
601	
602	
603	
604	
605	
606	Civil society may include charities and volunteers.
607	Compare 607 and 705: 607 is concerned with benefits to society of immigration, 705 more related to the immigrants themselves..
608	Often includes mention of English language requirement for incomers.
7	

701	
702	
703	
704	Focus here is on people, not institutions like the NHS.
705	May include: hospital patients, disabled people, refugees, ethnic minorities, Limited to the UK.
706	May include: young/old people, children. Does not include the unemployed (701).
0	
000	This code should be a very last resort. Wherever possible use context of motion.

Code allocation procedure

For each motion, annotators should first read the complete motion (QS1 - QS n) in order to get a grasp of the context.

Then, each QS of every motion is coded into one, and only one, of 57 categories. It is important to read every single QS very carefully.

Finally, an overall code should be applied to the motion as a whole.

Favourite codes 'addiction'

It's a common problem that annotators get in the habit of assigning codes that they have previously assigned to other examples to new examples that are superficially similar. Try to guard against this by bearing this phenomena in mind and regularly checking the code descriptions to see if you can find a more suitable code.