

# (DE-)LEGITIMATION IN THE ANTHROPOCENE: A PERSPECTIVE OF AGONISTIC POLITICS

PHILIPP CENSKOWSKY ([philipp.censkowsky@unil.ch](mailto:philipp.censkowsky@unil.ch))

DÉBORAH PHILIPPE ([deborah.philippe@unil.ch](mailto:deborah.philippe@unil.ch))

FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS  
UNIVERSITY OF LAUSANNE (SWITZERLAND)

## CODEBOOK

---

### User guide/description (for peer review):

We coded the assembled data corpus in the following, systematic matter:

1. We divided actors into challengers and incumbents, which we coded separately
  - a. Incumbents: Individuals or organizations whose communications clearly endorse fossil fuel expansion, i.e., developing new fields after 2021
  - b. Challengers: Individuals or organizations whose communications clearly disprove of fossil fuel expansion, i.e., developing new fields after 2021
2. We distinguished utterances into the following categories representing *beliefs* which actors used to justify (incumbents) or disprove of fossil fuel expansion (challengers).
  - a. ***Climate/environmental*** (codes 100)
  - b. ***Economic/fiscal*** (codes 200)
  - c. ***Political/geopolitical/legal*** (codes 300)
3. We distinguished utterances into the following categories representing *actions* or *strategies* used to achieve the goals of the incumbent/challenger field population:
  - a. ***Legal action*** (codes 400)
  - b. ***Political lobbying*** (codes 500)
  - c. ***Corporate strategy*** (codes 600)
4. We coded the stated goals of each field population in the following way:
  - a. ***Goals of the incumbent field***
  - b. ***Goals of the challenger field*** (both codes 700)

We coded beliefs and actions with respect to the following question or ‘wedge issue’ studied: do actors endorse fossil fuel expansion after 2021 or disprove of it? To justify respective beliefs or actions, actors draw on the same general categories as stated above. Hence, incumbents were given the 101, 102, 103 when they used climate/environmental arguments *in favor* of fossil fuel expansion in Norway or the U.K. An example of this logic is the argument that the production of fossil fuels is *relatively* cleaner than abroad, supporting the rationale of producing *more* in Norway/the UK. Meanwhile, challengers were given the code 151, 152, 153 when they used climate/environmental arguments *against* expanding fossil fuels in these countries. Here an example is the argument of the global carbon budget, which is being exceeded with new fields, considering their combustion-related (scope 3) emissions.

Finally, we added the category ‘*Joint themes*’ (codes 900) to denote utterances that have no immediate relation in favor or against government licensing policy for new supply fields but still provide relevant insights to the debate (e.g., obstacles, current market trends, technology, political sentiments, historical developments, the effects of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine).

Some complementary remarks regarding the coding procedure:

- To ensure originality of arguments, we did not code utterances where actors (e.g., a challenger) talk about how the respective adversaries (i.e., the incumbent) think or act.
- We do not distinguish ‘judgement validation institutions’ because, with few exceptions, all interviewees, even those representing such institutions, had a clear private opinion on the ‘wedge issue’ of endorsing or disproving of fossil fuel expansion after 2021.

All code categories represent aggregate categories from more than 200 initial raw codes, that are available from the first author.

***Incumbents: Defending fossil fuel expansion***

General category	Code	Sub-category	Description/rationale	Semantic descriptors
<i>Beliefs (rhetorical elements used as justifications)</i>				
<b><i>Climate/environmental</i></b>	<b>100</b>			
	101	Relatively clean production and technological progress	Domestically produced oil and gas is clean and can substitute dirtier oil and gas from abroad	Clean oil and gas, carbon capture and storage, substitutability, use in petrochemicals
	102	Gas as a ‘transition fuel’	Gas different than oil; seen as a transition fuel to alternative gases or energy supplies	Transition fuel, supposed alignment with 1.5° C scenarios
	103	Past achievements and production-related emissions	Achievements of reducing (territorial) emissions	Electrification, prevention of flaring, reduction of operated scope 1 and 2 emissions, companies as heroes of the transition
<b><i>Economic/fiscal</i></b>	<b>200</b>			
	201	Contribution to social and economic welfare	Fossil fuel expansion ensures energy security, shared prosperity, employment, investment, profitability, and fiscal space	Energy prices, supply security, trickle-down effect, fiscal effects, jobs
	202	Demand side/market logic	Demand should regulate the supply, not vice versa	Market-based policies, work, prices, de-regulation

	203	Complexity of the transition	Cannot stop fossil expansion because of the 'energy trilemma' and uncertainty of alternatives	Fear, afraid, collapse, overnight, new fields to prevent too steep a decline, complexity, balance, high costs
<b><i>Political/geopolitical/legal</i></b>	<b>300</b>			
	301	Need to maintain political mandates	Need to ensure energy security at home and/or in Europe	Being a stable supplier to Europe, following parliamentary mandates
	302	Need to adapt to changing geopolitical contexts	Fossil fuel expansion as geopolitical crisis response	Russia's invasion of Ukraine, external pressure, independence from authoritarian states
	303	Legality of the activity	Fossil fuel expansion justified since it is congruent with legal provisions	Article 112, constitution, EIA Directive
<i>Actions/strategies (non-rhetorical elements to achieve incumbent goals)</i>				
<b>Legal action</b>	<b>400</b>			
	401	Incumbents sue or appeal against challengers	Governments/companies take legal action against challengers	Appeals, direct suits, state prosecution, fines, prison, investor-state settlement disputes (ISDS)
	402	Adjunct legal actions	Strategic actions to support claims in the Court	Commissioning of studies, invitation of expert witnesses, evoking legal threats

<b>Political action</b>	<b>500</b>			
	501	Influence actors with political power	Lobbying of actors with direct political influence	Local MPs, coastal population, European Union, Oslo, Westminster
	502	Strengthen the state-industry-labor nexus	Strengthening ties with actors that have indirect political power (unions, Equinor etc)	Swing doors, revolving doors
<b>Corporate strategy</b>	<b>600</b>			
	601	Strategy re-alignment	Strategies/actions aimed to adapt to changing environments (e.g., move abroad if domestic business becomes unattractive)	Investing abroad, internationalization, strategic interest purchases, joint ventures, acquisitions
	602	Public relation campaigns	Advertising, sponsorships, consumer relations	Media, advertisements, marketing, sponsorships and donations
<b>Goals of the incumbent field</b>	<b>700</b>			
	701	Keep existing assets in operation & expand near-field	Involving already developed infrastructure and near-field expansion	Future option value, prioritization, near-field, domestic/abroad
	702	Keep existing assets in operation & expand frontier areas	Involving already developed infrastructure and frontier are as to maximize value creation	Maximized recovery, domestic/abroad
	703	Ensure stable political framework	Goal of lobbying	E.g., concerning the tax regime, licensing regime etc.

### *Challengers: Disproving of fossil fuel expansion*

General category	Code	Sub-category	Description/rationale	Semantic descriptors
<i>Beliefs (rhetorical elements used as justifications)</i>				
<b><i>Climate/environmental</i></b>	<b>100</b>			
	151	Global climate impact	Exceeding the global carbon budget leads to risks and impacts of global warming beyond 1.5° C	Scope 3 emissions, costs of climate change, international responsibility, climate justice, past inaction, public health
	152	System's perspective and uncertainty	How a systemic perspective invalidates incumbents' arguments	Tipping elements in the Earth system (uncertainty), reductionism, precautionary approach
	153	Local environmental degradation	Disproval because of local pollution/degradation	Harm to fragile areas, including birds or marine life, place-based conservationism, tourism
<b><i>Economic/fiscal</i></b>	<b>200</b>			
	251	Economic arguments against expansion	High lead times (15-20 years) render new projects obsolete, better job security in renewables	Stranded assets, approaching depletion, oil price changes, negative externalities, demand reduction, crowding out, skills, labor market
	252	Possibilities and resilience of alternatives	Availability of renewable energy technologies which can become economically viable	Energy security via renewables, industrial alternatives, state investment, oil fund, managed decline/just transition

	253	Social injustice	Current economic/energy model is socially unjust in terms of access to energy, prices, taxes etc.	Redistribution, new social contract, public ownership of assets, tax justice, class politics, unjust distribution of climate impacts, occupation of Palestine
<b>Political/geopolitical/legal</b>	<b>300</b>			
	351	International reputation	A licensing ban can increase international reputation of the country	Legitimacy, reputation, external views, credibility, BOGA, obstacles of int. climate negotiations
	352	Popular support for just transitions	A transition away from fossils speak to a growing portion of society	Mainstreaming of climate, political consensus
	353	Illegality of the activity	Fossil fuel expansion unjustified since incongruent with legal provisions	Article 112, the constitution, EIA Directive, procedural errors etc.
<i>Actions/strategies (non-rhetorical elements to achieve challenger goals)</i>				
<b>Legal action</b>	<b>400</b>			
	451	Challengers sue or appeal against incumbents	File a suit (e.g., against licensing, environmental assessment and permitting)	Lawsuit, grounds, legal strategies, climate litigation
	452	Adjunct legal actions	Strategic actions to support claims in the Court or raise media attention	Commissioning reports, inviting expert witnesses, criminal offences
<b>Political action</b>	<b>500</b>			

	551	Strengthening of actor alliances	Strategies involving synergies between different actors with common goals	Climate-labor nexus, new actors (e.g., Great British Energy or climate commissions)
	552	Influencing actors with political power	Lobbying of actors with direct political influence, public campaigns to ‘catch voters’	Parliamentarians/political parties/voters around the ‘wedge issue’ of fossil expansion
	553	Civil disobedience/direct action/protests	Civil resistance, ‘standing in the way’, mobilization	Friday-for-futures, general strikes, direct action, demonstrations
<b>Corporate strategy</b>	<b>600</b>			
	651	Shareholder activism	Strategies aimed to influence board decisions favoring fossil phase-out	Shareholder activism, state owners, non-state owners, groups of like-minded
	652	Campaigns targeted at corporate actors (e.g., Equinor Out)	Diverse campaigning strategies favoring fossil phase-out and strategy re-alignment	Social media, international campaigning, synergies
<b>Goals of the challenger field</b>	<b>700</b>			
	751	Stop new licenses & keep existing production	Involves a stop of new licenses (frontier/near-field)	End government licensing, new conservation areas
	752	Stop new licenses & phase out existing production	Involves a stop of new licenses & a scale-down of existing production	End government licensing policy, phase-out, phase-down, terminal decline



753	Stop new licenses & and transform the industrial structure	Whole-of-society transformation	Transformation, transition, industrial change
-----	--	---------------------------------	---

***Joint themes***

Code	Sub-category	Description/rationale	Semantic descriptors
<b>900</b>	<i>Shared topics by both challengers and incumbents</i>		
901	Obstacles to the transition	How actors frame obstacles to transitioning away from fossil fuels	Fiscal/political/geopolitical/economic /administrative/erosion of trust/emotional
902	Recurrent narratives and contradictions (as perceived by challengers)	How challengers perceive the incumbent field	Narratives / contradictions
903	Recurrent narratives and contradictions (as perceived by incumbents)	How incumbents perceive the challenger field	Narratives / contradictions
904	Norwegian specificities	Specificities to the struggle around O&G in Norway	Political/economic/cultural/historic
905	British specificities	Specificities to the struggle around O&G in the U.K.	Political/economic/cultural/historic
906	Enablers of the transition	Which enablers actors perceive to overcome obstacles	E.g., social tipping elements, policies etc.
907	Responsibility and moral questions	How actors evoke ethics and responsibility	Moral question, ethics, responsibility

908	Relation to judgement validation institutions	How actors relate to authority	Science, the law, parliament, the government
909	Comparison Norway/UK/international	How actors compare different national contexts	UK/Norway/Denmark/Colombia/Unit ed States/etc.
910	Effects of Russia's invasion of Ukraine	How the geopolitical crisis affects current pathways (without immediately bearing on the sub-field goals)	Russia, war, Ukraine, energy security, price effects, supply crisis

---