



Frame

How we perceive, understand and describe situations



What Frames Are?

- Frames are particular ways of making meaning of the complexity of situations.
- Frames are structures of beliefs, perceptions, values and appreciations about a situation, most of them underlying conscience.
- From the multiple components of a situation we select a particular set with which we try to understand the situation and to transform it.



The Process of Framing

1. The starting point is a vague image of a reality named by John Dewey as a “*Problematic Situation*”.
2. This situation is named and framed selecting a few salient/selected features and relations from the from the multiple elements of the complex reality.
3. These elements receive a coherent organization, and are used for describing what is correct and what is wrong with the situation, or what is the problem.
4. The directions for the transformation of the situation will come from the elements established in the frame.



Rhetorical and Action Frames

There are two main kinds of Frames:

- Rhetorical Frames, and
- Action Frames.

Rhetorical frames are related with espoused policies, and are used for arguing about a situation, it is resource for polemic.

Action frames are related to policies-in-use. They are used for dealing with the situation.

Frequently rhetorical frames try to obscure some elements of the action frames that are intended to be applied.



Frames and Metaphors

- Frames frequently use metaphors as a way to develop and/or to communicate their particular logic.
- Metaphors are of great utility for explaining and for thinking with a particular frame.
- In the 50s and 60s the problems of urban housing were presented as diseases that required sanitary interventions. In the 80s that metaphor was criticized.
- Based on a metaphor the actions look more familiar and consistent with the requirements of change of the situation.



Frames and Interests

- There is a double sided interaction between frames and interests
 - The actors' interests influence the way they frame the situation.
 - But the frames of the actors also shape the way they perceive their interests.
- These both relations tend to be tacit and invisible for the actors.



Circularity of Frames

- In conflicting frames there is no way of falsifying a frame with valid data.
- When we arrive to situations where different frames are resistant to refutation we are in a situation that is not normal.
- These situations were analyzed by Thomas Kuhn in his studies about the scientific revolutions.
- The thesis of Kuhn is that, in those situations, there is no neutral algorithm for theory (frame) choice.



Frames Are Mostly Tacit

- *“The frames that shape policies are usually tacit, which means that we tend to argue from our tacit frames to our explicit policy positions”*
- *“... we are usually unaware of their roles (of the frames) in organizing our actions, thoughts and perceptions.”*

Donald Schön and Martin Rein, *Frame Reflection*



A Precondition for Reframing

- “... when scientist and policy makers are caught up in frame conflict, their ability to reach an agreement depends on their learning *to understand one another’s point of view.*”

In order to do this, however, each party should be able to put in terms of his or her own frames the meaning of the situation as seen by the other in terms of the other’s frame.”

Donald Schön and Martin Rein, *Frame Reflection*