Inferences and Assumptions Project

June 30, 2022

**Assumptions Codebook**

**Overview**

Coders will be using a combination of NVivo 2020 and Excel software to ‘code’ decisions written by members of the Refugee Protection Division (RPD) of the Immigration and Refugee Board. As you will see, coders will use NVivo to review the first-level ‘Inference’ codes and will use Excel to capture their own ‘Assumption’ code decisions.

First-level codes: the Inference Codes

A team of JD students have coded these decisions for the credibility inference that the members have drawn. Wherever the member finds that the claimant is lying, the Inference coders have coded that text at one or more of the inferences that fall into the following major categories (for details, please see the Inferences Codebook in the

Assumptions coding Google Drive folder).

**A2** Implausible inconsistency

**A3** Lack of appropriate knowledge

**A4** Lack of diligence

**A5** Lack of supporting evidence

**A6** Manner, general quality or texture of testimony

**A7** Non-probative supporting evidence

**A8** Previous deception

**A9** Promise, oath or affirmation

**AA10** Risk response

**AA11** Otherwise illogical or unlikely

**AA12** Other

The aim of this first-level coding is two-fold:

To quantify in how many of these decisions the members concluded, in the context of an assessment of the risk of persecution, that the claimant had lied. ‘Lying’ is defined here as having “invented some or all of their allegations with the intention of deceiving the Board.”

To explore the inferences that the members use to justify their conclusion that the claimant has lied. This coding will quantify in how many decisions each inference appears but will **not** capture how often it appears in a given decision.

Second-level codes: the Assumption Codes

The psychology grad student coder team (the “Assumptions coders”) will be reading these decisions and, for each of the decisions in which the member concluded that the claimant was lying, coding the assumptions that underlie the members’ reasoning.

They will then be comparing this coding with the inference codes and cataloguing, for each category of assumption, which category or categories of inferences codes they support.

The aim of this second-level coding is two-fold:

To explore the assumptions that underlie the members’ conclusion that the claimant has lied. This coding will quantify in how many decisions each assumption appears but will **not** capture how often it appears in a given decision. This will allow us to answer these questions:

Which categories of assumption did the members rely on most often in drawing the inferences that support their negative credibility conclusions? Which did they rely on least often?

To capture the relationship between the inference codes and the assumptions codes: to identify which assumptions most often underlie which inferences. This will allow us to answer this question:

How often does a given category of assumption support a given category of inference?

**The coding process**

Assumptions coders will be trained in how to use the NVivo 2020 software to read the Inference codes, and how to use Excel to capture the Assumption codes. Each coder will be assigned a set of decisions to code.

First: Check to see if the member made a negative finding

In NVivo, for each decision, look at the **A1** Metrics code (the code that shows whether the member made a negative credibility finding). If the member made no negative credibility finding, indicate this by putting a ‘1’ in the ‘No deception’ column in Excel, and move on to the next decision. Otherwise, continue.

Second: Get a sense of the context

Read the decision once through from start to finish.

Third: Code the relevant text for the assumptions

Highlight all of the text that the Inference coders have coded:

select ‘Highlight’ from the NVivo toolbar

from the dropdown menu, select “Coding for selected items”

check the boxes for the A2-12 codes

Read through this text and code any assumptions at the appropriate assumption codes.

Note: One inference may be underpinned by more than one assumption.

Note: The idea here is to code the text that reflects the inferences that the first-level coders identified. The Inference coders used their judgment in deciding how much text to include in the code. If necessary, you can ‘read around the edges’ of the highlighted text to capture adjacent text that you think is making the same point.

Fourth: Prepare the NVivo Inference categories chart

Once the assumption coding is complete, in the NVivo toolbar, select “Chart.”

from the dropdown menu, choose ‘Chart PDF coding’

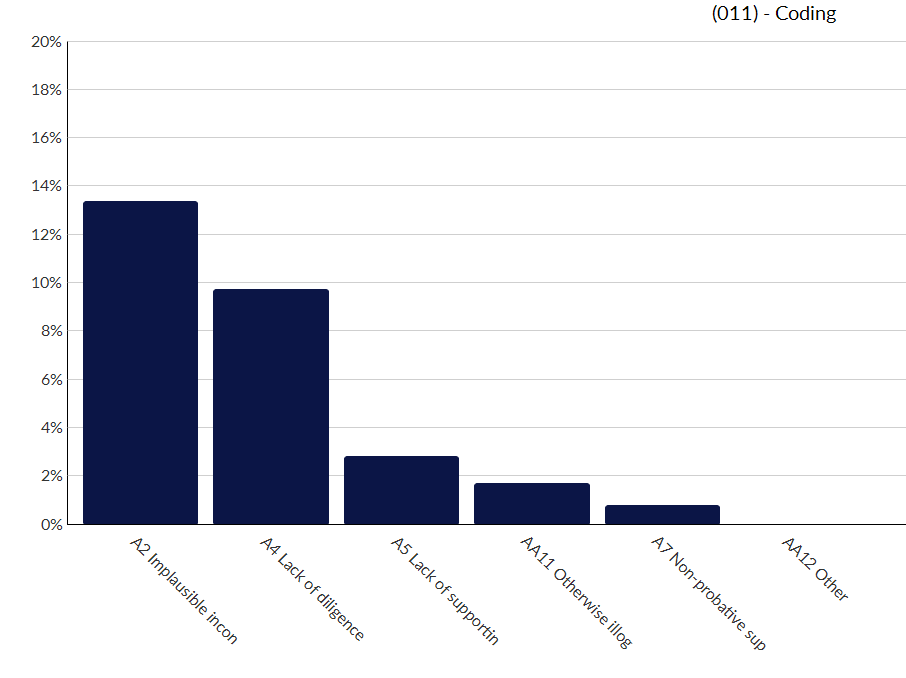
On the ‘Chart’ page, in the toolbar, go to ‘select data’

In the grey box, where it says X-axis, click the dropdown menu: choose “selected codes and cases”

click “select”

select codes A2 through A12 (just select the ‘parent’ codes, not the ‘child’ codes within them; e.g. select “A10 Risk response” but do not select “delay in claiming,” “delay in leaving” etc.). Do not select the A1 metrics code.

This should produce a chart that looks like this:



Fifth: Look at the collection of text coded at each inference category (i.e. each bar of the graph) and see what assumptions are also coded within that text

By clicking on one of the columns, open a link to the text of the decision where each of the relevant inferences in that category is highlighted.

In the NVivo toolbar, select ‘coding stripes’

from the dropdown menu, choose ‘Selected items…’

select codes P1 through P17

select ‘automatic colours’ in the Coding Stripes tab to make the bars easier to see

This will allow you to see which Assumption codes were identified within this category of inference: the colourful ‘coding bars’ corresponding to the various Assumption codes (P codes) will show up on the right-hand side of the screen.

Sixth: Capture the relationship in Excel

Verify that each Assumption code that appears within a category of inference in fact relates to this inference category.

By way of explanation: the same passage of text may be double-coded at several inferences. Since NVivo attaches codes to the text itself, on occasion an Assumption code that shows up in a certain category of inference may only be there by accident: because it is attached to a section of text that was also coded at a different inference. Coders will therefore need to check that an Assumption code properly relates to the given inference category.

In Excel, for each category of Inference, put a ‘1’ in the column for each Assumption code that supports it and fill the rest of the columns for that inference category with 0. If no Assumption code supports the inference put 0s in all of the cells for that inference. If the category of Inference does not appear in the file, put x in all the cells.

Return to Step Fifth and repeat for the next column.

**The Codes**

**At a glance**

*NOW/HERE/THERE are descriptive only.*

*Coding is always at the lowest level.*

NOW

P1 Demeanour

P1-1 Appearance/behaviour

P1-2 Manner of speech

P1-3 Expression of emotion

P2 Consistency

P2-1 Internal consistency

P2-2 External consistency

P3 Detail/Specificity

P4 Disclosure of sensitive information

P5 Lying in one place means lying elsewhere

P6 Now – Other

HERE

P7 Delay/Disclosure

P7-1 Late disclosure

P7-2 Timing of asylum application

P8 How people behave (claimant)

P8-1 How “intelligent people” behave

P8-2 People’s behaviour claiming asylum

P9 How people behave (family/friends)

P10 How people behave (others e.g. professionals)

P11 Knowledge or understanding

P11-1 Assumptions about knowledge in general

P11-2 People know what is important for a claim

P11-3 Other assumptions about what people know about claiming asylum

P11-4 Other assumptions about what people know

P11-5 People can explain their memory processes/motivations/behaviours

P12 Here – Other

THERE

P13 Judging others’ behaviour based on self

P14 How people behave (claimant)

P14-1 Rationally and consistently

P14-2 Other assumptions about how people behave in danger

P14-3 Other assumptions about how people behave in their country of origin

P15 How people behave (family/friends)

P15-1 Rationally and consistently

P15-2 Other assumptions about how families/friends behave in danger

P15-3 Other assumptions about how families/friends behave in their country of origin

P16 How people behave (others)

P16-1 Rationally and consistently

P16-2 Assumptions about how persecutors behave

P16-3 Other assumptions about how people behave in danger

P16-4 Other assumptions about people in authority

P17 Knowledge of matters in the country of origin

P17-1 People know the geography of their country of origin

P17-2 Other assumptions about what people know in their country of origin

P18 There – Other

**In the chart below:**

The BLUE cells are titles, not codes. They help to put the codes in context.

The ORANGE cells are the highest level of codes (the ‘parent’ codes) for those codes that contain sub-codes; the software will collect and aggregate the information from the ‘child’ codes that appear under them. The coders will not assign text to these codes.

The MAUVE cells are the codes that the coders will be using. The coders will select and assign text to these codes.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **NOW – The claimant as a truthful witness**  These assumptions are about how the member believes they can tell that a claimant is lying from the way that the claimant presents their account of persecution. | | |
|  | **P1 Demeanour**  The inference drawn about the claimant’s credibility rests on assumptions about the appearance or presentation of truthful/deceptive people. | |
|  | | **P1-1 Appearance/Behaviour at hearing/interview**  The inference of non-credibility is underpinned by an assumption about how a truthful/deceptive person appears/behaves.  *e.g. the claimant appeared uneasy when addressed directly* |
|  | | **P1-2 Manner of speech**  The inference of non-credibility is underpinned by an assumption about a truthful/deceptive person’s manner of speech.    *e.g. he was hesitant and replied slowly* |
|  | | **P1-3 Expression of emotion**  The inference of non-credibility is underpinned by an assumption about a truthful/deceptive person’s way of expressing emotion.  *e.g. she did not show any distress when describing this event* |
|  | **P2 Consistency**  The inference rests on the assumption that recall of dates, sequencing and other details of events is consistent across time and between different people. | |
|  | | **P2-1 Internal inconsistency**  Since a person’s truthful account will remain consistent across retellings, inconsistency within two different accounts by the same claimant -suggests deception.  *e.g. in her BOC she stated that she was detained for seven days but in her subsequent statement she says that it was 10 days.* |
|  | | **P2-2 External inconsistency**  Since different people’s accounts of the same event will be consistent, inconsistency between two different people’s accounts suggests deception.  *e.g. she stated that their father insisted she leave but her brother said in his statement that they had left because they were afraid* |
|  | **P3 Detail/Specificity**  Since people can recall and retell specific details about their experiences, a lack of detail and/or specificity suggests deception.  *e.g her answers were vague and she gave no details* | |
|  | **P4 Disclosure of sensitive information**  People can disclose sensitive information in a straightforward manner.  *e.g. if she really was raped as she claims I cannot believe she would not be able to tell me about it* | |
|  | **P5 Lying in one place means you’re lying in another**  Since telling a lie indicates that a person is dishonest, a lie or other deceptive behaviour in one part of the claim suggests deception in another part of the claim, including documents submitted – or the whole claim.  *e.g. given the credibility problems with her account I cannot accept these documents as genuine* | |
|  | **P6 Now - Other** | |
| **HERE – Applying for asylum**  These assumptions are about the behaviour or knowledge or motivation of people in the course of living in Canada and making an asylum claim | | |
|  | **P7 Delay/Disclosure**  Since people will come forward with information or make a claim without delay, a delay in coming forward with information, or to make a claim, suggests that the claim is unfounded – i.e. there is no genuine story of persecution. | |
|  | | **P7-1 Disclosing new information at a late stage in the process suggests deception**  *e.g. if this had really happened to her she would have mentioned it at the first opportunity* |
|  | | **P7-2 The timing of making an asylum claim suggests deception**  *e.g. he only submitted a claim when all other avenues to staying were exhausted* |
|  | **P8 How people behave (claimant)** | |
|  | | **P8-1 How “intelligent people” behave**  *e.g. an intelligent person would not have acted in this way* |
|  | | **P8-2 People’s behaviour claiming asylum**  *e.g. I can tell what an X <type of person> would do* |
|  | **P9 How people behave (family/friends)**  *e.g. I was surprised that your partner didn’t attend your hearing to support you.* | |
|  | **P10 How people behave (others, e.g. professionals)**  Assumptions about the behaviour of others (not claimant nor family) e.g. lawyer, medical expert; also in written form e.g. in reports  *e.g. why would the lawyer not have referred the claimant for a medical report if they were unwell at the time of their meetings?* | |
|  | **P11 Knowledge or understanding** | |
|  | | **P11-1 Assumptions about knowledge in general**  *e.g. if you know this you would know that* |
|  | | **P11-2 People know what is important in the claim process**  *e.g. he must have known that this document would be important evidence for his case* |
|  | | **P11-3 Other assumptions about what people know about claiming asylum**  *e.g. I do not find it credible that she did not know how to submit a claim at that time* |
|  | | **P11-4 Other assumptions about what people know**, including about other people’s behaviours, motivations etc.    *e.g. The claimant was not able to name any of the twelve disciples of Jesus, any of the file pillars of Islam, etc.* |
|  | | **P11-5 People can explain their memory processes/motivations/behaviours**  *e.g. she could not provide a reasonable explanation for the inconsistencies in her account* |
|  | **P12 Here – Other** | |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **THERE – In the country of origin**  These assumptions are about the behaviour or knowledge or motivation of people in their country of origin.  A NOTE OF CAUTION:  If the member is comparing something that is alleged to have happened in the country of origin against a report, or her/his own knowledge of that country, this is not an “assumption.”  *So “given the country information and the report of <academic anthropologist> I do not accept that he would have been recruited to the group in this way” is a comparison of the applicant’s account with information known about the situation in his country,*  *whereas*  *“I do not believe that a family in fear would stay in their house” is an assumption about how families behave in situations of danger.*  *NB: “she said walked for three hours to get to the border, but I see on the map that it is a journey of 100 miles so that would not be possible” might be a discrepancy with country information, or it might be an issue with the applicant’s recall. Careful reading around the inference should clarify how to code this inference.* | | |
|  | **P13 Judging other people’s behaviour based on self**  **I can use my own experience to decide how you ‘would have acted’**  *e.g. that’s not what I would do* | |
|  | **P14 How people behave (claimant)** | |
|  | | **P14-1 Rationally and consistently**  *e.g. it makes no sense that he would have returned to the area if he knew they were still looking for him* |
|  | | **P14-2 Other assumptions about how people behave in danger**  *e.g. in X situation claimant would have behaved in Y manner* |
|  | | **P14-3 Other assumptions about how people behave in their country of origin** |
|  | **P15 How people behave (family/friends)** | |
|  | | **P15-1 Rationally and consistently**  *e.g. I do not find it reasonable that he would send away his sister but not his wife* |
|  | | **P15-2 Other assumptions about how families/friends behave in danger**  *e.g. she claims that she loves her children so how could she have left them behind?* |
|  | | **P15-3 Other assumptions about how families/friends behave in their country of origin** |
|  | **P16 How people behave (others)** | |
|  | | **P16-1 Rationally and consistently**  *e.g. why would he insult her religion when he had been respectful to her previously?* |
|  | | **P16-2 Assumptions about how persecutors behave**  *e.g. if he wanted to harm your family he would have done more than just threaten you* |
|  | | **P16-3 Other assumptions about how people behave in danger**  *e.g. I do not believe that the prison guard would have helped her escape at risk to himself just because he knew her father* |
|  | | **P16-4 Other assumptions about people in authority** |
|  | **P17 Knowledge of matters in the country of origin** | |
|  | | **P17-1 People know the geography of their country of origin**  *e.g. she said she had moved to the east of the country, but Abuja is in the north* |
|  | | **P17-2 Other assumptions about what people know in their country of origin**  *e.g. she was unable to tell us about the overarching aims of the organisation* |
|  | **P18 There – Other** | |