Demotec: Framing analysis instructions

Contents

The coding exercise aims to shed light on how the news media "talks about" and represents paticipatory budgeting (PB) in its news reporting across different national contexts.

The task consists of coding news media article that mention "Participatory Budget" (PB). As such the coding task depends on a basic understanding of what is "PB", which we minimally define as follows:

> A "Participatory budget" (PB) is a process that allows ordinary citizens to be involved in the allocation of public finances.

Usually PB events take place at the local/municipality or city level. In pratice PB events can vary considerably. In some cases PB consists of an information event where citizens are informed about the budget. In other cases, citizens take the final decision on how the budget is allocated.

As part of the research, a corpus of documents (mostly news stories) has been collected in multiple languages. A random sample of 200 documents per language has been selected for coding.

The investigation is primarily focussed on two questions: (i) how important/relevant is PB for a given news story and (ii) how PB is "framed" in a news story.

The coding of documents takes place via a coding platform. Access details will be sent to you. The coding task is split into batches of 5 documents (40 batches) overall.

During the coding process, a coder may prefer to have a printed version or browse through an online version of these coding instructions. Accordingly, this document is available in 2 formats:

- A pdf version that can be printed download here

- A webpage follow this link

Q1: Indicate the type of document

The corpus of documents you are asked to code consist of texts that appeared in online mass media between 2015 and 2021. This question asks you to code whether the specific document being coded is a "news story" or not. The idea is to separate texts written by journalists and addressed to audiences expecting to get "their news" from reading the text from other types of text.

There are three possible response options:

1. News story

A document should be labeled as a "news story" if it is something that could appear in a newspaper, in the website of a tv/radio station or on an online news media outlet. It is the standard type of text one would expect from a journalist. Opinion articles (op-eds) from e.g. online newspapers should also be included in this category.

2. Other

Due to the way the corpus was collected, some documents are not "news stories" as understood above. Although such documents might look like "news stories" they are not written by news organisations. Examples include documents that appear in organisations' newsletters (e.g. NGO, Civil society organisations), discussion forums, blogs etc. The main quality that will tell you whether a text should be coded as "Other", is the description of the source as it appears in the "Document attributes" menu. These are two examples of such documents:

Example 1

Example 2

3. N/A (Not applicable)

In some rare cases you may encounter a document that is completely inappropriate for the corpus and you can indicate it using this category. This option should only be used in cases of a completely different text than one we are interested to code. An example is a job postings document. You may also encounter cases where the term PB is used to refer to something other than "PB as the allocation of public funds by citizens", in which case, you should also code N/A, as in this example.

Q2: Indicate the topic of the news story

The question asks you to code to which category the text being coded belongs to thematically, using the following 8 self-described categories:

1. **Business/Finance**

2. **Politics**

3. **Arts/Entertainment**

4. **Science**

5. **Technology**

6. **Society**

7. **Environment**

8. **Sports**

9. **N/A (Not Applicable)**

Only use the N/A option in cases where the document itself is inappropriate for the corpus. In cases where the document does not fit any of the aforementioned categories, use the closest one to it. In cases a text could belong to more than one, select the most dominant category.

Q3: Indicate the overall tone of the document

The question is designed to gauge the overall tone / sentiment that the document evokes to the reader. Possible values range from 1 (Negative) to 5 (Positive) as well as a Mixed tone:

1. Negative

The document describes some negative situation that arouses negative feelings without any positive elements.

2. Mostly negative

3. Neutral

This category should be used primarily for stories mostly presented in a completely factual manner, without attempting to express or provoke any sentiment

4. Mostly positive

5. Positive

The document presents the story in a positive manner, without any or with small caveats.

Mixed (negative and positive)

The document contains both negative and positive aspects.

N/A – Not applicable

Please use this option only for documents that are not relevant to the work at hand (i.e. where Q1 is also coded as N/A).

Q4 Indicate the relevance of PB to the story

This question asks you to examine how relevant to PB the document is as a whole. There are 5 response options:

1. Very low relevance

The text is about something other than PB. Although PB is mentioned in the document, it is mentioned in passing and only an inconsequential part is dedicated to it, i.e. PB appears as part of a sentence or a single sentence and you as a reader only gets a definition of it without any further information about what it is trying to achieve, possible outcomes etc. Examples:

> "SNP finance convener Jim Hume said: We would reverse previous budget decisions on festive lighting, grass cutting and grit bin reduction, and ongoing provision should form part of community boards' participatory budgeting." Source

> "[. . .] participatory budgeting where people decide public expenditures [. . .]" Source

2. Low relevance

The text is about something other than PB. PB is mentioned in-text but only a small amount of text is dedicated to it (part of a sentence or 1-2 sentences). However, despite the small amount of space dedicated to it, a reader receives something more about PB beyond its definition (e.g. how it works or what it is supposed to achieve). Example:

> "[. . .] According to him, participatory budgeting should be adopted by state and federal governments to encourage active governance. [. . .]" Source

3. Medium relevance

PB is an important part of the text alongside other (un)related issues.

4.High relevance

PB is the most important part of the text.

5.Very high relevance

The news story is exclusively about PB.

N/A – Not Applicable

Please use this option only for documents that are not relevant to the work at hand (i.e. where Q1 is also coded as N/A).

Difficult cases: Distinction betwen "Very Low" relevance and "Low" relevance

It might be difficult to differentiate between 1 (very low) and 2 (low relevance). In both cases, PB is mentioned very briefly in the text and the point of separation in reality is whether a "frame" for PB exists in the text or not (see Q8 – Framing), whether the reader gets something more about PB from the text other than a cursory definition. Compare these two examples:

"1. Very low relevance" example:

> "[...] participatory budgeting where people decide public expenditures [...]"

"2. Low relevance" example:

> "According to him, participatory budgeting should be adopted by state and federal governments to encourage active governance."

In both cases a very limited amount of text is dedicated to PB. However, while the first case merely offers a limited definition in the second case there is a specific attribution of a quality, i.e. "encourage active governance".

The distinction between a cursory, factual definition on the one hand and the attribution of a quality on the other is useful when differentiating between `1. Very low relevance` and `2. Low relevance`.

Q5 Indicate type of PB mentioned in the story

The question asks you to code whether PB is discussed in very general terms (e.g. as an example of democratic innovation that could be applied in theory) or whether it reports on a specific PB event (e.g. PB in city X or country Y). There are four main response options (**it is possible to select more than one option where relevant**):

1. PB as a specific event

The story refers to a PB-related event or mention that has already taken place or will be definitely taking place in the near future in a specific municipality or country.

2. PB as a specific, aspirational event

The story refers to the promise of a specific PB in a city or country that has not taken place and with no guarantees that it will. This category includes istances where a candidate/politician promises to implement PB if they get elected.

3. PB as a specific external event

PB is mentioned as a specific event that is taking place elsewhere, i.e. in another country or region. Examples include statements such as "PB can work, as the example of country X shows".

4. PB in general

PB is discussed in very general and broad terms as a possible policy option but without mention of a specific application in a city or country.

N/A (Not Applicable)

Please use this option only for documents that are not relevant to the work at hand (i.e. where Q1 is also coded as N/A).

Special cases: Overlapping examples

In some cases PB will be both described in general terms and reference will be made to some specific event, e.g. "PB is a good policy because X and Y, as the example of city Z has shown". In such cases, both applicable boxes can be selected.

Q6 Indicate the frame(s) identified

People talk about PB in different ways. The question asks you to categorise the impression about PB that a reader would have if the text was their only source of information about PB. Would the reader think it is a tool for making more active citizens or creating a more fair way of distributing public goods or creating a more egalitarian society?

We have identified 7 different ways that PB is being talked about and it is possible that a news story can have more than one frame; if so, you can check multiple boxes.

Framing can take place can take across multiple paragraphs or in a single sentence, such as this one:

> "According to him, participatory budgeting should be adopted by state and federal governments to encourage active governance." Source

Framing can be implicit as well as explicit. Perhaps a news story never explicitly states that, "PB is a way to distribute public goods" but if the story is entirely about a playground built through PB (e.g. as in this example) then this is the kind of message transmitted to the reader. The context of a paragraph can provide framing, even though no direct attribution is made to PB. To give another example, if PB is brought up in an article or paragraph that is largely about corruption and lack of transparency in how public funds are spent, the reader is invited to think of PB as a way to increase transparency in public spending.

The main PB frames identified

1. Democratic solution

This label is used to designate a catch-all category where PB is presented in general terms as a way to empower citizens or make decision-making more democratic. Typically, but not exclusively, PB is presented in very general terms and as more of an aspirational policy or novelty instead of a specific and serious policy proposal.

Only use this category if more specific attributes of PB are mentioned (i.e. if none of the other frames apply), while there is some frame (otherwise use "none of the above").

Some themes that appeared and can be associated with this wider frame:

- PB as a novel experiment in democracy.
- PB as a departure from standard practices/status quo.
- PB as a promise
- PB mentioned in passing as part of larger schemes toward broader democratization

2. Specific empowerment tool

PB is presented as a tool for specifically promoting greater citizen engagement/participation in public life. For example, PB as a way to give people a say, control over budgets or as a way to directly influence politics.

An example:

"Local councils could engage in participatory budgeting, putting up a proportion of their new capital spending budget for residents to discuss deeply – whether in person or online – and then allocate themselves." Source

An example:

"But just as important as that is the level of engagement achieved by participatory budgeting, which is itself empowering and health-promoting. Wampler reported that in Porto Alegre there were 479 councils, and "participatory budgeting ... brought over 50,000 residents to public meetings in the 2009/2010 participatory cycle." Source

3. PB as the allocation of public spending

Use this category for cases where PB is specifically advanced as a mechanism for allocating public goods, spending priorities etc., without necessarily focusing on the empowerment of citizens. This general frame tends to emphasises socio-economic benefits resulting from a PB process or the specific spending priorities.

An example:

"Hartford's mayor and city council set aside $1.2 million for"participatory budgeting," which allows residents to vote on projects they want the city to fund." Source

4. Social justice

PB is presented as a policy that can facilitate the improvement of lives of some group that is in some way under-privileged or has not had a sufficient say in decision-making. Use this category when values such as justice, equity and inclusion are emphasised in relation to PB.

Some themes we have noted appearing in this category include: - PB as a way to distribute public funds equitably

- PB as a way to promote social justice
- PB as a way to prevent public spending from going to the groups that tend to already benefit
- PB as a way to promote social inclusion, e.g. ensure the interests of disadvantaged groups are met (e.g. women/ under-privileged etc.)

An example:

"Brian Wampler of Boise State University reported that in both Porto Alegre and the city of Belo Horizonte — another early adopter — there was evidence that in using participatory budgeting these two cities were successful in promoting social justice. He noted that "the poorest neighbourhoods with the least amount of public or private infrastructure received the greatest amount of resources both in absolute and per capita terms." Source

5. Improving accountability

Use this category when the text emphasizes the fact/promise that through the application of PB specific governance problems such as lack of transparency or corruption in the spending of public funds can be solved/ameliorated.

Some themes:

- PB as a way to ensure accountability

- PB as a way to increase transparency

- PB as a way to fight corruption

An example:

> "At the onset of the meeting, Lewis joked that, for starters, she's old enough to be the mayor. But she also added that she would implement a transparent administration and participatory budgeting." Source

6. PB and implementation issues

This is a somewhat different type of frame; use it when the text makes note of problems with a specific implementation of PB. This should not imply that the text gives a negative view of PB (note the frame that follows) but in some cases the the opposite. For instance, PB is a good policy but should be implemented in a different way or perhaps insufficient funds have been allocated through PB (implying there should be more funds for PB).

An example:

> "Participatory budgeting doesn't happen nearly enough and when it does it's often confined to a single area of spending such as childcare." Source

7. Negative aspects of PB

Use this category when the text points out negative aspects of PB, e.g. that PB will lead to increased mismanagement of funds, that PB is difficult to implement, or PB and political/partisan conflict.

Other frame

Use the "Other frame" category to denote a specific type of frame that applies to the text in question and simultaneously appears with some regularity (i.e. you think it should be added as a separate frame option). Please provide some description for this frame in the open textbox of Q8.

No frame

Use this option when none of the aforementioned frames apply to the text, i.e. when reference to PB is made strictly in passing and the reader could not possibly gain any impression of PB

other than possibly its definition (i.e. when you code the text as having "very low relevance" in Q4).

N/A (Not Applicable)

Please use this option only for documents that are not relevant to the work at hand (i.e. where Q1 is also coded as N/A).

Q7 Indicate the dominant Frame

This question asks you to designate which of the aforementioned frames found in the text is the most dominant/important one. If only a single frame was identified in the previous question, then that frame should be re-entered from the dropdown list. If multiple frames were identified in the news story, then select the most important one.

Q8 Indicate whther the European Union is mention

This question asks whether the European Union (EU) is mentioned in the document *in relation to PB*. There are three possible responses

1. Yes

Code as "Yes" if the European Union (EU) or its institutions (e.g. the European Commission, the European Parliament) are mentioned in relation to PB. It is possible that a specific EU funding instrument is named, such as the European Social Fund or the EU structual funds, are mentioned.

An example:

> "Participatory budgeting should be included as part of EU's COVID-19 emergency fund allocation [...] Finnish MP Mari Holopainen" Source

2. No

Use "No" when there is no mention of the European Union (EU), its institutions of funding instruments in relation to PB. This is likely to be the majority of cases.

N/A (Not Applicable)

Please use this option only for documents that are not relevant to the work at hand (i.e. where Q1 is also coded as N/A).

Q9 Comment box

Please use this text box for any comments you have specifically about this text or to register specific responses when using the "Other" frame response option to Q6.