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AUTNES Coding of Websites 2013

Coding procedure & overview of variables

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Content

Introduction.....	3
Conditions of use.....	4
Coding procedure.....	5
ID Variables.....	6
v01 id	6
v02 coder id	6
Variables referring to the homepage.....	6
v03 URL.....	6
v04 type of homepage.....	6
v05 date of saving.....	6
v06 time of saving	6
Variables referring to the coding unit.....	7
v07 id_unit.....	7
v08 days online.....	7
v09 new unit.....	7
v10 visibility	7
v11 category	7
v12 continuous text.....	8
v13 picture.....	8
v14 video	8
Variables referring to the author.....	9
v15 author	9
v16 author: appearance	9
v17 author: outfit	9
v18 author: characteristics	9
v19 author: record.....	10
Variables referring to issues.....	11
v20 campaign issue	11
v21 predicate.....	11
v22 policy issue.....	11
v23 reference to EU.....	11
v24 justification	12
Variables referring to object actors.....	13
v25_1-v25_10 object actor 1-10: coded	13
v26_1-v26_10 object actor 1-10: name	13
v27_1-v27_10 object actor 1-10: organisation	13
v28_1-v28_10 object actor 1-10: appearance	13
v29_1-v29_10 object actor 1-10: predicate	14
v30_1-v30_10 object actor 1-10: outfit	14
v31_1-v31_10 object actor 1-10: reference to campaign issue.....	15
v32_1-v32_10 object actor 1-10: reference to policy issue	15
v33_1-v33_2 object actor 1-10: characteristics	15
v34_1-v34_10 object actor 1-10: record.....	16
v35 additional object actors.....	16
Variables referring to pictures.....	17
v36 picture of individuals	17
v37_1-v37_5 pic 1-5: groups	17
v38_1-v38_10 pic 1-5: number of people	18
v39_1-v39_10 pic 1-10: reference to party.....	18
References.....	19

Introduction

The dataset “AUTNES Content Analysis of Party Websites 2013” holds information gathered by a manual content analysis of the party homepages in the election campaign in 2013 by the Austrian National Election Study (AUTNES)), a National Research Network funded by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF) (grant no. S10903-G11).

AUTNES applies a common method of content analysis to different sources. This coding scheme is described in greater detail in the coding instructions for the content analysis of party press releases (ZA5861). The document at hand builds upon this description and gives details only for adaptations of the coding scheme that aim at maximising the validity of the homepage coding. Inquiries on further details regarding the data and coding can be directed at Laurenz Ennser-Jedenastik (laurenz.ennser@univie.ac.at) at the University of Vienna’s Department of Government.

How to cite these data:

Data users are kindly asked to acknowledge the data **and** the accompanying release document. Please refer to the GESIS data catalogue (www.gesis.org) for a recommendation on how to cite these data and the documentation.

File name:

“ZA6881_v1.0.0”

Conditions of use

Restrictions

The data are available for non-profit use without restrictions.

Confidentiality

AUTNES, the Principal Investigators and the funding institution bear no responsibility for the use of the data, or for interpretations or inferences based on their use, neither do they accept liability for indirect, consequential or incidental damages or losses arising from use of the data.

Deposit Requirement

In order to facilitate exchanges within the scientific community and to provide funding agencies with essential information about use of archival resources users of the AUTNES data are requested to notify the AUTNES team of all forms of publications making use of AUTNES data.

Coding procedure

The party websites were saved each day in the six weeks prior to the general election in 2013. Hence, the dataset captures changes from day to day during the campaign. The coding is restricted to the most important page of the website, thus to the “homepage” or start page of a website.

All six parliamentary parties and NEOS (who was not represented in the parliament before 2013) operated homepages during the election campaign. The Freedom Party (FPÖ) automatically redirected all users of their party homepage to their party leader’s homepage from the second campaign week onwards. Thus, the party leader’s homepage was coded as the official party homepage. Moreover, the original party homepage was coded for the one week during which it was not replaced by the top candidate’s homepage.

The coding units are graphical entities of the homepage. If a unit remained online for more than one day, it constitutes multiple observations in the data set. Still, the unit was only manually coded on the first day and then copied for the following days.

The coding process consisted of two steps: First, research assistants unitized a screenshot of every homepage by means of a template. Then, clusters of new units per day were randomly assigned to two research assistants.

The codebook was conceptualized for the coding of party homepages as well as candidate homepages. As only party homepages were coded in the national election campaign in 2013, two variables related to candidate homepages (v04 and v17) remain constant or missing in the data set. As party homepages and Facebook postings share many similarities, the coding rules and variables referring to the author, issues, object actors and individuals on images are almost identical (see ZA6882 for the coding of Facebook pages).

The list of variables is structured in several groups. At the beginning, the ID variables are described. The second block of variables gives information about the entire homepage, the third block gives information about the individual coding units. Then, variables referring to the author of the homepage, to the coded issues and to the object actors are described. The last variables contain information about individuals on pictures.

ID Variables

v01 id

- *Description:* ID variable
- *Type:* numeric

v02 coder id

- *Description:* coder ID (1-3)
- *Type:* numeric

Variables referring to the homepage

These variables hold information about the entire homepage.

v03 URL

- *Description:* URL of homepage.
- *Type:* string

v04 type of homepage

- *Description:* This variable indicates whether the homepage is a party or candidate homepage.
As only party homepages were coded, v04 remains constant.
- *Type:* numeric
- *Values:*
 - (1) party homepage
 - (2) candidate homepage

v05 date of saving

- *Description:* v05 contains the date when the homepage was saved (19 August 2013 – 28 September 2013).
- *Type:* date (day-month-year)

v06 time of saving

- *Description:* v06 contains the time of day when the homepage was saved.
- *Type:* string

Variables referring to the coding unit

The following variables refer to the individual coding units on the homepage.

v07 id_unit

- *Description:* This variable contains IDs to identify an individual coding unit.
- *Type:* string

v08 days online

- *Description:* Count of days a unit was online.
- *Type:* numeric

v09 new unit

- *Description:* v09 indicates whether the unit was online the day before or not.
- *Type:* numeric
- *Values:*
 - (0) old unit (unit was online the day before)
 - (1) new unit (unit is online for the first time)

v10 visibility

- *Description:* This variable indicates whether the unit was visible on a screen of standard size when opening the homepage.
- *Type:* numeric
- *Values:*
 - (1) visible
 - (2) not visible

v11 category

- *Description:* v11 gives a rough categorization of the coding units in order to facilitate finding the unit on the original homepage.
- *Type:* numeric
- *Values:*
 - (1) start picture
 - (2) head
 - (3) menu

- (4) news
- (5) policies
- (6) campaign
- (7) schedule
- (8) twitterwall
- (9) facebook
- (10) blogs
- (11) not discernible

v12 continuous text

- *Description:* Does the unit contain continuous text?
- *Type:* numeric
- *Values:*
 - (0) no text
 - (1) text

v13 picture

- *Description:* Does the unit contain a picture?
- *Type:* numeric
- *Values:*
 - (0) no picture
 - (1) picture

v14 video

- *Description:* Does the unit contain a video?
- *Type:* numeric
- *Values:*
 - (0) no video
 - (1) video

Variables referring to the author

The next variables refer to the author of the homepage, thus to the party that operated the homepage.

v15 author

- *Description:* This variable indicates the author of the homepage. As only party homepages were coded, this variable contains the code of the party organisations.
- *Type:* numeric
- *Values:* according to AUTNES list of organisations

v16 author: appearance

- *Description:* This variable indicates whether the author is mentioned in the unit.
- *Type:* numeric
- *Values:*
 - (0) not mentioned
 - (1) in written form

v17 author: outfit

- *Description:* Description of author's dress. This variable only applies to candidate homepages and therefore is missing for party homepages.

v18 author: characteristics

- *Description:* This variable contains the author's characteristics.
- *Type:* numeric
- *Values:*
 - (1) no attribute
 - (2) competence: +
 - (3) competence: –
 - (4) character: +
 - (5) character: –
 - (6) leadership: +
 - (7) leadership: –
 - (8) appearance: +
 - (9) appearance: –
 - (10) not discernible: +

- (11) not discernible: –
- (.) no object

v19 author: record

- *Description:* This variable contains the author's record.
- *Type:* numeric
- *Values:*
 - (0) no record
 - (1) record referring to policy issue
 - (2) record not referring to policy issue

Variables referring to issues

One policy issue and one campaign issue were coded per unit. If more than one issue was mentioned, the coders chose the dominant issue. Only written information was coded as issues. If parties included images of issues without any accompanying written information, these issues were coded as “77777 – image of issue, no text”.

v20 campaign issue

- *Description:* Coded campaign issue.
- *Type:* numeric
- *Values:* according to AUTNES list of issues, additional value:
 - (77777) image of issue, no text

v21 predicate

- *Description:* Author’s position towards the coded policy issue coded in v22.
- *Type:* numeric
- *Values:*
 - (-1) reject/criticise
 - (0) neutral
 - (1) support

v22 policy issue

- *Description:* Coded policy issue.
- *Type:* numeric
- *Values:* according to AUTNES list of issues, additional value:
 - (77777) image of issue, no text

v23 reference to EU

- *Description:* The variable indicates whether the author wishes to implement the policy issue on the European level.
- *Type:* numeric
- *Values:*
 - (0) no reference to EU
 - (1) reference to EU

v24 justification

- *Description:* Justification of policy issue.
- *Type:* numeric
- *Values:*
 - (1) no justification
 - (2) economy
 - (3) welfare state: expansive
 - (4) welfare state: protective
 - (5) environment
 - (6) security
 - (7) education
 - (8) governance
 - (9) ethnic-national
 - (10) religious
 - (11) universalistic
 - (12) not discernible
 - (.) no policy issue coded

Variables referring to object actors

Up to ten object actors were coded per unit. The digit after the underscore indicates to which object actor the variable refers to. For example, v26_1 gives the name of the first object actor whereas v26_10 holds the name of the tenth object actor.

Organisations, for example parties or companies, were coded when written information was given. Individuals were always coded when they were mentioned as text. Moreover, a list of prominent political actors (including for example top candidates, high ranking party officials, members of the national government, head of the state) was defined. These prominent actors were coded even if they were only present in pictures but not mentioned in written form. Variable v28 contains information about the appearance of an object actor in written form or in a picture. Individuals in pictures that were not classified as prominent were not coded as object actor but in the variables related to pictures (v36-v39).

v25_1-v25_10 object actor 1-10: coded

- *Description:* Binary variable indicating whether an object actor was coded.
- *Type:* numeric
- *Values:*
 - (0) no object
 - (1) object coded

v26_1-v26_10 object actor 1-10: name

- *Description:* This variable contains the names of individuals that were coded as object actors.
- *Type:* numeric
- *Values:* according to AUTNES list of individuals

v27_1-v27_10 object actor 1-10: organisation

- *Description:* This variable contains the object actor's organisation.
- *Type:* numeric
- *Values:* according to AUTNES list of organisations

v28_1-v28_10 object actor 1-10: appearance

- *Description:* This variable indicates whether the object actor is mentioned in written form, as a picture or both.
- *Type:* numeric

- *Values:*
 - (1) text
 - (2) picture
 - (3) text + picture

v29_1-v29_10 object actor 1-10: predicate

- *Description:* This variable indicates the relation between the author of the homepage and the object actor. If no written information is given and the object actor is only present as a picture, this variable is coded as “88 – picture”. The relation to political actors of the same party was coded as positive (+1) unless explicit criticism was mentioned. The coders assessed the relation to political actors of other party organisations for each case individually.
- *Type:* numeric
- *Values:*
 - (-1) reject/criticise
 - (0) neutral
 - (1) support
 - (88) picture

v30_1-v30_10 object actor 1-10: outfit

- *Description:* If the unit contains a picture of the object actor, the variable indicates how the object actor is dressed.
- *Type:* numeric
- *Values:*
 - (1) formally
 - (2) semi-formally
 - (3) workwear
 - (4) uniform
 - (5) casually
 - (6) traditional costume
 - (7) fancy-dress costume
 - (8) undressed
 - (88) not visible
 - (99) not classifiable
 - (.) no object/no picture

v31_1-v31_10 object actor 1-10: reference to campaign issue

- *Description:* This variable indicates whether the object actor makes a reference to the coded campaign issue. “1 – text reference” is coded if the object actors makes a reference towards the coded issue in written form. “2 – image reference” is coded if there is no explicit relation between the object actor and the coded issue in written form, but a picture of the object actor indicates a connection.
- *Type:* numeric
- *Values:*
 - (0) no reference
 - (1) text reference
 - (2) image reference
 - (.) no issue/ no object

v32_1-v32_10 object actor 1-10: reference to policy issue

- *Description:* This variable indicates whether the object actor makes a reference to the coded campaign issue. “1 – text reference” is coded if the object actors makes a reference towards the coded issue in written form. “2 – image reference” is coded if there is no explicit relation between the object actor and the coded issue in written form, but a picture of the object actor indicates a connection.
- *Type:* numeric
- *Values:*
 - (0) no reference
 - (1) text reference
 - (2) image reference
 - (.) no issue/ no object

v33_1-v33_2 object actor 1-10: characteristics

- *Description:* Object actor’s attributes
- *Type:* numeric
- *Values:*
 - (1) no attribute
 - (2) competence: +
 - (3) competence: –
 - (4) character: +
 - (5) character: –

- (6) leadership: +
- (7) leadership: –
- (8) appearance: +
- (9) appearance: –
- (10) not discernible: +
- (11) not discernible: –
- (.) no object

v34_1-v34_10 object actor 1-10: record

- *Description:* Object actor's record
- *Type:* numeric
- *Values:*
 - (0) no record
 - (1) record referring to policy issue
 - (2) record not referring to policy issue
 - (.) no object

v35 additional object actors

- *Description:* This variable gives the number of object actor's that were not coded due to the instruction to only code the first ten object actors per unit.
- *Type:* numeric

Variables referring to pictures

The next variables give information about individuals in pictures that were not coded as object actors (because they are no prominent political actors).

v36 picture of individuals

- *Description*: This variable indicates whether the unit contains pictures of individuals that were not coded as object actors.
- *Type*: numeric
- *Values*:
 - (0) no pictures of individuals
 - (1) pictures of individuals

v37_1-v37_5 pic 1-5: groups

- *Description*: This variable categorizes the individuals in pictures that were not coded as object actors. Individuals belonging to the same category were coded as a group (for example, a picture of five schoolchildren and a teacher were coded in two groups: v37_1 “7 – schoolchild” and v37_2 “15 – civil servant”). Up to five different groups were coded. The categorization of the groups is an adapted version of an unpublished codebook for analysing campaign posters developed by Lore Hayek (see Hayek (2016: ch. 7) for more information about the codebook).
- *Type*: numeric
- *Values*:
 - (0) no picture
 - (1) voter/people
 - (2) political activist
 - (3) woman
 - (4) man
 - (5) child/baby
 - (6) adolescent
 - (7) schoolchild
 - (8) student
 - (9) apprentice
 - (10) senior citizen/pensioner
 - (11) family
 - (12) employer/entrepreneur/freelancer
 - (13) blue-collar worker

- (14) white-collar worker
- (15) civil servant
- (16) unemployed person
- (17) farmer/rural population
- (18) journalist
- (19) representative of religions/clericalists
- (20) member of a minority
- (21) homosexual person
- (22) disabled person
- (23) person with migration background
- (24) member of a autochthonous minority
- (25) suspect of crimes

v38_1-v38_10 pic 1-5: number of people

- *Description:* Count of individuals of the respective category or group on the picture.
- *Type:* numeric
- *Values:*
 - 1 – 25 counts of individuals
 - (88888) non-countable

v39_1-v39_10 pic 1-10: reference to party

- *Description:* This variable indicates whether the individuals on the picture support a party (for example by participating in campaign events).
- *Type:* numeric
- *Values:*
 - (1100000) SPÖ
 - (1200000) ÖVP
 - (1300000) FPÖ
 - (1400000) Greens
 - (1500000) BZÖ
 - (1600000) Team Stronach
 - (2400000) NEOS
 - (8888888) other
 - (9999999) none

References

Hayek, Lore (2016): Design politischer Parteien. Plakatwerbung in österreichischen Wahlkämpfen, LIT Verlag: Wien.