Manifesto Project Main Dataset

Manifesto Website Collection Guidelines

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Website: https://manifesto-project.wzb.eu/

The handbook specifies guidelines for collecting manifestos from websites. It lays out what text constitutes a manifesto and rules of acquisition.

Today manifestos are often not published as one book or booklet anymore but are available through one or more webpages on the party's website. This creates a couple of challenges for researchers working with manifestos: with webpages it is more difficult to determine what content is part of the manifesto and what content should be regarded as an appendix that should not be coded. Here are some rules that help determine what website text the Manifesto Project regards as manifesto content. These are general rules, and there might be country-specific traditions with regard to manifestos that justify some deviation.

1 When can text from the party website be regarded as a manifesto substitute?

It must be published on the website in direct connection to the election, i.e. the party needs to publish the text under a rubric called "election YYYY" or "our plan/policies".

2 Acquisition Rules

As websites are much more volatile than printed booklets, it is important that the text is copied from the website before the election. As a rule of thumb, we try to copy it on the last weekday before the election. In the case that the party presents its full manifesto on its webpages, we want to make sure that we save both the content as well as the layout of the website for later usage. For this reason, we first copy paste the content of the document into a docx file and second, we make an html save of the complete webpages on which the manifesto content is available.[1]

3 Manifesto Substitutes from Websites

The way in which parties present their manifestos on their website varies substantially. Nearly all manifestos can be accessed through parties' websites today. In the best scenario a conveniently formatted manifesto is available as a pdf via the party's website. More and more often this is not the case anymore and the manifesto content spans several pdfs or webpages on the party's website. In these cases, it is more difficult to determine which text is manifesto content. Here we list some common scenarios and give some guidelines about what text should be considered manifesto content in each case:

- Manifesto as webpage instead of pdf: In these cases, the manifesto content appears directly on the party's webpage. This is often the case if the manifesto is comparatively short. In these cases, a single page on the party's website is called something like "Manifesto" or "Election YYYY". In these cases, we consider all the text on that webpage to be manifesto content, with the rules about text in margins etc. still applying.

- Collections of policy field documents: These are the cases where the manifesto content spans several different webpages, e.g. different html pages on the website or within different pdfs, each expressing the party's view on one specific policy area. In these cases, we regard all pages to which the party directly links to from the overview or root page as manifesto content. What we normally do not regard as manifesto content are additional pdfs, which the party links to from the subpages. There might be exceptions to this rule in some cases, but these need to be decided on a case by case basis, as there are nearly as many different ways of how to present manifesto content on a website as there are observations of parties in elections.

- Ambiguous heading: if a webpage or overview page linking to further pages or pdfs is not clearly indicated in the title or section or otherwise as an election manifesto, but just titled "Our Plan" for example, we decide based on the content. The content in question should refer to the upcoming election or "decision", government building, parliamentary make-off, change of politics etc. It

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[1] Firefox: Save Page As... > Web Page, complete
Safari: Save Page As... > Webarchive

should be clarified that it is not the party's general declaration, statute etc. or a reaction to current politics.

- Special caution with date of publication: Some manifestos may be called "manifesto" but are missing the year of election. In this case, we look for any indication of the time in the document, e.g. if the date of election is referred to – directly or indirectly, e.g. "The development vision for Greece at the end of the second decade of the 21st century is to. . . " for 2019 election. A good indicator is also the date of publication on the webpage, sometimes this can be found in the url.

Note: If in doubt, we ask the parties and/or discuss the documents with our coders from the countries in question.