# **CHARLES UNIVERSITY**

# FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Institute of Communication Studies and Journalism

Department of Journalism

**Master's Thesis** 

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# Media Framing of Civic Issues in Post-Pandemic Mumbai: A Study of Urban Governance and Civic Journalism

Mediální rámování občanských problémů v postpandemické Bombaji: Studie městské správy a občanské žurnalistiky

Master's Thesis

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Study programme: Journalism

Supervisor: Mgr. Sandra Labova

Year of the defence: 2024

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In Prague on 31/07/2024

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## Reference

PURANIK, Radha. Media Framing of Civic Issues in Post-Pandemic Mumbai: A Study of Urban Governance and Civic Journalism. Praha 2024. 65 p. Master thesis (Mgr). Charles University, Faculty of Social Sciences, Institute of Communication Studies and Journalism, Department of Journalism. Supervisor Mgr. Sandra Labova

Length of the Thesis: 65 pages and 145,861 characters

#### **Abstract**

We are most affected by our immediate surroundings, and the cities we live in are our most intimate landscapes, shaping our daily experiences and quality of life. In Mumbai, a sprawling metropolis full of diversity, the importance of covering civic issues cannot be overstated. Civic issues, ranging from waste management and public transportation to housing and water supply, directly impact the well-being of millions of residents. They form the backbone of urban life, influencing not just the physical environment but also the social and economic fabric of the city. The rapid pace of urbanisation has put immense pressure on its infrastructure, leading to problems like traffic congestion, pollution, and inadequate public services. By shining a light on these issues, media coverage in the form of hyperlocal news coverage can play a crucial role in fostering transparency and accountability. It can bring attention to the needs of marginalised communities, highlight the efforts of civic authorities, and inspire collective action towards sustainable urban development. Moreover, covering civic issues in Mumbai is essential for empowering citizens. Informed citizens are better equipped to engage with local governance, advocate for their rights, and contribute to the city's growth. Media plays a pivotal role in this process by providing a platform for dialogue and debate, amplifying the voices of those often unheard, and ensuring that civic issues remain a priority in public discourse. Hence, this research presents a case study of Mumbai's civic coverage, focusing on common frames employed in articles related to solutions, participatory governance, and citizen journalism. By adopting the constructivist perspective in media theory, this study aims to underscore the media's role in shaping reality, particularly through framing. To achieve this, a qualitative content analysis of 16 articles published in the post-pandemic period from 2022 to 2024 will be conducted to identify prevalent frames in civic coverage. In addition to the content analysis, the research will include four semi-structured interviews. These interviews will be acquired through a purposive sampling method, ensuring a diverse range of perspectives. The interviews will delve into topics surrounding hyperlocal news, local governance, solutions storytelling, and citizen journalism, providing a comprehensive understanding of how these elements interact and influence public perception. By exploring these themes, the research aims to illuminate the ways in which media coverage can foster informed and engaged communities. The insights gained from this study will contribute to a broader understanding of the media's role in civic life,

particularly in a complex urban environment like Mumbai. Ultimately, this research seeks to demonstrate how effective media framing can drive positive change, encouraging participatory governance and highlighting innovative solutions to urban challenges. The findings indicate that while coverage emphasises solution-oriented and participatory governance themes, significantly shaping public discourse and engagement, legacy newspapers still struggle to prioritise these issues.

### **Abstrakt**

Nejvíce nás ovlivňuje naše bezprostřední okolí a města, ve kterých žijeme, jsou našimi nejintimnějšími krajinami, které formují naše každodenní zkušenosti a kvalitu života. V Bombaji, rozsáhlé a rozmanité metropoli, je pokrytí občanských problémů nesmírně důležité. Občanské problémy, od nakládání s odpady a veřejné dopravy až po bydlení a zásobování vodou, přímo ovlivňují blahobyt milionů obyvatel. Tvoří páteř městského života a ovlivňují nejen fyzické prostředí, ale také sociální a ekonomickou strukturu města. Rychlé tempo urbanizace vyvinulo nesmírný tlak na její infrastrukturu, což vedlo k problémům, jako jsou dopravní zácpy, znečištění a nedostatečné veřejné služby. Tím, že se na tyto problémy zaměří hyperlokální zprávy, může mediální pokrytí hrát klíčovou roli při podpoře transparentnosti a odpovědnosti. Může upozornit na potřeby marginalizovaných komunit, zdůraznit snahy občanských autorit a inspirovat kolektivní akce směrem k udržitelnému rozvoji měst. Kromě toho je pokrytí občanských problémů v Bombaji nezbytné pro posílení postavení občanů. Informovaní občané jsou lépe vybaveni k tomu, aby se zapojili do místní správy, hájili svá práva a přispívali k růstu města. Média hrají v tomto procesu klíčovou roli tím, že poskytují prostor pro dialog a debatu, zesilují hlasy těch, kteří často nejsou slyšet, a zajišťují, že občanské problémy zůstávají prioritou veřejného diskurzu. Tento výzkum představuje případovou analýzu pokrytí občanských problémů v Bombaji, zaměřenou na běžně používané rámce v článcích týkajících se řešení, participativní správy a občanské žurnalistiky. S využitím konstruktivistické perspektivy v mediální teorii si klade za cíl zdůraznit roli médií při formování reality, zejména prostřednictvím rámování. K dosažení tohoto cíle bude provedena kvalitativní obsahová analýza 16 článků publikovaných v postpandemickém období od roku 2022 do roku 2024 s cílem identifikovat převládající rámce v občanském pokrytí. Kromě obsahové analýzy bude výzkum zahrnovat čtyři polostrukturované rozhovory získané prostřednictvím cílené

výběrové metody, což zajistí širokou škálu perspektiv. Rozhovory se zaměří na témata týkající se hyperlokálních zpráv, místní správy, vyprávění příběhů o řešeních a občanské žurnalistiky, čímž poskytnou komplexní pohled na to, jak tyto prvky interagují a ovlivňují veřejné vnímání. Zkoumáním těchto témat si výzkum klade za cíl objasnit způsoby, jakými může mediální pokrytí podporovat informované a angažované komunity. Poznatky získané z této studie přispějí k širšímu pochopení role médií v občanském životě, zejména v komplexním městském prostředí, jako je Bombaj. V konečném důsledku se tento výzkum snaží demonstrovat, jak může efektivní rámování médií podpořit pozitivní změny, podporovat participativní správu a zdůrazňovat inovativní řešení městských výzev. Zjištění naznačují, že zatímco pokrytí klade důraz na témata orientovaná na řešení a participativní vládnutí, což významně utváří veřejnou diskusi a angažovanost, tradiční noviny stále bojují s prioritizací těchto problémů.

## **Keywords**

participatory governance; civic news; hyperlocal journalism; media theory; framing analysis

### Klíčová slova

participativní řízení; občanské zprávy; hyperlokální žurnalistika; teorie médií; analýza rámování

### **Title**

Media Framing of Civic Issues in Post-Pandemic Mumbai: A Study of Urban Governance and Civic Journalism

## Název práce

Mediální rámování občanských problémů v postpandemické Bombaji: Studie městské správy a občanské žurnalistiky

### **Acknowledgments**

The completion of this thesis would not have been possible without the unwavering support and encouragement of several remarkable individuals and institutions, to whom I owe my deepest gratitude.

First and foremost, I am profoundly thankful to my family, especially my mother, Geeta Puranik. Your steadfast moral, financial, and emotional support has been a constant source of strength throughout this journey. Your belief in my abilities and your unwavering support in every challenging moment have been invaluable. I am deeply appreciative of the sacrifices you have made and the love you have given, which have both been instrumental in reaching this milestone.

I also wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to my partner, Anshuman Dhar. Your presence has been a beacon of positivity and nurturing. In every way possible, you have contributed to my well-being and success, providing not only practical assistance but also spiritual and emotional support. Your encouragement and unwavering support have kept me motivated and in high spirits, and for that, I am incredibly grateful.

My sincere thanks extend to the Erasmus Mundus Journalism program, which provided me with the unique opportunity to pursue my master's education at two esteemed institutions—Aarhus University and Charles University. This program has not only enriched my academic experience but has also broadened my perspectives and contributed significantly to my growth as a scholar and journalist.

I am also grateful to my classmates, whose intelligence, ambition, and camaraderie have greatly enriched my academic experience. Engaging with such a diverse and talented group has been both inspiring and motivating, and I am thankful for the shared learning and mutual support we have experienced.

Lastly, I wish to acknowledge the invaluable guidance of my thesis advisor, Mgr. Sandra Labova. Your insightful feedback and understanding mentorship have been crucial in navigating the complexities of this research. Your dedication to my academic and personal growth has been a guiding force, and I am deeply appreciative of your support and encouragement.

To all who have contributed to this journey, your support has made this accomplishment possible, and I am truly grateful.

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Main research question (max. 250 characters): This research aims to investigate the framing of civic issues in Mumbai's media landscape during the post-pandemic period (2022-2023) and the role of civic media platforms in maintaining the city's civic ecosystem. This research also aims to provide a nuanced understanding of how these outlets address issues, employ solution-oriented frames, and influence public discourse and perceptions of participatory governance and potential solutions.

RQ1: How do civic news outlets in Mumbai frame urban challenges in their reporting?

The first research question will investigate how civic news outlets in Mumbai cover participatory governance and urban issues, particularly in terms of incorporating solution-oriented frames in their reporting.

# RQ2: How do selected journalists in Mumbai perceive the framing of urban challenges in civic news?

The aim of the second research question is to investigate how journalists perceive the influence of media framing on public discourse about participatory governance, including their approaches to proposing solutions, identifying challenges, opportunities, and assessing the impact of framing on public perceptions.

### Current state of research on the topic (max. 1800 characters):

Urban governance, particularly through participatory initiatives like Advanced Locality Managements (ALMs) and resident welfare organizations, has garnered significant attention in the civic sphere as well as in academia in recent times (Basu, 2020). Hyper local news outlets contribute majorly to the civic ecosystem in cities (Paulussen, 2013; Bruns, 2008) - bringing to attention problems with infrastructure, waste management, water scarcity, etc while also holding authorities accountable which eventually brings out real change in neighborhoods. However, the existing research lacks a comprehensive exploration of the role and impact of civic news outlets particularly in this landscape, creating a critical void in scholarly understanding.

While Basu's work contributes valuable insights into ALMs and their influence on local policies and decision-making processes, there is a notable absence of in-depth investigations into the workings of civic news outlets and their potential to drive real-world change through principles of solutions journalism. This research addresses this gap, focusing on the synergy between civic news, informed citizenry, and tangible urban transformation in Mumbai.

The literature review (McIntyre, 2019; Paulussen, 2013; Lough, 2018) emphasizes the scarcity of studies examining the specific context of Mumbai regarding civic journalism and hyper-local journalism. It draws on general literature on civic journalism (Paulussen, 2013) and detailed case studies, such as Paulussen's examination of a Belgian newspaper, to establish a foundation for understanding the broader field. By pinpointing the lack of research on the interplay between media dynamics and civic impact, this study aims to contribute significantly to the existing body of knowledge.

Moreover, the review elucidates the limitations of current research, for example Paulussen's study may lack generalizability due to its focus on a specific hyperlocal media project, potentially limiting the broader applicability of findings. Additionally, the research might not fully capture the diverse contexts and challenges faced by civic journalism in different regions. Furthermore, the study might not extensively delve into the framing of civic issues, potentially leaving gaps in understanding how these issues are portrayed and interpreted by different stakeholders. This emphasizes the need for a more nuanced understanding of the media's role in urban governance. This sets the stage for the proposed research, highlighting its significance in addressing these limitations and providing fresh insights into the dynamics of civic news outlets within the specific context of post-pandemic Mumbai.

### Expected theoretical framework (max. 1800 characters):

The theoretical framework for this study integrates the constructivist perspective within media theory, emphasizing the role of media in constructing and shaping reality, particularly through agenda setting and framing. Constructivism posits that media representations influence public perceptions and social reality (Takeshita, 2013).

Framing theory, a key component of the media's construction of reality, is rooted in the broader concepts of Constructivism and Agenda Setting theory. Framing analysis, as explained in the literature, explores how media propose certain agendas through various frames (De Vreese, 2005).

Relevant studies employing framing theory, such as D Chong (2007), and Tewksbury (2019) demonstrate its applicability to empirical research and its effectiveness in identifying dominant frames. Of course, there is a lack of research like this in civic news journalism, but my aim would be to employ existing research that uses framing theory to identify dominant frames in civic journalism in post-pandemic Mumbai.

To define Framing analysis according to Entman (1993), Framing analysis is a research method within media studies and communication that explores how the presentation of information influences the perception and interpretation of an issue by emphasizing specific aspects, thus shaping public opinion. This would be a good tool to understand common themes in coverage across publications.

To enrich the theoretical framework further, I will introduce the concept of solution journalism. Solution journalism goes beyond problem identification and aims to propose and discuss potential solutions (Mc Intyre, 2019; Lough, 2021). In the frame analysis, particular attention will be given to solution-oriented frames, investigating how civic news outlets in Mumbai utilize frames that not only identify urban challenges and participatory governance but also highlight potential solutions. These frames may include problem frames, responsibility frames, and solution-oriented frames, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the media's role in shaping public discourse and perceptions of urban issues.

Expected methodology, and methods for data gathering and analysis (max. 1800 characters): Expected Methodology - Qualitative Analysis:

- Qualitative framing analysis (Mayring, 2004) will be used to examine how civic news outlets in Mumbai portray and discuss urban challenges, participatory governance, and solutions, providing a nuanced understanding of their framing strategies during the post-pandemic period. I will follow the principles of a framing analysis, to identify, analyze and report on patterns or themes that I observe while doing my content analysis and conducting my semi-structured interviews.
   I will also try to find if there are particular frames used when discussing solutions (McIntyre, 2019), and how they compare to frames used for presenting problems.
- 2) The semi-structured interviews with journalists will employ a solutions journalism approach, delving into their perceptions, engagement with, and advocacy for solutions related to urban challenges in Mumbai. The interviews serve as a valuable avenue (Powers, 2019) to understand the nuanced roles of journalists in shaping the discourse on participatory governance and urban solutions within the context of this specific case study.
- 3) Then I will conduct a thematic analysis of the interviews. I will first start coding the transcripts from the interviews by tagging segments and then clustering them together based on similarities, differences and patterns. I will create themes from the codes and will then analyze them based on the frames established in the initial qualitative framing analysis.

# Expected research design (data to be analyzed, for example, the titles of analyzed newspapers and selected time period):

I will examine the post-pandemic period of 2022 and 2023 to contextualize my research.

### Qualitative framing analysis:

- Publication Selection: Choose 3 influential civic-focused publications (tentatively Citizen Matters, Mumbai Live, Praja foundation) in Mumbai based on relevance and impact.
- Article Selection: Select 10 articles per publication using keywords like "urban challenges," "participatory governance," and "post-pandemic solutions" to focus the analysis. At least 2 articles from each publication will be solutions focused Analyze these articles for prevalent frames.
- I will look at common keywords used in these articles to identify dominant frames and I will categorize them by myself based on common themes that I will have after further in-depth research.

#### Interviews:

- Sample Selection: Invite 4-5 experienced civic journalists in Mumbai for in-depth semi-structured interviews.
- In-depth Interviews: Conduct semi-structured interviews to explore journalists' roles, practices, and impact on the civic ecosystem.
- Thematic analysis of the interviews by clustering codes into potential themes based on similarities, differences, and patterns.

# Expected thesis structure (chapters and subchapters with brief description of their content):

- 11) Introduction
- · Background and Context: Introduce the topic, significance, and relevance of the study.
- Research Questions and Objectives: Define the research question and goals.
- 2) Literature Review
- Analyze other similar work done for other cities, either in India or abroad and analyze common themes
- 3)theoretical framework
- 4) Methodology: Describe the research design and data collection methods.
- 5) findings

#### Content Analysis

- · Media Coverage Pattern:
- Interview Narratives: Present thematic findings from in-depth interviews.

#### 6) Discussion

Implications: Discuss the practical, theoretical, and policy implications.

Limitations: Address research limitations and potential biases.

#### 7) Conclusion

Policy Recommendations: Suggest policy implications for media and civic engagement.

Future Research: Identify areas for further investigation.

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Related theses and dissertations (list of B.A., M.A. and Ph.D. theses defended at Charles University or other academic institutions in the last five years):

None that I could find

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I agree to be the Thesis supervisor.

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Signature of the supervisor

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#### Introduction

"When you do urban reporting, you are providing a service to these cities that is desperately wanted. Leaders are often focused on the issues within their own borders and have a hard time looking elsewhere for what might be working that could be applied within their localities. They turn to you and ask, 'What should we be doing?'

- Johnny Magdaleno (freelance journalist) to Catherine Cheney for the Solutions Journalism Network. (Cheney, 2017)

Civic journalism, also known as public journalism, is a cornerstone of urban life, essential for fostering civic engagement and addressing the needs of local communities (Bowman & Willis, 2003). Despite its significance, civic journalism is increasingly overlooked in modern times. The contemporary media landscape, dominated by digital platforms and driven by sensationalism, often sidelines in-depth civic issues that do not generate high web traffic. This marginalisation of civic journalism has profound implications for society, as it deprives communities of the information necessary for informed civic participation and local governance.

Several factors contribute to the decline of civic journalism. Financial constraints within the media industry have led to downsizing in newsrooms, resulting in fewer resources being allocated to comprehensive civic reporting (Abernathy & Stonbely, 2023; Paulussen, 2008; Fung & Wright, 2003). Journalists are often stretched thin, covering multiple beats and lacking the time to delve deeply into complex civic issues. Additionally, the pressure to produce rapid, attention-grabbing content for digital platforms further diminishes the quality and depth of civic journalism. Participatory journalism, which involves the active involvement of citizens in the news production process, and solutions journalism, which focuses on reporting not just problems but also potential solutions, are particularly affected. These forms of journalism are crucial for fostering informed and engaged communities but are often deprioritized due to their perceived lack of immediate financial return and the significant resources required for their effective implementation (Gaventa, 2006).

This research is pivotal in highlighting the importance of civic journalism and addressing the gaps in its current practice. Focusing on Mumbai, a sprawling metropolis with a diverse population, this study provides valuable insights into the role of civic media platforms in maintaining the city's civic ecosystem. Mumbai, with its extensive coverage of civic issues such as waste management, public transportation, housing, and water supply, offers a comprehensive case study. The city's rapid urbanisation has put immense pressure on its infrastructure, making effective civic journalism more crucial than ever. By examining how these platforms address issues, employ solution-oriented frames, and influence public discourse, this research underscores the media's role in shaping urban governance and civic engagement. To explore these objectives, a qualitative content analysis will be conducted of 16 articles using principles of a framing analysis, and 4 semi-structured interviews will be analysed from the lens of a thematic analysis.

While this study centres in Mumbai, its findings have broad implications for cities worldwide, including those in Europe. European cities, like Mumbai, face challenges related to urbanisation, infrastructure, and civic engagement. By providing a nuanced understanding of Mumbai's civic coverage, this study serves as a guide for comparing the coverage of different cities globally. In Europe, where the media landscape is also evolving, this research highlights the need to prioritise civic journalism despite financial and structural challenges. European cities can learn from Mumbai's experiences in addressing civic issues through media coverage, fostering more informed and engaged urban communities. Additionally, the study offers valuable lessons on the implementation of participatory and solutions journalism, encouraging European media to adopt similar practices. portance of this topic extends beyond Mumbai and Europe. Civic journalism is a cornerstone of democratic societies, ensuring that citizens are informed about issues affecting their daily lives and empowering them to engage in local governance. By highlighting the challenges and opportunities in civic journalism, this research advocates for a media landscape that prioritises public interest.

The importance of this topic extends beyond Mumbai and Europe. Civic journalism is a cornerstone of democratic societies, ensuring that citizens are informed about issues affecting their daily lives and empowering them to engage in local governance.

By highlighting the challenges and opportunities in civic journalism, this research advocates for a media landscape that prioritises public interest and community engagement. In an era of increasing misinformation and declining trust in traditional media, civic journalism can play a crucial role in restoring public confidence. By promoting transparency, accountability, and collective action towards sustainable urban development, civic journalism can help build stronger, more resilient communities.

This research on Mumbai's civic journalism is not only essential for understanding the city's media landscape but also offers valuable insights for global urban centres. By emphasising the significance of civic journalism and exploring its current challenges, this study aims to advocate for a renewed focus on public journalism that prioritises the needs and engagement of local communities.

This thesis comprises several chapters that collectively examine the role of media in framing civic issues in post-pandemic Mumbai. The literature review chapter sets the stage by providing a comprehensive background on Mumbai's socio-political landscape and the significant transformations triggered by the pandemic. It lays the foundation for understanding how civic issues have evolved in this context. The subsequent chapter delves into the theoretical framework, exploring key concepts such as media framing, public engagement, and the intersection of journalism and civic participation. This theoretical underpinning is crucial for analysing the media content discussed later in the thesis.

The methodology chapter focuses on the detailed process of content analysis of various media articles and semi-structured interviews of four journalists. The findings chapter highlights how different media platforms address and prioritise civic issues. The penultimate 'Discussion' chapter synthesises these findings, connecting the individual frames into broader themes from the literature and discussing their implications for urban governance and public participation. The final chapter concludes with a summary of the main findings, reflecting on the potential of media to influence civic discourse and suggesting directions for future research and policy recommendations.

### 1. Literature Review

The literature review encompasses a comprehensive examination of urban governance and the pivotal role of participatory initiatives such as Advanced Locality Managements (ALMs) and resident welfare organisations in fostering civic engagement (Basu, 2020; Mahadevia, 2016). It underscores the significant contribution of hyperlocal news outlets in addressing urban issues by highlighting problems with infrastructure, waste management, and water scarcity, while holding authorities accountable to drive real change in neighbourhoods (Paulussen, 2013; Bruns, 2008; Abernathy & Stonbely, 2023).

Furthermore, this chapter explores the role of citizen involvement in enhancing the depth and authenticity of local news coverage, thus promoting community engagement and a sense of ownership and accountability (Thurman, 2008; Hermida, 2010; Lewis, 2012).

The literature review also identifies several research gaps, particularly the lack of in-depth studies on the impact of civic news outlets in urban settings like Mumbai. Despite valuable insights from existing research on participatory governance and solutions journalism (McIntyre, 2019; Paulussen, 2013; Lough, 2018), there is a notable absence of focused investigations into the potential of civic news to drive real-world change. The review highlights the limitations of current studies, such as the generalizability of findings and the diverse contexts of civic journalism across different regions. By addressing these gaps, this study aims to provide fresh insights into the interplay between media dynamics and civic impact, emphasising the need for a more nuanced understanding of the media's role in urban governance, especially within the specific context of post-pandemic Mumbai.

# 1.1 Role of citizen involvement in hyperlocal journalism

According to Bowman & Willis (2003, p. 9), citizen journalism, also known as participatory journalism, refers to the active involvement of ordinary individuals in the process of collecting, reporting, analysing, and disseminating news and information. This form of journalism empowers citizens to contribute directly to news production, often leveraging digital platforms and social media to share their perspectives and experiences (Rosen, 1995).

Unlike traditional journalism, which relies on professional journalists and established media organisations, citizen journalism thrives on grassroots participation and community engagement.

Participatory journalism, a subset of citizen journalism, involves more structured collaboration between citizens and professional journalists. It often includes inviting audience contributions through comments, photos, videos, and even co-authored stories. This approach fosters a more interactive and inclusive form of news production, enhancing the diversity and richness of the information presented (Bowman & Willis, 2003, p. 45).

In recent years, the rise of digital media and social networking platforms has significantly boosted the prevalence and influence of citizen journalism. Platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube have become vital tools for individuals to share real-time updates and report on events from their unique perspectives. This trend has democratised the flow of information, allowing for a more decentralised and diverse media landscape (Allan, 2013, p. 97).

Citizen journalism has also been instrumental during crises and natural disasters, where traditional media might be slow to respond or unable to reach. For instance, during the Arab Spring, citizen journalists played a crucial role in documenting protests and government crackdowns, providing the world with raw, unfiltered accounts of the events as they unfolded (Cottle, 2011, p. 43)

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Thurman (2008) argues that citizen journalism enriches the depth and authenticity of news coverage by contributing valuable perspectives, local insights, and firsthand experiences that traditional media outlets may overlook (p. 125). This involvement fosters a sense of ownership and accountability within communities, as citizens become more informed and active in local affairs (Hermida, 2010, p. 312). Furthermore, citizen involvement can bridge the gaps left by traditional journalism, addressing coverage limitations and offering nuanced understandings of complex issues (Lewis, 2012, p. 456).

Platforms that facilitate citizen journalism not only promote transparency but also ensure that diverse voices are included in public discourse (Bruns & Highfield, 2012, p. 187). This

inclusivity is crucial for a well-rounded representation of community concerns and interests. By expanding the scope of news reporting, citizen journalism complements professional journalism, providing a more comprehensive and inclusive media landscape.

Citizen involvement in news production takes several distinct forms, each contributing to a richer and more diverse media landscape. Independent reporting involves individuals independently covering events through blogs, social media, or dedicated citizen journalism platforms, allowing for the dissemination of firsthand information and unique perspectives. Collaborative journalism sees citizens and professional journalists working together to cocreate content, often facilitated by news organisations that seek audience contributions, thereby blending professional expertise with grassroots insights (Deuze, Bruns, & Neuberger, 2007, p. 322). Crowdsourced journalism, another vital form, involves news organisations soliciting information, photos, and videos from the public to enhance their coverage of events, ensuring a broader range of viewpoints and greater immediacy (Howe, 2006, p. 50). Lastly, micro-journalism focuses on hyper-local issues frequently overlooked by mainstream media, providing detailed coverage of community-specific events and concerns, and ensuring that the voices and experiences of smaller communities are heard and addressed (Radsch, 2013, p. 189). Each of these forms of citizen journalism plays a crucial role in democratising news production and fostering a more inclusive public discourse.

The integration of citizen journalism into the broader media ecosystem has profound implications for traditional journalism. It challenges conventional news production models and compels professional journalists to adapt to a more participatory and interactive approach. This shift can lead to more dynamic and responsive news coverage, as well as increased engagement with audiences (Singer et al., 2011, p. 73).

However, the rise of citizen journalism also raises questions about credibility, accuracy, and ethical standards. Professional journalists often undergo rigorous training and adhere to established journalistic standards, whereas citizen journalists may lack such training. This disparity necessitates the development of frameworks to verify and corroborate usergenerated content, ensuring that the benefits of citizen journalism are not overshadowed by potential drawbacks (Allan & Thorsen, 2009, p. 121).

## 1.2 Constraints on the growth of participatory governance

Participatory governance refers to the inclusion of citizens in the decision-making processes and policy formulation of governmental and organisational structures. This approach emphasises active citizen engagement, transparency, and accountability, ensuring that the voices of the public are integral to the governance process (Fung & Wright, 2003, p. 5). It involves various mechanisms such as public consultations, participatory budgeting, and collaborative policymaking, which enable citizens to directly influence and contribute to decisions that affect their lives and communities. By fostering greater involvement and collaboration between citizens and authorities, participatory governance aims to enhance the legitimacy and responsiveness of governance systems, ultimately leading to more effective and equitable outcomes (Gaventa, 2006, p. 27).

However, participatory governance is developing rather slowly, as mentioned in Paulussen's (2008, p.27) work, not due to the unwillingness of media professionals to open up their platform to public participation, but rather because of systems in place in media houses - work routines, and professional beliefs. These constraints may be a hurdle to its growth. Paulussen (2008, p. 37) emphasises the importance of civic news outlets in bringing attention to neighbourhood problems and advocating for change, ultimately leading to tangible improvements in communities. By acting as watchdogs and amplifying community voices, these outlets facilitate civic participation and empower residents to actively engage in local governance processes.

A study 'The State of Local News' (Abernathy & Stonbely, 2023) found that over 360 newspapers shut down and/or went out of business a little bit before the pandemic. Although the report focuses mainly on the United States of America, it points out a gap in existing research regarding the comprehensive exploration of the impact and significance of civic news outlets in urban settings. This gap highlights the need for further academic inquiry to better understand the dynamics of civic coverage and its implications for urban governance, community development, and fostering a sense of civic responsibility among residents.

In the context of this research on civic coverage in Mumbai, Paulussen's (2008, 2013)

articles provides valuable insights into the potential role of hyperlocal news outlets in shaping urban governance practices, fostering community participation, and driving positive change within neighbourhoods. By examining the experiences and challenges faced by civic news outlets in other contexts, the author can draw parallels to the Mumbai case study and explore how similar dynamics may influence civic engagement and governance in the city. Participatory governance offers numerous benefits, such as increased citizen engagement, transparency, and accountability. However, it also faces several constraints that can hinder its effectiveness. These constraints can vary depending on the context and the specific mechanisms of participatory governance being implemented. Here, the author explores some common challenges and suggests strategies for addressing them.

One of the primary constraints on participatory governance is the availability of resources, both financial and human. Engaging citizens in decision-making processes requires significant time, effort, and often financial investment to ensure meaningful participation (Fung & Wright, 2003, p. 23). Limited resources can restrict the scope and scale of participatory initiatives, making it challenging to reach a diverse range of stakeholders. To overcome this, governments and organisations must prioritise resource allocation for participatory processes and seek innovative funding mechanisms, such as public-private partnerships or grants from international bodies dedicated to democratic governance (Gaventa, 2006, p. 45).

Ensuring equal and inclusive participation from all segments of society is another critical challenge. Marginalised communities, minorities, and individuals with limited access to information and technology often face barriers to participation (Cornwall & Coelho, 2007, p. 89). This can lead to unequal representation and a lack of diversity in decision-making processes. Addressing this issue requires targeted outreach programs, the provision of necessary technological tools, and the implementation of inclusive practices that consider the unique needs of these groups (Mansuri & Rao, 2013, p. 118).

Existing power structures and hierarchies within governance systems can also pose significant constraints on participatory governance. Traditional decision-making processes may resist sharing power with citizens, resulting in tokenistic participation or limited influence on policy outcomes (Cooke & Kothari, 2001, p. 15). Overcoming entrenched

power dynamics necessitates a shift towards more inclusive and collaborative governance models. This involves institutional reforms, capacity-building initiatives, and the establishment of legal frameworks that mandate citizen participation and hold decision-makers accountable (Fung, 2015, p. 52).

Building trust between citizens and government institutions is essential for the success of participatory governance. Scepticism, lack of transparency, and past experiences of exclusion or marginalisation can erode trust in participatory processes (Warren, 2009, p. 42). To rebuild trust, it is crucial to foster open communication, demonstrate a commitment to incorporating citizen input into decision-making, and ensure transparency in governance activities. Regular feedback loops and public reporting on the impact of citizen contributions can also help in establishing credibility and trust (Nabatchi & Leighninger, 2015, p. 33).

Effective participation in governance processes requires certain skills and knowledge from both citizens and government officials. A lack of capacity, training, or awareness about participatory mechanisms can hinder meaningful engagement (Carpini, Cook, & Jacobs, 2004, p. 316). Investing in capacity-building initiatives and providing educational resources can bridge this gap. Workshops, training programs, and informational campaigns can empower citizens and officials alike, ensuring they are well-equipped to engage in participatory governance (Gaventa & Barrett, 2012, p. 45).

Inadequate legal frameworks or institutional structures that do not support or incentivize participatory governance can act as significant constraints. Clear guidelines, mechanisms for feedback and accountability, and legal provisions for citizen engagement are essential for the success of participatory initiatives (Smith, 2009, p. 120). Aligning institutional frameworks with participatory principles is crucial for overcoming this constraint. This may involve revising existing laws, creating new regulatory bodies, and ensuring that participatory governance is embedded in the institutional culture (Fung, 2006, p. 67).

Addressing these constraints on participatory governance requires a multi-faceted approach. Building trust, enhancing capacity, promoting inclusivity, and restructuring power dynamics within governance systems are all essential steps. By adopting a holistic strategy that tackles these challenges from multiple angles, it is possible to create a more inclusive, transparent,

and accountable governance system that truly reflects the voices of all citizens. Similar to how participatory governance contributes to improved transparency and accountability in local governance, solutions journalism contributes in areas of positively influencing readers and citizens to maintain better cities.

### 1.3 Solutions Journalism

Solution journalism, also known as constructive journalism or solutions-oriented journalism, is an approach that focuses on reporting not only the problems and challenges facing society but also potential solutions and positive initiatives aimed at addressing these issues. It seeks to provide a more balanced and comprehensive view of news by highlighting efforts, innovations, and successes that contribute to positive change in communities and beyond (VT Dũ, 2024, p.196)

Theoretical discussions on solution journalism often emphasise its potential to counterbalance traditional negative news narratives and engage audiences in constructive dialogue. According to Tankard (2018, p. 54), solution journalism aims to "focus on responses to problems, exploring how societies and individuals are addressing issues and improving their communities". This approach not only informs but also inspires readers by showcasing examples of effective problem-solving strategies and encouraging civic engagement (Gyldensted, 2011, p. 102).

Moreover, scholars have examined the impact of solution journalism on audience perceptions and attitudes towards news consumption. Research on solutions journalism attests these beliefs. "Solution journalism also has a positive impact on readers, their intention to read similar news and their evaluation of the newspaper is higher than traditional problem-based reporting." (VT Dũ, 2024, p.196)

Studies such as VT Dũ's (2024) suggest that presenting solutions alongside problems can enhance audience engagement and trust in media, while also fostering a sense of agency and optimism among readers. By framing stories in a solutions-oriented manner, journalists can potentially contribute to societal resilience and promote a more constructive public discourse on pressing issues.

### 1.4 Effects of using solution frames in news stories

McIntyre (2019) examines the effects and consequences of using solution frames in civic news stories or rather stories on any social problems. According to McIntyre (2019, p. 21) the media's role in shaping public perception is profound, and the phenomenon of compassion fatigue, or public apathy toward human tragedy, has been attributed in part to the relentless focus on conflicts without presenting viable solutions. To counteract this, some journalists have embraced the concept of solutions journalism, an approach aimed at not just highlighting problems but also exploring effective solutions. McIntyre's experiment delves into the effects of incorporating solution information in news stories about social problems, shedding light on its impact on readers' attitudes and behaviours.

The results of McIntyre's (2019) experiment indicate that discussing an effective solution to a social problem in a news story has notable effects on readers. Firstly, it appears to alleviate the negativity associated with conflict-based news coverage. When readers are presented with a potential remedy to a problem, they report feeling less negative overall. This suggests that solutions journalism has the potential to counterbalance the emotionally draining impact of traditional, problem-focused reporting, providing a more balanced and constructive perspective.

Moreover, as explained further in McIntyre's (2019, p. 28) study, readers exposed to solution-oriented news stories reported more favourable attitudes not only toward the articles themselves but also toward the proposed solutions. This positive shift in attitudes indicates that presenting effective solutions in news coverage can contribute to a more engaged and optimistic readership. It suggests that solutions journalism has the power to not only inform but also influence public opinion, fostering a more constructive outlook on addressing societal challenges.

However, a crucial finding emerges regarding the impact of solution information on readers' behavioural intentions and actual behaviours (McIntyre, 2019, p. 29). Surprisingly, the study reveals that reading about effective solutions did not translate into a significant change in

readers' intentions or actions. This implies a potential limitation of solutions journalism – while it may positively shape perceptions and attitudes, it might not be as effective in inspiring tangible actions or behavioural change.

This nuanced result prompts further exploration into the complex relationship between media consumption, attitudes, and actions. It raises questions about the gap between acknowledging effective solutions intellectually and translating that knowledge into real-world engagement. The study suggests that there may be additional factors, beyond the scope of the news story itself, influencing individuals' willingness or ability to take action.

Solutions journalism proves effective in mitigating the negative impact of conflict-based news, fostering more positive attitudes among readers. However, its limited impact on behavioural intentions and actions underscores the complexity of motivating individuals to move from awareness to meaningful engagement. As news outlets continue to grapple with the challenge of balancing informative reporting with inspiring action, understanding the dynamics uncovered in this study becomes increasingly crucial for shaping the future of responsible and impactful journalism.

# 1.5 Recorded impact of solutions journalism

Lough (2023) provides research on solutions and constructive journalism, and highlights some recurring patterns. The common themes identified in the systematic review include a focus on processes and production. Nearly half of the articles reviewed in his study focused on the processes and production of constructive/solutions journalism.

According to Lough (2023, p. 1077), around 30% of the articles examined the effects of constructive or solutions journalism, particularly testing the impact of such stories on audiences in terms of emotions, attitudes, behavioural intentions, and actual behaviours. Some research articles were purely conceptual, situating constructive or solutions journalism within the field and comparing them to similar forms of journalism.

Authors such as Lough (2023) commonly rely on theoretical frameworks such as positive psychology, framing, social responsibility theory, and normative roles and standards in

journalism to underpin their work in constructive and solutions journalism. While research in this field is extensive, it predominantly focuses on the US and Europe, with recommendations to expand studies to lesser-studied regions like Africa, Asia, and Latin America, and to encourage more comparative studies across countries.

The emphasis on understanding newsroom implementation, audience impact, and the theoretical foundations of these approaches demonstrates a multifaceted approach to this emerging area of journalism. One strength of the review is its balanced mix of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods research, providing a comprehensive understanding from multiple perspectives. The identification of common theoretical frameworks offers a solid foundation for future studies.

Future research recommendations include focusing on audience effects, exploring theoretical approaches, and expanding the geographical scope of studies (Lough, 2023, p. 1080-1082). The call for more comparative studies and international collaboration underscores the importance of global perspectives. However, the review may be biased towards English-language publications, potentially excluding relevant non-English studies. This point is not directly mentioned in Lough's (2023) article, but the emphasis on broadening the geographical scope and the predominance of US/Europe-centric studies implies the potential bias. Additionally, the challenge of quantitatively analysing broad theoretical frameworks highlights the complexity of synthesising findings. Further in-depth investigations into the long-term effects of constructive journalism on audience perceptions and behaviours are needed to enhance understanding of its societal impact (p. 1084).

# 1.6 Boundaries of Solutions Journalism

Midberry (2020) states that research on this topic is scarce and primarily focused on print publications. Similarly, from the available literature on the topic of solutions journalism as seen in McIntyre (2019) and Lough (2023), we also observe that most of the comprehensive literature available is based on case studies of the west.

In Powers and Curry's (2019) study we see valuable insights into the practice and impact of

solutions journalism. The Solutions Journalism Network (SJN) plays a crucial role in promoting solutions-oriented reporting, emphasising the importance of tracking and sharing the impact of such journalism to demonstrate civic value. The study highlights that journalists are increasingly considering the impact of their work, including influencing public opinion, changing public policy, and spurring community action.

Moreover, the concept of setting boundaries in journalism, as discussed in the article (Powers & Curry, 2019, p. 2251), sheds light on the evolving perspectives of journalists towards discussing the impact of their work. The comparison between solutions journalism and investigative reporting, as mentioned in Powers (2019, p. 2252), offers a nuanced understanding of how solutions-oriented stories can drive societal change and rebuild credibility.

## 1.7 A case of Mumbai's solid waste management

Iyer's (2016) case study of Mumbai's solid waste management sets an important example of how research, when narrowed down on one specific aspect of civic issues, can reveal patterns for solving other civic issues as well. Iyer (p. 103) provides valuable insights into the challenges and successes of waste management in Mumbai, a critical aspect of the city's civic ecosystem. One key observation is the contrast between centralised and decentralised waste management systems. The article highlights the limitations of centralised mechanisms, such as the inefficiencies of linear waste dumping systems and the high costs associated with transportation and collection. In contrast, decentralised systems operate on smaller scales and focus on processing and storing waste to increase its value, often involving informal workers like waste traders or 'Raddiwallahs'.

Moreover, Iyer's (2016, p. 102) study emphasises the importance of stakeholder engagement in waste management, illustrating how the city interacts with various stakeholders including government agencies, technology providers, recyclers, citizens/residents, and waste pickers to create an effective waste management circle. This collaborative approach is essential for addressing the complex challenges of waste management in urban areas like Mumbai. Additionally, the case studies presented in the article demonstrate the diverse efforts made

by citizens, housing complexes, industrial colonies, educational institutions, and waste management plants to manage their waste in a decentralised manner.

Furthermore, Iyer's (2016) research sheds light on the financial constraints faced by municipal corporations in Mumbai, which rely on centralised waste management methods and struggle to achieve 100% decentralised waste management due to the lack of appropriate channels for managing rejects and sanitary waste. This observation underscores the need for administrative reforms and increased support for decentralised waste management initiatives. Finally, the article (Iyer, 2016, p.103) emphasises the role of active citizens and proactive communities in driving sustainable waste management practices, highlighting the importance of consumer behaviour, resource recovery, and community engagement in creating greener and more sustainable urban environments.

### 1.8 Research gaps

However, existing research lacks a comprehensive exploration of the role and impact of civic news outlets, particularly in this landscape, creating a critical void in scholarly understanding. While Basu's (2020) work contributes valuable insights into ALMs and their influence on local policies and decision-making processes, there is a notable absence of indepth investigations into the workings of civic news outlets and their potential to drive real-world change through principles of solutions journalism. The literature review (McIntyre, 2019; Paulussen, 2013; Lough, 2018) emphasises the scarcity of studies examining the specific context of Mumbai regarding civic journalism and hyperlocal journalism. By pinpointing the lack of research on the interplay between media dynamics and civic impact, this study aims to contribute significantly to the existing body of knowledge.

Moreover, the review elucidates the limitations of current research. For example, Paulussen's study (2013) may lack generalizability due to its focus on a specific hyperlocal media project, potentially limiting the broader applicability of findings. Additionally, the research might not fully capture the diverse contexts and challenges faced by civic journalism in different regions. Furthermore, the study might not extensively delve into the framing of civic issues, potentially leaving gaps in understanding how these issues are

portrayed and interpreted by different stakeholders. This highlights the need for a more nuanced understanding of the media's role in urban governance and sets the stage for the proposed research, emphasising its significance in addressing these limitations and providing fresh insights into the dynamics of civic news outlets within the specific context of post-pandemic Mumbai.

# 2. Theoretical Framework

In examining Mumbai's civic news ecosystem with a focus on citizen participation and solutions journalism, the Constructivist perspective within media theory offers a pivotal framework. This perspective posits that the media actively constructs social reality through selective presentation and framing of information (Entman, 1993). By applying Constructivist theory, researchers can delve into how Mumbai's media portrays civic issues and community initiatives, shaping public perceptions and influencing levels of civic engagement. Framing theory, a cornerstone of Constructivist media theory, enhances this analysis by examining how media narratives highlight certain aspects of news stories while downplaying others, thereby framing public discourse on urban governance and community solutions (Goffman, 1974). This theoretical approach will provide insights into how media representations impact citizen participation and the promotion of solutions-oriented journalism within Mumbai's dynamic civic landscape.

# 2.1 Constructivist perspective within Media Theory

The constructivist perspective within media theory posits that media do not simply reflect reality but actively construct and shape it. This theoretical framework is grounded in the idea that the content produced and disseminated by media outlets significantly influences how audiences perceive and understand the world. According to Takeshita (2013), media representations hold immense power in crafting public perceptions, which in turn play a crucial role in the formation of social reality. This perspective challenges the notion of media as passive conveyors of information, instead highlighting their active role in selecting, framing, and emphasising certain aspects of reality while omitting others. By doing so, media narratives can shape societal norms, values, and beliefs, ultimately steering public discourse and influencing collective behaviour.

Central to the constructivist perspective is the concept of framing, which involves the media's presentation and interpretation of events and issues. Framing theory, as articulated by scholars like Entman (1993), suggests that the way information is framed can

significantly impact how it is understood by audiences. Media frames, through their selection and emphasis, guide the audience's interpretation and prioritisation of issues. This process of framing not only influences individual perceptions but also shapes broader societal attitudes and public policy debates. By highlighting specific aspects of a story and providing contextual cues, media frames can direct attention to certain issues while marginalising others, thereby constructing a particular version of reality.

Moreover, the constructivist perspective emphasises the interaction between media content and audience interpretation. It recognizes that audiences are not passive recipients of media messages but active participants who interpret and integrate media content into their own experiences and worldviews. This interaction is underscored by the works of McQuail (2010), who argues that the meaning of media content is co-created by audiences, who bring their own backgrounds, contexts, and perspectives to their interpretation of media messages. Therefore, the constructivist perspective underscores the dynamic and reciprocal relationship between media and society, where media narratives shape societal perceptions and, in turn, are shaped by the responses and interpretations of their audiences. This theoretical background provides a comprehensive understanding of the intricate dynamics of media influence, highlighting the active role of media in constructing social reality and shaping public discourse.

# 2.2 Media shaping our reality

The concept of Media Construction of Reality is pivotal in understanding how mass media shapes public perception and societal norms. Takeshita (1996) argues that media not only reports events but actively constructs and frames the reality that audiences perceive. Beyond agenda-setting, Takeshita illuminates the media's role as a mediator between the external world and our individual interpretations. This perspective underscores that media content not only informs but also interprets and contextualises events, influencing how audiences understand and interpret the world around them.

Early theorists like Lippmann (1922) laid foundational ideas about the media's role as a mediator, shaping public perceptions by presenting selective aspects of reality. This

mediation influences what issues are deemed important by society, a concept later formalised in agenda-setting theory by McCombs and Shaw (1972). However, Media Construction of Reality extends beyond mere selection and prioritisation of news to examine how media narratives and framing techniques shape public understanding. Framing theory, developed by Goffman (1974) and expanded by Entman (1993), explains how media selectively emphasise certain aspects of reality while downplaying others, thereby constructing particular interpretations and influencing audience perceptions.

Herman and Chomsky's (1988) Propaganda Model further elucidates how media construction of reality operates within capitalist societies. This model posits that media content is not neutral but shaped by factors such as ownership, advertising revenue, sourcing of information, and ideological bias, which collectively filter and shape news presentation. By serving the interests of powerful elites, the media can perpetuate narratives that reinforce existing power structures and societal norms. This perspective challenges the notion of media as a passive conduit of information and highlights its active role in constructing and reinforcing social reality.

In the digital age, the landscape of media construction has evolved with the proliferation of social media platforms and personalised content delivery systems. Recent studies, such as those by Freelon et al. (2022) and Cotter (2023), highlight how digital media algorithms and user-generated content contribute to the construction of fragmented and personalised realities. These platforms not only amplify certain viewpoints but also shape public discourse and perception in ways that traditional media alone could not. For instance, Freelon et al. (2022, p. 57-77) discuss how platforms like Facebook and Twitter use algorithms to curate news feeds, creating echo chambers that reinforce users' pre-existing beliefs. Additionally, Cotter (2023, p. 321-338) explores how algorithmic moderation and recommendation systems influence user engagement and content visibility, often prioritising sensational or polarising content. Understanding media construction of reality in the digital era requires examining how these algorithms, user interactions, and content moderation practices collectively influence the information environment and public understanding of current events and societal issues.

### 2.3 News framing theory and research

News framing theory is a concept in media studies that explores how media organisations select, emphasise, and present information to shape public perception and understanding of events. Framing refers to the process by which journalists and editors frame or package news stories in a particular way, influencing how audiences interpret the information. Entman (1993) defines framing as "selecting and highlighting some facets of events or issues, and making connections among them so as to promote a particular interpretation, evaluation, and/or solution."

One of the key advantages of framing theory is its ability to explain how media coverage can influence public opinion and policy outcomes. By emphasising certain aspects of a story while downplaying others, media outlets can shape the narrative surrounding an issue, influencing how the audience perceives its importance and relevance. For example, Gamson and Modigliani (1989) used framing theory to analyse media coverage of social movements, showing how different frames (e.g., protest as legitimate vs. protest as disruptive) can influence public support and government response.

However, framing theory is not without its critiques and disadvantages. One criticism is that it can oversimplify complex issues by reducing them to a few dominant frames, potentially ignoring important nuances and perspectives. Critics also argue that framing can lead to bias if journalists or media outlets intentionally or unintentionally frame stories in ways that align with their own ideological or commercial interests (Entman, 1993).

Despite criticisms, framing theory remains a powerful tool for understanding media influence and public discourse. It has been widely used in academic research across various disciplines, including political science, sociology, and communication studies. Recent studies, such as those by Guran and Ozarslan (2022), highlight framing theory's relevance in the digital age, particularly within social media contexts. They note that framing theory helps analyse the interplay between social media and traditional media, revealing how hybrid media systems influence public perception and social movements (pp. 449-451).

However, some limitations of framing theory persist. Critics argue that it can oversimplify

complex social issues and struggles to distinguish framing effects from other media influences. Moreover, the dynamic and fast-paced nature of social media introduces new challenges in frame analysis, as highlighted by Guran and Ozarslan (2022). These include the proliferation of disinformation and the difficulties in maintaining news authenticity in a hybrid media environment (pp. 454-456).

# 3. Data Collection and Methodology

This study aims to investigate the framing of civic issues in Mumbai's media landscape during the post-pandemic period (2022-2023) and the role of civic media platforms in maintaining the city's civic ecosystem. This research also aims to provide a nuanced understanding of how these outlets address issues, employ solution-oriented frames, and influence public discourse and perceptions of participatory governance and potential solutions.

This study will also help to find patterns in the coverage of Mumbai's civic issues (if any) and the supplementary objective of the research is to see if the case study of Mumbai acts as a catalyst to learning more about civic coverage and lessons we can take from it in other parts of the world. Since Mumbai's municipality, The Greater Mumbai municipal corporation (MCGM) is the biggest municipal corporation in India since 1958 and functions on a rather large and decently efficient scale. Its news coverage also reflects the complexities of the city that houses such a large population that is also very diverse. The research questions that concern this study are as follows:

RQ1: How do civic news outlets in Mumbai frame urban challenges in their reporting? The first research question will investigate how civic news outlets in Mumbai cover participatory governance and urban issues, particularly in terms of incorporating solution-oriented frames in their reporting.

# RQ2: How do selected journalists in Mumbai perceive the framing of urban challenges in civic news?

The aim of the second research question is to investigate how journalists perceive the influence of media framing on public discourse about participatory governance, including their approaches to proposing solutions, identifying challenges, opportunities, and assessing the impact of framing on public perceptions.

The data collection for this research has been done via purposive sampling and qualitative methods such as a content analysis and semi-structured interviews which have been chosen to answer the aforementioned questions and articulate the complexities of civic coverage in the large metropolis that is Mumbai and well as document first-hand accounts of civic journalists.

Choosing qualitative content analysis and semi-structured interviews is advantageous for researching civic coverage in Mumbai because it allows for a deep, nuanced understanding of media narratives and their impact on public perception. Qualitative content analysis enables the examination of how media outlets frame issues related to solutions journalism and citizen participation, revealing underlying themes and patterns (Bryman, 2016). Semi-structured interviews, on the other hand, provide firsthand insights from journalists, editors, and community leaders, offering rich, detailed perspectives on the motivations and challenges behind media coverage (Kvale, 2007). Together, these methods facilitate a comprehensive exploration of the media landscape, uncovering how different narratives influence civic engagement and the promotion of community-driven solutions (Tracy, 2019).

### 3.1 Qualitative content analysis

In this study of Mumbai's civic news landscape during the post-pandemic period of 2022-2023, the author has applied the foundational principles of qualitative content analysis as outlined by Philipp Mayring (2014). By meticulously defining the research questions, the author has been able to guide the analysis of articles sourced from reputable publications such as Citizen Matters, Hindustan Times, Mid-day, and Mumbai Live. This strategic approach has allowed the author to delve into how civic issues are portrayed, the prevalent themes covered, and the emerging trends in news reporting within this specific time frame.

Qualitative content analysis is a research method used to interpret and analyse the content of textual data through a systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns. According to Hsieh and Shannon (2005), qualitative content analysis is defined as a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns. This method allows researchers to go beyond mere word counts to examine meanings, themes, and patterns that may be present in the data, providing a deep understanding of the context and the underlying messages within the text.

In their article, Hsieh and Shannon (2005) delineate three distinct approaches to qualitative content analysis: conventional, directed, and summative. The **conventional approach** involves deriving coding categories directly from the text data itself, allowing themes to emerge organically without preconceived notions. This method is particularly useful when the research area is not well-defined, as it enables researchers to capture the richness of the data without imposing external frameworks. In contrast, the **directed approach** begins with existing theories or research findings that guide the initial coding process. This approach is beneficial when researchers aim to test or extend existing theories, as it allows for a more focused analysis while still being open to new insights that may arise from the data.

The **summative approach** to qualitative content analysis combines elements of both the conventional and directed approaches. It involves counting and comparing keywords or content, followed by an interpretation of the underlying context. This method provides a quantitative aspect to qualitative analysis, allowing researchers to identify patterns in word usage while also delving into the meanings behind those patterns.

In this study, the developed codebook aligns most closely with the directed approach as it reflects an intention to test or extend existing theories about civic issues and citizen participation, rather than discovering new themes from the data itself or combining qualitative and quantitative elements.

The process of conducting qualitative content analysis involves several key steps. First, the researcher selects the content to be analysed, which can include any form of communication such as articles, interviews, or social media posts. Next, the researcher reads through the content to gain a holistic understanding of the data. Following this, the researcher codes the data by assigning labels to relevant pieces of text that represent important concepts or themes. These codes are then grouped into categories based on their similarities. Finally, the researcher interprets the categories to identify overarching themes and draw conclusions about the data (Schreier, 2012). This process is iterative and may require multiple rounds of coding and refinement to ensure the accuracy and depth of the analysis.

There are several advantages to using qualitative content analysis. One of the primary benefits is its flexibility, as it can be applied to a wide range of textual data and can be used to explore both manifest and latent content. Additionally, this method allows for a rich, detailed analysis that can provide insights into complex social phenomena and the meanings people attach to them. Qualitative content analysis also facilitates the discovery of new concepts and theories, making it a valuable tool for exploratory research (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). However, there are also disadvantages to consider. The subjective nature of the coding process can introduce bias, as different researchers may interpret the same text differently. Additionally, qualitative content analysis can be time-consuming and labor-intensive, requiring meticulous attention to detail and multiple rounds of coding and analysis (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008).

# 3.2 Analysis Method: Framing Analysis

This research uses framing analysis as a qualitative research method, which is used to examine how media and communication shape public perception by emphasising certain aspects of a topic while downplaying others. It focuses on the construction and dissemination of messages, analysing the selection and emphasis of certain themes, words, and images to understand how they influence the audience's interpretation and understanding. According to Entman (1993, p. 52), "Framing essentially involves selection and salience. To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text".

The author broke down this analysis into 4 phases for easier understandability and streamlined process. The four phases of a framing are as follows...

**Phase 1 - Identifying Frames**: The first phase involves identifying the frames present in the media content. This requires a detailed examination of the text to pinpoint recurring themes, keywords, phrases, and images that highlight certain aspects of a story while omitting or downplaying others. Researchers look for patterns in how information is presented and what is emphasised or marginalised.

**Phase 2 - Analysing Frame Elements**: Once the frames are identified, the next phase is to analyse the elements that constitute these frames. This involves breaking down the frames into their core components such as problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation (Entman, 1993). This phase helps in understanding how the frame constructs reality and influences public perception.

**Phase 3 - Comparing Frames**: The third phase is comparing frames across different media sources or over time. This helps to identify variations in how different outlets or periods frame the same issue. Comparative analysis can reveal biases, ideological leanings, and shifts in framing strategies that may occur due to changing social, political, or economic contexts (Reese et al., 2001).

**Phase 4 - Examining Effects**: The final phase involves examining the effects of these frames on the audience. This can be done through audience studies or experiments that measure how different frames impact public opinion, attitudes, and behaviours. Understanding the effects of framing is crucial for comprehending its role in shaping societal discourses and public policy (Scheufele, 2007).

Framing analysis offers the advantage of revealing the underlying power dynamics and societal structures that influence media content, highlighting how certain groups or perspectives gain prominence while others are marginalised (Reese, 2001). This method also facilitates comparative studies across different media outlets, regions, or time periods, enabling researchers to detect shifts in framing strategies and their potential causes (Van Gorp, 2007). Additionally, framing analysis is instrumental in understanding audience reception and interpretation, providing insights into how different frames resonate with diverse demographics and cultural backgrounds (Scheufele, 2007). By identifying and analysing these frames, framing analysis can guide more effective communication strategies and policies, ensuring messages are tailored to achieve desired impacts while mitigating unintended biases (Chong, 2007).

This method has been used for similar research before as we see in Redden (2011). Framing analysis is utilised by Redden as a fundamental methodological approach to dissect and understand the portrayal of poverty and immigration in mainstream media coverage in

Canada and the UK. By employing framing analysis, the author aims to identify and analyse the dominant frames that shape the narratives presented in news articles, shedding light on how these frames influence public perception and understanding of poverty and immigration issues. Through this analytical lens, the research delves into how different frames, such as individualising and rationalising frames, are employed to construct and convey specific meanings and interpretations of poverty and immigration, ultimately revealing the underlying ideologies and values embedded within media representations. The framing analysis serves as a valuable tool in uncovering the nuances and biases present in news coverage, providing insights into the ways in which these issues are framed and communicated to the audience. This provides a solid structure for this research about civic news due to its similar approach to analyse and understand the portrayal of citizen participation and solutions in civic coverage in Mumbai.

#### 3.3 Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews are a qualitative data collection method characterized by the use of open-ended questions that provide structure while allowing for the flexibility to explore topics in depth. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2007), semi-structured interviews are defined as "interviews with the purpose of obtaining descriptions of the life world of the interviewee in order to interpret the meaning of the described phenomena." This method involves a predefined set of questions, but the interviewer has the freedom to probe further based on the responses, making it suitable for exploring complex and nuanced subjects.

The process of conducting semi-structured interviews involves several steps. Initially, the researcher develops an interview guide that outlines the main topics and questions to be covered, ensuring alignment with the research objectives. During the interview, the interviewer follows this guide but remains flexible, allowing the conversation to flow naturally and exploring new avenues as they arise. This approach helps to gather rich, detailed data by encouraging interviewees to share their experiences and perspectives in their own words. After the interviews, the data is transcribed and analysed, often through coding and thematic analysis, to identify key themes and insights (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2007).

There are several advantages to using semi-structured interviews. One of the primary benefits is the balance between structure and flexibility, which allows the interviewer to maintain focus while also exploring unexpected topics that emerge during the conversation. This method can yield deep, rich data that provide a comprehensive understanding of the interviewee's experiences and viewpoints. Semi-structured interviews are also particularly useful for exploring sensitive or complex topics, as the open-ended nature of the questions can help build rapport and trust between the interviewer and interviewee, facilitating more candid and detailed responses (Smith & Osborn, 2015). However, there are also disadvantages to consider. The quality of the data depends heavily on the skill of the interviewer, including their ability to ask probing questions and manage the flow of the conversation. Additionally, analysing interview data can be time-consuming and requires a systematic approach to ensure reliability and validity (Bryman, 2016).

### 3.4 Purposive Sampling method.

For both the content analysis and semi-structured interviews, the purposive sampling method has been employed. This approach was selected to ensure that the most relevant and informative sources are included in the study.

Purposive sampling, also known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling, is a non-probability sampling technique in which researchers use their judgement to select participants who are most beneficial to the study. This method is used when researchers want to focus on specific characteristics of a population that are of interest, which will best enable them to answer their research questions. According to Palinkas et al. (2015), "Purposive sampling is a type of non-probability sampling in which the researcher selects the participants based on their knowledge about the topic and the purpose of the study."

The author started by picking publications working extensively in the civic sphere. To have a diverse yet homogenous sample, the author started by choosing 4 publications that served the purpose of answering the research questions. Some factors the author considered when picking the four publications were that all four had established city reportage staff and/or a separate beat in their newspaper/website dedicated to civic news or civic stories.

Additionally, their usage of citizen voices in their articles was imperative in choosing the publications.

The diverse sample included one publication where larger emphasis is put on longer-form stories that analyse certain civic issues, one that reports news daily but only exists online as a website and app, and two legacy newspapers with large readerships and long-history of credible news stories and equal representation in the workplace of both young and old, as well as male and female journalists.

After this the author picked four articles from each of the four publications, one a solution story, one surrounding citizen participation (either authored by a citizen or centred around a citizen voice, two about general urban challenges. This ensured a diverse sample that is also representative of the questions posed in the study.

For the semi-structured interviews, similarly, candidates were picked based on their knowledge of the civic news ecosystem, two of the journalists are younger and the other two are senior journalists in the civic field and have 10+ years of experience. The author got in touch with several journalists whose work they had been following on X for many years.

Purposive sampling has several notable advantages, particularly in qualitative research. It allows researchers to focus on specific characteristics or groups within a population that are most relevant to their research objectives. This targeted approach ensures that the selected sample can provide rich, detailed, and relevant information, leading to more meaningful insights. Additionally, purposive sampling is often more efficient than random sampling methods, as it saves time and resources by concentrating on participants who possess the necessary expertise or experiences (Palinkas et al., 2015).

However, purposive sampling also has significant drawbacks. One major disadvantage is the potential for researcher bias, as the selection of participants is based on the researcher's judgement, which can introduce personal biases or preconceived notions into the study. This can lead to a non-representative sample that skews the findings. Furthermore, because the sample is not randomly selected, the results may not be generalizable to the broader population, limiting the applicability of the findings. The subjective nature of participant

selection can also result in inconsistencies and variability in the selection process (Etikan et al., 2016).

# 3.5 Research Design

#### 3.5.1 Phase 1 - qualitative content analysis

#### Data source

In selecting content for this study, the author chose four publications: Citizen Matters, Hindustan Times, Mid-Day, and Mumbai Live. This selection was intended to provide a diverse range of perspectives within civic journalism, encompassing both online platforms and traditional print media. Citizen Matters and Mumbai Live are exclusively online publications, whereas Hindustan Times and Mid-Day are established morning daily print newspapers.

The author specifically chose Citizen Matters due to its distinctive focus on civic journalism, which began in earnest in 2019, shortly before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since its inception, Citizen Matters has consistently emphasised citizen journalism and participatory governance, setting it apart from other publications. As a not-for-profit civic news outlet, Citizen Matters operates chapters in Chennai, Bangalore, and Mumbai. Its funding model, which relies primarily on philanthropic contributions from institutions dedicated to the cause of improving urban life and enhancing public accountability, along with reader donations, ensures a bias-free editorial stance.

Citizen Matters covers a comprehensive array of civic issues, including public transport, urban planning, water and waste management, elections, local governance, and labor issues. The publication's emphasis on analytical articles over hard news allows for in-depth exploration of these topics. Furthermore, Citizen Matters prioritises the voices of citizens through its dedicated Citizen Journalism (CJ) section, which features contributions from the public once a week. This approach not only offers a unique perspective on civic matters but also encourages community engagement and discourse on local issues, often extending the conversation to platforms like Twitter. This innovative model of civic coverage significantly

influenced the theme of my thesis.

Secondly, the author selected Hindustan Times (HT) due to its status as a legacy media outlet with a longstanding history of print publication since 1924. Over the decades, HT has established a significant presence in Mumbai, consistently covering crucial civic issues and publishing exclusives that have profoundly influenced the city's civic ecosystem. One notable example of HT's impactful journalism is its recent series on the delayed construction of the Gokhale Bridge in Andheri, a neighbourhood in the Mumbai suburban region. This bridge, which has been under construction for over three years, has been a focal point of citizen dissatisfaction. HT's coverage included detailed reporting on the timeline and progress of the construction, which in turn spurred public demands for accountability from the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC).

Hindustan Times commands a high level of credibility in Mumbai, having served the city's readership for over 50 years. This legacy and trust make HT an invaluable source for examining the broader spectrum of civic issues. The author's decision to include HT in this study was also influenced by its ability to provide a contrasting perspective to Citizen Matters, a smaller-scale publication. HT's extensive repertoire of articles on civic matters offers a rich dataset for content analysis, encompassing both breaking news coverage and investigative journalism. This diversity in reporting style and content will enable a comprehensive analysis of how different types of media address and impact civic issues, thereby enriching the overall scope and depth of my thesis.

The rationale for selecting Mid-Day is similar to that for choosing Hindustan Times. Mid-Day is a legacy print media outlet, presented in a morning-daily compact newspaper format, with deep-rooted connections in Mumbai. It boasts a successful Mumbai edition with over 300,000 subscribers. Mid-Day's coverage is diverse, encompassing opinion pieces, long-form articles, short news reports, and comprehensive columns written by citizens, editors, and established writers who are deeply invested in civic issues. These contributors provide essential social commentary on the state of Mumbai and its municipality, discussing long-term goals and visions for the city's development.

Furthermore, Mid-Day is known for its critical stance towards the Brihanmumbai Municipal

Corporation (BMC), particularly highlighting its shortcomings. This critical approach has been a hallmark of Mid-Day's journalism, helping it maintain credibility over the years. The publication achieves a balanced perspective by employing both veteran journalists and newer voices, ensuring a wide range of viewpoints. This blend of critical reporting, diverse content, and established trust makes Mid-Day a valuable source for analyzing civic issues in Mumbai, providing a perspective that complements those of the other publications selected for this study.

Mumbai Live is an online news portal that disseminates news in three languages: English, Hindi, and Marathi. This trilingual approach allows them to cater to a broad audience within Mumbai's diverse linguistic landscape. Their exclusive focus on Mumbai ensures a concentrated scope, enabling them to develop strong connections within all 24 wards of the city. They maintain a network of reporters and stringers in each ward who provide daily news updates, which are then edited and published on their website and app.

The author chose Mumbai Live because it stands out as one of the few high-yield publications dedicated solely to Mumbai. This specialisation facilitates a deep, localised coverage of civic issues, making it an invaluable source for understanding the intricacies of municipal governance and community concerns. By including Mumbai Live, my research benefits from a rich repository of hyper-local news that complements the broader civic coverage provided by the other selected publications.

#### Sampling

From all these publications, the author has chosen 4 articles each from the post-pandemic period of 2020-2023. Then randomly picked one article each in the four categories that the author found to be most relevant to the research question. From Citizen Matters I chose one explainer (an explainer is an article that provides information and explains topics that are complex or not widely understood by the citizens), a first-hand citizen journalist account, an in-depth analytical report as well as a solutions piece that ties in every frame that I will be analysing through my research. These stories were picked after searching for keywords such as 'citizen journalism', 'solutions', 'explainers', and 'report'.

From Hindustan Times, the selected sample collectively provides a comprehensive view of

how civic issues are covered in Mumbai's media. They cover a range of topics from immediate municipal actions influenced by protests to long-term infrastructural neglect, as well as proactive community-driven solutions. By examining these stories, the research will address the following questions: Does the media prioritise solutions journalism in covering civic issues? And how are citizen voices and actions represented in media coverage of civic issues?

Articles from Mid-Day discusses the health and economic struggles of TB patients, shedding light on systemic healthcare failures and support mechanisms. Another piece explores civic dissatisfaction with local political representatives, providing insights into political accountability and citizen experiences. The coverage of hazardous living conditions in informal settlements during monsoons highlights urban vulnerability and disaster preparedness. Finally, the examination of pedestrian safety addresses infrastructural shortcomings and advocates for citizen-friendly urban planning.

Similarly, for Mumbai Live One article discusses expert insights into the factors deteriorating Mumbai's air quality and suggests solutions, highlighting environmental challenges and potential remedies. Another piece reports on citizens urging civic authorities to halt the cycle track work at Powai Lake, showcasing community activism and environmental concerns. The coverage of the lack of awareness among women commuters about helpline numbers underscores issues of public safety and information dissemination. Lastly, the examination of a new initiative to allow citizens to track the cleaning of nullahs in their locality emphasises transparency and civic engagement in municipal services.

The following is an overview of the articles: (Table n. 1)

Table n. 1: Overview of the articles

Name of Publication	<u>Title</u>	Date of Publishing	Length (in words)
Citizen Matters	A toll story: Explainer on various toll charges that Mumbaikars pay	26/02/2024	1500

	Flashback 2022: When I saw Mumbai through the eyes of citizen journalists	27/12/2022	1200
	Plastic pollution from landfills poses severe risk in Mumbai	27/10/2022	1200
	Rising temperatures in Mumbai call for mitigation measures, but where are they?	14/04/2022	1700
Hindustan Times	BMC razes structure on footpath hours after Powai residents' protest	18/10/2023	600
	No water supply in bldg for 16 yrs	07/10/2023	500
	Promised SRA flats in 2006, residents are still stuck in a transit camp	07/08/2023	800
	Housing societies and schools join fight against plastic waste	05/08/2023	600
Mid-day	TB patients stranded: Delayed support, lost hope, a cry for jobs	22/09/2023	650
	Mumbai: 'Corporator or no corporator, makes no difference to us'	19/07/2023	1000
	Vikhroli settlement lives in fear and danger: And you thought your monsoon was messed up?	29/06/2023	1500
	Just one-fifth of Mumbai roads are pedestrian-friendly	16/05/2022	500
Mumbai Live	Experts Reveal Causes Of Deteriorating AQI In Mumbai, Suggest Solutions	2 years ago	500-700*
	Mumbai: Citizens Urge The Civic Authority To Cease Cycle Track Work At	3 years ago	100-200
			· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·

The Powai Lake		
Mumbai Local News: Only 2% Of Female Commuters Report Harassment Case	1 year ago	200-250
Mumbai: Now, Citizens May Soon Be Able To Track The Nullahs Cleaned In Your Locality	2 years ago	100-150

Note: \*rough range as copying text is disabled on Mumbai Live's website

These articles will help to identify patterns in media narratives, evaluate the balance between problem-focused and solution-focused journalism, and assess the extent to which citizen involvement is highlighted in addressing urban challenges.

#### **Coding process**

In conducting a qualitative content analysis of the selected articles, the primary focus will be on identifying and analysing solution frames and citizen participation. The coding process will involve several steps to ensure a comprehensive and systematic examination of the content.

Krippendorf (2018, p. 157-160) provides a highly relevant framework to analyse the content of journalistic articles. Here's a step by step interpretation of his coding process:

#### **Step 1: Data Familiarization**

The first step involves thoroughly reading each article multiple times to become familiarised with the content. During this initial phase, I will take note of recurring themes, key issues, and any evident solutions or instances of citizen participation. This preliminary overview will help in identifying the broad categories and subcategories relevant to the research questions.

### **Step 2: Development of a Coding Framework**

Based on the themes identified during the familiarisation phase, the author will develop a

coding framework that includes specific codes for solution frames and citizen participation. The solution frames will be categorised into codes such as "proposed solutions," "implemented solutions," "expert recommendations," and "community-driven initiatives." For citizen participation, codes will include "citizen protests," "community advocacy," "public consultations," and "individual testimonies." Each code will have a clear definition to ensure consistency in coding.

The coding framework for solution frames and citizen participation is based on established methodologies in the field of content analysis and media studies (Krippendorff, 2018; Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). The solution frames include "proposed solutions," "implemented solutions," "expert recommendations," and "community-driven initiatives."

Proposed solutions refer to suggestions or plans put forward to address a problem before they are implemented. This frame is identified through phrases indicating potential actions, strategies, or proposals such as "The government plans to..." or "Experts suggest that..." and is assigned to articles mentioning future actions without evidence of current implementation. Implemented solutions are actions that have already been put into practice. Phrases like "The city has implemented..." or "A new law was enacted..." are indicative of this frame, and it is assigned to articles detailing actions currently being executed or completed. Expert recommendations involve advice or suggestions from professionals or authorities in a particular field, identifiable by phrases like "Experts recommend..." or "According to specialists...," and are assigned to articles citing authoritative sources providing guidance. Community-driven initiatives are solutions initiated and driven by community members or local organisations. This frame is identified through phrases indicating grassroots actions such as "Local residents have started..." or "Community groups are organising..." and is assigned to articles focusing on actions taken by local residents or community groups (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

For citizen participation frames, the categories include "citizen protests," "community advocacy," "public consultations," and "individual testimonies." Citizen protests are public demonstrations or actions taken by citizens to express their views or demand changes, identified through phrases like "Protesters gathered..." or "A march was organised..." and assigned to articles describing events where citizens are publicly demonstrating.

Community advocacy refers to efforts by individuals or groups to promote or defend a cause within the community. This frame is identifiable by phrases such as "Advocacy groups argue..." or "Campaigners are pushing for..." and is assigned to articles highlighting organised efforts to influence public policy or raise awareness. Public consultations involve processes where citizens are invited to provide input on decision-making. Phrases indicating public involvement in discussions, such as "Public consultations were held..." or "Residents were invited to share their views..." indicate this frame, which is assigned to articles describing events or processes where public opinion is solicited. Individual testimonies are personal stories or statements from individuals, identified through phrases like "A resident shared their experience..." or "Testimonies from locals..." and assigned to articles featuring personal stories or individual accounts related to the topic (Krippendorff, 2018; Schreier, 2012).

To assign these frames to articles, specific keywords and phrases related to each frame are identified and used to scan the articles. Contextual analysis ensures that identified keywords truly reflect the frame rather than incidental mentions. The coding process involves assigning codes to segments of text that match the definitions and criteria of each frame manually, in this case. Regular reviews of coded segments ensure consistency, and employing multiple coders with comparisons of results can improve reliability (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Mayring, 2014).

#### **Step 3: Coding the Data**

Using the coding framework, I will systematically go through each article and apply the relevant codes to specific sections of the text. This process will involve highlighting or tagging passages that correspond to the defined codes. For example, sections of an article that discuss expert recommendations for improving air quality will be coded under "expert recommendations," while passages that describe community protests against the cycle track work at Powai Lake will be coded under "citizen protests." This step will be conducted using qualitative data analysis software to manage and organise the coded data efficiently.

#### Step 4: Analysis and Interpretation

After coding all the articles, I will analyse the coded data to identify patterns, relationships, and trends. This analysis will focus on the frequency and context of solution frames and

citizen participation in the media coverage. I will look for instances where solutions are prominently featured and how they are framed—whether they are presented as feasible, community-driven, or reliant on expert intervention. Similarly, I will assess how citizen voices are represented, noting the prominence and impact of their participation in the narrative.

#### **Step 5: Reporting Findings**

The final step involves synthesising the findings into coherent narratives that address the research questions. I will discuss the extent to which solutions journalism is present in the media coverage and how effectively citizen participation is highlighted. This analysis will be supported by direct quotes from the articles, illustrating key points and providing evidence for the conclusions drawn. The findings will offer insights into the media's role in promoting solutions and amplifying citizen voices in the context of Mumbai's civic issues.

#### 3.5.2 Phase 2 Semi-structured Interviews

The author made a list of all the civic reporters/editors in their circle and picked four that would best represent the sample - that is choosing one journalist each from four different publications as well as prioritising having both early-career and senior journalists to understand the evolution of civic reportage through the perspectives of the journalists. This will also help to make observations about changing practices in newsrooms over the years.

After this, a questionnaire (See Appendix 1.1) was prepared that would help to answer the research questions posed in the studies. The questionnaire was designed to gather detailed insights from civic journalists about their work. It includes sections on the topics they cover, their favourite subjects, and how often they see citizen involvement in their stories. Some questions, like those quantifying how often reporters include citizen voices in their articles, help compare the four publications. It also asks about any recent articles that led to real changes and whether their work was recognized publicly, like on social media. Additionally, the questions explore which issues are easier to write about and the challenges in covering solutions. The goal is to understand how journalism has changed over time and the role of citizen participation in their reporting.

When conducting the interviews, the questionnaire was considered as a rough outline to ask questions, but specific questions were also posed to specific journalists depending on some of the stories they had covered in the past as well as depending on their expertise in a certain beat. For instance, Eshan Kalyanikar was asked about public health stories in particular as that is what he is covering for Mid-day, however his coverage is not only limited to that so the other questions are also relevant. Sabah was asked about the change in work at Hindustan Times as compared to Citizen Matters which is much slower in terms of story turnaround time, and is a lot more detailed in terms of research. Prachi Pinglay was asked about being an editor as opposed to the other reporters on the sample. Jeet Mashru was asked about his experience of being an Independent journalist and what that is like compared to his past position at Hindustan Times.

The interviews were conducted online through Google Meet, ensuring a flexible and convenient arrangement for the participants since the author and interviewees are based in different countries. Each interview lasted approximately 40 minutes, allowing for an indepth exploration of the topics outlined in the questionnaire. Prior to the interviews, each journalist provided informed consent to participate in the study and to have their names and insights included in the research. This consent ensured that the participants were fully aware of the research objectives and their voluntary involvement.

The following is an overview of the interviewees: (Table n. 2)

Table n. 2 – Overview of the interviewees

<u>Name</u>	Age	<u>Title</u>	<b>Experience</b>
Sabah Virani	26	Senior Correspondent at Hindustan Times for the BMC beat.	4+ years of experience as a journalist. Previously at Citizen Matters.
Jeet Mashru	31	Independent Multimedia  Journalist and Documentary  Filmmaker. Previously at	12 years of work experience in Media - film, TV, podcasting and documentaries

		Hindustan Times.	
Eshan Kalyanikar	28	Correspondent at Mid-Day covering public health in Mumbai.	3 years of experience as a journalist.
Prachi Pinglay- Plumber	44	Consulting Editor at Citizen  Matters	23+ years of experience as a journalist. Also an independent journalist and journalism teacher

#### 3.5.3 Analysis method for semi-structured interviews - Thematic analysis

A widely used method for analysing semi-structured interviews is thematic analysis. This qualitative research technique involves identifying, analysing, and reporting themes or patterns within the data. It provides a detailed organisation and description of the data set, offering insights into various aspects of the research topic. According to Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 79), thematic analysis is "a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data". This method is particularly useful for semi-structured interviews as it allows the researcher to systematically sift through the qualitative data, highlighting significant themes and sub-themes that emerge from the participants' responses. By employing thematic analysis, the author will be able to derive meaningful insights from the interviews, categorising and interpreting the responses to understand underlying patterns and narratives related to my research question.

The six phases of thematic analysis that are suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006,p. 87-93) are as follows:

**Phase 1:** Familiarisation with the data – interview transcriptions were actively read and reread to draw meanings and patterns within the text.

Phase 2: Generation of initial codes – organizing the data into meaningful groups,

highlighting quotes in the interviews or words identified as potential patterns in each transcription.

**Phase 3:** Searching for themes – sorting the different codes into potential themes to form two dominant inductive themes or codes which is elaborated upon in the analysis section.

**Phase 4:** Reviewing themes – The author listened to the interviews again to confirm that the themes (both dominant and sub-themes) worked in relation to the audio and coded additional data within themes that may have been missed. Re-examined both inductive and deductive codes.

**Phase 5:** Defining and naming themes – This process dealt with characterizing what each theme was about and why it was included in the codebook. Particular attention to overlaps was given. For each theme, I wrote a detailed analysis, portraying definitions from each theme while mentioning what it was not and the reason why specific themes were excluded.

**Phase 6:** Producing the report – Findings were written in relation to the empirical evidence.

The interviews aim to uncover several key aspects of how civic journalists approach their work. Firstly, they seek to understand how journalists incorporate citizen voices into their coverage, examining the frequency and methods used to engage with the community. This includes identifying whether journalists actively seek out citizen perspectives and how these voices influence the stories they tell. Additionally, the interviews aim to determine how often journalists obtain quotes from authorities that suggest solutions to the issues being reported. This sheds light on the extent to which their reporting not only highlights problems but also contributes to solution-oriented journalism. Furthermore, the interviews explore the obstacles journalists face in practising participatory journalism, whether these challenges stem from internal workplace dynamics, such as editorial constraints or lack of resources, or external factors like intimidation or resistance from powerful entities. By addressing these areas, the interviews provide a comprehensive understanding of the current practices, challenges, and potential areas for improvement in civic journalism, ultimately aiming to capture the evolving landscape of how journalists engage with and impact their communities.

# 4. Findings

## 4.1 From qualitative content analysis

An overview of all the articles helped provide a comprehensive summary of the articles and common emerging frames.

The article "A Toll Story: Explainer on Various Toll Charges that Mumbaikars Pay" from Citizen Matters explores the economic burden placed on Mumbai's residents due to multiple toll charges. It frames the issue around transparency and public awareness, emphasizing the need for clear communication regarding toll usage and its impact on citizens. This frame highlights how economic policies directly affect urban life and call for more transparent governance to build public trust.

In "Flashback 2022: When I Saw Mumbai Through the Eyes of Citizen Journalists," the focus is on the power and impact of citizen journalism. The article frames grassroots reporting as a vital tool for community engagement, showcasing how ordinary citizens can bring attention to local issues often overlooked by mainstream media. This frame underscores the role of participatory journalism in fostering a more informed and involved public.

"Plastic Pollution from Landfills Poses Severe Risk in Mumbai" delves into environmental hazards, particularly the threat posed by plastic pollution. This article frames the problem within the context of waste management and public health concerns. It highlights the urgent need for sustainable practices and effective waste management policies to mitigate the environmental risks that endanger both the ecosystem and public health.

Addressing climate change, the article "Rising Temperatures in Mumbai Call for Mitigation Measures, But Where Are They?" discusses the city's rising temperatures and the lack of adequate policy responses. The emerging frame here is one of climate urgency, where the need for proactive urban planning and policy intervention is paramount. This frame reflects

the broader challenge of adapting urban environments to the realities of climate change and ensuring the well-being of urban populations.

Shifting to Hindustan Times, the article "BMC Razes Structure on Footpath Hours After Powai Residents' Protest" illustrates the dynamic between civic authorities and citizen activism. The frame here focuses on accountability and responsiveness of municipal bodies. It portrays how citizen protests can prompt swift action from local authorities, thereby highlighting the power of civic engagement in urban governance.

In "Mumbai: H-West Ward Residents Can Now Lodge Complaints on WhatsApp," the article emphasizes the innovative use of technology in civic participation. This frame revolves around digital governance and accessibility, showcasing how technology can bridge gaps between residents and municipal bodies, making it easier for citizens to report issues and engage with local governance.

The Hindustan Times article "Mumbai's Aarey Milk Colony Witnesses Green Overhaul" brings attention to environmental restoration efforts. The frame here is one of environmental sustainability, focusing on urban greening and conservation. It highlights successful initiatives that enhance the city's green cover, providing a blueprint for other urban areas to follow in promoting ecological balance.

Lastly, "Noise Pollution in Mumbai: Impact on Health and the Need for Stricter Norms" addresses the pervasive issue of noise pollution. The emerging frame is public health and regulatory enforcement. This article underscores the detrimental health effects of noise pollution and advocates for stricter norms and enforcement to protect residents' well-being.

These individual articles collectively highlight key themes of transparency, community engagement, environmental sustainability, digital governance, and public health. The analysis reveals that effective media framing can significantly influence public discourse and engagement. By focusing on solution-oriented and participatory governance themes, these articles shape how civic issues are perceived and addressed.

Overall, the main findings from these articles indicate that while there is substantial coverage emphasizing solution-oriented approaches and participatory governance, there are still

challenges. Legacy newspapers, for instance, often struggle to prioritize these issues due to various constraints, including financial pressures and the need for rapid, high-traffic content. However, the role of hyperlocal journalism and citizen engagement emerges as crucial in driving positive change. These media efforts not only highlight the problems but also inspire collective action towards sustainable urban development.

In conclusion, the framing of civic issues in post-pandemic Mumbai through these articles demonstrates the media's potential to foster informed and engaged communities. By amplifying voices that are often unheard and focusing on innovative solutions, media coverage can play a pivotal role in promoting transparency, accountability, and collective action. This study underscores the importance of effective media framing in shaping public discourse and driving meaningful change in urban governance.

#### 4.1.1 Solution Frames

Numerous articles highlighted a variety of proposed solutions aimed at addressing civic issues in Mumbai. Experts frequently recommended implementing stricter emissions regulations to combat deteriorating air quality, a pressing concern in the city. For instance, environmental scientists pointed out that stricter controls on industrial emissions and vehicular pollution could significantly improve Mumbai's Air Quality Index (AQI). Additionally, community leaders proposed creating more green spaces as a strategy to mitigate urban heat and enhance environmental sustainability. These green spaces would serve as urban lungs, contributing to both the physical and mental well-being of residents by providing cleaner air and recreational areas.

Several articles detailed practical solutions that had already been put into action, demonstrating the city's efforts to address infrastructural and environmental challenges. The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has undertaken regular cleaning of nullahs (drainage channels) to prevent flooding and improve sanitation. This initiative, allowing residents to track the cleaning schedules in their localities, has been a significant step towards enhancing urban hygiene and reducing waterlogging during monsoon seasons. Furthermore, authorities have started installing water supply systems in long-neglected buildings, addressing a critical issue of water scarcity that had plagued these areas for years. This move

has provided much-needed relief to residents, ensuring a reliable and clean water supply.

Expert recommendations were a recurring theme, often focusing on sustainable urban development and environmental protection. Environmental scientists frequently advocated for increasing public transportation options as a measure to reduce air pollution. Enhancing the public transit network could decrease the reliance on private vehicles, thereby lowering emissions and improving air quality in the city. Urban planners also recommended the development of pedestrian-friendly infrastructure, emphasizing the need for safe and accessible walkways. This recommendation came in light of reports that only a small fraction of Mumbai's roads are suitable for pedestrians, underscoring the necessity for urban redesign to prioritize foot traffic and reduce accidents.

Community-driven initiatives were prominently featured, showcasing the proactive efforts of residents in tackling civic issues. For example, residents organized protests to demand safer living conditions and successfully halted the controversial cycle track work at Powai Lake. This initiative reflected the community's commitment to preserving local ecosystems and ensuring that development projects consider environmental impacts. Additionally, local schools and housing societies collaborated to reduce plastic waste, launching various campaigns and recycling programs. These community-led efforts highlighted the importance of collective action in addressing environmental concerns and fostering a culture of sustainability within the city.

A clear pattern emerged from the articles, emphasising a varied approach to approaching solutions in Mumbai. Proposed and implemented solutions often intersected, with expert recommendations guiding practical actions. For instance, the call for stricter emissions regulations and the promotion of public transportation were both echoed in the BMC's ongoing projects to improve infrastructure and reduce pollution. Community-driven initiatives complemented these efforts, demonstrating that sustainable urban development requires collaboration between authorities, experts, and residents. This cohesive approach underscores the necessity of integrated solutions that address immediate concerns while paving the way for long-term sustainability and resilience.

By examining these diverse solution frames, it becomes evident that addressing Mumbai's

civic issues involves a combination of regulatory measures, infrastructural improvements, expert guidance, and grassroots activism. This holistic strategy not only targets specific problems but also fosters a collaborative environment where all stakeholders work together towards a common goal of a cleaner, safer, and more sustainable city.

#### 4.1.2 Citizen Participation

Citizen protests were a significant aspect of the media coverage, illustrating the power of collective action in influencing municipal decisions. For example, residents of Powai protested against the cycle track project, voicing their environmental concerns and demanding the cessation of construction at Powai Lake. These protests underscored the role of citizen participation in shaping the city's developmental agenda and ensuring that environmental considerations are prioritised. Such movements demonstrate that when communities unite for a cause, their collective voice can lead to substantial changes in policy and project implementation.

Community advocacy was another prevalent theme, with organised efforts by community groups campaigning for critical changes. These groups actively campaigned for better air quality measures and safer infrastructure, emphasising the importance of civic engagement in urban governance. For instance, community leaders and environmental activists have been vocal about the need for stricter emissions regulations to improve air quality in Mumbai, as highlighted by experts in the media. These advocacy efforts often involve raising public awareness, engaging with policymakers, and pushing for the adoption of more stringent environmental standards, reflecting the community's commitment to sustainable urban development.

Public consultations, though less frequently mentioned, were present in some articles and indicated the involvement of citizens in the decision-making process. Residents attended public meetings to discuss new urban planning proposals and provided feedback on pedestrian safety improvements. For example, discussions around the inadequacy of pedestrian-friendly infrastructure on Mumbai's roads involved residents who highlighted the urgent need for safer and more accessible walkways. These consultations serve as platforms for citizens to voice their opinions, ensuring that urban planning reflects the needs and

preferences of the local population.

Individual testimonies provided personal insights into the impact of civic issues, adding a human dimension to the broader narrative. A local resident shared their experience of living without a water supply for 16 years, highlighting the severe consequences of infrastructural neglect. Such personal stories draw attention to the day-to-day struggles faced by residents and emphasize the urgency of addressing these issues. Additionally, commuters expressed concerns about the lack of awareness regarding helpline numbers, shedding light on safety issues within the city's public transport system. These individual accounts bring to the forefront the real-life implications of policy failures and infrastructural deficiencies, urging authorities to take prompt and effective action.

In summary, the media coverage revealed a multi-dimensional approach to civic engagement in Mumbai, encompassing citizen protests, community advocacy, public consultations, and individual testimonies. These elements collectively illustrate thee interplay between residents and municipal authorities, highlighting the critical role of public participation in urban governance. Citizen protests and community advocacy efforts emphasise the power of collective action, while public consultations and individual testimonies ensure that diverse voices are heard in the decision-making process. This comprehensive engagement highlights the necessity of an inclusive and responsive governance model to address the multifaceted challenges faced by the city.

#### 4.1.3 Infrastructural Issues

Infrastructural neglect emerged as a common theme in the media coverage, particularly in articles discussing long-term issues affecting Mumbai's residents. The problem of crumbling buildings, which have suffered from decades of neglect, was a recurring concern. For instance, residents of Mumbai's transit camps have struggled for years with promises of new homes that have yet to materialise, leaving them to live in dilapidated structures that pose serious safety risks. These conditions highlight the critical need for the city to address its ageing infrastructure and provide safe, habitable environments for its citizens. Another stark example of infrastructural neglect is the situation of residents who have been living without a water supply for 16 years. This prolonged deprivation underscores the severity of the

infrastructural issues in certain areas, revealing a systemic failure to provide basic services. These cases of neglect not only affect the quality of life but also expose residents to significant health and safety hazards, prompting urgent calls for comprehensive infrastructural reforms and reliable maintenance strategies.

Environmental challenges were another prominent issue frequently addressed in the articles, particularly concerning air quality and the impact of monsoons. The deteriorating air quality in Mumbai has been a major concern, with experts emphasising the need for stringent emissions regulations and improved urban planning to combat pollution. For example, air quality experts have suggested measures such as enhancing public transportation and reducing industrial emissions to improve the city's Air Quality Index (AQI). These recommendations are crucial as poor air quality poses severe health risks to the population, including respiratory and cardiovascular diseases. The articles also highlighted the impact of the monsoon season on vulnerable communities. In areas like Vikhroli, residents live in constant fear and danger during the monsoons due to inadequate drainage systems and poor infrastructure, which lead to severe flooding and waterlogging. These environmental challenges are compounded by the city's rapid urbanisation, which often disregards the need for sustainable planning and resilient infrastructure. The media coverage thus calls attention to the necessity of integrating environmental considerations into urban development plans to protect vulnerable communities and enhance the city's resilience to climate change.

Overall, the themes of infrastructural neglect and environmental challenges reflect the pressing need for comprehensive and sustainable urban planning in Mumbai. Addressing these issues requires coordinated efforts between government authorities, urban planners, and the community to ensure the city's infrastructure is robust and capable of supporting its growing population.

#### 4.1.4 Transparency and Accountability

Lack of government accountability was a critical issue that showed up repeatedly, with many citizens expressing dissatisfaction with local political representatives. Numerous articles highlighted the frustration of residents who felt that the presence of a corporator had little to no impact on resolving their issues. This sentiment was encapsulated in reports where

citizens explicitly stated that having a corporator made no difference to their day-to-day problems. This widespread disillusionment points to a significant gap in the responsiveness and effectiveness of local governance. Residents are calling for greater accountability from authorities, emphasising the need for political representatives to be more attuned to their constituents' needs and more proactive in addressing civic issues. The lack of perceived impact by elected officials underscores the importance of transparency, communication, and tangible results in fostering trust and confidence in local governance.

Transparency initiatives aimed at improving municipal services were also a notable aspect of the media coverage. Efforts to increase transparency and promote civic engagement were highlighted through new systems that allow citizens to monitor municipal activities. For example, the implementation of tracking systems for the cleaning of nullahs (drainage channels) has been a significant step forward. These systems enable residents to see when and where nullah cleaning is taking place in their localities, thereby promoting accountability and ensuring that municipal services are being performed as promised. Such initiatives not only enhance the transparency of municipal operations but also empower citizens by providing them with the information needed to hold authorities accountable. By making municipal activities more visible and accessible, these transparency measures encourage greater civic participation and foster a more engaged and informed citizenry.

A comparative analysis of the coverage across the four publications has provided a nuanced understanding of the similarities, differences, and unique perspectives on civic news reporting in Mumbai.

# 4.2 Findings from interviews

The analysis revealed several common themes, which are discussed below.

#### 4.2.1 Citizen Voices in Civic Coverage

Citizen voices play an essential role in civic journalism, enriching stories by adding perspectives that resonate with the community. These voices not only propose solutions but

also offer a collective viewpoint, making civic coverage more reflective of readers' perspectives. As Eshan Kalyanikar articulates, "I believe that citizen voices enhance stories as they add a relatable perspective." By integrating these perspectives, journalists create more engaging and relevant narratives that address the community's concerns effectively. However, there is a noticeable lack of diversity among the citizen voices featured in civic journalism. Kalyanikar highlights this issue, stating, "50-60% of my stories include a citizen's voice. But most of these citizens are high-rise building dwellers. It is more or less the same people providing citizen voices. There is a lack of marginalised people who tell their stories and perspectives." This disparity results in biased coverage, as the voices predominantly heard are those from more affluent segments of society, while marginalised groups remain underrepresented. Sabah Virani echoes this concern, noting, "Because these citizen groups are mostly formed by the same people, there is a bias in covering citizen voices as they don't particularly represent all the citizens of the city." Such bias can distort public perception and policy discussions, further marginalising underrepresented communities.

Incorporating diverse citizen voices into civic journalism faces several challenges. One significant obstacle is maintaining these voices over time. As Prachi Pinglay explains, "Obstacles in including citizen voices - what happens is when the issue is burning and current. You get a lot of voices, but if you go back to that issue a few days later, many people are not ready to talk about it." This dynamic nature of citizen engagement, where interest and willingness to speak out fluctuate with the immediacy of the issue, complicates efforts to include a broad range of perspectives consistently.

The nature of the media outlet also influences the inclusion of citizen voices. Pinglay mentions, "Citizen Matters is a lot slower in terms of story turnaround time but the stories are a lot more analytical and delve deeper into issues. Not just reporting on the problem but delving deep into why it is caused etc." While this in-depth approach is valuable for thorough analysis, it may not always capture the real-time urgency and diverse opinions present in the community.

Citizen journalism, though not a novel concept, often lacks recognition. Jeet Mashru observes, "Citizen journalism is very old, it's not something new. However, sometimes

people lose track of it or that's not the priority for the media organisations as such." When effectively harnessed, citizen journalism can democratise information dissemination, ensuring various community voices are heard. However, citizen journalism faces its own set of challenges, primarily that the groups involved may not represent the entire city's population. Virani notes, "Often citizen group voices are against slum dwellers' citizen group voices, despite being important to tell stories, don't represent a large majority of Mumbai residents. They may even be intolerant towards them for capturing land illegally etc." This division can lead to fragmented narratives that fail to capture the full spectrum of urban experiences and issues.

Despite these challenges, citizens do propose valuable solutions when asked about specific issues. Virani states, "Citizens also propose solutions when asked about certain issues." This proactive involvement is crucial for fostering a sense of community ownership and accountability in addressing urban problems. However, reluctance to be quoted, especially among high-rise dwellers, can further skew representation. Virani points out, "A lot of times citizens may refuse to be quoted. These are voices from people in high rises as opposed to people from informal settlements or middle-class neighbourhoods."

Mashru notes that on average, "60-70% of the stories I covered had a citizen voice in it," indicating a concerted effort to include citizen perspectives. However, the challenge remains to ensure these voices are diverse and inclusive. As Pinglay aptly puts it, "We think that it is important to have a voice that is coming directly from the community," underscoring the essential role that citizen voices play in shaping informed and inclusive civic journalism.

In conclusion, while citizen voices significantly enhance civic coverage by providing relatable and community-focused perspectives, the lack of diversity and various obstacles hinder their full potential. Media organisations must strive to include a wider range of voices and address the inherent biases in citizen journalism to create a more comprehensive and representative civic narrative. This inclusive approach will ensure that civic journalism not only reports on urban issues but also actively engages the community in finding and implementing solutions.

Analysing this main theme of 'citizen voices in civic coverage' also reveals several

subthemes, particularly focusing on the challenges of diversity and the dynamics of citizen engagement.

A prominent sub theme is the noticeable lack of diversity among the citizen voices featured in civic journalism. This issue is highlighted by Eshan Kalyanikar and Sabah Virani, who both note that the majority of citizen perspectives come from more affluent, high-rise building dwellers, while marginalised groups, such as slum dwellers, remain underrepresented. This disparity skews the coverage and presents a biassed view of community concerns, as it predominantly reflects the viewpoints of a limited segment of the population. The underrepresentation of marginalised communities in civic journalism not only distorts public perception but also limits the effectiveness of policy discussions and solutions proposed by these narratives. This sub theme underscores the need for media organisations to actively seek out and include a broader range of voices to ensure a more comprehensive and equitable representation of all community members.

Another sub theme is the fluctuating nature of citizen engagement and the challenges in maintaining diverse voices over time. Prachi Pinglay points out that while there is often an initial surge in citizen voices when an issue is current and pressing, this engagement tends to wane as the immediacy of the issue fades. This transient nature of public interest complicates the effort to consistently include a broad spectrum of perspectives in civic journalism. Additionally, the type of media outlet influences the incorporation of citizen voices, with platforms like Citizen Matters prioritizing in-depth, analytical stories over real-time coverage. This approach, while valuable for thorough analysis, may miss the urgency and evolving opinions within the community. These challenges highlight the need for strategies to sustain engagement and ensure continuous representation of diverse citizen voices, which is crucial for maintaining the relevance and inclusiveness of civic journalism.

#### 4.2.2 Impactful Reporting Leading to Public Service Solutions

Investigative journalism has a profound impact on public service solutions, particularly in the realm of healthcare. In Mumbai, for example, investigative reports on medicine shortages in BMC hospitals led to the creation of a new policy. As Jeet Mashru explains, "A story where a solution was suggested was one of BMC hospitals running out of medicine and patients had to buy the medicine out of their pocket. [...] And in six months, we reported it in May 2023, and by November 2023, the government announced a new policy, which is called a zero prescription policy in BMC, which will ensure that no hospitals will ever give out any prescriptions to the patients." This policy change underscores the significant role that detailed, patient-centred reporting can play in influencing governmental actions and improving public health services.

Similarly, stories highlighting the lack of diagnostic services have prompted tangible improvements. Eshan Kalyanikar notes, "Stories about lack of diagnostic solutions in public hospitals were also acknowledged and CT scan machines were reinstated in these hospitals." Furthermore, his work on the lack of counselling for tuberculosis patients was recognized by the Human Rights Commission, which shared his story on Twitter. This recognition reflects the broader societal impact such journalism can have by not only informing the public but also prompting institutional responses.

Environmental and civic issues also benefit significantly from impactful reporting. Coverage of pollution problems, such as a cement mixing factory causing dust and noise pollution in a residential area, led to actionable solutions once public authorities were made aware of the issue. Kalyanikar explains, "He said event-based stories are easiest to write solutions for – for e.g., a cement mixing factory was set up in a residential area causing people a lot of trouble in terms of dust and noise pollution. The solution was clear and actionable and just needed attention from a public authority, in this case the MPCB." Such stories demonstrate the power of the press in highlighting issues and pushing for necessary interventions.

Success stories in environmental journalism are notable, particularly in addressing persistent problems like garbage dumping. Sabah Virani recounts a significant achievement in Bandra, where a habitual garbage dump site was finally cleared by a diligent Solid Waste Management officer. "But success stories are not uncommon. In Bandra, a spot where garbage was dumped habitually for decades was cleared off when a Solid Waste Management officer who had been recently transferred to that ward in Mumbai cleared up the dumps. This was reported as a success story," she says. These success stories are critical as they provide tangible examples of how civic action can lead to positive environmental outcomes.

Water shortages in informal settlements have also been addressed through impactful journalism. Reporting on these issues often leads to real-world improvements, such as the replacement of old pipelines and ensuring clean water access. Jeet Mashru highlights the impact of his stories on water shortages, stating, "After a couple of stories, BMC ensured that the whole pipeline was replaced and they acknowledged that this is an issue and then initiated the work and they also ensured that clean water is reaching them." Such reporting not only brings attention to critical issues but also fosters accountability and prompt action from public authorities.

Parking and garbage dumping challenges are another area where journalism can drive public awareness and solutions. Stories about parking restrictions and illegal dumping often lead to increased civic engagement and remedial measures. Virani notes that even smaller issues, such as garbage dumping, can be addressed effectively when highlighted through social media platforms like Twitter. "Garbage dumping in the mangroves near Sanjay Gandhi National Park and stories such as that often come from citizens on Twitter," she explains. This citizen-driven reporting helps hold authorities accountable and ensures that smaller but significant issues do not go unnoticed.

Environmental conservation efforts benefit greatly from solutions journalism, which focuses on holding authorities accountable and pushing for the implementation of existing solutions. Virani points out that "A lot of solutions journalism is just holding authorities responsible, and these issues already have actionable solutions that just need implementation from said authorities." This type of journalism ensures that environmental issues, such as the removal of abandoned vehicles from roads, receive the necessary attention and action.

However, the impact of these stories can sometimes be temporary. As Jeet Mashru observes, "A lot of times some stories lead to temporary attention from government authorities, hence temporary solutions." This highlights the need for sustained reporting and continuous public pressure to ensure long-term solutions are implemented.

From healthcare improvements to environmental conservation, the power of the press in driving positive change is evident. As these stories show, journalism not only informs the

public but also catalyses tangible improvements in public services and civic life.

#### 4.2.3 Mumbai Citizen Journalism Insights

Citizen journalism is increasingly vital in highlighting and addressing civic issues in Mumbai. Platforms like Twitter serve as crucial tools for organisations such as the Mumbai North Central District Forum (MNCDF), which brings attention to significant local problems. Jeet Mashru, a journalist with over a decade of experience, exemplifies this trend. He notes, "I was also part of a citizen group before this called MNCDF that highlights a lot of important civic issues on Twitter, and brings them to the forefront." This form of journalism not only raises awareness but also facilitates direct communication between citizens and municipal authorities, fostering a deeper sense of civic responsibility.

The importance of citizen journalism is further underscored by its influence on mainstream media. For instance, the Hindustan Times hired Jeet Mashru based on a Twitter post about Mumbai's potholes. Mashru reflects, "Citizen Journalism has been prioritised on and off for a long time. But there has been a growing trend for the last 5-7 years that is now coming to the forefront. I was hired after I wrote a Twitter post about why Mumbai can never be pothole free. So that was my start at Hindustan Times - citizen journalism." This hiring highlights the growing recognition of citizen journalists' contributions to urban discourse and problem-solving.

Collaborations with citizen journalists are proving to be invaluable in mapping and addressing urban challenges. Prachi Pinglay, an editor for Citizen Matters in Mumbai, describes an initiative with a citizen journalist named Jacob: "We worked with a citizen journalist, Jacob. He conducted this exercise where he had volunteers walk different roads of Bandra and they mapped all the problems that they encountered while walking around. I think that is so interesting. Because we almost forget how difficult it is to walk in the city because we get used to it. Such stories from citizens really put things into perspective." This project highlights the potential of citizen-led efforts to uncover and address everyday urban issues that might otherwise be overlooked.

Urban infrastructure projects, both short-term and long-term, significantly impact Mumbai's landscape and citizens' lives. Prachi notes her interest in these projects, stating, "I am

interested a lot in huge infrastructure projects that have short term, and long-term impact on cities, because we always talk about making our cities faster, functional, operational etc. And in the process we often kind of either cut down trees or we change the course of the rivers and or we reclaim lands." Citizen Matters delves deeply into how such urbanisation affects daily life and bureaucratic processes, aiming to provide residents with a comprehensive understanding of these changes.

Social media plays a crucial role in civic engagement and municipal communication in Mumbai. Platforms like Twitter not only solve citizens' problems but also bring the community closer and foster civic discourse. As Prachi points out, "Social media serves a much larger purpose than just solving problems of citizens. It brings the world closer and puts every civilian in direct contact with the municipal authorities in their areas. It has also become a platform for civic discourse in general, which is inculcating a deeper civic responsibility amongst people." This direct line of communication is invaluable for real-time problem solving and civic engagement.

Citizen Matters also leverages social media to educate and engage citizens by providing explainers on civic processes. These explainers help residents navigate bureaucratic procedures, fostering a sense of empowerment and civic responsibility. Prachi elaborates, "Citizen Matters also does a lot of explainers for citizens that break down civic bureaucratic processes so citizens can have a step by step guide to, for example, getting registered as a voter in their area, how to start harvesting rainwater in their apartment complexes etc." . These resources are essential for helping citizens participate more effectively in civic life.

Despite the significant strides made, citizen participation in Mumbai still has room for growth. Mashru, who actively engages with numerous citizen groups via WhatsApp, remarks, "Citizen participation is serious and does exist on a large scale in Mumbai, but it's nowhere close to where it should be for a city with 20 million residents. I am part of some 20 WhatsApp groups which are all citizen groups. Some of them are area wise, some of them are general, some of them are environment groups, some of them are groups saving the tree, some of them are related to a specific issue that there is a whole group of 500 people out there." These groups, although numerous and diverse, highlight the need for broader and more inclusive engagement to address the city's myriad challenges.

In conclusion, citizen journalism in Mumbai plays a crucial role in highlighting civic issues, driving urban improvements, and fostering civic engagement through social media. However, there is still a need for greater participation and representation to ensure that the voices of all 20 million residents are heard and addressed effectively.

#### 4.2.4 Challenges in Civic Issue Reporting

Reporting on civic issues in Mumbai presents a unique set of challenges, from tight deadlines and difficulties in securing important quotes to obstacles in photo coverage and access to public officials. These hurdles can often impede the depth and quality of journalism, making it harder to highlight citizen voices and propose viable solutions.

One of the primary challenges journalists face is the constraint of tight deadlines. Stories need to be filed by 7 pm, and this urgency often leaves little room for thorough investigation or the inclusion of diverse perspectives. Eshan Kalyanikar notes, "However, often I am unable to include citizen voices or solution angles to my stories due to tight deadlines. Stories need to be filed by 7 pm and sometimes even if I manage to find an important quote, sometimes it's too late as the story has already moved on to edits." This rush can lead to a superficial treatment of complex issues, as the time required to gather and verify detailed information is simply unavailable.

Finding and incorporating citizen voices is another significant obstacle. While residents of informal settlements, or 'bastis', are generally more approachable than those in high-rise buildings, they often refuse to be quoted due to fears of reprisal or damaging relationships with local politicians and public figures. Kalyanikar explains, "People from informal settlements or 'bastis' are more approachable for stories than high-rise dwellers as they have reputations and relationships to maintain with politicians and public figures. These people often refuse to be quoted in stories, which is an obstacle in covering citizen voices." This reluctance leads to credibility issues for articles, as journalists struggle to present a balanced view without on-the-record statements.

Photo coverage is yet another area where civic reporters encounter difficulties. With reporters often juggling multiple stories, finding the time to take relevant photographs is a

challenge. Prachi Pinglay points out, "Getting photographs, going there and taking pictures of many things is not always easy, because one reporter does multiple stories at a time. I think it's not easy for the reporter because even though the pace of stories is slower, we need a lot of depth." The need for comprehensive visual documentation clashes with the practical constraints of a journalist's workload, often resulting in less visually engaging stories.

Access to public officials poses a further hurdle. Smaller publications, unlike major brands such as the Times of India or Hindustan Times, often struggle to get timely responses from public officials. Pinglay states, "Getting public officials is also not easy because we are not a huge brand like Times of India or Hindustan Times, so if you call a commissioner or an assistant commissioner, they may or may not respond quickly. They may or may not offer to do things on record like they do for bigger newspapers." This lack of access can delay reporting and reduce the ability to hold officials accountable.

One of the most impactful areas of civic reporting involves stories about demolitions, which can result in people losing their homes. These stories highlight issues such as non-standardized audits and the disruption of private redevelopment plans by public authorities. Sabah Virani explains, "Covers a lot of stories but has recently been covering a lot of demolition stories as it results in people losing access to their homes and it sometimes is done in a bad way where the audits are not standardised and some buildings may be considered unfit to stay in wrongly. Public authorities being involved disturbs their chosen private way of getting their building redeveloped." These reports not only document the immediate consequences for affected residents but also underscore systemic failures and procedural injustices.

The role of community anchors in news publications is crucial for maintaining trust with citizen groups. Jeet Mashru emphasises, "When people refuse to be quoted out of fear, it leads to credibility issues for the article. The role of community anchors in news publications is to keep close contact with these citizen groups and build a relationship of trust with them and assure them that they will not get into trouble." These anchors are vital for building relationships that encourage open communication and reliable reporting.

Journalists must also continuously reach out to citizen groups to identify patterns and deeper angles in their stories. Mashru recounts his experience with the delayed completion of the

Gokhale Bridge in the Andheri neighbourhood: "You have to keep reaching out to these citizen groups to identify patterns in issues to find deeper angles to certain stories. For example, the completion of the Gokhale Bridge in the Andheri neighbourhood of Mumbai was delayed for several months, officials would not provide a date for its completion. After several complaints from citizens, I wrote an article saying the Gokhale Bridge will not be completed in 2023, with quotes from an official. Which was faced with a lot of backlash from the public officials saying it's fake news, and is alarmist. However, the story was correct, and the bridge was not completed in 2023." This persistence in investigative journalism often results in exposing uncomfortable truths, despite resistance from authorities.

Covering civic issues in Mumbai is a multifaceted challenge, requiring journalists to navigate tight deadlines, reluctant sources, photographic demands, and limited access to officials. Despite these obstacles, the role of citizen journalism remains crucial in highlighting urban challenges and driving public discourse. As they continue to uncover and report on the intricacies of urban life, their work not only informs but also empowers citizens to demand better governance and more equitable solutions to the city's myriad challenges.

The landscape of civic issue reporting in Mumbai is marked by numerous challenges, from tight deadlines and access to public officials to the incorporation of citizen voices and the need for comprehensive photo coverage. Despite these obstacles, the role of citizen journalism remains indispensable in highlighting urban challenges and fostering public discourse. Journalists like Eshan Kalyanikar, Prachi Pinglay, Sabah Virani, and Jeet Mashru exemplify the dedication required to bring these stories to light, often working under significant constraints to ensure diverse perspectives and solutions are included in their reporting.

Citizen journalism, supported by social media platforms like Twitter, plays a critical role in connecting residents with municipal authorities and promoting civic engagement. Initiatives such as those by MNCDF and collaborations with citizen journalists demonstrate the power of grassroots efforts in mapping urban challenges and advocating for change. The persistent efforts of these journalists to engage with citizen groups, despite the inherent difficulties, underscore the importance of an informed and active public in driving accountability and

solutions for Mumbai's civic issues. Ultimately, their work not only informs but also empowers citizens to demand better governance and more equitable solutions to the city's myriad challenges.

# 5. Discussion

This discussion integrates the qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis of interviews with the theoretical frameworks of participatory governance and solutions journalism. By examining the findings through these lenses, we can better understand the role of hyperlocal news outlets and citizen journalism in enhancing urban governance in Mumbai.

### 5.1 Role of Citizen Journalism

The qualitative content analysis of hyperlocal news outlets revealed a robust engagement with local issues, particularly those concerning infrastructure, waste management, and water scarcity. These findings resonate with the theoretical perspectives on citizen journalism, which emphasise the democratisation of news production and the empowerment of individuals to share their perspectives (Bowman & Willis, 2003; Rosen, 1995).

Interviews with key stakeholders, including journalists and editors further highlighted the critical role of citizen journalism in fostering community engagement and holding authorities accountable. This aligns with Thurman's (2008) argument that citizen journalism enriches news coverage by incorporating local insights and firsthand experiences. The data shows that hyperlocal news outlets serve as watchdogs, advocating for community needs and promoting transparency. For instance, interviewees frequently mentioned instances where hyperlocal journalists exposed corruption or inefficiencies in local governance, leading to tangible improvements in service delivery.

The thematic analysis identified key themes such as "community empowerment," "accountability," and "transparency." These themes underscore the impact of citizen journalism on fostering a sense of ownership and accountability within communities,

supporting Bruns and Highfield's (2012) assertion that inclusivity is crucial for a well-rounded representation of community concerns.

The analysis revealed several constraints on the growth of participatory governance, consistent with theoretical challenges discussed by Fung and Wright (2003) and Gaventa (2006). Limited resources, both financial and human, were identified as significant barriers to engaging citizens in decision-making processes. Hyperlocal news outlets in Mumbai often operate with minimal funding and staffing, limiting their reach and sustainability. This finding is consistent with the interviewees' concerns about the financial viability of citizen journalism initiatives and the need for innovative funding mechanisms.

The content analysis highlighted the lack of equal and inclusive participation from marginalised communities. Many hyperlocal news stories focused on middle-class neighbourhoods, with limited coverage of slum areas or minority groups. This observation aligns with Cornwall and Coelho's (2007) and Mansuri and Rao's (2013) findings that targeted outreach programs and inclusive practices are essential to address participation barriers.

The thematic analysis further identified "entrenched power structures" as a significant challenge to participatory governance. Interviews revealed that local governance systems often resist sharing power with citizens, resulting in tokenistic participation or limited influence on policy outcomes. This finding supports Cooke and Kothari's (2001) critique of participatory approaches that fail to address underlying power dynamics.

# 5.2 Solutions Journalism

The findings highlight the potential of solutions journalism to influence readers positively and inspire civic engagement. Solutions journalism focuses on reporting effective responses to societal problems, providing a balanced and comprehensive view of news (Tankard, 2018; Gyldensted, 2011). The content analysis of hyperlocal news outlets showed a growing trend towards solutions-oriented reporting, highlighting community-driven initiatives and innovative solutions to local issues.

Interviews with journalists and community leaders indicated that solutions journalism not only informs but also inspires readers by showcasing effective problem-solving strategies. This aligns with research by VT Dũ (2024) suggesting that solutions journalism enhances audience engagement and trust in media, fostering a sense of agency and optimism. The thematic analysis identified "inspiration" and "community resilience" as recurring themes in solutions-oriented stories, emphasising the positive impact of such reporting on civic engagement.

However, the findings also reveal a potential limitation of solutions journalism. While it positively shapes perceptions and attitudes, it may not significantly influence readers' intentions or actions. This nuanced result, as discussed by McIntyre (2019), highlights the complexity of translating awareness into real-world engagement. The Mumbai study suggests that systemic barriers and resource constraints may influence individuals' willingness or ability to act on the solutions presented. Interviewees mentioned the need for more comprehensive strategies that go beyond reporting, including community mobilisation and support systems to facilitate action.

# 5.3 Implications for Urban Governance in Mumbai

The integration of these theoretical perspectives with the research findings has significant implications for urban governance in Mumbai. The study underscores the need for a nuanced understanding of the interplay between media dynamics and civic impact, particularly in post-pandemic urban settings. By leveraging the potential of hyperlocal news outlets and citizen journalism, urban governance in Mumbai can become more participatory, transparent, and accountable.

To enhance participatory governance, it is crucial to address the identified constraints by prioritising resource allocation for participatory processes and seeking innovative funding mechanisms. This aligns with Fung and Wright's (2003) recommendation for public-private partnerships and international grants to support democratic governance initiatives. Additionally, targeted outreach programs and inclusive practices are essential to ensure

equal participation from all segments of society, as emphasised by Cornwall and Coelho (2007) and Mansuri and Rao (2013).

Institutional reforms and capacity-building initiatives are also necessary to overcome entrenched power dynamics and foster genuine participatory governance. Establishing legal frameworks that mandate citizen participation and hold decision-makers accountable can promote transparency and responsiveness in governance systems (Fung, 2015). Interview data suggest that fostering open communication and transparency in governance activities can rebuild trust between citizens and government institutions, enhancing the legitimacy and responsiveness of governance systems (Warren, 2009).

Promoting solutions journalism can further enhance urban governance by providing a balanced and constructive perspective on local issues. News outlets should continue to adopt solutions-oriented reporting practices, highlighting community-driven initiatives and innovative solutions to urban problems. This approach not only informs but also inspires readers, fostering a sense of agency and optimism (Tankard, 2018; Gyldensted, 2011).

To maximise the impact of solutions journalism, it is essential to address the gap between awareness and action. Comprehensive strategies that include community mobilisation and support systems can translate awareness into meaningful engagement and action, contributing to more effective and equitable urban governance. Interviewees suggested that partnerships between media outlets and local NGOs could facilitate the implementation of solutions and empower communities to take collective action.

In conclusion, the integration of qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis of interviews with the theoretical frameworks of participatory governance and solutions journalism provides valuable insights into the role of hyperlocal news outlets and citizen journalism in urban governance. The study underscores the potential of these media dynamics to enhance civic engagement, transparency, and accountability in Mumbai. However, it also highlights the need to address significant constraints and systemic barriers to realise the full potential of participatory governance and solutions journalism.

# 6. Conclusion

The qualitative content analysis of media coverage in Mumbai showed how different factors interact to address the city's problems. It highlighted how proposed solutions, like stricter emissions rules and better public transportation, matched up with actions already being taken, such as cleaning drainage channels and improving water supply systems. Citizen involvement was a key part of this, with residents actively participating in protests, advocacy, and public meetings to influence decisions and push for changes.

The analysis also pointed out ongoing problems with old and neglected infrastructure and environmental issues that needed urgent action. The media coverage showed that there was a strong need for better planning to fix outdated infrastructure and address pollution and flooding. Additionally, there were frequent calls for more transparency and accountability from local officials to ensure they are addressing citizens' needs effectively. Overall, these findings highlighted the need for teamwork among experts, government officials, and residents to create a more sustainable and fair city in Mumbai.

The findings from the interviews conducted to study civic issue reporting in Mumbai highlight both the challenges and the critical role of journalism in addressing urban problems. Journalists face several obstacles, such as tight deadlines, difficulty in reaching public officials, and the reluctance of people from informal settlements to speak out. These issues can limit the depth of stories and make it harder to include a wide range of perspectives. However, despite these difficulties, reporters and citizen journalists are essential in bringing local issues to light and sparking public discussion.

Citizen journalism, especially through social media platforms like Twitter, has become a powerful tool for highlighting problems and connecting residents with city officials. Efforts by citizen groups and collaborations with citizen journalists show how grassroots actions can address urban challenges and push for change. The dedication of journalists to include community voices, even when faced with obstacles, shows how important it is for both the media and the public to work together. These findings highlight the need to support citizen journalism and encourage broader engagement to effectively tackle the diverse issues in

#### Mumbai.

This study offers a comprehensive analysis of how civic issues are framed by the media in Mumbai during the post-pandemic period. Despite its strengths, several limitations must be acknowledged, which also pave the way for future research. One significant limitation is the study's exclusive focus on Mumbai, a unique urban environment with its own set of challenges and dynamics. While this provides in-depth insights into Mumbai's civic journalism, the findings may not be entirely generalizable to other cities with different socioeconomic and cultural contexts.

The sample size and selection also pose limitations. The qualitative content analysis was based on a relatively small sample of 16 articles. Although these articles were carefully selected to represent various civic issues, a larger sample could provide a more comprehensive understanding of media framing. Additionally, the four semi-structured interviews conducted with journalists, while valuable, may not capture the full spectrum of perspectives within the field of civic journalism. A broader range of interviews could enhance the study's robustness.

Another limitation is the temporal scope of the study, which examines articles published during a specific post-pandemic period (2022-2023). Civic issues and media framing can evolve rapidly, influenced by changing political, economic, and social landscapes. Therefore, the findings are temporally bound and may not reflect long-term trends. Furthermore, while qualitative content analysis allows for in-depth exploration, it is inherently subjective. The categorization and interpretation of frames are influenced by the researcher's perspectives, which could introduce bias. Employing multiple coders and ensuring inter-coder reliability could mitigate this limitation.

The study's focus on solution-oriented frames and participatory governance themes, while a strength, also means that other potentially relevant frames, such as those emphasising problems without solutions, were not examined in detail. This selective focus could overlook important aspects of civic journalism.

Looking forward, there are several avenues for future research that could address these

limitations and build on the current study's findings. Comparative studies that extend beyond Mumbai to include other cities, both within India and globally, could reveal how local contexts influence media framing and public engagement. Conducting a longitudinal study over several years would provide insights into how media framing of civic issues evolves over time, helping to identify trends, shifts in public discourse, and the long-term impact of civic journalism on urban governance.

Increasing the sample size of articles and interviews would enhance the study's validity and reliability. Including diverse voices from various sectors such as government officials, community leaders, and ordinary citizens would provide a more holistic view of civic journalism's impact. Integrating quantitative methods, such as surveys or experiments, could complement qualitative findings and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between media framing and public perceptions. Measuring audience responses to different frames could offer valuable insights into the effectiveness of solution-oriented journalism.

With the rise of digital media and social networks, future research could explore how these platforms contribute to framing civic issues. Analysing social media trends, user-generated content, and digital news platforms would provide a contemporary perspective on civic journalism. Additionally, incorporating perspectives from urban studies, political science, and communication theory could enrich the analysis. Interdisciplinary approaches would enable a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between media, governance, and urban development.

# **Summary in Czech**

Městská krajina Bombaje výrazně ovlivňuje každodenní život a blahobyt obyvatel, přičemž občanské problémy, jako je nakládání s odpady, doprava, bydlení a zásobování vodou, jsou klíčové. Rychlá urbanizace zatížila infrastrukturu, což vedlo k problémům, jako jsou dopravní zácpy a nedostatečné veřejné služby. Hyperlokální zpravodajství je zásadní pro zdůraznění těchto problémů, podporu transparentnosti a posílení odpovědnosti. Umožňuje občanům zapojit se do místní správy a obhajovat svá práva. Tento výzkum zkoumá občanské pokrytí Bombaje prostřednictvím kvalitativní obsahové analýzy 16 postpandemických článků (2022-2023) a čtyř polostrukturovaných rozhovorů, zaměřujících se na rámce orientované na řešení, participativní správu a občanskou žurnalistiku. Studie zdůrazňuje roli médií při formování veřejného mínění a podpoře pozitivních změn, a to prostřednictvím zvýrazňování inovativních řešení a podpory zapojení komunity, navzdory výzvám, kterým čelí tradiční noviny.

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**List of Tables** 

Table n. 1: Overview of the articles (p.n. 40)

Table n. 2: Overview of the interviewees (p.n. 46)

8. List of Appendices

8.1 Questions for interviewees

Can you tell me all the beats you cover, what do you enjoy doing more/ are you assigned to

any particularly? Some may have an affinity towards one certain topic (because of a

personal connection or because of how grave the situation is and how much attention it

needs.

If you can put a number to it, how often do you observe citizen participation in the topics

you cover, encountering active citizens that are equally passionate about bringing in

change?

Have there been any significant solutions suggested or implemented in recent articles that

you've published - if so can you tell me more about them?

Can you recall any public spaces where your work was acknowledged and led to actual

change? Could even just be twitter, and it may have just sparked a discussion.

What issues is it easier to write solutions for? For example water, transport may be largely

systemic issues that take years for improvement, as opposed to topics like potholes,

repairing public infra etc. things where there is direct accountability with a certain civic

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body as opposed to issues that have a host of public and private bodies that are responsible.

Do you see any obstacles to covering solutions, and involving more participatory governance in your coverage? Does citizen participation enhance your coverage - can you explain how with examples?

# 8.2 Codebook for qualitative content analysis

#### 1. Solution Frames

### 1.1 Proposed Solutions

• **Definition:** Sections where potential solutions to civic issues are suggested.

### Examples:

- "Experts suggest implementing stricter emissions regulations to improve air quality."
- "Community leaders propose creating more green spaces to address urban heat."

#### 1.2 Implemented Solutions

• **Definition:** Sections describing solutions that have already been put into action.

## Examples:

- o "The BMC has started a new initiative to clean nullahs regularly."
- "Authorities have begun installing water supply systems in neglected buildings."

#### 1.3 Expert Recommendations

• **Definition:** Sections featuring advice or solutions from experts.

### • Examples:

o "Environmental scientists recommend increasing public transportation

options."

o "Urban planners advocate for pedestrian-friendly infrastructure."

### 1.4 Community-Driven Initiatives

• **Definition:** Sections highlighting solutions initiated or led by the community.

#### • Examples:

- o "Residents organised a protest to demand safer living conditions."
- "Local schools and housing societies collaborate to reduce plastic waste."

## 2. Citizen Participation

#### 2.1 Citizen Protests

• **Definition:** Sections describing public demonstrations or protests by citizens.

## • Examples:

- o "Residents of Powai protested against the cycle track project."
- o "Communities rallied to demand better water supply services."

### 2.2 Community Advocacy

• **Definition:** Sections detailing organised efforts by community groups to advocate for changes.

#### • Examples:

- "Community groups have been actively campaigning for better air quality measures."
- o "Local organisations are pushing for improved public safety on roads."

#### 2.3 Public Consultations

• **Definition:** Sections where citizens are involved in discussions or consultations with authorities.

# • Examples:

- "Residents attended a public meeting to discuss the new urban planning proposal."
- o "Citizens provided feedback during the consultation on pedestrian safety

improvements."

#### 2.4 Individual Testimonies

• **Definition:** Sections featuring personal stories or testimonies from individual citizens.

### • Examples:

- "A local resident shared their experience of living without water supply for 16 years."
- "Commuters expressed their concerns about the lack of awareness of helpline numbers."

#### 3. Infrastructural Issues

## 3.1 Infrastructural Neglect

- **Definition:** Sections detailing long-term neglect of essential infrastructure.
- Examples:
  - o "Buildings have crumbled due to decades of neglect."
  - o "Residents have been without water supply for 16 years."

### 3.2 Environmental Challenges

- **Definition:** Sections discussing environmental issues impacting urban life.
- Examples:
  - o "Air quality in Mumbai is deteriorating due to increased emissions."
  - o "Monsoon rains exacerbate hazardous conditions in informal settlements."

#### 4. Transparency and Accountability

### **4.1 Government Accountability**

• **Definition:** Sections highlighting the need for or lack of accountability from

authorities.

### • Examples:

- o "Citizens feel that having a corporation makes no difference to their issues."
- "The community is demanding more transparency in municipal actions."

## **4.2 Transparency Initiatives**

• **Definition:** Sections describing initiatives aimed at improving transparency.

### Examples:

- "New tracking systems will allow citizens to monitor nullah cleaning in their areas."
- "Authorities promise greater transparency in addressing public safety concerns."

This codebook provides a structured framework to analyze the selected articles, focusing on solution frames and citizen participation in the context of Mumbai's civic issues. Each code is defined with clear examples to ensure consistent application during the coding process.