



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Nicole Ely

Title: Reconstructing Identities in Fake News: Comparing two Fake News Websites

Programme/year: **MISS 2020**

Author of Evaluation (supervisor/~~external assessor~~): Vít Strítecký, Ph.D.

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	10
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	30
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	34
<i>Total</i>		80	74
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	10
	Style	5	5
	Formal requirements	5	5
<i>Total</i>		20	20
TOTAL		100	94



Evaluation

Major criteria:

The dissertation applies a machine learning method (LDA) to analyse the content of Infowars and Sputnik News outlets. The research goal was to reconstruct the underlying topical structures, forming the respective ideological stances. The application of an ML technique is rather unique in the context of MA theses and the author deserves credit for such a methodological endeavour. I would have a few critical remarks that, however, do not intend to undermine the overall quality of the dissertation. Although I appreciate an attempt to combine LDA with a discourse-based method of interpretation, there still remains a gap between the way both methods are handled in the paper. In fact, the discourse methodological section stands rather separated from the rest of the paper and, even more importantly, is not utilised during the final interpretation. Additionally, I see a slight disbalance between the interpretation of Infowars and Sputnik. I would also appreciate a more elaborated conclusion as well.

Minor criteria:

There are no major formal problems, the resource base and its use is adequate.

Overall evaluation:

This is a methodologically clearly above a standard dissertation, working with real (social scientific) big data. Also, the interpretation is solid and convincing.

Suggested grade:

A2

Signature