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): Petr Spelda, Ph.D.

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	**10**	10
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	**30**	30
	Methodology, analysis, argument	**40**	33
Total		*80*	73
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	**10**	10
	Style	**5**	5
	Formal requirements	**5**	4
Total		*20*	19
TOTAL		*100*	92

Evaluation

Major criteria:

The thesis utilises a probabilistic topic modelling method (LDA) to analyse a dataset comprising some of the content recently published on Infowars and Sputnik news websites. This is obviously a methodologically challenging research that has been successfully delivered. The data collection, pre-processing, and the application of LDA are done in a correct way, leading to a reconstructed topical structure that provides a helpful foundation for interpretation. The interpretation itself reads well and offers persuasive analytical insights, even if it remains distant from CDA discussed at the beginning of the paper. My major concern pertains to a seeming self-evident nature of the analytical intervention. In a sense, the comparison confirmed the general distinctiveness of the outlets connected to their intended roles. Nevertheless, even such a confirmation based on a large data sample is valuable.

Minor criteria:

There are no major problems, however, the thesis contains several misspellings (16x) of David Blei's name, which unfortunate give his role in developing LDA.

Overall evaluation:

This is an ambitious research project, which has not failed to deliver on the main research goals.

Suggested grade:

A2

Signature

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