

Tracking down economization

Large scale text analysis for political sciences

The overall objective of the ePol-project (Gary Schaal and Gerhard Heyer) [1] is the empirical evaluation of hypotheses originating from the debate on post-democracy. Political scientists identify justifications of politics in public media as a key indicator for changes in political and democratic culture. Thus, looking for economization of public justification in German politics during the last decades seems to be a valid approach to track down qualitative changes of democracy. As computer scientists supporting this research interest with methods of text mining we focus on three aspects in our talk:

1. Operationalization: How can scholars of humanities/social science operationalize their research questions in a way that computer scientists are enabled to develop analytic tools specific to their needs. Interdisciplinary experience so far makes clear, we need models and procedures understood by both disciplines to bring humanists expectations and algorithmic possibilities into alignment.
2. Argument identification: We present our approach of a semi-supervised text mining tool chain for identification of 'neoliberal justification' on political topics. It mainly consists of a supervised preselection of articles from a complete long-term corpus of German newspapers based on automatic term extraction and a classification via active learning on the selected subcorpus.
3. Exemplary results: We demonstrate the current state of our analysis framework of the ePol-project highlighting achievements as well as difficulties for the political science research process dealing with abstract semantic categories.

[1] www.epol-projekt.de