Final Assignment

Computational Analysis of Political Communication

University of Mannheim (2019)

See course page at `http://vanatteveldt.com/2019-mannheim-computational/` for deadline and submission link

Final Assignment

The goal of the final assignment is to show that you can solve a real (but simple) social science question using automatic text analysis in R:

1. Pose a social scientific question that can be answered with automatic text analysis
2. Gather, read, and clean the needed data
3. Perform one or more automatic text analyses
4. Analyse and/or discuss the validity of the method
5. Visualize and/or describe the results
6. Discuss the outcomes in the light of the research question
7. Discuss the limitations and possible improvements

You can use any data source that you can find. See the course web page for some links.

Structure of the report

Your report should probably contain the following sections:

1. Introduction (1 page). Briefly introduce your research topic and what you are trying to do. End with a research question that is supported by the (extremely brief) literature review.
2. Data & Methods (2 pages). Describe the data you are using, and the cleaning, preprocessing, and analysis steps you took. This should give the reader enough information to replicate the analysis, but does not necessarily include all technical details like R packages used. For the anlaysis, also discuss the validity here: how do you know you're measuring what you're claiming to measure?
3. Results (2 pages). Show the exploratory and (if applicable) test results. Include relevant figures or tables.
4. Interpretation and discussion (1 page). What do your results mean? What are possible problems for this analysis, and/or ways to improve it?

The report should be submitted as an R Markdown document. The layout is not important, but please make sure only to include only relevant figures and details. Please make sure to include your name and student number clearly at the first page.

The page limits are not absolute, but don't make it much longer than the 6 pages total. Anything above 10 pages will receive a lower grade unless the pages are really needed to tell the story (at my discretion).

Grading criteria

This is not your doctoral thesis :-). Keep it small and simple. The point is not to produce a perfect analysis, the point is to show that you know what you're doing (and you do it in R). So a decent analysis with a good explanation of the weakness and ways for improving it can be better than a really good analysis without a good explanation.

- Introduction: Question is clearly described and linked to the literature and the analysis.
- Method and data: Correctly described and applicable to the research question
- Method and data: Correctly applied
- Results: Correctly visualized, interpreted and describedb
- Discussion: Implications, limitations, and improvements correct and clearly described
- Overall: R Code is functional, understandable, and well written
- Overall: Report is readable and in proper academic English