PhD Abstract

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August 20, 2013

Preliminary Title

The World Bank Discourse on Disability – Historical Development, Structures and Influences

Abstract

The main objective of this PhD-project is to analyze how disability is represented within documents of the World Bank since their establishment in 1946. The project-dataset (roughly 5500 documents) is based on the World Bank’s Documents & Reports online-archive.

In a first step, a basic text mining approach (Word-Frequencies, TF-IDF, n-gramms) will be applied to get a basic overview on the most important keywords/topics within the World Bank documents. Further on, a topic modeling will be done by applying latent Dirichlet allocation (LDA). LDA is a probability based method to pervade large collections of documents and to identify the discussed topics within these document-collections. Both methods should help to answer the following questions: How did and does the Bank’s disability discourse evolve over time? Which issues are addressed by the Bank in the context of their disability discussion? Do these issues change over time? Which external dependencies of the Bank impact the disability discourse (e.g. how strong is the influence of UN-conventions)?

In a second step, it will be evaluated whether the occurrence of the found document-topics can be linked to any environmental factors given by the regions/nation states they address. If possible, this second step should lead to a formal model of the Bank’s disability discourse. This model can hopefully explain how the relevance of the discussed topics changes depending on the (economic) development of nation states.