



Master Thesis Opportunity

Title: Coal Region or Region in Transformation? Regional Identity in the Lausitzer Rundschau

Description: Lusatia is one of Germany's most visible arenas of the energy transition: the coal phase-out and the structural change it triggers are reshaping the region. These developments affect not only the economic and social structure of Lusatia but also its sense of regional identity. As the main regional daily newspaper in Lusatia, the Lausitzer Rundschau shapes how these changes are discussed locally, either looking back to Lusatia as a coal and energy region or looking ahead to it as a region in transformation. This thesis will use a large corpus of its articles as a case study to examine the regional identity communicated in its reporting, using AI-based text analysis methods.

Key Research Questions:

- How is the regional identity of Lusatia represented in the Lausitzer Rundschau, and how has the balance between backward-looking and forward-looking narratives changed over time?
- How are coal and energy-related terms, such as "Kohleregion" and "Energeregion," contrasted with future-oriented concepts such as "Strukturwandelregion," and what role does coal still play in the self-image of Lusatia's population?
- How does the Lausitzer Rundschau represent local responses to the energy transition, including frustration, challenges, and concerns, and which future opportunities and approaches are presented as ways to support a new regional identity?

Methods: The thesis can combine **topic modelling, framing and sentiment analysis, word-embedding and co-occurrence analysis of key terms, and LLM-based text classification** (e.g., of past- vs. future-oriented statements) with time-series analysis.

Required Skills:

- Programming skills in Python or R (experience with text processing / NLP is a plus)
- Interest in energy policy, regional identity in Lusatia, or media and communication research
- Good reading knowledge of German (the Lausitzer Rundschau articles are in German)
- Motivation to work independently with large, unstructured datasets

Start: As soon as possible

Language: English or German

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