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Goodbye human annotators? Content analysis of social policy debates using ChatGPT

INSTITUTSKOLLOQUIUM / DEPARTMENTAL SEMINAR



Wednesday, 16 April 2025 - 16:00 c.t.

Room 124, Institut für Politikwissenschaft

Or join online via Zoom:

930 8975 0663 (Meeting ID), 142311 (Passcode)

In this talk, Dr. Sowula will present findings from the paper “Goodbye human annotators? Content analysis of social policy debates using ChatGPT”, published in the *Journal of Social Policy*. The paper evaluates the potential of the most prominent large language model, ChatGPT, to automate content analysis in policy debates. Using two contrasting case studies—the Universal Basic Income debate on Dutch Twitter and pension reform debates in German newspapers—we compare ChatGPT’s classification performance to that of human annotators. While ChatGPT demonstrates high reliability across datasets, its precision and recall vary significantly across argument types, indicating that full automation is not yet feasible. At least for now, human annotators are here to stay.

Nevertheless, the results also underscore the considerable potential of LLMs: when performance is tested on a subset of categories and benchmarked against human-coded data, tools like ChatGPT could substantially increase the volume and speed of qualitative content analysis. This opens up promising avenues for future research.

Moreover, beyond this specific study, Dr. Sowula invites a broader discussion on the potential and limitations of LLMs throughout the stages of the research process. What role should these tools play in the future of social science research?



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