

## ASSIGNMENT 4: GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION IN THE MEDIA (ONLINE MODE)

### 1. OBJECTIVE

This assignment has two objectives:

- To obtain a broader sensibility for the role of geographic information in our society,
- To train critical reading and thinking about the use of information.

### 2. INTRODUCTION

This assignment encourages you to critically read and assess the use of geographic information in the daily news of the media. Besides of its omnipresence, geographic information is frequently presented to support a political, social or economic argument. The use of information is rarely neutral, and the way it is presented is not neutral either. Your review should reveal such agendas, and think about objectively challenging or supporting the presented information by evidence.

### 3. DATA REQUIRED

Select an online **newspaper** article of your choice, published within the seven days before your signed-up week, from any English-speaking media around the world (note: blogs, weather forecasts and scientific articles are **out of scope**).

### 4. PROCEDURE

#### 4.1 Sign up for a week

You pick your week of the semester for this assignment. Make sure that by the end of the first week of the semester you have signed up for your preferred week. Note that the slots available per week are capped for balancing the numbers; you might not get your first preference.

**Signing up will be closed by the end of the first week.** If you did not sign up by then you will be signed up (including the students joining the subject after the end of the first week). This rigid rule is also necessary to distribute numbers of students equally over the semester.

Your signed-up week is final. Only in cases of special consideration (a doctor's certificate for the day of presentation) the chosen date can be changed.

## 4.2 Submit a report

Please submit your report by **Sunday 9 PM before the end of the week you have signed up for..** Your report must, as a condition of acceptance:

- Start with your name
- Then show the full reference of the media article, including its publication date
- Then follow the discussion structure below
- Have a length of maximum of 2 pages (12pt, single line spacing)
- Have the full article in the appendix (e.g., by copy-paste, screenshot, pdf print)
- Be in PDF

The report should not contain the figures of the article but refer to the figures in the appendix. Submit to LMS.

## 4.3 Content of your report

The discussion paper should cover:

- The full reference of the newspaper article.
- The identified geographic information in the article: the sort of data, the source of data, and the authors of the data.
- A discussion whether this information is properly referenced, and whether it is objectively testable or just inaccessible. Search on the web for data that could be used to validate the given information. Which data are you looking for? What sort of analysis would be necessary for a test?
- A discussion of the use of the geographic information in the argument of the article: is the argument made properly? If statistics is used, is it used comprehensibly? If graphics are used, are they used objectively? And if graphics are used, is there a clear link between the graphics and the text?
- If possible, check whether your article is followed up by other articles or discussed differently in other media (only with respect to the geographic information, of course).

## 5. ASSESSMENT

You can earn up to 8 points for this assignment. Hurdle requirement: your article must be published within the seven days before your signed-up week and must be in English.

Since the assignment will be assessed for thoroughness and intellectual rigour, expect that you reach 4 points (pass) if you pass the hurdle requirements and provide a basic review, 5 points if you deliver a satisfying review, 6 points if your review is thorough and well-written, and 7 (or even 8) if it is outstanding and well-argued.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

This exercise can be the beginning of a life-long habit: critically commenting on the use of geographic information in the public, from an informed expert view point.