Dear Editor-in-Chief,

I am sending you my research paper entitled “Topic and tone of political news articles in German online media”. Following the discussion about the impact of the media in the political opinion-forming process, I investigate how seven German online news websites report differently about domestic politics and how this reporting correlates with voting preferences.

The dataset contains nearly 15,000 online news articles. First, I find the latent topics of the news articles using a structural topic model (STM). The STM is an unsupervised machine learning model and a further development of so called topic models, which are widely used in various disciplines to deal with text data. The model is used to assign a topic to each article. The sentiment value of each article is then calculated. In the last step, the correlation between the sentiment of a particular topic and the survey values of the popular German parties is computed. The results show evidence, that the political reporting differs between the news provider and that the correlation between the sentiment and the poll value is significantly positive, when the reporting about a party is particularly negative.

The applied approach to analyze the text data is fairly recent and originates from the financial literature, which often examines the influence of central bank messages on macroeconomic factors. Additionally, the present study deals with a very contemporary topic (mass media and political tendencies) and uses a self-generated data set that has not yet been studied elsewhere. The study thus fits the standards of “Economics & Politics” of publishing “innovative theoretical and empirical work on the intersection of politics and economics”.

I confirm that this manuscript has not been published elsewhere and is not under consideration by another journal.

Please let me know of your decision at your earliest convenience.

With my best regards,

Sincerely yours,

Franziska Löw.