goals-for-csdh

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Goal of project:

- Economic: Are there co-movements between economic fluctuations at low frequencies and low frequency sentiments? IN OTHER WORD: Do sentiments drive economic growth, i.e. do cultural moods help explain the long-term development of the economy? Another way to put this: we ask, is there a link between the "Zeitgeist"/"structure of feeling" (Williams) and economic developments?
  Background: wide consensus that sentiments drive economic fluctuations at high frequencies (= what does this mean?).
  We offer a quantitative answer to this question.

- → the novelty of our project resides especially in this question; the methods are not new. That is, the contribution of our project is not methodological, it is conceptual.

- Literary: We seek to show quantitatively that literary creation has economic impact, or at least descriptive power about economic developments. Background: Literary scholars have long understood that novels tell us things about society–we propose a way to quantify the way that novels tell us things about society. So, put another way, we seek to show that the analysis of literature is worthwhile–worthwhile because it allows us to understand things about society that other textual or numeric data struggles to reveal. Quantitative literary studies have looked at the interaction of economics and literature in terms of direct topics, motifs and diction, eg. Sinykin et al (DATE). Our contribution is to examine on a more general, emotional level how novels shape/capture social and economic developments. That is, we are not interested in describing the micro-structures of the novels themselves as data: we are interested in capturing the interactions between novels-as-data and the economy-as-data.

In sum, our project has two goals:
1. Economic: Are there Zeitgeist-driven economic fluctuations? 2. Literary: We propose a way to quantify the way that novels tell us things about society.
Method:

- 1. step: extract a quantitative measure of "Zeitgeist" from a corpus of award-winning novels using text analysis methods – happy to discuss this point!

- 2. step: economic analysis step: we investigate the relationships between this data series and data on long-term economic developments (using a structural VAR model and VECM + as initial description, a spectral analysis) –happy to answer questions :-)

Preferred discussion points:

- generating the quantitative data from the novels

- accounting for generic, stylistic, tonal variation

- (corpus - see appendix)

Corpus:

- constrained by temporal availability of economic data–1950s on

- copyright issues, 1950s vs. 1923

- award-winners, why

- enable understanding of project objectives

- generate feedback on sentiment analysis algorithm

- generate feedback on capturing generic + other literary features