Perspectives on the Right to Privacy from Boston, London, and Berlin

Yordana Gerdzhikova, 2023

With the world of information at our fingertips, the dangers of deception and manipulation are

lurking not only in Senate Houses or Parliamentary Floors, but in our pockets and on our

desktops, with the trust we put in smartphones and laptops. This field research component

preceded Institutional Review Board approved research on privacy perspectives within Western

Democracies with intelligence relationships— The USA (Boston),sideUK֠ of the coin, but what did

experts think, who’ve worked on the ground with sensitive legal cases and human futures.

Amusingly, I cannot share whom I interacted with, for privacy reasons. But I am eager to offer

my insights and how they compare to my expectations.

Ultimately, this Davis Research Grant enabled my soon to be submitted research article draft

which focuses on the fundamental difference in understanding the agency individuals have in the

US and the EU. To clarify, the main UK privacy law, the UK GDPR, is based on the European

Union’s General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR,) so I indirectly refer to it via the EU. For

the US, there is no single federal privacy law, but six states have privacy laws signed, only three

of which are effective at the time of writing. Existing scholarship discusses the issue of privacy

in philosophical, legal, economic, and legal dimensions. Yet, the 5As Digital and Computational

Studies framework, developed by C. Hall, F. Nascimento, and

grant

is helping me draw attention to privacy design and policy.

Using topic modeling analysis in the R coding language, I explored how the text of the US State

Laws and the GDPR text align and differ on the question of granting agency to the individual

(consumer rights) versus demanding data protection from companies (business obligations.) A

sample of the output I provide here, delighted to talk more about at