

# Proposal

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## CAPSTONE PROJECT PROPOSAL

Data mining and Large Language Models (LLMs) for Political and Social Sciences

Spring Term 2025

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### 1. Project Title

Populist Narratives on Environmental Issues in the Media: A Discourse Analysis

### 2. Project Type

Research-Oriented (possible expansion to seminar paper / master's thesis)

### 3. Project Overview (150-200 words)

The goal of this project is to analyze media discourse on parties in Switzerland over the past ten years, with a particular focus on environmental topics. In a recent seminar paper, I investigated the relationship between climate awareness and populist attitudes, examining why right-wing populist attitudes correlate with higher levels of climate skepticism. However, as theory suggests a significant difference between left- and right-wing populism, I also found that left-wing populist attitudes do not exhibit the same critical stance toward climate change. Instead, left-wing populism clearly tends to support climate policies because , in contrast to right-wing populism, “the elite” and “the people” are defined differently.

Building on these findings, this project will now conduct a **media analysis of populist discourses in Swiss media**, examining in what way different political parties frame and engage in populist rhetoric concerning environmental issues.

## Research Question

How do the Swiss People's Party (SVP) and the Green Party present themselves in populist discourses on environmental issues, and how do their narratives differ?

## 4. Data Sources

Media articles of the past 10 years of mainstream media outlets in the German part of Switzerland:

- Blick Online, 20 Minuten, Tagesanzeiger, NZZ, SRF (online),
- Filtered by the following key words: Climate - Climate change - Climate crisis - Climate protection - Global warming - Global warming - Climate policy (in German)

## 5. Methods and Tools

1. **API Access via swissdox.ch:** Swissdox provides access to a vast collection of media articles from Switzerland over the past 50 years.

- **Customizable Queries:** Users can select specific media outlets for analysis, define the time period, keywords, and desired variables through the API.
- **Free Access for Students:** Access is free for students upon submitting a project inquiry.
- **API Access Keys:** API access keys are provided through the created project.

2. **Data Manipulation in R Studio:**

- **Further filtering** to only (national and cantonal) politics content, as well as green parties in Switzerland
- **Tokenization** and **Stopword** Removal

3. **ChatGPT API:**

- Quantitative text analysis of media articles via **API connection to ChatGPT**
- Categories (suggestion made by ChatGPT 4.0):
  - 1. **Relevance**  
*Relevant (1) are articles with connection to Swiss environmental politics*
  - 2. **Political Party Mentioned**
    - \* 1 = SVP (*Schweizerische Volkspartei*)
    - \* 2 = JSVP (*Junge Schweizerische Volkspartei*)

- \* 3 = GPS (*Grüne Partei der Schweiz*)
- \* 4 = *Junge Grüne Schweiz*
- \* 99 = *No or other party mentioned / not applicable*

### 3. Support or Oppositon

*Whether the party's stance on the discussed environmental policy is supportive or opposed.*

- \* 1 = *Support*
- \* 2 = *Oppose*
- \* 99 = *Unclear / not applicable* Climate Science & Green Parties

### 4. Populist vs. Pluralistic Framing

- \* 1 = *Very pluralistic (diverse viewpoints, cooperative tone, evidence-based)*
- \* 2 = *Rather pluralistic*
- \* 3 = *Neutral*
- \* 4 = *Rather populist (simplifies issues, contrasts "the people" vs. "the elite")*
- \* 5 = *Very populist (strong anti-elite rhetoric, emotional language, crisis framing)*
- \* 99 = *Unrelated content / not applicable*

### 5. Definitions of "People" and "Elite"

- \* Elite:
  - 1 = *Government / politicians*
  - 2 = *Corporations / business elites*
  - 3 = *Media / journalists*
  - 4 = *Intellectuals / academics*
  - 5 = *International organizations (EU, UN, etc.)*
  - 6 = *Environmental activists / NGOs*
  - 99 = *Other / not applicable*
- \* "the people"
  - 1 = *The Swiss population in general*
  - 2 = *Workers / lower class*
  - 3 = *Rural communities*
  - 4 = *Traditional Swiss values group*
  - 5 = *Small business owners / self-employed*
  - 6 = *Farmers*
  - 99 = *Other / not applicable*

## 6. Milestone Plan

1. Data acquisition completed: 26.03.2025
2. First draft of analysis or implementation: 01.04.2025

3. Key results or functional tool: 06.04.2025
4. Report structure and documentation drafted: 10.04.2025
5. Finalization and revision of report: 10.04.-17.04.2025
6. Deadline set: **17.04.2025, 14:00**

## **7. GitHub Plan**

### **Folder with subfolders**

00-Planning

01-Data

02-Scripts

03-Output

04-Junk

05-Report

## **8. Anticipated Challenges**

- API-Connections on Swissdax and ChatGPT
  - Swissdax: completed.
  - ChatGPT: to be done.

## **9. Expected Output**

The expected outcome of this project is a report analyzing media discourse on green parties in Switzerland over the past decade. The initial goal is to collect relevant data and systematically categorize the media articles based on their framing of green parties and climate-related topics. The report will include an overview of trends in media coverage, key findings from the categorization process, and potential insights into how media discourse has evolved over time.

## **10. LLM Use Declaration**

I will use ChatGPT-4.0 as an assistant for coding tasks and, ultimately, for the categorization of media articles. The model will help process large amounts of text data, identify relevant themes, and classify articles according to predefined categories.