Pre-Analysis Plan for Master Thesis

1. Summary

The project aims to understand how educational attainment influences the complexity and deviation of individuals' definitions of hate speech. Hate speech, a growing phenomenon amplified by the Internet, raises questions about digital governance and the role of generative AI in content creation. This study will analyze whether the discourse around hate speech regulation is confined to the academic world or extends to non-academics. Using survey data, this research will measure the level of differentiation in hate speech definitions and examine the ideological deviation in these definitions considering formal education. The study seeks to contribute to the broader understanding of how education influences political knowledge and opinions, specifically in the context of defining and regulating hate speech.

2. Motivation and Background

* This research is driven by the divide between academic and non-academic worlds, mirrored in the labor market and public opinion.
* The study will explore if hate speech is perceived similarly across different education levels, addressing the "ivory tower" discourse.
* There is mixed evidence on the role of formal education in shaping political knowledge and opinions. Studies show varying effects of education on political awareness, interest, and tolerance.
* The project aligns with my background in teaching and digital governance, aiming to combine statistical skills with an understanding of knowledge and text as data.
* Additional information required: Specifics on personal motivation and alignment with career goals.

3. Introduction

* Context: The research context includes educational effects on political knowledge/opinions and hate speech definitions/attitudes.
* Relevant papers:
  + Van der Heijden & Verkuyten (2020): Examines the relationship between education level, political orientation, and attitudes toward immigrants and refugee policies in the Netherlands.
  + Munzert et al. (to be published): Analyzes citizen preferences for online hate speech regulation, contributing to the debate over content moderation.
  + Kansok-Dusche et al. (2023): Provides a systematic review of hate speech definitions, particularly among children and adolescents.
* Additional information required: A more detailed summary of the methods and findings of these papers and how they relate to the proposed topic.

4. Research Question and Hypotheses

* Research Question: "How does educational attainment influence the complexity and deviation of individuals' definitions of hate speech?"
* Subquestions: Differences between countries and ideological subgroups.
* Hypotheses:
  + (H1): Higher educational attainment leads to more differentiated definitions of hate speech.
  + (H2): More differentiated definitions of hate speech show greater variations in individual definitions, potentially influenced by political orientation.
* Additional information required: Derivation of these hypotheses from the literature.

5. Data and Methods

* Data Description: The survey conducted for the study includes sociodemographic information, speech traits, political preferences, online behavior, and speech governance preferences.
* Outcome Variables: Two constructed indicators from the survey item on personal definitions of hate speech, measuring differentiation and degree of politicization.
* Independent Variable: Educational Attainment, categorized into academic and non-academic.
* Control Variables: Gender, empathy, political interest, social media usage, political ideology, experience with hate speech, etc.
* Statistical Method: Regression analysis to test the hypotheses. Alternative methods and detailed equations to be specified.
* Additional Analyses and Methodological Limitations: To be developed, including a systematic approach to classifying open text responses and addressing survey bias.
* Data Report: A detailed overview of the sample, missingness issues, and preliminary data insights.

Additional Considerations:

* The plan will include a detailed method for classifying open text responses and addressing potential biases in survey-based measures.
* The policy implications of the findings, especially in the context of lower and middle educational institutions, will be explored.
* Additional information required: A comprehensive discussion of the survey items to be used and a detailed plan for data analysis.