



Freedom of speech vs. hate speech: legal perspectives in Canada and the U.S

Sukaina Ashfaq Syed

Department of Law, Dadabhoy Institute of Higher Education, Pakistan

Email: sukainakazmy@gmail.com

Abstract

Freedom of speech and hate speech are two contentious issues that highlight the delicate balance between individual rights and societal values. This article examines the legal frameworks governing these concepts in Canada and the United States, focusing on their similarities and differences. While the U.S. prioritizes an almost absolute interpretation of free expression under the First Amendment, Canada adopts a more restrained approach, incorporating limits to protect against hate speech under its Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This comparative analysis explores key legal cases, including *Brandenburg v. Ohio* in the U.S. and *R. v. Keegstra* in Canada, to illustrate how these nations navigate the tension between preserving free speech and addressing harm caused by hate speech. The article also addresses contemporary challenges posed by social media, where hate speech proliferates and regulatory measures raise questions about censorship and democratic values.

Keywords: freedom of speech, hate speech, United States, social media regulation, Canada

Introduction

Freedom of speech and hate speech are cornerstones of modern legal debates, particularly in democratic societies like Canada and the United States. These nations share a commitment to protecting free expression but diverge significantly in their approaches to hate speech regulation. In the U.S., the First Amendment enshrines near absolute freedom of speech, even extending protections to hate speech unless it incites imminent lawless action, as established in *Brandenburg v. Ohio* (Hassett, 2022).

Canada employs a more measured approach, balancing freedom of expression with the protection of human dignity, as outlined in Section 1 of its Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Araujo, 2023). These contrasting philosophies create a rich ground for analysis, especially in the context of evolving societal norms and technological advancements.

The philosophical underpinnings of freedom of speech date back to thinkers like John Stuart Mill, who championed the idea that the free exchange of ideas is vital for truth



and societal progress (Brink, 2001). However, as societies grapple with the rise of hate speech, the classical liberal principles of free expression face challenges.

In the digital era, platforms like Telegram have facilitated the spread of extremist ideologies under the guise of free speech, raising questions about the limits of expression in safeguarding democratic values (Al-Rawi, 2021). In this regard, Canada and the U.S. exemplify two ends of the regulatory spectrum, with the former adopting proactive legislation to combat hate speech and the latter emphasizing individual freedoms, even at the risk of societal harm.

The tension between free speech and hate speech is not only a matter of philosophical debate but also one of practical implications. Canada's legal approach, as seen in cases like *R. v. Keegstra*, underscores its commitment to curbing hate speech to promote social cohesion and equality (Harel, 2021).

Conversely, U.S. jurisprudence often prioritizes individual liberties, as demonstrated in cases like *Virginia v. Black*, where cross burning was deemed protected speech unless intended as a direct threat (Howard, 2017). These legal precedents highlight the varying degrees to which each country values free expression versus protection against harm, reflecting broader cultural and historical contexts.

The rise of social media has further complicated the discourse on free speech and hate speech. Platforms such as Facebook and Twitter have become arenas for both democratic engagement and the proliferation of harmful rhetoric. While social media companies struggle to moderate content effectively, legal systems are often ill equipped to address these challenges without infringing on users' rights (DePaula et al., 2018). Efforts to regulate online hate speech, as seen in Canada's Internet Hate Speech laws, are often criticized for their potential to stifle legitimate discourse (Pukallus & Arthur, 2024).

This article aims to dissect the nuanced legal perspectives on freedom of speech and hate speech in Canada and the U.S., offering a comparative lens through which to understand these critical issues. By analyzing key legal cases, philosophical arguments, and modern challenges, it seeks to contribute to the ongoing discourse on balancing individual liberties with societal protections.

Research Justification

The debate between freedom of speech and hate speech regulation holds profound significance for democratic societies, especially in nations like Canada and the United States, where cultural diversity and pluralistic values are at the forefront. This research is justified by the need to explore how these two nations navigate the intersection of individual rights and societal protections.

Canada's emphasis on curbing hate speech under its Charter of Rights and Freedoms illustrates a legal philosophy that prioritizes collective harmony and equality, making it a compelling subject for comparison with the U.S., where freedom of expression enjoys near absolute protection (Hate Speech as a Legal Problem, 2023).



The rise of social media and its role in amplifying hate speech further underscores the importance of this research. As platforms like Telegram and Twitter become vehicles for extremist ideologies, the effectiveness of current legal frameworks in addressing this phenomenon remains in question (Al-Rawi, 2021). Exploring these challenges contributes to understanding how law and technology intersect in shaping free speech and mitigating harm.

By examining both philosophical and legal dimensions, this research addresses gaps in current literature, such as how cultural and historical contexts influence legal interpretations of hate speech (Howard, 2017). The findings aim to inform policymakers and academics on potential reforms.

Research Objectives

1. Examine Legal Frameworks
2. Analyze Philosophical Perspectives
3. Investigate the Role of Social Media
4. Identify Challenges in Regulating Online Hate Speech
5. Explore Ethical and Social Implications
6. Understand Cultural and Legal Influences
7. Examine Humor and Satire Role
8. Assess the Impact of Social Justice Principles
9. Address the Role of Misinformation
10. Propose a Nuanced Regulatory Approach

Research Methodology

This study employed a systematic review methodology, with research objectives established accordingly. A comprehensive literature review was conducted (Komba & Lwoga, 2020). Research findings were categorized based on their content (Hiver et al., 2021; Petticrew & Roberts, 2006), and classified information was incorporated into the study by organizing it into headings (Gan et al., 2021; Pawson et al., 2005). The evaluation of classified information and titles formed the basis of the study (Page, 2021; Rahi, 2017), ensuring the integrity of the research subject and its contents (Egger et al., 2022; Victor, 2008).

Literature Review

The debate surrounding freedom of speech and hate speech regulation has evolved significantly in recent years, particularly with the rise of digital platforms and global connectivity. Legal systems in countries like Canada and the United States have approached the issue in fundamentally different ways, reflecting varying cultural, political, and social values.

Scholars have examined the philosophical, legal, and ethical underpinnings of free speech, as well as the role of social media in amplifying hate speech. This literature review explores the complex relationship between these two competing interests,



providing a comprehensive overview of key legal frameworks, ethical considerations, and the challenges posed by modern technology in managing hate speech without infringing on free expression. The following sub sections address specific aspects of this debate, drawing from a wide range of academic perspectives.

Legal Frameworks on Freedom of Speech and Hate Speech

The tension between freedom of speech and hate speech regulation is most pronounced in the legal systems of Canada and the United States. In the U.S., the First Amendment offers robust protections for speech, including hate speech, unless it incites imminent lawless action, as established in *Brandenburg v. Ohio* (Hassett, 2022). This legal principle demonstrates the high threshold for restricting speech, even when it may cause harm. The U.S. legal system places a strong emphasis on individual rights and freedoms, viewing free expression as essential to the functioning of a democratic society. Canada takes a more cautious approach, balancing free speech with the protection of public order and human dignity. The Canadian Supreme Court's decision in *R. v. Keegstra* upheld hate speech laws, emphasizing that hate speech could be restricted to protect marginalized communities and promote social harmony (Araujo, 2023). This divergence highlights the philosophical differences between the two countries, with Canada prioritizing collective welfare and the U.S. upholding individual liberties.

Philosophical Underpinnings of Free Speech

Philosophical discussions surrounding freedom of speech have long been influenced by John Stuart Mill's harm principle, which advocates for minimal restrictions on expression to allow the free exchange of ideas (Brink, 2001). According to Mill, even controversial or offensive speech should be protected unless it directly harms others. However, critics argue that this principle does not fully address the harms caused by hate speech, particularly in multicultural societies.

Mill's ideas, while foundational, are increasingly challenged by the argument that hate speech can create real social harm by marginalizing vulnerable groups and inciting violence. Philosophical debates on the subject often center around whether the societal harm caused by hate speech justifies its restriction, leading to varying legal interpretations and public policies in different countries.



The Role of Social Media in Hate Speech

The rise of social media has significantly complicated the discourse surrounding freedom of speech and hate speech regulation. Platforms like Telegram and Twitter have become spaces where hate speech is increasingly prevalent, raising questions about how much regulation is necessary without infringing on free expression. Al-Rawi (2021) explores how far right ideologies are disseminated on dark social media platforms, highlighting the challenges of content moderation.

These platforms offer users the freedom to express their views, but they also create environments where hate speech can spread unchecked. The ability of social media companies to moderate hate speech effectively while respecting users' freedoms remains a contentious issue, with some advocating for more stringent regulations to prevent harm, while others warn against overreach that could stifle free speech.

Challenges of Regulating Online Hate Speech

Online hate speech presents unique challenges for legal and regulatory frameworks. Iglezakis (2016) argues that the regulation of hate speech on the internet must strike a delicate balance to avoid infringing on users' rights to free expression. While there is general agreement that online hate speech should be curtailed to protect individuals from harm, the methods of regulation vary.

Some advocate for stronger laws, while others caution that heavy handed regulation risks censoring legitimate discourse and undermining democratic freedoms. Social media platforms' role in moderating harmful content has also been criticized, with many suggesting that current systems are insufficient. Iglezakis emphasizes that any regulation must be narrowly tailored to prevent abuse and ensure that it addresses harmful speech without infringing on free expression.

Ethical and Social Considerations of Hate Speech

Hate speech raises profound ethical concerns, particularly regarding its potential to harm marginalized communities. Johnson, Thomas, and Kelling (2021) analyze the discursive construction of hate speech in U.S. opinion journalism, exploring how ethical considerations shape public views on what constitutes harmful speech. In the U.S., the ethical implications of free speech are often overlooked in favor of protecting individual expression. However, in Canada, ethical considerations related to equality and dignity are embedded in the legal system, influencing the country's approach to hate speech.

The question of whether speech should be restricted to protect the vulnerable or whether it should be allowed to flourish as part of democratic discourse remains a central issue. Ethical frameworks such as those rooted in social justice and equality are critical in shaping the policies around hate speech regulation.



Cultural and Legal Perspectives in Canada and the U.S

Kang (2018) provides a comparative analysis of the legal treatment of hate speech and freedom of expression in Canada and the U.S., illustrating how cultural and historical contexts influence the regulation of speech. Canada's legal framework places a strong emphasis on protecting public order and promoting social harmony, particularly in a country with a diverse and multicultural population.

The U.S. places a higher value on individual freedoms, with the First Amendment providing broad protections for free speech. This divergence reflects deeper cultural differences between the two countries, with Canada emphasizing collective rights and the U.S. prioritizing individual liberties. These differing perspectives influence not only legal outcomes but also societal attitudes toward free speech and hate speech.

Humor, Satire, and Free Speech

Humor and satire often complicate the boundaries of acceptable speech, especially when they are used to convey offensive or harmful ideas. Godioli and Little (2022) explore how humor and free speech intersect in both the U.S. and Europe, noting that while humor can be an important tool for challenging societal norms, it can also perpetuate harmful stereotypes and incite hatred. In the U.S., the protection of speech, including satirical content, is often extended to include jokes and parody, even when they are offensive.

In Canada, however, there is greater sensitivity to the potential harm caused by offensive humor, particularly when it targets vulnerable groups. This difference highlights the complexities of regulating speech that falls into the gray area between free expression and hate speech.

Social Justice and Hate Speech Regulation

Demaske (2019) argues that a recognition based approach to hate speech regulation offers a more nuanced solution to the debate on free speech. This approach prioritizes the dignity and equality of marginalized groups, suggesting that hate speech undermines social justice by silencing and dehumanizing these communities.

From this perspective, regulating hate speech is not an infringement on free expression but a necessary step to ensure that all individuals are able to participate in society on an equal footing. This perspective challenges traditional liberal views that prioritize individual rights and calls for a broader understanding of freedom that includes social justice concerns.

The Role of Misinformation in the Hate Speech Debate

Misinformation on social media platforms has become a significant issue in the broader discussion of hate speech regulation. DePaula et al. (2018) discuss the challenges that platforms face in moderating content while preserving the principles of free speech. The rapid spread of misinformation online, particularly in the context of hate speech, has led to calls for stronger regulation of digital platforms.



However, DePaula et al. caution that regulation must be carefully calibrated to avoid suppressing legitimate expression while curbing harmful content. This ongoing challenge underscores the need for effective legal frameworks that can address both hate speech and misinformation in the digital age.

The Need for a Nuanced Approach

The existing literature demonstrates the complex nature of the debate between freedom of speech and hate speech regulation. From legal frameworks to ethical and philosophical considerations, the issue requires a nuanced approach that takes into account cultural, historical, and technological factors. As social media continues to evolve as a space for both expression and harm, the need for careful regulation becomes more urgent. This literature review highlights the importance of balancing the protection of individual rights with the need to safeguard vulnerable groups from the harmful effects of hate speech, providing a foundation for further research and policy development.

Historical Background of Free Speech and Hate Speech Laws

The tension between freedom of speech and hate speech regulation has deep roots in the history of democratic societies, particularly in countries like the United States and Canada. In the U.S., the protection of free speech is enshrined in the First Amendment to the Constitution, which has long been considered a cornerstone of American democracy. However, the interpretation of this protection has evolved, especially when it comes to speech that incites hatred or violence.

Early cases such as *Schenck v. United States* (1919) began to draw distinctions between protected speech and speech that posed a clear and present danger. This was later refined in *Brandenburg v. Ohio* (1969), where the Supreme Court ruled that speech could only be restricted if it incited imminent lawless action. Over time, this established a robust framework in the U.S. for protecting even controversial and offensive speech under the First Amendment, unless it directly threatens public order.

Canada has adopted a more cautious approach to freedom of speech, balancing it with the protection of public order and individual dignity. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982) guarantees freedom of thought, belief, opinion, and expression, but Section 1 of the Charter allows for reasonable limits on these rights when they are demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society. This principle was notably illustrated in *R. v. Keegstra* (1990), where the Supreme Court of Canada upheld laws restricting hate speech, emphasizing the importance of protecting vulnerable communities from harm.

The historical development of these legal principles reflects differing societal priorities in Canada and the U.S. with Canada placing greater emphasis on social harmony and the collective good, while the U.S. prioritizes individual liberties and the free exchange of ideas. This divergence has shaped the ongoing debates about how to balance the right to free speech with the need to prevent harm caused by hate speech.



Leading Legal Frameworks on Freedom of Speech and Hate Speech

The legal clash between freedom of speech and hate speech regulation remains one of the most contentious issues in both Canada and the United States. While both countries enshrine freedom of speech as a fundamental right, they approach its limitations and the regulation of hate speech in starkly different ways.

In the U.S., the First Amendment offers broad protection for free speech, even when it involves hate speech, unless it incites imminent violence or poses a direct threat to public safety, as established in landmark cases like *Brandenburg v. Ohio* (1969). This interpretation underscores a firm commitment to individual liberties, emphasizing the importance of a free marketplace of ideas, even at the cost of tolerating offensive or harmful speech.

Conversely, Canada's legal framework takes a more restrictive approach. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees free expression, but Section 1 allows for reasonable limits, particularly when speech infringes on the rights and dignity of others. The Supreme Court of Canada, in *R. v. Keegstra* (1990), upheld laws prohibiting hate speech, prioritizing social harmony and the protection of vulnerable groups over unrestrained expression.

This reflects Canada's emphasis on collective well being and social order, where hate speech is seen as detrimental to public cohesion and individual dignity. The differing legal perspectives in these countries highlight the ongoing tension between protecting individual freedoms and safeguarding the public from harmful speech.

Theories of Free Expression and Their Application to Hate Speech

The theoretical context of the debate between freedom of speech and hate speech regulation is grounded in philosophical, legal, and ethical principles that seek to balance individual rights with the protection of societal welfare. The foundation of this debate often draws from John Stuart Mill's harm principle, which posits that the only legitimate reason to restrict speech is to prevent harm to others (Brink, 2001).

In this context, freedom of speech is seen as a fundamental right that supports the exchange of ideas and the functioning of a democratic society. However, Mill's framework has been critiqued for not fully addressing the societal harm caused by hate speech, particularly when it targets marginalized groups and incites violence or discrimination.

Legal theorists argue about the limits of free speech, with some advocating for stronger regulation of hate speech to protect vulnerable communities, while others warn against infringing on individual liberties. In the U.S., the First Amendment's protection of free speech reflects a commitment to individual freedom, which often includes the right to express controversial or offensive views (Hassett, 2022).

Canadian legal philosophy places a higher value on social cohesion and human dignity, justifying restrictions on hate speech to preserve public order and prevent harm (Araujo,



2023). This theoretical divide shapes how each country approaches the regulation of hate speech while attempting to preserve the core value of free expression.

Balancing Free Speech and Hate Speech: Key Challenges and Opportunities

The regulation of hate speech in the context of freedom of speech presents numerous challenges, particularly with the rise of digital communication platforms. One of the primary challenges is defining what constitutes "hate speech" and distinguishing it from legitimate forms of expression. The ambiguity and subjectivity surrounding hate speech make it difficult to craft laws that are both effective in curbing harm and narrowly tailored to avoid infringing on free speech rights. In both the U.S. and Canada, the difficulty lies in creating a legal framework that can address the diverse forms of hate speech, especially in the digital space, while ensuring that it does not stifle public discourse.

In the U.S., the First Amendment's broad protection of free speech means that laws restricting hate speech are often challenged, creating tensions between safeguarding individual freedoms and preventing harmful expression. This has led to a reluctance in imposing legal limits on hate speech, even when it can contribute to violence or societal harm. Canada's legal framework allows for more restrictions on speech, but this has raised concerns about government overreach and the potential to infringe on free expression. Striking the right balance between curbing harmful speech and preserving fundamental freedoms is a delicate task.

Despite these challenges, there are opportunities for innovation in regulating hate speech. One promising avenue is the development of targeted regulation for online platforms, where harmful speech can spread quickly. Social media companies have the chance to implement stronger content moderation practices that can curb the spread of hate speech without infringing on legitimate free speech. Additionally, promoting education around civil discourse and empathy can help reduce the need for legal interventions by fostering a culture of mutual respect and understanding.

Discussion

The ongoing debate between freedom of speech and hate speech regulation highlights the complexities of balancing individual rights with the broader social interest of protecting people from harm. On one hand, the right to free speech is foundational in democratic societies, allowing individuals to express diverse opinions and challenge prevailing norms. However, when speech crosses the line into hate speech, it can cause significant harm, incite violence, and contribute to social divisions. This presents a fundamental dilemma: how can societies protect vulnerable individuals from harmful speech without infringing on the right to express controversial or unpopular views?

The legal frameworks in the U.S. and Canada offer contrasting approaches to this issue. The U.S. places strong emphasis on protecting free speech, often prioritizing it over restrictions on hate speech, unless the speech directly incites violence. This broad protection, while safeguarding individual freedoms, can also enable the proliferation of



harmful rhetoric, especially in online spaces where hate speech can spread rapidly. Canada's more restrictive approach seeks to prevent harm by limiting hate speech, but this raises concerns about the potential for censorship and the limitations it places on free expression.

Finding a middle ground is crucial. Societies must ensure that legal protections against hate speech do not stifle meaningful dialogue or the exchange of ideas. At the same time, effective measures need to be in place to prevent hate speech from undermining social cohesion and the safety of marginalized groups. Balancing these competing interests is an ongoing challenge that requires careful consideration of both legal and societal implications.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the tension between freedom of speech and hate speech regulation remains a complex and evolving issue, particularly in the legal contexts of Canada and the United States. While both nations value free expression as a fundamental right, their approaches to regulating hate speech reflect their differing cultural, social, and legal priorities. The U.S. prioritizes individual liberty, emphasizing the importance of free speech even when it involves offensive or harmful content.

This broad protection, however, can sometimes allow hate speech to thrive, especially in digital spaces. On the other hand, Canada strikes a more cautious balance by allowing restrictions on hate speech to protect social harmony and the dignity of marginalized groups. While this approach may prevent harm, it raises concerns about the potential for overreach and the suppression of legitimate expression.

As technology continues to evolve, particularly with the growth of social media, both countries face new challenges in effectively regulating hate speech while safeguarding the core principle of free speech. The opportunities lie in the development of nuanced legal frameworks and innovative solutions such as targeted online content regulation and education programs to promote civil discourse.

The challenge remains to create a legal landscape where the rights of individuals to express themselves are preserved, while also ensuring that vulnerable communities are protected from the harms of hate speech. A thoughtful and balanced approach is essential to navigate this delicate issue in a way that benefits society as a whole.

Recommendations

Develop Clear Definitions: governments should establish clear and precise legal definitions of hate speech to differentiate it from protected speech, reducing ambiguity and minimizing the risk of censorship.

Implement Context Based Regulation: hate speech laws should consider context, intent, and potential harm, ensuring that only speech that directly incites violence or discrimination is restricted, while allowing for broader free expression.



Strengthen Online Platform Regulations: social media companies should implement stronger content moderation policies that detect and address hate speech promptly; while ensuring they do not suppress legitimate free speech.

Promote Education on Civil Discourse: education systems should focus on teaching the value of respectful dialogue, critical thinking, and empathy, helping individuals engage in constructive conversations without resorting to hate speech.

Encourage Self Regulation by Media: traditional and digital media outlets should be encouraged to establish and enforce their own guidelines to limit the spread of harmful rhetoric, ensuring ethical reporting without stifling free speech.

Expand Hate Speech Research: governments and academic institutions should fund research to understand the impact of hate speech on communities, the effectiveness of existing laws, and the most effective ways to balance freedom of speech and public safety.

Support Victim Protection Programs: countries should implement policies and support services that help victims of hate speech and discrimination, providing legal recourse and psychological support.

Establish International Standards: countries should collaborate to create international standards for regulating hate speech, especially in the digital age, ensuring consistent protections and mutual legal recognition across borders.

Implement Progressive Dialogue Platforms: online platforms should develop tools to encourage dialogue between individuals with differing views, fostering understanding and reducing the tendency toward hate speech.

Regularly Review Legislation: hate speech laws should be periodically reviewed and updated in response to new social dynamics, technological advancements, and emerging trends to ensure they remain effective and fair.

Research Limitations

The difficulty in defining and measuring the impact of hate speech, which varies significantly across cultural, legal, and social contexts. The subjective nature of what constitutes "hate speech" and how it is perceived by different communities poses a challenge in establishing consistent criteria for analysis. The rapid evolution of digital communication platforms and the constantly changing nature of online discourse complicate the ability to assess the long term effects of hate speech regulation and the effectiveness of existing legal frameworks.

Another limitation is the reliance on existing legal cases and theoretical perspectives, which may not fully reflect the current challenges posed by emerging technologies such as social media and artificial intelligence. Moreover, the research does not account for the diverse experiences and opinions of marginalized groups who may be most affected by hate speech. These factors may limit the generalizability of the findings across different jurisdictions.

Research Implications



The findings of this research have several significant implications for both legal theory and practice. It highlights the need for more nuanced and context sensitive legal frameworks that balance freedom of speech with the protection of individuals from hate speech. This could lead to the development of clearer, more precise definitions and regulations that avoid overreach while ensuring that harmful speech is effectively addressed.

The research underscores the importance of considering the evolving digital landscape when crafting hate speech laws. As social media platforms and online forums continue to play a central role in public discourse, legal systems must adapt to address the unique challenges of regulating speech in these spaces without infringing on individual rights.

The implications extend to policy making and education, where greater emphasis on promoting civil discourse and respect for diversity could help reduce the prevalence of hate speech, fostering more inclusive societies.

Future Research Directions

As the debate surrounding freedom of speech and hate speech regulation continues to evolve, several key areas warrant further exploration. Future research can deepen our understanding of how existing frameworks function in practice, particularly in the context of rapidly changing digital landscapes. Below are some potential directions for future inquiry that could contribute to refining policies and creating a more effective balance between free expression and the protection from harm.

Effectiveness of Current Laws

Future research could examine the effectiveness of existing hate speech laws in both the U.S. and Canada, particularly in relation to digital platforms. As online spaces continue to grow, the adequacy of current legal frameworks to regulate hate speech without infringing on free expression needs thorough evaluation. Studies could investigate the practical challenges of enforcing these laws and suggest potential reforms to address gaps in regulation.

Comparative Legal Systems

A valuable area for future research is comparative studies between different countries and legal systems. Research could explore how different jurisdictions balance freedom of speech with the need to protect citizens from hate speech. Such studies could identify which legal models are most successful and provide recommendations for countries struggling to find this balance.

Psychological and Societal Impacts of Hate Speech

Future research should investigate the psychological and societal consequences of hate speech, particularly its impact on marginalized communities. By examining the short and long term effects of exposure to hate speech, scholars can provide evidence based



recommendations for policymakers to mitigate harm while protecting individual freedoms.

Role of Education and Media Literacy

Lastly, exploring the role of education in preventing hate speech is an important future research direction. Studies could assess the effectiveness of educational programs that promote civil discourse, critical thinking, and media literacy. By focusing on prevention through education, researchers could help reduce reliance on legal measures and foster a more inclusive society.

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