

## **Postdoctoral Researcher in Political Communication at the University of Zurich (3+1 years)**

The International and Comparative Media Research Division (Prof. Frank Esser) at the Department of Communication and Media Research (IKMZ) is seeking to fill the position of a **postdoctoral researcher** within the **SNF-funded research project “Political Social Media Influencers: An Empirical Investigation into Their Role and Influence on Youth Political Engagement”**.

The project investigates the mechanisms through which political social media influencers (PSMIs) affect the political engagement of young people across different countries and media systems. Using cutting-edge methods (natural language processing, computer vision, panel experiments, data donations), our project aims to map the landscape of PSMIs on platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube, and to understand how these influencers shape political discourse and mobilize young voters across three diverse media environments (Germany, Poland, and the United States). This position offers an excellent opportunity to contribute to a pioneering area of political communication and media research, with implications for both academic understanding and practical policy development in digital political communication and political engagement.

### **Your responsibilities**

- Interest in advancing communication research on the role of political social media influencers
- Take a leading role in the project’s work package on the influence of PSMIs on political discourse and engagement. This includes applying computational social science methods using large multi-lingual and multi-modal social media datasets, and working with donated social media data.
- Develop your own research agenda within the broader scope of the project
- Conduct and publish high-quality research in leading communication journals and at presentations at international conferences
- Collaborate with other project members and research assistants
- Provide support for project-related management and administrative tasks

### **Your profile**

- A very good doctoral degree in communication science (or close to completing) or an adjacent field (e.g. political science, sociology, social computing) with an interest in political communication and computational social science.
- Experience with computational text analysis methods, including large language models. Experience or interest in computer vision and/or network analysis is an additional asset.
- Strong programming skills in R and/or Python
- Analytical skills and capacity for independent, internationally visible research
- Enthusiasm for working in teams
- Willingness to move to Zurich and willingness to travel internationally to engage with project-relevant scientific communities
- Strong command of English. Knowledge of a language related to the project’s regional focus (German, Polish) is an additional asset.

### **What we offer**

- Participation in a cutting-edge research project funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation
- Opportunity to develop your own research agenda within the framework of the project

- Funding for conferences, additional training, and research activities
- 3 years of employment, with a possible extension of 1 year. The position's employment rate is 80%.
- An internationally competitive salary (ca. 5,000 CHF/month after taxes)
- A supportive, well connected, research-oriented team
- An attractive work environment: the University of Zurich is Switzerland's largest university. Zurich is a vibrant, cosmopolitan city that regularly ranks as one of the cities with the highest quality of life in the world

The position is available from 01.09.2024, or by agreement.

For informal inquiries and further information, please contact the current members of the project team Frank Esser ([f.esser@uzh.ch](mailto:f.esser@uzh.ch)) or Christian Pipal ([c.pipal@ikmz.uzh.ch](mailto:c.pipal@ikmz.uzh.ch)).

Please send your application in one pdf file to Dr. Christian Pipal ([c.pipal@ikmz.uzh.ch](mailto:c.pipal@ikmz.uzh.ch)). Applications should be submitted in English and must contain the following elements:

- (i) Letter of motivation
- (ii) Description of your research profile and your fit for the project
- (iii) Detailed academic CV
- (iv) Copies of degrees and relevant transcripts
- (v) Contact details of two academic referees who can speak to your academic qualifications
- (vi) Two copies of relevant research works (e.g. articles, working papers, dissertation chapter)

The application deadline is 29.05.2024. Online interviews are planned for the second week of June via Zoom.