PhD and Postdoc positions (m/f/d) at the Chair of Digital Governance, Department of Governance, TUM School of Social Sciences and Technology

Profs. Margaret E. Roberts and Yannis Theocharis are inviting applications for one PhD position (3 years) and one Postdoctoral Researcher position (3 years) in the context of the project **Transparency in Content Moderation**.

Transparency in Content Moderation is a 5-year project led by Prof. Margaret E. Roberts (University of California, San Diego), and conducted in collaboration with Profs. Yannis Theocharis (Technical University of Munich) and Nils Weidmann (University of Konstanz). It is supported by Prof. Roberts' Max Planck-Alexander von Humboldt Research Award. The project seeks to understand the current state of transparency in content moderation on major social media platforms, test how different types of transparency affect downstream users, and investigate how content moderation systems may be strategically subverted for nefarious aims.

The positions will be based at TUM's Chair of Digital Governance, a research and teaching unit at the Munich School of Politics and Public Policy and the Department of Governance which is its corresponding department within the TUM School of Social Sciences and Technology. The Chair's research agenda is interdisciplinary and has a particular interest in the application of advanced quantitative and computational methods to tackle a broad range of questions at the intersection of digital media and politics.

PhD position

The successful candidate will explore how different types of transparency affect user perceptions and behaviors on social media. Tasks include designing and executing online surveys and survey experiments across different countries to understand user awareness of content moderation policies and their reactions to disclosed practices. Candidates will be expected to support the project leaders with data collection and data analysis, project coordination and administrative tasks related to the project's operation (e.g. coordination of research assistants). They will be involved in the project's publication output and are expected to develop and carry out their own PhD project related to the broader focus of the project.

Your Qualifications
- A Master's degree in political science or a related social science discipline or interdisciplinary field
- Strong skills in quantitative methods, ideally with experience in surveys, survey experiments and causal inference techniques. Knowledge of text-as-data methods or machine-learning is an asset.

- Proficiency in R is required; familiarity with Python is a plus.
- Ambition to work on a project focused on a current heated topic, eagerness to make both theoretically exciting and empirically important contributions and apply cutting edge research methods
- Enthusiasm for working in a team as well as ability to work independently
- Strong ability to communicate in spoken and written English (applicants who do not have a degree from an English-language university or program, please indicate proficiency)

Your Responsibilities
- Build on an existing database of content moderation policies and design and conduct large-scale online surveys and survey experiments.
- Contribute to high-impact publications and the broader intellectual agenda of the project.
- Support with project coordination and administrative tasks.
- Lead publications and present findings at academic conferences.
- Actively participate in the intellectual life and research activities of the project, the Chair of Digital Governance, and the TUM School of Social Sciences and Technology
- Collaborate with other project and Chair members

Postdoctoral researcher position

The successful candidate will examine how transparency in content moderation can be exploited by malicious actors to circumvent controls. The research will involve leveraging insights from machine learning on strategic classification and conducting lab experiments to assess vulnerabilities to gaming in content moderation systems.

Your Qualifications
- A PhD in political science, computer science, or a related field.
- Expertise in experimental designs and computational methods.
- Proficiency in R and Python.
- Demonstrated ability to publish in top-tier journals.
- Interest in bridging theoretical and practical questions on content moderation and digital governance more broadly.

Your Responsibilities
- Conduct cutting-edge research on strategic classification, leveraging machine learning methods to analyze and understand adversarial behaviors in content selection systems.
- Design, implement, and analyze experiments to assess vulnerabilities and robustness of content moderation mechanisms to strategic manipulation or gaming.
- Lead publications and present findings at academic conferences.
- Support with project coordination and administrative tasks.
- Actively participate in the intellectual life and research activities of the project, the Chair of Digital Governance, and the TUM School of Social Sciences and Technology
- Collaborate with other project and Chair members

Our Offer

- Positions within a vibrant, international research team engaged in cutting-edge work.
- The PhD position is funded for 3 years, with remuneration at 75% of E-13 level on the German public service pay scale.
- The Postdoc position is funded for 2 years, with a possible extension, and remuneration at 100% of E-13 level.
- Funding support for conferences, additional training, research activities.

How to Apply

Please send the following materials electronically and as a single pdf file to digitalgovernance@hfp.tum.de:

- A motivation letter which gives a sense of your scholarly and career interests
- A current CV, including list of publications (if available)
- Academic transcripts providing specific information about all of your university-level coursework and/or a list of courses that is informative about your substantive and methodological preparation, including the level at which each course was taken and the grade obtained;
- if not readily apparent from the official transcripts, documentation of all degrees obtained; if you have not yet completed your Master´s degree, please indicate date of completion and award
- A research paper or other analytical writing sample published in English
- A list of two academic references who can speak to your qualification for doctoral research.

The application **deadline is February 1, 2025**. The expected starting date is May 2025. For questions, please contact Prof. Yannis Theocharis at yannis.theocharis@tum.de

The Chair of Digital Governance strongly supports the TUM's strategic goal of increasing the diversity of its staff. As an equal opportunity and affirmative action employer, we particularly encourage applications from women, people with disabilities, members of groups that are traditionally underrepresented in the academy, and others who would increase the diversity of the university's research and teaching staff.

As part of your application, you provide personal data to the Technical University of Munich (TUM). Please view our privacy policy on collecting and processing personal data in the course of the application process pursuant to Art. 13 of the General Data Protection Regulation of the European Union (GDPR) at https://portal.mytum.de/kompass/datenschutz/Bewerbung/.

By submitting your application, you confirm to have read and understood the data protection information provided by TUM. Find out more about us at www.tum.de and www.hfp.tum.de

Contact
Chair of Digital Governance

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