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**UNIVERSITÄT
BERN**

Faculty of Business, Economics and
Social Sciences

Departement of Social Sciences

**Institute of Communication and
Media Studies (icmb)**

Job offer

The Institute of Communication and Media Studies at the University of Bern (icmb) is looking for a

PhD student (75-100%)

**for the project "Through a Glass, Darkly: How to Study Authoritarian Regimes" funded by the Swiss
National Science Foundation**

This five-year project examines how foreign audiences learn about the inner workings of **authoritarian
regimes** (specifically the People's Republic of **China** and the **Russian Federation**), focusing on the **role
of country experts and their connections**. The position will be available **from September 1st, 2025** (or
by appointment).
Note that there is a 2nd position available in this project that focuses on implementing a panel survey
of China and Russia experts.

We offer:
- A **fully funded PhD position for four years**, with a starting salary of approximately **50'000 CHF**
  and **no teaching requirements**. Compensated teaching assignments may be available, subject
  to departmental needs. Employment adheres to the regulations of the Canton of Berne.
- An attractive work environment with a collegial and **international team**, committed to sup-
  porting young scholars through cooperation and exchange.
- The **freedom to develop your own ideas for your dissertation** and request additional support
  from the University of Bern's Data Science Lab.

Tasks:
- **Write a dissertation** within the broader scope of the project
- **Adapt open-source LLMs to extract elite networks from unstructured text**, including adapting
  them to Russian and Chinese texts
- Help collect publicly available data on the experts and their social media and publications
- Help disseminate results and organize stakeholder conferences

Requirements:
- An above-average completed or soon-to-be completed **master's degree in communication
  science, political science, or other relevant social sciences**. Applicants with a master's level
  background in **computer science** and a strong interest in social science are also welcome to
  apply.

- Proven **quantitative research** and data science skills, experience working with **ML applications and/or APIs**, and interest in using **LLMs as research tools.**
- Excellent **English** skills (German and French is an asset)
- Ability to work independently as well as collaboratively within interdisciplinary and cross-institutional teams.
- Chinese and/or Russian language skills are an asset, as is demonstrated interest in the politics of those two countries

To apply for this position, please submit to franziska.keller@unibe.ch **one PDF file with a letter of motivation** including research interests and ideas, a **current CV** including a list of publications (if available), a **writing sample** (e.g. MA thesis), a copy of university **transcripts and degrees**, and a **letter of recommendation** by **July 14th, 2025**. Late submissions will be considered until the position is filled. Contact Franziska Keller if you have questions regarding this position.

The interviews will take place on **Monday 28th / Tuesday 29th of July 2025**.