Thesis Proposal

1. **What is your research topic?**

   > **You are first asked to choose two field of studies most related to your thesis project. In the next step you are required to elaborate more on your topic (1-2 sentences).**

   1. Data Science

   2. Other: Public Opinion

   My research topic is the utilization of Wikipedia data as an alternative method for measuring and analyzing public attention and information-seeking behavior during public health emergencies, specifically using the 2022-2023 multi-country mpox (formerly known as monkeypox) outbreak as a case study. The research topic was inspired, in part, by two of Prof. Munzert's proposed projects: "Measuring citizens' issue attention using Wikipedia data" and "Global attention towards climate change and public health."

   Data Sources:

   - Mpox case data

   - Wikipedia views

   - R's wikipediatrend package

2. **What is your research question?**

   > **At this stage, your research question will not be fully formed, and you may currently be considering more than one question. Your question will also change and evolve throughout the project. Nevertheless, it is important for us, and for you, to know which questions you will**

> ## consider addressing, so please list your key question(s) of interest. (max. 75 words)

<u>RQ</u>: How can Wikipedia data be effectively utilized as a metric to gauge public attention and information-seeking behavior during the global mpox outbreak of 2022-2023?

<u>Sub-questions</u>:

- How long is public attention is held by public health emergencies?

- To what extent is public attention correlated with disease impact (as measured by cases and/or deaths)?

- How do geography and differences across populations affect attention to public health emergencies?

- Is Wikipedia an effective source for measuring public attention to outbreaks, particularly when they affect only a segment of the population, as with mpox?

- How does Wikipedia data compare to other sources (e.g., Google Trends) when it comes to gauging public attention towards outbreaks?

These questions will evolve and refine as the research progresses.

3. **Why would you like to explore this question?**

> ## Please let us know why you are curious about your research topic, and why you think your question(s) are worth exploring. (max. 100 words)

As the world becomes increasingly interconnected and climate change elevates the risk of zoonotic spillover events, it becomes ever more susceptible to global-scale outbreaks. In this context, the ability to measure public attention towards public health emergencies becomes critical for policymakers. Wikipedia's vast user base and highly granular data make it a valuable resource for surveilling trends in public interest. This research could provide insights into the dynamics of public attention in the face of public health emergencies. Having worked with WHO's mpox team during my Professional Year, I have familiarity with the subject matter and moreover am fascinated by the topic.

4. **What are the scholarly debates to which your thesis will relate?**

> **These debates can be, for example: theoretical, empirical, normative, related to policy, or a combination of these. (max. 100 words)**

- Open Source Data for Public Health Surveillance: Examining the utility and limitations of using public data sources like Wikipedia to monitor and assess public health events, contributing to ongoing discussions about their reliability and relevance. (Compare to similar research performed using Google Trends data which has its own limitations; Yan, Du, et al.)

- Information Dissemination and Public Awareness: Investigating the extent to which public awareness of outbreaks is shaped by the impact (number of cases and/or deaths), connecting with debates about information ecosystems and their impact on public health communication.

- Policy Implications: Discussing the potential policy recommendations and interventions that can arise from a better understanding of public attention and information-seeking behavior during outbreaks on digital platforms.

5. **What type of research methods are you planning to perform?**

> **You will be provided with a comprehensive list of research methods commonly applied for social sciences and policy studies. Select the option most closely related to your project.**

Quantitative designs - descriptive designs (descriptive inference)

6. **What type of data collection strategy are you planning to conduct?**

> **You will be provided with a comprehensive list of data collection strategies commonly used for social sciences and policy studies. You may choose up to 3 options.**

- Databanks and statistical repositories
- Other quantitative data collection methods

7. **What are your supervision preferences?**

You will be able to pick and rank your top 5 choices of supervisors among the Hertie School faculty. Please note that (1) supervisors have limited supervision capacities, (2) supervisors in high demand will select their students based on the quality and relevance of their proposals, and (3) while we do our best to ensure that students get to work with supervisors of their choice, inevitably there are cases where top choice supervisor matches are not possible due to mismatches between supervision demand and capacity in specific topics.

1. Munzert, Simon

2. Tripodi, Egon

3. Ornaghi, Arianna

4. Traxler, Christian

5. Magazinnik, Asya

8. **Are you planning to pair with another student to write your thesis?**

You may still change your mind about this, but if you already know you will be working with someone, please indicate it here and provide your thesis partner's name.

No