Behavioral Scientist at the Postdoc Level (f/m/div), Developing and Testing Crime Reduction Interven
Max Planck Institute for the Study of Crime, Security and Law

Job Title	Behavioral Scientist at the Postdoc Level (f/m/div), Developing and Testing Crime Reduction Interven
Department	Criminology
	https://csl.mpg.de/criminology/research-program
Institution	Max Planck Institute for the Study of Crime, Security and Law
	Freiburg im Breisgau, Baden-Würtemberg, Germany
Date Posted	Aug. 2, 2024
Application Deadline	Sep. 8, 2024
Position Start Date	Available from the earliest possible starting date
Job Categories	Post-Doc
Academic Field(s)	Psychology - Behavior Analysis
	Criminology/Criminal Justice
Job Website	https://recruitingapp-5535.de.umantis.com/Vacancies/463/Description/2
Apply Online Here	https://recruitingapp-5535.de.umantis.com/Vacancies/463/Application/New/2
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Job Description

The Department of Criminology at the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Crime, Security and Law, in Freiburg i. Br., Germany is looking for a

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Behavioral Scientist at the Postdoc Level (f/m/div), Developing and Testing Crime Reduction Interventions in Public Space using Virtual Reality.

Your profile

We are seeking to recruit a behavioral scientist at the postdoc level with a strong empirical background and a keen interest in crime prevention and behavioral interventions. You will work with an international and interdisciplinary team of researchers and virtual reality developers to create and subsequently test interventions to reduce crime in urban settings.

The challenge

The criminologist's key predicament resides in its object of study: crime takes place outside our field of view. As a consequence, criminologists have historically prioritized studying the properties of individuals and the social factors that propel them into and out of crime (e.g., peers, gangs, neighborhoods, dispositions) over their decision-making and examining the crime event.

The MAXLab Virtual Twin Program will seek to address this gap by using virtual reality (VR) to test the effect of interventions in preventing crime and/or increasing public safety. For this purpose, VR replicas of street segments, squares, or other public spaces, i.e., "virtual twins" of the city of Freiburg (and potentially other cities), will be developed experimentally manipulated. This approach enables the creation of realistic and ecologically valid versions of these areas while maintaining researcher control. Additionally, in a departure from conventional field experiments, VR experiments provide access to the research population and hence can tap into individuals' motivations, emotions, and cognitions. This approach can offer unique insights into how interventions may work and for whom. Consequently, the research project can break new ground in advancing our understanding of criminal and anti-social behavior and how to reduce it.

Interventions may involve human presence (e.g., number and type of guardians present, 'eyes on the street') or entail physical changes to the environment (e.g., CCTV cameras, dynamic street lighting).

Candidates will be encouraged to come up with their own ideas for innovative interventions, which they subsequently test in virtual reality. The first phase of the project is dedicated to designing the intervention(s); consulting with practitioners, officials, and other stakeholders; and to the organization of a hackathon in which researchers from different disciplines, VR developers, and other stakeholders will join forces to provide the basis for the next generation of criminological intervention research.

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Implementation, testing, and data analysis are likely to begin during the second year of the position. The postdoc is supervised by Prof. Dr. Dr. Jean-Louis van Gelder and Prof. Dr. Dan S. Nagin from Carnegie Mellon University (Max Planck Law Research Fellow).

About us

The Max Planck Institute for the Study of Crime, Security and Law (MPI-CSL) is a growing European center for research in criminology, public security matters, and criminal law. The Institute is part of the Max Planck Society for the Advancement of Science – Germany's flagship research organization.

The Department of Criminology at the MPI-CSL offers a highly interdisciplinary and dynamic research environment in which criminologists, psychologists, sociologists, mathematicians, and computer scientists work together to understand the causes and consequences of criminal behavior and to develop effective interventions for the prevention of crime and the facilitation of offender rehabilitation. The department pushes the boundaries of crime research through the application of innovative methods, developmental theories of crime, and real-world application. It currently hosts three researchers with prestigious individual European Research Council (ERC) grants.

The Institute, with its approximately 150 employees, is located in Freiburg im Breisgau (Germany), a dynamic university city with a 900-year history. The city in the trinational border region (Germany, Switzerland, and France) impresses newcomers with its high quality of life and international flair. Freiburg ranked third on Lonely Planet's "Best in Travel 2022" list of the top ten city destinations in the world.

Contact Information

Please reference Academickeys in your cover letter when applying for or inquiring about this job announcement.

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