RESOURCING/

JOB DESCRIPTION:

Post-Doctoral Research Associate

Ref Number:	**HSS-125-22**
Salary Scale:	**Grade 7: £35,326 - £39,739 per annum Appointment will likely be made at Grade 7:31, £35,326 due to funding restrictions**
Contract:	**Full time for a fixed-term period of 3 years**
School/Department:	**School of Psychology**
Location:	**University of Kent, Canterbury Campus**
Responsible to:	**Dr Nikhil Sengupta (principal grant holder) or their nominee**
Expected start date:	**5th September 2022**

The Role

We are seeking to hire a Post-Doctoral Research Associate with expertise in conducting survey research in social and political psychology for a project focussing on the antecedents and consequences of political attitudes. The post is funded by a 5-year European Research Council Starting Grant awarded to Dr Nikhil Sengupta, titled "The psychology of public policy: Inequality, immigration and international relations (PSYPOL)".

The successful candidate will work with Dr Sengupta at the School of Psychology, University of Kent, UK, alongside a full-time project administrator, several graduate students and research assistants. Key responsibilities include data analysis, dissemination of findings in the form of conference presentations and publications in academic journals, as well as assisting with survey design, data collection, data management, and the organisational aspects of the project (e.g., co-ordinating the work of research assistants). It is expected that the successful applicant will be highly familiar with major theories and research in political psychology, and will have extensive experience with quantitative research methods (in particular, multilevel and longitudinal modelling). Additionally, familiarity with experiments, experience sampling, and network analysis, as well experience in applying multiple methods to a given research question are desirable.

The project involves two largescale data collection initiatives – a four-wave longitudinal survey of 50,000 adults and an eight-wave longitudinal survey of 20,000 adolescents. The adult survey will also involve the use of a custom app that will enable the sample to serve as a participant pool for nested experimental and experience sampling designs. The adolescent survey will

include full network information for each participant, allowing for the application of network analysis. Each survey will be fairly extensive, allowing for the inclusion of a very wide range of constructs relevant to the projects objectives (see below). The "political attitudes" referred to in this project centre around policy preferences in the domains of inequality, immigration and international relations, but are not confined solely to these domains, nor restricted solely to policy preferences (e.g., broader attitudes such as partisanship, xenophobia, ideology, and values will also be examined). The project main objectives are described in brief below:

Objective 1: social antecedents of political attitudes. This focusses on the effects of peers, norms and social identity in the development of political attitudes in adolescence and adulthood. It will also consider the effects of media exposure and political communication in shaping political attitudes. This objective will primarily use data from the adult panel study, nested experiencing sampling data, and network data from the adolescent study.

Objective 2: cognitive antecedents of political attitudes. This focusses on the effects of cognitive biases and heuristics in shaping political attitudes. Data for this part of the project will be drawn primarily from the adult panel study and the nested experiments.

Objective 3: motivational antecedents of political attitudes. This focusses on the effects of basic human needs, motives and dispositions in shaping political attitudes. Data for this part of the project will be drawn from the adult panel study, nested experiments, and adolescent network study.

Objective 4: individual consequences of political attitudes. This focusses on the effects of political attitudes on people's political behaviour (e.g., voting or protest intentions) and well as their wellbeing and psychological adjustment. Data from both the adult and adolescent samples are relevant to this objective.

Objective 5: structural consequences of political attitudes. This focusses on the effects of individual-level political attitudes on structural outcomes such as policy change, election results, demographic or regional change etc. Data from the adult survey will be used for this objective.

The successful candidate will leverage the largescale data generated by this project to advance the project's objectives as well as their own research interests. Given the broad scope of the research questions above, a wide range of topics in social, political, cognitive and developmental psychology can be investigated under the purview of the project. The post holder will thus be helping to set up a rich database that will generate scientific insights for many years to come, and will have ongoing access to this database to support their own research plans.

Key Accountabilities / Primary Responsibilities

- Complete and disseminate studies in line with the project's aims

- Assist with administrative aspects of data collection and management

- Actively contribute to the research culture of the School of Psychology

Key Duties

- Develop, conduct and coordinate the research as indicated in the grant proposal

- Write up research for publication and presen the project's findings at relevant national and international conferences

- Continually update knowledge and understanding in field or specialism

- Manage own research and administrative activities, with guidance if required

- Such other duties, commensurate with the grading of the post that may be assigned by Dr Nikhil Sengupta or their nominee

Health, Safety & Wellbeing Considerations

This role involves undertaking duties which include the health, safety, and wellbeing issues outlined below. Please be aware of these, when considering your suitability for the role.

- Regular use of Screen Display Equipment

Internal & External Relationships

Internal: The post holder will report to Dr Sengupta and work directly with him, the Project Officer, as well as several graduate students and research assistants on a day-to-day basis. The post holder will be part of a vibrant social and political psychology research groups at the University of Kent (for more information see: https://research.kent.ac.uk/political-psychology/ and https://research.kent.ac.uk/social-psychology/).

External: The post holder will be in regular communication external stakeholders of the project (e.g., schools, local councils, survey participants).

Person Specification

The Person Specification details the necessary skills, qualifications, experience, or other attributes needed to carry out the job. Please be aware that your application will be measured against the criteria published below. Applications will be deemed unsuccessful if an essential criterion is not met. This may also help you self-select if you are suitable for the role.

Selection panels will be looking for clear evidence and examples in your application which back up any assertions you make in relation to each criterion.

Qualifications / Training	Essential	Desirable	Assess via*
A doctorate (completed or submitted) or equivalent qualification or experience in psychology—preferably with a focus in political psychology—or a related discipline	✓		A

Experience / Knowledge	Essential	Desirable	Assess via*
An excellent record of publications in quality peer reviewed journals, commensurate with stage of career	✓		A
Experience conducting advanced statistical analyses, including longitudinal and multilevel modelling	✓		A/I
Experience using statistical packages such as R, Mplus, SPSS	✓		A/I
Experience designing surveys and experiments	✓		A
Demonstration of ability to work as an independent researcher and be self-motivated	✓		A/I
Familiarity with research literatures that apply theories from social and/or personality and/or cognitive and/or developmental psychology to the study of political attitudes, broadly construed	✓		A/I
Experience conducting research that leverages multiple methods (e.g., surveys + experiments) to produce more robust empirical findings		✓	A/I
Experience managing large and complex datasets		✓	A/I

Skills / Abilities	Essential	Desirable	Assess via*
Ability to conduct independent research by formulating research questions, designing studies and testing hypotheses	✓		A/I/T
Excellent interpersonal, organisational and problem-solving skills	✓		I
Effective written and verbal communication skills	✓		A/I/T
Excellent oral and visual presentation skills	✓		I
High degree of initiative, independence, and self-motivation	✓		I
Excellent project management skills	✓		A/I

Additional Attributes	Essential	Desirable	Assess via*
Interest in and willingness to learn more about ongoing advances in longitudinal survey methodology	✓		A/I
Interest and willingness to train, supervise, and mentor students and research assistants		✓	I
Continued interest to develop professional profile, knowledge, and skills	✓		A/I
Ability to collaborate with colleagues within and beyond the School		✓	I

*Criterion to be assessed via:
A   **= application form or CV/cover letter**
I   **= interview questions**
T   **= test or presentation at interview**