

CORE JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title:	Research Fellow in Anti-Autocratic Messaging
Grade:	Research Fellow, Grade 7
School:	Law, Politics and Sociology
Location:	Hybrid – two days per week on campus at the University of Sussex, Falmer (near Brighton)
Responsible to:	Dr. Dan Paget (NEWREPUBLIC principal investigator)
Direct reports:	
Key contacts:	Dr. Dan Paget (NEWREPUBLIC principal investigator)
Role description:	The Research Fellow in Anti-Autocratic Messaging will be a key part of the team for the research project entitled NEWREPUBLIC. The postholder's role will be research-focused. The role is designed to enable them to develop their publication profile and prepare to take their next step in an academic career.

NEWREPUBLIC

NEWREPUBLIC is a European Research Council (ERC) Starting Grant investigating two of the most urgent questions in contemporary politics: what ideas animate anti-autocratic movements, and how effective are these ideas as messages for persuading and mobilising against autocracy? Despite the global resurgence of authoritarianism, systematic evidence on anti-autocratic messaging remains remarkably scarce. NEWREPUBLIC will open a new field of research into this vital question. It will be undertaken by a team of six led by principal investigator Dr. Dan Paget.

The research

The project will include five or more surveys with in-built experiments. They will be fielded in a number of African countries, locations to be determined, but they will be used to generate findings of global, not regional, significance. Through this frontier-advancing research, combining experimental design, public opinion analysis and

content analysis, NEWREPUBLIC will generate both scholarly contributions and actionable insights for anti-autocratic practitioners, worldwide.

The position

The Research Fellow in Anti-Autocratic Messaging will be central to the project's success, working closely with the principal investigator and another research fellow to design two or more online experiments, undertake the quantitative analysis, co-author publications in top-tier journals, and engage with practitioners internationally. The postholder will build expertise in an important and fast-growing field while contributing to research with tangible real-world relevance.

Why Sussex

The University of Sussex has a distinguished Politics Department with particular strengths in the politics of autocratisation, state capture and political ideology. It houses the world-leading [Centre for the Study of Corruption](#), and has close links to Sussex's [Institute for Development Studies](#), which is consistently ranked first in the world in the QS World Rankings. It is host to the [School for Progressive Futures](#). NEWREPUBLIC has links with all of these institutions.

The University of Sussex is located just outside of Brighton, one of the UK's most dynamic and liveable cities. In TimeOut's 2025 rankings, Brighton is the [happiest city in the UK](#), and the 11th happiest in the world. It is one hour from London by train.

This is a hybrid role, with twice-weekly presence on-campus as the norm, but precise arrangements to be agreed with the principal investigator. For informal enquiries, please contact Dr. Dan Paget at d.paget@sussex.ac.uk.

PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES

1. **Research.** The postholder will contribute to the designing, commissioning, and analysing of the aforementioned online surveys, as well as the publication-writing stemming from them, and other project research.
2. **Impact.** NEWREPUBLIC has an ambitious agenda to reach practitioners and shape best practice in anti-autocratic messaging, worldwide. As a secondary responsibility, the postholder will contribute to that knowledge-exchange and impact work.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Under the direction of the principal investigator, and in collaboration with others:

1. **Research**
 - 1.1 Contribute to the design, inclusive of survey scripting, sampling strategy and pre-analysis planning, for two or more online surveys with built-in experiments.

- 1.2 Contribute to the execution of those surveys, inclusive of platform selection, survey script loading, treatment production, and survey placement.
- 1.3 Contribute to the analysis of data generated from the surveys.
- 1.4 Contribute to the management of data generated from the survey.
- 1.5 Contribute to the writing of publications and reports based on that data.
- 1.6 Contribute to the research dissemination and networking of NEWREPUBLIC, inclusive of attending and presenting at conferences and/or co-organising research workshops.
- 1.7 Engage in continuous professional development.
- 1.8 Contribute to the wider research agenda associated with NEWREPUBLIC through research, publication and administration, at the discretion of the principal investigator.

2. Impact

- 2.1 Contribute to international and practitioner-oriented outreach, knowledge-exchange and networking on behalf of NEWREPUBLIC.
- 2.2 Contribute to the generation of practitioner-oriented reports, op-eds, social media content, and other resources.
- 2.3 Contribute to organising, attending and addressing practitioner-oriented events worldwide.
- 2.4 Develop relevant practitioner and academic contacts and networks.

This Job Description sets out current duties of the post that may vary from time to time without changing the general character of the post or level of responsibility entailed.

INDICATIVE PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- Publication of co-authored articles in highly-regarded political science journals.
- Independent design and commissioning of two online survey experiments.
- Independent analysis of survey data and drafting of corresponding text for inclusion in published articles in accordance with the highest standards in political science.
- Demonstrated competence in preparing and delivering papers and presentations at conferences and events.
- Consistent meeting of deadlines, attendance of meetings, and independent management of time.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

1. PhD (awarded or about to be awarded) in political science or equivalent subject.
2. Publications in highly-ranked peer-reviewed journals, commensurate with career-stage, which utilise advanced quantitative research methods.
3. Fluency in R or Stata.
4. Expertise in survey experiment design, execution, and analysis.
5. Expertise in public opinion analysis, including factor analysis.
6. Expertise in political messaging, political behaviour, discourse studies, and/or ideology studies.

DESIRABLE CRITERIA

1. Expertise in autocratic politics, democratic resilience, and/or anti-autocratic movements in Africa.
2. Interest in researching the ideas and messages of anti-autocratic movements.
3. Experience working as part of a close-knit small team.
4. Experience placing online surveys in Africa.
5. Fluency in French, Luganda, Portuguese, and/or another language spoken in Africa (note to prospective applicant: please do not be deterred from applying if you lack one or more of the desirable criteria, especially this one).