

**Research Associate for the project “PANCOPOP: Pandemic Communication in Times of Populism”
Full-time and fixed-term for 21 months, starting 1st May 2022 or as soon as possible thereafter.**

Job Ref: REQ220219

As part of the University’s ongoing commitment to redeployment, please note that this vacancy may be withdrawn at any stage of the recruitment process if a suitable redeployee is identified.

Please note: this appointment is subject to formal consent by the project partners, due to be confirmed prior to the interview date.

Project Description

The PANCOPOP project will develop a comprehensive, comparative study of health crisis communication in the context of populist politics, bringing significant advances in knowledge at the intersection of political communication and public health. Research will examine the impact of populism on four aspects of the pandemic communication circuit during COVID-19: government-led health crisis communication, media policy, media coverage, and public attitudes. The fifth strand will take a transnational perspective and analyse how the interaction between populism and pandemic communication was shaped by China and Russia’s pandemic geopolitics. The focus will be on four countries that were led by populist leaders during the pandemic, and which capture different types of populist responses to the pandemic: Brazil, Poland, Serbia, and the USA.

This research will inform recommendations aimed at building more resilient media organisations that are better equipped to withstand the challenges of future pandemics in divided societies. The recommendations will be developed and disseminated in collaboration with key organisations representing media regulators, communication professionals, and public service media.

The post holder will work under the joint supervision of Professor Sabina Mihelj and Dr Vaclav Stetka and will be responsible for data collection and analysis in Serbia (including interview analysis, policy analysis, public opinion survey, and media content analysis), as well as for conducting the comparative analysis of public attitudes in four countries, and for supporting the delivery of impact activities. They will also collaborate with other team members based in Brazil, USA and Poland.

The post will be based in the Communication and Media Division, School of Social Sciences and Humanities, and affiliated with the Centre for Research in Communication and Culture.

<https://www.lboro.ac.uk/subjects/communication-media/>

<https://www.lboro.ac.uk/research/crcc/>

Job Description

Job Grade: Specialist and Supporting Academic Grade 6

Job Purpose

The researcher's primary responsibilities will be to (1) play a central role in the 'Public Attitudes' strand of the project, assisting with quantitative (survey) data collection, analysis and management for all four countries covered in the project, (2) contribute to data collection and analysis related to Serbia for other project strands (Health Crisis Communication, Media Policy, Media Coverage, Pandemic Geopolitics), (3) play a central role in impact activities, assisting with stakeholder communication and event organisation.

Job Duties

- Actively participate in the design of the population survey, scheduled to launch in October-November 2022, and assist with its adaptation for all four project countries
- Communicate with the polling company that will distribute the questionnaire in Serbia, and coordinate with project partners collecting survey data in other countries
- Be responsible for the storing of all quantitative data from the project, and for coordinating the process of backing up and long-term storing and archiving of all project data in the UK Data Service, in consultation with Loughborough University's Research Data Manager and project partners
- Undertake statistical analyses of survey data for all four countries
- Undertake data collection and analysis in Serbia for other project strands, including qualitative media coverage analysis (using framing analysis) and media policy analysis, and relevant literature and secondary research related to Serbia
- Actively participate in the organisation of impact activities, including two main stakeholder meetings (provisionally planned for June 2022 and October 2023) and follow-up activities with individual stakeholders
- Assist with the organisation of the conference symposium (provisionally planned for May 2023)
- Contribute to the writing of project reports, journal articles, policy recommendations and other outputs, taking on the role of lead, co-author, or assistant as appropriate
- Attend academic conferences and (co-)present project's findings
- Contribute to the project's website and social media accounts, and to disseminating project's outcomes via these and other channels, including a project video
- Contribute ideas for new research and enterprise directions
- Maintain confidentiality and ensure that intellectual property (IPR) agreements are not violated
- Engage in training programmes in the University (or elsewhere) that are consistent with the needs and aspirations of the project and those of the Division and School
- Undertake other duties as may be reasonably requested and that are commensurate with the nature and grade of the post

Points To Note

The purpose of this job description is to indicate the general level of duties and responsibility of the post. The detailed duties may vary from time to time without changing the general character or level of responsibility entailed.

Special Conditions

All staff have a statutory responsibility to take reasonable care of themselves, others and the environment and to prevent harm by their acts or omissions. All staff are therefore required to adhere to the University's Health, Safety and Environmental Policy & Procedures.

All staff should hold a duty and commitment to observing the University's Equality & Diversity policy and procedures at all times. Duties must be carried out in accordance with relevant Equality & Diversity legislation and University policies/procedures.

Successful completion of probation will be dependent on attendance at the University's mandatory courses which include Respecting Diversity and, where appropriate, Recruitment and Selection.

Organisational Responsibility

Person Specification

Your application will be reviewed with respect to meeting the essential and desirable criteria listed below. Applicants are strongly advised to explicitly state and evidence how they meet each of the essential (and desirable) criteria in their application. Stages of assessment are as follows:

- 1 – Application
- 2 – Test/Assessment Centre/Presentation
- 3 – Interview

Essential Criteria

Area	Criteria	Stage
Experience	Background in media/communication studies, political science, sociology, or another related discipline	1,3
	Demonstrable knowledge of at least one of the following fields and relevant literature: political communication, media sociology, Eastern European politics and society, or a cognate area relevant to the project focus	1,2,3
	Demonstrable knowledge of media, politics, and society in Serbia	1,2,3
	Experience of using quantitative social science methodologies, particularly surveys and advanced statistical techniques using survey data	1,2,3
	Experience of qualitative social science methodologies, particularly qualitative analysis of textual data	1,2,3
Skills and abilities	Ability to design and implement population surveys, using questionnaires	1,3
	Ability to analyse large data sets utilizing advanced statistical techniques	1,3
	Ability to conduct qualitative framing analysis	1,3
	Ability to conduct media policy analysis	
	Ability to author original research work	1,3
	Active knowledge of SPSS or other comparable quantitative software packages	1,3
	Excellent written and spoken English	1,2,3
	Active knowledge of Serbian	1,2,3
	Excellent time management and ability to complete agreed work commitments on time	1,3
	Excellent interpersonal and organisational skills	1,3
	Competence in IT skills, Internet usage and social media (e.g. web site development, social media accounts management)	1,3
	Interest in engaging in mixed methods research	1,3
	Ability to engage in impact generation with non-academic stakeholders, for instance through preparing stakeholder reports, presentations and other collaborative activities	1,3
Training	A willingness to undertake further training as appropriate and to adopt new procedures as and when required	1,3

Qualifications	PhD, or very close to completion, in media/communication studies, sociology, political science or another related social science discipline	1
Other	Travel / Able to travel Independently	1,3

Desirable Criteria

Area	Criteria	Stage
Experience	Research experience with one or more of the project's key research areas, i.e., political communication (especially in relation to populism), political polarization and public attitudes, health communication (especially in relation to health crisis communication)	1,3
	Experience with comparative, cross-country research	1,3
	Experience of engaging in mixed methods research	1,3
	Experience of engaging in impact generation with non-academic stakeholders	1,3
	Working in a high quality academic research environment	1,3
Skills and abilities	Proven ability to publish in high quality academic journals and present at academic conferences	1,3
	Active knowledge of NVivo, or other comparable qualitative analysis data analysis software packages	1,3
	Proven ability to use mixed methods or qualitative methodologies	1,3

Conditions of Service

The position is full-time and fixed term for 21 months. Salary will be on Specialist and Supporting Academic Grade 6, £31,406 to £40,927 per annum, at a starting salary to be confirmed on offer of appointment.

The appointment will be subject to the University's Terms and Conditions of Employment for staff grades 6 and above, details of which can be found [here](#).

The University is committed to enabling staff to maintain a healthy work-home balance and has a number of family-friendly policies which can be found [here](#).

The University offers a wide range of employee benefits which can be found [here](#).

We also offer an on-campus nursery with subsidised places, subsidised places at local holiday clubs and a childcare voucher scheme (further details are available at: <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/services/hr/a-z/childcare-information---page.html>)

In addition, the University is supportive, wherever possible, of flexible working arrangements. We also strive to create a culture that supports equality and celebrates diversity throughout the campus. The University holds a Bronze Athena SWAN award which recognises the importance of support for women at all stages of their academic career. For further information on Athena SWAN see <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/services/hr/athena-swan/>