

2 two-year postdocs on children's political socialization at Aarhus University

The Department of Political Science at Aarhus University invites applications for two two-year full-time postdoctoral researchers to join an [ERC-funded research project](#) on children and youths' conceptions of political power (YOPOW). The project is headed by Associate Professor [Kristina Bakkær Simonsen](#) with whom the postdocs will be working closely together. The starting date is flexible and subject to mutual agreement but expected to be between September 2026 and February 2027.

The research project

Political marginalization, understood as the systematic underrepresentation of social groups in political office, is a major democratic problem. To understand its entrenched, structural nature, the YOPOW project will examine how societal norms take root already early in life and give rise to beliefs about who is fit for power.

The project is organized around three work packages. Work package I examines the *messages* children and youth receive about political power in school materials, children's news media, and politicians' social media. Work package II studies their *beliefs* about political power. Finally, work package III zooms in on the early *experiences* of politically interested youth and how these experiences teach them lessons about their own fit in politically powerful positions. The two positions advertised in this call focus primarily on the second work package.

The YOPOW research project runs for five years from August 2025 until July 2030 and is carried out by a team of three postdocs, two research assistants, and Associate Professor Kristina Bakkær Simonsen as the project leader. The two postdocs advertised in this call will be responsible for developing the qualitative design for storytelling interviews to be conducted among 12–15-year-old children to examine their beliefs about political power. The project is funded by an ERC Starting Grant, the flagship funding program of the European Union, which supports frontier, cutting-edge research. Read more about the project [here](#) in an interview with Kristina Bakkær Simonsen and check out the [project homepage](#).

Job description

The two postdocs are expected to engage in collaborative research with project leader Kristina Bakkær Simonsen and other team members. The postdocs will take on leading roles in developing, designing, and coordinating work package II, which seeks to understand children's beliefs about what political power is, who can hold it, and how it can be exercised.

The methodological emphasis of the positions is on qualitative interviewing and interpretive and qualitative content analysis. Core tasks involve recruitment of participating schools in different countries, seeking ethical approval of the study (IRB), communicating with schools, parents, and children, developing the interview guide using age-appropriate questions/tasks, conducting interviews, analyzing interview transcripts, and writing academic articles based on the data.

YOPOW seeks to deliver cross-national evidence across the three work packages, with work package II oriented toward a small set of countries varying on political descriptive representation of gender, class, and ethnic minorities. The preliminary selection includes Denmark and Germany, with openness to adding a third country. Applicants are invited to reflect on country choice, including their own prerequisites in terms of language skills, network, and country knowledge necessary for planning and conducting interviews there.

Because of the methodological span across the project's three work packages—ranging from large-scale, computational analysis to in-depth, qualitative interpretation—successful candidates are expected to be open-minded, intellectually curious, and respectful of different approaches to knowledge generation. To the extent that applicants hold additional methodological competencies beyond interviewing and qualitative analysis, they are invited to reflect on how they can put them to use in examining children's beliefs about political power.

Research will primarily be carried out in collaboration with other project members. In addition, the positions involve opportunities to pursue independent work within the overall focus of the project. The successful applicant will become part of an exciting and ambitious research project and a supportive research team with a collegial and respectful atmosphere. There will be excellent opportunities for intellectual

Application Deadline:
15 May 2026

Institute/Faculty:
Department of Political
Science

Faculty:
Aarhus BSS

**Academic contact
person:**
Kristina Bakkær
Simonsen
Lektor
+4587165349
bakkaer@ps.au.dk

Vacant positions:
2

Number of months:
24

Hours per week:
37

**Expected date of
accession:**
01/09/2026

development and mentoring, with a focus on how the candidate can make use of the postdoctoral position to develop their career.

In addition to the outlined research tasks, the position implies modest teaching obligations equivalent to one course per year. If the postdoc is interested, a one-year further extension in return for additional teaching might be negotiable (to be decided by the Head of Department), depending on the candidate's prior teaching experience and the department's need for teaching during the period of employment.

Your qualifications

Applicants are expected to hold or be close to completing a PhD in political science or another field relevant to the project such as sociology. In addition, applicants are expected to demonstrate the following qualifications:

Qualitative interviewing and analysis

- Interviewing experience (in-depth interviews and/or focus groups), preferably with young people or children
- Qualitative analysis, e.g., qualitative content analysis or interpretive analysis
- Ability to think creatively about qualitative designs, including adaptations to the group of interest: children and youth

Professional interest in and knowledge of one or more relevant literatures, for instance:

- Political socialization
- Political representation and -marginalization
- Social norms
- Youth political behavior

Language skills

- High level of professional English proficiency
- Proficiency in one or more of the languages covered by YOPOW's cross-national focus, such as Danish, German, or a third (European) language is a clear advantage

Personal skills

- Capacity for working independently and taking initiative, sharing research ideas, and contributing to creative problem solving
- Interest in and potentially prior experience with collaborating in a team

What we offer

- A project that studies a highly relevant and societally important issue
- A work environment at one of Europe's leading political science departments with a vibrant, supportive, and collegial atmosphere
- Excellent development opportunities and research support, including funding for data collection, conferences/travel, and research assistance
- Competitive salary

Further information

If you have any questions regarding the positions or want to learn more about the project and specific tasks, please do not hesitate to contact project leader Kristina Bakkær Simonsen at bakkaer@ps.au.dk

If you need help uploading your application or have any questions about the recruitment process, don't hesitate to contact HR supporter Astrid Valdgård Schmidt via e-mail: avs@au.dk.

Place of work

Department of Political Science, Bartholins Allé 7, DK - 8000 Aarhus C

Application deadline

Applications must be submitted before the deadline of 15 May 2026. Interviews with

selected candidates are expected to take place in the week of June 8, 2026.

Who we are

With around 130 academic staff members and 40 PhD students, the Department of Political Science is among Europe's largest political science departments. The research at the department covers most political science disciplines, including public administration, and represents a variety of methodological approaches. We are among Europe's highest-ranked departments, and our broad research profile enables us to focus on societal problems as they appear in the national and international political arena. This allows us to contribute actively to the development of the discipline. We offer a lively and ambitious research and teaching environment characterized by pluralism and openness. We expect active participation in the activities of the department, which includes being present at the department at least three days per week.

For more information about the Department of Political Science, please see [here](#).

The Department of Political Science is part of [Aarhus BSS](#), Aarhus University – a top 100 university. Aarhus BSS has achieved the triple-crown AACSB, AMBA and EQUIS accreditations.

International applicant?

Aarhus University offers a broad variety of services for international researchers and accompanying families, including relocation service and career counselling to expat partners. Please find more information here:

<https://internationalstaff.au.dk/relocationservice/>

Please find more information about research opportunities at Aarhus University here: <http://international.au.dk/research/>

Aarhus University also offers a Junior Researcher Development Programme targeted at career development for postdocs at AU. You can read more about it here:

[For Junior Researchers](#).

Terms of employment

The appointment is made in accordance with the [Memorandum on Job Structure for Academic Staff at Danish Universities](#) as well as the circular on the [Collective Agreement for Academics Employed by the State](#) (in Danish).

The job content and qualification requirements are described in further detail in the [Ministerial Order on the Appointment of Academic Staff at Universities](#).

Application procedure

When you apply for this position it is mandatory to attach the following:

- **Cover letter** motivating your interest in joining the YOPOW project and laying out your qualifications (ca. 1-1.5 pages).
- **Research proposal** (ca. 2-2.5 pages) outlining your idea for a specific study within the scope of YOPOW. The project idea(s) should relate to the study of children's conceptions of political power using qualitative interviews.
- **Curriculum Vitae**. You are encouraged to declare any periods of leave without research activity, including, for example, parental leave, since your research activities are assessed in relation to your actual research time.
- **Diplomas** (diploma for master's, PhD and possibly higher doctoral degree). In case the PhD degree has not been awarded at the time of applying, documentation for submission, date of defense or letter stating expected submission date may be included.
- **List of publications** (the enclosed publications must be clearly marked on the list of publications).
- **Selected sample of your work**. Up to three publications or work in progress can be included in the application. In the event of several authors, the publications/papers/dissertation chapters must be accompanied by a co-author statement detailing the applicant's share of the collaborative work with the consent of the co-authors. [This template may be used for the purpose](#).
- **Teaching portfolio**. The specific requirements regarding the documentation can

be found [here](#)

Materials which cannot be uploaded together with the application may be submitted in three copies to Aarhus BSS HR & PhD, Aarhus University, Bartholins Allé 16, DK-8000 Aarhus C.

Read more about how to apply for an academic post at Aarhus BSS [here](#)

The evaluation process

After the application deadline, an assessment committee is appointed. Please note that the assessment of applicants is based solely on the material received prior to the application deadline. For further information, see [Guidelines for Assessment Committee, Aarhus BSS](#).

Aarhus University's ambition is to be an attractive and inspiring workplace for all and to foster a culture in which each individual has opportunities to thrive, achieve and develop. We view equality and diversity as assets, and we welcome all applicants.

The application must be submitted via Aarhus University's recruitment system, which can be accessed under the job advertisement on Aarhus University's website.

Aarhus University

Aarhus University is an academically diverse and research-intensive university with a strong commitment to high-quality research and education and the development of society nationally and globally. The university offers an inspiring research and teaching