

Louise Halberg Nielsen

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Research interests

My primary research interest lies at understanding drivers of political engagement and disengagement, and causes of inequalities in political engagement between societal groups, with a special focus on understanding persistent gender gaps in political participation. Drawing on theories of political behavior, social psychology, socialization, and gender, my work examines factors such as the role model effects of women politicians and perceptions of gendered barriers in shaping women's political interest and ambition. Beyond gender and politics, I also engage with broader questions in political behavior including for instance political powerlessness or political attitudes and behaviors during societal crises.

Academic positions

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| Postdoc at Department of Political Science, Aarhus University | 2025-2026 |
| The project I am currently working on focuses on understanding political powerlessness. Through surveys and in-depth interviews, we aim to understand experiences of feeling powerless towards politics: What these experiences are, where they come from (often politicians), what the consequences are (often disengagement), and how widespread powerlessness is in the Danish society.
Project team: Michael Bang Petersen (PI) and Troels Bøggild. | |
| PhD at Department of Political Science, Aarhus University | 2022-2025 |
| In my PhD dissertation, I focused on understanding continuous gender gaps in political ambition. Through three solo-authored papers, I examine women politicians' role model effects depending on more shared identities, deterring effects of exposure to online harassment of politicians, and perceptions of gendered barriers as explanations of women's political ambition. Methodologically, I rely on surveys, experiments, and qualitative focus group interviews.
Supervisors: Professor Lene Aarøe and Professor Anne Binderkrantz. | |
| Visiting Scholar at University of California, Berkeley | 2024 |
| Visiting Amanda Clayton and the American Politics Research Lab lead by Gabriel Lenz and David Brockman at UC Berkeley. | |
| Full time Research Assistant on the HOPE-project | 2021-2022 |
| On the HOPE-project, I coauthored three papers with members of the research team on citizen attitudes and behaviors towards the politics surrounding COVID-19. I worked systematically with dissemination of results and analysis for media, public, and government in e.g. weekly reports. I also gained substantial experience with | |

designing and collecting survey data, contact with participants, data management and storage, and analysis of large surveys and panel studies.

Principal investigator: Michael Bang Petersen

Papers

Publications

Nielsen, Louise Halberg (2026). *Why women don't aspire to run for office: Perceived gendered barriers and politicians as exemplars*. PhD dissertation, Aarhus University.

Nielsen, Louise Halberg, and Michael Bang Petersen. (2025) "Beyond Left and Right: The Role of System Trust in COVID-19 Attitudes and Behaviours across Eight Western Countries". *European Journal of Political Research*. 64: 1233-1256. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12749>

Jørgensen, Frederik Juhl, Louise Halberg Nielsen, and Michael Bang Petersen. (2022). "Willingness to Take the Booster Vaccine in a Nationally Representative Sample of Danes". *Vaccines* 10(3):425. <https://doi.org/10.3390/vaccines10030425>

Under review

Nielsen, Louise Halberg. Women Politicians' Role Model Effects: The Influence of Shared Identities Beyond Gender. *Invited to third revise and resubmit in Political Behavior*.

Work in progress

Nielsen, Louise Halberg. How perceptions of gendered barriers factor into women's considerations about running for office

Nielsen, Louise Halberg. Online harassment of politicians has a negative influence on citizens' perceptions of running for office.

Nielsen, L. H., Rasmussen, M. S., Jørgensen, F. J., Bor, A., Gregersen, M. F., Petersen, M. B: HOPE Comparative Rolling Cross-Sectional Survey Data on Attitudes and Behaviors During the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Bøggild, Troels, Louise Halberg Nielsen, and Michael Bang Petersen (authors listed alphabetically). Politisk afmagt. Book forthcoming with Aarhus University Press under Magtudredningen 2.0.

Other publications

Blogposts

Nielsen, Louise Halberg. 2025. "System Trust Is Key to Explaining Covid-19 Attitudes and Behaviours". *The Loop (ECPR research blog)*.

<https://theloop.ecpr.eu/system-trust-is-key-to-explaining-covid-19-attitudes-and-behaviours/>

Public reports

Authored weekly reports and briefs on the development of the COVID-19 pandemic and citizen's attitudes as part of the HOPE-project. The reports were read by the government, media, and the public. See e.g.:

Nielsen, L. H., Roepstorff, A., & Petersen, M. B. (2022). *Danskernes Adfærd og Holdninger Under Corona-Pandemien*. Aarhus Universitet.

https://hope-project.dk/#/reports/danskernes_adfaerd_og_holdninger/versions/10-03-2022

Nielsen, L. H., Jørgensen, F., Bor, A., Hyldgaard, F. B., & Petersen, M. B. (2022). *Danskernes Smitteforebyggende Adfærd og Opfattelser: HOPE-Projektet*. Aarhus Universitet.

https://hope-project.dk/#/reports/Danskernes_Smitteforebyggende_Adfaerd_Og_Opfattelser

Nielsen, L. H., Roepstorff, A., & Petersen, M. B. (2022). *Hvad kan vi lære om kriseadfærd fra corona-pandemien?* Aarhus Universitet.

https://hope-project.dk/#/reports/danskernes_adfaerd_og_holdninger

Teaching experience

Master thesis supervision (Aarhus University)	2026
Gender and Politics (Lecturer, MA-course, Aarhus University)	2024
Methods II: Quantitative methods (teaching assistant, BA-course, Aarhus University)	2019, 2023
Methods I: Intro to qualitative and quantitative methods (teaching assistant, BA-course, Aarhus University)	2018, 2019, 2021

Conferences and workshops

Conferences

American Political Science Association (APSA) Paper presentation	2024
European Conference for Gender and Politics (ECPG) Paper presentation, panel chair	2024, 2026
Danish Political Science Association (DPSA) Paper presentation, panel chair	2022, 2023, 2025

Workshops

Cepdisc Stereotypes and Sexism in Politics Workshop at Aarhus University Paper presentation	2023
Gender Dynamics in Politics, the Workplace, and Society at Lund University Participant	2023
Cepdisc Perceptions, Stereotypes, and Discrimination of Women in Politics Workshop at Aarhus University Participant	2022

Media and societal outreach

Media and podcasts

Live interview in P1 Morgen on P1 about the record number of women elected for the Danish parliament (27/3/26)

Live interview in P4 Morgen on P4 Østjylland about the record number of women elected for the Danish parliament (27/3/26)

Netavisen.dk. Statements for an article on women's underrepresentation in local politics (5/11/2025).

P4 Morgen Østjylland. Segment on women candidates for the municipal election 2025 (03/11/2025).

Interview for Ritzau on women's underrepresentation in local politics (15/10/2025)

P4 Morgen Nordjylland. Segment on deterring effects of a rough tone in the political debate on women's participation (18/09/2025).

P4 Morgen Østjylland. Segment on Kamala Harris as presidential candidate (23/07/2024)

"Hvad drev splittelsen under COVID-19-pandemien - Louise Halberg Nielsen". Episode of the podcast Regelstaten (05/04/2024).

Interview for Aarhus University's LinkedIn page about the American Presidential Election 2024

Part of P1 Morgen's list of experts

Part of Aarhus University's list of experts for media, on

- the US election in 2024
- the Danish municipal election 2025
- the Danish Parliament election 2026

Education

PhD in Political Science, Aarhus University	2022-2026
Master's degree in Political Science, Aarhus University	2019-2022
Bachelor's degree in Political Science, Aarhus University	2016-2019

Reviewer

Reviewer for Political Behavior, Politics and Gender, European Journal of Politics and Gender, and Politica.