



**Universitat
Pompeu Fabra**
Barcelona



DemoSoc

Universitat Pompeu Fabra
Department of Political and Social Sciences
Ramon Trias i Fargas st. 25-27
08005 Barcelona, Spain

[Sociodemography Research Group](#)

One Fully-Funded PhD Researcher Vacancy (for 4 years) in the UNPACK Project, at the Sociodemography Research Group, Pompeu Fabra University

Position

The [Sociodemography Research Group \(DemoSoc\)](#) seeks doctoral applications from talented students with a strong interest in research. We offer a 4-year predoctoral fellowship to develop a doctoral research as part of the team of the research project “Unpacking the Puzzle of Child Poverty: Why Child Poverty Persists Despite Economic Recovery and Declining Inequality (UNPACK)” headed by Dr. Alba Lanau (UPF) and Dr. Pau Mari-Klose (University of Zaragoza) and funded by the Spanish Research Agency (PID2024-160501NB-I00). The doctoral work will focus on the dynamics of child poverty and the role of social policies in Spain and Southern Europe.

Main tasks

- Develop a PhD dissertation based on peer-reviewed publications.
- Contribute to project work packages on measurement, employment, and policy.
- Present research at international conferences and workshops.
- Contribute to dissemination activities with academic and policy audiences.

Requirements

- Master's degree in sociology, social policy, demography, economics, or related fields (completed before Sept 2025).
- Quantitative skills: ability to work with large databases and conduct multivariate research experience with Stata and/or R.

- Excellent academic record and strong writing skills.
- Fluency in English (spoken and written). Knowledge of Spanish and/or Catalan is an asset.
- Demonstrated interest in research on child poverty, inequality, and/or social policy.

Contract details

- **Duration:** 4 years
- **Start date:** January–April 2026
- **Salary:** 24.468,27€
- **Location:** DemoSoc, Department of Political and Social Sciences, UPF (Barcelona).

Application process

This is a two step process

1. Candidates not yet accepted in the PhD programme:

Step 1 Candidates must apply for admission for a PhD in the Department of Social and Political Sciences at UPF <https://www.upf.edu/web/doctorats/ciencies-politiques-i-socials>

Step 2 Candidates must apply through the admissions portal identifying the project they are interested in https://www.upf.edu/web/masters/2_preinscripcio

2. Candidates already in the PhD programme at UPF:

Send their [merits](#) for evaluation to admissions.doctorat@upf.edu

Further information:

Further information on the full process is available at: <https://www.upf.edu/web/phd-school/fpi>

Interested applicants are welcome to contact admissions.doctorat@upf.edu about the process and alba.lanau@upf.edu for further information on the programme.

Deadline:

Applications should be submitted **before October 22nd**

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to an interview (online or in person).

Project description – UNPACK

Despite economic recovery and declining inequality in Spain, **child poverty rates remain persistently high**. Nearly 29% of children grow up in poverty — among the highest rates in the EU. This paradox raises key questions about the links between labour markets, welfare policies, and child well-being.

The **UNPACK project** seeks to address this puzzle by:

- **Measuring and understanding child poverty trends** in Spain and Southern Europe, including the role of housing costs and alternative indicators.
- **Exploring child poverty dynamics and employment**, focusing on entries, exits, and persistence in households with children.
- **Examining the policy dimension**, analysing how tax-benefit systems and recent reforms (e.g. Ingreso Mínimo Vital) impact child poverty.

The project combines advanced quantitative analysis of large-scale survey and administrative datasets with comparative perspectives, focusing particularly on Southern European countries. Its ultimate aim is to provide new insights into the persistence of child poverty and inform more effective policy solutions.

Sociodemography Research Group

The Department of Political and Social Sciences (DCPIS), and more specifically the Sociology and Demography research group (DEMOSOC), offers a stimulating environment for research. On one side, the DEMOSOC is an interdisciplinary research group specialized in demographic and sociological analysis, as well as labour market and criminology studies. The group is oriented towards quantitative and comparative research across populations. On the other side, the DCPIS comprises currently 34 permanent professors and 56 PhD students, actively researching on a wide variety of social science topics. It stands out for its strong international focus, its dynamic research, the cross-disciplinary nature of its teaching, the quality of its graduate programme and its support for student mobility. The DCPIS belongs to Pompeu Fabra University (UPF), a leading Spanish University, recently recognized as International Campus of Excellence (CEI), the 2nd Spanish university in the Times Higher Education Indicator and 176th in the world ranking (THE Ranking, 2025), and leader in Spain for the quality of its scientific production (according to CWTS Leiden Ranking 2024).