

Job Offer

3 years PhD

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UNIVERSITAT DE
BARCELONA

The area of Political Science of the Department of Law of the *Universitat de Barcelona* is looking for a 3-years PhD position working in the EU-funded **SUPA** research project on sustaining public administration in modern democracies under the supervision of Xavier Fernández-i-Marín

The SUPA project

Public administrations in advanced democracies are increasingly overburdened. Administrative overburdening arises from a continuous increase in the number of rules that require implementation and the relative stagnation in administrative capacities. This discrepancy between the rules up for implementation and the administrative resources available results in suboptimal policy outcomes, low-quality public services, and inconsistent implementation practices.

In view of this assessment, it is the central objective of **SUPA** to examine strategies for enhancing the capabilities of the public sector to cope with the escalating challenges of administrative overburdening. To this end, **SUPA** pursues two interrelated objectives: The first one is to examine how decision-making procedures and practices can be improved to limit the overall burdens placed on the administration. The second goal is to explore how administrative structures can be reformed to manage ongoing rule growth effectively.

SUPA examines patterns of rule growth and the resulting administrative changes and challenges in six European States (Denmark, France, Germany, Norway, Spain and the Netherlands) and the European Union. Based on a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, **SUPA**

- evaluates the effectiveness of so-called “rule-offsetting” schemes;
- investigates how legislators can embed legal design principles to prevent unintended rule growth cascades;
- assesses how policy growth affects the underlying administrative structures; and
- examines citizens’ experience and operational challenges linked to different ways of distributing implementation burdens across public authorities.

SUPA has formed collaboration agreements with multiple public authorities, ensuring that the Consortium’s findings can be directly transferred to both policy-makers and administrators in the field.

Project details

Name	Sustaining Public Administration in Modern Democracies
Acronym	SUPA
Call	HORIZON-CL2-2024-DEMOCRACY-01
Topic	HORIZON-CL2-2024-DEMOCRACY-01-09
Type of action	HORIZON Research and Innovation Actions
Granting authority	European Research Executive Agency
Project starting date	01/03/2025
Project end date	29/02/2028
Project duration	36 months

The role of the Universitat de Barcelona

The Political Science department is part of the Department of Law at *Universitat de Barcelona*. This is an advantage in the context of the **SUPA** project, since it allows several synergies between scholars of public policy and law scholars. The department offers a thriving environment to study comparative public policy and focus on legal aspects of bureaucratic administration. The role of *Universitat de Barcelona* in the project is fundamental in the first and last stages of the research as providers of the basic data infrastructure where all the gathered evidence will be analyzed. The specific tasks comprise the following actions and activities:

- Collect legislative data from different countries.
- Produce measures of rules, burden and legislative capacity.
- Evaluate the “burden” of legislation in multiple contexts.
- Develop a utility to analyze legislative texts and assess the expected burden they can introduce.

The **SUPA** team at the *Universitat de Barcelona* is formed by Xavier Fernández-i-Marín and Laura Chaqués Bonafont.

The PhD contribution

The Job offer is linked to the pursue of a PhD in the Social Sciences with major methodological contributions from the data science point of view at the intersection of comparative public policy, administration and law. The candidate will be a fundamental part of the *Universitat de Barcelona* team in the **SUPA** project, participating in the activities of the consortium.

We offer:

- Competitive salary for a PhD in Barcelona, with incentives linked to performance.
- 3-years position starting on 01/03/2025
- Lively and stimulating work environment
- Access to computing facilities, and possibility of establishing ties with the Barcelona Supercomputing Center
- Access to a network of top European scholars

Job requirements

We are looking for a candidate with a strong background in Machine Learning and sensibility for social and legal issues.

More specifically, we aim for a candidate that already has experience and ability with:

- Machine Learning programming
- Natural-Language Processing experience
- Webscraping
- R/Python and writing extensions for them

We will also consider experience in statistical inference, probabilistic programming and Bayesian inference.

Contact details and application procedure

Submit your application by email to x.fernandez-i-marin@ub.edu, as a single compressed file containing the following PDF files:

- CV
- Master thesis (or a public link to access it).
- Cover letter stating at least a) the potential contribution of the candidate to the project and b) an assessment of potential individual contributions for the PhD program.

Previous publications related to the project can be found at xavier-fim.net/tag/policy-portfolios and at xavier-fim.net/tag/regulatory-offsetting.