

Fully-funded PhD positions (5 years) within the ERC project DEPOLARIZE

Overview:

These positions are for research to be conducted as part of the ERC StG project DEPOLARIZE, led by Assoc. Prof. Selim Erdem Aytaç at the Department of International Relations of Koç University in Istanbul.

DEPOLARIZE will establish whether affective polarization is a factor driving democratic backsliding through the proliferation anti-democratic attitudes using state-of-the-art causal inference methods. The project will produce high-quality observational and experimental data from nationally representative surveys fielded in Hungary, Poland, Turkey, and the US.

Duties and responsibilities:

The holders of these PhD positions will support the project for a duration of 5 years, starting in Fall 2023. Candidates with MA degrees in political science or a related field and research interests in democratic backsliding, democratic attitudes, affective polarization as well as quantitative research methods (survey methods and experimental designs) are encouraged to apply. The responsibilities of the PhD position include:

- Be enrolled in the Graduate School of Social Sciences and Humanities (GSSSH) of Koç University and satisfy the requirements of the PhD program in political science and international relations (exceptional candidates currently enrolled in other PhD programs will also be considered – see “application and timeline below”),
- Support the project in the organization of roundtable discussions, literature reviews, development of survey instruments and experimental interventions, coordination with survey firms, analyses of data, and reporting of results,
- Participate in research administration and organization of project-related events,
- Disseminate results from the project at conferences and department seminars,
- Complete a PhD thesis on a topic related to the aims of the project.

Skills and qualifications:

- MA degree (or equivalent) in political science or related discipline (or close to completion),
- Strong interest in academic research and motivation to pursue an academic career,
- Interest in or background on the study of democracy, democratic backsliding, and affective polarization,
- Willingness to acquire new quantitative methodological skills required for the project and PhD thesis,
- Excellent command of English (written and spoken),
- Command of Stata and/or R is an asset but is not required.

What we offer:

- 5-year full-time PhD scholarship (subject to satisfactory progress in the project) with an internationally competitive stipend and benefits package (tuition waiver, accommodation, private health insurance, meal pass),
- Integration to the Department of International Relations at Koç University, a leading department with motivated and engaged members (exceptional candidates enrolled in other PhD programs will also be considered – see “application and timeline below”),
- Funding for conference travel within the scope of the project.

Application and timeline:

Candidates *who are currently not enrolled in a PhD program* should apply for the PhD program in International Relations and Political Science through Koç University’s application platform at <https://apply.ku.edu.tr/courses/course/35-phd-international-relations-and-political-science> – **deadline 31 May**. Detailed information about the application requirements can be found at <https://gsssh.ku.edu.tr/en/departments/international-relations-and-political-science/phd/application-requirements/>.

Please note at the beginning of your statement of purpose that you are interested in Dr. Aytaç’s ERC project. Candidates should also send the following to depolarize@ku.edu.tr :

- A letter of motivation (1-2 pages) explaining your research profile and interests,
- An up-to-date CV,
- An English academic writing sample (e.g., chapter of MA thesis, articles, working papers).

Candidates *who are currently enrolled in a PhD program* do not need to apply to Koç University. Instead, they should send the following materials as a single pdf file to depolarize@ku.edu.tr :

- A letter of motivation (1-2 pages) explaining your research profile and interests,
- An up-to-date CV,
- Academic transcripts (undergraduate and graduate),
- Two academic writing samples (e.g., chapter of MA/PhD thesis, articles, working papers),
- Contact details of two scholars who could supply recommendation letters (if shortlisted).

Application deadline: 31 May 2023

Interviews with shortlisted candidates: To be announced.

Starting date of position: Fall 2023 semester.

Informal inquiries about the position and project could be addressed to Selim Erdem Aytaç at saytac@ku.edu.tr