

## **Fully funded PhD position on industrial modernization in Estonia**

**Institution:** Institute of Social Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Tartu, Estonia

**Deadline for applications:** 15.05.2024

**Expected starting date:** ideally 02.09.2024 (but can be negotiated)

An interdisciplinary team of researchers is seeking to recruit a PhD student to a five-year project titled “[The Crisis and Transformation of Industrial Modernity, 1900-2055](#)”, led by [Laur Kanger](#) and funded by the Estonian Research Council. The project is based on the Deep Transitions framework which theorizes industrialization as a long-term co-evolution of various socio-technical systems (see [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)). The research builds on the team’s prior work on measuring long-term continuities and ruptures in the foundational ideas, institutions and practices of industrial societies (see [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)).

### **Project summary**

Contemporary societies are underpinned by industrial modernity: a set of commonly shared ideas, institutions and practices related to the natural environment, science, and technology. Historically, industrial modernity has enabled massive leaps in societal welfare, while increasing environmental degradation. Therefore, many of its dominant traits need to be rethought to address the interlinked crises of climate change, biodiversity loss, and resource depletion. Drawing on and further developing the Deep Transitions framework, the project will 1) chart the rise and crisis of industrial modernity over the 20th century; 2) identify countries where it is most likely to be transformed; 3) apply these insights to sketch various future scenarios for Estonia.

### **PhD topic description**

The PhD study will focus on a historical investigation of the relationship between industrial modernity and environmental consciousness in Estonia over the last 150 years. The PhD student will pursue both an original program of research based on a series of historical case studies, and contribute to the overall advancement of the project by providing qualitative inputs to the rest of the team. The principal tasks of the PhD student are the following:

- Identifying representative case studies from 1850-2025 that illustrate the development of the relationship between industrial development and its environmental consequences.
- Developing an original argument on how specific industrial processes have, as the case may be, inhibited or catalysed the development of environmentalist ideas, institutions, and practices.
- Integrating the case studies along with existing secondary scholarship into a synthetic narrative of industrial development and environmental consciousness in modern Estonia.
- Contributing to a mixed method comparative-historical study of continuities and ruptures in industrial modernity with the rest of the team.

### **Ideal candidate profile**

You are an ideal candidate if you:

- Have a master’s degree in history, comparative literature, anthropology, cultural studies or a related field of humanistic inquiry. A demonstrated research interest in environmental history is desired.

- Have proven experience with a majority of the following skills and a willingness to acquire or develop the rest:
  - Experience with archival research in Estonian archives.
  - Critically using digital source collections, both printed and archival.
  - Working with historical newspapers, journals, legal documents, and other printed sources.
  - Critical visual analysis of both artistic and functional sources.
  - Working with technical documents, scientific texts, regulatory documents etc.
  - Knowledge of the relevant secondary literature in environmental history, science and technology studies, sustainability studies etc.
- Are creative, independent, curious and willing to think big. An ambition to save the world would probably help too.

### **Team and the PI**

The current project will consolidate interdisciplinary and multi-method expertise in Deep Transitions research, initially developed during a previous five-year research project ([see here](#)). The core team is composed of 8 researchers, combining expertise in sustainability transitions studies, digital humanities, political science, history of science and technology, and social practice theory.

[Laur Kanger](#) is an Associate Professor in Technology Research in the Institute of Social Studies, University of Tartu, with research interests in transitions studies, history and theory of technology, and macro-historical sociology. He has contributed to the conceptualization of the Multi-level Perspective on socio-technical transitions, policy intervention points for facilitating transitions, societal embedding of radical innovations, the role of users in transitions, and energy justice. Thematically, Laur's research has covered energy and mobility transitions, mass production and industrial modernity. He is also one of the co-authors of the Deep Transitions framework.

### **Contract terms**

Fully funded temporary employment (junior research fellow) for up to 48 months. The salary is comparable to the Estonian average (in 2024 the minimum salary rate of junior research fellows is 1830 euros per month for full-time work, net salary ca. 1450 euros).

### **Further information**

Candidates must submit an online application with all requested documents. See further information on the [programme website of Social Sciences](#).

Please contact Maiu Reinhold (Specialist for International Relations, Institute of Social Studies, [maiu.reinhold@ut.ee](mailto:maiu.reinhold@ut.ee)) for any practical matters regarding the application process.

Please contact Laur Kanger ([laur.kanger@ut.ee](mailto:laur.kanger@ut.ee)) and Aro Velvet ([aro.velmet@ut.ee](mailto:aro.velmet@ut.ee)) for any research-related inquiries.