

## DOKTORITÖÖ TEEMAD SISSEASTUJATELE 2024 / PhD TOPICS FOR APPLICANTS IN 2024

### MAJANDUSTEADUS/ECONOMICS

Juhendaja(d) /Supervisor(s)	Teema/Topic	Teema kirjeldus/Description of the topic	Language (ESTonian, ENGLISH)
<p>Diana Eerma <a href="mailto:diana.eerma@ut.ee">diana.eerma@ut.ee</a></p> <p>Mariia Chebotareva <a href="mailto:mariia.chebotareva@ut.ee">mariia.chebotareva@ut.ee</a></p>	<p>Green energy transition: the role of energy efficiency and energy poverty in the development of sustainable technologies</p>	<p>This study delves into the essential relationship between energy efficiency and the creation of sustainable transition systems that prioritize environmental friendliness. A candidate may examine various strategies for improving energy efficiency, which includes technological advancements, policy frameworks, and collaborative efforts among stakeholders. It is evident that a holistic approach is needed, one that considers not only technological innovations but also social, economic, and environmental factors. The topic includes the following sub-studies: 1. Policy Frameworks for Optimizing the Transition from Conventional to Green Energy: Lessons from International Best Practices; 2. Integrating Smart Technologies for Enhanced Energy Efficiency in Multi-Apartment Buildings; 3. Enhancing Energy Efficiency and Alleviate Energy Poverty through Multi-Apartment Building Renovations.</p>	<p>ENG</p>
<p>Diana Eerma, <a href="mailto:diana.eerma@ut.ee">diana.eerma@ut.ee</a></p> <p>Mariia Chebotareva <a href="mailto:mariia.chebotareva@ut.ee">mariia.chebotareva@ut.ee</a></p>	<p>Relationship between Social Accounting and Corporate Financial Performance in the Banking Sector</p>	<p>The aim of the topic is to reveal the relationship between social accounting (SA) coverage and financial performance in the banking industry (research to be conducted on banks in Northern Europe) and disclose new drivers for banks to adopt the latest SA practices. Conventional measures applied in corporate companies fail to capture all of the SA dimensions and indicators required in new generations of guidelines and directives. Considering different and somewhat diverse views on SA, a comprehensive review is needed to frame the concept for banks. SA seems to be defined within the scope of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in the banking industry. There exists the gap to be filled with more accurate empirical analysis based on relevant measures and measurement practices specific to each industry.</p>	<p>ENG</p>

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Anneli Kaasa <a href="mailto:anneli.kaasa@ut.ee">anneli.kaasa@ut.ee</a>	Cultural dimension of flexibility vs monumentalism: sources, measurement, and impact	<p>This topic systematically investigates a cultural dimension recently introduced in literature: flexibility vs monumentalism, another dimension next to the individualism vs collectivism that is already well-known and has received a lot of attention in literature. While individualism-collectivism explains the North-South cultural differences, flexibility-monumentalism highlights a contrast between East Asia and Latin America plus Africa. Some possible research questions might be (but are not limited to): how this dimension has been shaped? What has contributed to this difference across cultures? What are the possibilities to measure it? What is the explanatory power of this dimension? How much does it add in explaining various social and economic phenomena? The applicant is free to choose methods and data with what to approach the research questions. The only limitation is that the topic is and the application has to be strictly based on 1) the concept of societal culture, defined as a pattern of values, beliefs, attitudes, norms that differentiate one group of people (country, region) from another; 2) the state of the art regarding measuring culture with the help of dimensions, specifically flexibility-monumentalism.</p>	ENG/EST
Anneli Kaasa <a href="mailto:anneli.kaasa@ut.ee">anneli.kaasa@ut.ee</a>	The impact of global challenges (pandemic) on culture	<p>This topic investigates, whether global challenges like the latest pandemic with its social and economic limitations have influence on culture. Some possible research questions might be (but are not limited to): Has the pandemic changed values, attitudes, norms and beliefs of people? Is it different in different countries? Does it depend on the type (pattern) of culture? Are the changes permanent or will they fade out after the pandemic has faded out? The applicant is expected to offer a well thought-through set of research questions and explain the methods with what he/she is planning to answer those questions. The applicant is free to choose methods and data with what to approach the research questions. International surveys that have been performed during and after the pandemic form just one option. The only limitation is that the topic is and the application has to be strictly based on 1) the concept of societal culture, defined as a pattern of values, beliefs, attitudes, norms that differentiate one group of people (country, region) from another; 2) the state of the art regarding measuring culture with the help of cultural dimensions.</p>	ENG/EST

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Jaan Masso <a href="mailto:jaan.masso@ut.ee">jaan.masso@ut.ee</a>	Effects of technological changes on labour market	The PhD thesis would look at the effects of technological changes (automation, robotization etc) on the labour markets. The interaction of technological changes with other trends like internationalization and deinternationalization can be considered. The proposed research may plan to use large-scale administrative databases like the matched employer-employee data.	ENG
Tiiu Paas <a href="mailto:tiiu.paas@ut.ee">tiiu.paas@ut.ee</a>	Growing uncertainty and people's economic and social resilience	The proposed research aims to provide new knowledge and lessons on how people can adapt to the uncertainties arising from the unpredictability of political, economic and social developments. Research questions may focus on changes in people's wellbeing, growing inequalities as well as adapting to new forms of working offered by labour markets (e.g. remote work, telework, co-working, gig-work). What is the role of different components of human capital in supporting people's resilience to new challenges? What government action is needed to support economic and social resilience? These are just some of the possible research questions. In addition to a quantitative analysis, the use of qualitative research approaches is also recommended by the conducting the study.	ENG
Tiiu Paas <a href="mailto:tiiu.paas@ut.ee">tiiu.paas@ut.ee</a>	Adjustment of people with labour markets' developments in the conditions of increased uncertainty	Recent changes in labour markets are caused by rapidly increased uncertainty (e.g. COVID pandemic, war, several crises), technological development and digitalisation processes. These processes are pushing people to adjust with labour market developments through using new working ways (NWW; e.g. remote work, hybrid work, co-working spaces). The focus of the thesis can be on analysing social and economic consequences of increased uncertainty in labour markets (changes in employment, income, poverty, inequality, working ways), and possible effects of implemented policy measures in different countries aiming to generalise lessons and elaborate supportive measures for people and enterprises.	ENG/EST

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Eve Parts <a href="mailto:eve.parts@ut.ee">eve.parts@ut.ee</a>	Economic effects of population ageing	<p>Ageing is one of the greatest social and economic challenges of the 21st Century. It is important to understand how the ageing process will affect nations, economies and individuals. Most developed economies face increasing dependency ratio which translates into the tax and contribution burden of social expenditures related to ageing, such as pensions, health and long-term care. However, demography is not everything – labor force participation is an important mediating factor between demographics and the social expenditure burden. One of the mitigating factors for the aging problem could be to keep older people longer in the labor market. Retirement ages and exit routes into retirement vary a great deal across countries. These differences are strongly related to the design of the welfare systems. Therefore, it is important to figure out which policies and changes (i) in the pension and health systems and (ii) in the mindset of employers and elderly employees would help to keep older people in the labor market longer.</p> <p>Alternative research questions for PhD thesis could include (but are not limited to) following: (a) Factors influencing elderly labor supply; (b) Possibilities and practices to influence elderly labor supply through pension system; (c) Relationship between elderly labor supply and their living standard. Empirical analysis could be based on panel data or longitudinal data from SHARE – The Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe. This is a multidisciplinary and cross-national panel database of micro data on health, socio-economic status, and social and family networks of about 140,000 individuals aged 50 or older (around 380,000 interviews). SHARE started in 2004 and covers 27 European countries and Israel. See more about SHARE here: <a href="http://www.share-project.org/home0.html">http://www.share-project.org/home0.html</a> . Doctoral candidate choosing this topic can benefit from SHARE international research community – there are more than 10.000 SHARE users since 2019.</p>	EST/ENG
Eve Parts <a href="mailto:eve.parts@ut.ee">eve.parts@ut.ee</a>	Are we ready for degrowth society - and how to reach there?	<p>Degrowth is a multidisciplinary movement arguing that endless growth on a planet with limited resources is unsustainable and will inevitably lead to the collapse of the entire capitalist system. Abandoning the growth mentality and switching to a more sustainable development path requires several ideological and structural alterations. Since the natural movement in this direction tends to be too slow, political interventions are needed. For policies to work (and for them to be talked about at all), people need to be ready for the</p>	EST/ENG

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		<p>corresponding changes. This readiness is related to people's personal values, and general cultural values at national levels. Degrowth values include, among others, more emphasis on leisure, family life, and voluntary work, readiness to live a simpler life and work less for money, support for the environment over economic growth, etc. To study empirically people's readiness for degrowth, one can use quantitative approach based on the data of World/European Values Survey. This can be combined with qualitative methods (interviews, survey), depending on applicant's preferences and skills. Alternative research questions might be, e.g, who are the winners and who are the losers in degrowth process? Whether and how can governments or international organizations nudge the people's behavior and values into desired direction? How can we measure the progress in degrowth?</p>	
<p>Kadri Ukrainski <a href="mailto:kadri.ukrainski@ut.ee">kadri.ukrainski@ut.ee</a></p>	<p>Towards Integrated Framework for Transformative Innovation Policy: Models for Decisionmaking and Regime Change</p>	<p>The thesis is focused on economic decisionmaking models driving innovation in both the public and private sectors. The study aims to map, analyze, and further develop these models for developing an integrated framework of transformative innovation policy in a small country setting. The research examines three sub-topics. First, innovation in the private sector and strategies to enhance innovation capability focusing on developing decisionmaking models for start-ups in various sectors and an analysis of the extent to which research-based methods are utilized in practice (using CDL (Creative Destruction Lab) data on deeptech startups and Estonian Founders Society experience). Second, innovation in public sector via the certification model for lifelong learning acquired education exploring the role and value proposition of universities in the context of supporting niche generation and acceleration. Based on the above, the comprehensive model of the innovation ecosystem (regime) and cross-sectoral synergy (multi-regime interaction) is developed incorporating policy solutions for enhanced niche generation, acceleration and regime change.</p>	<p>ENG/EST</p>
<p>Lenno Uusküla <a href="mailto:lenno.uuskula@ut.ee">lenno.uuskula@ut.ee</a></p>	<p>Essays in applied macroeconomics</p>	<p>The thesis theme is open for suggestions in the field of applied macroeconomics. It can include both empirical and theoretical papers as well as different questions on growth and the business cycle analysis. All data sources such as standard macroeconomic data or unstructured big data can be analysed depending on the specific question.</p>	<p>ENG</p>

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Lenno Uusküla <a href="mailto:lenno.uuskula@ut.ee">lenno.uuskula@ut.ee</a>	Public Private Partnership and other solutions to the green transition and other social challenges	<p>21st century societies are facing several challengers. Green transition is one tasks that the countries need to manage, but this is only one of several that include also health care and other sectors of the economy. The common question in all of them is how to finance the necessary investments. Public debt is already at a very high level in many European countries and the fiscal limits are tested through several recessions in a row. More and more governments are looking towards cooperation towards private sector in the financing or co-financing. The thesis could benefit from the common analysis of financial data and behavioural aspects of decision making.</p>	ENG/EST
Priit Vahter <a href="mailto:priit.vahter@ut.ee">priit.vahter@ut.ee</a>	Determinants of productivity gap between frontier firms and the rest	<p>This study would investigate based on firm level and employer-employee level data the drivers of productivity gap between firms at the productivity frontier and the rest. This involves investigation of factors that create competitive advantage for the top performers (superstar firms) and/or factors that support or hinder catch-up by low or medium productivity firms with the productivity frontier. The topic needs to be narrowed down by the candidate by focusing on specific factors of the productivity gap. Proposals are especially welcome that would focus on: i) the role of differences in skills and diversity of workforce (e.g., by gender, cultural background, age) in explaining the productivity gap; ii) factors that hinder knowledge spillovers to low productivity firms; iii) how complementarities in innovation process of firms (e.g. between technological innovation and other factors of productivity) affect the productivity gap. Also, focus on either the role of adoption of technologies, such as AI and automation, or eco-innovation by firms in productivity dynamics is very welcome.</p>	ENG