

<u>Information on Postgraduate Research Scholarship</u> <u>Ref: GBS-PhD-10-2026-3</u>			
Faculty:	Business	Department: Management and Marketing	
Lead Supervisor:	Vera Weghmann		
Project Title:	(Em)Powering Regional Prosperity: Renewable Energy, Local Value Creation and Economic Resilience in Europe		
Project Description:	The purpose of this PhD is to investigate how renewable energy expansion can contribute to regional value creation, economic resilience and inclusive development across Europe. The European energy system is undergoing a profound transformation under the pressure of geopolitical, economic and social developments. Russia's war against Ukraine has shown acute structural weaknesses of the energy system that still dominated by fossil fuels, import dependency and high price volatility, with serious implications for households, industry and the cohesion of the internal market. Renewable energy presents an opportunity to retain investment, revenues and economic activity within local and regional economies. However, existing research has primarily focused on aggregate employment and macroeconomic effects (Vogele et al., 2023), or carbon reduction outcomes and energy security (Kosowski, 2024). As previous PSIRU research has pointed out, less is known about how ownership structures, governance arrangements, labour market institutions and public policy choices influence the extent to which renewable energy generates local jobs, strengthens municipal finances, supports local businesses and reduces regional inequalities (Weghmann 2019). This PhD addresses this gap by examining beyond the assertion that investment in renewable energy creates economic benefits, but who benefits, where benefits are captured, and under what conditions. The research will investigate the economic, social and fiscal impacts of solar photovoltaics, wind energy, renewable heat systems, energy storage technologies and energy communities on different regions in Europe. Particular attention will be paid to ownership structures of energy suppliers, employment creation of renewable energy production, local supply chains, municipal revenues, public investment capacity and the strengthening of regional economic ecosystems. Drawing on political economy, regional development and energy transition scholarship, the PhD study will compare different European regions and municipalities pursuing distinct renewable energy pathways. The aim is to analyse the role of public, municipal, cooperative, community and private ownership models in shaping local value creation		

	and the distribution of benefits by studying renewable energy projects and their impacts on local and regional employment, productivity and economic activity. The project will also explore impacts on energy poverty, affordability, price stability and energy security. Methodologically, the project will combine quantitative analysis with qualitative case studies, policy analysis and interviews with trade unions, local authorities, policymakers, energy providers and community organisations. The PhD will be undertaken in partnership with younion (Austria's largest public service trade union) representing workers in municipal services and local government. Building on the growing collaboration between PSIRU and Austrian trade unions, the project embeds impact throughout the research process. The partnership will facilitate field access to policymakers, municipalities and practitioner networks while ensuring that research findings are translated into practical policy recommendations. The project will produce comparative evidence, policy briefings, stakeholder workshops and actionable recommendations demonstrating how renewable energy expansion can be leveraged as a tool for regional industrial policy, employment creation and long-term economic resilience. In doing so, it will strengthen PSIRU's partnership with younion, enhance the University of Greenwich's reputation for impactful research, and contribute to policy debates on delivering a just and locally beneficial energy transition across Europe. References Colgan, J.D., Gard-Murray, A.S. and Hinthorn, M. 2023. "Quantifying the value of energy security: How Russia's invasion of Ukraine exploded Europe's fossil fuel costs", in <i>Energy Research & Social Science</i>, Volume 103, doi: 10.1016/j.erss.2023.103201. Despeghel, J. and Driesen, J. 2024. "Impact of Network Tariffs and Electricity Prices on the Investment Decisions for PV-Battery Systems," in <i>IEEE Transactions on Energy Markets, Policy and Regulation</i>, vol. 2(2), pp. 175-185, doi: 10.1109/TEMPR.2024.3367546 Kosowski, P. 2024. "From Fossil Fuels to Renewables: Clustering European Primary Energy Production from 1990 to 2022. <i>Energies</i>, 17,5596, doi.org/10.3390/en17225596 Vögele, S., Broska, L.H., Ross, A. <i>et al.</i> 2023. "Macroeconomic impacts of energy communities and individual prosumers: an assessment of transformation pathways", in <i>Energy, Sustainability and Society</i> 13(13), doi: 10.1186/s13705-023-00395-3 Weghmann, V. 2019 <i>Going Public: A Decarbonised, Affordable and Democratic Energy System</i>. The European Federation of Public Services
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	Unions. Available at: Going Public: A Decarbonised, Affordable and Democratic Energy System for Europe new EPSU report EPSU	
Duration:	3 years, Full-Time Study or 6 years, Part-Time Study	
Bursary available (subject to satisfactory performance): Year 1: £23,805 (UKRI 2026-27 standard rate including London Weighting) Years 2 & 3: In line with relevant UKRI rate In addition, the successful candidate will receive a contribution to tuition fees equivalent to the university's Home rate for the duration of their scholarship. International applicants will need to pay the remainder tuition fee for the duration of their scholarship. The fee is subject to an annual increase. Partially funded by Youunion , Die Daseinsgewerkschaft (ÖGB)		
Person Specification of Essential (E) or Desirable (D) requirements:		
Criteria:		E or D
Education and Training:		
1st Class or 2nd class, First Division (Upper Second Class) honours degree or a taught master’s degree with a minimum average of 60% in all areas of assessment (UK or UK equivalent) in a relevant area to the proposed research project		E
For those whose first language is not English and/or if from a country where English is not the majority spoken language (as recognised by the UKBA), a language proficiency score of at least IELTS 6.5 (in all elements of the test) or an equivalent UK VISA and Immigration secure English Language Test is required, if your programme falls within the faculty of Engineering and Science a language proficiency score of at least IELTS 6.5 overall with a minimum of 6.0 in all elements of the test or an equivalent UK VISA and Immigration secure English Language Test is required. Unless the degree above was taught in English <u>and</u> obtained in a majority English speaking country, e.g. UK, USA, Australia, New Zealand, etc, as recognised by the UKBA.		E
Experience & Skills:		
Previous experience of undertaking research (e.g. undergraduate or taught master’s dissertation)		E
Previous experience of undertaking independent research (e.g. undergraduate or Master's dissertation)		E
Demonstrable interest in political economy, public policy, public services and/or questions of social justice		E
Excellent written and verbal communication skills		E
Experience of qualitative and/or quantitative research method		D

• Experience of engaging with policymakers, trade unions, NGOs or civil society organisations	D
• Knowledge of a European language other than English	D
Personal Attributes:	
• Understands the fundamental differences between a taught degree and a research degree in terms of approach and personal discipline/motivation	E
• Able to, under guidance, complete independent work successfully	E
• Excellent organisational and time-management skills	E
Other Requirements:	
• This scholarship may require Academic Technology Approval Scheme approval for the successful candidate if from outside of the EU/EEA	E
• The scholarship must commence before 30 October 2026	E
Closing date for applications:	midnight UTC on 11/08/2026
For further information contact:	v.weghmann@gre.ac.uk
Making an application: Please read this information before making an application. Information on the application process is available at: https://www.gre.ac.uk/research/study/apply/application-process. Applications need to be made online via this link. No other form of application will be considered. All applications must include the following information. Applications not containing these documents will not be considered. • Scholarship Reference Number (Ref)– included in the personal statement section together with your personal statement as to why you are applying • a CV including 2 referees * • a detailed research proposal of about 1,500 words • academic qualification certificates/transcripts and IELTS/English Language certificate if you are an international applicant or if English is not your first language or you are from a country where English is not the majority spoken language as defined by the UK Border Agency * <i>*upload to the qualification section of the application form. Attachments must be a PDF format.</i> Before submitting your application, you are encouraged to liaise with the Lead Supervisor on the details above.	