

## 18 months Post-doctoral position in France Aix Marseille University

### ○ **JOB TITLE**

Participation in the research project HyFlex: Designing the transition to hydrogen in the territories: what flexibility of projects between environmental risks and socio-political risks (AMU-MESOPOLHIS)

### ○ **JOB PROFILE/TYPE :**

**Contract :** temporary Post doctoral position (18 months) starting on 05/2023

**Employer :** Aix-Marseille Université

**Gross salary** depending on your professional background : the first year ranging from 2466€ to 2891 €/month and the second year (last 6 months) between 2772€ to 3197€/month (gross salary)

### ○ **KEYWORDS**

sociology of urban, peri urban and rural areas – citizen mobilisations – conflicts of use – sociology of cohabitations between social groups – socio-spatial recompositions

### ○ **JOB LOCATION**

Aix Marseille University (France): MESOPOLHIS – UMR 7064 CNRS – MMSH, 5 rue Château de l’Horloge 13090 Aix en Provence

### ○ **ADVISORS**

Pierre Fournier, [pierre.fournier@univ-amu.fr](mailto:pierre.fournier@univ-amu.fr)

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### ○ **PI of the project**

Pierre Fournier, Professor of Sociology at Aix Marseille University (AMU)

### ○ **JOB DESCRIPTION**

This 18-months’ post-doctoral fellow is funded by the new [Mediterranean Institute for Environmental Transition](#) (A\*Midex), an interdisciplinary initiative aiming to tackle the challenges of the ongoing climate nexus, and will begin on 05/2023

### **Description of the position:**

### **Short summary project:**

The research program intends to track the trajectory of an emerging hydrogen development project in a sparsely populated area. To this end, it proposes to integrate the analytical capacities of environmental sciences and social sciences to determine the valence of the risks and opportunities that it crosses and to apprehend their consideration or their ignorance by the actors involved.

### **Project summary:**

Climate change requires to look for solutions to decarbonize human activities, but the implementation of these solutions in the territories can open up other threats. With regard to the development of hydrogen as a substitute for hydrocarbons, are the industrial projects so clear in their balance of benefits and risks that they are obvious? Or is the pathway to their realization undergoing inflections to deal with multiple risks? Some are put forward as a source of legitimacy (such as the climate risk to be combated), others as potential obstacles to the project (such as the technological risks to be prevented in the production and consumption areas). Similarly, this path is defined by opportunities such as changes in public policy incentives, debt relief through inflation, the commitment of the population to feel that they are acting on the climate and in favor of reindustrialization ... It is this iterative movement designing this industrial project in a game of forces sometimes contrary that the present research program intends to illuminate through the examination of an industrial project with high territorial stakes, seized in the process of being formulated. To this end, it proposes to integrate the analytical capacities of environmental and social sciences to determine the valence of risks and opportunities and to track their consideration or ignorance by the actors involved. Among these risks and opportunities, particular attention will be paid to the contradictory effects of the use of hydrogen on the climate and on air quality (hydrogen produced by electrolysis avoiding the mobilization of methane with a greenhouse effect, but the fugacity of hydrogen potentially representing a risk of leakage towards the atmosphere, which indirectly provokes an additional greenhouse effect, an increase in tropospheric ozone pollution and a destruction of the stratospheric ozone layer that protects living organisms from the sun's harmful UV rays). On the socio-political side, we find similar ambivalences in favor of the project (as a relay of activity in the face of the limitation of carbon energies, as a source of income for local communities, as an attestation of collective mobilization against the environmental crisis...) and against it (in the face of financial risks, sanitary risks, conflicts of use around the mobilized lands, the lack of consideration of citizens in the socio-technical decisions, the lack of transparency in the management of public money...).

The measurement of the effects of hydrogen use on climate and air quality will be performed *by another postdoc, also recruited for the HyFlex project, in atmospheric science.*

### **Responsibility: task animation**

### **Description of task:**

The social sciences know that socio-technical controversies, public support, and the public policy mechanisms that frame the energy transition influence the trajectory of such projects, but the repertoires according to which these risks and opportunities are articulated at the local level and in their interactions with national and international levels are still poorly understood. Monitoring the project as closely as possible to the territory during its definition phase should help to shed light on these issues and to see how the rhetoric of the *promise* in various fields echoes the rhetoric of the *injunction* on environmental issues.

This sociological task explore the reception of an emerging industrial energy project by local populations and how this reception impacts its territorial trajectory. The current temporality of the project makes it possible to observe the way in which the various stakeholders in the territory perceive it and participate in orienting it according to their own interests at a time when its implementation is not completely decided and not necessarily decided for its totality. We hypothesize that certain groups may seize on its risks as grounds for contestation, while others, on the contrary, perceive it as a continuity of the social dynamics of which they are the bearers and, even, see in it the opportunity to accelerate the transformations of the territory that they expect.

**The postdoc** will carry out a sociographic survey to characterize the evolution of the composition of the territory's population in relation to the transformations of the activities it has carried out since the 1950s. An ethnographic survey will then be conducted (observation of meetings, biographical interviews).

**The two postdocs** will also try to observe together the way in which these populations and their representatives seize the data of measurements carried out within the framework of the atmospheric task, and the debate on the industrial risks and on the climatic risks of the H2 characterized by these measurements.

#### ○ **QUALIFICATIONS/SKILLS/EDUCATION & RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS/DUTIES**

The post-doc will be hired for *18 months* with the following preferred skills:

- Significant research experience in urban and/or peri urban sociology and in social stratification, with a focus on socio-spatial recompositions
- An interest of environmental controversies or mobilizations around industrial or territorial development projects would be a plus
- Proficiency in social science methods, particularly observation, biographical interviews and quantitative data analysis
- Ability to conduct interviews in foreign languages (English, German, Italian)
- A solid grounding in sociology but also an interdisciplinary opening towards other social sciences and, if possible, a participation in interdisciplinary collaborative research
- Good writing and synthesis skills
- Team coordination and animation
- Relational qualities

○ **APPLICATION DEADLINE**

- February 15th, 2023
- Start date by May 2023

○ **REQUESTED DOCUMENTS OF APPLICATION AND CONTACT TO APPLY**

- Curriculum vitae
- A motivation letter

The application should be sent to:

Pierre Fournier, [pierre.fournier@univ-amu.fr](mailto:pierre.fournier@univ-amu.fr)

Maurice Olive, [maurice.olive@univ-amu.fr](mailto:maurice.olive@univ-amu.fr)