

Vacancy
Postdoctoral researcher
Faculty of Arts and Philosophy
Department of history
Vrije Universiteit Brussel (Belgium)

Networks of State and Capital in the Low Countries

Job description

The (early) modern European state-system was under constant pressure of war. International conflicts became ever more intense, armies and navies increased in size and required an ever more complex administration. However, the administrative apparatus of the early modern state was not yet adapted to the ever-increasing demands of warfare. Therefore, state administrations resorted to the private market to recruit, house, pay, feed and provide clothes for soldiers, and to equip war ships. In the course of time, networks of state officials and financial and commercial entrepreneurs emerged and became crucial for facilitating warfare. These networks often extended beyond 'national' boundaries as a small number of entrepreneurs specialized in very complex duties (such as provisioning of bread or transfer of large amounts of money) and offered their services to various governments.

This project seeks to test the hypothesis that in the eighteenth century the predominance of the 'free market' decreased in favour of more vigorous national state administrations. The international networks shrank in the process as well while 'national' administrations came at the fore in facilitating warfare. Thus, the research question is how entrepreneurs and state officials collaborated in facilitating warfare in the Low Countries and how this collaboration evolved throughout the eighteenth century.

Currently, two Phd-students are working in the project 'Networks of State and Capital'. One is based at the University of Amsterdam analyzing military entrepreneurs in the Northern Netherlands. The other is based at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel analyzing military entrepreneurs in the Southern Netherlands (today Belgium). Dr. Marjolein 't Hart (University of Amsterdam) and Griet Vermeesch (Vrije Universiteit Brussel) are the senior researchers in the project. We are looking for a researcher, who can join our team, and who is to be based in Brussels. He/she will concentrate his or her research on international networks of entrepreneurs who were active in the Low Countries or who provided troops that were operating in the Low Countries during the wars of the eighteenth century. Depending on his/her scientific background, the provisioning of German, French or English troops will be the focus of analysis.

Requirements

Applicants have preferably (or have evidence of the imminent completion of) a PhD degree and have some affinity with early modern entrepreneurial, economic or military history. Fluency in English is essential. However, it is not necessary to be able to read or write Dutch.

Organization

The Vrije Universiteit Brussel is a university in the capital of Europe and hosts internationally recognised research teams. This goes for the history department as well, with its rich tradition of research. The postdoctoral researcher will become member of the research group HOST (director: Prof. Dr. Hugo Soly), in which diverse aspects of urban history are analysed by a dynamic group of researchers. For more information, see:

http://www.vub.ac.be/HIST/hist_in_english/index.html

Conditions of employment

The researcher will be appointed with a salary of 1735 Euro net per month to 2200 Euro depending on qualifications and experience. The starting date for the post is 1 January 2010. The employment basis will be temporary for a specified period (1/1/2010-31/12/2010). The duration of the contract is twelve months with the possibility of a one-year extension. It is not strictly necessary to move to Brussels, depending on the archival resources that will be explored. However, arrangements will be made for regular attendance in Brussels to discuss the research project.

Application

Applications should include a cover letter, a brief research proposal (1 to 3 pages), curriculum vitae and list of publications, as well as the names and contact details of two potential referees. Further information can be obtained from Griet Vermeesch (e-mail griet.vermeesch@vub.ac.be). Applications should be sent before **10 October 2009** and can be sent electronically to griet.vermeesch@vub.ac.be. When your application reaches us we will send you conformation by email. If you have not received a confirmation within three days after you send us the email, phone us at (+32) (0)3 6630185.