

2 Phd Vacancies in the History of Science at the University of Leuven: Brazilian and Indian Scientific Societies and the Globalization of Science (1930-1990)

Ref. BAP-2022-403

For the Cultural History since 1750 Research Group at the University of Leuven (KU Leuven, Belgium), we are looking for two doctoral students who will investigate the regulatory role of scientific societies within the scholarly community in respectively Brazil and (British) India. Both candidates will examine how scientific societies have acted as gatekeepers in a globalizing scientific landscape between ca. 1930 and ca. 1990 by simultaneously opening up and limiting access to (sub)groups (e.g. female scholars). The research will be supervised by prof. dr. Joris Vandendriessche, prof. dr. Kaat Wils and prof. dr. Idesbald Goddeeris. Each candidate will write a doctoral dissertation.

The research group Cultural History since 1750 at the University of Leuven focuses on the history of knowledge and science, historiography and historical culture, cultural infrastructure and cultural transfers, by considering the various shapes and meanings of scientific and cultural practices. Within the history of science and knowledge, its members pay attention to the production, circulation and cultural meanings of knowledge and science in the public domain. They explore themes such as the formation of disciplines, scientific identities, the popularisation of science, science policy, visual culture and the role of gender and corporeality in the history of science and knowledge.

<https://www.arts.kuleuven.be/cultuurgeschiedenis/en/index>

Project

The two PhD projects are part of the larger research project GLOBAL ACADEMIES, funded by a Starting Grant of the European Research Council (ERC) and supervised by prof. dr. Joris Vandendriessche. The project uses scientific societies as a lens to scrutinize the changing social relations between scientists at a global scale over the course of the twentieth century. The project focuses more specifically on the regulatory role of scientific societies within science (e.g. by organizing conferences, selecting speakers, allocating prizes, electing boards etc.) during a period of intense social and geopolitical changes, such as decolonization and the Cold War. To uncover this regulatory role, the project will look at how formal and informal codes of conduct (sociability) led societies to distinguish – consciously or unintentionally – between (sub)groups of scientists (e.g. women scholars, scholars with different nationalities or socio-political views), and to in- or exclude these groups from aspects of scientific practice. In addition, the project investigates how codes of conduct related to the setting and maintaining of scientific standards, and to coping with (political) dissent. The results of this research will contribute to a better awareness of the versatile regulatory role of scientific societies within science, and will offer a nuanced historical perspective to the initiatives taken by present-day academies on diversity in science.

For more information about the project: <https://www.kuleuven.be/english/research/EU/p/he/p1/erc/global-academies>

Brazilian and Indian Scientific Societies and the Globalization of Science (1930-1990)

The doctoral students will each scrutinize a selection of scientific societies, including 'general' scientific societies operating across disciplines and disciplinary-specific societies stemming from the domains of cancer research, astronomy and history. They will each focus on a particular geographical context: one PhD student will focus on (British) India, the other PhD student on Brazil. Both will study the functioning of Indian and Brazilian scientific societies also in relation to international scientific societies and to international organizations such as UNESCO. The research will involve journal analyses, archival research and oral history interviews.

Profile

- You have a passion for historical research and the ambition to become an outstanding researcher.
- You have strong academic abilities and you have completed (or are about to complete) a Master in History or an equivalent degree in which a historical and/or a science studies and/or a gender and ethnicity studies perspective played a prominent role.
- You can read and speak English fluently, and are prepared to publish in English.
- You can read and speak Portuguese. This is only required if you are applying for the position for a doctoral student researching scientific societies in Brazil. (It is not required if you are applying for the position of a doctoral student researching scientific societies in (British) India).
- You are willing to work in Leuven and live in Belgium during the main period of the PhD scholarship.
- You are willing to conduct substantial research stays (e.g. 10 to 12 months in total) in Brazil or India to do oral history interviews and conduct archival research.
- You are willing to communicate on your research at conferences, on social media, through publications, and by engaging in outreach activities in collaboration with present-day academies and scientific societies, which will be involved as stakeholders in the project.
- You are willing to work in team and to engage in comparative historical research, which involves close collaboration among the team members, and to play an active role within the Cultural History since 1750 Research Group.

Offer

We offer two fully funded, full-time PhD positions, each for the duration of 4 years. The initial contracts will cover 1 year. After a positive evaluation, these can be extended with 1 year and subsequently with 2 years. Salary and benefits are in accordance with the university salary scales for PhD students and highly competitive by international standards.

You will carry out your PhD as part of the international research project GLOBAL ACADEMIES (funded by a Starting Grant from the European Research Council, N. 101042343) in a stimulating intellectual environment.

You will complete a doctoral training program at the History Research Unit of KU Leuven, which has a lively international community of (PhD) researchers.

You will benefit from guidance and research training from experts in the field. You will be given a work space and the resources to attend and present at conferences, to publish in open access journals, and to cover travel expenses for research in India or Brazil.

Interested?

For more information on the content of the project and the function, please contact Prof. dr. Joris Vandendriessche (joris.vandendriessche@kuleuven.be).

Candidates are invited to submit their application in English or Dutch, consisting of:

- a cv, including a detailed list of marks/grades of bachelor and master studies
- a letter of motivation stating the candidate's qualifications and reasons for interest in the position, indicating clearly for which research position(s) you are applying (Indian and/or Brazilian scientific societies)
- one writing sample, in pdf (published article, MA thesis chapter, ...)
- the contact information of two references (including information on relationship with the applicant).

Interviews with a selection of the applicants are scheduled on 22 or 23 August. Candidates who are selected will be notified mid-July. At that moment, they will receive a small writing assignment which is due August 15.

You can apply for this job no later than July 04, 2022 via the online application tool :

<http://www.kuleuven.be/eapplyingforjobs/light/60126970>

KU Leuven seeks to foster an environment where all talents can flourish, regardless of gender, age, cultural background, nationality or impairments. If you have any questions relating to accessibility or support, please contact us at diversiteit.HR@kuleuven.be.