
Internship for Master's Students (M/F)

History of economic thought | Energy, sustainability
French-speaking corpus in Belgium

Context

The internship (4 to 6 months) will be part of the ERC Starting Grant project ETRANHET – ‘Energy Transitions in the History of Economic Thought (19th-20th c.)’ (<https://www.centre-cired.fr/etranhet/>), hosted by CNRS, CIRED Paris,¹ and consisting in exploring and analysing how the economic discipline, and economists, have dealt with energy issues since the early 19th century, in different market-economy contexts (5 areas: Continental Western Europe, the British Isles, North America, Latin America, Japan). Research questions include: how did past economists conceive the role of energy in economic growth and development? How did they consider the role of technology in energy transitions? What role did they play in the design of energy policies around the world? What lessons can be drawn from history to address today’s sustainability challenges?

The selected candidate will contribute to this collective project, crossing the fields of economics, history of ideas, science and technology studies and political science, by working on one specific corpus, under the supervision of one team member (currently 1 researcher + 2 post-doctoral fellows).

Activities

ETRANHET includes a case study on the Dutch and Belgian corpus. Until 1830 the Netherlands and Belgium formed one kingdom under the Dutch king William I. After the 1830 uprising Belgium became an independent country, cutting of the Netherlands from Belgian coal supplies. These supplies were abundant since Belgium had part of the coal deposits that stretched from Nord Pas-de-Calais in France through the Borinage and Charleroi region to Liège, as well as the large deposits stretching from the German area around Aachen, through Dutch Limburg to the Belgian Kempen region. The mining industry has therefore been one of the defining features of the Belgian economy and landscape until the very last mine was closed in 1992, some 30 years after Dutch mines (prematurely) closed due to the discovery of natural gas.

The selected candidate is expected to work on the French-speaking corpus in Belgium. He/she will assist the researchers of the project by conducting a literature review of the potentially relevant contributions to the history of energy and sustainability issues in Belgian economics, and by conducting biographical surveys of particular authors. Some of the more prominent Belgian economists wrote in French: in the nineteenth century this includes Gustave de Molinari (1819-1912), Charles Périn (1815-1905), Émile de Laveleye (1822-1892), Paul-Émile De Puydt (1810-1891) and in the twentieth century Fernand Baudhuin (1904-1977) among others. Did these prominent economists write about mining, optimal exploitation rates, and energy (in)dependency issues at all? Were there other more specialized economists (or mining engineers who did not necessarily identify as economists) who worked on the economics of resources, either at a macro or more micro-level? How

¹ CIRED: Centre international de recherche sur l’environnement et le développement (*International Research Centre on Environment and Development*), joint research lab (UMR 8568 – CNRS, Ecole des Ponts ParisTech, AgroParisTech-UPSaclay, EHESS, CIRAD).

did they see the role of coal in the Belgian economy and what was their outlook for the eventual end of coal and possible transitions to other forms of energy such as oil and nuclear? The selected candidate will be invited to work with the team members working on the Dutch case to compare to what extent two neighbouring small market economies developed different ideas about resource use.

Bibliographic and biographical tools such as Scopus, WoS, Gallica (and equivalents in Belgium) will be mobilised. Besides these tools and databases, the economics faculty at the University of Liège might be a favourable starting point for research. Here, in 1838, an *Ecole des Mines* was founded as well and some French-speaking economists were based there. It will be possible for the candidate to consult archival sources in Belgium, under the supervision of team members.

The selected candidate will have to report on his/her results by writing notes and/or by building literature maps for the research team – further guidance will be given in this direction.

The selected candidate will also have the opportunity to participate in the regular research activities taking place at CIREN, including seminars, conferences and reading groups.

If the selected candidate has to write a Master's thesis for his/her curriculum, he/she will be invited to work on one particular author/episode/controversy among those identified during his/her literature review to contribute to the historiography of energy and sustainability economics in Europe in general and Belgium in particular (e.g. debates about mine closures, transition from coal to alternative energy, role of oil imports in economy, etc.). Team members will be available to help the selected candidate, and time will be allowed for him/her to write his/her thesis, during the last weeks of the internship.

Conditions

The internship is intended to last 4 to 6 months (negotiable), full time. The expected starting date is March 1st, 2023 (negotiable). CIREN is located on the Jardin Tropical campus in Nogent-sur-Marne (15-minutes train (RER A) from Paris). Partial remote work may be negotiable. The selected candidate will have to establish an agreement between his/her university (or school) and CNRS, which will be the official host structure – he/she should ensure with his/her university (or school) that such an agreement is possible before applying.

A monthly allowance (ca. 600€ per month) plus leave entitlements are included, according to CNRS's terms and conditions. Partial remote work is negotiable.

Profile

- Master's student (4th or 5th year of university) in economics, history of ideas, economic history, energy history, science and technology studies, political science, or a related field;
- Language skills: English (at least B2-C1, working language), French (B2-C1, corpus language);
- Computer skills (not mandatory, to be improved during the internship): MS Office, Acrobat Pro (for optical recognition of characters), Zotero (for bibliographic collections); concept mapping software;
- Other skills: organisation, rigour, teamwork, good written expression.

Application

To apply for the position, please send by e-mail to [hendrik.johannes.theodoor\[at\]cnrs.fr](mailto:hendrik.johannes.theodoor[at]cnrs.fr) and [antoine.missemer\[at\]cnrs.fr](mailto:antoine.missemer[at]cnrs.fr) (i) a CV, (ii) a short cover letter (1 page max.) explaining why you are motivated and have a suitable background for the project, and (iii) the name and e-mail address of the referent teacher/professor with whom the internship agreement will be discussed. Deadline for application: **December 31st, 2022**. The results will be communicated by 15-20 January 2023.

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