

Apologies for cross-postings.

In response to the ongoing pandemic conditions, the deadline for the vacancy below has been extended.

Deadline for applications is now 20 August 2021.

Feel free to share with potential candidates.

Best wishes,

David

*** VACANCY for a full-time PhD Researcher for 4 years

Cosmopolis: Centre for Urban Research (Vrije Universiteit Brussels, Belgium) is seeking to attract a **full-time junior researcher** in the context of the project “Emerging Geographies of Financial Technology in Europe: Mapping Organizational, Institutional, and Strategic Financial Center Change in the Benelux” funded by the Research Foundation – Flanders (FWO) and coordinated by David Bassens (short project description below). The successful candidate will **develop an article-based PhD** within the framework of the project and collaborate with the project coordinator and a postdoctoral researcher to achieve collective research goals.

The candidate holds a master degree in **geography** or a related and relevant discipline (e.g., anthropology, business studies, economics, history, political science, sociology), has a **clear interest in financial geography**, and a proven talent for analysing both qualitative and quantitative data sources. A well-developed insight into (fin) tech developments and broader economic geography debates is an asset. Local knowledge of one of the case study contexts (i.e. Amsterdam, Brussels, Luxembourg) is also considered a plus, but is not a prerequisite as such. Cosmopolis is committed to achieve diversity and gender equality in the research group. We strongly encourage the application of **female candidates** who will be given priority if equally qualified.

The successful candidate will be enrolled as a doctoral student at Vrije Universiteit Brussels and receive a standard PhD bursary for four years (subject to a positive evaluation at the end of year 1) which is adequate to cover the cost of living in Belgium. **The preferred starting date is 1 October 2021.**

Application deadline is 20 August 2021 with interviews planned on 25 August 2021. Please submit a dossier in English consisting of an academic CV, the transcript of records of your bachelor and master’s degrees, a writing sample of maximum two pages, a motivation letter of maximum two pages, and the contact details of two academic references.

For inquiries and applications contact David Bassens david.bassens@vub.be.

Witnessing the rapid digitization of financial services, this project investigates financial center change through a comparative case study of Amsterdam, Brussels, and Luxembourg. A main question this project seeks to answer is how the traditional intermediating role of financial centers is changing in light of the increased use of Financial Technologies (FinTech) – from digital payments and currencies to the embrace of artificial intelligence. Is there still a need for financial centers in the age of digital finance? And if so, which organizations will be the key players: established financial institutions, or perhaps tech giants like Google or Amazon, or China’s Alibaba and Tencent? Although constituting pressing issues in terms of economy, society and geopolitics, FinTech-induced transformations in financial centers remain poorly understood. While a geographical research agenda on FinTech is emerging, the focus has thus far been mostly on relations between tech start-ups and banks, less on the rise of Big Tech embracing FinTech. This project seeks to fill these research gaps by focusing on shifts in the Benelux where established financial institutions and large tech firms are beginning to collaborate and compete. The project focuses on how these organizations change, how local and regional institutions accommodate digitization, and how these transformations and accommodations relate to wider regulatory and strategic changes enacted at national and European scales.

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