

Tensions of Europe Research Group on Technologies, Environment, and Resources

Coproduction of territories and their resources: technologies of prospecting, extraction and remediation in history

16-17 April 2020

National Research University Higher School of Economics—St. Petersburg, Russia

In his recent manifesto, Bruno Latour argues in favour of ‘terrestrial politics’ and the importance of going beyond local and global perspectives when dealing with climate change. Responding to this, we historians need to do more analytical work unpacking the ‘resource-state nexus’ by historicising relationships between territories and societies through the lens of history of natural resources and related technologies. Natural resources are always connected with some particular territory, be it land or water. Geographies define several types of territories: national, regional and local, dependent, disputed, overseas, but also global commons like the high oceans and atmosphere and even those that might go beyond territorial principles into space. Moreover, the territories, both lands and oceans, have volume; that is, they are voluminous surfaces. Finding, describing and forecasting the future of particular natural resources demand different technologies: drilling, echo sounding, measuring, mapping, aero- or space photography and many others. Resources are not only located and mapped; possibilities for extraction are investigated and infrastructures of exploitation are envisioned. How are such technological interventions negotiated within society and weighted against other services of the territory and interests such as agriculture, recreation, and biodiversity?

At this workshop we would like to discuss the use of technologies connected with resources in different types of territories with a focus on expert knowledge. Expert knowledge, often originating from encounters with new lands and cultures and transnational contexts, has been critically important for all the stages of resource exploitation. To what extent has expert knowledge been in tension with local knowledge and local visions? Another aspect to be discussed is the role of geopolitical interests and strategies. How does the creation or appropriation of technologies for resource use connect to attempts to gain control over a territory? Likewise, how were the processes of maintaining territorial control intertwined with appropriation of new technological assemblages and the transnational circulation of knowledge and expertise? How did expert knowledge and the use of technologies contribute to constructions and changes of spatial imaginaries of territories and of national or international juridical order?

We invite presentations on any geographic area, with some preference given to Europe, its close neighbours, overseas territories, and territories to or from which European flows of resources are particularly strong. The workshop is a follow-up activity of the Technologies, Environment, and Resources Group of the Tensions of Europe Network (<https://www.tensionsofeurope.eu/technology-environment-and-resources/>). It will be organized by the Laboratory for Environmental and Technological History of the Center for

Historical Research with the support from the research network Challenging Europe: Technology, Environment and the Quest for Resource Security (EURES).

Please submit an abstract of maximum 500 words along with a short academic CV to **events.histechlab@gmail.com**. Proposals are due by **10 January 2020**, and a response will be given by 20 January. Visa support for travel to Russia as well as a limited number of travel grants will be provided. Please note on your abstract whether you will need travel support.

Alexandra Bekasova, Alexei Kraikovski, Elena Kochetkova, Julia Lajus (Higher School of Economics, Russia), Matthias Heymann (Aarhus University, Denmark)