



ToE NEWSLETTER - NOVEMBER 2018

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Newsletter contents:

[Project News](#)

[Conferences and meetings](#)

[News from the ToE Early Career Scholars Network](#)

Dear Tensions of Europe (ToE) participant/friend,

The 9th Tensions of Europe Conference will take place in Luxembourg between the 27th and 30th of June 2019. The Conference theme is **Decoding Europe: Technological Pasts in the Digital Age**. You may [submit](#) your proposal by 15 November 2018. We hope to see you all this June in Luxembourg!

The November 2018 issue of the ToE Newsletter includes an update on new and ongoing ToE-related projects, conferences and meetings, including news from the ToE Early Career Scholars Network. We look forward to having your news and comments published in future issues of the ToE Newsletter.

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Project News

➤ Update on the new ToE flagship research program *Technology and Societal Challenges*

At the **Vught I** workshop (Spring 2016), we kicked-off the ToE flagship program on *Technology & Societal Challenges*—a successor program to the successful *Technology & European integration* program. The rationale:

(1) Political, academic and public actors have great difficulty to make sense of the cavalcade of interrelated global crises that recently hit our modern world. Technology plays a major role, as alleged cause and suggested solution of such crises. Our network has the expertise and experience to critically examine interactions between technological, social and environmental changes; it is in a unique position to develop narratives and analyses of the ambivalent technological dynamics of grand challenges.

(2) Instead of running after funding opportunities as individuals and individual research groups, we could build a collective research agenda, research network and fundraising strategy, which could enable a competitive and relevant (to us), informed, and qualified response to funding calls.

We decided to embark on an *explorative* program to, in the time span of 2-3 years, develop possible collaborations (i.e. building a new research network) and research agendas (which research questions are relevant? How could they possibly be answered?). This task was distributed over a number of working groups—experimentation spaces which, each in their own way, explore these issues and organize activities for a particular theme (e.g. the migration, energy, or resources challenge, sustainable urban mobility, or cross-cutting themes such as ‘governing technologies’ and ‘cultures of crisis’).

At the **Vught 2** (June 2018) workshop, working group coordinators evaluated their findings so far and discussed future ambitions and plans. Working group coordinators **reported their activities** of the past two years. These reports showed an impressive variety of initiatives, activities and results, and also very different ways of operating. A number of working groups successfully applied for local or research council seed money, and used that for consortium- and agenda building and further proposal writing. One group already won a prestigious H2020 research grant. Other working groups focused on workshops and joint publications, and a number of special issues are currently on their way. Several new working groups were established in the last half a year or so, and have only just begun planning/organizing activities. Conversely, some older working groups were less active.

Some themes are not yet part of our program and perhaps should be. These include water, agriculture & food (currently under “resources”); gender/poverty/inequality; ICT & Big Data; artificial intelligence and robotics. The ToE-Grand Challenges program is an open and bottom-up program, so all themes that have a coordinator and critical mass are most welcome. However, as a program, we do not *have to* be comprehensive at this point in time, for the point of an explorative program is to select arenas for experimentation and learning.

Getting different theme-coordinators at the same table raised a number of **important issues**. All expressed agreement that our topic is rich, inspiring, promising and important and that our current network is a strong one: we should engage with this topic, not as fragmented individuals/research groups, but as a network that builds a strong research agenda, develops & shares knowledge. Another observation was that there are several notions of ‘grand challenges’ and ‘crises’ at play in the different networks. All agree that we should not essentialize and take for granted, but interrogate the concept. This may involve developing a new (meta) vocabulary. The concept of Anthropocene was debated as a possible frame.

There were also **differences**: Some argued for articulating the ‘specificity of Europe’ (also because this is where our expertise currently lies); others for taking a global history perspective. In addition,

participants have different attitudes towards the relationship between professional history on one hand, and stakeholders/policy/public debates on the other (including 'public history'). Some participants urged that historians need to intervene in, rather than just study, our problematic world. Others reported how they experiment with stakeholder co-creation (and raised the concept of the 'usable past'). Still others emphasized – in different wordings – that the strength of professional history is its ability to engage from a position of strong professional autonomy in various debates. Either way: At this moment we are not looking for uniform answers or choices, but for raising deep and contentious questions, and experimenting with intellectual and organizational ways to answer them, in other words, to open up new horizons for research as well as engagement.

The session on **future ambitions** of the program featured a brainstorm and a debate. Some participants see the program mainly as a possibility for short-term experimentation with exciting ideas and people, or networking and grant proposal writing. Other participants supported the idea of a long-term, major scientific intervention in the form of a 'landmark publication', e.g. a high-prestige book series. Still others emphasized possibilities for policy and public interventions. The discussion underscores that we are not aiming for a 'one size fits all' plan. The program is 'emergent'. Some participants may work on major scientific interventions, others on policy/public interventions, others on both.

Further sessions addressed the making of a *Technology & Culture* Forum special issue; the organization of sessions or roundtables at the upcoming 9th Tensions of Europe Conference in Luxemburg and the SHOT conference in Milan; funding options; and the program website.

For more see: <http://www.tensionsofeurope.eu/second-flagship-program-technology-societal-challenges/>

➤ **Research Group on Technologies, Environment and Resources**

After the workshop at Vught in the Netherlands in 2016 the "[Research Group Technology, Environment and Resources](#)" was formed with Elena Kochetkova (St. Petersburg) and Matthias Heymann (Aarhus) as coordinators. The research group has been very active since then. Its activities comprised:

- Workshop I: Technology, natural resources and crises in the past and present of Europe and beyond (National Research University Higher School of Economics - St. Petersburg, Russia, October 2016). The workshop hosted about 40 participants from the USA, Russia, the Netherlands, Sweden, Hungary, and other countries. See [program](#).
- Workshop II: Technology, natural resources and crises in the past and present of Europe and beyond II (University of Aarhus, Denmark, May 2017). [Workshop Program](#) [Workshop Report](#) [Workshop Website](#)
- Stringed sessions at the 8th Tensions of Europe Conference in Athens (September 2017). See [session program](#).
- Writing workshop "Challenging Europe: Technology, environment and the quest for resource security" (KTH Stockholm, 13-15 June 2018). The workshop hosted 17 participants from 8 countries, who submitted and discussed 16 manuscripts and comments to them and decided after intensive discussion on the plan to develop three special issues for different reviewed journals.

In summer 2018 the Research Group received two grants to continue collaborative activities and research:

- **GREASE** project: [Global Resources and Sustainability of European Modernization 1820-2020](#) funded by the Netherlands Research Council (coordinator Erik van der Vleuten)
- **EURES** project: [Challenging Europe: Technology, Environment and the Quest for Resource Security](#) funded by the Danish Council for Independent Research (coordinator Matthias Heymann)

EURES has started activities with two workshops in autumn 2018:

- Kick-off workshop “Perceptions and constructions of resources, resource crises and resource futures: looking at the Arctic and other spaces”, Aarhus University, 8-9 November 2018.
- Workshop, “Economic development and environmental transformations in Europe’s extractive peripheries (16th-21st centuries)”, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS), Paris, 21-22 November 2018.

In the framework of EURES and GREASE, among others the following workshops and conferences are planned:

- Workshop “Globalized resource cycles and social and environmental transformation”, University of Lisbon (June 2018)
- Workshop “Expert knowledge in the construction of natural resources and managing crisis in the European periphery and colonial / postcolonial world”, Higher School of Economics, St. Petersburg (November 2019)
- Final Conference at Aarhus University (June 2020)

In addition, the Research Group plans to organize panels and sessions at upcoming conferences, such as:

- Panel series: “Natural Resources and Production in the Age of Mechanization and Digitalization: National Narratives and Transnational Connections” at the 9th Tensions of Europe Conference “Decoding Europe: Technological Pasts in the Digital Age”, Luxembourg, 27-30 June 2019.
- Panels and a Roundtable Discussion at the 10th Biennial European Society for Environmental History (ESEH) Conference “Boundaries in/of Environmental History”, Tallinn, 21 to 25 August 2019.

➤ GREASE

Prof. Erik van der Vleuten and dr. Frank Veraart, Tensions of Europe participants from Eindhoven University of Technology, have received a networking grant from the Dutch science foundation NWO for a project called *Global Resources and Sustainability of European Modernization* (GREASE), 1820-2020. Through a series of workshops, GREASE builds a research network and research agenda to historically explore the global inequality, well-being, and (un)sustainability entanglements along global resource chains. Tensions of Europe partners in GREASE are Eindhoven University of Technology, Royal Institute of Technology Sweden (KTH), University of Paris Sorbonne, Luxemburg University, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Europa-University Viadrina, St. Petersburg Higher School of Economics, University of Lisbon, Aric University of Norway, Netherlands ministry of Foreign Affairs and Netherland Statistics.

For more see: <https://www.tensionsofeurope.eu/global-sustainability-entanglements-along-the-resource-chain-grease> & www.nwo.nl/onderzoek-en-resultaten/onderzoeksprojecten/i/78/32178.htm

➤ InsSciDE

The H2020 project ‘Inventing a shared Science Diplomacy for Europe’ – *InsSciDE* was launched by Pascal Griset (CNRS - Sorbonne Université) in January 2018. It includes 15 consortium partners from 11 countries and an assembly of international experts and actors who specialize in science diplomacy. InsSciDE aims to create new knowledge on past and present science diplomacy in Europe, engage stakeholders in drawing lessons learned, and deliver shared policy and training tools. The InsSciDE consortium takes advantage of past collaborations among ToE members and will help the network to reach out to new communities.

InsSciDE will hold its first Open Conference in Kraków, Poland, 18-20 January 2019, in partnership with the European Academy of Diplomacy. Aristotle Tympas will join a plenary dialogue about “*Border tensions: Who fixes what with science and technology?*” and other ToE members will run hands-on Discovery Round Tables centered on 6 historical cases of Science Diplomacy to face global challenges.

The OC brings together researchers, experienced practitioners, and motivated young diplomats-in-training for highly interactive days using history of technology to envision best diplomatic practice. A few spaces remain open. Persons interested can visit <https://insscide.diplomats.pl/register/>

To stay updated about the InsSciDE activities visit <http://www.insscide.eu>

➤ EUROPTT

What about the so-called "hidden integration" of Europe during war times? This question lays at the heart of the EUROPTT research project. Co-funded by the German DFG (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft) and French ANR (Agence nationale de la recherche), the project runs from 2018 to 2020 around a core group of scholars (Yves Bouvier, Pascal Griset, Christian Henrich-Franke, Léonard Laborie, Martial Libera, Guido Thiemeyer, plus two PhDs: Valentine Aldebert, Sabrina Proschmann).

EUROPTT focuses mainly on the European Postal and Telecommunications Union (EPTU) that was established in 1942 on the basis of an italo-german initiative. An international organization during the Second World War is a contrast to the narrative of war being a caesura in international and more specifically European cooperation. The union shows that the Second World War also fostered coordination between European entities – here between the Post, Telegraph and Telephone (PTT) administrations. The research project is composed of three parts. They are: 1) International postal and telecommunication cooperation during the Second World War; 2) Continuities and discontinuities of postal and telecommunication cooperation from the Interwar to the postwar period; 3) Comparison with other infrastructures: continuities and discontinuities in international cooperation.

EUROPTT has announced a Call for Proposals for its Book project "Conflict and Cooperation: Crossborder infrastructure governance in Europe facing the Second World War" (see the call [here](#)).

For more information visit EUROPTT blog <https://europtt.hypotheses.org>

➤ DIGINAUTS - MIGRANTS' DIGITAL PRACTICES IN AND OF THE EUROPEAN BORDER REGIME

Despite the 'digital turn' in migration research, there has been a lack of studies focusing on migrants' usages of information and communications technology (ICT). Funded by the Velux Foundation, the interdisciplinary DIGINAUTS project sets out to investigate the digital navigation of migrants on arrival sites and en-route to Europe. The aim is to conceptually synthesize existing insights from Critical Border and Migration Studies, Social Media Studies, European Ethnology and Science and Technology Studies. By employing a set of mixed methods (combining ethnographic and digital approaches), the aim is to investigate how ICT, the digital practices of migrants as well as of aiding organisations and initiatives of the receiving countries intermediate and constitute new sociotechnical networks of community and solidarity, in turn re-enacting migrants as political subjects in/of the European border regime. Three sites have been selected for the ethnographic investigation of migrants' digital practices: 1) the Greek borderland (with a focus on the islands of Lesbos and Chios and the capital of Athens), 2) the German-Danish border region and 3) the Öresund region between Denmark and Sweden. The DIGINAUTS team includes familiar ToE members and supporters, including Vasilis Galis (co-principal investigator, associate professor at the IT University Copenhagen, guest lecturer at the "Science, Technology, Society" Graduate Program of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, and, Huub Dijkstra, professor, University of Amsterdam, member of the advisory board). The first workshop of the project will take place in Athens, at the Greek National Documentation Centre, November 14th-15th of 2018.

For more information, see <https://www.en.cgs.aau.dk/research/projects/diginauts/>

Conferences and meetings

➤ 9th Tensions of Europe Conference, Luxembourg, 27-30 June 2019: Call for papers

The 9th Tensions of Europe conference is organised by the Centre for Contemporary and Digital History (C²DH) / University of Luxembourg. The main conference theme is **Decoding Europe: Technological Pasts in the Digital Age**.

Decoding Europe: Technological Pasts in the Digital Age investigates the way in which our approach to European technological pasts is influenced, shaped and may even be transformed in the digital age, and, conversely, how the digital present and future of Europe is the result of long-term historical trajectories and patterns.

In the current narrative, digitisation is a process profoundly shaped by US visions. This conference also aims to rediscover European influences in this process, alternative EU visions, etc. Although Europe will be at the centre of most of the analyses, proposals that compare global, national, regional and/or local approaches and combine several scales and trajectories to shed light on technological pasts in the digital age are also welcome.

Along with the impact of digitisation on historical archives, resources and practices, we also invite presentations exploring the writing and shaping of European history in a critical, experimental and interdisciplinary way: retro-digitised and born-digital heritage, new tools and digital practices of European historiography, digital narratives and teaching methods in the field of European history.

Our aim is to encourage a process of cross-fertilisation by including contributions from a wide variety of historical disciplines as well as from archivists and fields such as geography, digital humanities, science and technology studies, Internet studies, media studies, information and communication sciences, and infrastructure, platform and code studies.

Also welcome are themes that extend the general research agenda of the Tensions of Europe network, e.g. transnational histories of technology, history of European infrastructures and networks, environment and technology, the democracy–technology relationship, conflicting interests and technology, technology and hidden integration, technology and culture, gender and technology, technology and ethnicity, and technology and disability.

Tensions of Europe conferences have always featured **alternative meeting formats**. We encourage proposals for non-traditional sessions with different formats and new ideas (e.g. round tables, agenda-building sessions, brainstorming sessions, break-out groups with assignments, poster discussions, film discussions and event-based sessions). As long as quality can be demonstrated – with the potential for constructive, stimulating and engaging discussion – the program committee will not prioritise between formats.

The organisers invite scholars to **submit proposals by 15 November 2018 (submissions will open on 15 October 2018)**.

More information and the call for papers can be found on the conference website <http://www.toe2019.org>.

➤ ICOHTEC symposium Katowice (Poland), 22-27 July 2019, Call for Papers: Technology and Power

Social theorists from Max Weber to Jürgen Habermas have argued that power relations are among the defining characteristics of every society, along with culture and economic relations. The main theme of this conference, Technology and Power, seeks to interrogate the various roles technologies

have played in the development of power relations in the past, in different parts of the world. Political power (local, state, and inter-state) is the most obvious of these, but relations of gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, labour, age, and so on, also include elements of power. Technologies have instrumental, mediating, undermining, reinforcing, and constructive roles in all of these relations. Some technologies have been used by elites, others have served the relatively powerless. Think of weapons as means of state power, but also as instruments of revolution; the printed word as a vehicle of state and church propaganda, but also as a disrupter of all kinds of authority; contraceptive devices and pills that have changed relations between the sexes and in families. Power is usually contested, and technologies often change the chances of those involved in these conflicts.

The recent interest in transnational history has extended the range of these topics and revealed their interconnectedness. Technological change is disrespectful of national borders: technical knowledge and technicians travel, and new technologies of communication and transport transform balances of trade and power on a worldwide scale. We have only begun to explore these global dimensions, and the symposium will offer the opportunity to push this project forward. Proposals and presentations on a wide spectrum of topics related to the general theme are very much encouraged. Proposals outside the main theme will also be considered. Deadline for proposals is Tuesday, 15 January 2019.

For more information see [here](#).

➤ **B/ORDERS IN MOTION Current Challenges and Future Perspectives. International Conference at the European University Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder), Germany, November 15-17, 2018**

In 2018, the Viadrina Center B/ORDERS IN MOTION celebrates its fifth anniversary as a host and hub for b/order-related research with an international conference. With this conference, we offer a platform to consider current challenges and future perspectives of Border and Boundary Studies. B/ORDERS IN MOTION outlines a conceptual perspective and a heuristic research agenda: The conceptual perspective emphasizes a volatile but inevitable interdependence of dynamic bordering practices, which both rest on and are constitutive for past and present political, legal, economic, societal, and cultural orders. As a heuristic research agenda, B/ORDERS IN MOTION invites varying disciplines to integrate the research perspective 'from the border' as an innovative and prolific approach. In a world of different speeds, complex overlaps of structures, fragmentations and pluralization of temporal horizons, as well as new processes of differentiation and heterogeneities, the theme of B/ORDERS IN MOTION has advanced to encompass both an existential societal challenge and a fundamental question of the humanities that is a key to the future.

For the program and more information see [here](#)

News from the ToE Early Career Scholars Network

➤ Tensions of Europe Summer School 2019 “Towards Digital Science and Technology Studies: Challenges and Opportunities”, Luxembourg, 25-27 June 2019

We live in the digital age, which has a huge impact on the way we do scholarly research. For emerging careers, it seems to be particularly pivotal. On the one hand, digitalization brings opportunities enlarging the methodological and thematic horizons. On the other hand, it sets a number of challenges on how to employ various methods, use new digital applications, and adapt to a rapidly changing academic community. But why do we actually need digital methods in our research?

The Early career scholars network of Tensions of Europe in connection to the 9th Tensions of Europe (ToE) Conference, organizes a Summer School to discuss challenges and opportunities in the field of science and technology studies (STS). The Summer School relates to the overall conference theme “Decoding Europe: Technological Past in the Digital Age”. We invite participants from the field of science, technology and medicine studies, both from historical and other social disciplines.

In order to participate, we invite applicants to submit a short bio (no more than one page) and a short text (350-500 words) explaining their interest in the topics of the summer school and how their work would benefit from these discussions. **Proposals** should be sent until **31st January 2019** to len.kochetkova@gmail.com or elitsastoilova@gmail.com with a title “ToE Summer School Proposal”.

For further information see [here](#).