



Call for Papers

The 10th Tensions of Europe Conference Aarhus University, Denmark 29 June–1 July 2022

Conference theme: Technology, Environment and Resources

Deadline for proposals: 31 October 2021

The 10th Tensions of Europe Conference will as usual be open to all topics and themes. The special theme of this conference will be the history of interactions between technology, the environment and resources. It aims to explore connections between aspects such as scientific exploration, technological development, resource exploitation and use, resource markets and environmental change by investigating both scientific and technological practices as well as narratives and perspectives related to natural resources and environmental issues. The conference places particular emphasis on processes of circulation and appropriation of knowledge, ideas, technologies and resources across space and time in all historical periods and at local, regional and global scales.

Technology has been a major factor in using, shaping and understanding environments, as demonstrated at the 7th Tensions of Europe Conference in Stockholm in 2015. The 10th Tensions of Europe Conference continues and deepens this thread, paying particular attention to histories of natural resources. Our understanding of the concept “natural resources” is broad, comprising water, metals, minerals and energy along with living resources such as fish, forests and agricultural products. Most technological, social and environmental changes in history, as well as the way in which we understand and make sense of these changes, relate to natural resources in diverse and intricate ways.

Resources provide the basis for subsistence and industrial production; they play a role in fostering or hindering innovation, motivating or justifying technological systems and complex infrastructures, easing or aggravating national and international social and political tensions and relieving or causing significant social and environmental burdens. Just as important as the material and physical manifestations of resource regimes and their changes over time are their intellectual and ideological underpinnings, their conceptual analysis, their communication and presentation in media and the construction of narratives including excessive expectations and doomsday visions.

Themes and questions of particular interest include:

- *Perceptions and constructions of resources, resource crises and resource futures:* What national and transnational actors and historical contexts have shaped perceptions, narratives and imaginaries of natural resources and resource opportunities, abundance, risks, scarcity, criticality and crisis? What narratives have contributed to constructing or historicising the technology-resources-environment nexus?
- *Globalised resource chains, global resource exploitation and the related social and environmental impacts:* How can we conceptualise and describe global chains of resource exploitation, transportation and use and their social and environmental consequences at all stages in the resource chain? What contexts such as colonialism, imperialism, industrial capitalism, (real) socialism and Western European unification have shaped and fuelled global resource chains?
- *Managing crises: technologies and politics at local, regional and global scales:* How have societal actors and groups on different spatial levels perceived and framed resource challenges, responded to resource crises, devised strategies of relief and constructed visions of resource use? What historical contexts have affected ideas of resource security and fostered forms of resource nationalism?
- *Technology, resources and environmental transformation:* The links between resource use and unintentional environmental change or intentional drivers of the green transformation often lack visibility. What factors, technologies and contexts have shaped these links? When and why have key actors taken

environmental challenges into consideration or fallen back on environmental rhetoric and “greenwashing”?

- *Material and ideological sides of the digital transformation:* The ongoing digitalization transforms resource flows and ideas. Productivity gains and savings of material resources have gone along with soaring consumption of rare metals and energy. How have digital technologies and services, from robot factories to smart technologies and social media to cryptocurrencies affected resource consumption patterns, perceptions and politics?
- *Conceptual issues: How are histories of resources written, and how should they be written?* Contemporary debates about natural resources are predominantly framed by approaches to resource economics and the dynamics of commodity prices. How can historians contribute by unveiling deeper factors such as ideological framings, political traditions, legal regimes and technological path dependencies? Do we need more commodity history (“*Stoffgeschichte*”) or histories of material culture? Should the “new materialism(s)” be taken more seriously?

We welcome contributions on topics related to these broad themes as well as on general themes in the history of technology and neighbouring fields of interest to the Tensions of Europe network. As well as traditional panel sessions with a number of papers and a commentator, we also encourage proposals for non-traditional panels with different formats and new ideas (e.g. round tables, agenda-building sessions, brainstorming sessions, breakout groups with assignments, poster discussions, film discussions and event-based sessions).

The format of proposals should be as follows:

- **Proposals for whole panels** (in traditional or alternative formats) should include a title for the panel, a description of the format and theme of the panel (max. 300 words), chair of the panel and the academic title, affiliation and short biography of the organiser(s). Traditional panels should also include shorter abstracts (max. 150 words) of the individual papers with the name, academic title, affiliation and short biography of the presenter(s). Please include all this information in a single PDF file and name the file as follows: [OrganiserLastName]-[OrganiserFirstName]-Panel (e.g. Miller-Robert-Panel). In the case of more than one organiser choose the name of the contact person in the file name.
- **Proposals for individual papers** should include a title, a short abstract (no more than 300 words) and the academic title, affiliation and short biography of the applicant(s). Please include all this information in a single PDF file and name the file as follows: [ApplicantLastName]-[ApplicantFirstName]-Paper (e.g. Miller-Robert-Paper).

- **Proposals for contributions to a “My PhD in 10 minutes” session** allowing young scholars to present their research. These proposals should include an abstract (approx. 150 words) and the affiliation and short biography of the applicant. Please include all this information in a single PDF file and name the file as follows: [ApplicantLastName]-[ApplicantFirstName]-PhDSession (e.g. Miller-Robert-PhDSession).

The organisers invite scholars to submit their proposals by 31 October 2021. Proposals can be submitted via the conference website (<https://conferences.au.dk/toe10/>) from 1 September 2021. Please submit your proposal on the conference website by clicking on the appropriate button (“Individual Paper”, “Whole Panels” or “PhDSession”). We will try to make a limited number of travel grants available for young scholars without their own funding.

The Tensions of Europe Conference is organised biennially by an [interdisciplinary community of scholars](#) who study the shaping of Europe through the lens of technology and material culture. We encourage constructive interactions between historians of technology and scholars from all other fields of the humanities and social sciences. The organisation of this conference is based on the research network “[Challenging Europe: Technology, Environment and the Quest for Resource Security](#)” (EurReS), which is coordinated at Aarhus University and is part of the Tensions of Europe programme “Technology & Societal Challenges, ca. 1800-2050”.