Inventing Europe
Technology and the Making of Europe

A Proposal for an EUROCORES Programme

Johan Schot, Håkon With Andersen, Robert Bud, Albert Carreras, Martin Daunton, Pascal Griset, Patrick Fridenson, Victoria de Grazia, Hartmut Kaelbe, Arne Kaijser, Luda Klusakova, Ruth Oldenziel, Helmuth Trischler
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European Highway Network Plan by Puricelli (1934)

Source: Le Strade, nr. 12
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Inventing Europe
Its main aim:
To develop a novel understanding of European integration using
the lens of technology
Informal integration

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To get away from focus on institution building, treaty history, and history of policy coordination

Instead
Focus on how “Europe” has been constructed and performed through interaction, networking, projection, and appropriation
Summary of other features

- Long-term perspective
- Transnational perspective
- Global perspective;
- Include contested and fragmented nature of process;
- Relate informal process to formal process;
- European integration part of European history
Using the lens of technology

Technology comprises machines, products, systems, and infrastructures as well as skills, knowledge, and cultural scripts that make them work. Hence, technological change is understood as a deeply political, social, and cultural process involving people, institutions, and choices.

This contextual understanding of technology allows to see it as a site for shaping European integration.
History of Proposal
Based on:

- ESF Network (also funded by NSF, plus range of national sponsors);
- Commitment to international research collaboration;
- Commitment to open up History of Technology to broader questions and other disciplines and fields.
Specific Research Areas

• Building Europe through infrastructures;
• Standardising Europe;
• Consuming Europe;
• Europe in the Global World
I. Building Europe through Infrastructures

- What specific European ideas have been embedded in infrastructures?
- How have nation-states and other international actors sought to regulate transnational connections?
- How have range of users signified used transnational infrastructures?
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II. Standardising Europe

• How were European perspectives negotiated against rival national, regional and international perspectives in European research collaborations?

• How were European standards and ways of thinking implemented?

• How did research collaborations influence knowledge infrastructure development?
Two discrete European cases

“Successfull” collaboration: ELDO, ESA and the “learning curve” of transnational research network

“Failed” standardisation: European collaboration in computer technology
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III. Consuming Europe

• How have firms tried to define and develop Europe-wide networks and markets?

• How have users and their representatives appropriated consumer products?

• How did the narratives about Europe relate to local, regional, national and global practices?
IV. Europe in the Global World

- How were definitions and practices of European technology development shaped by the colonial and decolonialisation experience?

- What was the influence of competition and comparison between European nations and empires and between Europe and the US and USSR?

- How did international agents serve as sites for negotiating European identities and practices?
General questions to address in each project

- What kind of history of European integration and Europe is advanced in this project? How to interpret major episodes in European history?
- How has technology shaped emergent European structures and relationships?
- How can we evaluate relationships between informal and formal processes of European integration?
Building coherence and outreach

• Networking; including workshops, annual conference summerschool. Networking will be open to invited experts & and other scholars, f.e. in associated projects;

• Publishing a book series (flagship); conceptualisations starts immediately;

• Web-based exhibition for a general audience. Portal to museum and other heritage organisations across Europe
European added value

- Follows quite naturally from its subject: European integration;
- Is located in transnational nature of knowledge to be produced;
- Mapping rich and varied ways in which people have built, explored and opposed Europe since 1850s;
- Inventing Europe proves importance of EUROCORES scheme. It cannot and perhaps should not be funded otherwise.
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