



Medium to High Risk Research Ethics Approval

Project Title

Disrupting technology -- can the planetary technosphere be politically steered toward a post-capitalist metabolism?

Record of Approval

Principal Investigator

I request an ethics peer review and confirm that I have answered all relevant questions in this checklist honestly.	X
I confirm that I will carry out the project in the ways described in this checklist. I will immediately suspend research and request new ethical approval if the project subsequently changes the information I have given in this checklist.	X
I confirm that I, and all members of my research team (if any), have read and agreed to abide by the Code of Research Ethics issued by the relevant national learned society.	X
I confirm that I, and all members of my research team (if any), have read and agreed to abide by the University's Research Ethics, Governance and Integrity Framework.	X

Name: Tomislav Medak

Date: 15/03/2018

Student's Supervisor (if applicable)

I have read this checklist and confirm that it covers all the ethical issues raised by this project fully and frankly. I also confirm that these issues have been discussed with the student and will continue to be reviewed in the course of supervision.

Name: Gary Hall

Date: 01/12/2018

Reviewer (if applicable)

Date of approval by anonymous reviewer: 03/12/2018

Medium to High Risk Research Ethics Approval Checklist

Project Information

Project Ref	P69342
Full name	Tomislav Medak
Faculty	Faculty of Arts and Humanities
Department	Post Digital Cultures
Supervisor	Gary Hall
Module Code	FAH-PHD
EFAAF Number	
Project title	Disrupting technology -- can the planetary technosphere be politically steered toward a post-capitalist metabolism?
Date(s)	22/01/2018 - 01/07/2021
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Project Summary

My PhD theorizes the socially structured mechanisms that shape technological development and accelerate the technosocial impacts on Earth's systems. I will look at how disruption of technological systems, particularly energy systems, enables climate action and, in turn, how technologies, particularly digital technologies, help in production and dissemination climate science. To achieve the exploration of these areas, the PhD project incorporated the perspectives of other actors and communities and how they make sense of these issues.

To expand my research empirically, I will conduct three case studies: first, with the Institute for Political Ecology, an environmentalist group in Croatia; second, with the Unite trade union in the UK; third, with members of the academic community who are devising practices of no-barriers access to data and science.

My principle methods will be the literature review, the use of online and print sources about and from those actors to analyse their actions, and open-ended interviews to understand motivations and positions of those actors for their actions.

Names of Co-Investigators and their organisational affiliation (place of study/employer)	
Is the project self-funded?	YES
Who is funding the project?	Coventry University
Has the funding been confirmed?	YES
Are you required to use a Professional Code of Ethical Practice appropriate to	NO

your discipline?	
Have you read the Code?	NO

Project Details

<p>What is the purpose of the project?</p>	<p>The purpose is:</p> <p>1) to develop through literature review a theoretical framework to account how technologies contribute to climate change and how technologies help tackle climate change, an account that gives equal weight to structural processes and social agency.</p> <p>2) to 'test' that framework by conducting case studies of three actors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - an environmentalist group that mobilises around climate action on the European semi-periphery, - a trade union based in the European centre that organises a large industrial workforce whose future is central in a just transition to a low-carbon economy, and - academic communities that advocate and make scientific publishing and data openly available. <p>3) to provide, in a situation of a likely runaway climate crisis, an analytically grounded and realistic assessment what are organisational and ideational resources coming from the observed actors, to organise climate action, and to transform the existing social metabolism into a more just and sustainable one.</p> <p>The project can be seen as a form of research-based support to the agency of those actors, making it essential to allow these actors to hear and respond to the findings of my research.</p>
<p>What are the planned or desired outcomes?</p>	<p>The objectives of this research project are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to develop a theoretical framework to account how technologies contribute to climate change and how technologies help tackle climate change;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to conduct three case studies analysing the work of observed groups, which I intend to present back to them for their critical feedback, and to publish thus revisited case studies in open access peer-reviewed journals; - to critically, constructively and affirmatively contribute to the efforts of the social actors with whom I intend to conduct my empirical study and who are significant actors in shifting the social metabolism toward a different relation between humanity, technology and the planetary environment.
Explain your research design	<p>The research will be conducted using a combination of qualitative methods, which will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a theoretical framework developed by means of an initial literature review; - three case studies, with material composed of 1) online and print primary and secondary sources related to the activities of the actors, and 2) open-ended interviews develop an understanding of the actors' motivations and positions based on the research questions (see Principal Methods section); - presentation of my findings for and feedback sessions from the representatives of those groups. <p>The theoretical framework, findings of case studies and response to the findings will be worked into academic presentations, open-access journal articles and my thesis. Following submission of the thesis and completion of the viva, I intend to further publish the work as a monograph.</p> <p>These methods have been selected as they allow to establish both a position of the outside observation, situating the observed actors in the larger societal processes, and a position of dialogue</p>

	<p>which can contribute in substantive ways to their work. These methods were honed in on through discussions with my supervisors.</p>
Outline the principal methods you will use	<p>The empirical research will start from the study of online and print sources relevant to the observed actors and their positions. This will allow me analyse their agency in context and will support the research in producing meaningful interview content. Interviews will be based on a set of questions related to the central research questions and emergent on the basis of the document analysis. These interviews will inquire participants on their and their organisation's positions on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) How technologies impact climate change? 2) How technological systems and technological development be acted upon to facilitate climate action? 3) How access to data and scholarly writing help in understanding climate change and supporting climate action? 4) How climate action shapes their and other societies in the future, and what change do they want to see in their societies and globally happening with climate action? 5) Where they see political and organisational resources to change the present business as usual and bring about that change? <p>While my theoretical framework and the analysis of primary and secondary sources will allow me to situate their agency in social structure, the interviews will allow me to better understand how their agency is trying to shape the societal processes at the structural level, and what their rationale and motivations are for doing so.</p> <p>The actors Unite, Institute for Political Ecology and access to knowledge communities have been selected as they</p>

	<p>represent: a diversified geography of agency (European centre, European semi-periphery and global); different approaches to the climate change crisis (post-growth vs growth-based low carbon transition), and; different forms of expertise (advocacy and activism, labor organising and politics, science). I have good understanding of each group's social and political contexts of agency.</p> <p>I will approach these actors to help me recruit interviewees. Interviewees and actors will later be invited to participate in discussing my findings. I will be seeking to interview a member of theirs who can respond on their behalf to the questions outlined above, and a group of their members to whom I can later present my findings and hear their response. Their statements and responses will also be used as sources in writing my case studies.</p> <p>The interviews will be audio recorded and digitally transcribed for the purposes of writing the outputs. The recordings and digital transcripts will be destroyed after the finalisation of my thesis. Any inclusion of non-anonymised statements will be sought in advance, authorised for publication and subject to withdrawal. They will be duly credited in the publications and the thesis.</p>
Are you proposing to use an external research instrument, validated scale or follow a published research method?	NO
If yes, please give details of what you are using	
Will your research involve consulting individuals who support, or literature, websites or similar material which advocates, any of the following: terrorism, armed struggles, or political, religious or other forms of activism considered illegal under UK law?	NO
Are you dealing with Secondary Data? (e.g. sourcing info from websites, historical documents)	YES
Are you dealing with Primary Data involving people? (e.g. interviews, questionnaires, observations)	YES
Are you dealing with personal or sensitive data?	YES
Will the Personal or Sensitive data be shared with a third party?	NO

Will the Personal or Sensitive data be shared outside of the European Economic Area ("EEA")?	NO
Is the project solely desk based? (e.g. involving no laboratory, workshop or off-campus work or other activities which pose significant risks to researchers or participants)	NO
Are there any other ethical issues or risks of harm raised by the study that have not been covered by previous questions?	NO
If yes, please give further details	

DBS (Disclosure & Barring Service) formerly CRB (Criminal Records Bureau)

Question		Yes	No
1	Does the study require DBS (Disclosure & Barring Service) checks?		X
	If YES, please give details of the serial number, date obtained and expiry date		
2	If NO, does the study involve direct contact by any member of the research team:		
	a) with children or young people under 18 years of age?		X
	b) with adults who have learning difficulties, brain injury, dementia, degenerative neurological disorders?		X
	c) with adults who are frail or physically disabled?		X
	d) with adults who are living in residential care, social care, nursing homes, re-ablement centres, hospitals or hospices?		X
	e) with adults who are in prison, remanded on bail or in custody?		X
	If you have answered YES to any of the questions above please explain the nature of that contact and what you will be doing		

External Ethical Review

Question		Yes	No
1	Will this study be submitted for ethical review to an external organisation? (e.g. Another University, Social Care, National Health Service, Ministry of Defence, Police Service and Probation Office)		X
	If YES, name of external organisation		
2	Will this study be reviewed using the IRAS system?		X
3	Has this study previously been reviewed by an external organisation?		X

Confidentiality, security and retention of research data

Question		Yes	No
1	Are there any reasons why you cannot guarantee the full security and confidentiality of any personal or confidential data collected for the study?		X
	If YES, please give an explanation		
2	Is there a significant possibility that any of your participants, and associated persons, could be directly or indirectly identified in the outputs or findings from this study?	X	
	If YES, please explain further why this is the case	The open-ended interviews will not be aiming at personal positions and motivations of the interviewees, but at the explanations of positions and motivations behind the publicly held views and public actions of their organisations. Should any inclusion of non-anonymised statements in my articles, thesis and book seem justified, I will seek consent in advance, subject to withdrawal at any point. Use of statements in publications will be subject to their prior authorisation. This will be made clear in the letters to the actors when approaching them to recruit the interviewees, in the informed consent form, in the participant information sheet and in the indicative questionnaire. Given the nature of the groups involved, participants are more likely to request non-anonymous representation, to give credit to their ideas, and this will be carefully negotiated with participants throughout the process.	
3	Is there a significant possibility that a specific organisation or agency or participants could have confidential information identified, as a result of the way you write up the results of the study?		X
	If YES, please explain further why this is the case		
4	Will any members of the research team retain any personal or confidential data at the end of the project, other than in fully anonymised form?		X
	If YES, please explain further why this is the case		
5	Will you or any member of the team intend to make use of any confidential information, knowledge, trade secrets obtained for any other purpose than the research project?		X
	If YES, please explain further why this is		

	the case		
6	Will you be responsible for destroying the data after study completion?	X	
	If NO, please explain how data will be destroyed, when it will be destroyed and by whom		

Participant Information and Informed Consent

Question		Yes	No
1	Will all the participants be fully informed BEFORE the project begins why the study is being conducted and what their participation will involve?	X	
	If NO, please explain why		
2	Will every participant be asked to give written consent to participating in the study, before it begins?	X	
	If NO, please explain how you will get consent from your participants. If not written consent, explain how you will record consent		
3	Will all participants be fully informed about what data will be collected, and what will be done with this data during and after the study?	X	
	If NO, please specify		
4	Will there be audio, video or photographic recording of participants?	X	
	Will explicit consent be sought for recording of participants?	X	
	If NO to explicit consent, please explain how you will gain consent for recording participants		
5	Will every participant understand that they have the right not to take part at any time, and/or withdraw themselves and their data from the study if they wish?	X	
	If NO, please explain why		
6	Will every participant understand that there will be no reasons required or repercussions if they withdraw or remove their data from the study?	X	
	If NO, please explain why		
7	Does the study involve deceiving, or covert observation of, participants?		X
	Will you debrief them at the earliest possible opportunity?		
	If NO to debrief them, please explain why this is necessary		

Risk of harm, potential harm and disclosure of harm

Question		Yes	No
1	Is there any significant risk that the study may lead to physical harm to participants or researchers?		X
	If YES, please explain how you will take steps to reduce or address those risks		
2	Is there any significant risk that the study may lead to psychological or emotional distress to participants?		X
	If YES, please explain how you will take steps to reduce or address those risks		
3	Is there any risk that the study may lead to psychological or emotional distress to researchers?		X
	If YES, please explain how you will take steps to reduce or address those risks		
4	Is there any risk that your study may lead or result in harm to the reputation of participants, researchers, or their employees, or any associated persons or organisations?		X
	If YES, please explain how you will take steps to reduce or address those risks		
5	Is there a risk that the study will lead to participants to disclose evidence of previous criminal offences, or their intention to commit criminal offences?		X
	If YES, please explain how you will take steps to reduce or address those risks		
6	Is there a risk that the study will lead participants to disclose evidence that children or vulnerable adults are being harmed, or at risk or harm?		X
	If YES, please explain how you will take steps to reduce or address those risks		
7	Is there a risk that the study will lead participants to disclose evidence of serious risk of other types of harm?		X
	If YES, please explain how you will take steps to reduce or address those risks		
8	Are you aware of the CU Disclosure protocol?	X	

Payments to participants

Question		Yes	No
1	Do you intend to offer participants cash payments or any kind of inducements, or reward for taking part in your study?		X
	If YES, please explain what kind of payment you will be offering (e.g. prize draw or store vouchers)		
2	Is there any possibility that such payments or inducements will cause participants to consent to risks that they might not otherwise find acceptable?		
3	Is there any possibility that the prospect of payment or inducements will influence the data provided by participants in any way?		
4	Will you inform participants that accepting payments or inducements does not affect their right to withdraw from the study at any time?		

Capacity to give valid consent

Question		Yes	No
1	Do you propose to recruit any participants who are:		
	a) children or young people under 18 years of age?		X
	b) adults who have learning difficulties, mental health condition, brain injury, advanced dementia, degenerative neurological disorders?		X
	c) adults who are physically disabled?		X
	d) adults who are living in residential care, social care, nursing homes, re-ablement centres, hospitals or hospices?		X
	e) adults who are in prison, remanded on bail or in custody?		X
	If you answer YES to any of the questions please explain how you will overcome any challenges to gaining valid consent		
2	Do you propose to recruit any participants with possible communication difficulties, including difficulties arising from limited use of knowledge of the English language?		X
	If YES, please explain how you will overcome any challenges to gaining valid consent		
3	Do you propose to recruit any participants who may not be able to understand fully the nature of the study, research and the implications for them of participating in it or cannot provide consent themselves?		X
	If YES, please explain how you will overcome any challenges to gaining valid consent		

Recruiting Participants

Question		Yes	No
1	Do you propose to recruit any participants who are:		
	a) students or employees of Coventry University or partnering organisation(s)?	X	
	If YES, please explain if there is any conflict of interest and how this will be addressed	<p>I will conduct interviews with the members of the Centre for Postdigital Cultures who are working on issues of Radical Open Access and Shadow Libraries. I will seek permission from the Centre for Postdigital Cultures and approach the researchers working on these topics to conduct interviews with them. With two of the researchers I will:</p> <p>a) conduct an open-ended interview on their views on how open access to data and scholarly writing can help climate activists and how their activities contribute to the climate act;</p> <p>c) seek permission to include statements both from the interview and the feedback session in my thesis and my publications, subject to withdrawal and subject to authorisation.</p> <p>The Centre for Postdigital Cultures I will also ask to organise a feedback session.</p> <p>As I am the part of the Centre for Postdigital Cultures, there is a potential conflict of interest. To mitigate the risks associated with this, the potential conflict of interests will be managed by my Director of Study, alongside its inclusion in Progress Review Panels and monitoring by the Research Leader of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities.</p>	
	b) employees/staff recruited through other businesses, voluntary or public sector organisations?	X	
	If YES, please explain how permission will be gained	I will approach (see Recruitment Letter) Institute for Political Ecology and Unite to seek assistance so as to:	

		<p>a) to recruit an employee of theirs who is working on climate change with whom I can conduct an interview on the organisation's positions and motivations on questions related to my research concerns (see Questionnaire);</p> <p>b) to ask them to organise a meeting with a broader group of their members to present to and receive critical feedback from on the case study once I have the first draft.</p> <p>From the interviewees I will seek permission to include information from their interview into my thesis and my publications, subject to withdrawal and authorisation.</p> <p>At the IPE I will approach the Director V. Horvat and the researcher M. Domazet who works on issues of climate change, climate action and degrowth. I have previously collaborated with the IPE, contributing to their summer schools and publications.</p> <p>At Unite I will approach their head of campaigns A. Flynn to establish first contacts and ask for a meeting to arrange for the interview and the presentation. Alternatively, I have access through mutual contacts from my previous work who might assist me in approaching</p>	
c) pupils or students recruited through educational institutions (e.g. primary schools, secondary schools, colleges)?			X
If YES, please explain how permission will be gained			
d) clients/volunteers/service users recruited through voluntary public services?			X
If YES, please explain how permission will be gained			
e) participants living in residential care, social care, nursing homes, re-ablement centres hospitals or hospices?			X
If YES, please explain how permission			

	will be gained		
f)	recruited by virtue of their employment in the police or armed forces?		X
	If YES, please explain how permission will be gained		
g)	adults who are in prison, remanded on bail or in custody?		X
	If YES, please explain how permission will be gained		
h)	who may not be able to refuse to participate in the research?		X
	If YES, please explain how permission will be gained		

Online and Internet Research

Question		Yes	No	
1	Will any part of your study involve collecting data by means of electronic media (e.g. the Internet, e-mail, Facebook, Twitter, online forums, etc)?	X		
	If YES, please explain how you will obtain permission to collect data by this means	I will use public information on the WWW about the activities and positions of the actors I'm observing. But no personal or social media communication will be collected.		
2	Is there a possibility that the study will encourage children under 18 to access inappropriate websites, or correspond with people who pose risk of harm?		X	
	If YES, please explain further			
3	Will the study incur any other risks that arise specifically from the use of electronic media?		X	
	If YES, please explain further			
4	Will you be using survey collection software (e.g. BoS, Filemaker)?		X	
	If YES, please explain which software			
5	Have you taken necessary precautions for secure data management, in accordance with data protection and CU Policy?	X		
	If NO	please explain why not		
	If YES	Specify location where data will be stored	Data (audio recordings of interviews and digital transcripts) will be stored on my encrypted disk and the OneDrive cloud storage of the Coventry University. Upon the completion of the research (end date of my PhD) the data will be duly destroyed with the assistance of the IT staff of the Faculty/University.	
		Planned disposal date	31/07/2021	
		If the research is funded by an external organisation, are there any requirements for storage and disposal?		X
		If YES, please specify details		

Languages

Question		Yes	No
1	Are all or some of the consent forms, information leaflets and research instruments associated with this project likely to be used in languages other than English?		X
	If YES, please specify the language[s] to be used		
2	Have some or all of the translations been undertaken by you or a member of the research team?		
	Are these translations in lay language and likely to be clearly understood by the research participants?		
	Please describe the procedures used when undertaking research instrument translation (e.g. forward and back translation), clarifying strategies for ensuring the validity and reliability or trustworthiness of the translation		
3	Have some or all of the translations been undertaken by a third party?		
	If YES, please specify the name[s] of the persons or agencies performing the translations		
	Please describe the procedures used when undertaking research instrument translation (e.g. forward and back translation), clarifying strategies for ensuring the validity and reliability of the translation		

Laboratory/Workshops

Question		Yes	No
1	Does any part of the project involve work in a laboratory or workshop which could pose risks to you, researchers or others?		X
	<p>If YES:</p> <p>If you have risk assessments for laboratory or workshop activities you can refer to them here & upload them at the end, or explain in the text box how you will manage those risks</p>		

Research with non-human vertebrates

Question		Yes	No
1	Will any part of the project involve animal habitats or tissues or non-human vertebrates?		X
	If YES, please give details		
2	Does the project involve any procedure to the protected animal whilst it is still alive?		
3	Will any part of your project involve the study of animals in their natural habitat?		
	If YES, please give details		
4	Will the project involve the recording of behaviour of animals in a non-natural setting that is outside the control of the researcher?		
	If YES, please give details		
5	Will your field work involve any direct intervention other than recording the behaviour of the animals available for observation?		
	If YES, please give details		
6	Is the species you plan to research endangered, locally rare or part of a sensitive ecosystem protected by legislation?		
	If YES, please give details		
7	Is there any significant possibility that the welfare of the target species of those sharing the local environment/habitat will be detrimentally affected?		
	If YES, please give details		
8	Is there any significant possibility that the habitat of the animals will be damaged by the project, such that their health and survival will be endangered?		
	If YES, please give details		
9	Will project work involve intervention work in a non-natural setting in relation to invertebrate species other than <i>Octopus vulgaris</i> ?		
	If YES, please give details		

Blood Sampling / Human Tissue Analysis

Question		Yes	No
1	Does your study involve collecting or use of human tissues or fluids? (e.g. collecting urine, saliva, blood or use of cell lines, 'dead' blood)		X
	If YES, please give details		
2	If your study involves blood samples or body fluids (e.g. urine, saliva) have you clearly stated in your application that appropriate guidelines are to be followed (e.g. The British Association of Sport and Exercise Science Physiological Testing Guidelines (2007) or equivalent) and that they are in line with the level of risk?		
	If NO, please explain why not		
3	If your study involves human tissue other than blood and saliva, have you clearly stated in your application that appropriate guidelines are to be followed (e.g. The Human Tissues Act, or equivalent) and that they are in line with level of risk?		
	If NO, please explain why not		

Travel

Question		Yes	No
1	Does any part of the project require data collection off campus? (e.g. work in the field or community)	X	
	<p>If YES:</p> <p>You must consider the potential hazards from off campus activities (e.g. working alone, time of data collection, unfamiliar or hazardous locations, using equipment, the terrain, violence or aggression from others). Outline the precautions that will be taken to manage these risks, AS A MINIMUM this must detail how researchers would summon assistance in an emergency when working off campus.</p> <p>For complex or high risk projects you may wish to complete and upload a separate risk assessment</p>	My off-campus activities involve recorded interviews and digital transcripts. Both will be stored on an encrypted drive before being uploaded to the Coventry University cloud infrastructure, where they will be stored in a password-protected folder accessible only to me. Upon my PhD completion the data on my computer and the OneDrive cloud storage will be destroyed under the supervision of Coventry University IT services.	
2	Does any part of the project involve the researcher travelling outside the UK (or to very remote UK locations)?	X	
	<p>If YES:</p> <p>Please give details of where, when and how you will be travelling. For travel to high risk places you may wish to complete and upload a separate risk assessment</p>	I'll conduct part of fieldwork in Zagreb in the first part of 2019. My Director of Study is informed of and has agreed to the schedule of my field work. Travel to Zagreb presents no risk.	
3	Are all travellers aware of contact numbers for emergency assistance when away (e.g. local emergency assistance, ambulance/local hospital/police, insurance helpline [+44 (0) 2071 737797] and CU's 24/7 emergency line [+44 (0) 2476 888555])?	X	
4	Are there any travel warnings in place advising against all, or essential only travel to the destination? NOTE: Before travel to countries with 'against all travel', or 'essential only' travel warnings, staff must check with Finance to ensure insurance coverage is not affected. Undergraduate projects in high risk destinations will not be approved		X
5	Are there increased risks to health and safety related to the destination? e.g. cultural differences, civil unrest, climate, crime, health outbreaks/concerns, and travel arrangements?		X
	If YES, please specify		
6	Do all travelling members of the research team have adequate travel insurance?	X	
7	Please confirm all travelling researchers have been advised to seek medical advice regarding vaccinations, medical conditions etc, from their GP	X	