Value change panel proposal

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(bio in the first abstract below)

This panel aims to explore the relation between values and technologies from different theoretical viewpoints. A specific instance of this relation is technologically induced value change, whereby values are not only providing guidance to actions but also change in response to technologies. The authors in the panel elucidate value change from several positions. *Philip Nickel, Olya Kudina and Ibo van de Poel* focus on uncovering the dimension of moral uncertainty that underlies value change, drawing on several case studies. *Anna Melnyk* draws on the scholarship of Isaiah Berlin and Ronald Dworkin to highlight the moral epistemology of value change, while referring to the cases of renewable energy technologies. *Michael Klenk* discusses the possibility of change in objective values by inviting us to consider what actually makes something valuable. Finally, *Steffen Steinert* explores the role of social structures in relation to values and technologies, drawing on the recent accounts of social ontology. The panel will be of interest to anyone curious in untangling value change in relation to technologies and beyond.

1. Philip Nickel, Olya Kudina and Ibo van de Poel **"Moral uncertainty in technomoral change: closing the explanatory gap"**

In this talk, we will further deepen the relation between values and technologies as presented in the technomoral change account by explaining in detail the concept of technological disruption. The technomoral change account highlights the disruptive character of technologies to foreground and rework human values. However, it does not distinguish between different forms of disruption that can lead to different forms of value change. We call this an explanatory gap and attempt to bridge it by inquiring into the epistemic and deliberative dimensions of technomoral change. To do so, we focus on the phenomena of moral uncertainty and moral inquiry. Moral uncertainty contains the seeds of disruption because it is often experienced as unpleasant and undermining of moral agency. In moral inquiry, the social group as a whole is engaged in conflicting and sometimes antagonistic discourse, exhibiting collective perplexity about moral values. To develop an account of moral uncertainty and inquiry, we explore three historical cases: the introduction of the early pregnancy test, the contraception pill and the mechanical ventilators. By analyzing the cases, we gain insight into the distinctive epistemic and deliberative processes surrounding technomoral disruption, distinguishing it from mere change. Doing so will allow us to discern better what properties of technologies, and the social contexts in which they are introduced, are associated with differentially disruptive effects. This would provide a conceptual resource for fields such as technology assessment, ethics of technology, and responsible research and innovation.

Keywords: *moral inquiry, moral uncertainty, technomoral change, disruption*

Philip J. Nickel is an associate professor of Philosophy and Ethics at Eindhoven University of Technology. His current research explores how epistemology provides insight into applied ethics, and vice versa. He has written a number of articles about trust and testimonial reliance.

Olya Kudina is a postdoctoral researcher at TU Delft exploring the technologically induced value change from a pragmatist perspective. She works at the intersection of moral hermeneutics, (post)phenomenology, bioethics and design. Currently, Olya explores the case of AI-based voice assistants and how they change our values of socialization, good parenting and privacy.

Ibo van de Poel is professor in ethics and technology and head of the department Values, Technology and Innovation at TU Delft. His research interests include design for values, responsible innovation, moral responsibility in research networks, ethics of newly emerging technologies, new technologies as social experiment, and value and moral change.

2. Anna Melnyk **"Moral epistemology of value change: disquisitions for climate and energy ethics debates"**

Changing values often give rise to intergenerational conflicts. Such a tendency can be observed in the on-going climate debate and energy transition. This paper introduces two philosophical perspectives on value conflicts to elucidate moral epistemology of value change. First, I will critically examine Isaiah Berlin's philosophical perspective on value conflict, who claims that the moral landscape is populated by such distinct values that are relationally separate from one another. In Berlin's view, each value is equally important due to its unique meaning, its "conceptual authenticity." Another perspective that this paper discusses is that of Ronald Dworkin, which stresses the interconnectedness of values and the importance of their social function. This perspective does not deny the possibility of changing values but sees it more as a gradual process rather than as a clash between generations. In this paper, I claim that intergenerational value conflicts cannot be addressed when each specific conceptualization of values is substantive. Instead, one should aim at a holistic perspective on values to understand how their social functions converge and overlap in each specific context. Hence, this paper explores Dworkin's standpoint in moral epistemology to provide an entirely new perspective on the way values may change in the course of climate change and energy transition.

Keywords: *value change, moral epistemology, climate ethics, energy transition*

Anna Melnyk is a PhD candidate in the Ethical & Philosophy of Technology section at TU Delft, the Netherlands. She obtained MSc in Philosophy of Science, Technology, and Society (University of Twente) specializing in technologies and values. In her current research, which is a part of the ERC project "Design for Changing Values in Socio-Technical Systems," she is developing the dynamic account of values to target potential implications of value change through institutional and technical design in energy sector.

3. Michael Klenk **"Can objective values change?"**
This paper aims at describing a practically relevant notion of value change, and to analyse whether that type of value change is possible. I argue that one relevant interpretation of value change refers to changes in *what actually makes something valuable* but not what people value, or how many values there are. I then argue that change to what actually makes something valuable is possible. That kind of value change, I also claim, depends on whether extrinsic properties of things can both change and bear values.

Keywords: *value theory, value change, intrinsic value*

Michael Klenk is a postdoctoral researcher at Delft University of Technology. He works at the intersection of metaethics, epistemology, and moral psychology. His work has appeared in journals such as *Synthese, Ratio, Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy*, *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, and *Ethical Theory of Moral Practice.* During the academic year 2019/20 he was a Niels Stensen Fellow at the University of Stanford and the University of St Gallen.

4. Steffen Steinert **"Technology, social structure and value"**

I want to explore the relation of social structure, technology and value. Social structures are important building blocks of our social fabric and an important concept in social theory. Unfortunately, there are many, sometimes divergent, accounts of social structures in the literature. I will draw on recent accounts from social ontology (e.g., Lawson; Haslanger) to sketch a plausible account of social structure. I will then go on to show how values (particularly social values) are embedded in social structures. In short, social structures shape the preferences, evaluations and agency of people. In the last step, I motivate and develop an account of how technology is related to social structures. Because technology plays a major role in social practices and social practices maintain social structures, technology also play a role in sustaining social structures. This also means that technology plays a role in sustaining the values embedded in social structures. Nevertheless, technology can also play a part in the change of social practices and consequently the transformation of social structures and values. So, understanding social structures and their relation to value also brings us a step closer to understanding the stability and malleability of certain values. It also gives us a clearer picture of how social change relates to value change.

Keywords: *social structure, social ontology, social practice, value, technology*

Steffen Steinert is postdoctoral researcher at the Ethics and Philosophy of Technology Section at TU Delft. Steffen's main research interest is philosophy of technology and he has also focused on ethics of robotics and ethical implications of brain-computer interfaces. He is particularly interested in ontology of technology, the relation between values and technology, and the connection between technology and emotions.