

HoNESt – History of Nuclear Energy and Society

*Horizon 2020
Research and
Innovation Project*

*Euratom Fission
Work Programme
2014/15*

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Overview

1. The puzzle
2. Project aims
3. Core concepts
4. Methodology
5. Project structure

- www.honest2020.eu



Fukushima 2011



**Call Horizon
2020 /
Euratom
NFRP
12-2014:
Objectives**

Understanding the development of nuclear energy in Europe and beyond

1. **Context** in which decisions were made
2. **Factors** influencing success or failure in engaging with civil society
3. Helping to **improve** communication and interaction with civil society



Setup: Three phases

1. History:

- ▶ „Core facts and figures“ based on documents and interviews:
 - ▶ „well-organized and documented database and historical record“

2. Social Science Analysis

- ▶ „understanding of the **mechanisms** for effective interaction with civil society regarding nuclear applications“
 - ▶ „factors underlying **perception, participation, engagement**“

3. Dissemination and Engagement:

- ▶ Discussing results with stakeholders
 - ▶ „Industry, associations, policy-makers and civil society“

The Puzzle

- Nuclear energy continues to polarize civil society across Europe
 - Emotional, immediate reactions
 - Entrenched lines of conflict
 - Mutual miscomprehension
 - Black and white issue
 - No level of safety measures suffices to alleviate fears
- Wide variance between European countries in perceptions
 - France / UK vs.

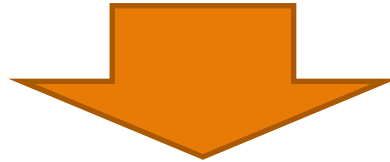
– Germany / Austria / DK

Why this variance in perceptions?

- Hypothesis

- Engagement mattered:

1. Policy makers, industry, associations' engagement with civil society
2. Civil society's engagement with nuclear energy



- Systematic large-scale analysis of historical record

Explaining nuclear- societal relations

- Core factors:
Perceptions and actors' interaction
 - 1. Perceptions**
 - explaining varying perceptions and their policy relevance
 - 2. Civil society's engagement with nuclear energy**
 - Between tacit support to active opposition
 - 3. Policy makers' and industry's engagement with civil society**
 - „mechanisms“ and instruments for engaging with civil society
 - → policy recommendations



History: Contexts matter

- **Historical context**
 - time and social change, value change
- **Technological context**
 - Reactor technologies, technological risks and problems
- **Political context**
 - Political structures, actors and political culture
- **Economic context**
 - Economic structures, actors and ideas / perceptions
- **Societal context**
 - Social movements, societal structures and inequalities
- **Cultural context**
 - Structures and ideas e.g. religion



Two analytical objectives

1. A new history of nuclear- societal relations

- Comparative survey (20+ countries)
- In-depth analysis
 - Specific relevant cases
 - Including transnational perspectives
 - » International Organizations
 - » Societal Actors



- **First comprehensive,
interdisciplinary narrative**

Two analytical objectives

2. An integrated interdisciplinary framework of analysis

- Practically useful analytical framework to single out key factors for interaction nuclear industry – civil society
 - Interdisciplinary
 - Including multiplicity of actors' perspectives
 - Relevant for engagement
 - Analytical framework
 - Large technological systems / Integrated Sociotechnical Systems

- First long-term historical and interdisciplinary analysis of nuclear-societal relations



Concepts

Socio-technical systems

- **Technology is embedded in a complex manner**
 - With regard to
 - what it produces
 - what it requires
 - what advances / limits its further development
- **Research angles**
 - Systems' own dynamics and rules
 - Change over time
 - Geographical scope (transnational)
 - Linkages beyond the system
 - Users, customers, etc → civil society



Civil Society

- **Normative political theory:**
 - Sphere of free association beyond state and market:
 - Citizens engage to advance societal discourse
 - Better quality of decision making
 - Legitimacy
- **Broader understanding**
 - All societal groups and organizations interacting and engaging with each other and in politics
 - E.g. social movement research
 - Organization, aims, effectiveness
 - Framing research → perceptions



Engagement

- **Perceptions and participatory procedures**
 - **normative social science tradition**
 - Against myth of technocracy:
 - Participation vs. Decision quality
 - Public acceptance
 - Fairness and equal access to information
 - Rationales
 1. Technocratic decisions are not value-free
 2. Legal / normative rules: Aarhus Convention on environmental information
 3. Ignoring public concerns is ineffective and inefficient



Metho- dology

- **Comparative and transnational historical approach**
 - Country case studies
 - **Comparative country reports**
 - International Organizations
 - Euratom, IAEA
 - Transnational societal actors
- **Criteria of comparative analysis**
 - Derived from
 - Large Technological Systems research
 - Social Movement Research, including e.g. framing
 - Risk perception research
 - Engagement and participation research



Research questions

Social Science Analysis:

1. Events
2. Actors
3. Discourses and behaviours
4. Public perceptions
5. Public engagement

Historical research:

Questions derived from state of
the art in history

Project structure: 6 work packages

1. Management and Coordination
2. History of the civilian production and use of nuclear energy in Europe, 1945-2013: Constructing the Narrative
 1. Creation of Database and short country reports
 2. In-depth studies
3. Translating, linking and bridging
 - History and Social Science
4. Understanding perceptions and mechanisms for societal engagement
 - Social Science Analysis
5. Backcasting
6. Dissemination and Engagement



CONTACTS

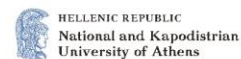
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