

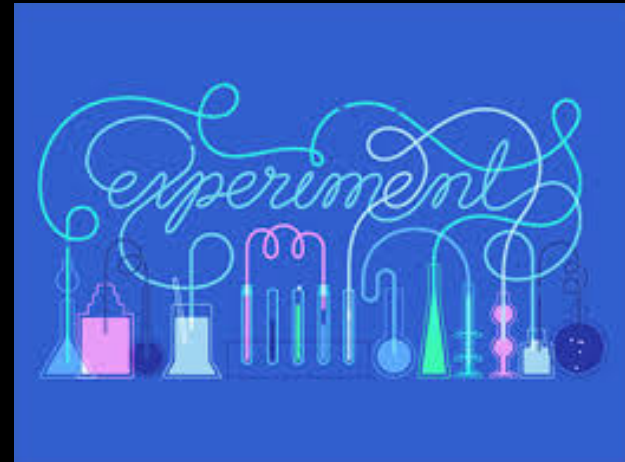
Breaking the myth of neutrality? Politics of National Regulatory Body in Nuclear Wasteland



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1. Introduction

- The Art of Government in nuclear wasteland is a social experiment



The recognition of the experimental character of the art of government could change the way actors perceive and envision their roles in nuclear wasteland.



1. Introduction

- For next decision-making steps, national regulatory body will stand out as key actor
 - Assessing the experimental technology
 - Framing the regulatory practices (safety guides, ...)
 - With ‘go’ or ‘no go’ for siting decision.

This scientific decision will be a crucial political moment in the decision making processes for nuclear countries.



1. Key normative questions

- What are and **should be** the role(s) of national regulatory body in governing nuclear wastes?
 - “what role should scientists, who are professionally committed to impartiality, expect to play in decisionmaking?” (Jasanoff 1990, 7)
- How may their performances act as **catalysts of more democratic debates** about collective futures?
 - How do this institution **influence the legitimacy** of NWM decision-making process, NWM program and more globally nuclear futures so far?

2. Dealing with (the myth of) neutrality



2. Research Scientist



What my mother thinks I do



What my friends think I do



What the gov't thinks I do



What society thinks I do



What I think I do



What I really do

What about the national regulatory body?

2. What national regulatory bodies think they do

- Providing ‘independent’ and ‘impartial’ assessments and ‘neutral, ‘objective’ communication
 - Formally assessing the final industrial NWM project with a “go for siting” decision.
 - Assessing safety requirements only regarding the international safety levels and national safety guidelines
 - Having no suggestion power on the design of national NWM project



Nuclear safety means
**independent
decision making**

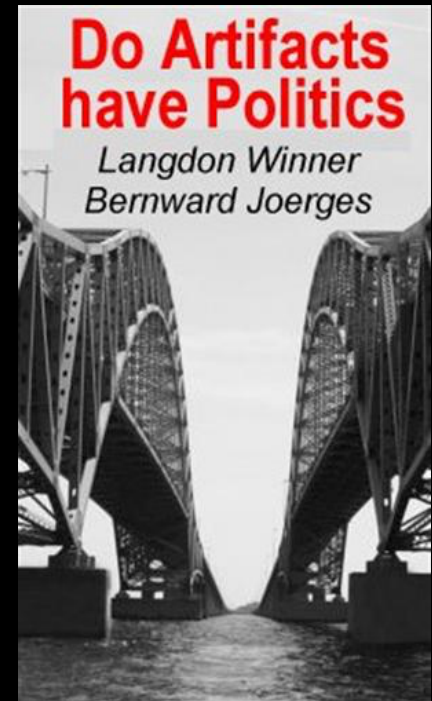
CCSN, (2018)

2. What regulatory bodies actually do

- Occupying a **critical** position by:
 - **Imposing common visions of safety** principles which are taken-for-granted in the nuclear establishment communities.
 - They are so naturalized and stabilized that they are difficult to open up again (e.g practices of classification and its consequences, e.g vision of passive safety).
 - Providing safety guides for NWMO that are **hard law**.
 - Attending numerous NWMO's meetings in order **to comment the design** of geological disposal project.

2. Regulatory body assessment has politics

- Regulatory body practices and scientific standards are typically associated with a political preference about:
 - Geological disposal (the association of geological disposal and a particular type of waste)
 - Passive safety (Schröder et al. 2016)



2. Regulatory body assessment is politics

- National Regulatory bodies occupy a **critical position** within democratic spaces, from where they exert their power of influence
- They sustain a particular **form of ‘knowledge’**, which:
 - is animated by particular values and visions of the future in technological societies
 - materializes in concrete safety guides and contributes to shaping NWM decision-making process

3. Rendering the politics of regulatory body visible

- Belgium: « **Neutrality and non engagement** »
 - Refusing an pro-active role in the NWM decision-making process.
 - Their N regulation activities remain invisible and closed down to non-experts.
- Canada: « **Reactive engagement and institutionalized opened up moments** »
 - Advance publication of decisionmaking guidelines: Possibility to react/comment/question the safety guides during their building.
 - In practice, few NGO experts and NWMO regularly react to safety guides.

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3. Rendering the politics of regulatory body visible

- France: Recently, “**Experimental engagement** in regulatory assessment processes”
 - Open decisionmaking procedures: Technical support of ASN (IRSN) opened up to local stakeholders.
 - What was the results of this more open advisory procedures?



4. Conclusion (1)

- **Neutrality has worked as a 'legitimizing myth' for regulatory body**
 - to anchor regulatory body practices in **evidence-based modes** of policy-making.
 - It reinforces unequal distribution of power between the expert communities and non-experts.

Nevertheless, because sensitive and controversial NWM programs are **experimental**, the credibility of regulatory body is ***expected to be challenged*** in the coming years.

4. Conclusion (2)

- Should regulatory body decide to break with the myth of neutrality and fully acknowledge that their assessments **have and are politics**? **Yes!**
- **Why?**
 - It could potentially **open up** the regulatory assessment processes to **the public (non-expert) eye**.
 - It could potentially **redistribute** imperfectly and temporally **power among experts and non-experts**.

Thanks for you attention!

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Recent Publications:

- Parotte, Céline. *L'Art de gouverner les déchets hautement radioactifs*. Presses Universitaires de Liège. Science Technologie et Société. Liège, Belgique, 2018.
- Pierre Delvenne and Céline Parotte, 2018 « Breaking the myth of neutrality: TA has politics, TA as politics », *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 8p.
- Parotte, Céline, and Pierre Delvenne. “Co-Produced Legitimacies: Parliamentary Technology Assessment and Nuclear Waste Management in France.” *Science and Public Policy*, 2018. <https://orbi.uliege.be/handle/2268/218936>.

