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Summary

Shifting the Paradigm for Research on Nuclear Waste Management

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Although nuclear waste management (NWM) is a theme that requires a trans-disciplinary method of research, it has been discussed in divided academic territories. Is it possible to improve the explanatory quality by introducing boundary conceptions to analyze NWM policies? Generally speaking, we would imagine disciplinary, geographical (spatial) and diachronic (inter-generational) boundaries. The aim of this article is to clarify boundary conceptions and to rethink their applicability to NWM research.

Transcending disciplinary boundaries is the main topic of the first section of this article. The remarkable NWM process in Gorleben, Germany, the symbolic battlefield of the anti-nuclear movement, has acquired new meanings since the Repository Site Selection Act in 2013. The final report of the Commission for the Disposal of High-active Waste proposed a final repository with retrievability. Germany, which had strictly adhered to the IAEA principle of aftercare-free deep geological disposal, eventually adapted to the international trend of final repositories with retrieval. It symbolized the fall of techno-optimism and reinforced the recognition that NWM is not only a natural scientific but also a social and political issue. Simultaneously, a trans-disciplinary project supported by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, ENTRIA, was launched. The ENTRIA verified three options (disposal without retrieval, deep geological disposal with retrieval, and long-term storage near the surface). One of its reports simulated risks and uncertainties in eight phased periods of maximal 1,000,000 years. This inter-disciplinary research contributed to the increased reliability of sciences and to the legitimization of site-selection processes. Whether this cross-disciplinary dialogue will promote a “deliberative turn” of NWM should be tested in real-political developments.

In the second section, based on our research question (i.e., What impacts on NWM research will the relativization and realignment of geographical boundaries have?), we reconsider preceding theoretical and comparative studies. Political process analysis within national borders has been an important part of NWM research. This article contains an overview of German, French, Finnish, US

and Britain cases. We aim to expand our scope in two directions. The first is NWM in the European Union (EU), whose directive 2011/70/Euratom provides a common framework. In spite of an expectation for its potentialities, there are problems such as variable governability among member states with different nuclear policies, the exportation of nuclear waste inside and outside of the EU, and so on.

The other is nuclear oases theory. This insists that radioactive substances are likely to concentrate in peripheral regions which are economically dependent on nuclear industries and are characterized with inward-looking and acquiescent culture. Hanford (USA), La Hague (France), Sellafield (UK) and Gorleben are regarded as typical examples. Nuclear oases theory seems a variant of the centre/periphery theory, but a redefinition of boundaries would make it an advanced variant which transcends conventional argumentation. The centre/periphery threshold is not more than an ambiguous category and peripheral regions are full of diversities. Although nuclear oases are located downstream of nuclear power plants and some of them embrace reprocessing facilities, reprocessing facilities are not the terminal points of spent nuclear fuel. Final repositories are not always constructed in the areas of reprocessing facilities. It seems more rational to think that nuclear oases need their hinterlands, which are acutely vulnerable to being targeted for final repository siting. Such a consideration clarifies what the conventional centre/periphery theory cannot enough explain, i.e. Gorleben's peculiarity among nuclear oases.

Further investigation leads us to a fundamental problem: NIMBY facilities such as final repositories are issues of burden-distributive fairness. It matters how to realize an intra-generational and inter-generational sharing of the nuclear legacy. Nuclear waste must be isolated for thousands of years. We must think about diachronic factors to complete a model of boundary-conscious NWM research.

In the third section, we start from a viewpoint of an ethic political theorist who analyzes Canadian NWM and concludes that deliberative democracy rises more fully to some challenges than welfare utilitarianism and modern deontology, which suffer from a persistent indeterminacy of substantive principles. Whether this argumentation is persuasive is to be answered through three sub-questions: How does environment theory tackle uncertainties derived from the longevity of radioactive substances? How is the interest of future generations represented in today's decision making? And how is democratic theory applied to real-politics? The notion of deliberative democracy about mutual dialogue between present and future generations is accompanied with anonymity. Contrasting with such an abstract discussion, the stakeholder theory stresses the importance of negotiation in real-politics. All NWM processes are concerned with concrete issues. However, aporia of inter-generational burden-distributive fairness remains unsolved.

The appearance of a “wicked problem” would be a trigger for a paradigm shift in modern sciences. In the conclusion of this article, we refer to Japanese case of NWM, i.e. the final repository siting debate in local communities in Hokkaido.

Between the East and the West: The Third Position in Post-Socialist Czech Republic

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The purpose of this paper is to show how a moment to de-territorialise the post-socialist space-time that emerged on the border of the East and the West with the end of the Cold War in 1989 is latent and manifest in this space-time. This paper regards the 1990s and 2000s as a period of post-socialism, the 2010s as a period of transition from post-socialism to post-post-socialism, and the 2020s and beyond as a period of post-post-socialism. The post-socialist period in the 2000s and the transition from post-socialism to post-post-socialism in the 2010s are the main focus of this paper.

Based on the aforementioned period classification, the first part of this paper (Chapter 1 and 2) examines the reception of the film “Pelišky,” which retrospectively depicts the ordinary life of people during the socialist period. The aim is to use the reception of the film to examine the structure of the ideological struggle in the cultural sphere of the Czech Republic in the 2010s between the “pro-Western group,” the political forces responsible for the “democratisation” of the country’s political and economic system under the banner of a return to the West, and the “pro-Eastern group,” the political forces that, in the eyes of the “pro-Western group,” were suspected of having links with the “pro-Eastern group.” In Chapter 1, I analyze the characteristics of “Pelišky” as a nostalgic film by comparing it with the film “Goodbye, Lenin!” In the following chapter, I focus on the controversy over a scene in the film, which had been going on for more than a year since 2017 in the comments section of YouTube, and analyze the structure of the ideological struggle in the cultural sphere of the Czech Republic in the 2010s. I argue that the post-socialist space-time has been organised in a complex of three dichotomies: the East and the West, “the Past and the Present,” Socialism and Capitalism.

In the second part of this paper (Chapter 3), I take up two documentary films released in 2004 and 2016 to show that, in the midst of the post-socialist ideological struggle, a moment to objectify