

RICOMET Conference  
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Albert Presas i Puig  
UPF, Barcelona - HoNESt

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**HoNESt** History of Nuclear  
Energy and Society

[www.honest2020.eu](http://www.honest2020.eu)



HoNESt research project is designed to **answer the Call for the NFRP 12 – 2014 Work Program** that focuses

***“...on understanding of the development of nuclear energy in Europa in view of clarifying the context within which certain decisions were made, identifying the factors which influenced projects' success or failure in gaining engagement of the civil society and ultimately, help improving communication and interaction with civil society.”***

With the UPF as lead institution, involves an **interdisciplinary consortium** of 24 partner institutions across Europe

HoNESt sets out to **explain variety and change in European societies' relations with nuclear energy** on the basis of the **reflexion on historical experience**

Scientific Presentation

Experimental and  
innovative character

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First comprehensive **comparative and transnational analysis** of nuclear developments and their relations with society to cover 20 countries over the past 70 years

Its innovative **interdisciplinary framework** combines insights from the **history of technology, science and technology studies, environmental history, economic and business history, social movement research, and the study of societal engagement**

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Experimental and  
innovative character

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This project has received funding  
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training programme 2014-2018  
under grant agreement No 662268.

HoNESt is an **interdisciplinary collaboration of historians and social scientists** and dedicate a full task to generate **links and common language** in order to ensure appropriate methodology

**Historical and social-scientific interpretation** of past nuclear developments, **decision-making and associated citizen engagement**, including the factors underlying perception, participation and engagement

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HoNESt will contribute to a **new understanding** of these relations, and mediate these insights to the different stakeholders via **dissemination and engagement**

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On the basis of **historical experience**, **systematic** reflection to improve the understanding the formation and growth of technological systems, (nuclear energy), and to **identify the key challenges for policy makers**

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**Large Technological Systems (LTS)**  
(Thomas Hughes) and **Integrated Socio-  
technical System (ITS)** (Jens Rasmussen)  
emphasize the **complexity of systems**  
that contain both **technological and social  
elements**

**Embeddedness of technology** and its  
application in a broad societal, political,  
economic and cultural context



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**Elements of the system:** companies, higher education systems, political contexts, financial and law systems, economic policies, international scenarios, government, social commitment, etc.

**The features of the subject and its interdisciplinary approach determine the structure of the project**

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## **WP1 - Management and coordination with the Scientific Secretariat**

**WP2 - History of the civilian  
production and use of nuclear energy  
in Europe, 1945-2013;**

**Constructing the narrative” dedicated  
to the historical research:**

- **collection of the historical data**
- **analysis and interpretation of the  
data in order to construct a  
narrative that will be used by the  
sociologists in the following WPs.**



**WP3 - “Translating, linking and bridging: Phase 1 (History) and Phase 2 (Social Sciences)”** brings sociologists, social scientists and historians together

**WP4 - “Understanding perceptions and mechanisms for societal engagement,”** to develop analytical frameworks to suitably interrogate the evidence generated by the empirical historical research and to offer evidence for the Backcasting exercise in WP5.

**WP5 - “Backcasting: ideal futures”** will distinguish key lessons from past historical nuclear interactions with civil society and propose desirable future engagement scenarios for energy projects

**WP6 - “Dissemination and Engagement”** is devoted to the dissemination to and engagement of the stakeholders.



## Writing Group (WP2). Constructing the narrative, (history of technology, business history, history of science, economic history and transnational history).

- to select research questions based on the historical facts and figures collected by the data project.
- to develop a comparative and transnational history “map of nuclear Europe”



## Questions proposed by WP2 partners

1. How did the cultural legitimacy of nuclear change over time and vary by region, and why?
2. What was the role of referenda?
3. Are there any whistle-blowers/ scientists who "change sides"? If so, who?
4. Who are the main actors for and against nuclear energy, what are their political connections?
5. Who are, and what is the role of, supranational organisations?
6. What kind of people staffed it (from constructors to engineers to managers)?



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22. What was the public's reaction to (non) nuclear incidents/accidents?
23. How does risk perception and management change over time? (For decision makers and public?)
24. When was optimism replaced with pessimism?
25. How did PR/public engagement by the nuclear establishment change over time? Was practice shared between operators/transnationally?
26. How were nuclear decisions made?
27. How did the political regime shape the programme?
28. What was built and who built it?

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34. Did power plants (etc.) influence the region in which they were built (or are they built there for a reason) and how did the region influence the power plant ?
35. Is development of nuclear "technology glaciation"?
36. What system of insurance and compensation was in place?
37. Has nuclear energy shaped national/international transmission networks?
38. Has availability of nuclear energy changed electricity consumption?
39. Do countries without nuclear plants receive nuclear energy? Did this affect development/opinion?



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Structure of the project

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## Writing Group (WP2). Constructing the narrative

- to translate the comparative map into a transnational framework focusing on flows of knowledge, linking and de-linking of national systems and appropriations of technologies and modes of participation, perception and engagement.
- to participate and collaborate with the WP3 and WP4 to enhance sociological analyses and dissemination of results (WP6) produced by the project

HoNESt considers the **construction of this interdisciplinary framework to be a core component of its work because it will allow for the analysis of energy problems in the future.** HoNESt will thus be dedicating an entire work package (WP3) to developing a common framework of analysis.



## WP3 – Translating, linking and bridging

### Provide knowledge brokerage mechanisms:

#### Promoting mutual understanding

Reasoning practices (i.e. language, frames, concepts, etc)

Practical needs (i.e. type of evidence)

Cross-validating evidence & meanings

### Ensure historical evidence gathered matches needs of social scientist

Ensure social analysis takes into account the broader context.

Develop common understanding of:

- Key terms
- Concepts
- Processes
- Events

**Producing history:** representation of past events and processes based on a number of interlocking moments; identification, exhaustive scrutiny and evaluation of sources for data; comparison and interpretation of it; narration in writing or other media such as public address

Not only of the material and written kind, but also in the **testimony of the actors and leading figures** (interviews strategies)

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History of the development of nuclear energy as the **history of tensions** and problems **inherent in a technological development** and in particular social contexts.



Problems of historical investigation on still on-going processes

Contemporary events must be considered and **analysed from the highest number of possible perspectives**

Historic facts should not only be evaluated according to the consequences which are attributed to them but also according to what could have resulted from them

Analysis of the historic experience with nuclear energy has to extend its consideration to a chronological period long enough to go beyond a simple snapshot

- to observe the **social significance and the effect of political and technological decisions**
- to observe the **processes and mechanisms** by which the underlying values are maintained or modified



## **Polarization about nuclear energy is difficult to explain**

Neither the interests and the motors of the atomic policy; nor can the origins of the movement against nuclear energy be clarified by using general superficial or timeless concepts

Development of nuclear energy **does not follow a straight line**;

Not follow any established *rationality*

Not follow one single pattern

Controversy about nuclear energy **don't show a uniform development** with an exchange of stereotypes

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We are in front of  
**complex processes and  
developments.**

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Thank you very much!

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