**Absent, yet Present? Tracing “Responsible Research and Innovation” in Radiation Protection Research**

Michiel Van Oudheusden

Abstract

In this paper, I argue that although the notion of responsible research and innovation (RRI) is manifestly absent in research programs for radiation protection and nuclear research and training, RRI is increasingly recognized, and mobilized, by various actors in the field; is an essentially contested concept; and facilitates the development of a sizeable network comprising actors with a variety of roles, expectations and stakes, including researchers in the social sciences and humanities (SSH). To sustain these points, I draw on my experiences as an embedded social scientist in nuclear research, singling out sites and instances (e.g. the crafting and dissemination of the 2015 Ricomet Public Declaration, SSH research within the EU-Concert framework, conversations with radiation protection researchers) where RRI is explicitly discussed, propagated, negated, or transformed. This exploration highlights recurring challenges of “translating” RRI to radiation protection research, such as the strong evaluative connotation of RRI and its top-down character; the lack of industry involvement in RRI processes; the tight connection between RRI and new and emerging technologies; and the hybridization of SSH through inter- and transdisciplinary research. I discuss each of these challenges in turn, with the aims of reflexively considering how RRI is co-produced in radiation protection research through negotiations between stakeholders and the interplay of practices and artifacts; and what the potential implications of these processes are for SSH engagement in the field.

Keywords: Absence, Presence, Radiation Protection, Responsible Research and Innovation, Social Sciences and Humanities