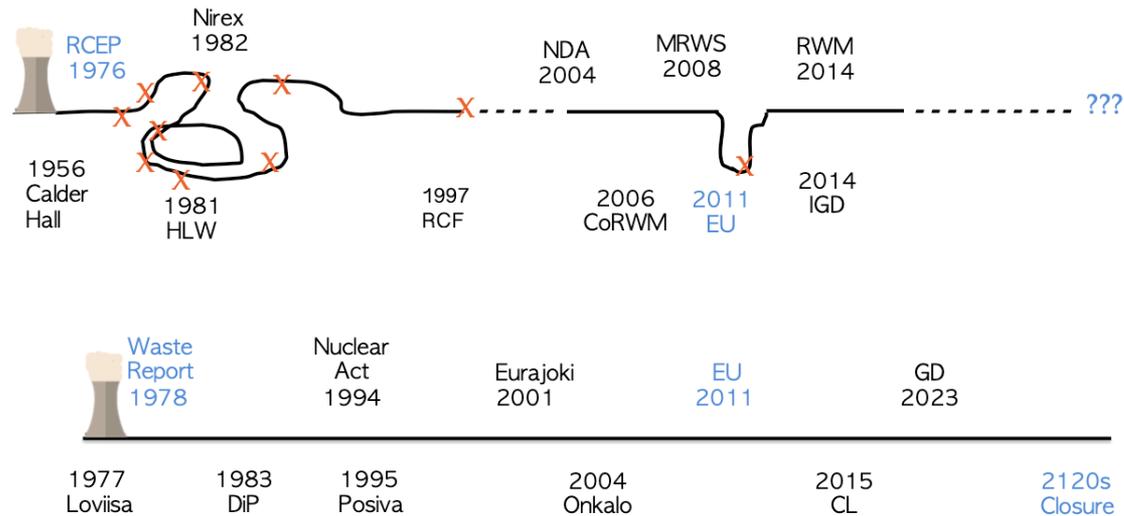


“You are but a trainee scientist”
**Participant-Observation in a Materials Science
Laboratory**

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Project



Science and policy imaginations underpinning geological disposal

University research laboratories (+ interviews, documentary analysis, scientific meetings and conferences)

UK: February 2015-July 2015 (+ FIN: August 2015-March 2016)

- Two research projects working on geological disposal of nuclear waste

Participant-observation as Body-work

Body-work (Myers, 2008)

- The body has a central role in generating new forms of knowing and new kinds of things to be known

Touch (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017)

- A strategy for 'seeing' the less noticeable aspects of experience missed by the 'optic'

The afternoon is taken up by the repetitive monotony of hammering and smashing cement, and the accompanying **backache**. ... I'm too short for the glovebox and I have to stand on a makeshift platform in a weird angle to be able to use my arms. (16 April 15)

Doing as a way to be a more engaged researcher: attention to **materiality and** embodiment



“What’s your role today? Are you an observer or a helper?”

From a ‘nuisance’ to a helping hand

- “Since you are scribbling stuff down, **you might as well take down something useful.**” (16 Feb 15)
- Alex asks if I could run an XRD for her.** She’ll show me how to set it up... (30 April 15)

I see Alex has given you the most boring and horrible job possible. Batching and sieving”. (9 March 2015)

“Yeah, Alex has taken advantage of you.” (16 April 15)

From the observer to the observed

- Jodie is following instructions David left for her for his pH measurements. “I do this differently, and **I will explain why** when we get there ... **Would you write down as much as stuff if I was silent?**”, she asks. (19 May 15)



Conclusion

Body-work as a form of ethnographic meaning making

Rapport, credibility, shared experiences

Mutual inquiry and curiosity

- Making sense of each other's methods

Limitations

- Narrowing focus down
- Part of the experimental set-up of my participants(?)

Everyone got something out of the process