

Fukushima Dai-ichi and the Ocean: 10 years of study and insight Abstract Submission Form : Entry # 20

Name

Michiel Van Oudheusden

Title

Dr.

Affiliation

University of Cambridge

Email

mpv28@cam.ac.uk

Country

United Kingdom

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Abstract Title (English, limited to 300 characters)

Fukushima Travels

Abstract (English, limited to 2000 characters)

This poster is inspired by my recent research work on the 2011 Fukushima disaster. It depicts how 'Fukushima' has registered in narratives, pictures, and images in my home country of Belgium, evoking hope, despair, anger, and awe. As this impression makes clear, Fukushima travels a complicated route, and is transformed and repackaged in various ways. Alongside the dominant, mediated narratives of fear ('Fate strikes') and expert reasoning ('Here are the facts'), we encounter denial and technological solutionism ('Fukushima could never happen here'), as well as aspirations of transformation and renewal. The latter include experiments in citizen science, with citizens in Japan and elsewhere generating their own scientific data and tools, and seeking to open research and science policymaking to the wider public. As a social scientist who collaborates with nuclear scientists and technologists and who informs policymakers, I am drawn to these new starting points and to how travels between Japan and Europe can generate new fields of possibility for stakeholders interested in mutual learning, innovation, and democratic renewal. While inevitably partial and unfinished, my impressions are meant to be both critical and generative, highlighting my personal convictions and bringing complex practical and speculative considerations into the picture so that others could get an idea of what is at stake in citizen science after Fukushima, for individuals and broader communities. I invite others to think through these issues with me and to confess to the difficulties of transforming (nuclear) science-society governance towards robust and responsible processes and outcomes.