

Discussing the role of scientific associations in policy and governance

Ana Delicado (ICS University of Lisbon)

Raquel Rego (SOCIOUS – ISEG)

Cristina Palma Conceição (CIES – IUL)

Inês Pereira (CIES – IUL)

Scientific associations in policy advice and governance

Schofer (2003): professional vs. socially-oriented scientific associations

"1) bringing scientific information to the citizenry or policy makers (...), 2) promotion of science or science policy that directly ameliorates social problems (...), 3) promotion of ethics in the application of science"

Case study: nuclear debate in Portugal

The research project

SOCSCI – Scientific societies in contemporary science

Funding: FCT (national agency)

Duration: 2 years (2010-2012)

Aim: to draw a panorama of scientific societies in Portugal
and to study the associative behavior and representations
of Portuguese scientists

Nuclear controversies

Nuclear risk: artificial, invisible, uncontrollable, with catastrophic consequences, over future generations

Science as origin of the risk, but also source of monitoring and prevention

Nuclear arms vs. Nuclear energy

Scientific associations: Pugwash Movement, Federation of German Scientists

Nuclear debate in Portugal

Currently no nuclear power plants

1st attempt to establish a nuclear power plant in the
70s

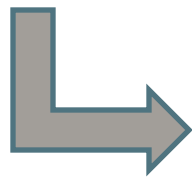
On and off discussion in the 80s and 90s

The issue re-emerges in the 00s

Spanish nuclear power plants are an ongoing concern

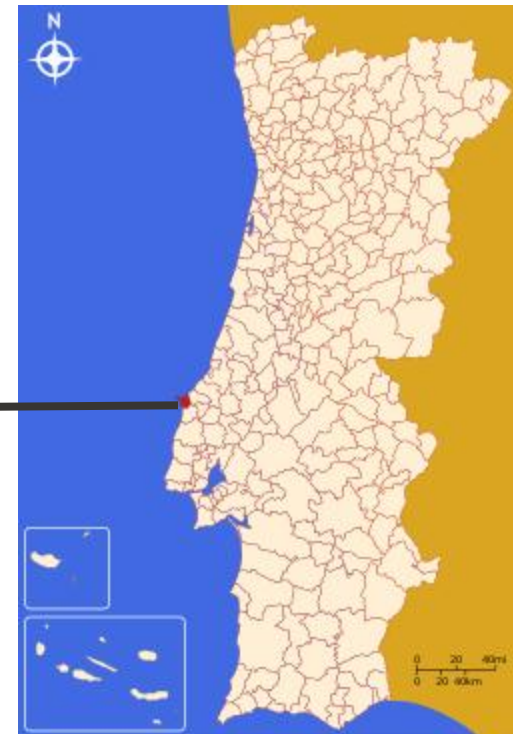
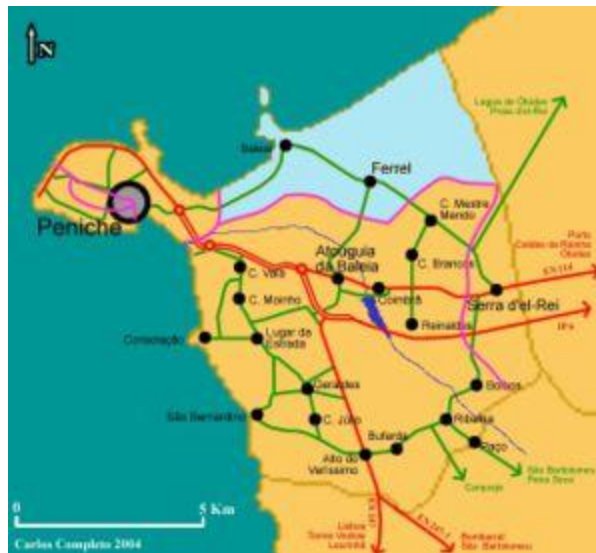
Opening the case (1976)

Government	Legislation for licensing nuclear power plants
Private sector	Electrical company commissions studies for the location of the 1 st nuclear power plant



Announcement of the chosen location

Ferrel



Grassroots movement

Post-revolutionary period: explosion of grassroots movements

Ferrel as the first environmental protest by local populations, incipient role of ENGO

Grassroots movement



in response to the relentless chime of their church bells, the inhabitants of Ferrel went out into the street, stopped all the works, closed the ditches that had been opened and warned that if the works restarted they would come back to destroy whatever had been done

Grassroots movement

CALCAN – Support Commission to the

Struggle Against the Nuclear Threat

National appeal: “We are all inhabitants of
Ferrel”



Statements: “Portuguese Nuclear Programme

Moratorium” and “People’s Creative Intervention in

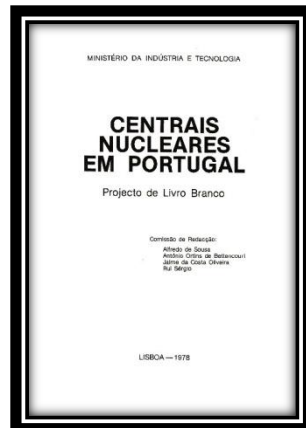
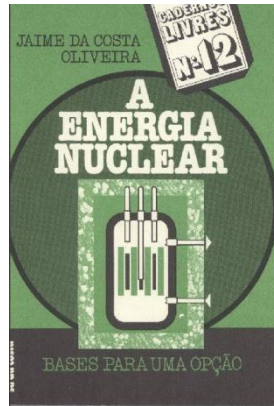
Defence of a Non Depleted Environment”

Festival: “For Life and Against Nuclear”

The role of scientists

	For nuclear	Against nuclear
Who	Engineers and scientists from the electrical company and JEN/LFEN	Engineers and scientists from universities and JEN/LFEN
Actions	Technical reports White Book Interventions in seminars Books	Interventions in seminars and events organised by the grassroots movement Opinion columns in newspapers Books
Arguments	Need for public information Energy needs Manageable risks	Need for public debate No economic viability Risks

The role of scientists: for



contributing to the public debate of such an important (and exciting issue) such as the peaceful use of nuclear energy in Portugal (...) a global vision that will make easier [for the reader], I hope, to appreciate its relative importance. To emotional and so often ill-founded relations they rise, I seek to counterpoint the serenity that that stems from the scrupulous respect for scientific objectivity (Oliveira 1977: 6)

Collective action of scientists

Informal groups:

- Manifesto on Energy Policy
- Commission for Promoting the National Debate on the Nuclear Option
- Organisation of seminars and a collective book

No intervention from the Portuguese Physics Society

Closure of the case in the 70s

Technical report shows that there is seismic risk in

Ferrel

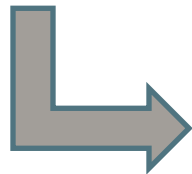
Unfavourable public opinion

No scientific consensus

Political disagreement (among political parties)

Reopening the controversy in 2005

Private sector	Nuclear Energy of Portugal: a group of business men and energy companies propose the construction of nuclear power plants Manifesto for a new energy policy
Government	No official position, but former ministers and the Governor of the Bank of Portugal seem in favour

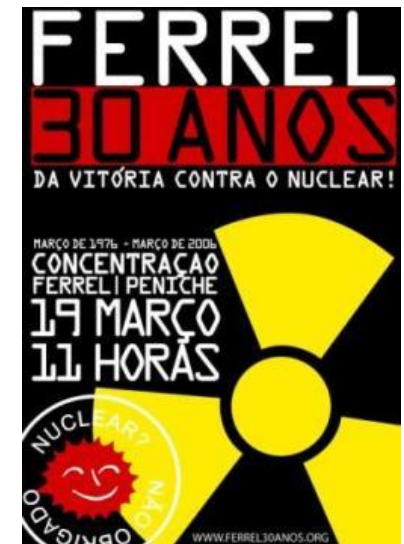


No location is announced

Grassroots movement

No local protests

Celebration of the 30th
anniversary of Ferrel



ENGO



Stronger ENGOs
dominate the anti-
nuclear movement
Platform No to the
Nuclear Option in
Portugal

The role of scientists

	For nuclear	Against nuclear
Who	Engineers and scientists from business companies, universities and ITN Members of the Physics Society	Engineers and scientists from universities and ITN
Actions	Manifesto Interventions in seminars Opinion columns in newspapers Association	Interventions in seminars Opinion columns in newspapers
Arguments	Need for public debate Energy needs Manageable risks Climate change	Need for public debate Renewable energies No economic viability Risks

Collective action of scientists

Roundtable organised by the Physics Society

President of PS publicly in favour of nuclear energy

Creation of ADN – Association for the Dissemination of Nuclear Energy

a platform for debate and accurate information on nuclear energy (...) to increase the information and training on nuclear energy (...) [and] widen the debate to society in general

Final remarks

Associations seem to be gaining relevance in terms of policy advice and governance: awareness of the advantages of collective action, increased legitimacy, claims to participation and social responsibility

More research is needed: other case studies