



NEGATIVE EMISSIONS TECHNOLOGY: SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONCERNS

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REASONS FOR CAUTION?

How do we ensure that NETs facilitate and enhance reduction of atmospheric carbon?

- Complement not undermine mitigation efforts
- Don't overpromise and under-deliver <https://www.ispot.tv/ad/IW6P/exxon-mobil-carbon-capture>

The importance of political risk in driving policy change

Targeted to address specific problems that are technically difficult to reach through mitigation

- Not used to circumvent difficult political problems
- Or assume that commercial interests will necessarily generate public benefit

KEY QUESTIONS

Who benefits from NET technology and are these benefits equitably shared?

Who bears the burdens from NET technology and are these burdens equitably shared?

Where does decisionmaking lie around NET technology, in its development, testing and implementation?

- Are those who shoulder the greatest burden empowered in terms of decisions around its use?

SOCIAL LICENCE

Questions of authority underpin the social licence

Social licence has multiple meanings:

First meaning:

- Social licence equates to community pressure that enhances legal compliance
 - 'beyond compliance'
- Authority vested in the law

Second meaning:

- Social licence is separate from legal compliance. It applies when:
 - The community accepts the activities of the company
 - The company in turn acts as a 'good citizen' in its relationship to the community
- Authority shifts between the company (shaping expectations of the community) and the community (in civilizing the behaviour of the company)

Third meaning:

- "You have no social licence!"
- Community claims authority over a company which seen to violate the interests of the community, their identity, livelihoods and aspiration for themselves and their town

CONFLICT AND SOCIAL LICENCE

Contentious technology can generate and exacerbate social conflict

Those wanting legally approved technology see social licence as 'anti-democratic'

Companies resist versions of the social licence that threatens their ability to control the term

Those against the technology either:

- See social licence as a stalking horse - a way of dividing communities
- Or argue company has 'no social licence'

All sides argue agree on the importance of evidence

- So can technical evidence provide the way forward?

NO

Evidence:

- Comprises data based on *assumptions*, varying levels of *uncertainty* anchored in different visions of the future reflecting different values (*ambiguity*)

Is drawn into conflict as a weapon and a strategy

- That exploit assumptions, uncertainty and ambiguity
- Where attention shifts from the integrity of the evidence to the expert
- The push for consensus can exacerbate conflict

Evidence *can* (and should) inform and assist decision making

- Necessary but not sufficient
- Is plural not singular

SO — WHAT NOW?

Recognising our dependence on evidence

- Emphasising integrity (rather than simply independence)

Valuing accountability for the production and use of different forms and sources of evidence

- Not punishment for failure
- But providing:
 - a defensible account that the data captures what it set out to capture (by those undertaking the research) acknowledging uncertainty and ambiguity
 - A justification of policy decisions drawing on those data that similarly acknowledges uncertainty and ambiguity
 - But which provides a compelling vision of an inclusive future
 - Where those who bear the greatest burden from its use are protected.