

**Speaker:** Phil Macnaghten

**Title:** Living the global social experiment: An analysis of public discourse on solar radiation management and its implications for governance

**Abstract:**

Solar radiation management techniques are a class of geoengineering methods designed to reflect some of the inbound sunlight back into space with the intended effect of arresting further warming of the planet and thus counteracting global warming. In this talk I examine current debates on solar radiation management governance, clarifying a number of assumptions that persist and why these require further scrutiny. Building on existing research I articulate a more critical role that the social sciences should be playing in public engagement with solar radiation management. I utilise a deliberative focus group methodology that aims to open up deliberation on the technology, focusing explicitly on the kinds of world that its deployment would bring into being. My findings, based on an analysis of public discourse, suggest that solar radiation management would be publicly acceptable only under very specific, and highly contingent, conditions. Given the sensed implausibility of these conditions being realised in the real world, I set out the implications for solar radiation management governance. I explain why solar radiation management was perceived as likely to create a particular kind of world, one with an increased probability of geopolitical conflict, a new condition of global experimentality, and major threats to democratic governance. How to bring these issues into solar radiation management governance entails an important but challenging role for the social sciences.

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