

□□□ Ethics and Nanotechnology
Nanotechnology and Society Research Group
Northeastern University

Support

1. NIRT: Nanotechnology in the Public Interest
2. NSEC: Center for High-rate Nanomanufacturing

Researchers

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Graduate: Rodrigues

Undergraduate: Basl, Garcia, Lodwick



Nanotechnology and the “Other Issues”

- Project: Identify, articulate, and demonstrate the significance of the “other” social and ethical issues associated with NT, as well as indicate what adequate responsiveness to them would involve.
- Approach: Focus on role that problematic features of the social contexts into which NT is emerging plays in generating these challenges, as well as emphasize that they can only be adequately responded to by addressing those features.
- Examples: Nanomanufacturing and environmental justice
Human enhancement and social justice



Nanotechnology and Environmental Ethics

- Project: The social context project particularized to the those contexts (and their problematic features) of concern in environmental ethics.
- Concerns:
 - Commodification of nature
 - Marginalization of non-economic values
 - Reliance on technological fixes
 - Treating problematic effects rather than addressing causes
 - Alienations for nature
 - Techno-optimism and techno-determinism
 - Moral standing of different forms of life (including novel forms)
 - Human hubris (overestimation of power and control)



Governmental Capacity and Human Enhancement Technologies

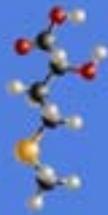
- Project: Assess governmental capacity (regulatory and policy) for advanced human enhancement (AHE) technologies, and develop recommendations for building capacity where it is not already adequate.
- Questions:
 - How should AHE research be regulated or funded?
 - Should attempts at AHE be regulated and, if so, how?
 - How should dual-use technologies be regulated (research and commercialization)?
 - Should parents have the legal right to enhance their children?
 - Should AHE ever be required (e.g. as immunizations are)?
 - How should AHE be treated in different competitive domains (e.g. job market, school admissions)?



Nanotechnology and the Global Poor

- Project: Develop policy recommendations for promoting nanotechnology and nanomanufacturing in ways that benefit the global poor—the approximately 2.7 billion people in the world that live on less than 2 dollars per day.
- Areas:
 1. Identifying existing pathways through which this is or might be accomplished
 2. US foreign aid mechanisms (USAID and MCC)
 3. US patent policy mechanisms (e.g. humanitarian exemptions or novel patent types)





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