

The Global Politics of Solar Geoengineering

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Global climate change effects are already with us and certain to worsen, pointing to the failure of mitigation strategies to date. In this context researchers, policy-makers and entrepreneurs have begun to discuss the possibility of, even advocate for, technological interventions to moderate the effects of climate change, including geoengineering. While one form of geoengineering- carbon dioxide removal (CDR)- has become relatively accepted and integrated within states' net zero emissions plans, the other- solar geoengineering/ solar radiation modification (SRM)- remains acutely controversial. Large scale technological interventions to reflect sunlight back into space certainly have the theoretical potential to mask (at least some) climate effects, in the process potentially reducing some harms to humans, plants, animals and ecosystems. Yet they also raise concerns about unanticipated ecological effects, the danger of disincentivising mitigation action and the possibility of causing sudden and significant harms if suddenly curtailed. There are also acute concerns about their governance, with no current global agreement in place to regulate their use and emerging steps towards commercialisation and security sector involvement. This roundtable gathers together leading researchers working on the international politics of solar geoengineering to explore these debates and reflect on the future of solar geoengineering in response to the climate crisis. Participants will be invited to consider a range of questions in this space, including whether (large-scale) solar geoengineering interventions are likely; whether they should be and if so under what circumstances; what the key concerns are about research and their deployment; whether meaningful global regulation is possible; and/or whether the potential implications of their use are adequately considered by key institutions of global politics.

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