

Planetary Technologies in the Context of Increasing International Instability

University of Leeds

1st July 2024

The purpose of this one-day workshop is to bring together experts across a range of disciplines to consider the intersection of the political and governance parallels of these technologies with the hope of establishing an interdisciplinary network that continues to engage in an iterative process to analyze and shape the political and governance debates around SRM. The workshop serves as an opportunity to examine the implications of the erosion of nuclear arms control architecture for solar geoengineering governance and will function as a jumping off point for considering solar geoengineering as an edge point of the climate-nuclear science and politics nexus.

An increasingly urgent aspect of the international politics of climate change is the governance of potential large-scale climate interventions such as solar geoengineering, or solar radiation modification (SRM). This includes proposals for extensive Stratospheric Aerosol Injection (SAI), in which reflective aerosols are injected into the lower stratosphere to reduce solar radiation and cool global temperatures. SAI is gaining momentum as a potential response to the growing environmental consequences of climate change, but it has become clear over the course of research done throughout this fellowship that the potential political ramifications of SRM technologies, particularly SAI, have been underexamined. These technologies are almost always assessed in terms of their potential environmental benefits and harms, rather than as potential political tools. However, it is essential to also centre the potential political implications of SAI.

Nuclear weapons governance has sometimes been suggested as a useful comparison for SRM. However, key institutions of international nuclear governance are unravelling, and the governance of nuclear weapons technology is centralized, hierarchical, and hyper-securitized despite the open, cooperative, and science-led governance of the technology envisioned by its developers. Recent moves by the US and China to begin expanding their nuclear arsenals, and Russia's nuclear sabre rattling in the context of the war in Ukraine make these goals more distant. It is likely that SRM governance will face similar political dynamics and challenges given already existing concerns about domination of SAI by the Global North and its potential to contribute to inter-state conflict.

Finding us in Leeds.

The conference will take place in the Fine Arts Building, University of Leeds Seminar Room 2.09. A campus map is available [here](#). Directions to get to the University are available [here](#).

For those travelling to Leeds from elsewhere, there are several accommodation options available in the city centre.

Any questions?

Please email climate.politics@leeds.ac.uk or d.young@leeds.ac.uk with any questions.

To reduce plastic waste, we will not be providing bottled water. Please bring your own bottle or reusable cup to fill at the water fountains on campus. We will also not print programmes. A QR code to access the final programme will be available in all conference rooms.

Workshop Programme

Location: Fine Art Building SR2.09	
10.30am	Registration and Coffee, welcome
11.00am-12.30pm	Panel 1
12.30am-1.45pm	Lunch
1.45pm-3.15pm	Panel 2:
3.15pm-3.30pm	Coffee
3.30pm-5.00pm	Panel 3/Plenary Discussion

Panel details

Panel 1	Chair: Danielle Young
Time:	11.00-12.30pm
Benoît Pelopidas Founding Director of the Nuclear Knowledges Programme Sciences Po and Sterre van Buuren, Research Assistant Nuclear Knowledges Existential Silos: The Compartmentalization of the Futures of Environmental Change and the Nuclear Threat	
Jeroen Oomen Assistant Professor Urban Futures Utrecht Universities The Unavoidability of SRM in the drama of climate politics	
Olaf Corry, Professor of Global Challenges University of Leeds and Duncan McLaren Climate Intervention Fellow UCLA Why might states develop solar geoengineering? Three models in search of a sunshade	

Panel 2	Chair: Duncan McLaren
Time:	1.45-3.15pm
Hannah Hughes, Senior Lecturer in Climate Politics Aberystwyth University	

The risks of reclaiming nuclear expertise through geoengineering the climate	
Jan Ruzicka, Lecturer in International Relations, Aberystwyth University Know thy Enemy: Nuclear Nonproliferation Regime and Solar Geo-engineering Governance	
Danielle Young, UKRI Postdoctoral Fellow, University of Leeds and Joanne Yao Senior Lecturer in International Relations, Queen Mary University Nothing New Under the Sun? The Use of Historical Models in Governing Emergent Global Technologies	

Panel 3	Chair: Danielle Young
Time:	3.30-5.00pm
Plenary discussion for workshop participants and attendees on the potential positioning of solar geoengineering in the nuclear-climate nexus, the political futures of SRM decision-making, and future research agendas.	