

Unforeseeable Harms of Intentional Climate Change

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Abstract

One objection to the development of geoengineering is that intervening in the climate system brings with it the risk of adverse consequences that were not foreseeable at the time of deployment. Without taking a stand on whether such a possibility precludes the morally permissible use of a geoengineering technology, this paper assumes that any legitimate regime of geoengineering governance must deal with the question of how to provide redress for unforeseeable harms. Drawing on discussions of "excusable ignorance" in climate justice literature, the paper outlines a combination of morally relevant principles that should guide any compensation system. It concludes by briefly comparing this account with the principles enacted in current compensation regimes for environmental harms.