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"The Last Chance to Save the Planet? An Analysis of the Geoengineering Advocacy Discourse in the Public Debate"

Anshelm, Jonas, and Anders Hansson

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Geoengineering, i.e., the deliberate manipulation of the global climate using grand-scale technologies, poses new challenges in terms of environmental risks and human–nature relationships. Until recently, these technologies were considered science fiction, but they are now being reconsidered by researchers, leading to an emerging public debate. Our aim is to improve our understanding of the public discourse on geoengineering in mass media. We analyze 1500 articles published from 2005 to 2013, constructing four coherent storylines that represent most of the geoengineering advocacy in the public discourse in mass media. We scrutinize inconsistencies in this discourse and argue that geoengineering may be the first example of a grand-scale technology that in some important respects has clear postmodern tendencies: geoengineering advocacy, for example, is not based on objective truth claims of the natural sciences and does not promise a better world. (Text from authors' abstract)

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