

**Iris Hilbrich** received a Double-Bachelor's degree in English and American Studies and Sociology from the University of Erlangen-Nuernberg and a Master's degree in Sociology from the University of Vienna. Since 2018 she has been working at the University of Hamburg, focusing on sociological and ethical implications of medicine, science and technology. Since 2019 she has been a research associate at the Center for Advanced Studies "Futures of Sustainability" at the University of Hamburg, where she focuses on sustainability and technology transitions in the Anthropocene.

From September until December 2022, she was a fellow at the African Climate and Development Initiative (ACDI) at the University of Cape Town where she conducted interdisciplinary work with climate modelers and biodiversity specialists on climate mitigation and adaption strategies on the African continent. In early 2023, she was a fellow at the Center for the Study of Culture, Politics and Society (CECUPS) at the Universitat de Barcelona linked to the research project "The Politics of Imagined Climate Futures". At CECUPS, she worked on the socio-political foundations of technological and (eco)modernist visions in response to the climate crisis. From October until November 2023 she will be a visiting researcher at Harvard Kennedy School in the Program on Science, Technology and Society. From March until June 2024 she will be a research fellow of the Institute for Advanced Studies on Science, Technology and Society (IAS-STs) at TU Graz.

## **Project at IAS-STIS: Geoengineering the Climate: Postcolonial Sociotechnical Imaginaries in Germany and South Africa**

Controversial discussions about large-scale technological interventions into the earth system to battle climate change, so called geoengineering, condense fundamental questions about sustainable development, intergenerational equity, and regional justice. So far, most of these technologies only exist as blueprints to future technological innovation. Moreover, the discursive construction of technological responses to climate change differs fundamentally when adopting a spatial perspective. Vulnerable countries in the Global South are exposed to different threats than comparatively stronger industrialized nations and are particularly compromised when their voices are being excluded from the discourse. Nevertheless, knowledge production on geoengineering is dominated by research institutions in the Global North.

Based on a qualitative empirical analysis with German and South African scientists, my dissertation reconstructs different sociotechnical imaginaries guiding (natural scientific) research on geoengineering. The comparative study highlights that researchers' perspectives entail very different imaginaries of risk based on their location, which in turn point to hegemonies within the discourses around

geoengineering and in a broader sense, the climate emergency. It is therefore argued that an analysis of sociotechnical imaginaries sensitive to issues of space and neocolonial continuities is paramount for technology assessment and global governance strategies for high-risk technologies.

### **Selected Publications**

Philipp Degens/ Iris Hilbrich/ Sarah Lenz (2022). Special Issue “Ruptures, Transformations, Continuities. Rethinking Infrastructures and Ecology”, *Historical Social Research* 47(4).

Philipp Degens/ Iris Hilbrich/ Sarah Lenz (2022). “Analysing Infrastructures in the Anthropocene.” Introduction to Special Issue “Ruptures, Transformations, Continuities. Rethinking Infrastructures and Ecology”, *Historical Social Research* 47(4).

Solveig Lena Hansen/ Iris Hilbrich/ Frank Adloff/ Silke Schicktanz (2022). Special Issue “Exclusion, Engagement, and Empathy: Reflections on Public Participation in Medicine and Technology”. *Social Epistemology - A Journal of Knowledge, Culture and Policy*, Volume 36, Issue 1.

Frank Adloff/ Iris Hilbrich (2021). “Practices of sustainability and the enactment of their natures/cultures: Ecosystem services, rights of nature, and geoengineering”.

*Social Science Information*. Special Issue “Contested Futures: A Sociology of Sustainability and Ecological Crisis” Vol. 60 No. 2., 168-187.

Iris Hilbrich/ Solveig Lena Hansen (2021). “Explorations about the Family’s Role in the German Transplantation System: Epistemic Opacity and Discursive Exclusion”. *Social Epistemology - A Journal of Knowledge, Culture and Policy*, Volume 36, Issue 1, 43-62.