

Caution on Climate Change

Editor's Pick. Written by Jordan Vaughn Neal.

Note: This is not meant to be a definitive proof of anything, only something designed to make one question and think.

It is a fact that the measured global average temperature has been rising. It is also a fact that a higher carbon concentrate in an atmosphere, all other things being equal, will lead to greater heat retention in that atmosphere. Those are not being contested. What is being contested, is the “Day After Tomorrow” catastrophist claim that so inundate our society these days. I mean come on, Jake Gyllenhaal is way older than he was in that movie and nothing has happened yet.

Global average temperature is not obtained by a giant thermometer that gets the distributed temperature of the whole the earth at any given time. It is an aggregation of many local temperatures averaged out over the year. The current data is much more accurate than the older data (going back to the late 1800's) as we've been able to more efficiently gather data across the world.

However, there is an observed scientific phenomenon called urban heat bubbles, where higher population density brings about an increase in local temperature. This has been proven, and there are many suspected causes of it.

We must conclude that the data used to measure global average temperature includes temperature measurements from urban city centers. If was excluded then the data would be misleading. So, all things being equal, a global average temperature aggregation that includes urban areas, would show an increase in average temperature, which is not an indication of global change, but rather an aggregation of known local changes, and without looking at the individual data points would be unknown to the casual observer. It is also impossible to isolate and remove that variable, without affecting the means of measuring the global average itself.

What's also interesting is that there is a correlation relationship between increase in carbon emissions and increased population density over the last century. So, assuming all other things remaining static, the entire correlation between carbon emissions and global average temperature could theoretically be only a result of urban heat bubbles.

Of course narrowing a complex system like the climate down to a single variable, would be a foolish act indeed, which brings me to the point. When you want to sell the general population on an idea, simplicity is the key. You want to present them with a simple causal relationship with discrete values, and ignoring any other external variables. “You're poor

because other people are rich", "Police are killing black people because they're all racist", "The global average temperature is increasing because carbon emissions." Little bite sized portions that Joe Everyman can digest and draw conclusions from.

This is fallacious, and we need to be careful that we don't allow ourselves to be spoon fed linearity, in the face of complexity. Because the world doesn't come in neat little discrete causal relationships. The world comes in giant continuous messes of spaghetti, driven by complexity and chaos.

* I feel I should cite Michael Crichton as the fountainhead for many of my thoughts on this subject.

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