

Re-examining Global Warming: Global Chilling vs. Warming

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Theme: [Environment](#)

“Trees won’t save the planet” is the title of an article in *INVT* (21-22 Sep 2014) by Nadine Unger, professor of atmospheric chemistry at Yale University. Her thesis: The conventional wisdom—that planting trees serves carbon capture—is wrong; it is all much more complex.

Photosynthesis is only one factor. Another factor for global warming is how much of the solar energy is absorbed by the earth’s surface and how much is reflected. Trees, being dark, absorb; the net balance may be chilling in the tropics and warming elsewhere.

But there is more to it. Trees emit VOCs, “volatile organic compounds”, for their own protection. Mixing with pollution from cars and industry “an even more harmful cocktail of airborne toxic chemicals is created”, producing methane and ozone. Research at Yale seems to indicate that this affects global climate on a scale similar to surface color and carbon storage capacity.”

Trees and soil also breathe oxygen and release CO₂. The Amazon forest produces oxygen during the day and reabsorbs at night; a closed system. Moreover, eventually trees die or burn and “the carbons finds its way back into the atmosphere”.

The old story. Search for one factor causing an evil-like CO₂ causing global warming—and act to remove that one cause; the present mainstream dogma. But *research* points at many other factors involved and they may all be ambiguous. Yin-yang in other words, forces and counter-forces, and holism, expanded visions. A daoist vision.

So let us move East, to a retired professor of natural resources at Nagoya University in Japan, Kunihiro Takeda. And to professor in geophysics Shigenori Murayama at the Tokyo Institute of Technology who has very similar views (Google both of them.) Summers will be hotter, winters colder. Net balance?

Some key points from Takeda[i]:

1. Meteorologists tend to predict global warming, geophysicists global chilling; the meteorologists may have dominated the discourse.
2. Thermometer readings are from 1880, for a long time in advanced countries and urban areas only; this may have biased the conclusions.
3. Urban areas absorb more heat from the sun due to concrete and waste, also from cars-industry; level of urbanization a key factor.
4. Climate change as warming was 0.3C in the past 100 years, on the average, attributable largely to urbanization; not to CO₂ alone.
5. Warming of the land and the ocean will heat the atmosphere; warming of the atmosphere has little effect on the ocean.

6. Urban-rural gap is increasing-Nagoya, Naha (Okinawa), Singapore up to 38, 34, 32C; Japan, surrounded by sea, on the average, not.
7. Waste recycling-garbage sorting mostly irrelevant, only at most 2% recycled; polyester eco-shopping bags consume more resources.
8. The 1988 hypothesis of global warming due to CO₂ was disproved in 2009: South pole ice increasing, North pole not decreasing[ii].
9. CO₂ is essential for life; lack of CO₂ may be the end of life, also human; reducing the emission may accelerate the ending of life.
10. Heating good for humans who fit well with warm climates, also good for rice production and food in general.
11. Global chilling is the problem because it becomes more difficult to survive, lower food production, humans less adaptable.
12. The water level may go up 6 meters in 3,000 years; better focus on the concrete problems like flooding of very low islands today.
13. Be aware of vested interests behind Club of Rome and others in shifting the discourse from domestic-global society to environment.
14. Be aware that the West wants energy resources for business and military and tries to control the CO₂ emissions of China and India.
15. Be aware that there is much money in the mainstream approach and in the IPCC-Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change; also that scientists may go where the money is located.
16. Be aware that some data may even be false, faked or at least questionable-Climategate.
17. Be aware of the vested interests of eco-business and the eco-movements in the CO₂ hypothesis and the recycling hypotheses.

This author is not in a position to take a stand for or against the CO₂ hypothesis, or what is better for life, warming or chilling relative to the present level. The position taken here is in favor of more complex and particularly more dialectic views: there may be more to it, action generates re-action. For views in favor of the mainstream see <http://www.realclimate.org>, for skeptics see <http://www.sepp.org>.

Maybe Takeda underestimates the dangers of warming. But a striking point in his analysis is the role attributed to urbanization. Or concretization, covering soil with concrete, settling on top of it in huge mega-congregations with waste as lifestyle.

De-urbanization would be a consequence of Takeda's points. Some of this may be happening in some places; people moving into smaller, more village-like communities, decentralization of administration made possible by the Internet. Leaving more to nature's wisdom than to the human lack thereof, and particularly to the market's lack thereof.

In 1972 when "limits to growth" became mainstreamed, I warned against the missing class perspective within and between countries[iii]. Nothing new about depletion and pollution. The West had been depleting resources of the colonies for ages, and working-class districts had always been polluted. Novelty was middle and upper classes in middle and upper countries being hit. Like wars not hitting only women, children and periphery countries, but right at the center of the Center, the West.

Conclusion: re-search, re-think, re-act; not one factor, CO₂, and one problem, warming. There is more in the world. Move forward with good, proven examples, not with a

“multilateral consensus” reflecting power structures and vested interests more than a complex reality.

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NOTES:

[i]. I am indebted to Fumiko Nishimura for making this available from Japanese.

[ii]. This author has been skeptical because of the absence of confirming laboratory simulations like the simulation of the *aurora borealis*, the northern lights.

[iii] “Limits to Growth” and class politics, *JPR*, X (1973), 1/2, pp. 101-114. Also in: *Essays in Peace Research V*, pp. 316-333.

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