

PSYCHOLOGY AND THE NEW CLIMATE ALARM

THE CLIMATE COOLED FOR 37 YEARS FROM 1940. BOOKS WERE WRITTEN EXPRESSING ALARM.



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Lowell Ponte's 1975 book warns: "Global cooling presents humankind with the most important social, political, and adaptive challenge we have had to deal with for 110,000 years. Your stake in the decisions we make concerning it is of ultimate importance: the survival of ourselves, our children, our species."

Now there is a new climate alarm. Climate models used by authorities forecast that CO2 emissions will cause dangerous global warming, now referred to as Climate Change.

PSYCHOLOGY, BIAS ERRORS AND CLIMATE

Recent findings in the area of psychology, "Psychology and Economics" by Prof. Matthew Rabin show the prevalence of a number of bias errors when people make decisions.

Such errors are relevant for climate scientists in examining the evidence claimed to support Climate Change. The following reviews the importance of two key bias errors.

The bias error of "there is a misinterpretation that purely random events are too long to be purely random and represent a long term trend".

- The Millennium Drought from 1997 to 2010 was misinterpreted as a long term trend as a consequence of Climate Change. This lent support to State Governments over-investing in desalination plants.

The bias error of "once forming a view people are often inattentive to information contradicting their view. There is the problem of selective scrutiny of evidence".

A bias problem that carbon dioxide emissions drive Climate Change is illustrated by the following:

- Over the past one million years climate cycles ranging from Ice Ages to warmer periods have been caused principally by changing levels of energy from the sun, changing planetary alignments and changing ocean currents. These three important climate determinants are not well enough understood to be included in climate models.

- It is thus not surprising that all temperature predictions by these models over the past fifteen years have been inaccurate by a considerable margin. Nor can they explain earlier climate records. It is clear the models are unable to make reliable climate forecasts.

- Since the last Ice Age, ice cores reveal that temperature rose some 200 years in advance of rising CO2. During that Ice Age, 18,000 years ago, most of

the Northern Hemisphere had a permanent ice cover and sea levels fell by 120 metres.

- More recently, despite rising CO2, there was a cooling of climate for 37 years from 1940 and satellite data shows no increase in temperature over the past 17 years.

- Global warming, with interruptions, has therefore continued since the last Ice Age unrelated to CO2 levels.

- The geological record also shows no correlation of rising temperature with increasing levels of CO2 which varied from 200 ppm (0.02%) to 7,000 ppm (0.7%). The significant fall from 7000ppm was mainly due to removal of CO2 in marine skeletal material during the Cambrian Period to form vast limestone deposits. At that time the ocean could not have been acid otherwise the limestone would have dissolved.

- The present level is near 400 ppm (0.04%) and this could double only if all the known fossil fuel reserves were used. In the past CO2 has been near 8 times this level without dangerous warming "ending the planet".

- Melting of Arctic ice is commonly referred to as confirming Climate Change caused by CO2 emissions. In 1922 the US Weather Bureau advised in respect of an Arctic ice melt, "Reports all point to a radical change in climate conditions and hitherto unheard-of temperatures in the Arctic zone." Subsequently the ice cover returned. There is no evidence rising CO2 has any influence on the historical phenomenon of retreating and advancing of Arctic ice.

Because of bias errors, the view that dangerous global warming is caused by CO2 emissions has not been confirmed. There has been the bias of "selective scrutiny of evidence".

The following findings in psychology have also influenced the public attitude towards Climate Change.

"CHOICE ARCHITECTS" AND "NUDGES"

In the book "Nudge" the authors, Thaler & Sunstein, have explained how the employment of the findings from psychology can be used to "nudge" people to do what "choice architects" think would be in people's best interests.

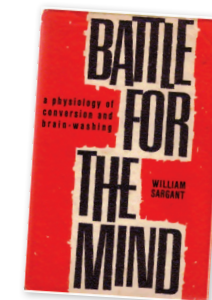
Referring to CO2, an invisible gas, as carbon, which as soot is a black dirty solid, is a good example of a "nudge" to sway public opinion in favour of reducing CO2 emissions.

There is the "nudge" food quality will

fall with increasing atmospheric CO2. This is misleading. The rise in CO2 provides for a useful increase in plant growth. Food quality can decline if there is not a corresponding increase in other essential plant nutrients.

Another "nudge" is the claim that CO2 emissions will cause ocean acidity.

There is no evidence that levels as high as 7,000 ppm of CO2 did or could cause ocean acidity. The ocean is alkaline and contains minerals in solution which constrain lowering of alkalinity with rising CO2.



HOW FEAR AND ANXIETY WORK

There is a heading for a chapter concerning Climate Change in "Nudge" titled "Saving the Planet". This heading and other similar claims are calculated to raise fear and anxiety.

The book by William Sargant titled "Battle for the Mind" documents the conclusion of research by psychologists that statements which raise fear and anxiety facilitate conversion of people to a desired belief without the benefit of evidence.

The statement by US President Obama "We will respond to the threat of climate change, knowing that failure to do so would betray our children and future generations" is an example.

CONCLUSION

There is no evidence CO2 has determined climate in the past or that it could do so in the future. Just as there was needless alarm over the 37 year cooling from 1940 there is now unwarranted public alarm over a threat of dangerous global warming. The next ice age remains the real global climate threat.

Australia should save the \$3 billion plus spent annually supporting renewable energy programs. The heavy burden of these costs falls on taxpayers, business, and households.

No Australian post-2020 emissions reduction target could be justified which requires additional costs for consumers and/or tax payers.

– THE CLIMATE STUDY GROUP