How the Urban Heat Island Effect Influences the CO_2 Doubling Temperature and its Implications

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Vixra: 2004.0064

Key Words: Urban Heat Islands, Albedo goals, global warming causes, global warming feedback, global warming amplification effects, CO2 doubling temperature, CO2 doubling theory, IPCC albedo goals

Abstract

Global warming has both root causes and amplification feedback effects. The main root cause, believed to be CO_2 greenhouse gas, then creates many feedback amplification mechanisms such as loss of ice and snow albedo decrease, increase in atmospheric water vapor and so forth. The strength of the CO_2 mechanism is often assessed by its doubling theory. However, such estimates rely on the fact that CO_2 is the primary root cause. Numerous authors including this one have found the Urban Heat Island effect to be significant and should for many reasons be part of our effort to combat global warming problems. Therefore, if one quantifies the UHI effect, it must affect the CO_2 doubling theory. In this paper we provide a short overview to illustrate how the CO_2 doubling temperature is influenced by the UHI effect. We also discuss its implications related to a lack of IPCC UHI albedo goals.

1. Introduction

The subject of UHI effects having significant contributions to global warming is important. The contention that global warming is only due to CO_2 is very risky as it encourages one to neglect the UHI issue. In actuality, this has been stated mathematically in the literature (see Table 1) using doubling theory giving one the false sense that the doubling temperature should be estimated without any influence from the UHI effect. Ignoring the UHI effect is unrealistic where many authors have now shown significance. One well known paper, McKitrick and Michaels (2007), found that the net warming bias at the global level indicated that the UHI effect may explain as much as half the observed land-based warming. This study was criticized (Schmidt 2009) and defended for a period of about 10 years by Mckitrick (see McKitrick Website). Other authors have also found significance (Feddema et al. 2005, Ren et al. 2007, Stone 2009, Yang et al. 2011, and Haung et al. 2015). These studies used land based temperature station data to make estimates. In a recent study by the author (Feinberg 2020), this contention was supported using a totally different approach with a weighted amplified albedo solar urbanization model supplemented with footprint studies for UHI amplification factors and global feedback mechanisms.

The table below lists the global warming causes and amplification effects (Feinberg 2020). As one can see from the table, UHI effect is a global warming root cause. One would expect that the stronger the influence that the UHI effect plays, the more it should decrease the CO_2 doubling temperature. Therefore, in this paper, we focus on how CO_2 doubling theory is influenced by the UHI effect with a brief overview.

Table 2 Global Warming Cause and Effects

Global Warming Causes →	Population → Expanding Urban Heat Islands (UHI), Roads & Increases in Greenhouse Gas
Global Warming Amplification Effects →	Increase in Specific Humidity, Decrease in Relative Humidity, Decrease in Land Albedo Due to Cities & Roads, Decrease in Water Type Areas from Loss of Albedo (Reflectivity) due to Ice and Snow Melting
Urban Heat Island Amplification Effects →	UHI Solar Heating Area (Building Areas), UHI Building Heat Capacities, Humidity Effects and Hydro-Hotspots, Reduced Wind Cooling, Solar Canyons, Loss of Wetlands, Increase in Impermeable Surface, Loss of Evapotranspiration.

2. Review of the Timeline of CO_2 Doubling Theory

Greenhouse theory and early predictions started as far back as 1856 with CO_2 experiments by Foote, Tyndall in 1859, and what has become very popular, doubling theory by Arrhenius in 1896. Since Arrhenius, doubling temperature estimates based on theory and linked to environmental trends, have decrease as shown in Table 1. The doubling temperature, originally 5-6°C estimated by Arrhenius, shows a range with the last estimates now between 1.5 to 4.5°C per the IPCC. Doubling temperature is logarithmic with PPM of CO_2 as shown in Equation 1.

$$13.9^{o}C\ (57.02^{o}F)+2.36^{o}C\ Ln(412/311.8)/Ln2=14.85^{o}C\ (58.73^{o}F),\ 0.95C\ (1.71^{o}F)\ Rise \qquad (1)$$

We see that this equation's doubling temperature of 2.36°C is very close to the Manabe and Wetherald (1975) estimate in the Table. In general, the doubling temperature value of 2.36°C is the temperature increase that one would expect if we doubled CO_2 from 312 to 624ppm. Then we would get another 2.36°C increase if we again doubled it to 1248ppm. The rate and magnitude of global climate change is determined by radiative forcing, climate feedbacks and the storage of energy by the climate system.

Table 1 Key *CO_2* doubling theory history and conflicts

Reference	CO_2 Doubling Temperature	CO_2 Temperature Effect Estimates	Moisture Percent Effect*	UHI Albedo % Forcing Estimates
Arrhenius,1896	5-6°C	5-6°C	-	0
Gillbert Plass,1950's	3.6°C	3.6°C	-	0
Manabe and Wetherald,1975	2.3°C	2.3°C	-	0
IPCC (1^{tst}-5^{th} Assessment 1990-2014, (ECS) equilibrium change	1.5 - 4.5°C	1/3	2/3	0
Current Trend, Eq. 1. Based on going from 311.8ppm to 412 PPM from 1951 to Dec 2019, with a *0.95°C (1.71°F)* rise	2.36°C *	1/3 (0.3°C)	2/3 (0.63°C)	0

*Ignoring other GHG

3. CO2 Doubling Theory Estimates with UHI Influence

Equation 1 can be solved for the doubling temperature DT_{CO2} as

$$DT_{CO_2}=\frac{\Delta T_{CO_2+Effects}}{Ln(CO_{2(2019)}/CO_{2(1950)})/Ln2} \qquad (2)$$

In this case $\Delta T_{CO2+Effect}$=0.95°C, $CO_{2(2019)}$=412ppm, and $CO_{2(1950)}$=311.8ppm, giving

$$DT_{CO_2}=\frac{0.95°C}{Ln(412/311.8)/Ln2}=2.37°C \qquad (3)$$

as expected form Equation 1. Here CO_2 is treated as the main cause and this include all amplification effects such as increase in water vapor greenhouse gas (due to the fact that warm air holds more moisture), snow and ice melting etc.

Let's assume that CO_2 warming is responsible for 1/3 of global warming and the amplification feedback effects are causing ~2/3. The actual feedback is known to be positive (van Nes, 2015). For example, water-vapor feedback alone, which is one of the most important in our climate system, is thought to have the capacity to about double the direct warming (Manabe and Wetherald, 1967; Randall et al., 2007, Dessler et. al, 2008). Then incorporating the feedback, we can write this as

$$DT_{CO_2}=\frac{0.95°C\ \{X_{CO_2}+X_{Feedback}(1\text{-}X_{Other\_GHG})\text{-}X_{Other\_GHG}\}}{Ln(412/311.8)/Ln2} \qquad (4)$$

Here we will use X_{CO2}=1/3, $X_{Feedback}$=2/3, and assume $X_{Other\_GHG}\approx0$. The X_{Other_GHG} is for other GreenHouse Gas (GHG) which are a small root cause source (so their temperature influence would need to be subtracted out from the DT_{CO2}), as well it would reduce the CO2 feedback portion proportionally if it were to be considered. However, we will treat it as negligible (X_{Other_GHG}=0).

If we have another main root cause, the UHI effect, then the doubling temperature is diminished similarly to the way we had writted it for X_{Other_GHG}. Let's say for example that UHI causes f_{UHI} fraction of global warming. For example, if UHI caused 20%, then f_{UHI} =0.2, Incorporating this fractional effect, then the doubling equation becomes

$$DT_{CO_2} = \frac{\Delta T_{CO_2+Effects}\ \{(X_{CO_2} + X_{Feedback}(1\text{-}f_{UHI})\text{-}f_{UHI}\}}{Ln(CO_{2(2019)}/CO_{2(1950)})/Ln2} \tag{5}$$

Here we assume that it shares the amplification feedback effect of $X_{Feedback}$ proportionally, so the CO_2 feedback is then diminished by $X_{Feedback}(1\text{-}f)$. For Example if UHI effect causes 20% of global warming; now $X_{Feedback}$ is reduced to 0.8 $X_{Feedback}$.

Furthermore, the temperature change 0.95°C due to global warming of CO_2 is reduced since a fraction is due to UHI effect. For example if UHI causes 20% of global warming (i.e. 0.95°C), then we must subtract of 20% of 0.95°C=0.19°C. In this example where

X_{CO2}=1/3 and $X_{Feedback}$ =2/3, f=0.2 we have for example

$$DT_{CO_2} = \frac{0.95°C\ \{1/3+2/3(0.8)\text{-}0.2\}}{Ln(412/311.8)/Ln2} = \frac{\{0.317+0.507\text{-}0.19\}°C}{Ln(412/311.8)/Ln2} = \frac{0.633°C}{Ln(412/311.8)/Ln2} = 1.57°C \tag{6}$$

Here the global warming CO_2 doubling temperature is diminished form 2.36°C to 1.57°C due to the fact that UHI effect is responsible for 20% of global warming (without effects).

To check our results, we solve Eq. 2 for $\Delta T_{CO2+effectz}$, and using DT_{CO2}=1.57°C, we have

$$\Delta T_{CO_2+effects} = DT_{CO2} Ln(CO_{2(2019)}/CO_{2(1950)})/Ln2 = 1.57°C\ Ln(412/311.8)/Ln2 = 0.633°C \tag{8}$$

Then the temperature rise due to the UHI+amplification feedback effect is

$$\Delta T_{UHI+Effects} = \Delta T_{gw}(f + X_{Feedback} f) = 0.95°C(0.2+0.666(.2)) = 0.19°C+0.1265°C = 0.3165°C \tag{7}$$

Therefore, the global warming increase is

$$\Delta T_{gw} = \Delta T_{CO_2+Effects} + \Delta T_{UHI+Effects} = 0.633°C+0.3165°C = 0.95°C \tag{9}$$

as required. We note the author feels from his work (Feinberg 2020) that 20% is not an unreasonable estimate for the UHI effect on global warming.

Figure 1 provides an overview of the doubling temperature Equation 5 versus f when X_{CO2}=1/3, $X_{Feedback}$ =2/3 and ΔT_{gw}=0.95°C.

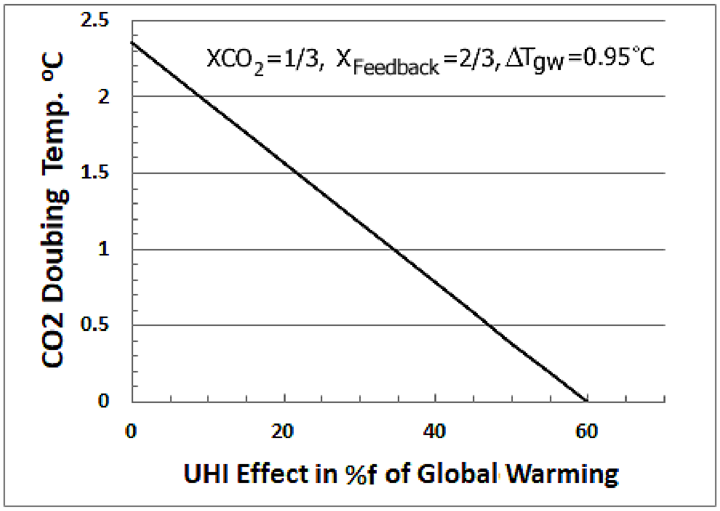

Figure 1 Results of CO_2 doubling temperature with UHI effect (%f) increasing influence

4. Model Findings and Implications

Using the model we can assess the McKitrick and Michaels 2007 contention that the net warming bias at the global level may explain as much as half the observed land-based warming. From our model this would indicate that the CO_2 doubling temperature would diminish to 0.39°C according to Equation 5 (see Fig. 1). If that were the case, then the CO_2 doubling effect would basically breakdown. Such a contention would promote pushback as it has (see McKitrick Website). Although it is less likely the UHI effect is that high in magnitude, it does suggest that there is a reasonable probability we have a dual root cause. Addressing only the CO_2 mechanism puts our planet at risk if it turns out the McKitrick and Michaels work is reasonably accurate along with the many other authors cited in the introduction including this author (Feinberg 2020). One cannot guarantee with 100% probability that our current CO_2 path is correct, as a lack of action by the IPCC goals suggests. There are currently no IPCC goals for UHI warming mitigation while this concern has gone back about 15 years by many authors.

It is difficult to understand why the many authors' findings have not been influential enough to encourage such UHI goals. Each day we take almost no action to try and cool off our cities is valuable wasted time in our fight against global warming while we lose more and more ice and snow. We have of course minimal suggestions of urban cool roofs, yet there is very little on-going coordinated global effort to make such changes. We continue to use the worst case colors for our roads and roofs, and allow unreflective architecture into our cities and ignore many other mitigating choices. Given the uncertainty in all our models, a better safe than sorry policy with dual path goals for both CO_2 and the UHI effect would certainly reduce this apparent high risk.

5. Summary

We have provided a short review of CO_2 doubling theory and how its doubling temperature changes due to the UHI effect on global warming. Both the magnitude of CO_2 and the UHI effect are obviously hard to estimate on how much influence each has on global warming anomalies. A reasonable assessment is even difficult at this time. Therefore, we should accept that we most likely have two main root causes of global warming. In our paper (Feinberg 2020) we provided suggestions related to the Urban Heat Island effect which we would like to include here. As of the time of this paper, the IPCC authors are still (approximately 15 years) treating the UHI as only a local effect.

- *We feel this is a serious error on a global scale. We stress that the IPCC is the main governing force and the only agency capable of promoting such albedo changes for cities and roads. Therefore, whether it is just for UHI known health reasons or due to studies that have found significance, we strongly urge the IPCC to set albedo goals and include such goals in their global meetings.*

Therefore our suggestions remain (Feinberg 2020):

- Creating IPCC goals to include the need for albedo enhancements in existing UHIs and roads

- A directive for future albedo design requirements of city and roads
- Recommend an agency like NASA be tasked with finding applicable solutions to cool down UHIs.
- Recommendation for cars to be more reflective. Here although world-wide cars likely do not embody much of the Earth's area, recommending that all new manufactured cars be higher in reflectivity (e.g., silver or white) would help raise awareness of this issue similar to electric cars that help improve CO2 emissions

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