

How the Urban Heat Island Effect Influences the CO₂ Doubling Temperature and a Lack of IPCC Albedo Goals

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Abstract

Global warming has both root causes and amplification feedback effects. The main root cause, believed to be CO₂ 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 CO₂ mechanism is often assessed by its doubling theory. However, such estimates rely on the fact that CO₂ is the primary root cause. Numerous authors including this one have found the Urban Heat Island effect to be substantial 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 CO₂ doubling theory. In this paper we provide a short overview to illustrate how the CO₂ doubling temperature is influenced by the UHI effect. We also assert that having a lack of IPCC albedo goals is highly risky given the numerous available studies.

1. Introduction

The subject of UHI effects having significant contributions to global warming is very important and should remain so. The contention that global warming is only due to CO₂ is very risky as it encourages one to neglect the UHI issues. In actuality, this is perhaps stated mathematically using the doubling temperature estimate since one is given the false sense that the doubling temperature can be estimated without any influence from the UHI effect. Ignoring the UHI effect is unrealistic where many authors have now shown their significance. One important paper was by McKittrick and Michaels who in 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 McKittrick 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 amplification factors, and global feedback mechanisms. In this study the author found that UHI with urban coverage could range from 8% to 86% of global warming. The wide range is related to the difficulty of estimating how much land is actually urbanized.

The table below lists the global warming causes and amplification effects. 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 CO₂ doubling temperature. Therefore, in this paper, we focus on CO₂ doubling theory influence 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 CO₂ Doubling Theory

Greenhouse theory and early predictions started as far back as 1856 with CO₂ experiments by Foote, Tyndall in 1859, and what has become very popular, doubling theory by Arrhenius in 1896 [13,14]. 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 CO₂ as shown in Equation 1.

$$13.9^{\circ}\text{C} (57.02^{\circ}\text{F})+2.36^{\circ}\text{C} \ln(412/311.8)/\ln 2=14.85^{\circ}\text{C} (58.73^{\circ}\text{F}), 0.95\text{C} (1.71^{\circ}\text{F}) \text{ Rise} \quad (1)$$

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 CO₂ from 312 to 624ppm. Then we would get another 2.36°C increase if we again doubled it to 1248ppm.

Table 1 Key CO₂ 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 st -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

The doubling temperature is based on the fact that CO₂ is the dominate mechanism causing global warming and Equation 1 is written so as to include amplification effect. However, when we include the UHI effect, we would expect the doubling temperature to drop since it is also a root cause, not an amplification effect.

3. CO₂ Doubling Theory Estimates with UHI Influence

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

$$DT_{\text{CO}_2} = \frac{\Delta T_{\text{CO}_2 + \text{effects}}}{\ln(\text{CO}_{2(2019)}/\text{CO}_{2(1950)})/\ln 2} \quad (2)$$

In this case $\Delta T_{\text{CO}_2 + \text{effect}} = 0.95^{\circ}\text{C}$, $\text{CO}_{2(2019)} = 412\text{ppm}$, and $\text{CO}_{2(1950)} = 311.8\text{ppm}$, giving

$$DT_{\text{CO}_2} = \frac{0.95^{\circ}\text{C}}{\ln(412/311.8)/\ln 2} = 2.37^{\circ}\text{C} \quad (3)$$

as expected from Equation 1. Here CO₂ is considered 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 CO₂ warming is responsible for 1/3 of global warming and the amplification effects are causing 2/3 (IPCC, 1st-5th Assessment 1990-2014), then we can write this as

$$DT_{\text{CO}_2} = \frac{0.95^{\circ}\text{C} \{X_{\text{CO}_2} + X_{\text{Feedback}}\}}{\ln(412/311.8)/\ln 2} \quad (4)$$

where $X_{CO_2}=1/3$, $X_{Feedback}=2/3$. Here $X_{Feedback}$ is an attempt to capture feedback mechanisms. We note that this equation ignores the effects of other greenhouse gases (not including moisture) which are considered as very minor root causes. So in this assessment, they are neglected.

If we have another main root cause, the UHI effect, then the doubling temperature is diminished. 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

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

Here we assume that it shares the amplification effect of $X_{Feedback}$, so the CO₂ amplification portion would be diminished by $X_{Feedback}(1-f)$. 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 CO₂ 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 $0.95^\circ\text{C}=0.19^\circ\text{C}$. In this example where

$X_{CO_2}=1/3$ and $X_{Feedback}=2/3$, $f=0.2$ we have for example

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

Here the global warming CO₂ 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 $\Delta T_{CO_2+effects}$, and using $DT_{CO_2}=1.57^\circ\text{C}$, we have

$$\Delta T_{CO_2+effects} = DT_{CO_2} \text{Ln}(CO_{2(2019)}/CO_{2(1950)})/\text{Ln}2 = 1.57^\circ\text{C} \text{Ln}(412/311.8)/\text{Ln}2 = 0.633^\circ\text{C} \quad (8)$$

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

$$\Delta T_{UHI+effects} = \Delta T_{gw} (f + X_{Feedback} (1-f)) = 0.95^\circ\text{C}(0.2 + 0.666(.2)) = 0.19^\circ\text{C} + 0.1265^\circ\text{C} = 0.3165^\circ\text{C} \quad (7)$$

Therefore, the global warming increase is

$$\Delta T_{gw} = \Delta T_{CO_2+effects} + \Delta T_{UHI+effects} = 0.633^\circ\text{C} + 0.3165^\circ\text{C} = 0.95^\circ\text{C} \quad (9)$$

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 $X_{CO_2}=1/3$, $X_{Feedback}=2/3$ and $\Delta T_{gw}=0.95^\circ\text{C}$.

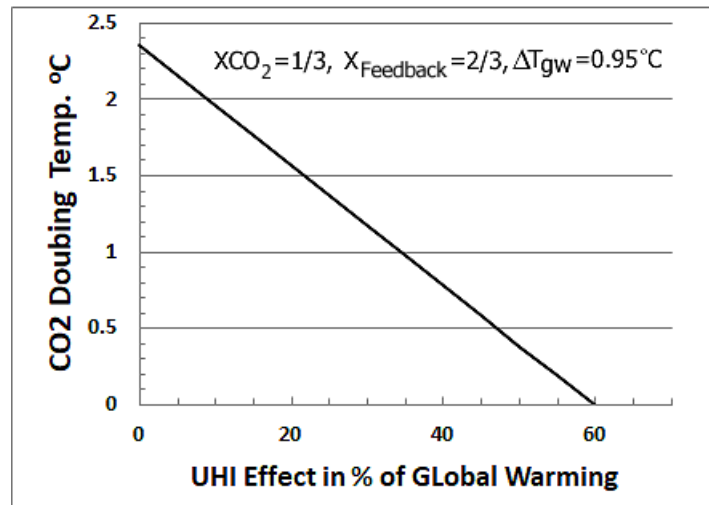


Figure 1 Results of CO₂ doubling temperature with UHI effect (f) increasing influence

Going back to the McKittrick and Michaels 2007 contention that the net warming bias at the global level may explain as much as half the observed land-based warming would indicate that the CO₂ doubling temperature would diminish to 0.39°C according to Equation 5 as is also indicated on the graph. If that were the case, we see that the CO₂ effect would really not be the main problem with the doubling temperature that reduced. This is perhaps a main reason that the IPCC has been difficult to accept this contention. We see that CO₂ theory has a long history in Table 1. It would be difficult for those who are leading the CO₂ effort to accept this contention. *Nevertheless, this puts our planet at risk* if it turns out the McKittrick and Michaels work is reasonably accurate along with the many other authors cited in the introduction including this author. We note the references actually go back to 2005.

It is clear that there is certainly cause for alarm why the many authors are being ignored as there is absolutely no real reason for the IPCC not to address this issue through setting albedo goals as they have for CO₂. 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 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. There is actually no excuse for a better safe than sorry policy. This lack of IPCC albedo goals is highly risky and unacceptable at this late date.

4. Summary

We have provided a short review of CO₂ doubling theory and how its doubling temperature changes due to the UHI effect on global warming. Both the magnitude of CO₂ 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 must accept that we most likely have two main root causes of global warming. Both need to be addressed. In our paper (Feinberg 2020) we provided suggestion related to the Urban Heat Island Effect which we would like to include here. As of the time of this paper, the IPCC is still (after 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 similar to ours, 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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