

Consensus on climate change: scientific or political?

EMCC, 22 May 2024 at the SilverSquare, av Louise 250

Prof Richard Lindzen, one of the most respected scientists in physics of the atmosphere grew up in the Bronx, he graduated in Physics at the age of 20 and published 200+ scientific articles.

He's a retired MIT professor, and a member of the American Academia of Science since 1977 as well as of Norway.

He was for the first time in Brussels meeting the Club de PAN to speak on the Consensus on climate change: scientific or politic?

The meeting was not structured around his keynote speech, but rather allowed exchanges between the attendees and the Professor who gave a short introduction describing past examples in history about science and politics, citing 3 major cases:

1/ The [Emigration act of 1924](#) resulted from 1920's great concerns caused by the large emigration of South & Eastern Europeans to the USA. Indeed emigrants were considered stupid, supported by biological scientists. The resulting eugenics policy aimed at protecting the US citizens from contamination of their stupidity. The Emigration Act lasted from 1924 until 1960, showcasing biased and inaccurate scientific support for politics.

2/ In 1940, [Lysenko](#) became director of the Institute of Genetics of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, and he used his political influence and power to suppress dissenting opinions and discredit, marginalise, and imprison his critics, elevating his anti-Mendelian theories to state-sanctioned doctrine.

3/ [Charles Percy Snow, Baron Snow](#): Most US politicians are unfamiliar with science, not to say uneducated. Hence they prefer hearing "the best of science is settled, all scientists agree" to comfort their political stances.

However, according to Lindzen, science is not an authority but a way of asking questions.

His presence in Brussels, the capital of the EU, is "very rare" so far intimidation strongly applies here.

However in the US questioning sciences e.g. CC, was accepted until the 90'. But later on, changed e.g. even the magazine "Nature" refused to publish anything that questions CC.

Conversely, it became part of political parties' games, e.g. in the Midwest objecting to CC became an opposition election argument.

Question session

Does CC exist and is it caused by CO₂?

Yes CC exists, but no it's not caused by humans

But what is called Climate is wrong!

On earth we have an infinity of different local climates changing all the time, the more easily/faster depending on sensibility and/or inertia of the local substrate, (author note) e.g. daily temperature fluctuation in dry conditions like Sahara and humid tropical forest.

What is the amount of CO₂ in the atmosphere and how much is exhausted?

The figures were not available, but (editor's note: C Gerondeau, Le Climat par les chiffres, page 32):

- CO₂ stock in the Atmosphere = +/- 3200 billions tons CO₂
- Yearly anthropogenic emissions from fossil burning = +/- 34 billions tons CO₂
 - More than half of a.m. anthropogenic emissions are absorbed by vegetation & oceans
 - Resulting amount of anthropogenic CO₂ added to the atmosphere = +/- 16 billions tons
 - Europe's anthropogenic CO₂ emissions = +/- 1,6 billion tons (10% of total GHG emissions), the remaining 90% is emitted by non-EU countries

The majority of working (low educated) people don't care about it, but higher educated people are much more worried about a few °C temperature increase.

In the past, the climate changed strongly, it has been extremely cold but also (e.g. -50 mioY) very warm. It should be looked at temperature differences between the tropics and poles, note that over the last 150y, these differences didn't change.

Temperature changes depend on thousands of factors! For instance, ocean circulation is playing a key role. MA climate optimum took place 1000 years ago, Southern Greenland was ice-free, and Europe was warm but not the rest of the world. Sensitivity to changing factors is also key, e.g. deserts or oceans do not react identically to temperature changes e.g. caused by volcanic eruptions. Hence small changes could have a strong impact in certain places or the contrary. In short, pretending that CO₂ only controls the "Earth Climate" is oversimplifying such a complex issue.

On the other hand, does daily temperature fluctuation of about 10°C in the same place, harm anyhow? Clearly not, humans did adapt since every time the daily temperature changes, just put on a fur or a sweater...

Lots of questions address the issue of facing strong conformity in the EU on the certitude of street men that CC is caused by CO₂ and will harm/destroy us and the planet. How to argue without being discredited, quote of a teacher facing massive protestation when addressing it?

No clear answer to that, but providing some simple and clear arguments like the fact that even IPCC didn't find any relationship between extreme weather events and temperature changes. As they refuse to admit it, they launched a massive brainwashing campaign, making the media so happy to bludgeon the population with all sorts of extreme weather events across the planet, completely distorting local realities, since there is always somewhere in the world an extreme weather event.

Forcing effect: small CO₂ increase supposed to cause long-lasting temperature increase effects? Again if CO₂ is a GHG, its effect on global temperature is very low, at certain periods its concentration did follow temperature changes (i.e.CO₂ did not cause it), but even that is difficult to extrapolate as climate (again and again) is very complex, subject to thousands of changing elements.

Why not talk about the very strong GHG water/clouds?

Simply as nothing can be done against clouds and burning generates water and CO₂. Reversely, banning other GHGs like CFCs and substitutes is an (easy) election argument.

The Mann curve showcases a strong modern temperature increase.

Yes but this curve has been falsified as it erased the ice age... and so, if CO₂ didn't let temperature rise, what did it? Again, climates are very versatile on Earth, with very different sensitivities, e.g. think of different levels of humidity in local places with major influences when temperatures change.

Isn't the Sun that is the driving force behind the climate?

Only partly. It is just one of the many driving forces behind the complex climate change that is still underway.

Why do so few scientists don't oppose CC?

Well, they would lose their jobs and subsidies, so this is becoming a "good student problem". (Author note: my Prof I Marko from the University of Louvain, has been put under pressure, for having released the book [Climat : 15 vérités qui dérangent \(18 février 2019\)](#)). The same applies to industries of all kinds as huge amounts of subsidies can be picked up targeting new markets with high potentials (e.g. EV).

Conclusion

CC is clearly politically driven, not scientifically.

CC is and remains a very complex subject, even Prof Lindzen remains prudent refraining from making any CC predictions, what humility!

However, for Richard Lindzen, nothing dramatic should be feared, we're safe for the next 5000 years!

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