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Holes in Global Warming Theory Fertilize Climate Change Skepticism

Global warming warnings have been popularized since the early 1990's and have exploded recently with Go Green campaigns, hybrid cars, Live Green Go Yellow ethanol fuel, solar power, wind power, hydro power, and movies such as *An Inconvenient Truth* winning an Oscar. Conditioned to take care of the earth early with childhood television shows such as *Captain Planet*, the afternoon hero who worked to "bring pollution down to zero", memorizing the Three R motto; Reuse, Reduce, and Recycle, learning about the banning of aerosol hairsprays which are believed to cause holes in the O-Zone, seeing the devastations of Hurricane Katrina, and the usual winter we recently had in which there was little snow on Christmas in my New York home yet there was snow in LA, I've never questioned climate change and so I found it shocking to be handed a flyer on my way to work for Presidential runner Lyndon Larouche stating global warming as a fraud. Curious about the skepticism of climate change, which seemed so apparent to me, is how I began my research into global warming skepticism.

Set Up:

I am studying climate change skepticism, in order to learn what function it serves to those who circulate the theory, which contributes to the fields of conspiracy theory studies by exploring the possibilities as to why conspiracy theorists fear consensus with societal and especially the scientific majority. The research I will continue to do surrounds the societal and political dynamics of the 1990's till today exploring the more conservative skepticism of climate change verses the more liberal view of acceptance of the global warming theory.

My research has included online blogs, environmental magazines, skeptic magazines, environmental policy articles, television interviews, and scientific journals. I decided to use these communication dynamics because they offered versions of the theory through the eyes of average people (blogs), those within the scientific realm (scientific magazines), those within the conspiracy realm (skeptic magazines), and the ways in which the theory is communicated and addressed in media. This gives me a range of materials and types of sources to gain insight into global warming skepticism. The people who circulate the theory tend to be older, well educated, conservative scientists and professors who have worked within the environmental field and those who are followers of the skepticism tend to be well educated and right of center in political ideology.

I hope to answer the questions as to why conservatives are more likely to be global warming skeptics than liberals, what skeptics fear with regards to politicians taking on global warming agendas, and what do they hope to offer society with the pursuit of their theory. These questions will hopefully offer insight to conspiracy theorists fear of mixing politics and economics with science.

Synthesis of the Object of Inquiry:

The main idea behind the global warming skepticism is that although the earth's temperature maybe rising, it is due to natural planetary changes in which case there is nothing to do about it anyway. Politicians use Green scare tactics to persuade voters to align themselves with leaders looking to ride the global warming band wagon. What most skeptics fear is that proponents of the global warming theory believe it is a problem that should be fixed by government regulations. This is seen as a block to the free market

system and a way to monopolize on alternative energy markets. These ideas have been accumulated in areas of skeptic global warming think tanks such as the Competitive Enterprise Institute, TCSDaily.com, Whistleblower magazine, and the George Marshall Institute.

There are more extreme variants of the theory including the political agenda of trapping Americans in the global warming threat so the government can use propaganda to conform and preside political influence according to Colorado State University's Bill Gray, (those on the fringes on the theory go as far to compare it with new world order theories). Author of Jurassic Park, Michael Crichton, in his book, *State of Fear* goes as far as to compare the hoax of global warming with the hoax of eugenics during the Holocaust.

The Global warming skeptic theory has been circulated since 1990 which was also the hottest year recorded and the year in which many of the baby boomer environmental scientists such as Bill Gray lost a great deal of federal funding to newer computer modules of environmental studies.

People who circulate the theory tend to be right of center and from the baby boom generation. Perhaps the theory serves to give credibility back to observational methods used during the 1950's instead of computer analysis that cannot be measured with numerical value which was used during their generation when meteorologists would physically enter storms to study them instead of predictions made by a computer.

Analytical Description/Interpretation of Sample Source Text:

The surge of global warming warnings came during the 1990's with the hottest year recorded in 1998. However, the temperature wasn't the only atmosphere heating up during this time and perhaps the social and political attitudes during the 90's contributes more to global warming skepticism than anything else. The close of the Cold War is here, Democrats are in power, people are using computers and the internet at home, and the baby boomers are beginning to feel out of touch with the most technological society they have ever seen. With Clinton and Gore in office, Republicans are shouting liberal media bias and with liberals (specifically Gore) taking on the climate change issue, conservatives are a bit more skeptical of ulterior motives especially with IPCC ties to politicians.

William O'Keefe, CEO of The George Marshall Institute, a think tank for global warming skepticism argues that scientific credentials of many global warming proponents are used as political credentials and the two benefit from each other through "the environmental movement, the IPCC, the media, and money." The skepticism that arises around the environmental movement, the IPCC, media, and money can be seen in Bill Gray's reasons for global warming alarmists. His theory includes a need for a common enemy to unite people after the Cold War, and the desire of government leaders to find a cause that would give them an opportunity to "organize, propagandize, force conformity, and exercise political influence." What better way to create uniform than to instill fear in citizens of an apocalyptic end to the home of all familiar nature. Climate change skeptics argue that though the earth may be heating up, CO2 is not to blame, and neither are humans, climate change is a natural process. O'Keefe sites anomalies such as that in the 1970's scientists argued that the earth would undergo global cooling and we would be heading towards another Ice Age, the increased temperatures after smoke stacks were

made more environmentally friendly, and the warmer age of the Vikings who could not have lived under the frigid temperature of Nova Scotia normally.

Skeptics seem to be less concerned with climate change than economic socialism. I think this is likely because the skeptics circulating the theories are retiring baby boomers who still feel the need to combat fascism and communist economics. Skeptics see government regulation of fossil fuel industries and businesses as impeding on the free market system and living through the period of WWII and the Cold War in which the fight for freedom was so stressed, it is understandable how this generation would want nothing to hinder personal freedom. Whistleblower Magazine released an article called Hysteria which explains how “environmentalism is nothing less than the global elitists’ replacement ideology for communism/socialism.” The article explains how after just three weeks after the U.N. formed international fears over global warming, a panel of 18 scientists from 11 countries wish to put a global tax on companies that emit greenhouse gasses. This type of government involvement with science and economics is a scary combination to the baby-boomer generation. Economically, Fred Smith suggests that everything down to national parks and endangered species should be privatized and owned so that government has no involvement with private property, this even goes for endangered species Smith suggests should be “owned” instead of in PETA promoted animal slavery.

Another threat to the baby boomer generation within scientific study is expressed by Bill Gray whose method of observation and numerical study is considered outdated with the use of computer nodules that are seen as more accurate. Yet as part of a generation in which Gray flew into storms to study them, he sees computer nodules as insignificant tools with only theoretical answers to meteorology; “Nearly all of my colleagues who have been around 40 or 50 years are skeptical as hell about this whole global warming thing”. After losing much government funding under the Clinton administration to new computer nodules, Gray attributes his loss in grants to his known skepticism of climate change which may explain his hostile attitudes toward computer projected environments.

In 1997, when the Kyoto treaty to limit greenhouse gasses was put in effect, 17,000 scientists signed the Oregon Petition stating that “Moreover, there is substantial scientific evidence that increases in atmospheric carbon dioxide produce many beneficial effects upon the natural plant and animal environments of the Earth.” This idea is also expressed in a recent add for the Competitive Enterprise Institute which calls Co2 “life” as a young girls blows bubbles, a soccer mom takes her kids to practice, and a feeble woman doing back breaking labor which would be so simply avoided thanks to machinery which pumps Co2. The commercial is supposed to “bring a tear to your eye” says Fred Smith as you see how Co2 makes our lives as we know it manageable and beautiful.

Analytical Description of the People and Groups Circulating these Stories:

Richard Lindzen is the most credited skeptic within the global warming theory. As a professor at MIT, he is known for his research in dynamic meteorology and often speaks out against the IPCC when it comes to global warming being caused by humans. Bill Gray of Colorado State University and hurricane expert sees computer modules as

untrustworthy coming from a time of study which focused on direct involvement, observation, and numerical values. After losing grant money under the Clinton administration, he continues his research to disprove global warming alarmists under a limited budget but a decent size following. Fred Smith, President of the think tank conspiracy site, The Competitive Enterprise institute strives to expose corrupt politicians such as Al Gore who seek to scare Americans into buying Go Green and voting in favor of his legislation. The George Marshall Institute is another think tank which works to expose the political aligning of the IPCC. It appears that these leaders within the skeptic theory are looking; especially now with our Republican president's low approval rating to combat the liberal view of global warming to simply stay in the race and not be trampled by the go green campaign bombarding liberals are using for the 2008 democratic candidate elections. Presidential runner since 1980, Lyndon Larouche is the black sheep of the bunch as he is the only democratically aligned player in the skeptic theory, his following also includes many young people as opposed to the baby boom generation which is attracted to the more conservative players in this theory.

Important Background Information about the Moment in which These Texts are Circulating:

It is necessary to keep in mind that during the 1990's the Cold War has come to an end, the baby boomer generation is growing into old age, and technology is on the rise. Skeptics see global warming as a way to create an enemy now that communism is no longer a threat. Yet skeptics in this matter are accustomed to using older tools of study instead of newer computer based tools which they find little credibility in. One technological tool that certainly serves to help spread the skeptic view is the internet through blogs and global warming skeptic websites often run by professors, scientists and PhD's. While going through the primary sources, it is important to recognize the societal reasons behind the skepticism. Under Clinton, old climate researchers were given less funding as they produced studies discrediting global warming. This does not mean that one caused the other, it just means that more money was given to computer modules which could predict weather conditions and atmospheric changes.

Skeptics in this theory point to anomalies such as the "Little Ice Age", the cooling of 1945 and 1975 even though industries were at their highest productions, the racing temperature ever since the Clean Air Act, and the Medieval Warm Period. All of these changes in climate direct skeptics to look elsewhere for the reasons behind climate change.

When satellite studies found no warming of the lower atmosphere, the leaders in the skepticism found relief in that even with such high tech satellite data, the information proved to be along the same lines as their own "old fashion" data analysis. When the satellite test was redone however, it resolved the discrepancy although skeptics still use the original data to prove their own beliefs which I believe satisfies themselves more than their actual theories in the way that it proves to themselves that they are not out of touch with the high tech world, even if they do not trust it.

Presentation and Discussion of Your Tentative Conclusions:

In my study of global warming skeptics, I have found that the leading conspiracy theories on this issue serve to function as means of holding on to traditional meteorology research that were used before computer nodules which allow the older professors, and scientists, such as Gray, of environmental studies to prove themselves a part of a scientific and social world they have trouble fitting into and particularly being funded for.

It also functions for these generally conservative individuals as a place to attack liberal politics and liberal media bias in which the claims argue that marketing and politics hinders a free market system. The Eco-socialism claims of liberal political policy reform in industries are nostalgic of the threatening economic claims during the Cold War. I would consider this a way for skeptics to find comfort in a common enemy as they did for years with the enemy of communism now that the Cold War era is over. This parallel is interesting because the need for an enemy after the Cold War is the same claim skeptics use to explain global warming proponent's need for an enemy of the earth in the form of Co2.

What makes global warming skeptics different from other conspiracy theorists is that, the skeptics are actually optimists. They see humans as being a part of the planet to use and live on. Skeptics won't be the first ones to join a rally to save the next endangered species, but they do see resources available to us, as resources to take advantage of. Unlike extreme global warming proponents, the skeptics are not expecting the apocalyptic end of the earth, which comes up in many conspiracy theories, and they do not expect to die of green house gas emissions. Skeptics intend to live life the most comfortable and enjoyable way possible, even if it means cutting down a few trees.

In conducting my research, I have found the conspiracy theory can serve to lend a familiar voice to those who feel out of place, especially in the scientific field. It also functions to give a voice to scholars who may have lost following, federal funding, or credibility for their ideas and with a voice of new or different thought, may bring acclaim as Held, Lindzen's apprentice states, "There are always people in the fringes. They are attracted to the fringe...It may be as simple as, how do you prove you're smarter than everyone else? You don't do that by consensus". What skeptics want is hard facts of global warming due to human activity and Co2 emissions even though they themselves use unclear modules of climate observation, it is quite clear that no one or no machine can truly predict how much an effect it will actually have on our planet but nothing is certain, not even in science so in order for the skeptics to be taken seriously, they must learn to accept ambiguity within the global warming theory.

Discussion of Relevant Secondary Sources from the Field of Conspiracy Theory Studies:

I believe Stephen Gould would be interested in my work in regards to his work on skepticism and how he validates skepticism by calling a claim to be tested, much like the global warming skeptics call for hard proof of human influence on global warming. I believe he would consider the work of global warming skeptics to be "internalist" as they focus on "the internal workings of science independent of its larger cultural context: the development of ideas, hypotheses, theories, laws, and the internal logic between them." I believe that Gould would put the internalist aspects of the global warming skeptics in dialogue with global warming proponents to simply test each hypothesis against each

other. However, I believe he would consider my analysis of global warming skeptics as “externalist” as I placed the skeptical theory in context of its moment in time which revealed it’s social, political, and economic ties and the influence this time had and continues to have on skeptics. Also, Gould’s explanation of progressive science helps to further explain the skeptic view that no one wants to listen a global warming skeptic because a skeptic won’t talk in computer jargon or fit in with the current ideology; “Scientific progress is the cumulative growth of a system of knowledge over time, in which useful features are retained and non-useful features are abandoned, based on the rejection or confirmation of testable knowledge”. This offers explanation to skeptics such as Grey whose federal funding was cut when new modules appeared and offered new and advanced tools for climatic research.

I believe that Goldberg would have the most conflict with my analysis as he states “Conspiracism thrives when power is exercised at a distance by seemingly selfish groups zealous in their authority.” In this manner, the global warming skeptic would be looking to advance his own means but what I have found in my research is that these skeptics don’t act from a distance, I was simply on my way to work when I came across the LaRouche article, there was no searching for it, it came to me. Also, from the research I have conducted it does not seem that the global warming skeptics are looking to advance their means, but simply looking to stay in the running and at least have someone listen up.

I see my work contributing to the field of conspiracy theory studies by showing how contemporary conspiracy theories reveal just as much about the present as they do about the past. In my research, the impact of the Cold War on the baby boomer generation is seen to leave once highly regarded scientists in the dust except for their own conspiracy theory followers to be replaced by computer models and a return to what they fear as eco-socialism which portrays the feelings of still being at ends with an enemy as they were up until the 90’s.

Implications of this report for Further Research:

The questions that now arise are to what ends does the past create skeptic opinion of the future, what personal imperatives do the skeptics have if they will not live to see the actual playing out of the global warming apocalypse and do not believe it will happen at all, and how does the desire for a more liberal government play out in regards to economics, will the skeptics take on other conspiracy theories such as New World Order narratives to explain the conspiracy of global warming itself. The limitations of this study at this time are that we are still another year away from seeing the more liberal government take a role in global warming and since the global warming debate is still a heated topic, more and more strands will develop before I will have the chance to research them.

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