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### Climate Change: Is it an Existential Crisis?

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# Climate Change: Is It an Existential Crisis?

Emily Payne, Whit Lawrence, and Dr. Tim Knight



## Objective:

This research aimed to perform an in-depth literature review of four different books concerning the topic of climate change to determine whether the issue should be labeled an existential crisis or not.

## What is Climate Change?

Climate is the long-term pattern of weather in a region. Climate change refers to the long-term shifts in these weather patterns. Climate change is defined differently by the various organizations and people of influence in America. This research investigated the 7 most significant contributors to the great climate crisis.

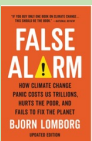
## What We Read:



*Fossil Future* makes the argument that the rapid elimination of fossil fuels would cause a moral dilemma. Developing countries would be cut off from the opportunities to grow at the same rate developed countries did with the use of fossil fuels. The author also argues that the quality of life would decrease, and poverty rates would increase if fossil fuels were eliminated.



*Unsettled*, overall, gives a convincing, intuitive, and logical approach regarding the issues of climate today. Koonin uses his background in politics to address how many reporters on climate change don't have a background in science. The book suggests that there are often ulterior motives to the release of negative climate reports, such as political advantage or monetary gain.



*False Alarm*, by Bjorn Lomborg, addresses the truth about climate change, how not to fix climate change, and provides several theories on the best ways to fix climate change. Lomborg claims that the Paris Agreement is a bad policy and that it's jeopardizing developing countries' abilities to lift themselves out of poverty. He also says that climate change has had very little impact on extreme weather.



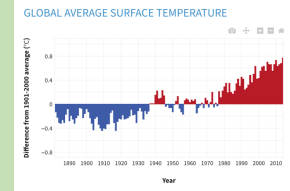
"Climate change is real but it's not the end of the world. It is not even our most serious environmental problem." Shellenberger writes *Apocalypse Never* to fight the exaggeration and alarmism that's associated with climate science today, addressing how and why manageable environmental problems have been mainstreamed as apocalyptic.

## Global Temperature Increase

There is a confirmed global temperature increase of about 1 degree Celsius.

- Greenhouse gas emissions: heat is trapped in the atmosphere in the form of reflected infrared radiation.
- Oceans: overall temperature increase of 1.5 °C.

While alarming, attempts to predict increasing temperature trends are not as reliable as portrayed by the media.



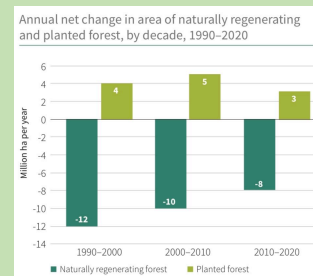
## Extreme Weather



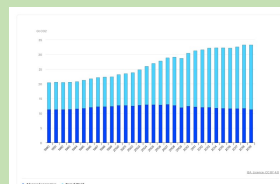
- Many resources point out that wildfires have worsened over the past decade.
- Weather and climate-related disasters have social as well as physical dimensions (IPCC).
- Climate change ultimately does not make extreme weather events worse.

## Deforestation

- The reforestation efforts being made worldwide are catching up to the slowing global deforestation rates.
- The highest net loss of forest area over the past decade has occurred in Africa, followed by South America.
- To address this problem by telling developing nations that they can no longer develop as more advanced nations once did is unreasonable.



## Fossil Fuels/Carbon Emissions



- Governments around the world aim to decrease the usage of fossil fuels due to the increasing temperatures of the earth and rising CO<sub>2</sub> levels.
- Climate related deaths have significantly decreased in countries that have been industrialized. Fossil fuels are what also drives the harvest, movement, and storage of food worldwide.
- The quality of human life would be decreased if these resources were eliminated, and less reliable forms of energy were used.

## GDP

A resounding positive effect of the use of fossil fuels has been decreasing poverty and world hunger rates..

- Non Renewable resources such as coal, oil, and natural gas have been used to speed along the industrialization process because they produce high amounts of energy and can be easily stored.
- The land, cost of construction, and raw materials still have negative effects on the climate that are not as easily offset as fossil fuels. Fossil fuels are still the fastest and most convenient means of growing a country's economy.

## Politics

The science has been simplified for political purposes, which creates a simple solution: "just get rid of fossil fuels."

- It's difficult to rally a crowd with uncertainty.
- There can be no gray area in politics, so politicians pick sides in the matter.
- Both sides are so extreme that no solutions can be found.

## Media

- Koonin points out several different scientists that are now hired by politicians to report their data. These affiliations cause bias in their reports and certain facts are left out.
- Media reports leave out key factors in findings to create a better, more exciting story that will gain more traction with audiences.
- The demand for news has increased – reporters become increasingly pressed for stories. Media profits from eye-catching stories and big headlines.

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