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Output Steeply By 2100

October 24, 2015 By Steven Newman — 1 Comment



The study



compiled 50 years' worth of *economic* data and temperature readings from over 100 countries and found a strong correlation between these

two: regardless of a country's wealth levels, human productivity seems to be highest for annual temperature values of around 13 degrees Celsius (55 Fahrenheit).

But it's not clear the researchers have identified a cause, he adds.

At the least, he adds, the study will stimulate a debate among economist about the best way to sift through the various factors that affect a country's productivity in order to isolate and assess global warming's *economic* effects.

"Our macro-level results lined up nicely with micro-level studies", Solomon Hsiang, an associate professor of public policy at the University of California, Berkeley, and a co-leader of the study, said in a media release. This has been estimated at 55 degrees Fahrenheit (13 degrees Celsius), and is close to the average temperatures encountered in San Francisco's bay area. "If your average temperature is hotter, a little bit of warming might hurt you".

The economists said in the study that Canada, Russia, and countries in northern and central Europe could see an increase in productivity with warming temperatures, but countries in the tropics and subtropics would feel the worst effects. Burke and Hsiang use different population-weighted temperature figures than NOAA calculates.

“We are already experiencing the *economic* impacts of climate change – heatwaves, for example, are increasing health costs and employee absenteeism, as well as reducing crop yields”, said Thomas Sterner, at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden, who was not involved in the research. He read the new Nature paper but withheld his judgment until the statistical analysis of the data has been tested.

Importantly, the researchers did not compare countries with one another – an approach that would have been beset with many confounding factors.

Burke and his colleagues studied temperature and *economic* records from 166 countries over a 50-year period from 1960 to 2010, and analysed how the *economic* output changed in the years that were unusually cool or warm.

The second half of the study then projected the toll of a steadily warming trend, based on these relationships.

“ “In 2100, we estimate that unmitigated climate change will make 77% of countries poorer in per capita terms than they would be without climate change.”

New research predicts a grim future for future economies if climate mitigation does not take place. On top of easier shipping, resource exploitation, and tourism, there could be a productivity boost due to more favorable temperatures.

Many tropical countries, in contrast, suffer *economic* damages in this scenario – getting hotter than they already are.

As a result, it is expected that global inequality will escalate, as the income gap between nations becomes even more pronounced, study authors warn.

“The cross-country implications of the analysis is eye-opening”, said Rick Larrick, a professor at

Duke's Fuqua School of Business, after reviewing the study for the Washington Post. He has been covering climate change since 1988. Burke, Hsiang, & Miguel (*Nature* 2015) demonstrate the effects of these changes on economies around the world. A cooler world leads to more equitable global growth, offering regions like Africa the chance to "catch up".

He and others also questioned the idea that there is an optimal temperature for *economic* production.

OK, so we are now all in agreement that climate change is very real. Yes.

"If you have a lot of data on a lot of countries in a lot of years, that allows you to start to distinguish the particular role of temperature in *economic* performance", explained Marshall Burke, study co-author and center fellow at the Center on Food Security and the Environment, at Stanford University.

The study's authors suggest that the relationship between climate change and *economic* output can be understood by looking at land and worker productivity, which are both reliably related to temperature changes. And the answer appears to be largely no.



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BY DR. GLEN BARRY · OCTOBER 24, 2015

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AMERICANS. GRIZZLY BEARS roamed and redwood forests towered. Now the heavily industrialized state is an over-populated ecologically collapsing mess. Remaining tawdry natural ecosystems are surrounded by an endless sprawl of human filth, and the very climate is abruptly changing.

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