EGUsphere, referee comment RC2
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Comment on egusphere-2022-577

Anonymous Referee #2

Referee comment on "Brief communication: Climate science as a social process – history, climatic determinism, Mertonian norms and post-normality" by Hans von Storch, EGUsphere, https://doi.org/10.5194/egusphere-2022-577-RC2, 2022

This paper touches upon relevant topics. An analysis of the modern shift in climate science towards more quantitative/deterministic/predictive endeavours is nowadays more important than ever. This is especially so in light of the hostility that developing and promising qualitative approaches, such as the storyline approach, have received. Also, the paper illustrates early incipient aspects of climate justice, especially in terms of colonialist attitudes, which require revision for tackling the challenges we face today. The text is also clear and easy to follow.

Having said this, the overall point – that climate science is a social endeavour – seems a platitude by now. In this sense, it seems to me that this contribution may play fruitful pedagogical or communication roles. But if intended as an "original" contribution, it does not seem to have much of an original claim to make. In addition, the scope of the paper is, on my estimation, too broad, both in terms of its theoretical framework and the subjects. In terms of its theoretical framework, it is unclear to me how much of a contribution to the argument is the introduction of the concepts of post-normal science and CUDOS. This is especially troubling because the concepts are employed very lightly, used to advance a point in the argument but not critically analysed. And, in terms of the subjects, the paper goes from colonialism to climate denialism, over centuries of global human history. This kind of ambition may not even be suitable for a book or series of books.

I would recommend going deeper into specific aspects touched upon in the paper. For example, specific historical episodes could be analysed in more detail and used as case studies to illustrate the embodying changes in our perceptions of climate. It is clear that the author has vast knowledge on these subjects, especially in terms of the references used. The recommendation is for the author to channel this knowledge in lines of argument that are pursued in depth.

Specific points:

- I would change the title. As it is proven by a comment above, it leads to think that this is the contribution of the paper, namely, to show that climate science is social. It seems that the aim of the paper is to show specific ways in which the social dynamics of climate science have reflected in changes in practices.
- The author writes in the abstract: "the topic of climate – in the sense of "usual weather" - has in the western tradition attracted attention as a possible explanatory factor". Possible explanatory factor of what? This becomes clearer in the main text but should be made explicit in the abstract too.
- It is not obvious to me that Humboldt's definition of climate illustrates the quantitative drive of modern approaches to climate (L.39). More explicitly, there is no mention to quantities, calculations, predictions, or something of sorts.

TYPOS

L.26: i.e.., = i.e.,

L.46: 1098 = 1898

L.73: Ellsworth Huntington drew… = Ellsworth Huntington, who drew…

L.81: Ghe = The

L.106: signific ant = significant