



Preface to the Preconference Climate Seminar

Klimarealistene
P.O. Box 33,
3901 Porsgrunn
Norway
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Correspondence:
jopp@space.dtu.dk

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Jens Olaf Pepke Pedersen

Senior Scientist, DTU, Denmark

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A preconference seminar was held at DTU on 14 September 2023 and featured two sessions on “The Carbon Cycle Controversy” and “The Coming (Little) Ice Age” respectively. In this issue, we are very pleased to present several extended abstracts from the talks given at the seminar.

Some of the talks presented ideas which are controversial and also sparked a lively debate at the seminar. The talks may turn out not to be correct, but in the interest of scientific openness, we include all of them in this issue. This is unfortunately becoming rare in the field of climate science.

An early warning signal was found already during Climategate in 2009, where leaked e-mails from the inner circles of IPCC authors revealed how they gave friendly peer-reviewed to each other’s papers and were able to keep uncomfortable knowledge out of the scientific literature.

One infamous quote is from an e-mail from 2004 to Michael Mann sent by Philip Jones who was at that time director of the Climatic Research Unit (CRU) at the University of East Anglia, and which clearly showed the corruption of the IPCC process: “I can’t see either of these papers being in the next IPCC report. Kevin and I will keep them out somehow - even if we have to redefine what the peer-review literature is!”.

Another e-mail from Philip Jones in 2005 revealed how he would rather delete climate data than release them for public scrutiny: “If they ever hear there is a Freedom of Information Act now in the UK, I think I’ll delete the file rather than send to anyone.”

A recent example of how the climate science today is broken, is exposed in a comment given by the lead author of a recent publication in *Nature*¹ on the effect of climate change on wildfires. In his comment² Patric Brown admits that the paper he just published “focuses exclusively on how climate change has affected extreme wildfire behavior”, and he adds that “I knew not to try to quantify key aspects other than climate change in my research because it would dilute the story that prestigious journals like *Nature* and its rival, *Science*, want to tell.”

¹ P. T. Brown et al. (2023) “Climate warming increases extreme daily wildfire growth risk in California”, *Nature* vol. 621, pp. 760–766.

² <https://www.thefp.com/p/i-overhyped-climate-change-to-get-published>

Brown emphasizes that the climate change influence on wildfire risks is very real but notes that “there are also other factors that can be just as or more important, such as poor forest management and the increasing number of people who start wildfires either accidentally or purposely”. He admits that “we didn’t bother to study the influence of these other obviously relevant factors”, not because they did not know how to make the analysis more realistic and useful, but because he “knew that it would detract from the clean narrative centered on the negative impact of climate change and thus decrease the odds that the paper would pass muster with Nature’s editors and reviewers.”

Another recent example of the corruption of peer review in climate science is the retraction a few months ago of a paper published in 2022 in *The European Physical Journal Plus* with the title “A critical assessment of extreme events trends in times of global warming”.³

The paper was based on data in the recent IPCC report and showed how extreme weather events have not become more intense or more frequent as the temperature of the earth’s surface has increased. The paper thus concluded that “On the basis of observational data, the climate crisis that, according to many sources we are experiencing today, is not evident yet.”

In a recent blog post Roger Pielke has commented on the case and based on the review reports, his conclusion is that this is a clear case of a “politically-motivated retraction of a paper that some climate scientists happened to disagree with”.⁴ In Pielke’s opinion the retracted paper” is not even particularly significant, as it mainly reviews the conclusions of the IPCC on trends in weather extremes”. He further adds that “to be clear, there is absolutely no allegation of research fraud or misconduct here, just simple disagreement. Instead of countering arguments and evidence via the peer reviewed literature, activist scientists teamed up with activist journalists to pressure the publisher – Springer Nature, perhaps the world’s most important scientific publisher – to retract a paper. Sadly, the pressure campaign worked. The abuse of the peer review process documented here is remarkable and stands as a warning that climate science is as deeply politicized as ever with scientists willing to exert influence on the publication process both out in the open and behind the scenes.”

Historically, science has proven to have a strong ability to be self-regulating, so that incorrect theories gradually disappeared from the literature. This process only went wrong in the past when totalitarian forces tried to control what the researchers were allowed to investigate and what they were allowed to conclude. Unfortunately, for decades, climate research has suffered from these unpleasant trends. With the sad state of climate research in mind, it only emphasizes even more the need for workshops and journals that act as breathing holes for new and controversial ideas.

Guest-Editor: Stein Storlie Bergsmark; **Reviewers:** anonymous.

³ <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1140/epjp/s13360-021-02243-9>

⁴ <https://rogerpielkejr.substack.com/p/think-of-the-implications-of-publishing>