



## HGSS-2021-1 | Copernicus statement on the review process

Copernicus Publications is committed to a fair, transparent, and impartial discussion of scientific findings in all our journals. This is demonstrated through our outreach activities, our decade-long advocacy of a public peer-review process, and the fact that our editors act independently of any financial or other corporate interest Copernicus Publications may have as a publisher.

This arrangement can only work on a basis of trust in our chief editors and their editorial boards and their dedication to a fair and impartial peer review. We passionately believe in this approach to academic publishing and feel affirmed by the many high-quality manuscripts we publish every day. Copernicus Publications – and thereby all our journals – are members of COPE, the Committee on Publication Ethics, and explicitly subscribe to COPE's code of conduct for journal editors<sup>1</sup> and guide for peer reviewers<sup>2</sup>.

It has been brought to our attention that an article published in the journal *History of Geo- and Space Sciences (HGSS)* may not have met the standard of fair and impartial peer review, concerns that we take very seriously. Any decision we take regarding this article is motivated purely by our commitment to publication ethics and scientific discourse. In the interest of transparency, we summarize relevant aspects of the case in the following.

### Aspects related to publication ethics

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- On 24 January 2021, the author submitted a manuscript to *HGSS*. The manuscript outlines the author's view on the interrelation of CO<sub>2</sub> / CH<sub>4</sub> and global temperature changes.
- The editor decided to send the manuscript to review on 27 January 2021. Based on the editor's publication record, their expertise is in seismology, solid earth processes, and solar physics.
- The topic and conclusions of the manuscript are highly controversial due to their political and social implications, a fact that author, editor, and referees were aware of, as evident from email records, the manuscript's cover letter, and referee reports.
- The editor nominated 8 referees, of which 6 agreed to write and 4 eventually submitted a report.
- Out of 8 nominated referees:

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<sup>1</sup> [https://publicationethics.org/files/Code\\_of\\_conduct\\_for\\_journal\\_editors.pdf](https://publicationethics.org/files/Code_of_conduct_for_journal_editors.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://publicationethics.org/resources/guidelines-new/cope-ethical-guidelines-peer-reviewers>

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- 4 were suggested by the author upon submission.
- 6 have a limited or no publication record in climate sciences, ice core geochemistry, or atmospheric sciences.
- 6 are publicly known as being in favour of or having ties to an industry benefiting from the manuscript's conclusion.
- Out of the 4 referees that submitted a report:
  - 1 was suggested by the author upon submission.
  - 3 have a limited or no publication record in climate sciences, ice core geochemistry, or atmospheric sciences.
  - all are publicly known as being in favour of or having ties to an industry benefiting from the manuscript's conclusion.
  - all agreed within 1-2 days and submitted their reports within 1-8 days (1 x same day, 2 x 4 days, and 1 x 8 days).
  - 3 suggested technical corrections and 1 suggested major revision.
- The handling topical editor was also on the list of referees suggested by the author.

Some of the points raised above are in direct violation of COPE's conflict of interest policy and editorial practices. Others are listed as notable aspects when it comes to judging the legitimacy of a peer review<sup>3</sup>.

Copernicus Publications emphasizes that the author had no influence on the process other than suggesting referees (see above).

## Academic aspects

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Although Copernicus Publications remains impartial in all academic aspects of the presented work, the following could be noted:

- The scope of *HGSS* is "to document historical facts and knowledge and to improve awareness of the history of geoscience." While the author discusses popular historic fallacies in the Earth sciences, there is no clear link between the manuscript's central conclusions and the scope of the journal.
- The author does not show a published track record in climate sciences, ice core geochemistry, or atmospheric sciences and no relations to major (French) climate research groups (e.g., IPSL or CNRM).
- The author describes their work as an epistemological approach focusing on "fundamental principles without the need for delving into technical details", hinting that the work represents either an opinion or review.

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<sup>3</sup> [https://publicationethics.org/files/COPE%20PR\\_Manipulation\\_Process.pdf](https://publicationethics.org/files/COPE%20PR_Manipulation_Process.pdf)



- Interpreted as a review, the author frequently mentions ice cores and climate models but, apart from citing a single reference core<sup>4</sup>, does not discuss any recent authoritative publications in either field of science.
- Far-reaching conclusions are derived from analysing the single ice core while none of multiple works on time–depth or CO<sub>2</sub>–temperature relations on the same or other cores are discussed.
- A central argument is made that current climate models are based on false premises, while likewise, no or unspecific reference is given to the vast literature on these models (e.g., the considerable record on CMIP5/CMIP6)<sup>5</sup>.

## Conclusion

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In the light of the above and after conferring with the author, the *HGSS* editorial board, and experts in the field, Copernicus Publications has come to the decision to temporarily bar access to the article and perform a post-publication review, as recommended by COPE in such cases<sup>6</sup>.

Reports and the outcome of this review will be published, and the article will be handled accordingly.

Regardless of the outcome, Copernicus Publications will carefully review the editorial practices and peer-review process of *HGSS*.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://doi.org/10.1038/20859>

<sup>5</sup> <https://scholar.google.de/scholar?q=CMIP5>

<sup>6</sup> [https://publicationethics.org/files/Systematic\\_manipulation\\_of\\_the\\_publication\\_process.pdf](https://publicationethics.org/files/Systematic_manipulation_of_the_publication_process.pdf)

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