Earth Syst. Dynam. Discuss., 4, C258–C260, 2013
www.earth-syst-dynam-discuss.net/4/C258/2013/

Earth System Dynamics
Discussions

Interactive comment on "Agnotology: learning from mistakes" *by* R. E. Benestad et al.

R.E. Benestad

rasmus.benestad@met.no

Received and published: 14 June 2013

I am grateful for the comments provided by C. Loehle, and hope that I can answer his criticism on the behalf of the whole team of authors.

I think that we all disagree with the statement "the science of climate change is "settled" and that this consensus cannot be questioned." - the paper that we write just do that - it questions published results! We argue that the past findings must be reassessed continuously in the light of new findings. We argue that replication is an important way of doing so.

I think that we also disagree that "anyone questioning this consensus does so willfully and malevolently". To think that we take this position in our paper, one needs must have misinterpreted our message.

I disagree with Loehles statement "Yet in no case do the authors bother to truly refute anything," - the paper does in fact present a number of case studies showing how different papers are replicated and found to be incorrect. In particularly so, one of the papers that Loehle has co-authored with N. Scafetta. We are seriously questioning the methods used in this paper and the conclusions drawn from them.

We agree on "takes no man's word" for anything - hence our paper, the R-package replicationDemos, and our attempts to replicate the results. I would also say that it would be beneficial if scholars were more open with their methods and data: see e.g.

http://www.newscientist.com/article/dn18307-sceptical-climate-researcher-wont-divulge-key-program.html

I also think that there is no evidence that "publications (143)" means that one is correct about a scientific position - as Loelhe just argued himself (in a few lines above this quote).

I would like to challenge Loehle on his statement "ClimateGate emails showed that these events resulted from pressure from a handful of activists such as Mann" - please provide the evidence supporting this allegation! I also find it rather surprising that someone presenting a claim like this also accuses others for presenting handwavy arguments.

We agree that working with time series is tricky, but also that the method chosen in Loehle and Scafetta (2011) is not convincing, and we provide a demonstration with synthetic series to show that is is not robust. The weakness is not the exact process for fitting a curve, and whether the length really is 60 or 70 years. For noisy geophysical data, it is hazardous trying to identify cycles when you only have a small number of them ($\sim$2), and from such a curve-fit, you cannot really attribute much physical significance.

My advice to Loehle is to keep on working, and try to find more convincing arguemts. I

agree that in some cases, discoveries have been made before the physics have been understood. It would indeed be very good news is Loehle and Scafetta (2011) were right.

Interactive comment on Earth Syst. Dynam. Discuss., 4, 451, 2013.