3d Review of paper submitted by Grimm and Potts to CPD, reviewer #2

As mentioned in my last review I am not against the publication of that paper as it stands now. The authors bring new ideas and develop well-argued criticisms of the method. This paper is interesting for its content.

Concerning my last comment "*but I nevertheless recommend to the authors a modification of their most confrontational sentences*", it was more a recommendation to the authors than anything else. And, as such, they must feel free to take it or not. I find the tone of the paper (the paper as a whole in fact not just few sentences here and there) aggressive, destructive and most of all patronizing. If the authors think this is a message their paper should carry, it's not a problem to me as the science and the problems discussed are valid. But I do believe that it could cause more harm than good to the paper if many other scientists share my opinion.

The Coexistence Approach is probably outdated and I'm convinced by the authors' arguments. Yes, novel approaches should be developed and used. Nevertheless, I am also convinced that everything that has been done since the seminal paper of Mosbrugger and Utescher (1997), in terms of science produced, *impetus* given to the field of palaeosciences, all the projects developed with and for the method, *etc. etc*. is not completely useless, contrary to what the authors like to suggest. Acknowledging that aspect would certainly be a better approach and a more constructive starting point for the paper.

To conclude, my comments have nothing to do with being politically correct or not. It's about acknowledging other people's work, building on it – which sometimes can mean discarding it for better and more complex methods – rather than simply discrediting it.

This is all I have to say about this manuscript. I leave the final decision to the editor.

Mosbrugger, V., Utescher, T., 1997. The coexistence approach - a method for quantitative reconstructions of Tertiary terrestrial palaeoclimate data using plant fossils. Palaeogeogr. Palaeoclimatol. Palaeoecol. 134, 61–86.