

# ***Interactive comment on ““Everything is scorched by the burning sun”: Missionary perspectives and experiences of 19th and early 20th century droughts in semi-arid central Namibia” by S. Grab and T. Zumthurm***

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Received and published: 11 November 2019

Dear Anonymous Reviewer

I really value your comments. One that in particular struck me is the questioning about differentiating between 'regional drought' and 'major drought' given that these have not been adequately defined. In reflecting on this, I think drought terminology needs more careful consideration in documentary based climate work.

I have just had a look through several prominent documentary based climate recon-

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struction papers (and some already published in this special volume on droughts) and many, if not most, use drought terms rather vaguely. The irony is that the discipline has been generally good in classifying - through defining attributes - different categories of wetness or dryness, but when it comes to 'drought' - we have generally failed in this regard. So, papers have used terms such as 'drought', 'moderate drought' and 'severe drought' all in the same paper without any differentiation between these categories of drought. Other papers have used terms such as 'major drought', 'extreme drought', 'very great drought', 'extraordinary drought' etc...all without any clarification how these might differ from 'drought'. The work by Tejedor et al and Brazdil et al (both this volume) - are exceptions to this as they quantify and explain, respectively, what constitutes an 'extreme drought'. Most other papers have failed to do so - including our own here - so thanks for highlighting this to us.

Defining the category of drought I guess depends on ones frame of reference and geographic work space etc - so what might be a 'severe' drought to one region may only qualify as a 'moderate' one to another, or may in fact not even qualify as a drought if in a much drier region. So collectively we have much to improve on defining categories of drought in terms of their severity, extent, duration etc.

I will make sure we cover ourselves better in this regard when revising the current paper. Many thanks again for this interesting and important point. Stefan

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Interactive comment on Clim. Past Discuss., <https://doi.org/10.5194/cp-2019-95>, 2019.

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