

Interactive comment on “Documentary evidence of droughts in Sweden between the Middle Ages and c1800” by Dag Retsö and Lotta Leijonhufvud

Anonymous Referee #1

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This article is about droughts in Sweden from 1400 to 1800 reconstructed on the basis of documentary data. Besides the reconstruction of droughts, it also deals with their economic consequences and presents a number of drought periods. It is a very interesting paper and presents important results, which are definitely worth publishing. Nevertheless, there are some points of criticism that would have to be changed before publication: Actually, a proper state of research is missing. Some of this information appears in the course of the paper, but it would be better to concentrate it at the beginning (e.g. lines 166-167). At the beginning of the paper, but also further down, there are also a few references missing. For example, the description of the climate indices (lines 77-79) should be followed by a reference to Christian Pfister or Rudolf Brázdil, who developed them in this form. Or lines 156-159, this statement should also be fol-

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lowed by a reference. On the other hand, I think the table with the references for lines 290-340 is an excellent solution! In my opinion, the introduction also lacks a delimitation of the subject or a kind of outline. Therefore, a genuine question or something similar, which defines the framework of the article, would be very helpful here. It should also be considered whether the description of the data and historical sources should possibly be separated from the introduction and presented in a separate chapter. If so, more information on the nature of the database could be added in this chapter as well as information on grain prices in the sources (lines 163-164). I agree in principle with the statement in lines 175-177, but nevertheless this statement that grain prices in the 15th century were mainly influenced by meteorological events should be better substantiated (e.g. references!). It should also be borne in mind that the demand and price relationships between the various cereals can fluctuate, even if the basic demand for cereals remains generally stable. Furthermore, I would be very careful to associate the famines of the 15th and early 16th centuries described above with drought. In some examples this is plausible, in other examples less so. Many famines in this period coincide with price increases in other parts of Europe and the reasons for these famines there were often different weather patterns than droughts. Of course, the article does not say this explicitly, but the statement in lines 156-159 already suggests it. However, I would like to emphasize again that this article contains valuable results and I recommend a publication after minor changes.

Minor remarks: In the abstract the listing of drought periods is not chronological. This may be the intention, but then it would have to be written slightly differently. Fig 1. has a somewhat unusual scale as a label for the x-axis. Would intervals of 10 years perhaps be somewhat clearer? The years in the graph are rather difficult to read anyway. lines 107-111: Maybe the links and especially the information about the last access etc. would fit better into the reference list.

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