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Interactive comment on “Social capacities for drought risk management in Switzerland” by S. Kruse and I. Seidl

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Dear colleagues,

you submitted a sound and interesting paper. My comments relate to the following issues:

I) Social capacities typology:

You say, your typology is taken as a synonym for “adaptive capacities” (or the other way round); you argue with “5 dimensions” of adaptive/social capacities according to Adger et al. 2007 (1: information and knowledge, 2: technology and infrastructure, 3: organisation and management, 4: economic resources, 5: institutions and policies).

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In my mind, there are 3 problems related to that typology (partly in general, partly with regard to the way you applied it): (ad 1) the main reference provided for these five dimensions is Adger et al. (in IPCC 2007); however, there this typology cannot be found: Adger et al. 2007 rather refer to a great number of indicators, that relate to “institutions, knowledge and technology” (*ibid.*, 727), and implementation issues, that include “policies, investments in infrastructure and technologies” (*ibid.*, 719); later on in the paper when talking about limits and barriers to adaptation, they distinguish: physical and ecological limits, technological limits, financial barriers, informational and cognitive barriers and, finally, social and cultural barriers (*ibid.*, 733-737); however, in the earlier 2001 IPCC report there is a similar but not identical typology (Smit et al. 2001); there they are called “determinants of adaptive capacity” and differentiated in: (1) Economic Resources (2) Technology (3) Information and Skills (4) Infrastructure (5) Institutions (6) Equity

Therefore, please clarify the basis and background of your typology as well as the reasons for revising those found in the literature.

(ad 2) moreover, there is no consistent use of your typology: the dimensions distinguished are referred to as both “dimensions” and “capacities” (ad 3) whose capacities do you refer to? is it individuals, organisations, social groups/stakeholders?

II. Definition of droughts

You define droughts as complex hydro-meteorological phenomena (p. 1); there is a competing social-science based definition (Kallis 2008) who refers to droughts as “socio-environmental phenomena” – refer and relate to it

III. Some minor points

- You state that after 2003 droughts are increasingly on the agenda in Switzerland (p. 2): please substantiate this statement with some concrete examples - Fig. 1 could contain more information/thoughts (e.g. which capacities/dimensions in which phase

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and what form/indicator relevant; see e.g. the indicators/issues mentioned on p. 4)
- Tables 2+3: improve presentation (distinguish existing/missing capacities or define weaknesses/strengths); how do capacities/dimensions relate to measures? (called "prerequisite", p. 7 but couldn't/shouldn't they be a result?)

Kind regards Annett Steinführer

P.S.: Quoted references above: Smit, B. and Pilifosova, O. (2001): Adaptation to climate change in the context of sustainable development and equity. In McCarthy, J.J., Canziani, O.F., Leary, N.A., Dokken, D.J. and White, K.S. (eds.): Climate Change 2001: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability, Contribution of Working Group II to the Third Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 877-912; with reference to: Smit, B., I. Burton, R.J.T. Klein, and R. Street, 1999: The science of adaptation: a framework for assessment. Mitigation and Adaptation Strategies for Global Change, 4, 199–213.

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