

Interactive comment on “Zonal-mean data set of global atmospheric reanalyses on pressure levels” by Patrick Martineau et al.

Anonymous Referee #2

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This work presents a new dataset that provides zonal average diagnostics from a number of reanalysis. The data are interpolated to a common set of pressure levels at 2.5° resolution in latitude. The choice of pressure levels and the name of variables follow the CF convention, indicating that the dataset is intended to be used by the large community of climate change studies. The data are associated to a couple of DOIs and are available on CEDA. I checked that they can be actually accessed and can be read with standard netcdf tools. As the work is done under the framework of the S-RIP project, the dataset provides a few more levels than the CF standard set in the stratosphere. The paper results from the juxtaposition of two independent works on dynamical variables and on the diabatic heating rates which are processed separately. The paper does not address the matter of comparing the reanalyses and only study the effect of

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interpolating from the so-called original grid (see below) to the common grid. This is OK since such a comparison on all the variables would by itself deserve several studies and it is important to advertise quite rapidly this dataset so that it can be used in the CFMIP-6 intercomparison. I am therefore favourable to publish the manuscript with a limited number of reservations as follows:

- The main reservation is about the notion of original grid in the paper which is indeed the pressure grid on which the reanalyses centres are projecting their data for dissemination. The true original grid of the model - on which data are also available, at least for modern reanalysis - is not that one but usually a hybrid grid in the vertical and various meshes or spherical harmonics truncations in the horizontal. Therefore what the authors call the original grid is not the original grid but results from interpolation on a reduced set of levels and grid points. It is plausible that the effect is small on most diagnostics presented here but this double interpolation leading to the common grid should be mentioned quite clearly. The data will be probably used by some people who only have a vague notion of how an atmospheric model is built and it is important to tell them what they get.
- The noise due to this first interpolation is hard to estimate from the data presented here but is not necessarily smaller than that between the OG and the CG.
- I do not see the need to show two figures on the zonal wind comparison. Figure 4 could be omitted without any loss.
- Even if reanalyses intercomparison is not the topic of the paper, it could be mentioned that the reanalyses for which altitude data depart from the main group are those which rely only on surface observations.
- It is not surprising that products of zonal anomalies exhibit more noise due to interpolation than the main variables. My opinion is that such quantities should be calculated at the highest available resolution (on a pressure grid with the same resolution as the true original grid) and then interpolated to the target grid.

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- It is a pity that clear sky heating rates are not included. They are not provided by all reanalysis and they actually differ much less than the all sky heating rates but they could be useful to calculate the cloud radiative heating rates.
- It is also a pity that no cloud diagnostics like cloud cover, liquid and ice water content, are provided. This is where reanalyses and climate models are exhibiting the largest discrepancies among them and what can explain the discrepancies in the heating rates.
- It is mentioned that new reanalyses will be included when available. It ERA5, which is already available, will be soon included, it is worth mentioning it.
- Perhaps the name of the variables as they appear in the file could be added in tables 3 to 6 as this is not always obvious. There is an additional description file associated with the dataset but it could be useful to have all the information in one single location.

I have also a few comments related to the way data are presented on CEDA:

- It would be useful that the two components of the dataset are cross-linked on the two DOI landing pages. That is not the case presently.
- The heating rates are described as being temperature tendencies and in K s-1 in the diabatic landing page while they are actually potential temperature tendencies and in K day-1. Please fix this confusion.
- The diagnostic quantities described in section 3.6.2 are not available from CEDA. Make them available or remove them from the paper.
- It would be convenient that the dynamical and diabatic dataset have exactly the same format. The diabatic netcdf files contain an extra longitude dimension of size 1.

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