

# **BOOK REVIEW**

**N. Stehr & H. von Storch: CLIMATE AND SOCIETY. CLIMATE AS RESOURCE, CLIMATE AS RISK.** World Scientific Publishing, Singapore, 2010, 141 pp. Price \$US 60.00 hardcover, ISBN-13 978-981-4280-53-2)

[Czech translation: **KLIMA A SPOLEČNOST.** Karolinum, Charles University in Prague, 2014, 1st edition, 157 pp. Price 1530 Kč, ISBN-978-80-246-2847-9.]

Our book review can start with the non-trivial fact that the book was written by a sociologist (Nico Stehr) and a climatologist (Hans von Storch) within their complementary viewpoints in relation to the subject. We wrote about several titles thematically related to the impacts of climatic change on life at landscape level in this (Kovář 2011, 2014) and other journal section (Kovář et Maděra, 2010), however, cultural, economic, historical and political context is more deeply elaborated in Stehr and von Storch monograph. The book begins with an overview of concepts in climatology and human approaches to them. Reflection of climatic mechanisms started early in the history of mankind, however, more exact observations and measurement occurred first in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Climate and its change became a part of political matters approximately in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. New emphasis on systematic data collection within time series led to public discussions about credibility of conclusions and/or falsely declared trends (misinterpretations of statistical relevance are shown in the book). Stehr and von Storch give details in their historical examples of human concerns about climate change. Their discussion of “climate as a human construct” consists of records of public misinformation on climate change and science, and “ideological, and other subjective interests alongside their scientific interests”.

We discover the argument that cultural factors create obstacles for the ability to agree on climate policy, and that we need to be more flexible in our relationship to climate changes that are now inevitable. At the same time, the authors are relatively critical of these cultural factors when they claim that illiterate public and media poor in the knowledge of climate science represent a crucial barrier to better climate policy. Declaration of adaptive strategies included into our climate policy are required. On the other hand, the book reflects contradictory conclusions derived from the same data collected in the frame of climate science by various experts. This striking phenomenon of cultural distortion in scientific analyses implies polarization of public debate and climate science. At the same time, it means the chance for different social constructions as a challenge in the climate change problem. Stehr and von Storch evoke explicitly calling for policy related to adaptation, not only for the long- term change of climate but for actually existing risks (e.g., increasing intensity and frequency of hurricanes, flooding, weather extremes, etc.). Interesting manifestation of specific opinions is engaged in the chapter entitled the “Zeppelin Manifesto on Climate Protection”.

*Climate and Society* shows several of the more serious concerns (such as fast spread of diseases or sea level rise) to climate scientists. Apart from these controversial scientific details the book is readable, streamlined and inspirational for thinking about degree of anthropogenic causality in the present climate change. One could argue that surprisingly little attention is paid to the role of economic interests (mainly in obstructions against any agreement on climate change). However, we can say that especially the Czech edition of the book brings a blow of fresh air after some break in time into the public arena exhausted by purely materialistic focus.

**Pavel Kovář\***

## REFERENCES

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\* Charles University in Prague, Faculty of Science, Benátská 2, 128 01 Prague 2, Czech Republic,  
e-mail: kovar@natur.cuni.cz