



Are extreme cold waves characteristics and snow-temperature feedback well represented in regional and global climate models (WRF and CMIP3/CMIP5)?

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Despite their economical and health impacts, only a few recent studies concern extreme cold events. However, recent decade was punctuated by cold waves in Europe as during winter 2009-2010, December 2010 and February 2012. Extreme cold days will probably narrow globally in frequency in a global warming future (e.g., 2046-2065) albeit still remain present in regions favored by cold waves such as Europe or United States. Thus, the present-day evaluation (i.e. 1961-2000 period) of climate variability modeled by GCM/RCM remains critical in order to model consistently extreme events characteristics in the future. In this study, an array of global (CMIP3/CMIP5) and regional (WRF) climate models run on Europe domains compared with observations (EOBS) and reanalysis data (ERA 40/ERA Interim) is used to analyze different aspects of extreme cold waves.

For each model, skewness and several statistical indices of frequency, intensity, temporal and spatial persistence (coherent in terms of health and energy impacts), for cold spells are calculated in order to assess the capacity of climate models to simulate these extreme events.

The purpose of this study is also to address the origins of biases obtained among the models. First, the impact of resolution is analyzed by comparing regional and global climate model output and studying a global climate model (IPSLCM5/CMIP5) on different horizontal scales. Second, a modeling study with regional climate model WRF forced by reanalysis is carried out in order to estimate, with sensitivity analyses, snow/temperature relationship in the development of extreme European cold waves cases.

Finally, future projections (2045-2065 period; scenario A2 or RCP8.5) are carried out taking into account the above-mentioned capacity of climate models to represent the extreme cold waves characteristics on present-day period.