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Interactive comment on “Comparison of the CMAM30 data set with ACE-FTS and OSIRIS: polar regions” by D. Pendlebury et al.

M. Santee (Referee)

michelle.l.santee@jpl.nasa.gov

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The paper presents results from a 30-year run of the CMAM CCM nudged to ERA-I dynamical fields. The CMAM30 stratospheric and mesospheric temperature, ozone, water vapour, and methane are validated against satellite observations from OSIRIS and ACE-FTS. In addition, polar processing in the model is evaluated through comparisons with data from Aura MLS inside the lower stratospheric polar vortices during a representative winter in each hemisphere. In general the authors have performed a thorough analysis, and the manuscript is well prepared. I do have a number of specific substantive comments (detailed below), but none are serious and most should be relatively easy to remedy. I recommend publication after these points have been

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addressed.

General Comment:

I would have liked to see a little more context and motivation for this study. Given the crudity of the model's PSC formation and chlorine activation schemes, the simulated lower stratospheric winter polar processing could not possibly be expected to compare very well with that observed. Without particle sedimentation or realistic handling of chlorine partitioning, if the model successfully reproduces observed lower stratospheric ozone and other fields, then the agreement must be at least to some extent fortuitous or a result of the cancelling of other errors. Thus it is not clear what the point of such a detailed comparison with observations really is. Obviously the CMAM30 fields lack the fidelity needed to be useful for specific polar processing studies (for which a CTM is probably a better choice at this point). Is the ultimate goal to be able to employ the nudged CCM in investigations of polar processing and ozone loss during particular winters? Or is it to enhance CMAM's polar processing capabilities for studies of future climate? Towards the end of the manuscript, it is mentioned that a newer version of CMAM has been developed that includes a more realistic treatment of chlorine activation. Will the results found here inform further model refinements? Are there plans to generate another 30-year data set with the improved CMAM? If so, it might have been more illuminating to perform these kinds of comparisons with a revised data set.

Specific Substantive Comments:

P11183, L25-28; p11184, L1-2: It is stated that: "PSCs form when the temperature dips below 196 K for Type 1 PSCs, which are composed of nitric acid, sulphuric acid and water, and below 188 K for Type 2 PSCs, which are solid water." This appears to be a general statement, and not a description of CMAM's treatment of PSCs. It is too simplistic, however, as the PSC formation thresholds are not constant values, but depend on pressure and HNO₃ and H₂O abundances. In addition, PSCs are important for ozone depletion not only "during spring", but throughout the winter. Finally, "sedi-

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mentation of the heavier ice particles” leads to the question “heavier than what?” It is probably better to just say “large particles”.

P11186, L11: Carleer et al. [2008] is a rejected paper and should not be cited. I understand that it is “published” in ACPD, but since it never completed the peer-review process, it is not a valid reference. Papers submitted to but not accepted in JGR (for example) are not citable, and nor should rejected ACPD papers be.

P11186, L16: A reference is needed for sPV, since not everyone is familiar with this concept, and moreover there are various ways of scaling PV. The Manney et al. [2007] paper cited for the DMPs would probably suffice.

P11187, L1-4: There are two Froidevaux et al. [2008] validation papers – one for HCl, the other for ozone. Both need to be cited here (as they were in the originally submitted manuscript), but in the current draft only the HCl paper appears in the references. In addition, because it contains updated information on the v3 data used in this study, it would be appropriate to cite the MLS Quality Document: Livesey, N.J., et al. [2013], Earth Observing System (EOS) Aura Microwave Limb Sounder (MLS) Version 3.3 and 3.4 Level 2 data quality and description document, JPL D-33509 (available from the MLS web site).

P11189, L14: The statement is made that OSIRIS temperatures have not been validated near 85 km. But this is not true – according to P11185, L17-19: “temperatures between 80 and 86 km are deemed unreliable, due to uncertainties in O₂ absorption in the A-band. The temperature data also exhibit a cold bias of 10–15 K near 85 km (Sheese et al., 2011)”. Thus the data have been validated, in that their quality has been evaluated and documented.

P11190, L6-11: It is stated that “Agreement with ozone seems to be better”, but this is somewhat difficult to judge quantitatively since the temperature comparisons are described in terms of absolute differences (K), whereas the ozone comparisons are described in terms of percent differences. I’m not convinced that the ozone compar-

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isons are that much better, at least in the UTLS. The authors point out that small ozone mixing ratios in some regions lead to large relative differences, which brings up the question of why it was felt that relative rather than absolute differences were better to show for ozone.

P11190, L18-20: “Note that compared to ACE-FTS, CMAM30 shows a low bias in the upper troposphere/ lower stratosphere in the tropics (see Fig. 4), in contrast to the OSIRIS data.” I don’t believe that the contrast with OSIRIS is that strong – Figs. 2b, c, and d all show a low bias in CMAM30 relative to OSIRIS in the tropical UTLS.

P11190, L22-25: “At 0.1 hPa, the diurnal cycle of ozone becomes important in the comparisons, and while ACE-FTS ozone profiles extend to this altitude, they have not been validated above 70 km”. Given the importance of the diurnal cycle and the fact that the reliability of the ACE data has not been demonstrated at this altitude, what can we learn from the model/measurements comparisons there?

P11191, L1-8: A small positive bias is also found in the tropical lower stratosphere in October. It’s a small feature, but it stands out against the otherwise nearly pervasive low bias.

P11191, L9-10: I don’t think it’s quite fair to characterize methane as having an overall high bias of 10–20% when so much of the vertical range (especially at high latitudes) in most months in Fig. 6 shows biases of 60–100%.

P11191, L13-17: These sentences require some clarification. I assume that the statement “The methane profiles exhibit a kink between 10 and 1 hPa, which descends over a season” refers to the ACE-FTS data and not the model, but this needs to be made explicitly clear. Is this kink in the observed methane profiles a real atmospheric feature? Some information on the validation of the ACE CH₄ measurements, in particular for this kink in the profile, should be included.

P11192, L2-4: “It is clear that the CMAM30 data set does not simulate enough ozone

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destruction during this period”. Couldn’t it also be that the diabatic descent in the model is too strong, bringing down too much ozone-rich air from above? In L20-23 the possibility that horizontal mixing out of the lower stratospheric vortex is underestimated is mentioned, but the strength of the modeled descent does not seem to be explored. The methane comparisons could be used to explicitly discuss the reliability of the vertical transport in the model. Finally, it is asserted in L25-26 that the model methane indicates that “the polar vortex isolation is not the answer to this puzzle”. Please expand on why this is the case. What specific aspects of the methane distribution preclude this explanation?

P11193, L4: This sentence is a little confusing – it’s not clear exactly what is being compared. I believe that the authors intend to compare the growth in CMAM ozone biases between July and September to the growth in CMAM methane biases over that interval, but I’m not entirely sure – as written the sentence seems to imply that the growth in ozone biases is being compared to the methane biases themselves (and not the growth therein). Please clarify.

P11194, L19-20: It is stated that 2006 was chosen as a “typical year”, but in fact 2006 was characterized by a record-setting ozone hole. It no doubt represents an excellent year to compare against model results, but I’m not sure that a record ozone hole year can be called “typical” even in the SH.

P11194, L22-23: Are the ozone discrepancies really greatest in the 2004/2005 NH winter? The MAD is largest that year, but the percentage differences at the lowest level in January 2007 and 2008 appear to be just as large as those in January 2005, if not larger.

P11194, L23-24: There is still not enough information given about how the error bars on the ACE and MLS data points are calculated. It is stated that: “Instrument errors are calculated according to the reported errors for each profile and averaged using the square root of the sum of squares of the errors”. But it is not clear whether the

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“reported” errors include accuracy or just precision. It is also still not clear why some MLS points appear to have errors much larger than those of surrounding points. Since it is the relative changes and their comparison to those in the model that are of most interest here, I believe that it is not so important to include accuracy in the error bars – it is the precision term that really shows how well the instruments can track day-to-day variations in the atmosphere. The approach taken by the authors fails to account for the fact that precision (which reflects radiance noise) can be greatly improved by averaging. ACE-FTS measures at most 15 profiles inside the vortex on any given day; on some days no more than 3 or 4 profiles may be obtained in the vortex. In contrast, MLS measures many profiles inside the vortex on almost all days. The “precision uncertainty” on the MLS vortex averages is probably reduced over the single-profile precision by at least a factor of 10 in most cases. The error bars on the plots in Figure 13 should be recalculated for both instruments to reflect only the precision, divided by root N (where N is the number of points contributing to the vortex averages in each case).

Figure 13: In addition to the error bars, there is another substantive issue with this figure: the y-axes for the two hemispheres in the middle and bottom panels are inconsistent. In the middle panels, the left-hand y-axis for both hemispheres represents water vapour. Only the SH left-hand y-axis is labeled, so the reader expects the tick marks on the NH left-hand y-axis to be the same as those of the SH left-hand y-axis, but they are not. Therefore it is not possible to derive quantitative information about NH water vapour from this plot. The rightmost y-axis shows HNO_3 amounts for both hemispheres. But it would be better if, rather than appending another vertical axis at the side of the plot, the right-hand y-axes of the panels for both the NH and SH showed the HNO_3 range (only the NH axis would have to be labeled, just as only the SH H_2O axis is labeled). Similar issues are present with the left-hand y-axes of the bottom panels – that is, the O_3 / HCl / ClONO_2 range on the left-hand y-axis for the NH in the right column does not align with that of the SH in the left column. Again, the ClO range should be presented on the right-hand y-axes of both hemispheres.

P11195, L1-4: I do not believe that it is adequate to cite “technical documents available from the Aura-MLS website and the ACE-FTS website”. I would think that a general reference such as Bernath et al. [2005] or Boone et al. [2005] or [2013] would suffice for ACE-FTS, and the Livesey et al. [2013] quality document would be good for MLS. In addition, I think it would be better to label this quantity something other than “area of the polar vortex”, which most readers will interpret to mean the true area encompassed by the vortex as defined through meteorological analyses, not the “area of the vortex sampled by the satellite instruments on any given day”.

Discussion of Figure 13: More generally, do the top panels of Figure 13 imply that ACE-FTS samples virtually nothing of the polar vortex in either hemisphere? The blue triangles deviate very little from zero in either panel. This may make sense, as ACE-FTS obtains only a few profiles inside the vortex on any given day (as illustrated in Figures 11, 12, and 14). It does, however, call into question the value of the ACE comparisons in these figures. Given the difference between the area of the vortex sampled by MLS and that sampled by ACE-FTS, do the ACE comparisons really add very much information? Finally, what level of the atmosphere does Figure 13 pertain to? Does it also show results for 500 K, as do Figures 11, 12, and 14? My apologies if I missed this information in either the main text or the figure caption.

P11195, L12: CMAM is only higher than ACE-FTS water vapour in midwinter – it agrees well with both ACE and MLS at the end of winter.

P11196, L6-12: Interpretation of comparisons with ACE-FTS data in September can be confounded by the ACE sampling, which sweeps rapidly through the collar region during this period. As shown by Santee et al. [JGR 113, D12307, 2008 (not the CIO validation paper)], it is difficult to separate increases in ACE-FTS CIONO₂ and HCl arising from abrupt changes in the air masses being measured from those arising from chlorine deactivation. Thus caution is required in drawing conclusions about model performance based on these data, and this complication should be mentioned.

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P11196, L27-28 to P11197, L4: Although the model does not account for NAT PSC formation, it does include a treatment of STS. Therefore should it not show some signs of PSC formation in this cold winter, during which extensive PSC formation has been documented? I'm not sure that I agree that "The gas phase HNO₃ for the NH polar vortex also agrees well over the whole season" (agrees well with what?). It is too high compared to MLS until mid-March, after which it is considerably low relative to both MLS and ACE.

P11197, L8-9: The authors state that the "The seasonal variation in HCl from Aura-MLS and ACE-FTS agrees well over the season", but they might note that the degree of agreement between MLS and ACE HCl measurements over this particular winter was discussed in detail by Santee et al. [JGR 113, D12307, 2008].

P11197, L14: As noted elsewhere and illustrated in several of the figures in this paper, a "vortex average" for ACE is not the same as a vortex average for MLS or the model. The ACE averages do not encompass the same air masses, and this likely accounts for the much greater degree of variability in the ACE results. To reduce the day-to-day variability in this plot, the authors might consider imposing a minimum number of profiles required to define a "vortex average" and then discarding averages failing to meet this criterion.

P11199, L13-18: These sentences need to be worded more carefully. Sedimentation of PSC processes is not included in the model. Thus it is not precisely correct to state that the treatment of PSCs "does not allow for enough denitrification in the lower stratosphere" – it doesn't allow for *any* denitrification (which means the permanent removal of HNO₃ from the stratosphere through the settling of PSC particles). The statement "In addition, the dehydration of the lower stratospheric vortex in the model does not seem to be enough during the winter months" is similarly incorrect. It isn't a question of degree – the model simply cannot simulate dehydration, period. In addition, it was stated in Section 2 that the formation of STS in the model is calculated following Carslaw et al. [1995] and that of water ice PSCs is based on supersaturation with

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respect to the frost point. Therefore, presumably PSC formation is not “turned on” in the model exactly at the thresholds of 196 and 188 K, as implied here.

P11200, L1-4: “In CMAM, as the winter progresses this pathway to chlorine activation shuts down once the ClONO₂ is depleted”. Does the ClONO₂ in CMAM become completely depleted? It is quite low at the beginning of winter, but Figure 13 does not seem to show complete depletion of modeled ClONO₂. Of course, further conversion of reservoir chlorine into active forms can occur later in the winter when photolytic processes reform ClONO₂.

P11200, L20-21: “Even during a cold year without an SSW, water vapour shows very little change from the consistent low bias”. But this is not surprising. Although 2004/2005 was a moderately cold winter, temperatures were not exceptionally low and only a single event of depleted water vapour at the end of January was linked to formation of water ice PSCs [Jimenez et al., GRL, 2006], thus essentially no dehydration occurred that winter.

Typos and Other Minor Wording / Grammar Comments:

P11184, L12: denitrification/dehydration . . . *do* not occur

P11185, L20: “multiple scatter” → “multiple scattering”

P11186, L16, and p11187, L4: I don’t think that “DMPs taken from the GEOS5 model” or “DMPs taken from MERRA” is the best wording. The information is not simply copied from the analyses. Rather than “taken from”, I think that “calculated from” or “based on” (or, of course, “derived from”) would be better. In addition, GEOS5 is not purely a model. It would therefore be better to say “the GEOS5 data assimilation system”.

P11186, L27: delete comma after “2005”

P11187, L1: “found *in* Froidevaux”

P11188, L6: “SD” might be a standard acronym, but it should still be defined the first

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time it is used.

P11189, L13: It would be helpful to add “(see Fig. 3)” at the end of the sentence about ACE temperature comparisons.

P11192, L12: This wording is ambiguous for the Arctic. I assume that the years given refer to January dates, but it would be clearer to write them as “2004/2005”, etc.

P11192, L16: It would be appropriate to include a general reference for the statement about the strong and chemically isolated SH polar vortex, at least the WMO Report if nothing else.

P11192, L20: Dehydration (in the sense of permanent removal of water vapour from the stratosphere) requires not only PSC formation but also particle sedimentation.

P11192, L27: “comparison . . . *shows*”

P11193, L5-6: It seems slightly jarring to introduce Figures 11 and 12 after they have already been discussed in the previous paragraph (L2).

P11193, L17-28: It would be better to differentiate between the light and dark greys in this sentence.

P11193, L25: “cycles . . . become” → “cycle . . . becomes”

P11194, L9: What exactly does “PSC concentration” mean? Are these plots of aerosol extinction coefficient, or just frequency of PSC occurrence?

P11195, L18: “HNO₃ gas phase” is slightly awkward and inconsistent with usage elsewhere in the manuscript, where typically “gas phase HNO₃” is used.

P11196, L1: This wording about ClO seems to imply that it destroys ozone only in darkness, which is not true. Sunlight is required for significant ozone destruction in the polar lower stratosphere, and such chemical loss starts at the sunlit edge of the vortex in June and sweeps poleward with the terminator as winter progresses. I do not see

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why such a statement is even necessary at this point in the manuscript. It is sufficient to state that active chlorine is necessary for chemical ozone loss and CMAM produces too little of it.

P11196, L4: delete the comma after “bite”

P11196, L15-16: A general reference for SSWs in the NH would be appropriate.

P111978, L7: “the ozone maximum (~ 1 hPa of ~ 8 ppmv)”. This wording is confusing. It would be clearer to say “the ozone maximum (~ 8 ppmv at ~ 1 hPa).

P11198, L23-26: It is unnecessarily redundant to say “... may be explained by a Brewer–Dobson circulation in the model that is too fast, ... as air parcels circulate via the Brewer–Dobson circulation”. I suggest deleting the phrase “via the Brewer–Dobson circulation” at the end of this sentence.

P11210, Fig. 3 caption: Is this a typo, or does panel (b) really represent a particular day in April?

P11218, Fig. 11 caption: The white overlaid (temperature) contours need to be defined in the figure caption (not just in the text).

P11220, Fig. 13 caption: In the penultimate line, delete the comma after “HNO₃” and add one after “panels”. In addition, it seems awkward to write “sPV $\langle \rangle \pm 1.2$ PVU”, and it may not be clear to all readers that these values refer to different hemispheres. Wouldn't it be easier to use absolute values? Finally, it is very hard to read the x-axis labels in these panels. I suggest using a smaller font so that the date labels do not run together.

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