

# **Limitations of WRF land surface models for simulating land use and land cover change in Sub-Saharan Africa and development of an improved model (CLM-AF v. 1.0)**

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## **Replies to Referee 2**

In this study, Glotfelty et al. assess the ability of several land surface models to simulate the surface characteristics of sub-Saharan Africa, within the WRF regional numerical weather prediction framework. They find that the default models do a rather poor job in the region, in terms of, for instance, albedo and leaf area index. Consequently, they develop a new CLM land surface model variant, wherein they have improved the representation of such surface properties. Following, they perform a land use/land cover change experiment to highlight the applicability of the new variant, since they show how the meteorological proficiency of the default models hides problems in surface processes, which can lead to flawed conclusions in such experiments. I agree with RC1 that the topic is within the scope of GMD and that this work is relevant not only for the WRF modelling community, but also for land use/land cover change studies focusing on Africa and the Southern Hemisphere. I also find the manuscript to be well outlined, with a clear motivation, sufficient methods, and an in-depth analysis. However, I think it could be improved by addressing the following specific comments. Additionally, I list some technical details that I think should be corrected.

[Response: We thank the reviewer for their comments on this work. Our point-by-point responses to the reviewer's comments can be found below.](#)

### **Specific comments:**

- 1) After reading the major comment 1) in RC1, it is clear to me that authors need to improve a few things in Section 4 to better explain their experimental setup. I agree in Section 4.1 they should address RC1 comments, and justify why a single-year validation is enough for the scope of the study, and why it is desirable it is not during an El Niño-Southern Oscillation phase. Maybe a reference to a similar study could help, or stating explicitly the proof-of-concept nature of the validation. Perhaps avoid use the word "validation", in case other studies have validated these LSMs in Africa

[Response: We thank the reviewer for their comment. We understand both this reviewer's and the other reviewer's concerns. As mentioned in our response to reviewer 1, the model validation experiment is only meant to serve as an "out-of-the-box" meteorological comparison/evaluation of the WRF LSMs to illustrate the meteorological impacts of the default LSM deficiencies. Our overall goal with this experiment is to assess the impact of each LSMs land surface parameters on the model's meteorological performance. Since these parameters are unchanging in time, the performance of each LSM relative to the others will be similar in time regardless of the meteorological state. Therefore, it is unlikely that running](#)

the model for additional years will change the results in any way significant enough to justify the computational expense. For simplicity we chose 2013 because of its neutral ENSO status, since this is the most common ENSO phase ([https://origin.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/analysis\\_monitoring/ensostuff/ONI\\_v5.php](https://origin.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/analysis_monitoring/ensostuff/ONI_v5.php)) and thus would be the most representative single year to simulate.

To address this comment we have changed the name of the model validation experiment to the “Meteorological evaluation experiment” as this is a more accurate description of the goal of this experiment. Additionally, we have added additional descriptions to Section 4.1 to state the proof-of-concept nature of the validation more clearly:

Lines 266-257 revised manuscript:

“The **meteorological evaluation** experiment consists of five simulations conducted for the year 2013, each using one of the five LSM configurations discussed above. The year 2013 is selected because it is a neutral year for the El Niño Southern Oscillation (**ENSO**) and thus **should be representative of the mean state of Sub-Saharan Africa’s ENSO climate variability**. While a single year comparison does not yield climate relevant statistics, it is sufficient to demonstrate differences in the meteorology between the five LSM configurations and the mechanisms responsible for these differences. **This is because the prescribed surface parameters from the LSM do not vary between years and thus the impact from these parameters on the simulated meteorology will be similar (or at least the impact from each LSM will remain similar relative to the others) regardless of the model’s overall meteorological state.** The **meteorological evaluation** simulations are conducted with default greenhouse gas concentrations and MODIS 21 class land use data. These default settings are chosen to illustrate the performance that can be expected from the publicly available WRF model.”

- 2) Then I think Sections 4.2 and 4.3 are failing to explain the time period simulated. The comment in RC1 confuses me, because what I understand is that simulations are for boundary conditions of period 2010-2015, all of them, only that in LU01 land use maps are from MODIS 2001, and in LUD land use maps are from Dinamica EGO results. Is this right? If so, then comparison between LU01 and LUD is done subtracting 6-year (2010-2015) averages. Is this right? Authors should explain why this time span was chosen. I think the different time periods in Section 4.3, to explain the Dinamica EGO methods, may confuse the reader. Why mention year 2050? Why add in line 317: "and to 2050 for simulation purposes"?.

Response: We thank the reviewer for their comment. There does appear to be some confusion concerning the land use impact experiments in RC1. What the reviewer indicated is indeed correct. Both simulations (i.e., LU01 and LUD) are simulating the same meteorological period using boundary conditions of 2010 to 2015, LU01 uses MODIS 2001 land use and LUD uses Dinamica EGO land use for each simulated year, and the differences between LU01 and LUD are found by subtracting the 6-year averages. We have updated the text in Section 4.2 for clarity

and have added a line explaining the reasons why we chose the 2010-2015 period (See underlined below).

Lines 277-291 revised manuscript:

“The LULCC experiment simulates recent climate responses from LULCC since the year 2001 by comparing simulations with static LULC from 2001 with dynamic LULC representing 2010-2015. In both cases, meteorology is simulated for the six-year period of 2010-2015. These two simulations differing in LULCC are conducted for each LSM configuration, using the Noah, Noah-MP, CLM-D, and CLM-AF LSMs. The first simulation for each LSM uses static LULC from MODIS representing the year 2001 for each simulated year (i.e., 2010-2015), hereafter referred to as LU01. The second uses dynamic LULC from the MODIS 21 class land use dataset that is processed by the Dinamica EGO land use modeling framework (Soares-Filho et al., 2002 – described in more detail below) for each simulated year in the 2010-2015 period, hereafter referred to as LUD. The six-year average differences between the LU01 and LUD simulations delineate the climate response to LULCC. The time period 2010-2015 is selected because it is far enough away from the year 2001 to show significant impacts from LULCC and because it contains the full ENSO climate variability cycle. Noah-Sat is excluded because LAI and albedo parameters derived from satellite data could be impacted by climatological variability, and therefore do not only represent LULCC. The LULCC simulations also utilize global average greenhouse gas concentrations for each simulation year (2010-2015) from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s (NOAA) Earth System Research Laboratory (ESRL) Global Monitoring Division. In the LULCC experiment, each year is a discreet simulation with a 3-month spin-up in which the model LULC is updated at the start of each year. This is necessary because the WRF modelling framework treats LULC as a static field.”

The rationale for mentioning the 2050 time horizon in Section 4.3 was to inform the reader that the LULC data used in this study is just a small subset of a much larger dataset. However, since this is causing confusion the mention of this has been removed per the reviewer’s suggestion.

- 3) Minor comment 2) of RC1 : does it perhaps have to do with the fact that SWDOWN is compared with CERES and CF with MODIS?.

Response: While comparisons to two different datasets may play a role, the true reason is that SWDOWN is tied to cloud optical thickness rather than cloud fraction as we have added to the manuscript below:

Lines 465-467 revised manuscript:

“The underestimated cloud radiative forcing seems to indicate the model is not generating clouds of sufficient optical thickness, since cloud fractions are overestimated compared to satellite estimates (Fig. 10, Fig. S15).”

- 4) I think also a table with the data used from ERA-Interim in the Supplementary Material could be helpful.

Response: We thank the reviewer for their comment. Per the reviewer’s suggestion, we have added Table S1 to the Supplementary Material.

Table S1: Variables Used from ERA-Interim Reanalysis

Variable	Units
Atmosphere Temperature	K
Geopotential Height	$m^2 s^{-2}$
East -West Wind Component (U)	$m s^{-1}$
North -South Wind Component (V)	$m s^{-1}$
Relative Humidity	%
Surface Pressure	Pascal
Sea-Level Pressure	Pascal
Surface Skin Temperature	K
Sea Surface Temperature	K
Soil Temperature	K
Soil Moisture	$m^3 m^{-3}$
Sea Ice Fraction	Fraction
Snow Density	$kg m^{-3}$
Snow Height	m

- 5) I agree with RC1 that the role of Noah-Sat in the study is not explicitly stated. I understand it is used as a proxy for observations in Section 5, and that in Section 6 it helps assess the parameterizations in Noah and Noah-MP, since the surface properties should be ok. But I wonder if Section 2.1.1 could be improved to better explain these reasons why Noah-Sat is included.

Response: We understand both this reviewer and reviewer 1’s concerns. We have added the following discussion to Section 2.1.1 to indicate the reasons why Noah-Sat is used per the reviewer’s suggestion.

Lines 130-132 revised manuscript:

**“However, Noah-Sat is useful for meteorological evaluations, because it has the most accurate surface parameters in the current WRF modelling system. Therefore, Noah-Sat can be used to understand deficiencies in the surface parameter methodology of the Noah LSM and other WRF LSMs.”**

- 6) I agree with RC1 that it is easiest to assess performance with maps of differences (e.g., Figs. 2-5, and Figs. 7-9).

Response: We thank the reviewer for their comment. We understand both this reviewer and reviewer 1's concerns. We evaluated model performance in the meteorological evaluation experiment through both soccer goal plots and spatial plots. The soccer goal plots provide insights into the model performance at both a domain-wide and regional level that convey to the reader how far off from the observations the different parameters are. The spatial plots display how well the different model configurations capture the spatial patterns and magnitudes of our three key variables of interest (i.e., USRS, T2, and precipitation). Because we think these elements of the evaluation are the most relevant we have elected to keep these as the model evaluation figures in the main text. However, to assist readers and the reviewer we have also included difference plots of our three key variables in the supplementary material with citations in the main text (See below).

Lines 452-253 revised manuscript:

**“Additionally, annual average difference plots with CERES-EBAF for each LSM are shown in Fig. S6.”**

Lines 469-470 revised manuscript:

**“Annual average differences between CRU and the LSMs are also shown in Fig. S11.”**

Lines 472-473 revised manuscript:

“The only clear impact of surface albedo inaccuracy on annual average T2 is the relatively stronger cold bias in the Noah LSM (Fig. 9, **Fig. S11**).”

Lines 507-508 revised manuscript:

**“Additionally, seasonal spatial plots of PRE compared with TRMM and annual average differences between TRMM and the LSMs and shown in Fig. S16 and Fig. S17, respectively.”**

Lines 510-512 revised manuscript:

“The greatest underpredictions occur in arid regions (ND, ED, SD, NESD, and WSD) and portions of East Africa (EM, CM, and LVW), while regions in South Africa (SSD and SM) and EW typically experience the strongest overprediction across the LSMs (Fig. 10, Fig. S12, **Fig. S17**).”

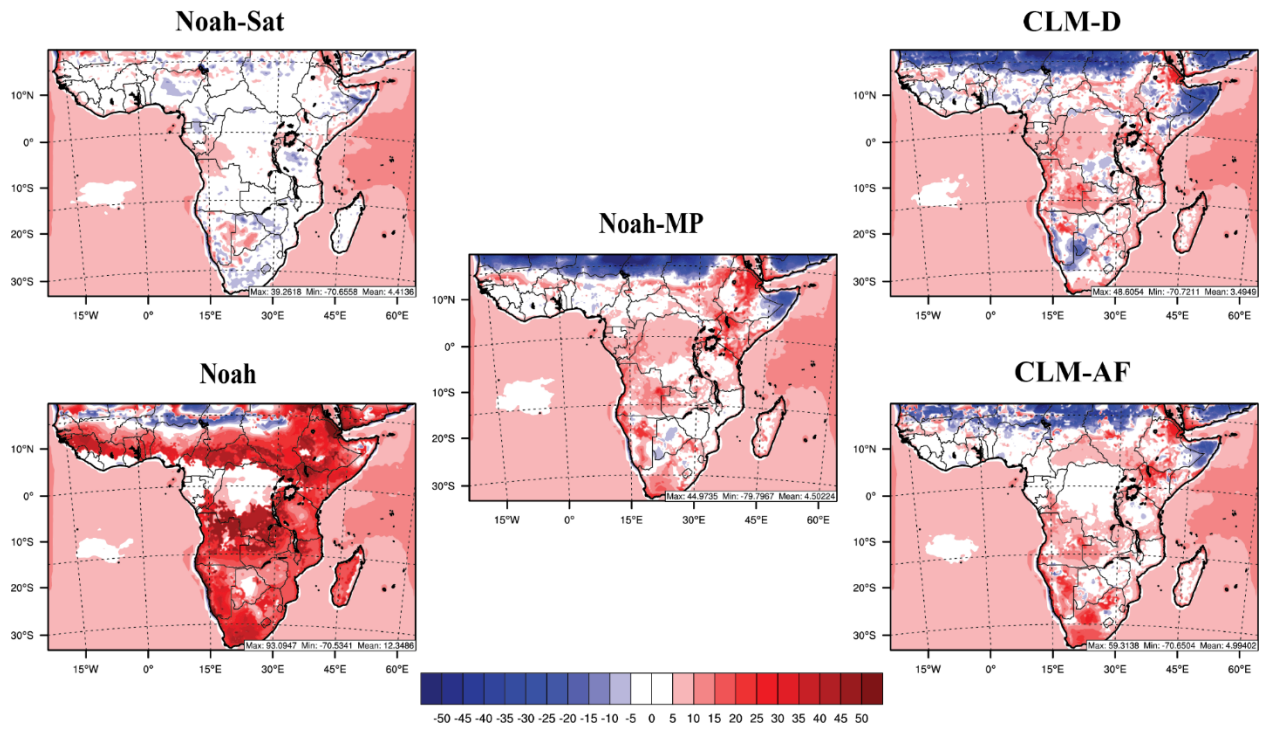


Fig S6: 2013 annual average differences in upwelling shortwave radiation at the Earth's surface ( $W m^{-2}$ ) between the WRF simulations and CERES-EBAF estimates (WRF – CERES-EBAF)

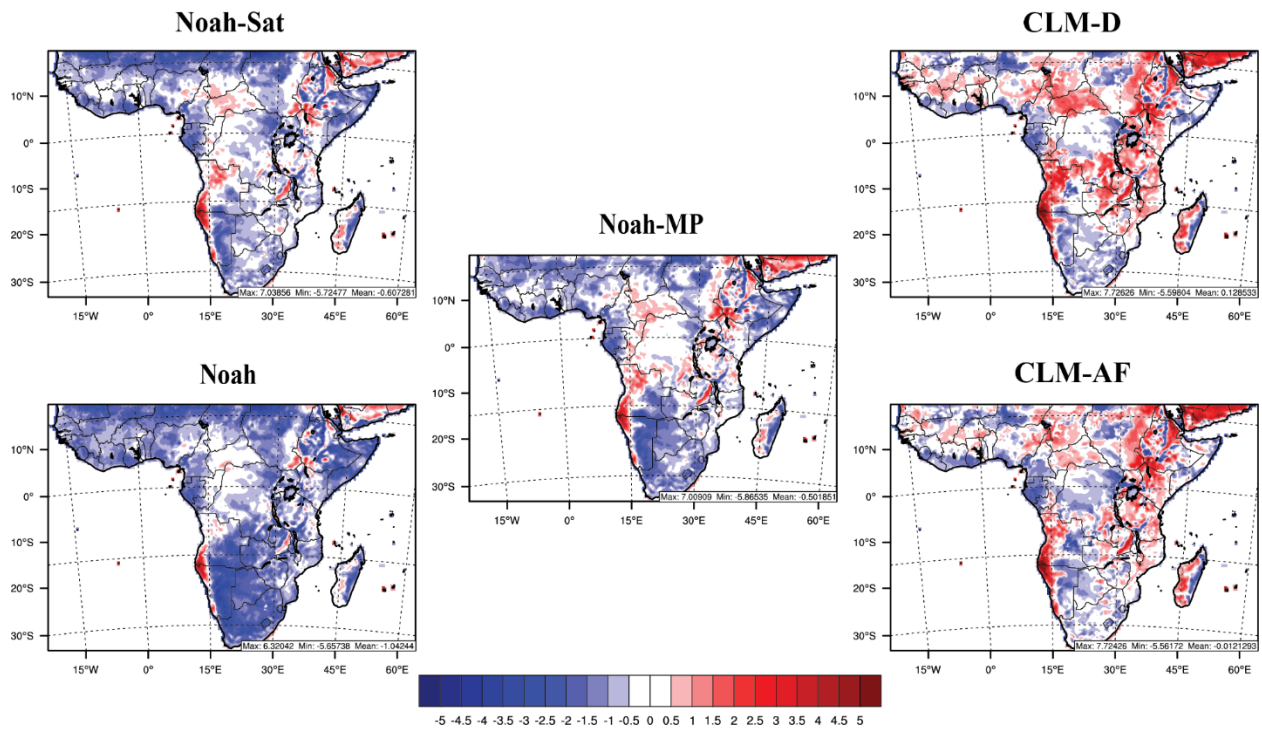


Fig S11: 2013 annual average differences in 2-m temperature ( $^{\circ}C$ ) between the WRF simulations and CRU estimates (WRF – CRU)

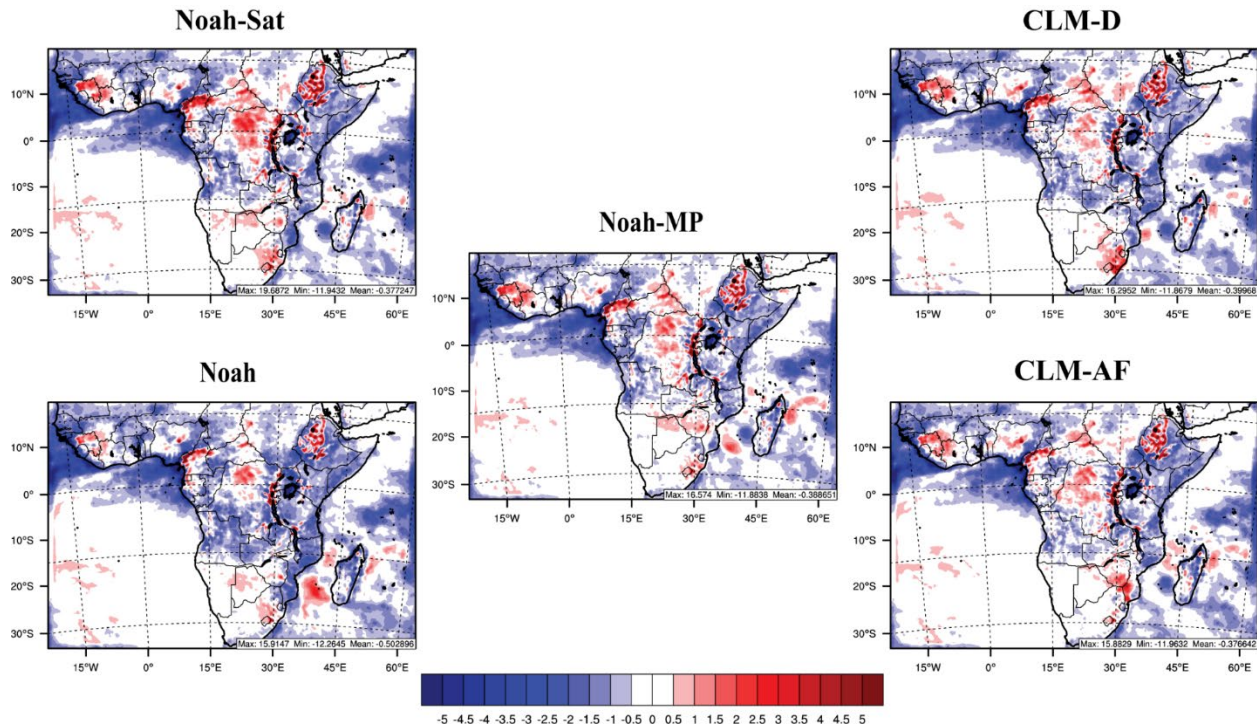


Fig S17: 2013 annual average differences in precipitation ( $\text{mm day}^{-1}$ ) between the WRF simulations and TRMM estimate (WRF – TRMM)

7) Is this the first assessment of all these LSMs in Africa using WRF? If so, state it somewhere. If not, include references.

Response: To our knowledge, this is the first time these LSMs have been examined with this level of detail in Africa. We have added the following line to the introduction to indicate this.

Lines 77-78 revised manuscript:

**“To the authors’ knowledge, this is the first time the surface parameters of these LSMs have been robustly assessed in Sub-Saharan Africa”**

8) In the end, it was not clear why the regionalization of Africa occurred. In Section 4.3 I learn that it is for the Dinamica EGO predictions, however in Section 3.2 I was told it was for the LAI monthly profiles. Is it both? If so, connect the two ideas.

Response: We thank the reviewer for their comment and we understand the reviewer’s concerns. The regionalization of Africa is a necessary part of the Dinamica EGO modeling system but we adapted it to also make better LAI profiles for CLM-AF. We have updated the text in both Sections 3.2 and 4.3 to connect the two ideas per the reviewer’s suggestion.

## Section 3.2

Lines 204-212 revised manuscript:

“Since the Sub-Saharan Africa domain covers a wide range of tropical and sub-tropical latitudes, a single domain-wide LAI and SAI monthly profile for each PFT is not appropriate. Here, geographically varying monthly LAI profiles are generated using 17 distinct regions based on bioclimate characteristics used in LULCC modelling of Sub-Saharan Africa (Fig.1, Table 3). These bioclimate regions are constructed for land use modeling purposes as discussed in Section 4.3, because landscape dynamics are known to be different between broad climatic zones, needing separate modelling parametrizations (Soares-Filho et al 2006). These same bioclimate regions are ideal for parameterizing LAI and SAI profiles because they divide the region based on climate characteristics that impact vegetation. However, the central wet (CW), central moist (CM), and northeast semi-dry (NESD) bioclimate regions used in the land use modeling span a large latitudinal range and are subdivided based on latitude to generate more meaningful LAI seasonal profiles (Supplementary Material ST2).”

## Section 4.3

Lines 333-341 revised manuscript:

“For Dinamica EGO, Africa is regionalized into 18 regions based on climatic zones, demographic factors, and anthropogenic activity (Fig. S1) consisting of three overlapping layers: 1) United Nations geographic regions for Africa: Northern, Eastern, Southern, Western and Central (UNSD, 1999); 2) a bioclimate layer from the modified version of the Global Environmental Stratification (GEnS) dataset (Metzger et al. 2013); and 3) residential sector emissions hotspots using DICE-Africa emissions (Marais and Wiedinmyer, 2016). The resulting 67 categories are generalized into the final 18 based on neighborhood. The process of generalization is done by comparing major change trends among regions, trying to avoid as far as possible the presence of separate regions with similar LULC dynamics. Of these 18 regions, 17 are used in the WRF modelling and for the generation of LAI and SAI profiles as described in Section 3.2 because the North Semi-dry region is outside the Sub-Saharan Africa domain.”

- 9) The study prefers to use Dinamica EGO output instead of MODIS directly to reduce "noisiness". Is this a usual practice? Is there some previous reference?

Response: We thank the reviewer for their comment. To the authors' knowledge conducting a land use and land cover experiment with annually varying land use is a novel task that we have not seen before in the literature. Therefore, the use of a land use model product for this task rather than a remote sensing product is also a novel practice. The rationale behind this choice is twofold.

First, the LULCC experiment is a “proof-of-concept” experiment in which our goal is to determine if the climate change signals from land use and land cover changes make logical sense with the different LSMs. This can be accomplished with any land use and land cover



dataset that shows a change whether it is realistic or idealized. In our case, these changes are realistic because they are based on observed changes.

Second, we are using the 5<sup>th</sup> version of the MODIS land use and land cover data, which was the newest product available when this experiment was conducted. This product was only available until the year 2012, so using a model product to represent the years 2013-2015 was only possible using a simulated product. In addition, we found that these MODIS data show frequent transitions between land uses in some grid cells, including transitions back and forth between two land cover classifications. Our filtering methodology helps to remove these, but using Dinamica EGO enables us to keep only the strongest transitions that have statistical relationships to other land surface properties and socio-economic variables. In this way, Dinamica EGO acts as a secondary filter to only keep the most robust land use transitions. A 6<sup>th</sup> version of MODIS that covers the whole period of interest has been released recently, after this project was well underway. However, because the accuracy of the land use product is not the focus of the experiment we do not think redoing the land use and land cover experiments with the updated MODIS land use product is necessary, since it will not affect our findings on how the different LSMs react to land use and land cover changes. We have updated the text in Section 4.3 to make this point clearer.

Lines 301-307 revised manuscript:

“The LULC dataset for the LULCC experiment are created by means of prospective landscape modelling techniques and while simulations contain some level of model error, this approach is used to reduce the impact of potential LULC misclassification errors and uncertainties in the MODIS product that could propagate into the WRF model leading to “noisy” and inconclusive climate impacts. **To the authors’ knowledge, this is a novel practice as many LULC studies in Africa do not simulate year to year changes from the LULC datasets (e.g., Otieno and Anyah, 2012) or use idealized LULC datasets (e.g., Abiodun et al., 2008; Wang et al., 2016). The use of a simulated LULC product is sufficient to support the LULCC experiment, which aims to determine if the climate signals from realistic LULCC simulated by the different LSMs make logical sense.**”

10) How different is the "default" land use in the validation and the MODIS 2001? Is "validation 2013" very different from "year 2013 of LU01"??

Response: We thank the reviewer for their comment. There are a few non-trivial differences between the WRF default LULC dataset and the MODIS 2001 dataset used in the LU01 experiment. It is not possible for us to track down exactly why they are different because the WRF developers did not keep very detailed records of which MODIS version the default LULC product is. They have indicated that they received these data (i.e., modis\_landuse\_20class\_30s\_with\_lakes) from the National Centers for Environmental Prediction (NCEP) and that they are likely representative of the year 2001. See the following link: <https://forum.mmm.ucar.edu/phpBB3/viewtopic.php?t=156>. We also contacted the WRF developer responsible for static data at the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR), Michael Duda, and he provided the same response at the above link. We have

added a comparison plot of these two different land use datasets in the Supplementary Material and a brief discussion of the differences in Section 4.2.

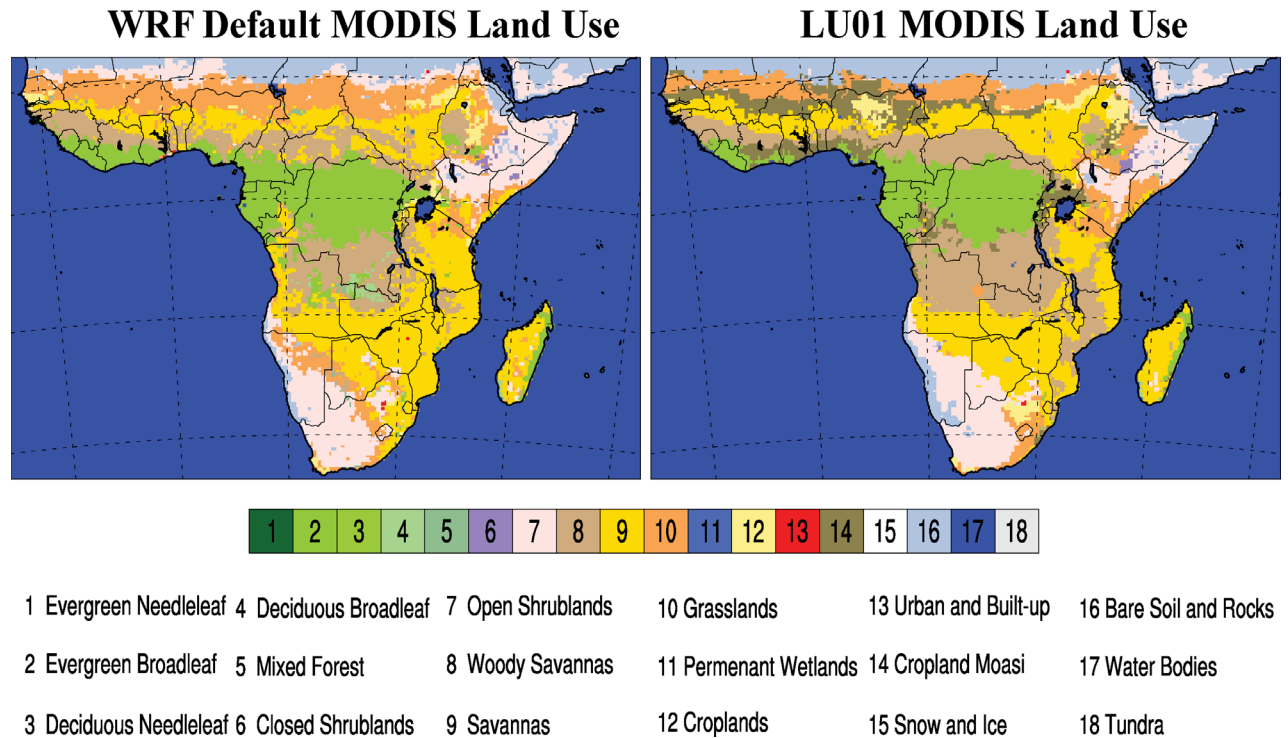


Fig S1. Comparison of the default WRF LULC dataset used in the meteorological evaluation simulations and the 2001 MODIS LULC dataset used in the LU01 simulations

Lines 292-299 revised manuscript:

**“There are several non-trivial differences between the WRF default LULC used in the evaluation experiments and the MODIS data used in the LU01 simulation (Fig. S1), even though the WRF default LULC is intended to represent 2001. Overall, the default WRF LULC data has more area classified as grassland, savanna, and forest, with less areas classified as cropland, woody savanna, and barren land compared to the LU01 dataset. Spatially, the areas classified as cropland in LU01 are primarily classified as the nearest natural LULC type in the default dataset. In Central Africa, some areas classified as forests and savannas in the default LULC dataset have been assigned as woody savanna in LU01. In southern Africa, some areas assigned as grasslands in the default LULC dataset are classified as open shrubland and in arid regions some areas classified as open shrubland in the default dataset are assigned as barren land in LU01.”**

11) Is Fig. 10 similar to other results of LULCC studies in Africa?

Response: We thank the reviewer for their comment. It is difficult for us to compare our LULCC with other studies in Africa because they either use idealized LULCC or do not simulate year-to-year change in LULC. However, increased agricultural expansion and deforestation is consistent with at least one of these studies. Thus, we have added the following line to our discussion in Section 7. (Note that Figure 10 is now Fig. 12.)

Lines 545-548 revised manuscript:

**“While it is difficult to compare the LULCC predicted by Dinamica EGO to other African LULCC studies because these studies either use idealized LULCC (e.g., Abiodun et al., 2008; Wang et al., 2016) or do not simulate year-to-year changes, the increased agricultural expansion and deforestation/degradation are consistent with the LULCC seen in Otiemo and Anyah (2012) for the period of 1986–2000.”**

12) I do not know how to interpret Table 4. Please explain what is "First Region" and "Second Region".

Response: We thank the reviewer for their comment. The first and second regions are the nearby regions we gather LAI profile information from if a given bioclimate region does not have enough grid cells with that plant functional type to calculate a meaningful LAI profile. We have expanded the discussion to make this point clear.

Lines 225-229 revised manuscript:

**“The first nearby alternative bioclimate region used to generate LAI profiles for the missing PFTs is listed as “First Region” in Table 4. If the “First Region” does not have all the missing PFT LAI profiles then these profiles are obtained from a second nearby bioclimate region (“Second Region”).”**

**Technical comments:**

1) As pointed out in RC1, some acronyms are not explained. I point out RL. Also in Table 9 it says WS 10, but in text it is used as WSP10.

Response: We thank the reviewer for their comment. We have fixed several acronym inconsistencies throughout the paper including WSP10 and RL, as well as those used in Table 9.

Table 9: Evaluated Variables and Evaluation Datasets

Variable	Acronym	Evaluation Dataset
2-m Temperature	T2	CRU TS4.02 and NCDC-ISD
Daily Maximum Temperature	T2MAX	CRU TS4.02
Daily Minimum Temperature	T2MIN	CRU TS4.02
Diurnal Temperature Range	DTR	CRU TS4.02
2-m Vapor Pressure	E2	CRU TS4.02
2-m Dew point Temperature	T <sub>d</sub> 2	NCDC-ISD
Precipitable Water Vapor	PWV	MOD08_M3
Cloud Fraction	CF	CRU TS4.02 and MOD08_M3
Precipitation	PRE	CRU TS4.02, GPCP, and TRMM
10 m Wind Speed	WSP10	NCDC-ISD
Downwelling Shortwave Radiation (Surface)	SWDOWN	CERES-EBAF
Downwelling Longwave Radiation (Surface)	GLW	CERES-EBAF
Upwelling Shortwave Radiation (TOA*)	SWUPT	CERES-EBAF
Upwelling Shortwave Radiation (Surface)	USRS	CERES-EBAF
Upwelling Longwave Radiation (TOA*)	OLR	CERES-EBAF
Shortwave Cloud Forcing	SWCF	CERES-EBAF
Longwave Cloud Forcing	LWCF	CERES-EBAF

\*: Top of the Atmosphere

2) Abstract: "climate signals" is used too often. I wonder if "illogical" is the right word.

Response: We thank the reviewer for their comment. We have reworded the abstract to reduce the number of times "climate signals" is used.

We have debated what word best describes the changes deemed illogical and we believe that "illogical" is the best choice. Using the words "incorrect" or "inaccurate" implies that there is an observed change against which these climate responses are compared. This is not the case. What is occurring is that the surface parameters are incorrect which leads to climate changes that are not logically/physically consistent with the given land use and land cover change. Thus, the use of the word "illogical" is more accurate.

Lines 10-27 revised manuscript:

“Land use and land cover change (LULCC) impacts local and regional climates through various biogeophysical processes. Accurate representation of land surface parameters in land surface models (LSMs) is essential to accurately predict these LULCC-induced climate signals. In this work, we test the applicability of the default Noah, Noah-MP, and CLM LSMs in the Weather Research and Forecasting Model (WRF) over Sub-Saharan Africa. We find that the default WRF LSMs do not accurately represent surface albedo, leaf area index, and surface roughness in this region due to various flawed assumptions, including the treatment of the MODIS woody savanna LULC category as closed shrubland. Consequently, we developed a WRF CLM version with more accurate African land surface parameters (CLM-AF), designed such that it can be used to evaluate the influence of LULCC. We evaluate meteorological performance for the default LSMs and CLM-AF against observational datasets, gridded products, and satellite estimates. Further, we conduct LULCC experiments with each LSM to determine if differences in land surface parameters impact the LULCC-induced climate responses. Despite clear deficiencies in surface parameters, all LSMs reasonably capture the spatial pattern and magnitude of near surface temperature and precipitation. However in the LULCC experiments, inaccuracies in the default LSMs result in illogical localized temperature and precipitation changes. Differences in thermal changes between Noah-MP and CLM-AF indicate that the temperature impacts from LULCC are dependent on the sensitivity of evapotranspiration to LULCC in Sub-Saharan Africa. Errors in land surface parameters indicate that the default WRF LSMs considered are not suitable for LULCC experiments in tropical or Southern Hemisphere regions, and that proficient meteorological model performance can mask these issues. We find CLM-AF to be suitable for use in Sub-Saharan Africa LULCC studies, but more work is needed by the WRF community to improve its applicability to other tropical and Southern Hemisphere climates.”

- 3) Text sections in supplementary material should be labelled, to be referred to from the main text easily (e.g., ST1, ST2).

Response: We thank the reviewer for their comment. The supplementary material text sections have been named ST1-ST4 with references in the text per the reviewer's suggestion.

- 4) Check the use of "en dash" for ranges of numbers (e.g., domain ranges).

Response: We thank the reviewer for their comment. We have corrected the usage of “en dash” throughout the manuscript and supplementary material.

- 5) I would stick to "DJF" for winter season, rather than "JFD".

Response: We thank the reviewer for their comment. “JFD” has been changed to DJF throughout both the manuscript and supplementary material.

- 6) Authors prefer the use of block titles for referring to panels in figures, instead of using labels (e.g., (a), (b)). It is ok, but I think the font size could be reduced. Also figures should use the same font types (titles are serif, but coordinates are sans-serif).

Response: We thank the reviewer for their comment. We like the size of the block title headers because it improves readability. For all panel figures, they are generated via the use

of two programs. The first is NCL (NCAR command language) that generates the individual plots and the second is Adobe Illustrator to assemble them into a large panel figure. The default font of NCL is Helvetica, which is not available in Adobe Illustrator due to licensing issues. Therefore, we have elected to keep the figures as they are because there is no way for us to obtain matching fonts given our current tools without a non-trivial amount work to manually reprocess each figure for little benefit to the manuscript.

7) Tables are missing punctuation signs in captions and footnotes. I also think that tables with a lot of text are more readable if left-aligned (raggedright).

Response: We thank the reviewer for their comment. We have added punctuation to all table captions and footnotes. The vast majority of our tables contain acronyms or numbers rather than a lot of text so we have left them all center-aligned for consistency.

8) Sometimes too many references are used. For instance, the number of applications of Dinamica EGO has 12 references.

Response: We thank the reviewer for their comment. To our knowledge, this is the first time Dinamica EGO is being used for an application in a weather/climate model at this scale. For this reason, we want the readers to be aware that this is a robust modeling tool with many different applications. Since the journal does not have any specific rules or page limit restrictions regarding these references we have elected to keep the references for this purpose.

9) Figure captions in supplementary material say "verses" instead of "versus".

Response: We thank the reviewer for their comment. The figure captions have been corrected the captions to say "versus".

10) I wonder if the inset boxes in all maps with extreme and mean values are really being used. I like the idea, but they are not being used in the text or discussion.

Response: We thank the reviewer for their comment. Even though these inset boxes are not being used to a great extent in the text discussions, to make the discussions more succinct, we do think they provide the reader with additional insights and information should the reader be interested. For example, in Fig. 2 the maximum albedo value for Noah-Sat is 45%, which helps the reader see how poorly the default LSMs perform (maximum of 23–28%). Additionally, removing these inset boxes would be a very time consuming non-trivial task that adds little to no benefit to the manuscript. For these reasons, we have elected to keep the figures as they are.

11) Is Table S3 really necessary? Maybe only referencing Friedl, et al. 2002 is enough. By the way, this reference is nowhere in the references list.

Response: We thank the reviewer for their comment and catching this missing reference. We do believe Table S3 is necessary because it is an important piece of the discussion in Section

3.1 and it would be cumbersome for the reader to have to track down this paper to understand the differences in the land cover classes for this discussion. We have added the reference to the reference list.

“Friedl, M., McIver, D. K., Hodges, J.C.F., Zhang, X.Y., Muchoney, D., Strahler, A.H., Woodcock, C.E., Gopal, S., Schneider, A., Cooper, A., Baccini, A., Gao, F., and Schaaf, C.,: Global land cover mapping from MODIS: algorithms and early results, *Remote Sensing of Environment*, 83, 287-302, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0034-4257\(02\)00078-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0034-4257(02)00078-0), 2002.”

### **Line comments:**

We thank the reviewer for their line comments. Our response to each comment can be found below.

1) through A land surface model

Response: The correction has been made:

“Impacts of LULCC are simulated in climate and numerical weather prediction models through a land surface model (LSM).”

2) different SIMULATED climate responses

Response: The correction has been made:

“Differences in LSM parameterizations can lead to significantly different simulated climate responses to LULCC in both magnitude and sign (e.g., Olsen et al., 2004; Boisier et al., 2012; Burakowski et al., 2016), even when little difference exists in the mean simulated climate (Crossly et al., 2000)”

3) and IN the PRESCRIPTION OF

Response: The correction has been made:

“Errors and uncertainties in LSMs occur in response to errors in LULC classification maps and in the prescription of land use properties, such as vegetation distributions and surface albedo (e.g., Lu and Shuttleworth, 2002; Olsen et al., 2004; Ge et al., 2007; Boisier et al., 2012; Boisier et al., 2013; Boysen et al., 2014; Meng et al., 2014; Hartley et al., 2017; Bright et al., 2018).”

4) with WIDESPREAD surface heterogeneity

Response: The correction has been made:

“Having accurate representations of these parameters is especially important in regions with widespread surface heterogeneity, such as East Africa (Ge et al., 2008).”

5) Air Force AND Hydrology Lab (Noah)

Response: The correction has been made:

“Results from these WRF simulations are somewhat contradictory as some studies found the National Centers for Environmental Prediction, Oregon State University, Air Force and Hydrology Lab (Noah) LSM (Chen and Dudhia, 2001; Ek et al., 2003) to have superior performance compared to observations and reanalyses (Pohl et al., 2011; Igri et al., 2018), while others found no unambiguous difference in model performance between different LSMs (Noble et al., 2014; 2017).”

6) reanalyses (maybe plural?)

Response: The correction has been made:

“Results from these WRF simulations are somewhat contradictory as some studies found the National Centers for Environmental Prediction, Oregon State University, Air Force and Hydrology Lab (Noah) LSM (Chen and Dudhia, 2001; Ek et al., 2003) to have superior performance compared to observations and reanalyses (Pohl et al., 2011; Igri et al., 2018), while others found no unambiguous difference in model performance between different LSMs (Noble et al., 2014; 2017).”

7) parametrization or parameterization?

Response: It should be parameterization. The correction has been made:

“Physics parameterizations common to all simulations include: the New Tiedtke cumulus parameterization scheme (Zhang et al., 2011), the aerosol-aware Thompson microphysics scheme (Thompson and Eidhammer, 2014), the RRTMG long and shortwave radiation schemes (Clough et al., 2005; Iacono et al., 2008), and the MYNN surface/ planetary boundary layer physics (Nakanishi and Niino, 2004; 2006)”

8) each year, EVERY

Response: The correction has been made:

“Because LULC inputs change each year, every model year is simulated individually, preceded by a three-month spin-up period that is discarded to allow the model to reach equilibrium and minimize the impact of initial conditions on the simulations.”

9) model year is SIMULATED

Response: The correction has been made:

“Because LULC inputs change each year, every model year is simulated individually, preceded by a three-month spin-up period that is discarded to allow the model to reach equilibrium and minimize the impact of initial conditions on the simulations.”

10) why "In"? Maybe only: "Noah and Noah-Sat are"

Response: It should just be “Noah and Noah-Sat are”. The correction has been made:



“Noah and Noah-Sat are the same LSM with different configurations for how surface albedo and LAI are prescribed.”

11) also? why also?

Response: This sentence has been restructured in accordance with specific comment 5 above:

“However, Noah-Sat is useful for meteorological evaluations, because it has the most accurate surface parameters in the current WRF modelling system. Therefore, Noah-Sat can be used as pseudo-observations understand deficiencies in the surface parameter methodologies of the other WRF LSMs”

12) "(Sellers 1985)", check citation format

Response: A comma was added for consistency:

“CLM contains a single-layer vegetation parametrization with a sunlit and shaded canopy and uses the two stream approximation (Sellers, 1985) to calculate the energy balance within the canopy.”

13) why not "PFT distributions" instead of full name?

Response: It has been changed to PFT distributions:

“CLM-AF PFT distributions”

14) "3 arc minute": a magnitude and a unit

Response: The correction has been made:

“Updated PFT distributions are derived from a global 3 arc minute PFT dataset for the year 2001 generated by the National Center for Atmospheric Research for the Model of Emission of Gases and Aerosols from Nature version 2.1 (<https://bai.ess.uci.edu/megan/versions/megan21>)”

15) why not: categories 2, 4-10, 12 and 14

Response: The correction has been made:

“Updated PFT distributions were generated for broad leaf evergreen/deciduous forests, mixed forests, closed and open shrublands, woody savannas/savannas, grasslands, and cropland/mosaic croplands (i.e., MODIS categories 2, 4-10, 12, and 14).”

16) "100%" instead of "one hundred percent"

Response: The correction has been made:

“Since CLM allows for up to four PFT patches, the top four most abundant PFTs within each MODIS land use category are scaled to represent 100% of the land use category, with an

exception for some inconsistencies that occurred between the PFT and the evergreen broad leaf forest, savanna, and mosaic cropland MODIS categories (see Supplementary Material).”

17) spacing: "Fig. 1", and"). These"

Response: The correction has been made:

“Here, geographically varying monthly LAI profiles are generated by using 17 distinct regions based on bioclimate characteristics used in LULCC modelling of Sub-Saharan Africa (Fig. 1 and Table 3)”

18) parametrizations or parameterizations?

Response: It is parameterizations. The correction has been made:

“These bioclimate regions are constructed for land use modelling purposes as discussed in Section 4.3 below, because landscape dynamics are known to be different between broad climatic zones, needing separate modelling parameterizations (Soares-Filho et al 2006).”

19) "80%" instead of "eighty percent"

Response: The correction has been made:

“LAI profiles are calculated only from a subset of grid cells within the WPS Sub-Saharan Africa LAI climatology, where the 36 km regrided PFT data indicates that a given PFT comprises 80% or more of the grid cell (PFT80)”

20) "60%"

Response: The correction has been made:

“If no grid cells within a bioclimate or sub-bioclimate region meet the PFT80 criteria for a required PFT, then a reduced threshold of 60% of the grid cell is utilized to calculate the monthly LAI profile for that PFT.”

21) "60%"

Response: The correction has been made:

“If no grid cells meet the 60% criteria, the LAI profile for that PFT within the bioclimate or sub-bioclimate region is assumed to be the same as a nearby comparable bioclimate region.”

22) "satellite-derived" (hyphen)

Response: The correction has been made:

“Some additional adjustments were also required for the broad leaf evergreen tree PFTs to make these areas more consistent with the satellite-derived climatology (Supplementary Material).”

23) why not LULC?

Response: The correction has been made:

“LULC data”

24) experiment name is LULCC (double C)

Response: The correction has been made:

“The LULC dataset for the LULCC experiment are created by means of prospective landscape modelling techniques and while simulations contain some level of model error, this approach is used to reduce the impact of potential LULC misclassification errors and uncertainties in the MODIS product that could propagate into the WRF model leading to “noisy” and inconclusive climate impacts.”

25) remove "simple or complex"

Response: The correction has been made:

“LULC is simulated using the Dinamica EGO environmental modelling platform (Soares-Filho et al., 2002). Dinamica EGO is a modelling tool designed to construct spatiotemporal models involving multiple transitions and iterations, dynamic feedbacks, sub-region approaches, and several spatial algorithms for the analysis and simulation of a wide variety of dynamic LULCC phenomena.”

26) "500 m" (why say "meter")

Response: The correction has been made:

“For input to our LULCC simulations, we use the MODIS Land Cover Type product (MCD12Q1) consisting of a suite of datasets that provides global land cover maps at 500 m spatial resolution and annual temporal coverage from 2001 to 2013, and includes six different land cover classification schemes (Friedl and Sulla-Menashe, 2015; Friedl et al., 2010).”

27) I wonder if "ingested by" is the right word.

Response: It has been changed to used by:

“Specifically, we use the IGBP classification legend since the land cover data used by the WRF model (Skamarock, 2008) is based on MODIS-IGBP classification scheme. The MODIS Land Cover product has a post-process overall accuracy of 75% (Friedl et al., 2010).”

28) "(Hagen 2003)", check citation format

Response: A comma was added for consistency:

“To evaluate the accuracy of simulations within the present time, simulated annual maps outside the calibration period (2008-2013) are compared with the MODIS product for the same year, using a fuzzy-logic method (Hagen, 2003) (Fig S3)”

29) performance IS shown ("a list", singular)

Response: The correction has been made:

“A list of data used to evaluate WRF’s meteorological performance is shown in Table 8, and the WRF model variables evaluated against these datasets are listed in Table 9.”

30) Figures 2-4 (because it starts a sentence)

Response: The correction has been made:

“Figures 2-4 depict the surface properties for each of the five LSM configurations from the 2013 evaluation simulations.”

31) I would not reference Fig. 10 so far in advance.

Response: The reference has been removed:

“Additionally, woody savanna LAI in CLM-D is significantly underpredicted because it has the same LAI profile as closed shrubland.”

32) dataset INDICATES that (closer inspection, third person)

Response: The correction has been made:

“A closer inspection of T2 within Fig. 8 for the CRU dataset indicates that Noah-Sat, Noah, and Noah-MP all contain a domain-wide cold bias in annual average T2, while CLM-D and CLM-AF have minimal domain-wide T2 biases due to offsetting warm and cold biases in various regions”

33) "LSM, but provides" why but? maybe "and"

Response: The correction has been made:

“The WRF comparison with the hourly NCDC-ISD dataset confirms the presence of a cold bias for the Noah LSM, and provides more insight into regional model performance.”

34) wettest?

Response: The correction has been made:

“Across all the LSMs the wettest regions (e.g., MAD, WW, WWN, CW, LVW, EW) contain the strongest cold biases, while the semi-arid regions (e.g., SESD, WSD, NESD, SSD) contain the strongest warm biases.”

35) "a more muted" maybe use "reduced" or synonym

Response: The correction has been made:

“The evaluation of the moisture variables PWV, CF, and PRE against MODIS and TRMM estimates (Fig. 10) and the spatial comparison of WRF PRE to observations (Fig. 11) show a reduced impact from LSM differences compared to temperature variables.”

36) remove "select" and "very"

Response: The correction has been made:

“Most regions have reasonable agreement in moisture variables with observations and satellite estimates, with a few regions experiencing poor agreement (Fig 10).”

37) wet instead of "wetter"

Response: The correction has been made:

“Across all LSMs, PRE is better simulated in the wet regions of West and Central Africa.”

38) Dinamica EGO

Response: The correction has been made:

“Changes in land use and land cover, as represented by Dinamica EGO, between 2001 and 2015 are shown in Fig. 11.”

39) patterns

Response: The correction has been made:

“Similar T2 patterns occur across the northern half of the domain when comparing Noah-MP, CLM-D, and CLM-AF simulations, while Noah predicts the most unique changes.”

40) Figs. 5, 7 and 9: I would add "Year 2013" to start the caption.

Response: The correction has been made:

“Figure 7: Year 2013 annual average upwelling shortwave radiation at the Earth’s surface ( $W m^{-2}$ ) for CERES-EBAF estimates and WRF simulations.”

“Figure 9: Year 2013 annual average 2 m temperature ( $^{\circ}C$ ) from CRU and WRF simulations with five different LSMs. NCDC-ISD 2 m temperature observations are overlaid.”

“Figure 11: Year 2013 annual average precipitation rate (mm day-1) from CRU, GPCP, TRMM, and the five WRF LSM simulations.”

41) Fig. S11: has low text quality.

Response: The Figure now Fig. S18 has been redone to have higher quality text.

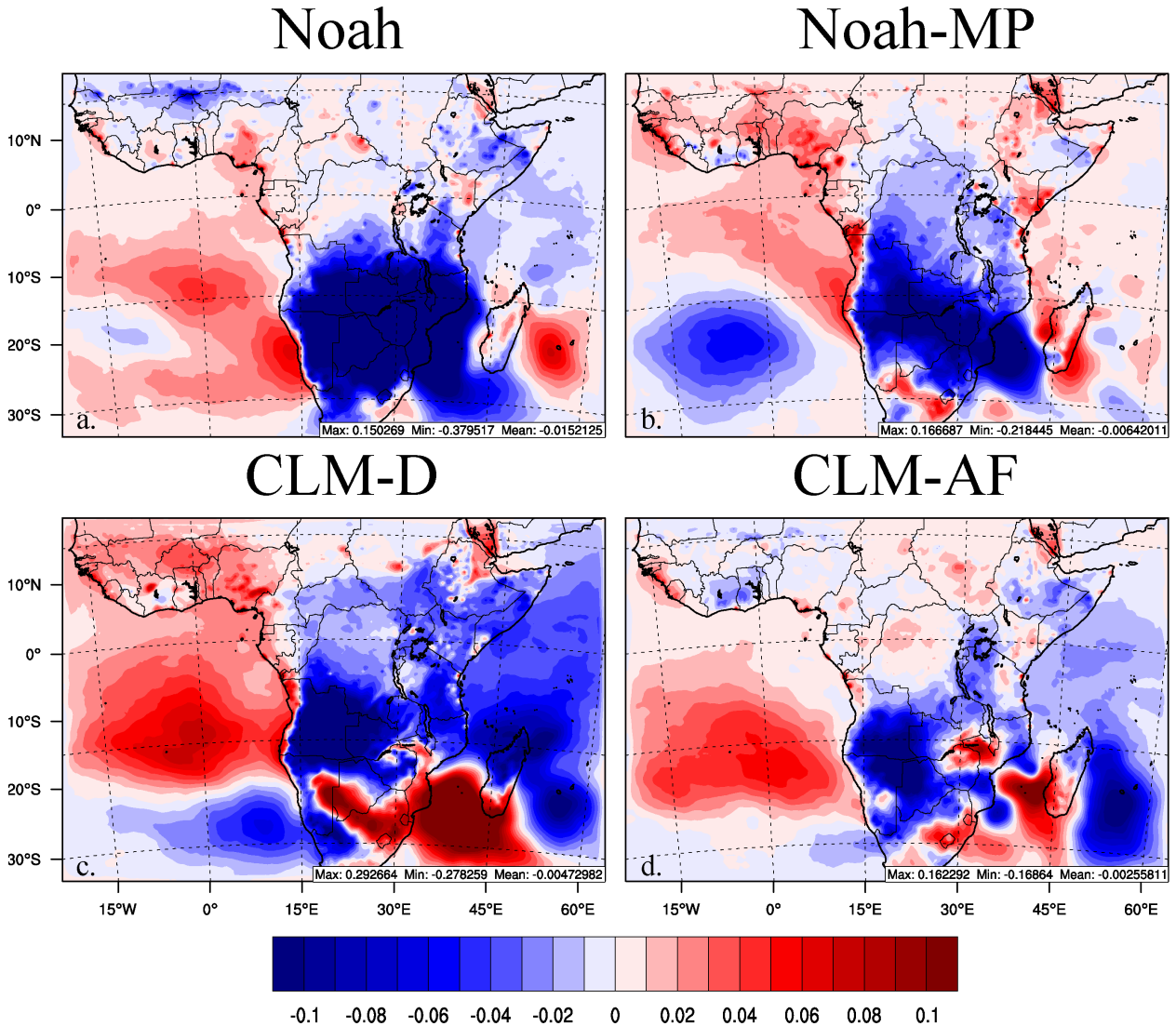


Fig S18. Differences in average JFD sea level pressure (hPa) between the dynamic and 2001 LULC simulations using (a) Noah, (b) Noah-MP, (c) CLM-D, and (d) CLM-AF

42) Table 9: It says Dowelling, instead of Downwelling

Response: The correction has been made:

Table 9: Evaluated Variables and Evaluation Datasets

Variable	Acronym	Evaluation Dataset
2-m Temperature	T2	CRU TS4.02 and NCDC-ISD
Daily Maximum Temperature	T2MAX	CRU TS4.02
Daily Minimum Temperature	T2MIN	CRU TS4.02
Diurnal Temperature Range	DTR	CRU TS4.02
2-m Vapor Pressure	E2	CRU TS4.02
2-m Dew point Temperature	Td2	NCDC-ISD
Precipitable Water Vapor	PWV	MOD08_M3
Cloud Fraction	CF	CRU TS4.02 and MOD08_M3

Precipitation	PRE	CRU TS4.02, GPCP, and TRMM
10 m Wind Speed	WSP10	NCDC-ISD
Downwelling Shortwave Radiation (Surface)	SWDOWN	CERES-EBAF
Downwelling Longwave Radiation (Surface)	GLW	CERES-EBAF
Upwelling Shortwave Radiation (TOA*)	SWUPT	CERES-EBAF
Upwelling Shortwave Radiation (Surface)	USRS	CERES-EBAF
Upwelling Longwave Radiation (TOA*)	OLR	CERES-EBAF
Shortwave Cloud Forcing	SWCF	CERES-EBAF
Longwave Cloud Forcing	LWCF	CERES-EBAF

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\*: Top of the Atmosphere