Local and remote climate impacts of future African aerosol emissions

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Abstract. The potential future trend in African aerosol emissions is uncertain, with a large range found in future scenarios used to drive climate projections. The future climate impact of these emissions is therefore uncertain. Using the Shared Socioeconomic Pathway (SSP) scenarios, transient future experiments were performed with the UK Earth System Model UKESM1, investigating the effect of African emissions following the high emission SSP370 scenario as the rest of the world follows the more sustainable SSP119, relative to a global SSP119 control. This isolates the effect of Africa following a relatively more polluted future emissions pathway. SSP370 sees higher direct anthropogenic aerosol emissions, but lower biomass burning emissions, over Africa. Increased aerosol reduces the local incident surface radiation, causing a local cooling, but the dominance of the black carbon absorption effect remotely from Africa leads to a global warming. The local cooling persists even when including the higher African CO_2 emissions under SSP370 than SSP119. Precipitation also exhibits complex changes, with large-scale shifts in the Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ) due to hemispheric asymmetries in the applied forcing, and enhanced local rainfall due to mid-tropospheric instability from BC absorption. These results highlight the importance of future African aerosol emissions for regional and global climate, and the spatial complexity of this climate influence.

1 Introduction

Emissions of aerosols and their precursors have substantial and complex impacts on climate, both locally to their emission location and further afield (Liu et al., 2018; Thornhill et al., 2021). Their overall negative radiative forcing has dampened the warming effect of greenhouse gases historically, though the exact magnitude of this dampening forcing is uncertain (Bellouin et al., 2020; IPCC, 2021). The future of this forcing is also uncertain, and dependent on future emissions scenarios, with the recent Shared Socioeconomic Pathways (SSPs) projecting a broader possible set of future emissions than the prior Representative Concentration Pathways (RCPs) (Gidden et al., 2019).

The net negative present-day aerosol forcing arises from an outweighing, on the global scale, of absorbing – and therefore positive forcing – black carbon (BC) aerosol by scattering (and therefore negative) aerosol, primarily sulfate and organic carbon (OC) (IPCC, 2021). The combined top-of-atmosphere radiative effect of OC and BC, however, is uncertain (Grandey et al., 2018; Jiang et al., 2020; Thornhill et al., 2021). The balance between negative OC and positive BC forcings depends on

factors such as the underlying surface albedo, the optical properties of the aerosols, and the vertical distribution of the aerosol load (Hodnebrog et al., 2014; Mallet et al., 2020; O'Connor et al., 2021; Westervelt et al., 2020).

35 Due to their short lifetime of several days, aerosol impacts are strongly dependent on their emission location (Persad & Caldeira, 2018). Aerosols can have substantial impacts on circulation patterns, including on monsoon systems through both local and remote effects (Li et al., 2018; Shawki et al., 2018; H. Wang et al., 2016; Z. Wang et al., 2017; Wilcox et al., 2020), though these changes may not significantly influence their impact on the global scale (Johnson et al., 2019).

Impacts of aerosol emissions on precipitation are particularly complex. Scattering aerosols tend to decrease precipitation via
40 their cooling effect, with this manifesting on multidecadal timescales; absorbing aerosols also tend to decrease precipitation, since their SW absorption represents a net source of atmospheric energy, reducing the energy deposited by latent heat (Liu et al., 2018; Richardson et al., 2018). At the global level, these effects are energetically constrained through TOA and surface fluxes, but on regional scales horizontal energy transport can influence this balance. (Zhang et al., 2021) found that African BC aerosol can increase precipitation locally, with the increased atmospheric energy from both BC absorption and this increase
45 in latent heat balanced by horizontal energy transport.

The climate response to global and regional aerosol changes has been studied extensively in model experiments, using both idealised, instantaneous emissions perturbations, and transient, scenario projections. Idealised perturbations have been applied both globally and regionally across some key areas (Kasoar et al., 2018; Lewinschal et al., 2019; Samset et al., 2016; Yang et al., 2019), but the influence of tropical regions remain understudied in this regard. The effects of various differing aerosol
50 emissions scenarios on the climate have also been studied (Acosta Navarro et al., 2017; Allen et al., 2021; Tebaldi et al., 2021). However, the effects of single regions following different emissions trajectories to other areas have not been studied using fully coupled models and the effect of African emissions remains understudied.

The recent SSP scenarios used in CMIP6 project a wider range in future aerosol emissions than previous scenarios such as the RCPs used in CMIP5 (Gidden et al., 2019), which may have been unrealistically narrow in their projections (Partanen et al.,
55 2018). This implies a wider range of possibilities for the impact of aerosols on the climate system than previously suggested. The climate impact of regional variations in these emissions scenarios has not yet been studied in detail.

The Tropics cover half the Earth's surface and are a substantial source of aerosol emissions, from a complex range of natural and anthropogenic sources. These emissions will therefore have a substantial effect on local and remote climates. The large population centres within the Tropics – e.g. across southern Asia and central Africa – render the human impacts of any local
60 climate and atmospheric composition changes substantial too. The direct human health impact of the tropical aerosol perturbations studied here, through their impact on particulate matter and ozone, will be analysed in a separate paper.

This study applies time-varying SSP scenarios differing only in aerosol and reactive gas emissions over a single continent – Africa – in a fully-coupled Earth System Model, and investigates the impact on local and remote climates. Large, idealised aerosol emissions perturbations were also applied over Africa and the Tropics, and used to inform the analysis of the more
65 complex transient experiments. The bulk of the results presented in the main text relate to the scenario experiments; the analysis has been substantially informed by the results of the idealised perturbations which are presented primarily in the Supplementary

Material. The model used and experiments performed are described in Section 2, the temperature and precipitation responses and their mechanisms are detailed in Section 3, and discussion and conclusions are presented in Section 4.

2 Methods

This study uses the UK Earth System Model version 1, UKESM1, a participant in CMIP6 with a horizontal resolution of 1.875° x 1.25° and 85 vertical levels (Sellar et al., 2019). The model couples the ocean, atmosphere, and land components to Earth System components such as dynamic vegetation and ocean biogeochemistry. Aerosols are represented by the GLOMAP-mode 2-moment scheme, which simulates aerosol number and size in five lognormal modes (Mulcahy et al., 2018). The aerosol scheme is coupled to the interactive StratTrop chemistry scheme (Archibald et al., 2020). UKESM1 simulates black carbon (BC), organic carbon (OC), sulfate, sea salt, primary marine organic aerosol (PMOA), secondary organic aerosol (SOA), and dust aerosol, with dust simulated as an external mixture in 6 size bins using an earlier aerosol scheme, CLASSIC. (Bellouin et al., 2011)

UKESM1 represents the Earth's climate well, with biases generally comparable to other CMIP6 models (Sellar et al., 2019). Its Equilibrium Climate Sensitivity (the steady-state warming realised upon a doubling of CO_2 concentrations), at 5.4K, is higher than most other CMIP6 models (Andrews et al., 2019; Zelinka et al., 2020). It exhibits the Double-ITCZ Bias (Sellar et al., 2019), common among similar models (Tian & Dong, 2020); its overall precipitation representation is reasonable. Its BC aerosol forcing is the strongest of all models participating in AerChemMIP, but its strong negative sulfate forcing gives a typical overall aerosol forcing (Thornhill et al., 2021). The simulated AOD is low over West Africa when compared to satellite and ground observations(J. Mulcahy et al., 2020), a common bias in climate models (Wilcox et al., 2020).

The Shared Socioeconomic Pathway (SSP) emissions scenarios, created for use in CMIP6, are used in this study to generate transient 21st century emissions pathways. They comprise a set of future spatially-resolved emissions trajectories, given particular socioeconomic and climate change mitigation trends. They are denoted SSPx-y, with x an integer from 1 to 5 indicating a different socioeconomic baseline (O'Neill et al., 2017), and y indicating the approximate top-of-atmosphere radiative forcing in 2100 (van Vuuren et al., 2014). The two scenarios used in this experiment are SSP119 and SSP370. The first of these corresponds to strong climate mitigation, following the "Sustainability" socioeconomic trends in SSP1 and a forcing of 1.9 W/m2 in 2100, approximately compatible with the more ambitious Paris Agreement goals (O'Neill et al., 2016). The second scenario instead assumes the "Regional Rivalry" associated with SSP3, coupled with weak mitigation of both greenhouse gases and aerosols, leading to a radiative forcing of 7.0 w/m2 in 2100 and high aerosol levels (Gidden et al., 2019). In this study, the control scenario experiment consists of the whole globe (including Africa) following the high-mitigation SSP119 scenario. Additional experiments are carried out using hybrid scenarios of SSP119 and SSP370. In all of them, the world outside of Africa follows SSP119 in its entirety. Africa, however, follows the SSP370 pathway for different subsets of

emissions. Five experiments are performed, named after the set of emissions for which Africa follows SSP370. The aerosol
100 species altered are sulfate (via emissions of SO2), OC, and BC. The reactive gases are Carbon monoxide (CO), Nitrogen oxide
(NO), Ammonia (NH3), Ethane (C2H6), Propane (C3H8), Di-methyl sulfide, Methanal (HCHO), Acetone (C3H6O),
Acetaldehyde (C2H4O), and non-methane volatile organic compounds (NVOCs); these species are altered, and the list
provided, for completeness, but the aerosol impacts drive the response under these experiments. All the species have biomass
and non-biomass components except SO2, in UKESM1.

105 "AerAll" refers to all aerosols and reactive gases. "AerBB" refers to Biomass Burning aerosols and reactive gases;
"AerNonBB" is then those emissions from non-Biomass Burning sources, i.e. fossil fuels and biofuel use. In the "CO2"
experiment, globally averaged CO2 concentrations were increased from the SSP119 concentrations in the control, to
approximately the levels reached globally if Africa had followed SSP370 emissions of CO2 whilst the rest of the world
followed SSP119. These CO2 concentrations were calculated using the MAGICC6 simplified climate model (Meinshausen et
110 al., 2011). Finally, "AerAllCO2" perturbs all aerosols, reactive gases, and CO2 concentrations such that Africa follows
SSP370. Each experiment was carried out from 2015-2100, and multiple ensemble members of each were used: ten members
of the SSP119 control (five newly simulated for use here, and five used from the pre-existing CMIP6 ScenarioMIP experiments
(Tebaldi et al., 2021)), and seven members of each of the five additional experiments.

While the transient scenario experiments are the focus of this study, idealised aerosol emissions perturbation experiments were
115 also performed with UKESM1. These involved changes in similar species over similar regions as in the scenario experiments,
but were driven by much bigger emissions perturbations, which were sustained constantly until climate equilibrium was
reached. This allows for a clearer understanding of the general climate response to the emissions changed in the scenario
experiments. As these idealised experiments had to be computed from an equilibrium climate, UKESM1 was initialised from
2015 and ran with present-day (2006-2015 average) emissions of aerosols and reactive gases and present-day (2015)
120 concentrations of greenhouse gases. The model was judged to have approximately reached equilibrium in global temperatures
after 135 years (model year 2150), and the idealised emissions perturbations were then applied:

10×Trop-SO2 (SO2 emissions multiplied by 10 in the Tropics, defined as 30° S to 30° N)

zeroTropBB-OCBC (Biomass Burning (BB) OC and BC emissions removed in the Tropics)

125 10×TropBB-OCBC (BB OC and BC emissions multiplied by 10 in the Tropics)

10×AfricaBB-OCBC (BB OC and BC emissions multiplied by 10 over Africa)

These perturbations were applied for 200 years; the first 50 years were discarded as spin-up, as the climate system adjusts to
the applied forcing, and the final 150 years are analysed as the equilibrium response. This method is consistent with prior
130 studies which used similar spin-up times to reach equilibrium under similar-sized aerosol perturbations in earlier generation
models (Kasoar et al., 2018; Myhre et al., 2017; Shawki et al., 2018). Six control members, five of zeroTropBB-OCBC, and
two each of the larger three experiments, were simulated. To more effectively isolate the climate response to the aerosol

changes, in these idealised experiments the vegetation was held at present-day levels, and the link between changing CH4 concentrations and CH4's radiative forcing was also deactivated. Thus, no climate impacts of changes in vegetation or CH4 compared to the present-day were simulated in these idealised experiments. In contrast, the scenario experiments used the standard UKESM1 CMIP6 configuration, with the radiation and vegetation schemes unaltered.

Figure 1 shows the emissions changes applied in the scenario experiments. Total OC+BC emissions are higher in the AerAll experiment than in the control, while the BB aerosol subset shows the opposite trend. This is because the nonBB emissions – from fossil fuel and biofuel burning – are straightforwardly related to the SSP scenario, with higher emissions under weaker climate mitigation, whereas the link between BB emissions and the scenario drivers is more complex. The use of different Integrated Assessment Models to generate the different scenario emissions (IMAGE for SSP1 (van Vuuren et al., 2017) and AIM/GCE for SSP3 (Fujimori et al., 2017)) precludes a complete understanding of the exact causes of the relatively higher African BB emissions projected in SSP119 than SSP370, even when consulting the model teams, but the dominant component of the total emissions change in AerAll is the higher nonBB emissions in SSP370. NonBB carbonaceous aerosol emissions are concentrated near highly populated and industrial areas, primarily in West and East Africa as well as the North coast. BB emissions are centred in the areas of seasonal BB activity north of the Equator in DJF and south of it in JJA. The difference in total African SO_2 emissions between the scenarios is small, with relatively higher emissions in northern Africa in SSP370 offset by projected higher industrial SO_2 emissions in SSP119 in the south of the continent (except South Africa). Global SO_2 emissions drop quickly overall in both experiments, with only a small magnitude difference by 2100. The total aerosol emissions difference between the scenarios applied in this study is therefore dominated by changes in carbonaceous aerosol. The CO_2 concentration increases in both scenarios from the present day, before peaking around mid-century. It drops below 400ppm in the (SSP119) control, but when switching Africa's emissions from SSP119 to SSP370 the concentration peaks later and decreases less sharply, remaining above 2015 levels in 2100.

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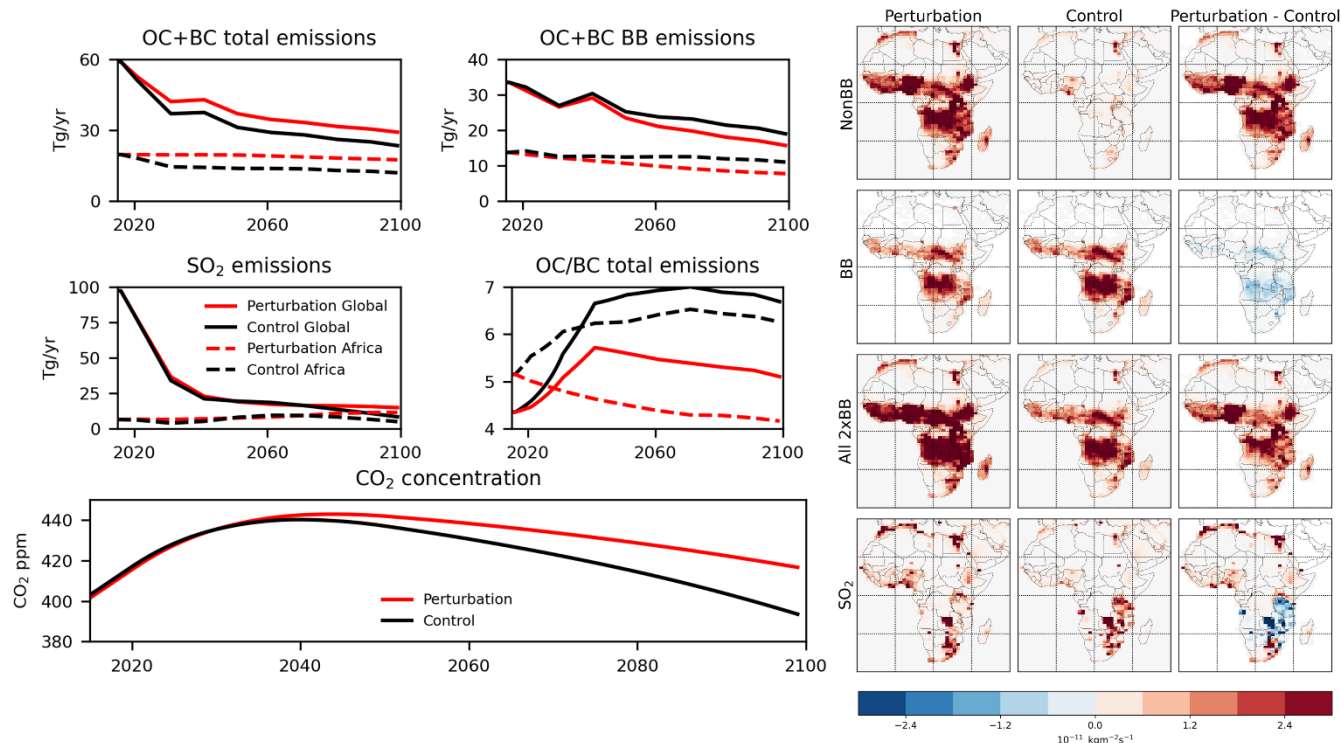
Figure 1: Timeseries of combined OC+BC (carbonaceous) aerosol, with both the total and the BB emissions given, as well as the OC/BC ratio and SO2 emissions. These emissions timeseries are shown globally and over Africa for OC+BC, with the perturbation/control ratio shown for SO2. The total OC+BC emissions curves then represent the control (black) and AerAll

160 (red), while the OC+BC BB curves show the control (black) and AerBB (red). CO2 global concentrations are also indicated. Also shown are maps of aerosol emissions in each scenario, and their difference, in 2060.

3 Results

This section details the climate response to the different emissions changes, focussing on the scenarios, particularly for the

165 period from 2070-2100. This period is selected to maximise the difference between the climates, as the emissions diverge throughout the century, while reducing internal variability through averaging over a 30-year period.

Figure 2 shows the global mean surface temperature in each experiment, from both the idealised and scenario experiments. Global and regional temperatures in 2070-2100 relative to a pre-industrial control UKESM1 experiment are also indicated in Table 1 for the scenario experiments. The values in Table 1 are coloured red/blue to indicate statistically significant

170   higher/lower temperatures compared to the control experiment. Beginning with the idealised experiments, as detailed in the methodology, UKESM1 was run with present-day emissions for 135 years to reach equilibrium, before applying the idealised perturbations for 200 years. The increased sulfate experiment, 10×Trop-SO2, resulted in a strong global cooling of −1.93 ± 0.07 K, consistent with the strong negative forcing associated with sulfate aerosol (Smith et al., 2020) and with the size of the perturbation applied here. When carbonaceous BB aerosol is increased in 10×TropBB-OCBC and 10×AfricaBB-OCBC,

175   however, a substantial global warming of 1.08±0.07 K and 0.78±0.07 K occurs, respectively, while the weaker and opposite zeroTropBB-OCBC experiment causes a slight global cooling, with a temperature change of −0.07 ± 0.05 K. This is consistent with UKESM1's positive BC forcing being larger in magnitude than its negative OC forcing(O'Connor et al., 2021), and indicates that this holds even for BB emissions, despite the fact that they have a higher OC/BC ratio than other carbonaceous aerosol sources (von Schneidemesser et al., 2015).

180   The global mean temperature in the SSP119 control experiment continues to increase, before levelling out around 2060. The experiment with increased CO2 warms further, as expected, with a significantly higher warming of 0.16K in 2070-2100 (Table 1). AerNonBB also exhibits a significant warming, though the dampening effect of reduced BB emissions causes AerAll to not see a significant global response in the annual mean temperature change. The largest change occurs in AerAllCO2, where both the net warming aerosol and CO2 are increased, giving a relative global warming of 0.22K.

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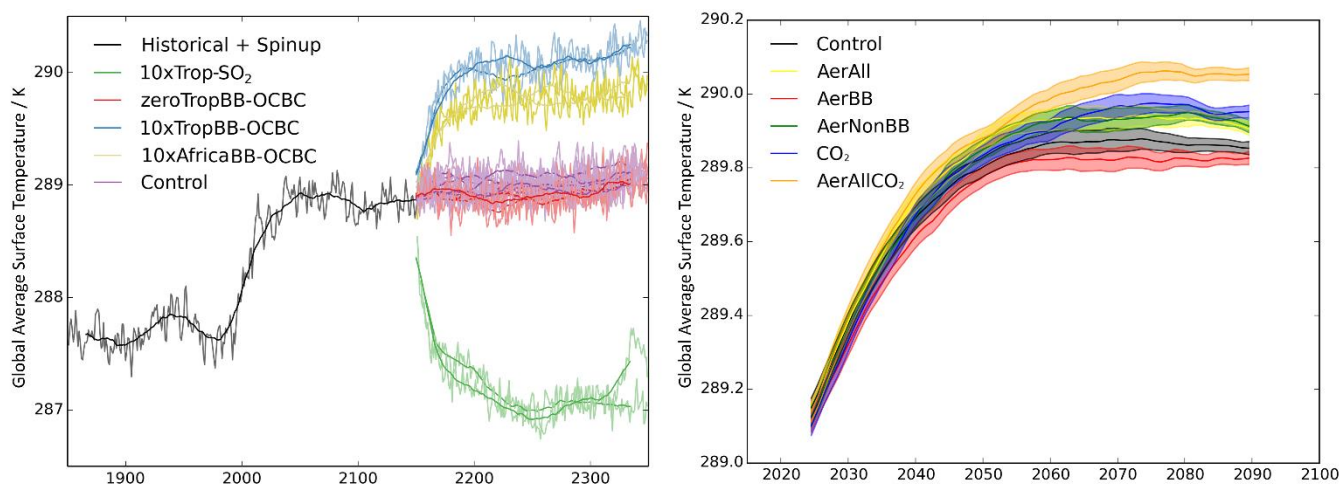
Figure 2: global mean temperature response historically and under the idealised emissions perturbations (left) and through the
190   21st century in the emissions scenario experiments (right). The left plot shows each member of each experiment, with the 20-yr rolling mean and the annual data shown to indicate the internal variability. The right plot shows the ensemble 20-yr rolling mean only, with the inter-member standard deviation shown by the shaded envelopes.

	Global	Africa	NTropAf	Arctic
Control	2.27	2.50	2.41	6.68
AerAll	2.33	2.35	1.83	6.89
AerBB	2.28	2.51	2.43	6.76
AerNonBB	2.34	2.36	1.78	6.84
AerAllCO₂	2.43	2.68	2.58	7.01
CO₂	2.49	2.53	2.03	7.07

Table 1: Changes in surface temperature from a pre-industrial control to the period 2070-2100 in the control scenario and each experiment, globally and in several regions. Africa is defined as per the emissions region, visible in the difference plots in Figure 1; NTropAf (northern tropical Africa) is the high emissions region from 0° E-30° E and 0° N-30° N; the Arctic is 60° N-90° N.

Turning to the spatial response, Figure 3 shows maps of the 2070-2100 mean temperature response in DJF and JJA under each scenario experiment. While the increased aerosol experiments drive a general warming effect, a striking local cooling over much of Africa is found. This occurs because absorbing aerosol, while increasing the energy within the Earth system and therefore raising temperatures globally, acts to reduce the radiation into the surface underneath it (adding to the cooling effect of OC), which here outweighs the general warming effect close to the perturbation, where the burden change is largest. This local surface cooling even outweighs the enhanced warming from additionally increased CO2 in AerAllCO2. Whereas the local cooling from increased nonBB aerosol occurs around the main nonBB emissions areas in northern tropical Africa in both seasons, the AerBB experiment exhibits the BB emissions seasonal cycle in its local warming. This warming occurs since BB aerosol emissions are lower under this experiment, hence increasing the incident surface radiation. It should be noted that the local cooling pattern does not match exactly the pattern of emissions changes between the scenarios; the reason for this is linked to the background circulation pattern, and is explored later in this paper. An analogous figure showing the surface temperature response to the idealised perturbations is given in Supplementary Figure S1. Enhanced local warming is present in southeastern Africa under AerAll; this is due to the local reduction in SO2 emissions (Figure 1), increasing the incident surface radiation. Statistically significant remote impacts – warming/cooling under increased/decreased carbonaceous aerosol – occur across broad land and ocean regions, more so under the larger nonBB-changing experiments, and with almost all remote areas experiencing warming under AerAllCO2.

Table 1 shows the temperature change from pre-industrial times to the period 2070-2100 over several regions in addition to the global mean, for the control scenario and each experiment. The Arctic experiences substantially more warming than the global mean, occurring predominantly in DJF (Figure 3) as is typical of Arctic amplification (Stjern et al., 2019). Africa, defined using the emissions region as can be seen in Figure 1, experiences larger warming than the global mean, consistent with the larger land than ocean response, but while the CO2 experiment exhibits enhanced warming relative to the control, the increased nonBB aerosol in AerNonBB and AerAll drives a significantly cooler Africa than in the control, by around 0.15K.

220   Focussing further, on the strong cooling region from 0° E-30° E, 0° N-10° N, this cooling reaches 0.6K in AerNonBB, reducing
        the overall warming trend from pre-industrial times to 2070-2100 by 25%.
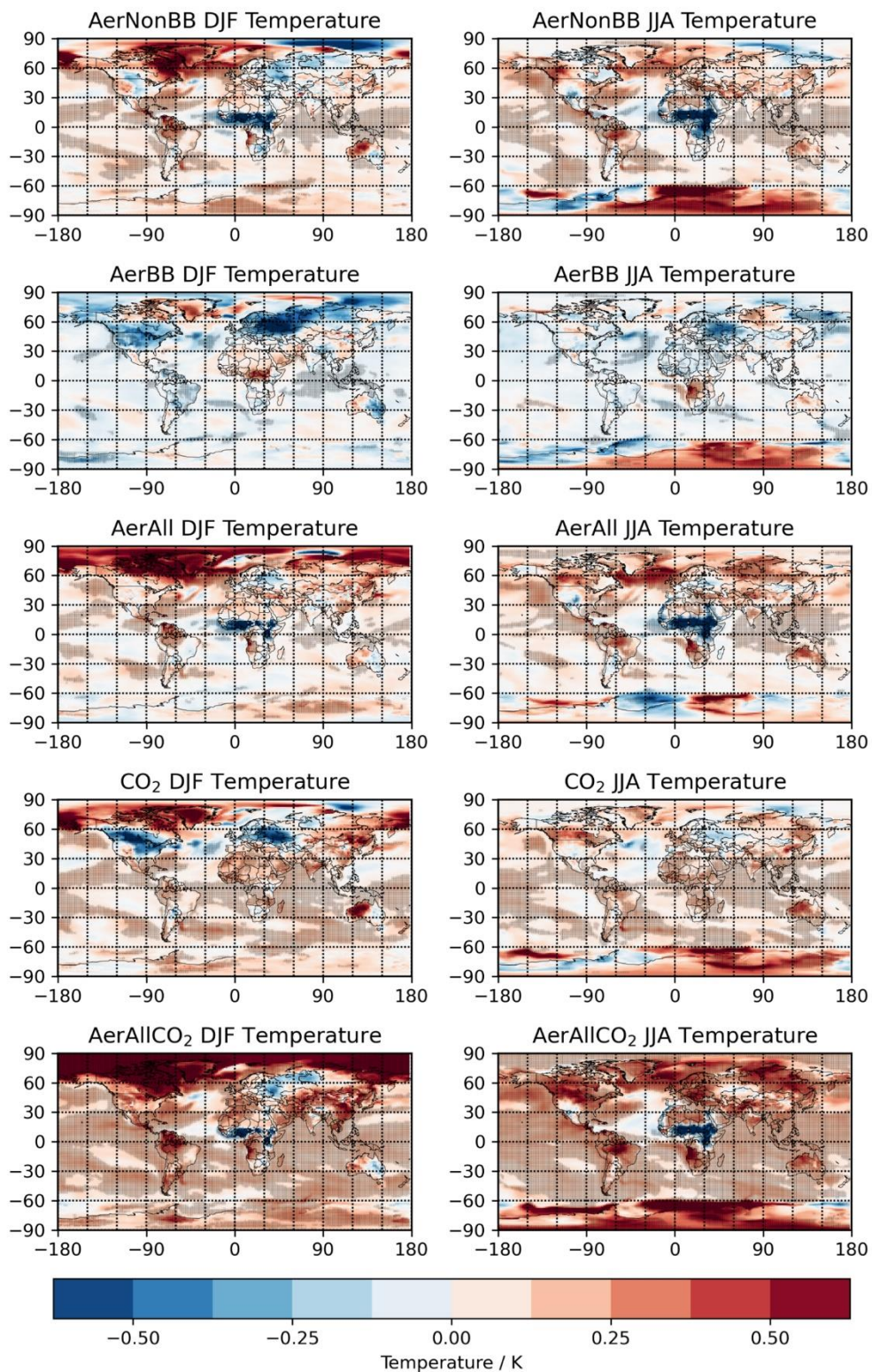
Figure 3: Effect of each scenario experiment on surface temperatures in DJF (left) and JJA (right) in 2070-2100. Stippling
225 indicates gridcells where the change is significant with respect to intra-ensemble variation.

Turning to the effects of the scenario experiments on atmospheric circulation patterns, Figure 4 shows the 2070-2100 response
of upwards vertical velocity at 850hPa, and the Atlantic zonal-mean response, under each of the aerosol-only experiments in
DJF and JJA, as well as the background circulation in the control simulations. The ITCZ in this season can be clearly
distinguished in DJF at 0° N-10° N in the control over Africa and the Pacific and slightly further south over the Atlantic, and
230 north of this, particularly over land, in JJA. Since the overall effect of the carbonaceous aerosol in the experiments is a positive
forcing (to generate the overall warming in Figure 2), and the increase in nonBB aerosol is primarily north of the Equator (see
Figure 1), the experiments with increased nonBB represent an overall positive northern hemispheric forcing. Positive radiative
forcings act to pull the ITCZ location towards the hemisphere where they occur (Schneider et al., 2014; Voigt et al., 2017; W
Frierson & Hwang, 2011), so a northward shift in the ITCZ can be expected under the increased African nonBB aerosol
235 experiments here in DJF, though the effect in JJA may be complicated by the more northern background ITCZ location. This
is indeed clear in DJF in the Pacific, Atlantic, and Africa in the 850hPa vertical velocity maps, and also in the Atlantic zonal-
mean plots in AerAll and AerNonBB. In the less drastic AerBB experiment, the BB aerosol emissions decrease in DJF is also
centred north of the Equator, suggesting a southward ITCZ shift due to overall cooling in the northern hemisphere in this case.
This is present over the Atlantic zonally, and over Africa in the 850hPa map, but less clear over the Pacific, likely due to the
240 smaller emissions difference under this experiment. In JJA, hints of northward shifts are present in eastern Africa and the
Atlantic. Figure S2 in the Supplementary Material shows consistent, stronger effects under the much larger idealised emissions
perturbations.
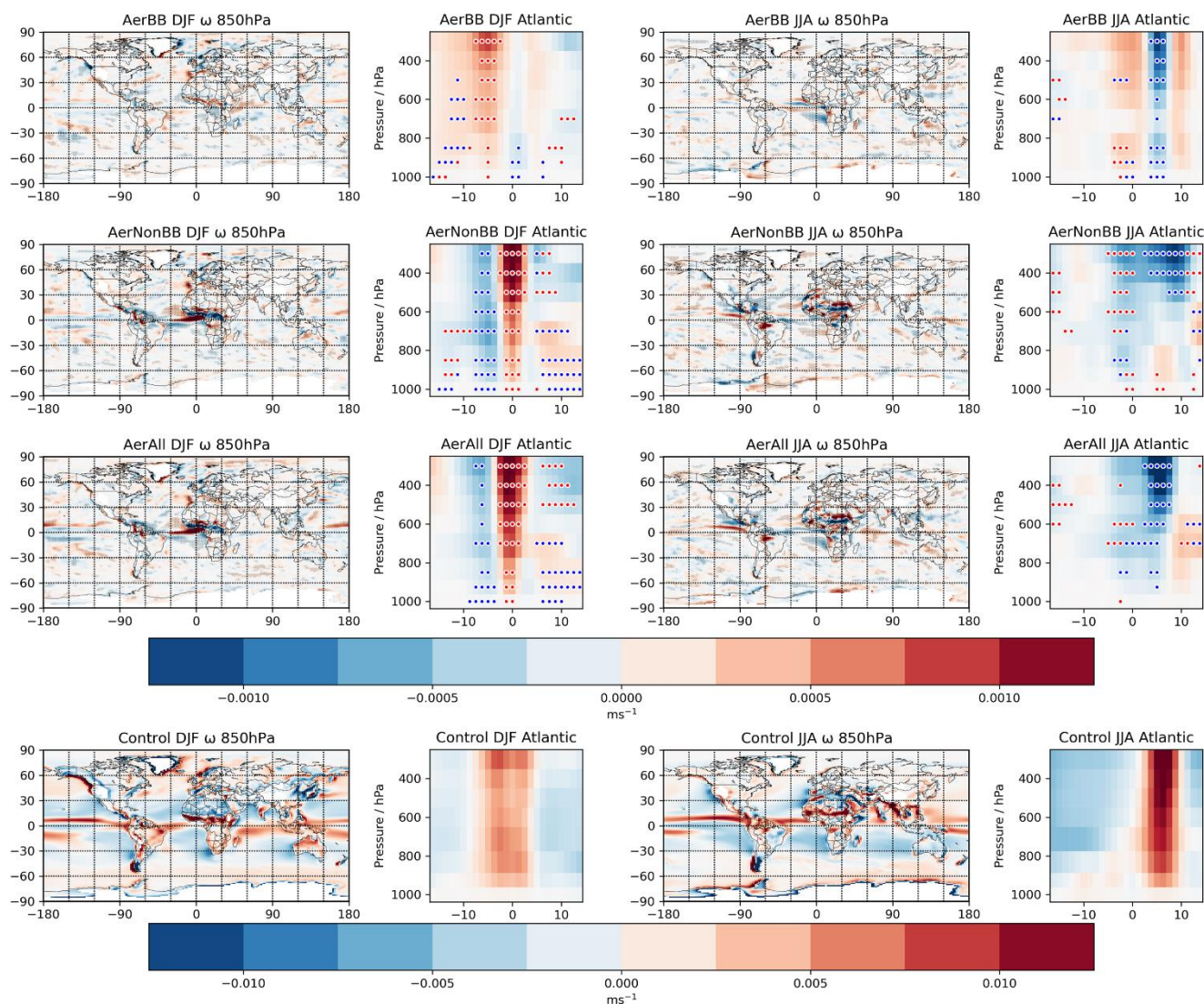
Figure 4: Vertical velocity changes globally, and zonally over the Atlantic in DJF and JJA, for the three aerosol perturbations minus the control (AerBB, AerNonBB, and AerAll), for the period 2070-2100. The Atlantic here is $40° W - 15° W$; narrower than the length at the Equator to avoid including land between $15° S$ and $15° N$. Stippling on the change plots indicates gridcells where the change is significant with respect to intra-ensemble variation. The stippling on the zonal plots is coloured red when the change strengthens the background circulation, and blue when opposing.

The precipitation response in both DJF and JJA is then shown in Figure 5 for the aerosol experiments, with maps as well as global and Pacific zonal means, along with the control rainfall. Figure S3 in the Supplementary Material presents the same for the idealised experiments, with consistent results. The Pacific zonal mean is shown as the ITCZ is coherent here and extends

across a large longitude range, allowing any shifts to be more readily identified. Over the Pacific, the northward shift in DJF under AerAll and AerNonBB identified in the vertical velocity plots is also clear in the rainfall response, with a characteristic

255   wetting/drying in the north/south of the control ITCZ band. No clear Pacific ITCZ shift manifests in JJA under AerAll or AerNonBB, indicating that the more northern position of the ITCZ in JJA may prevent the perturbations from inducing a strong interhemispheric forcing asymmetry as is the case for DJF. AerBB shows little clear Pacific precipitation response, consistent with the vertical velocity change, but some local effects are found, discussed presently. Northern South America experiences substantial decreases in precipitation under increased African nonBB aerosol, centred over areas with large background rainfall

260   in both DJF and JJA. While small in percentage terms, these are relatively large magnitude shifts, suggesting that the ITCZ impacts can produce substantial changes in precipitation in key locations remote from their emission.
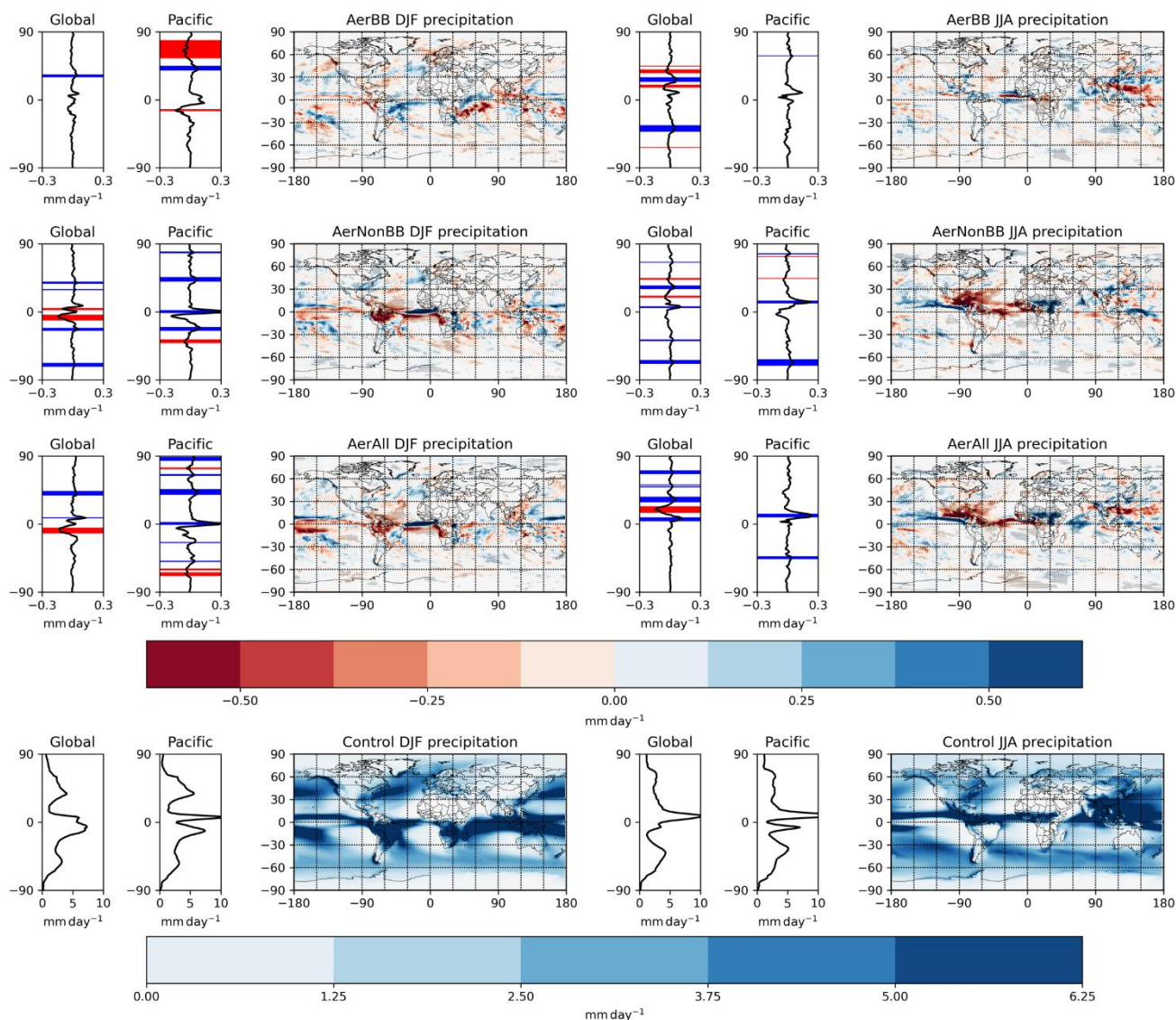
Figure 5: 2070-2100 precipitation response in AerAll (top), AerBB (middle), and AerNonBB (bottom) for DJF (left) and JJA (right), with maps and zonally both globally and across the Pacific (150° E − 270° E). Control DJF and JJA precipitation maps are shown at the bottom. Stippling on the maps indicates gridcells where the change is significant with respect to intra-ensemble variation. The coloured areas in the zonal change plots show significance – red for decreased, blue for increased precipitation. The local pattern of precipitation change over Africa is complex, with large increases under increased nonBB aerosol, in different regions in DJF and JJA. These responses can be understood through an investigation of the effect of the emissions changes on the vertical atmospheric structure.

Figure 6 shows vertical profiles of the change in carbonaceous aerosol burden, SW heating, potential temperature, atmospheric stability, vertical velocity, and cloud, in 2070-2100 in AerNonBB. These profiles are given for three region-season pairs, with the regions indicated in the bottom right of Figure 7: Region 1 centres on the Eastern Sahel, with profiles shown for DJF and

275 JJA, while Region 2 is centred on the high-emissions southern Nigeria-western Cameroon area and the Gulf of Guinea, with just the DJF profile shown. Figure 7 shows the background (control) 850hPa vertical velocity, and the AerNonBB-induced 2070-2100 change in three variables: temperature at 420m, vertical velocity at 6000m, and surface precipitation, centred over Africa for DJF and JJA.

In Region 1 in JJA, the strong increase in emissions (Figure 1) coincides with a strong background upwards vertical velocity

280 (Figure 7). This allows the carbonaceous aerosol to increase strongly throughout the column (Figure 6). This large aerosol burden then generates a strong SW heating vertical response, and also gives rise to the cooling at the surface and in the lower atmosphere, as seen in Figure 3 and Figure 7. Thus, the pattern of local cooling depends not just on the pattern of emissions change, but also on the background circulation, with areas of strong uplifting circulation allowing for higher aerosol loads, and consequent reductions in radiation into the surface. The vertical profile of potential temperature change over Region 1 in JJA

285 reflects this: a significant cooling occurs up to 1.5km, giving way to warming at higher levels. Crucially, the combination of the receding cooling effect with height (since the amount of aerosol present to block radiation decreases with altitude) and increased SW absorption gives rise to a warming peak around 4km, with less warming above for several kilometres. The effect is therefore an instability anomaly in the mid-troposphere, which gives rise to enhanced vertical velocity above 4km. This enhanced mid-tropospheric convection is strongly correlated spatially with the local cooling (Figure 7). Cloud is enhanced

290 above this, with reduced mid-level cloud coinciding with the SW heating. Precipitation is therefore strongly enhanced in these areas with increased mid-level convection, i.e. across northern equatorial Africa in JJA (Figure 7), enhancing the background rainfall (Figure 5).

To summarise: Region 1 in JJA is associated with both increased carbonaceous aerosol emissions and background convection exhibiting strong uplifting of the aerosol; SW heating from the BC aerosol leads to a warming peak, which generates a mid-

295 tropospheric instability anomaly, and hence increased precipitation.

This mechanism can be applied to different region-season pairs. Figure 6 shows vertical profiles for Region 2 in DJF, which also features strong increased aerosol emissions and background convection. Thus, a warming peak occurs around 3km, convection is strongly enhanced above this, and precipitation is increased. The horizontal circulation also plays a role here, with the aerosol carried downwind generating a strong precipitation response into the Atlantic. In contrast to the two region-

300 season pairs initially analysed, Region 1 in DJF – while having strong emissions still – is dominated by descending air. This strongly suppresses the vertical extent of the aerosol increase (Figure 6), precluding the mechanism described above from manifesting, and thereby preventing any significant precipitation response. A further case study – over East Africa in DJF under the idealised emissions perturbations – is presented in Supplementary Figure S4.

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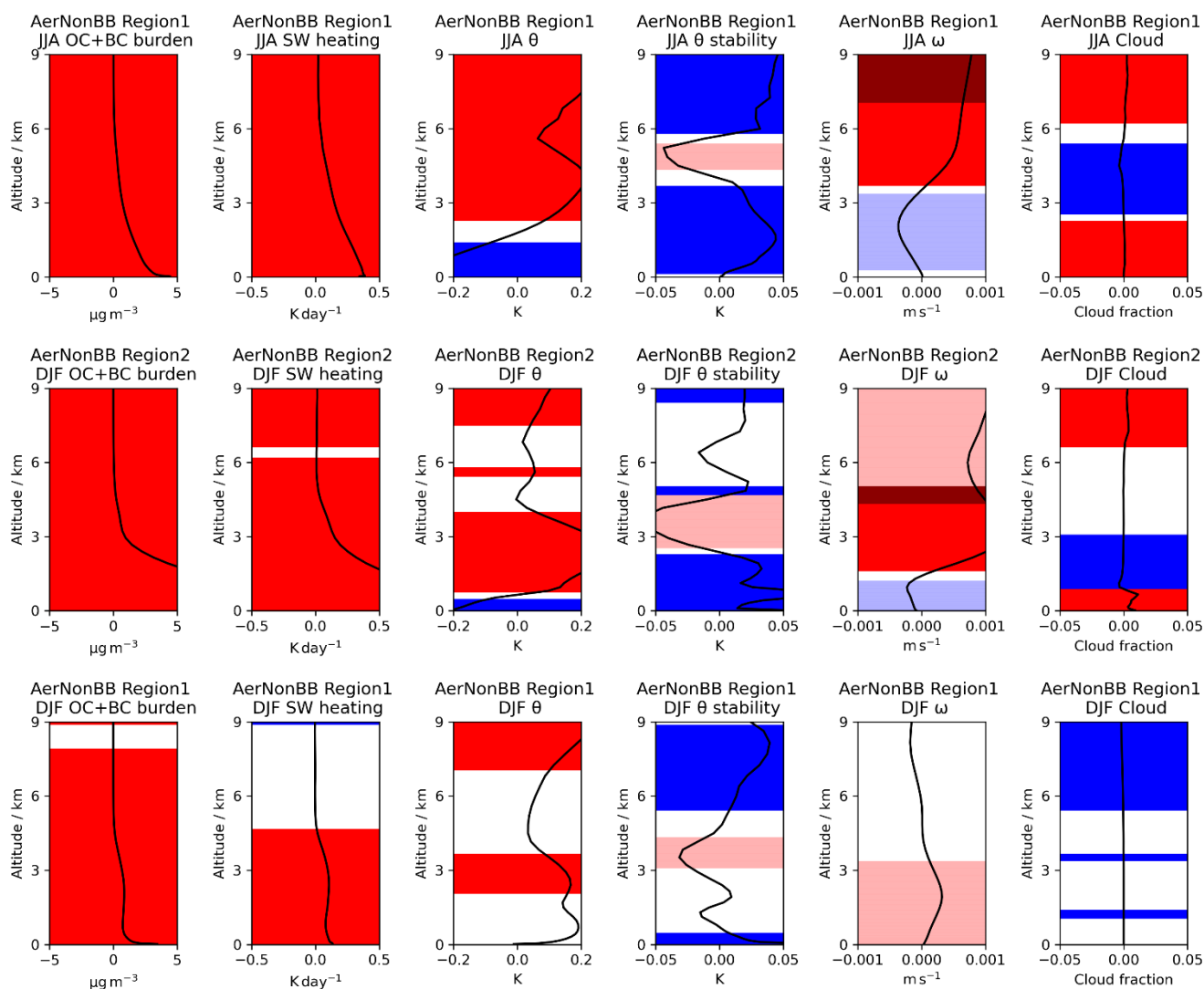
Figure 6: Changes in the vertical profile of perturbed aerosol burden (left column), clear-sky SW heating (2nd column), potential temperature (3rd column), potential temperature vertical gradient calculated at each level as the potential temperature at the height immediately above the level minus at that level (4th column), vertical velocity (5th column), and cloud (6th column), over Region 2 in JJA (top), and Region 1 and Region 2 in JJA (middle and bottom), in 2070-2100 under the

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AerNonBB experiment relative to the control. Coloured horizontal lines indicate significant increases (red) or decreases (blue). The stability and vertical velocity colour shades are modified depending on the sign of the change relative to the control baseline: lighter red and blue when the change is enhancing the background, normal when opposite in direction to the background but with the change weaker in magnitude, and darker when opposed with higher magnitude than the control, acting to reverse the sign.
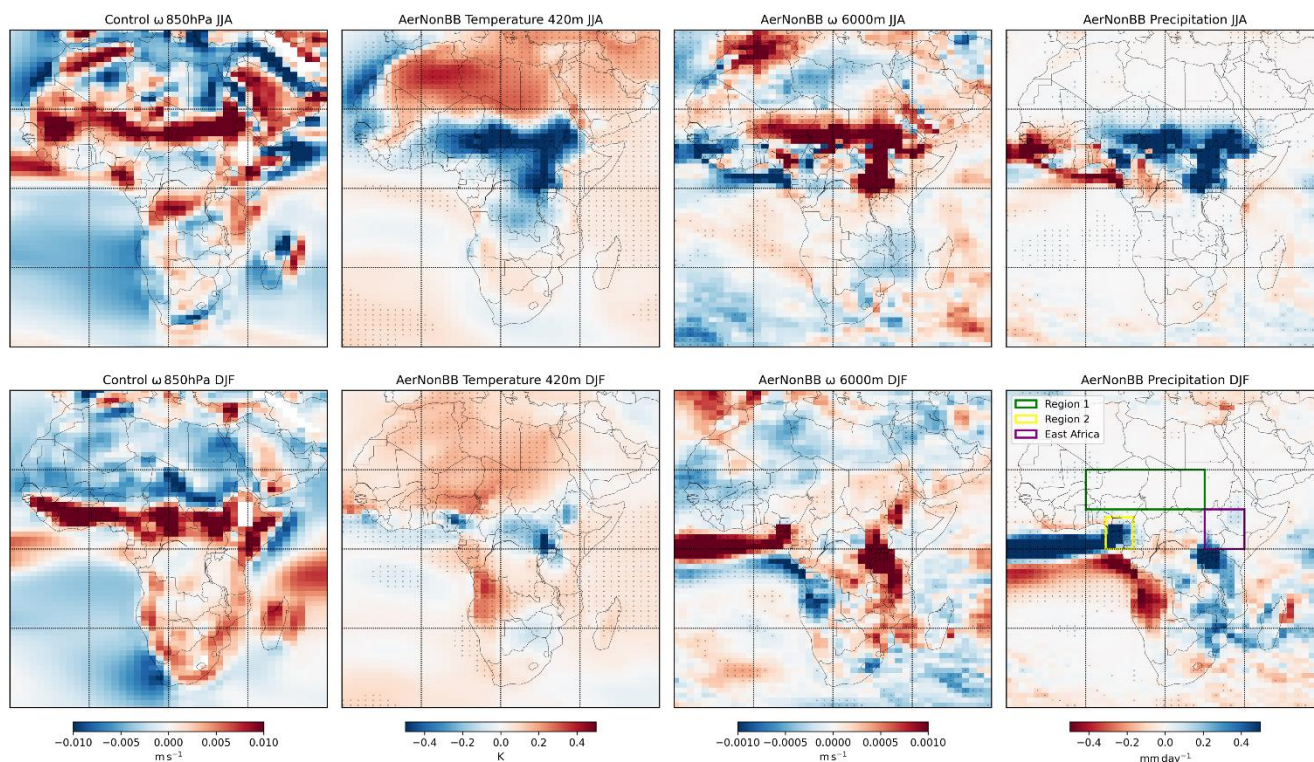
Figure 7: Background 850hPa vertical velocity in the control (left), and the AerNonBB-induced 2070-2100 changes temperature at 420m (2nd column), vertical velocity at 6000m (3rd column), and surface precipitation (right column), over Africa for JJA (top) and DJF (bottom). Stippling indicates significant changes when compared to the inter-member deviation. The local precipitation response, while complex, is then intelligible when considering the patterns of both the emissions and the background circulation pattern. Similar features can be seen elsewhere, such as over East Africa, where emissions, convection, surface cooling, enhanced mid-level convection, and rainfall are co-incident. Further examples of this mechanism are provided in the supplement for AerBB and the idealised perturbation experiments.

4 Discussion and Conclusions

This study analysed the effect on local and global climates of Africa pursuing SSP370 aerosol, reactive gases, and CO2 trajectories rather than the strong mitigation SSP119 scenario. The bulk of the responses are attributable to the aerosol changes,

335   which see substantial differences between these two scenarios. SSP370 comprises higher fossil fuel and biofuel use, with associated higher CO2 emissions and non-biomass burning aerosols, with BB aerosol emissions conversely lower than in SSP119. The state-of-the-art CMIP6 Earth System Model UKESM1 was used in this study, with its 2-mode aerosol scheme and interactive chemistry scheme simulating the response to changes in sulfate, organic carbon and black carbon aerosols, and reactive gases. Analysis of the transient scenario experiments was aided by several much larger idealised aerosol emissions

340   perturbation experiments over Africa and the Tropics. These idealised experiments demonstrated large-scale responses consistent with the transient scenario-based experiments, including the net warming from carbonaceous aerosol and the broad dynamical responses of the ITCZ and precipitation effects.

Emissions were changed only over a single continent, Africa, in the scenario experiments, with emissions elsewhere fixed at SSP119 levels in all simulations. The experiments represent several possible future trajectories in emissions subsets, albeit

345   following two very different emissions pathways spanning the full range of aerosol emissions in the SSP scenarios (Gidden et al., 2019). Only a subset of emitted species was changed each time – either some or all aerosols and reactive gases, with and without CO2. These relatively small perturbations to total emissions, nonetheless generated substantial impacts on the climate, both locally and at the global level. The large effect of the different scenarios reflects the far wider range in aerosol emissions trajectories in the SSP scenarios used here compared to the previous RCP scenarios. This stresses the importance of aerosols

350   for the future evolution of global and regional climate, and simultaneously highlights that further attention should be paid to the impact of future African sulfate and carbonaceous aerosols in particular, since they can lead to substantial modulations of the predicted patterns of future temperature and rainfall for different world regions.

While SO2 and carbonaceous aerosol were changed simultaneously, the overall difference in SO2 emissions between the experiments was small due to spatial cancellations; some local responses were driven by local SO2 changes, but global effects

355   and most prominent regional changes were driven by the carbonaceous aerosol response. UKESM1 features a strong BC forcing, causing the BC aerosol to be the dominant driver of the response. Increasing nonBB aerosol emissions from Africa therefore generated a significant relative global warming of 0.07K, enhanced to 0.22K when including the additional African CO2 emissions of SSP370 compared to SSP119. These global temperature changes are substantial when considering the disparate impacts between 1.5K and 2K of global warming (IPCC 2018).

360   The general warming was outweighed locally by cooling, due to the reduced surface incident radiation from increased aerosol. This local cooling persisted even when including the increased CO2 concentrations. The pattern of this cooling did not match the emissions change, as it depended also on the background circulation; areas with both higher emissions and strong convection, particularly near the ITCZ over Africa, saw strong aerosol lofting and therefore a larger radiative effect, with consequent large local cooling. This lofted aerosol drove strong BC absorption, with a warming peak around 3-4km and

365 enhanced instability above this, resulting in increased precipitation. The complex responses of temperature and precipitation, including the opposing local and remote temperature impacts, indicate the importance of investigating the regional response to specific emissions trajectories in addition to the global mean change.

A single model, UKESM1, was used in this project. While UKESM1 accurately simulates many aspects of the global climate, its representation of some aspects of the climate system relevant to this study is different to that of other models. In particular,

370 it simulates a strong present-day BC forcing, the largest of eight AerChemMIP models at 0.37 ± 0.03 W/m2 (O'Connor et al., 2021; Thornhill et al., 2021). Its OC forcing is similar to other models; the dominance of BC over OC in UKESM1 may therefore be at odds with other models. Of the six AerChemMIP models which calculated both OC and BC ERFs, UKESM1 is one of only two in which the magnitude of BC forcing outweighs that of OC. Thus the warming found here under higher African carbonaceous aerosol emissions is likely unrepresentative of most other models; similar experiments changing

375 carbonaceous aerosols using other CMIP6 models would therefore be useful to investigate the model uncertainty in this response. However, UKESM1 and its earlier versions feature accurate aerosol schemes, with the earlier version HadGEM3 demonstrating better observational BB properties than most models (Brown et al., 2021), and the aerosol scheme has undergone careful improvement and evaluation against observations (Johnson et al., 2016; J. Mulcahy et al., 2020; J. P. Mulcahy et al., 2018; O'Connor et al., 2021).

380 The vertical profile of Black Carbon has been found to be biased compared to observations, with too much aerosol at high altitudes and not enough lower down, in CMIP6 models including UKESM1; when accounting for more realistic vertical profiles, the BC forcing is reduced significantly (Allen et al., 2019). A more observationally-constrained simulation of these scenarios would therefore likely reduce the warming effect. Potentially, the mechanism analysed here through which precipitation is enhanced by the increased carbonaceous aerosol would be weaker under more accurate vertical profiles, though

385 the extent of this is less certain without further experiments. Biases in underlying circulation patterns, such as the double-ITCZ bias (Tian & Dong, 2020), would also impact the specific pattern of precipitation increase found here.

The scenarios applied here changed subsets of emissions, whereas in reality specific anthropogenic activities and natural processes cause emissions of broad ranges of species. Using fossil fuel-linked aerosols from one scenario with CO2 emissions of another neglects this link. In addition, the SSP scenarios include interactions between continents, contrary to the experiments

390 here allowing the scenario to vary spatially. The scenarios created here are not designed to be specific plausible future pathways, but are instead generated to isolate the effects of a single continent varying in its trajectory of particular emissions subsets. The SSP119 and SSP370 scenarios feature little difference in SO2 emissions over Africa, due to the spatial cancellation visible in Figure 1. These scenarios were created by different Integrated Assessment Models, and this cancellation may not be a robust response. If these experiments were applied over other regions, or for other pairs of scenarios, sulfate

395 aerosol may play a substantially larger role, with potentially larger local cooling and less remote warming.

This study highlights the importance of future African aerosol emissions for local and global climates, showing that the range of plausible futures over a single continent can drive significant shifts in global temperatures, and substantial impacts in local

and remote temperatures and precipitation. Further work should be undertaken to better understand the plausible future variation in aerosol-climate impacts, exploring a range of scenarios, regions, species, and models.

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Data availability

Reasonable requests for model output and the data used for figures in this manuscript are available from the corresponding author.

405 **Author contributions**

AV and CDW conceived designed the experiments. CDW carried out the analysis with assistance from MK and led the preparation of the manuscript. All authors provided discussion of the analysis and reviewed the manuscript.

Competing interests

410 The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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