

Negative Social Tipping Dynamics Resulting from and Reinforcing Earth System Destabilisation

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Abstract. In recent years research on **normatively** positive social tipping dynamics in response to the climate crisis has produced invaluable insights. In contrast, relatively little attention has been given to the potentially negative social tipping processes that might unfold due to an increasingly destabilised Earth system, and how they might in turn reinforce social and ecological destabilisation dynamics and/or impede positive social change. In this paper, we discuss selected potential negative social tipping processes (anomie, radicalisation and polarisation, displacement, conflict and financial destabilisation), linked to Earth system destabilisation. We draw on related research to understand the drivers and likelihood of these negative tipping dynamics, their potential effects on human societies and the Earth system, and the potential for cascading interactions (e.g. food insecurity and displacement), contributing to systemic risks. This first attempt to provide an explorative conceptualisation and empirical account of potential negative social tipping dynamics linked to Earth system destabilisation is intended to motivate further research into an under-studied area that is nonetheless crucial for our ability to respond to the climate crisis and for ensuring that positive social tipping dynamics are not averted by negative ones.

1 Introduction

Recent advances in research on Earth system tipping points (ESTPs) (e.g. Armstrong McKay et al., 2022), paint an increasingly alarming picture of the state of our planetary system. Understanding tipping points and other forms of non-linear change is now widely recognised as critical to managing and responding to change in complex systems (Scheffer, 2009). We define

49 social tipping points on the basis of mathematics of dynamical systems (Strogatz, 2000). Specifically, tipping points in
50 dynamical social systems are critical thresholds where a small change in a variable describing the state of the social system or
51 in a parameter capturing external influences leads to an often abrupt qualitative change of the dynamical social system, i.e. the
52 social dynamical system undergoes a phase transition from one state to another (Winkelmann et al 2022). Tipping occurs
53 because positive feedback mechanisms create self-reinforcing loops, where a small change in one component of the system
54 triggers changes that further reinforce the initial change. Tipping is further enabled by weak negative feedback mechanisms
55 that tend to stabilise a dynamical system. Tipping is usually difficult to reverse due to hysteresis that locks the system within
56 the new state or within the trajectory to a new state, even if the original drivers for the change are removed (Wiedermann et
57 al., 2020, Winkelmann et al., 2022). Normatively speaking, social tipping points can be both positive (predominantly beneficial
58 to humans and the natural systems) or negative if they result in catastrophic consequences for human societies and ecological
59 systems (IPCC, 2022; Lenton et al., 2023).

60 Increasing attention is also being paid to cascade effects that connect different systems, implying that a change in one system
61 may trigger further change in another system (Liu et al., 2023). Here, we consider a tipping cascade to take place when one
62 tipping point triggers the crossing of another tipping point (Klose et al., 2021). We focus here moreover on negative social
63 tipping processes that have the potential to feed back to the Earth system, further destabilising it, i.e. we are interested in
64 processes where the Earth system destabilisation contributes to social system destabilisation, which then further destabilises
65 the Earth system (e.g. due to lack of cooperation), creating a potential feedback loop. We note that this paper focuses on climate
66 ESTPs, but the same rationale can be broadly generalised to other Earth systems.

67 Although research on the potential for positive social tipping dynamics in various systems (e.g. food, energy, transportation,
68 financial, behavioural etc.) has started to emerge (Tàbara et al., 2018; Otto et al., 2020; Lenton 2020; Lenton et al., 2022;
69 Winkelmann et al., 2022; Milkoreit, 2023), there has been limited research on negative social tipping dynamics that might be
70 triggered by climate change (Laybourn et al., 2023). This is noteworthy, not least because early research on tipping points in
71 the social sciences was mostly concerned with undesirable social processes, such as rapid and non-linear patterns of urban
72 racial segregation in the United States (Schelling, 1978). More recently, researchers have used dynamical systems analyses to
73 empirically study tipping points in school segregation (Spaiser et al., 2018), political instability of countries (Grimm &
74 Schneider, 2011), and rapid proliferation of misinformation (Törnberg, 2018).

75 We argue that studying negative social tipping points in the context of Earth system destabilisation is important because it
76 highlights the risks generated by overshooting temperature thresholds such as 1.5°C (Bustamante et al., 2024). While indeed
77 every tenth of a degree of temperature increase matters, framing around climate policy is moving in the direction of making
78 overshoot socially acceptable. Overshoots are presented as temporary, with the deployment of carbon dioxide removal (CDR)
79 being able to recover temperatures back into the ‘safe zone’ by the end of the century. The risks of ESTPs however make
80 overshooting very dangerous, as overshooting may trigger ESTPs, which then cannot be reversed even if we return to lower
81 global warming after the overshoot period. Triggering ESTPs on the other hand poses the risk of escalating climate change
82 impacts (Wunderling et al., 2024). Moreover, overshooting would lead to further ecological destabilisation (Singh et al., 2023),
83 which might be reversible in terms of returning to lower global warming; but in the meantime, ecological destabilisation could
84 trigger negative social tipping points described here, and these negative social tipping points could feedback to the Earth
85 system, further destabilising it, potentially leading to ESTPs being triggered. We believe that understanding these potential
86 complex interactions is important, because humans have agency and can make decisions trying to prevent such escalating
87 processes. None of the scenarios described here is inevitable and although many dynamics are already unfolding today, we
88 have not reached a point of no return.

89 Negative and potentially catastrophic consequences are unequally distributed, both internationally and within individual
90 societies (Pereira et al., 2024). Research has emphasised that low-income countries that have often contributed least to the
91 destabilisation of the Earth system will bear the brunt of the climate change impacts (IPCC, 2022; Lenton et al., 2023).
92 Moreover, within each society, it is the most vulnerable groups, such as children (Thiery et al., 2021; UNICEF, 2021), women
93 (Denton, 2002), minority groups (Berberian et al., 2022, Donaghy et al., 2023) and generally the less affluent (Thomas et al.,
94 2019), who will be most affected by climate change impacts. Triggering negative social tipping points will have considerable
95 consequences for these vulnerable groups, further amplifying their vulnerability and stressing the need for climate justice
96 (Newell et al., 2021).

97 In this perspective, we pose the following questions: (1) What are the potential negative social tipping points that the
98 destabilisation of the Earth system could trigger? (2) To what extent could the triggering of negative social tipping points
99 further destabilise the Earth system? (3) How do these negative tipping elements interact and what cascades could these
100 interactions cause? (4) What research and modelling approaches are suitable for studying negative social tipping points and
101 cascades? And (5) what intervention options are available to prevent negative social tipping points and cascades?

102 **2 Mapping out Negative Social Tipping**

103 We identify five negative social tipping processes that according to some existing evidence could be triggered by Earth system
104 destabilisation (see Figure 1). The part or subsystem of a larger system that can pass a tipping point is referred to as the tipping
105 element. Drawing on the positive social tipping element framework developed by Otto et al. (2020), we identify four social
106 tipping elements (TE) that have the potential for negative tipping processes (TP): socio-psychological systems (TE1), political
107 systems (TE2), human settlements (TE3) and financial markets (TE4). Figure 1 provides an overview of these tipping elements
108 and the tipping that could be triggered within these tipping elements: Anomie (TP1.1), Radicalisation & Polarisation
109 (TP1.2), Displacement (TP2.1), Conflict (TP3.1) and Financial Destabilisation (TP4.1). All these processes can unfold across
110 different levels of social structure on different time- and spatial scales. Specifically, tipping can occur as rapidly as hours,
111 triggered by a major shock event or unfold more slowly (years) over cascading pathways as the effects of ESTPs accumulate.
112 Tipping can also occur only locally, affecting a specific community or spread across a nation or the globe. The figure also
113 indicates the potential for interactions between various negative tipping elements. The interactions between different TEs
114 indicate different possible destabilisation pathways that could lead to the crossing of negative tipping points across scales. This
115 illustrative selection is based on evidence for tipping processes in these subsystems and evidence that Earth system
116 destabilisation has a direct effect on these subsystems.

117 [FIGURE 1 HERE]

118 **2.1 Anomie**

119 The concept of anomie, which was introduced by Durkheim (1893, 1897) to describe the breakdown of norms and social order
120 and its relationship to suicide patterns in societies, has evolved over decades of social research (Abrutyn, 2019; Twyman-
121 Ghoshal, 2021). We define anomie as a state of a society or community that is characterised by a breakdown of social norms,
122 social trust, social ties, and social reality, resulting in social disorder and disorganisation, disorientation, and disconnection.
123 These syndromes manifest on the individual level through mental health deterioration, increased suicide rates, and/or increased
124 deviant behaviour (Brown, 2022; Teymoori et al., 2017). Although this is a relatively new area of research, there is increasing
125 evidence to suggest that changes in the Earth system can contribute to anomie. For instance, anomie has been observed in the
126 aftermath of natural disasters, made more likely by climate change (Miller, 2016) and it has been suggested that Earth system
127 destabilisation may result in a new form of anomie, called environmental anomie (Brown, 2022), where sudden changes to the

128 physical landscape can upend the established social order and undermine people's ability to comprehend, relate to, and function
129 within their environment. For instance, people from Paradise (California, US) who survived the devastating Camp Fire in 2018
130 reported how the wildfire event undermined their ability to comprehend the world around them, because their familiar
131 environment became unintelligible (e.g. they struggled to determine wind direction), they were no longer able to relate to and
132 function within their environment. This resulted in a breakdown of self-efficacy, with a sense of unreality taking hold (e.g.
133 burning tree branches falling from the sky). This experience of environmental anomie was further exacerbated when the
134 affected individuals witnessed that traditional authorities were overwhelmed and unable to respond to the physical chaos,
135 which undermined confidence and led to an individuation of suffering and feelings of social isolation, i.e. experience of general
136 anomie. With the breakdown of social order people were forced to fend for themselves and rules (e.g. regulating traffic) were
137 no longer observed (Brown, 2022).

138 Beyond anomie resulting from extreme weather events caused by escalating climate change, there is also evidence for a rise
139 in anomic experiences, particularly by young people and children around the world, contributing to a mental health crisis. In
140 a first comprehensive study, surveying 10,000 children and young people (aged 16-25 years) in 10 countries (Australia, Brazil,
141 Finland, France, India, Nigeria, Philippines, Portugal, UK and USA) Hickman et al. (2021) found that more than 45% said
142 their feelings about climate change negatively affected their daily life and functioning, 75% reported that they find the future
143 frightening, and 83% said they think people (adults) have failed to take care of the planet. But it is not just the young
144 experiencing the effects of climate change on mental health – it is negatively affecting the mental health and emotional
145 wellbeing of people of all ages globally, but more profoundly of poor and vulnerable populations (Lawrence et al., 2021;
146 Clayton et al., 2017), as well as women and Indigenous people (IPCC, 2022; Sultana, 2022). For a summary of other studies,
147 see Figure 2.

148 [FIGURE 2 HERE]

149 The extent of tipping dynamics in anomie have not yet been studied directly, but some studies have demonstrated tipping
150 dynamics in phenomena that can serve as proxies for the anomic state of a society or community. Specifically, (complex)
151 contagion processes (see Table 1) have been observed for mental disorders and distress, including suicide (Scatà et al., 2018;
152 Paz, 2022), for deviant behaviours (Busching and Krahe, 2018), and for distrust (Ross et al., 2022). Societies or communities
153 that are already in a zone of social instability (e.g. high rates of anti-social behaviour, increasing deviant behaviour such as
154 crime or substance abuse, high rates of mental health problems) due to other factors, such as poverty, rising inequality and
155 failing institution (Burns, 2015) or because of a gradual erosion of social norms that can affect affluent communities too (Pfiff
156 et al., 2012; Bursztyjn et al., 2020), are particular at risk to tip into an anomic state, when additionally being faced with
157 ecological destabilisation (cf. Douglas et al., 2016). Anomie tipping can also result from a single extreme event, for instance,
158 triggered by an ESTP being breached. Such an event can instantly disintegrate whole communities, scattering members of the
159 community in the aftermath (i.e., interaction with displacement), leaving them with depleted social and mental resources
160 (Miller, 2016) and establishing the perception that society as a whole is failing (Teymoori et al., 2017). Tipping in this case
161 can be described using Logistic Map models (Bruun et al., 2017), which can model how coupled systems can tumble towards
162 chaotic system behaviour (see Table 1). Natural and human-caused disasters can bring communities together and strengthen
163 cooperation, however research suggests that when the experience of solidarity and unity in the disaster aftermath starts to
164 wane, communities can experience increasing disillusionment and depression, followed by social disintegration (i.e. anomie),
165 if they are left without adequate, long-term support (Townshend et al., 2015).

166 Anomie can have feedback effects on the Earth system, further destabilising it through various pathways. When social norms
167 disintegrate, certain pro-social behaviours and collective actions that are necessary to slow down the climate crisis may

168 diminish (Constantino et al., 2022; Schneider and van der Linden, 2023; Lettinga et al., 2020). Without strong social norms
169 and social ties supporting collective action and fostering reciprocity, trust, and cooperation, it becomes increasingly
170 challenging to implement effective measures to address accelerating Earth system destabilisation, hence increasing the
171 likelihood for Earth system tipping (Fehr et al., 2002; Thøgersen, 2008; Malerba, 2022). Moreover, mental health problems
172 weaken people’s capacity to seek solutions, fostering collective inertia and increasing susceptibility to conspiracy theories,
173 potentially further undermining trust and cooperation to prevent further Earth destabilisation (Burden et al, 2017; de la
174 Sablonnière & Taylor 2020; Green et al., 2023).

175 **2.2 Radicalisation & Polarization**

176 Radicalisation can be a reaction to perceived external threats, including ecological threats. Research suggests that people can
177 respond to climate change and other ecological threats by becoming more authoritarian and derogative against outgroups
178 (Fritsche et al., 2012; Jackson et al., 2019; Taylor, 2019; Russo et al., 2020; Uenal et al., 2021; [Spaiser et al., 2024](#)). This effect
179 can be further exacerbated by the well documented effect of heat on aggressive behaviours, including online hate speech
180 (Stechemesser et al., 2022). Current trends seem to suggest increasing polarisation (Dunlap et al., 2016; Vihma et al., 2021;
181 Cole et al., 2023; Smith et al., 2024), i.e. a rise of the political right, which is increasingly attracting the political centre
182 (Levitsky and Ziblatt, 2018; Halikiopoulou, 2018; Layton et al. 2021), obstructing climate action and increasingly diverging
183 from the political left/centre-left, which is demanding climate action (Aasen, 2017; Lockwood, 2018; Gustafson et al., 2019).
184 This polarisation is driven indirectly by Earth destabilisation too, as it is at least partly a response to climate mitigation policies
185 that are perceived as a threat to the existing socio-economic system, status and identity (Dunlap et al., 2016; Hoffarth and
186 Hodson, 2016; Daggett, 2018; Clarke et al., 2019; Benegal and Homan, 2021; Ehret et al., 2022; Brännlund and Peterson, 2024)
187 and can be further exacerbated by inequality and general economic decline (Winkler, 2019; Stewart et al., 2020; Hübscher et
188 al., 2023), which again can be partly linked to Earth destabilisation at least in some parts of the world (Méjean et al., 2024;
189 Dietz et al, 2021). However, as climate change progresses and becomes a more concrete existential threat throughout the world
190 (Huggel et al., 2022), we may see even socially liberal individuals developing increasingly authoritarian and reactionary views
191 (Gadarian, 2010; Hetherington and Suhay, 2011; Huddy and Feldmann, 2011; Hirsch, 2022). At that stage we may see
192 radicalisation taking a different direction, with currently fringe political ideologies such as ecofascism taking hold. Ecofascism
193 reinterprets white supremacy ideology in the context of climate/ecological crisis with the goal to defend habitable areas for the
194 white race and decrease world population (Taylor, 2019). Already, a couple of recent right-wing terrorists have self-identified
195 as ecofascists, such as Brenton Tarrant, who killed 51 people during a terror attack on a mosque in Christchurch, New Zealand
196 in 2019. A few months later Patrick Wood Crusius killed 23 people in El Paso, United States, legitimising his actions again
197 with ecofascist ideologies (Achenbach, 2019). Certain ecofascist themes seem to also appear increasingly in public debates
198 (Thomas and Gosink, 2021).

199 Radicalisation can exhibit tipping dynamics. Research has described radicalisation, e.g., the spread of right-wing ideology
200 (Youngblood, 2020), through complex contagion processes (see Table 1). Similarly, the spreading of extremist content on
201 social media has been observed to follow complex contagion processes (Ferrara, 2017). Indeed, polarisation and radicalisation
202 around climate change has been observed to be on the rise online (Weber et al., 2020; Teen et al., 2020; Falkenberg et al.
203 2022), at times displaying non-linear, accelerating diffusion dynamics (Centre for Countering Digital Hate, 2023) and fuelled
204 by corporate funding (Farrell, 2016; Teen et al., 2020). Moreover, processes of “cross-pollination”, the merging or previously
205 separate radical clusters facilitating further contagion, have been documented (Kimmel, 2018; Baele et al., 2023), including
206 for climate denial (Agius et al., 2020). Polarization has also been observed to follow tipping dynamics. Leonard et al. (2021)
207 describe for instance for the US how subtle public opinion shifts from left and right can have a differential effect on the self-
208 reinforcing processes of elites, causing Republicans to polarize more quickly than Democrats. As self-reinforcement pushes

209 societies toward the critical threshold, polarisation speeds up. Political polarisation tipping, often accompanying radicalisation
210 of certain segments of the population, has been found to be difficult to reverse due to asymmetric self-perpetuating trajectories
211 (Macy et al., 2021).

212 Radicalisation and polarisation can have feedback effects on the Earth's system, destabilising it further. According to research
213 (Stanley et al., 2017; Stanley and Wilson, 2019; Julhä and Hellmer, 2020), authoritarian and social dominance attitudes are
214 negatively related to environmental attitudes and support for environmental/climate change policies. Indeed, right-wing
215 ideology has been repeatedly correlated with climate change denial (Hornsey et.al, 2016; Hoffarth and Hodson, 2016; Czarnek
216 et al., 2020; Julhä and Hellmer, 2020). When climate change is denied, no attempts are made to mitigate climate change, on
217 the contrary, decisions may be taken to further prop up high-emitting industries (Ekberg et al., 2023; Darian-Smith, 2023).
218 There is however increasingly a retreat of pure climate denial (primary climate obstruction), instead we see a rise in secondary
219 and tertiary climate obstruction, which can include deliberate polarisation of societies on the issue (Kousser and Trantr, 2018;
220 Goldberg and Vandenberg, 2019; Lamb et al., 2020; Mann, 2021; Flores et al., 2022; Ekberg et al., 2023; Burgess et al., 2024).
221 Research moreover demonstrates that the increasing success of the radical right influences also the policies of mainstream
222 parties (Abou-Chadi and Krause, 2020), i.e. even if radical parties are not in government, they still can undermine climate
223 policies.

224 **2.3 Displacement**

225 Acute and slow-onset environmental pressures, such as heatwaves, long-term temperature and humidity changes, extreme
226 weather events and sea level rise (e.g. due to the melting of Greenland glaciers, and the West Antarctic Ice Sheet), are likely
227 to impact the migration (voluntary) and displacement (forced, involuntary) circumstances of a large proportion of the global
228 population (Mastorillo et al., 2016; Berlemann et al., 2020; Hauer et al., 2020; Hoffmann et al., 2020; Lu and Romps, 2023).
229 In the context of ESTPs, sea-level rise is projected to be one of the most costly and irreversible consequences of climate change
230 (Hauer et al., 2020, McLeman, 2018, Kaczan & Orgill-Meyer, 2020; Armstrong McKay et al., 2022). Another rapid-onset
231 hazard is land degradation due to permafrost melt, both in coastal areas and inland (Irrgang et al., 2022; Streletskiy et al.,
232 2023). Accelerated Polar warming or Arctic Amplification warms Arctic surface temperatures by a factor two-to-four times
233 faster than the rest of the globe (Rantanen et al., 2022), which - in addition to the direct impact on permafrost thawing - results
234 in the loss of protective sea ice and, consequently, rapidly increasing coastal erosion (Casas-Prat and Wang 2020; Nielsen et
235 al., 2022; Wunderling et al., 2024). As the proportion of the global population living in coastal regions continues to grow,
236 likely surpassing one billion people this century, this will have profound implications for both individuals and societies (Hauer
237 et al., 2020, McLeman, 2018, Kaczan and Orgill-Meyer, 2020). However, sea level rise is not the only driver of adaptive
238 mobility (Gioli et al., 2016). Even if international efforts towards mitigating climate change are successful (RCP 4.5 – low
239 emissions scenario), models have projected drought-induced international displacement to increase substantially by the end of
240 the 21st Century. High emissions scenarios (e.g. RCP 8.5) would push the number of displaced due to droughts even further
241 up (Smirnov et al., 2023).

242 Displacement can happen suddenly and amplifying or positive feedbacks can increase or maintain the dislocation of
243 populations even after the extreme weather event or initial shock has passed. This can create a cycle that reinforces, extends,
244 or renders the displacement permanent. Displaced populations must grapple with the loss of their livelihoods, often by
245 identifying new temporary sources of income that can become permanent due to the challenges of returning to origin
246 communities (Young and Jacobsen, 2013; Wilson, 2020). The displacement is often linked with turning away from traditional
247 ways of life and economical support, e.g. in the cases of Arctic Inuit population fishing, hunting, and trapping (Ford et al.,
248 2023; Streletskiy et al., 2023), and the movement away from traditional agricultural and pastoralist livelihoods in areas of
249 Central and Southwest Africa (Akinbami, 2021; Thorn et al., 2023). This can result in cultural heritage loss (Pearson, 2023).

250 These compounding and reinforcing effects can exacerbate pre-existing social inequities and determine the pattern of
251 displacement (e.g. short or long-term/permanent) among different populations (Lama, 2021; Boas et al, 2022). Additionally,
252 with slow-onset events, decisions to migrate can be driven by social networks and connections; when members of a community
253 migrate, others may make the decision to follow (Manchin and Orazbayev, 2018; Thorn et al., 2023; Tubi and Israeli, 2023).
254 This can, in and of itself, be subject to tipping dynamics; when a certain percentage of a community has left, this has been
255 observed to negatively impact those left behind, potentially triggering subsequent outmigration (Rai, 2022).

256 In the absence of appropriate governance mechanisms and protocols for how and where to relocate displaced communities,
257 negative feedback consequences for the Earth systems are possible (Islam et al., 2021; Thorn et al., 2023). Hosting
258 communities may face strains on their natural resources and/or sinks to meet the additional needs of the displaced. For example,
259 Tafere (2018) identified environmental degradation resulting from the influx of displaced populations in East Africa, often in
260 environmentally sensitive (e.g. protected forests) or already strained regions (e.g. arid or semi-arid areas). Such straining of
261 ecological systems to accommodate increased ecoservices demand due to forced migration could contribute to accelerating at
262 the very least regional ecological destabilisation.

263 **2.4 Conflict**

264 Despite growing concerns about conflict, the causal link between climate change and conflicts as well as their underlying
265 dynamics remain debated (Burke et al., 2009; Buhaug, 2010; Buhaug et al., 2014; Solow, 2013, Kelley et al., 2015; Selby et
266 al., 2017). While statistical models inferred either significant coincidences of particular civil conflict events with concurrent
267 climate extreme events or significant associations of warming and drought trends with civil conflict trends, many qualitative
268 in-depth assessments of the particular civil conflict events and their underlying mechanisms dismiss such coincidences and
269 associations (e.g. Buhaug, 2010; Selby et al., 2017). Though not the only cause (Sakaguchi et al., 2017; Mach et al., 2019;
270 Scartozzi, 2020; Ge et al., 2022), climate change undermines human livelihoods and security, because it increases the
271 vulnerability of populations (e.g. to extreme events, food/water scarcity), grievances, and political tensions through an array
272 of indirect – at times non-linear and latent (i.e. not measurable) – pathways, thereby increasing human insecurity and the risk
273 of violent conflict (Scheffran et al., 2012; van Baalen and Mobjörk, 2017; Koubi, 2019; von Uexkull and Buhaug, 2021; Ide
274 et al., 2023). It is difficult to separate mutually enforcing vulnerabilities to both climate and conflict that trigger an escalating
275 spiral of violence and amplify cascading crisis events beyond critical thresholds (Buhaug and von Uexkull, 2021) and
276 connected through telecoupling (Franzke et al., 2022).

277 Many conflicts can be described in terms of social tipping mechanisms, which can be triggered by Earth system destabilisation,
278 where causal mechanisms are inferred using data (Sun et al., 2022) and can be modelled through socially connected tipping
279 dynamics, for instance using the logistic map approach (see Table 1) (Guo et al., 2018, Aquino et al., 2019, Ge et al., 2022,
280 Guo et al., 2023). Using a complex systems lens and connecting the human–environmental–climate security (HECS) nexus
281 framework (Daoudy, 2021; Daoudy et al., 2022; Scheffran et al., 2012) and the social feedback loop (SFL) framework
282 (Kolmes, 2008) can help clarify conflict tipping mechanisms in coupled social-ecological systems. The HECS framework
283 infers that climatic drivers of civil conflicts are best understood as a result of policy decisions and governance that reflect the
284 ideology and preferences of ruling elites or ethnic bias instead of investigating the direct functions of climate extremes. SFL
285 suggests that initial social disruptions directly caused by gradual climate change and climate extreme events can itself generate
286 a distinct positive feedback loop leading to self-accelerating rates of societal disintegration and to civil conflicts (Kolmes,
287 2008). In turn, using a combined HECS-SFL lens, civil conflicts can be perceived as amplified social disintegration and
288 disruption resulting from societal and political responses to the initial disintegration and disruptions caused directly by climate
289 extremes and climate change (Scheffran et al., 2023). Self-reinforcing feedbacks emerge in social-ecological systems as a
290 result of complex interactions among socio-economic, environmental and political events and variables, such as institutional

291 capacity for solving social-ecological problems initially caused by climate change (Daoudy et al., 2022). These complex
292 interactions result in the amplification of social-ecological shocks that climate change and extremes initially caused and
293 potentially disrupt and negatively tip the system in concern to a conflict state. The affected system becomes entrapped in the
294 conflict state until sufficient incentives can move it out. However, there remain gaps in understanding latent mechanisms which
295 introduce variable delay (e.g. slow social transformations), confounding factors, non-linear bifurcations (e.g. some
296 transformations are irreversible) and regional variability.

297 When conflicts escalate, exhibiting a tipping dynamic, they can in turn impact the Earth system, either directly as warfare itself
298 is producing excessive GHG emissions and destroying vital ecosystems such as forests, as is for instance currently the case of
299 Russia's war in Ukraine (de Klerk et al., 2022). For example, the Kakhovka Dam was destroyed in 2023 during the Russia-
300 Ukraine conflict. Early assessments (UKCEH & HRW, 2023; UNEP, 2023) indicated a maximum downstream flood extent
301 of around 83,000 hectares (6 - 9 March 2023) including inundation of downstream urban areas and disruption of irrigation for
302 agriculture, water supply and sanitation systems. Over half a million hectares of habitat of conservation importance was
303 estimated to have been affected by the dam breach, from the upstream Kakhovka Reservoir and its wetland habitats to the
304 downstream Black Sea Biosphere Reserve. This impact area covered the distribution of 567 species that have a listing on the
305 IUCN European Red List, 28 of these species have a threat status of vulnerable or worse. There were also concerns about the
306 supply of cooling water to the upstream Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, i.e. one war-induced ecological disaster could have
307 resulted in another ecological disaster. Illegal logging, deforestation and charcoal production also support militia in many
308 protracted conflicts throughout Africa (Branch et al., 2023). But, even beyond involvement in war activities, everyday military
309 operations directly generate vast emissions of GHGs (Kester and Sovacool, 2017; Crawford, 2019). The feedback impact of
310 conflicts on the Earth system can also occur indirectly through impeding humanity's ability to collaborate to find solutions to
311 global challenges such as climate change. Within societies entangled in a conflict, resources are diverted to winning the conflict
312 rather than to mitigate climate change, also affecting a country's environmental governance mechanisms. Finally, the continued
313 presence of a large number of tactical and nuclear weapons represents a significant threat to global climate and other Earth
314 system processes (Turco et al., 1983; Xia et al., 2022).

315 **2.5 Financial Destabilisation**

316 The impacts of Earth system destabilisation on the financial sector are now receiving increasing attention (Ameli et al., 2023;
317 Chenet, 2024), with studies suggesting that climate-related damages will impact the stability of the global banking system
318 significantly (Lamperti et al., 2019), as can biodiversity loss (Kedward et al., 2023). For instance, stocks of capital at risk due
319 to climate-induced extreme and more frequent weather events such as floods, would adversely affect insurance companies
320 (Lamperti et al., 2019). Reinsurance companies are withdrawing increasingly from areas exposed to high climate change risks,
321 e.g., areas vulnerable to wildfires and floods (Frank, 2023). Earth system destabilisation is likely to result in stranded assets
322 (Caldecott et al., 2021). Escalating climate change can also destroy the capital of firms, reduce their profitability, deteriorate
323 their liquidity, reduce the productivity of their workforce, leading to a higher rate of default, harming the financial sector and
324 the economy in general (Dafermos et al., 2018; Dietz et al., 2021). One issue with the existing empirical evidence and models
325 that try to estimate climate damage for the financial sector is however that they do not account for ESTPs (Keen et al., 2022;
326 Kedward et al., 2023; Trust et al., 2023; Marsden et al., 2024).

327 Still, first advances are being made. Martin et al. (2024) propose an Integrated Dynamic Environment-Economic model on the
328 coupling of an Earth Model of Intermediate Complexity and a non-linear macroeconomic model in continuous time. Using
329 this model, they found that above a warming of about +2.3°C, damages drastically foster the need for additional investments
330 in productive capital for adaptation, which could potentially lead to the emergence of private-debt tipping points and a
331 worldwide cascade of defaults. The inability to repay obligations generates non-performing loans (or bad debt) in the balance

332 sheets of banks and other financial institutions, with possible systemic implications such as those experienced during the 2008
333 global financial crisis. It is estimated that climate change will increase the frequency of banking crises by 26% to 248%
334 depending on the extent of climate change (Lamperti et al., 2019). If the banks' equity deterioration due to economic
335 imbalances reaches a certain threshold, secondary systemic effects can be triggered. Financial institutions exposed to troubled
336 banks would suffer losses in the market value of their assets, potentially triggering contagion phenomena (Kiyotaki and Moore,
337 2002; Yan et al., 2010; Roukny et al., 2013; Chinazzi and Fagiolo, 2015). These contagion phenomena can result in a financial
338 tipping point being reached, when contagion becomes self-perpetuating due to feedback loops in the system that amplify the
339 initial shocks (May et al., 2008; Gai and Kapadia; 2010, Haldane and May, 2011). If ESTPs are triggered, destroying assets
340 and the economic productivity of whole regions, we can expect rapid non-linear tipping effects in the coupled financial sector
341 (Battiston et al., 2017). The financial and economic system would eventually settle into a new state, although this state may
342 be characterized by recession, high unemployment, austerity, and other deteriorating economic conditions. The consequences
343 of such a financial upheaval are often a rapid increase in social instability (i.e. interaction with anomie), increase in
344 radicalisation (i.e. interaction with radicalisation) as more people are forced to compete for basic needs (i.e. interaction with
345 conflict) (Dietz et al., 2021).

346
347 This could also impact societies' abilities to mitigate climate change, thus risking the derailment of sustainability transition
348 (Laybourn et al., 2023). Governments will likely try to stabilise financial markets through bailing-out policy such as providing
349 fresh capital and saving insolvent banks and it is predicted that climate change will likely increase the frequency of bailouts
350 (Lamperti et al., 2019). Recent government bailouts in response to COVID-19 have shown a distinct lack of sustainability
351 focus (Rockström et al., 2023). Bailouts negatively affect the public budget and lead to increasing government debts, leaving
352 decreasing resources for addressing Earth system destabilisation, for instance through effective climate change mitigation
353 measures. Financial destabilisation would also deplete businesses and individuals of resources to invest in post-carbon
354 transition (Laybourn et al., 2023).

355 **3 Cascading Negative Social Tipping Dynamics**

356 The basis for many tipping point behaviours in social-ecological systems is a non-linear relationship between critical pairs of
357 variables. Non-linearities create disproportionate relationships between cause and effect, potentially leading to change that is
358 faster, more intense, or more extensive than expected (and hence, harder to reverse or control). Cascades, as defined by Klose
359 et al. (2021), are sequential occurrences of events in which an initial event triggers a series of subsequent events and are one
360 important attribute of systemic risk (Sillmann et al., 2022). Cascades are more likely when multiple variables within a given
361 system exhibit and transform non-linear relationships to each other, i.e. when coupled, these relationships transform in ways
362 that often cannot be understood. Crossing multiple negative tipping points in diverse systems increases the likelihood of (partial
363 or localised) societal collapse.

364 In the context of migration, this can manifest as a domino effect, where an environmental or socio-political event causes
365 involuntary displacement or voluntary migration as people search for improved living conditions and better economic
366 opportunities. This is well documented in the Lake Chad Basin case where climate change and unsustainable resource
367 management affect the sustainability of natural resources, increasing vulnerability and leading to coping strategies such as
368 migration (McLeman et al., 2021). In Ukraine, the war-induced ecological devastation in the aftermath of the Kakhovka Dam
369 destruction has displaced thousands of people, and a major humanitarian programme was initiated in response (WHO, 2023).

370 A possible tipping cascade can be identified between climate change, food insecurity, and migration. The last five years have
371 seen an increase in food insecurity, representing a problematic reversal of the progress done since the 1990s to reduce world

372 hunger (FAO et al., 2022). Climate tipping points could dramatically impact food security through direct impacts on production
373 (availability) and indirect impacts on access to food when displacement occurs. One of the most direct ways in which tipping
374 points can affect food insecurity is through changes in rainfall distribution, which would render agricultural livelihoods in
375 rainfed regions unfeasible without irrigation (or other) technologies (Giannini et al., 2017; Benton et al., 2017). Indeed, even
376 in the most optimistic climate mitigation scenarios which would lead to a temporary overshoot over 1.5°C, and then return to
377 temperatures below that threshold, a tipping point might occur in precipitation patterns which can result in adverse food
378 security impacts (cf. Ritchie et al., 2020). Additionally, recent studies suggest that escalating climate change could result in
379 concurrent weather extremes driven by a strongly meandering jet stream, which could trigger simultaneous harvest failures
380 across major crop-producing regions, posing a serious threat to global food security (Kornhuber et al., 2023). Food security
381 can change seasonally. As such, food security does not exhibit traditional bifurcation in the sense of irreversibility. However,
382 a permanent change towards a state of food insecurity would be catastrophic, representing a permanent food crisis.
383 Krishnamurthy et al. (2022) offer a framework to identify “transitions” as prolonged periods of food insecurity (Figure 3),
384 using the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), the leading global metric for standardized food security
385 assessment, which combines data on agricultural production, food prices, nutrition rates, weather patterns, and other variables
386 to determine the general food security situation in a given location. With these metrics, a tipping point in a food system can be
387 thought of as a shift between periods with minimal food insecurity (IPC 1 or 2) to periods of sustained food crisis (IPC 3 or
388 higher). An example of a potential tipping point using the IPC categories was found in East Africa in 2015/2016 due to
389 anomalously low rainfall in both the summer and autumn. This trend, combined with insufficient drought preparedness,
390 resulted in crop failures and livestock mortality—and consequently a depletion of livelihood assets, food stocks, and overall
391 food security in northern and eastern regions of Ethiopia (Figure 3).

392

393 [FIGURE 3 HERE]

394 The links between food insecurity and migration are complex, severe food insecurity has been found to trap people locally,
395 who wish to migrate, but are unable to (Sadiddin et al., 2019) but there is also evidence that migration can be driven by food
396 insecurity (Smith and Wesselbaum, 2022). Migration flows are also impacted by climate change directly (i.e. the local
397 environment becomes unsuitable for favourable habitation) and indirectly (i.e. by impacting relative wages through effects on
398 farmers’ crop yields). A climate disaster, for instance triggered by a climate tipping point being breached, may also lead to
399 sudden displacement, whether temporary or permanent. To summarise, a cascading dynamic plays out when various tipping
400 points become coupled, for instance, when the tipping in an Earth system triggers the tipping in food insecurity and potentially
401 simultaneously a tipping in displacement, which may in turn reinforce food insecurity.

402 Other potential cascading links exist as well. For instance, societies may tip into a state of conflict because of competition over
403 dwindling resources as tipping in food insecurity occurs and conflicts in turn may reinforce food insecurity, a cascade made
404 likely when institutions are weak, and governance fails (Martin-Shields and Stojetz, 2019; Anderson et al., 2021; Shemyakina,
405 2022). Radicalisation and polarisation can fuel conflicts (McNeil-Willson et al., 2019; Rousseau et al., 2021), radicalisation
406 and polarisation has been also observed in countries hosting displaced communities (Ravndal, 2018), a link often moderated
407 by socio-economic inequality and perceived insecurity. Radicalisation, polarisation, and anomie can reinforce each other too.
408 Research suggests for instance that in countries with greater polarisation, people trust each other less (Rapp, 2016). On the
409 other hand, people with mental health issues are more susceptible to conspiracy theories, which can fuel radicalisation (Green
410 et al., 2023). Finally, financial destabilisation can be a driver for radicalisation, polarisation, and anomie (Funke et al., 2016;
411 Bygnes, 2017; Doerr et al., 2022). However, these and other potential cascading links and processes are still little researched
412 and understood.

413 4 Emerging research questions and intervention options

414 4.1 Methods and models and emerging data questions

415 Various methods and approaches have been suggested for the study of tipping processes in social and socio-ecological systems,
416 which can be used to study negative social tipping points and the cascading interactions between them. In Table 1 we discuss
417 the most prevalent methods and some new emerging approaches. We would like to emphasise here that we are not suggesting
418 that negative social tipping points are knowable in advance, in terms of determining or predicting the exact threshold or time
419 when a tipping will occur. In fact, the knowability of tipping points is a challenge not only for social tipping points but equally
420 for ESTPs (Boulton et al., 2023). It is usually only possible to determine a tipping point subsequently. However, even then
421 there is often not a single negative social tipping point, the exact threshold may vary for instance from one country to another
422 or from one community to another (e.g. c.f. Spaiser et al. 2018 deriving from data specific segregation tipping points for
423 various schools, located on a curve), as the setup of reinforcing and dampening feedbacks will be different in every context.
424 This is also true for some ecological tipping points; e.g. different lakes will have different tipping points (Hessen et al., 2023)
425 The methods we are suggesting here are useful (1) to study tipping processes, once they have occurred or to generate various
426 model-based scenarios to build our general understanding of tipping processes, so we are better equipped to respond to them
427 and (2) to build early warning systems that could potentially capture a system becoming more unstable, chaotic or exhibiting
428 more unusual behaviour before a tipping point has been reached (Dakos et al., 2023). The purpose is to increase our agency
429 (see 4.2).

430

431 We are also conscious that all models are oversimplifications of many stories and perspectives and detailed mechanisms.
432 Tipping models can be higher dimensional to capture more dimensions. But even a low dimensional tipping model, such as a
433 neural network (see Table 1), can be used to estimate tipping parameters. In effect a simple model provides a projection of
434 more complex mechanisms in a function space. The main questions are how much information we lose in projecting to a
435 tipping model, compared to a projection to a different model, and how useful the projection is in enhancing our understanding
436 of underlying mechanisms and in determining agency pathways. We believe tipping model development is important to
437 advance our understanding and enhance our agency, but we also advocate the comparison of different models to identify the
438 most useful model.

439 [TABLE 1 HERE]

440 Further emerging data questions include:

- 441 • What are the most relevant and appropriate datasets for early warning of negative social tipping points? Social tipping
442 points are more complex than physical tipping points due to the interacting relationships between climate parameters
443 and social responses. Given this complexity, there is a need to identify relevant data sources and methods that can be
444 used to detect and anticipate tipping points. Recent advances in machine learning and increasing digital social data
445 all offer an unprecedented opportunity to understand early warning signals for social tipping points. Once datasets
446 are identified, ensuring that these are accessible and usable for analysis is highly important. Moving forward, it will
447 be important to consider sharing platforms to ensure access.
- 448 • What are the characteristics of datasets that can render them more (or less) useful for detecting social tipping points?
449 A key, practical question for tipping point analysis is whether there are specific characteristics that make datasets
450 more appropriate for detection of critical transitions. Early warning of tipping points ultimately depends on reliable,
451 high-frequency data (Scheffer et al. 2009, Dakos et al. 2015). For example, in an analysis of data requirements for
452 early warning of food security tipping points, Krishnamurthy et al. (2020) highlighted the importance of temporal
453 resolution over spatial resolution to detect autocorrelation or flickering in coupled climate-food systems. However,

454 research has shown that even limited datasets such as Soil Moisture Active Passive (SMAP) can provide game-
455 changing opportunities for detecting food security transitions (Krishnamurthy et al., 2022).

- 456 • Which early warning signals are more meaningful for different applications? Identifying the most useful metrics and
457 statistics for early warnings of tipping points translates to actionable information, but it requires a clear understanding
458 of underlying system functioning and mechanisms. For instance, in food security applications, autocorrelation is the
459 key metric used to detect a transition in food security states, with the rolling average statistic indicating the direction
460 of the transition (Krishnamurthy et al., 2022). Such insights can help leverage resources in a timely fashion to avert
461 negative effects associated with social systems that exhibit tipping points.
- 462 • Moreover, probabilistic insights from research on collective social dynamics may complement insights from new
463 early warning signals for social tipping. These approaches identify measurable qualities of social systems or networks,
464 such as heterogeneity, connectivity and individual-based thresholds that make social tipping points more likely
465 (Bentley et al., 2014). For maximum efficacy, these modelling efforts should derive from both qualitative and
466 quantitative methods so as to benefit from both data and lived experience.

467 **4.2 Intervention options and emerging policy questions**

468 Given that negative social tipping points are under-researched, there is little knowledge on how they can be prevented or
469 managed. As noted for instance by [Milkoreit et al. \(2024\)](#), social tipping point governance has not really been developed yet.
470 In Table 2 we nevertheless provide a preliminary overview of potential intervention options, linked to the discussed negative
471 social tipping points and their main potential interactions. Future research needs to focus on identifying other potential
472 intervention options and tying these together into a coherent tipping points governance framework. Ultimately, effective
473 governance of negative (social) tipping points will hinge upon the understanding of collective social dynamics and proactive
474 resource-based interventions. The main line of agency we would like to emphasise is the strengthening of societal institutions
475 and polycentric governance mechanisms (Carlisle and Gruby, 2019; Morrison et al. 2023). We also would like to emphasise
476 agency in driving positive social tipping processes that improve long-term sustainability and well-being of people and planet
477 (Gaupp et al., 2023) and prevent societies sliding into negative social tipping dynamics.

478 [TABLE 2 HERE]

479 Further emerging policy questions include:

- 480 • How do multiple climate extremes and other shocks and stressors combine, especially do slow onset climate change
481 processes drive systemic changes and tipping points? Evidence provided here, suggests that severe climate events,
482 such as droughts and hurricanes, can result in highly complex social change, including negative social tipping points.
483 Additional research is required to understand if and how climate and social tipping points interact, and whether one
484 tipping point can result in a plethora of other transitions.
- 485 • As critical transitions unfold, how does the risk landscape shift in response? Societies respond to environmental stress
486 and resource scarcities. However, these responses may lead to new risks. Understanding how critical transitions affect
487 the current (and future) risk landscape can provide essential information for decision-makers to prioritize investments
488 in adaptation and mitigation.
- 489 • What are the processes required to integrate research into policy making? There is growing research on early warning
490 signals for tipping points. However, once suitable datasets and early warning diagnostics are identified, what are the
491 enabling processes and steps required to integrate actionable early warning systems into decision-making? New data
492 analytics, dashboards and communications material may go a long way towards facilitating the transition to early
493 warning systems of tipping points that can translate into action.

494 **5 Conclusion**

495 We mapped selected key potential negative social tipping points and their potential cascading interactions. We have also briefly
496 discussed potential intervention options and provided examples of methods and models that need to be advanced in the future.
497 We do not claim to have captured all possible social negative tipping points in the context of Earth system destabilisation, and
498 we acknowledge that other social subsystems could experience negative tipping points as well, e.g. breakdown of (certain)
499 global supply chains (Marcucci et al., 2022), or breakdown of the public health system (at least in certain areas) triggered for
500 instance by a massive freak heat event or the breakout of a disease due to climate change (Sharma 2023, Skinner et al., 2023).
501 Our goal is to highlight that if societies fail to stabilise the Earth system through decarbonisation, land use reallocation and
502 other measures, societies will not merely stay in the business-as usual state. Through mechanisms of negative social tipping
503 accompanying further Earth system destabilisation, they instead risk transitioning into a new social system state, which may
504 be characterised by greater impoverishment, authoritarianism, hostility, discord, violence, conflict, and alienation. Societies
505 more vulnerable to climate change are likely to experience such negative social tipping sooner, but this will inevitably have
506 knock-on effects globally. It is increasingly likely that in some regions large-scale climate adaptation will need to be
507 undertaken to reduce vulnerabilities to the current and future magnitude of climate change.

508 The acceleration of climate tipping points perpetuates a vicious cycle that weakens societies and their abilities to respond,
509 feeding further Earth system destabilisation. This vicious cycle is also fed by widening socioeconomic inequalities (Millward-
510 Hopkins, 2022). As the consequences of climate change intensify, societal trust, cooperation, and altruism may erode due to
511 increased competition for scarce resources, displacement of populations, and other climate-related challenges. Our knowledge
512 on negative social tipping points is still very patchy and fragmented, with many estimations and models likely to be
513 underestimating the effects of breaching Earth system tipping points. This is particularly true for economic and financial sector
514 models (Marsden et al., 2024). Researchers (Keen et al., 2022) are advocating for developing future loss calculations in close
515 collaboration with climate scientists to ensure adequate representation of climate catastrophes.

516

517 **Competing interests**

518 At least one of the (co-)authors is a member of the editorial board of Earth System Dynamics.

519

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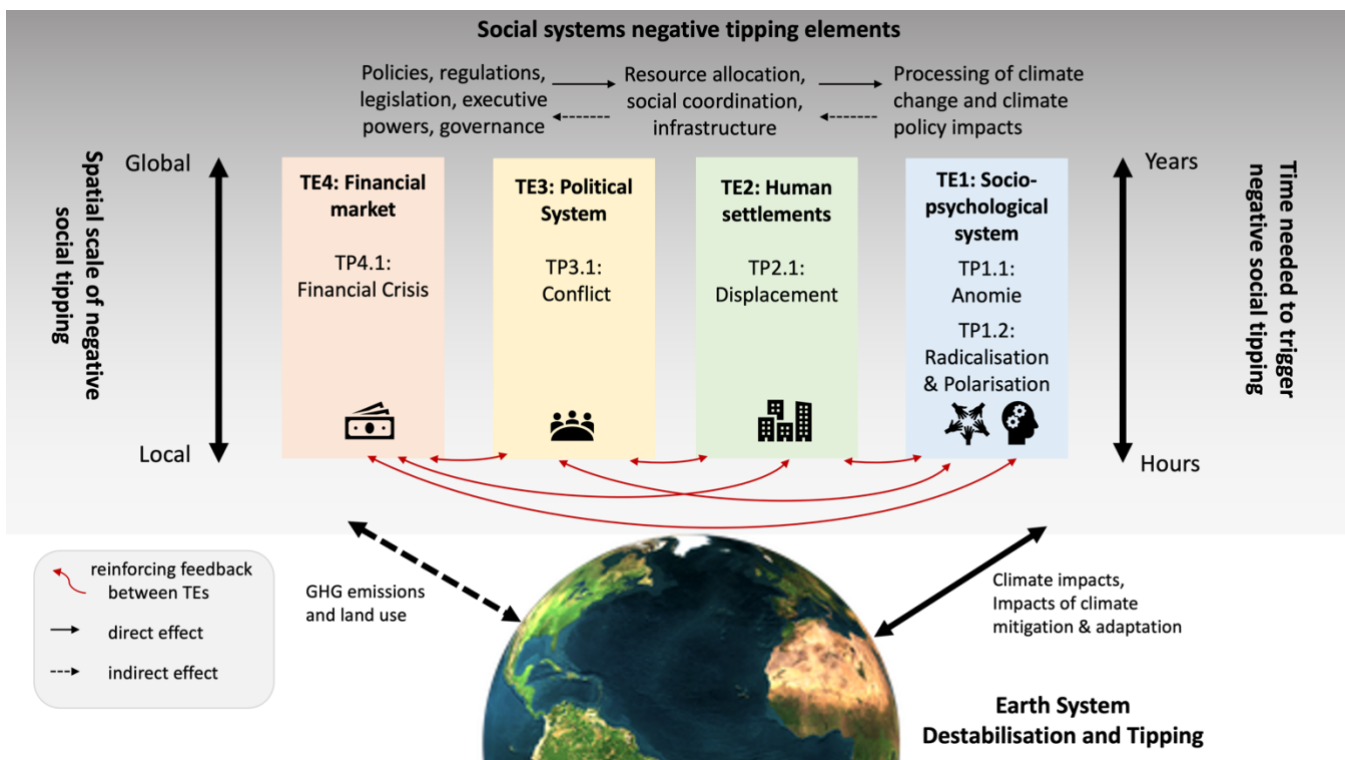
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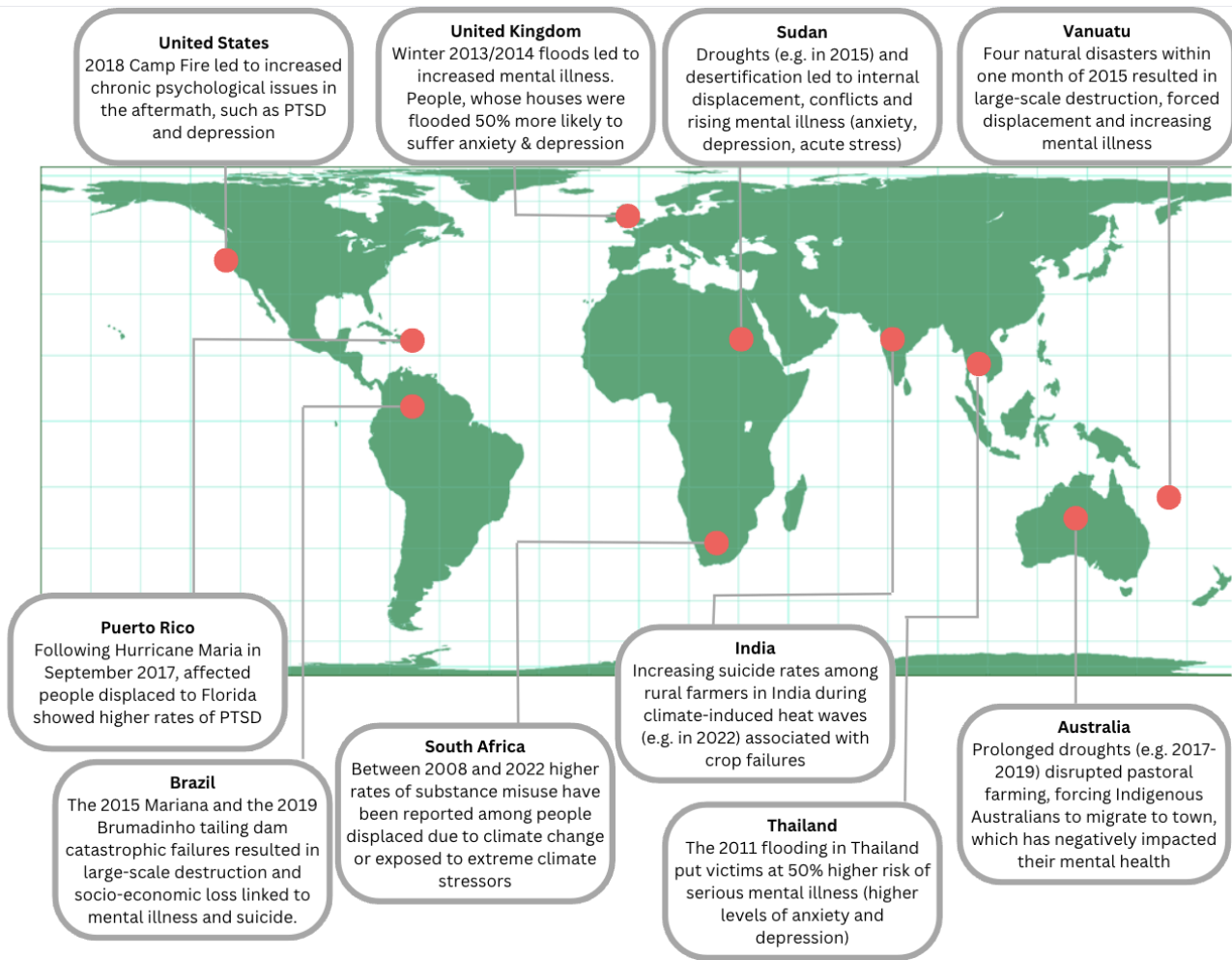
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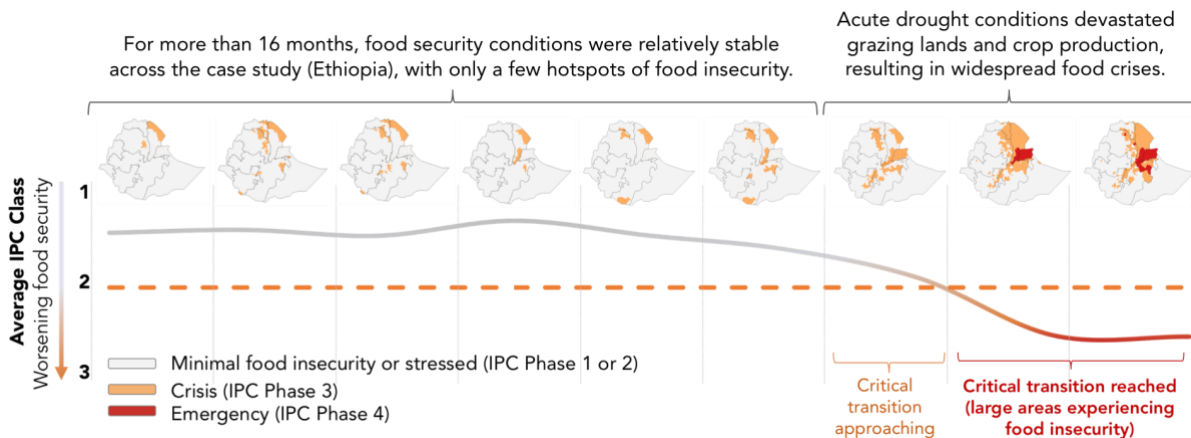


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 1522 **Figure 1: Tipping elements (TEs) and associated negative social tipping processes (TPs) with the potential to further destabilise the**
 1523 **World–Earth system. The identified interactions between the various negative tipping processes mean that they can potentially**
 1524 **reinforce one another, making destabilisation more likely. Earth image source: <https://pngimg.com/image/25350>**
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Figure 2: Examples of the impact of extreme weather events on mental health across the world, based on Carleton (2017); Clayton et al. (2017); Jermacane et al. (2018); Atwoli et al. (2022); Hamideh et al. (2022); Lawrence et al. (2021), and Ferreira et al. (2023).



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Figure 3. Example of a “tipping point” in the context of food security, showing the transition from stable food security conditions to a food crisis resulting from drought in Ethiopia (Source: Krishnamurthy et al., 2020)

Table 1. Models and Methodological Approaches for Studying Negative Social Tipping Points and Cascades

Model/ Approach	Rationale	Modelled phenomena	Examples	Further Questions
(Complex) Contagion Processes on (Social) Networks	In a simple contagion direct exposure to a viral entity (beliefs, behaviours, emotions, price signals) is sufficient for a node to get “infected”. In a complex contagion a node gets “infected” if a certain number (can be heterogeneous) of its neighbour nodes are infected (Guilbeault et al., 2018; Wiedermann et al., 2020; Andreoni et al., 2021). Models of contagion on networks can be used to study radicalisation, anomie, and financial tipping.	In a contagion a viral entity spreads initially gradually until a critical threshold (critical number of “infected” nodes) is reached at which stage the social system tips through saddle-node bifurcations and hysteresis. Hysteresis ensures that the contagion spreads further and leads to the phase transition, even if the original seeders of the viral entity are removed from the network, i.e., the contagion processes become self-reinforcing (Dodds and Watts, 2004; Wiedermann et al., 2020; Xie et al., 2021). Network structure (e.g. clustering) can facilitate or prevent various contagion processes (Guilbeault and Centola, 2021).	Research shows that beliefs (incl. misinformation), mental states, behaviours and practices (e.g. technology adoption) can spread through complex contagion across social networks (Karsai et al., 2014; Törnberg, 2018; Fink et al., 2021; Xie et al., 2021; Alexander et al., 2022). Research on financial contagion also shows that volatility can spread across a network of financial institutions (Summer, 2013; Wunderling et al., 2021).	There are gaps in our understanding of the mechanisms underlying complex contagion in the real world, where at any given time multiple, conflicting diffusion processes are taking place (Min and Miguel, 2018; Vasconcelos et al., 2019; Yletyinen et al., 2021).
Logistic Maps Models	The logistic map is a mathematical function that models the population change of an ecosystem over time and it is a useful tool for policy and climate analysis as it represents a wide range of regular and chaotic features (Feigenbaum, 1980; Bruun et al., 2017). Logistic Maps can be used to study anomie social tipping and cascading dynamics for instance in financial and political systems (incl. conflicts).	The logistic map provides the capability to investigate non-abrupt and/or reversible tipping point changes that are features of the system. It represents the socio-economic system through the population level, at time t , as X_t , and its future population state at time $t+1$ is specified by the non-linear relationship $X_{t+1} = r X_t (1 - X_t)$. It enables us to identify and explore tipping point transitions and complexity cascades properties across a set of different system types.	Logistic maps have been used to model financial and economic cycles and crises (Ausloos and Diricx, 2006; Guégan, 2009). Logistic maps have also been employed to study conflicts (Guastello, 2008; Scheffran and Hannon, 2007).	The model could be useful to study phenomena such as anomie, where the ecological and social system are closely coupled and the tipping in the ecological system would have direct repercussions for the social system with one possible outcome being disintegration of the social system, i.e. chaotic, random and irregular behaviour of the social system.
Causal Loop Diagrams (CLD) and Causal Inference	Causal loop diagrams (CLD) are a structural approach for systemic risk assessment on different scales and to identify whether a society is at risk of reaching a negative social tipping point (Groundstroem and Juhola, 2021; Sillmann et al., 2022). Causal inference is the attempt to empirically test causal assumptions. CLDs and causal inference can be used to study displacement, conflicts, and cascading dynamics.	CLDs map out the structure of a system and its networks and reveal causalities and feedbacks within the system (Haraldson, 2004; Sanches-Pereira and Gómez, 2015). Variables are connected with arrows that indicate positive or negative causal links between them. Links between variables may have temporal delays (Sanches-Pereira and Gómez, 2015). Feedback effects arise when variables affect each other in a cascading manner, ultimately leading back to a previous variable, creating a feedback loop. This loop can be either reinforcing (R), leading to unbounded growth or decline, or balancing (B), if some variables create counteracting changes, resulting in equilibrium.	CLDs have been used to model socio-ecological system dynamics, for instance the coupling of climate change, food insecurity and societal collapse (Richards et al., 2021). Causal inference has been used to model for instance climate induced conflict as an excitation causal process (Sun et al., 2022). Machine learning methods have also been used for causal inference, i.e. to self-discover causal trees between Earth system and social systems, including climate conflict (Ge et al., 2022).	Improving causal understanding of how changes in the Earth system affect social systems is challenging when many of the latent mechanisms and pathways lack data, and when different regions experience diverse mechanisms. End-to-end causal inference has limited success (Guo et al., 2023).

Multi-Stable Differential Equation Models	Approaches building on mathematical dynamical systems theory (Hirsch et al., 2012), analyse time series data to identify possible phase transitions from stability to instability until a new equilibrium is found. Differential equation models can have multiple equilibrium points, where the rate of change of a variable (e.g. degree of cooperation) does not change further. These models can be used to study negative social tipping phenomena, where sufficient time-series data is available, e.g. conflicts and financial systems tipping.	The specific functional form of the models can vary depending on the studied phenomenon. A tipping model can be for instance a 3 rd -order polynomial in the form of a bi-stable ordinary differential equation (ODE): $dx/dt = x(x-C)(x-K)$. Here, we can see that the rate of change ($dx/dt = 0$) has three equilibrium points: $x=0$, $x=C$, $x=K$. Two of the three equilibria are stable, i.e. a small perturbation will cause the system to return to the closest point 0 (conflict) or $K>C$ (cooperation). One of the three is unstable, i.e. a small perturbation will cause the system to deviate away completely (this is the tipping criticality point C).	Multi-Stable Differential Equation Models have been also used for assessing the risks of emerging tipping cascades in interconnected climate tipping elements (Krönke et al., 2020; Wunderling et al., 2023) and financial systems (Wunderling et al., 2021) using Monte Carlo approaches to propagate parametric and structural uncertainties. They have also been used to study conflict dynamics (Aquino et al., 2019).	The models rely on rich and dense multiple time-series data. They are also constrained in terms of complexity representation. This results partly from their aggregate nature, as they are mainly concerned with macro-level dynamics; as such they might be less suitable where micro-level interactions are of interest.
Agent-Based Modelling (ABM)	Agent-Based Modelling (ABM) represents the rule-based behaviour and interaction of individual agents which ranges from simple homogenous to complex heterogeneous agents characterised by diverse response functions regarding their motivation and reasoning, capability to act and adaptive learning, perception, and anticipation of changing environmental situations (BenDor and Scheffran, 2019). ABM can be used to study conflicts and cascading dynamics.	Multiple agents show collective behaviour via opinion dynamics, coalition formation, network building, inducing social feedback, structural shifts, social norms, and transformative policies, including the transition between conflict and cooperation (Juhola et al., 2022). ABM captures macro-scale phenomena from micro-scale interactions among many heterogeneous adaptive and learning agents with bounded rationality (Filatova et al., 2013; Weber et al., 2023).	ABM is applied to study agents' adaptation behaviour and the possible limits to adaptation (Juhola et al., 2022). ABM approaches are well suited to model game-theoretical approaches to predict agent-induced tipping points when collaboration for instance breaks down (Grimm and Schneider, 2011). They can simulate self-reinforcing chain reactions and cascading effects in dynamic social networks (BenDor and Scheffran, 2019).	Where ABM lacks empirical foundation (i.e. insufficient data for a large number of agents), it is difficult to verify the predictions they are making. They can be useful to generate hypotheses and explore theoretical mechanisms, which should be tested empirically.
Machine Learning (ML)/AI	Machine Learning (ML) approaches have been already mentioned in the context of previous sections (causal inference). But ML methods can also be used to explicitly detect tipping points (Bury et al., 2021). ML can be used to study negative social tipping phenomena, where sufficient time-series data is available, e.g. conflict, financial systems tipping etc. (Ge et al., 2022). Generative AI is also discussed for the purpose of generating in-silico data (fine-tuned by human data) (Argyle et al., 2023; Park et al., 2023; Törnberg et al., 2023), e.g. high-dimensional, dynamic social network data for in-silico large-scale experiments, mimicking real life and real people, to study otherwise difficult to study phenomena, such as negative social tipping processes.	ML models have been used for instance to model bifurcations, i.e. the divergence of an outcome trajectory. These are often mechanism-informed ML models. Hawkes excitation model has been used for instance to model the coupling between successive improvised explosive device (IED) attacks and security retaliation (Tench et al., 2016). Point process modelling has been used to identify complex underlying processes in conflicts, such as diffusion, relocation, heterogeneous escalation, and volatility (Zammit-Mangion et al., 2012).	ML approaches can be useful to forecast tipping in conflicts for instance (Guo et al., 2018). With increasing availability of rich digital data, negative social tipping processes (e.g. radicalisation or social disintegration) could be detected using for instance Deep Learning models in combination with social network analyses (Gaikwad et al., 2022). ML-based tools are also emerging to predict tipping in financial systems (Samitas et al., 2020)	Pure data driven prediction models (e.g. using Gaussian Processes, Deep Recurrent Neural Networks), typically lack the ability to model irreversible transformations, such as tipping and understand causal relation strength. But if sufficient data is available and if the ML models are informed by theory and deep understanding of the underlying mechanisms (Guo et al., 2018) they can be a useful method.

Table 2 Negative (social) tipping points and options for prevention and impact management

Negative (Social) Tipping Points	Prevention Options	Impact Management Options
Earth System Tipping Impacts (e.g. food insecurity)	Early warning systems to detect escalating food insecurity and anticipatory action mechanisms, incl. investment in irrigation, crop diversification and investment in long-term adaptation options to improve climate-smart agriculture (Krishnamurthy et al., 2020)	Risk finance (e.g., weather index insurance) (Benso et al., 2023) and emergency response (e.g., food assistance), managed relocation from areas that become uninhabitable/uncultivable (Ferris and Weerasinghe, 2020).
Anomie	Strengthening resilience of individuals and communities (Ogunbode et al., 2022). Strengthening social cohesion (Orazani et al., 2023). Ensuring authorities can respond to ecological hazard effectively through capacity building and resilient infrastructure (Miller, 2016; Brown, 2020)	Mental health support to individuals and communities affected by extreme weather events and displacement (Wood and Kallestrup, 2021). Working with affected communities to re-build and integrate displaced communities in host communities (Hawkins and Maurer, 2011)
Radicalisation & Polarisation	Preventing the spread of misinformation/disinformation (Aïmeur et al., 2023). Psychological inoculation against misinformation/disinformation (Van der Linden et al., 2017). Monitoring radicalisation. Radicalisation prevention programmes. Public engagement in democratic, deliberative decision making (Devaney et al., 2020).	Deradicalization and dialogue building programmes (Kimmel, 2018; Hangartner et al., 2021). Containing the influence of radical groups (Flache et al., 2017). Early warning systems for detecting the potential for violence (Guo et al., 2018).
Displacement	Early warning systems and anticipatory action mechanisms, e.g. managed relocation. Investing in resilience of displaced communities, through stability, education, and employment opportunities (Ferris and Weerasinghe, 2020).	Host community and refugee support (e.g., humanitarian support, food aid, housing, mental health support) (Pearce et al., 2017). Financial compensation for host communities. Legal frameworks and policies to support mixed movements (McAdam, 2012)
Conflict	Conflict early warning systems (CEWS) (Guo et al., 2018). Conflict prevention processes, through conflict management and democratic procedures. Agreements on scarce resource management and distribution. Climate change adaptation support. Resilience building of societies at risk of violent conflict (Abrahams, 2020). Conduct conflict risk assessment of critical infrastructure identifying impact cascades across rural, urban and natural environments to inform redevelopment or security measures to mitigate risks.	Conflict resolution process (Ngaruiya and Scheffran, 2016). Humanitarian support to citizens trapped in conflicts. Managed relocation from active fighting zones. Provision of evidence to support post-conflict reconstruction and recovery building. Provision of clean water, sanitation, hospitals, and schools. Biodiversity recovery planning to restore critical habitats and species, including those of high economic value to support social recovery.
Financial Destabilisation	Early and stable transition away from fossil fuel assets (i.e. divestment). Implementation of a green corporate quantitative easing programme to reduce climate-induced financial instability and restrict global warming (Lamperti et al., 2019)	Macroprudential regulation in climate risk management. A counter-cyclical capital buffer (as proposed in the Basel III framework) could help address climate physical risks, even though it may be insufficient when damages surge (Lamperti et al., 2019)
Cascading dynamics	A big potential lies in recovery and reconstruction efforts that have the goal to build resilience to prevent future negative social tipping points cascading (Hanson, 2018). During recovery and reconstruction planning, options for climate change adaptation and biodiversity recovery may provide a level of risk management for future conflict and natural disasters (e.g. adapting to future flood risk in the lower Dniro basin caused by climate change in Ukraine). An approach to assessing impact cascades may be transferable to risk assessment and mitigation of natural disasters globally (Ward et al., 2020). The United Nations Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) Programme Framework may provide a starting point for such an approach (UNDRR & ISC 2020).	Overall, management options for cascading impacts have been studied relatively little. Management options depend greatly on the type of cascading impact and the systems between which it occurs. In general, collaborative governance, bilaterally or multilaterally, between governing entities can yield better outcomes.