Global precipitation changes shaped by natural and anthropogenic forcing

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Mesa Verde

In response to warming:

How much will it rain?

Theory and Models vs. Observations (at least, Wentz et al)

Where will it rain?

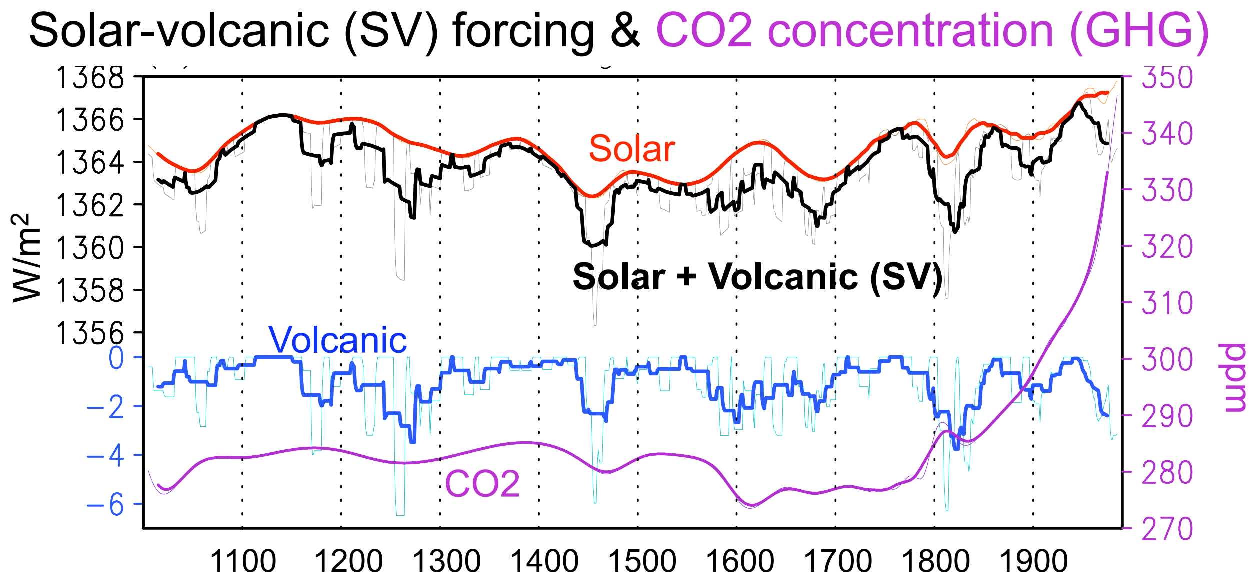
Which is related in part to the SST pattern in the tropical Pacific.

"El Niño like" vs. "La Niña like"

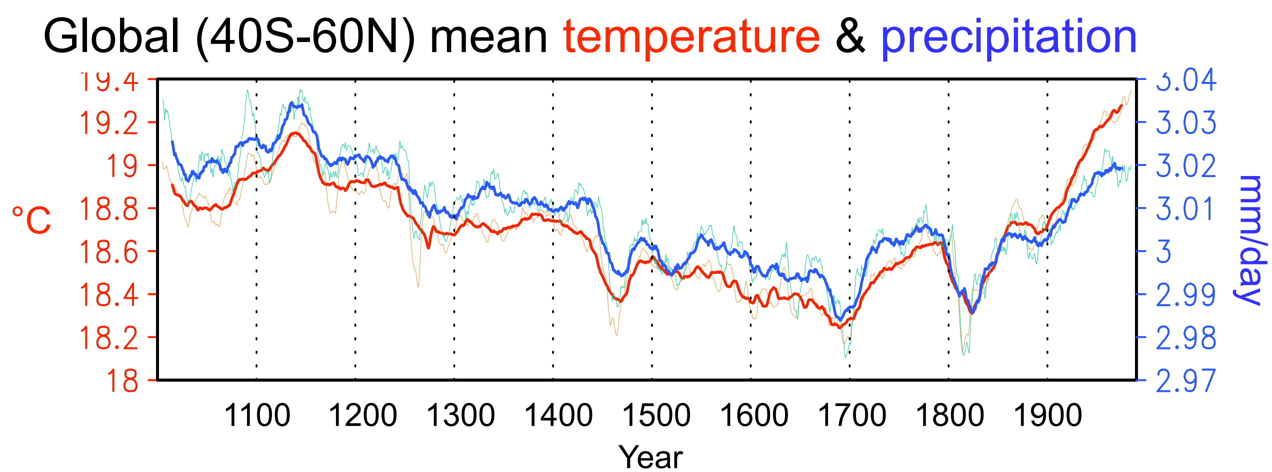
"Weaker Walker" vs. "Ocean Thermostat"

Some lessons from the last millennium
-- primarily from a model simulation of the last millennium

Greenhouse gases vs. Solar-Volcanic



FORCING

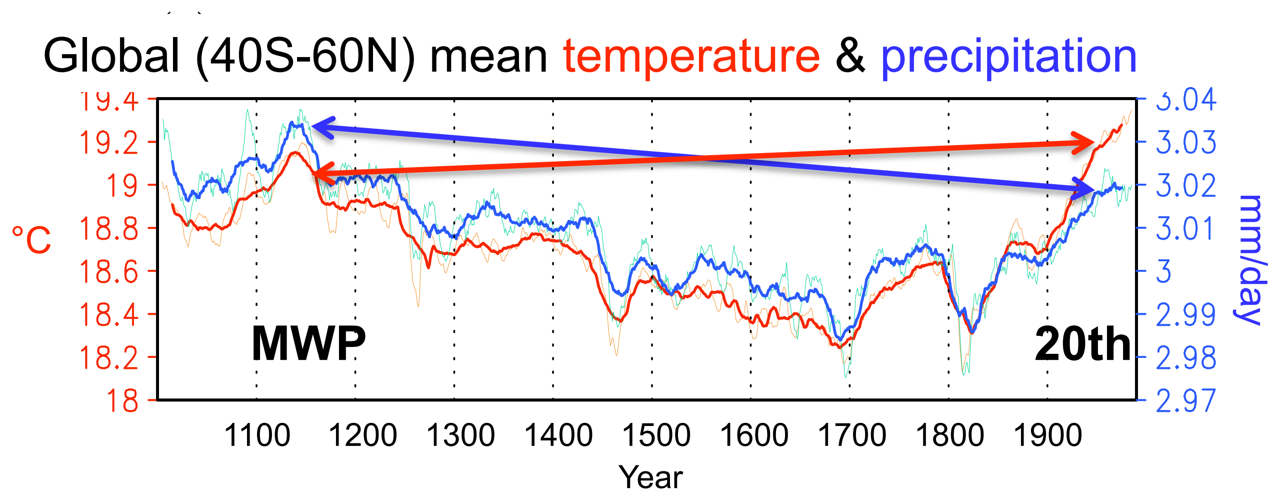


MODEL RESPONSE

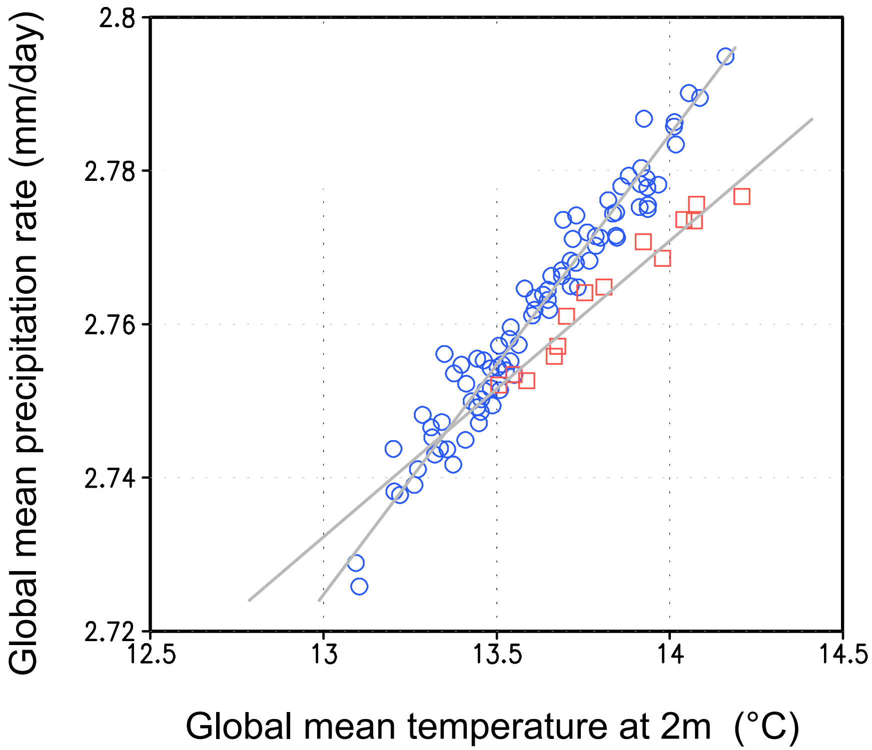
From “ERIK”, an ECHO-G simulation of the last millennium

11-year running means

Global mean Temperature in the 20th Century is warmer than in the Medieval Warm Period (MWP) but the Precipitation rate is lower



Global mean precipitation rate versus global mean temperature

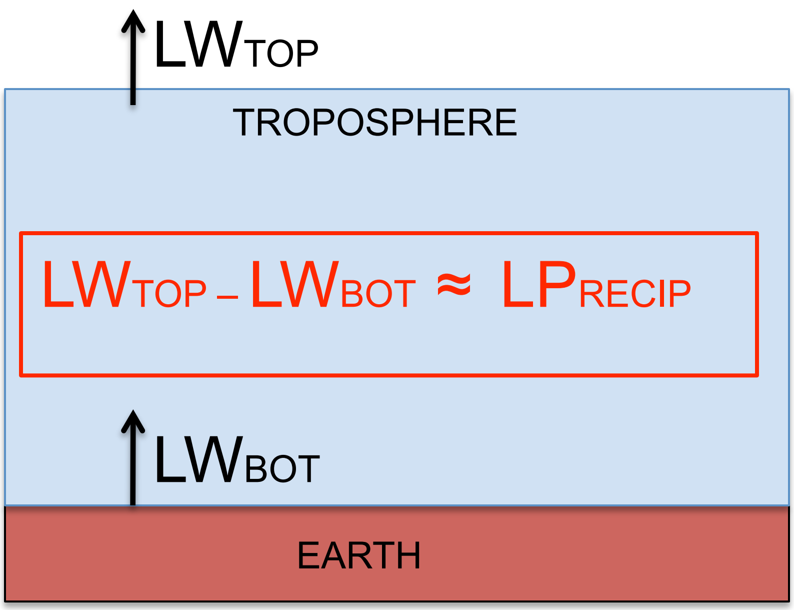


○ **Solar-Volcanic (SV)**
Pre-industrial era (1000-1850):
0.058 mm/day per °C = **2.1% /°C**

□ **GHG** + SV
Industrial era (1850-1990):
0.039 mm/day per °C = **1.4% /°C**

Data are decadal mean values from the ERIK forced millennial simulation.

The global tropospheric balance is **Longwave Flux Divergence ≈ Latent Heating**



Since Δ LW is less for GHG warming than for Solar-volcanic warming, precipitation is less.

See Allan and Ingram 2002, *Nature*

In response to warming:

Where will it rain?

We look at the part related to the SST pattern in the tropical Pacific.

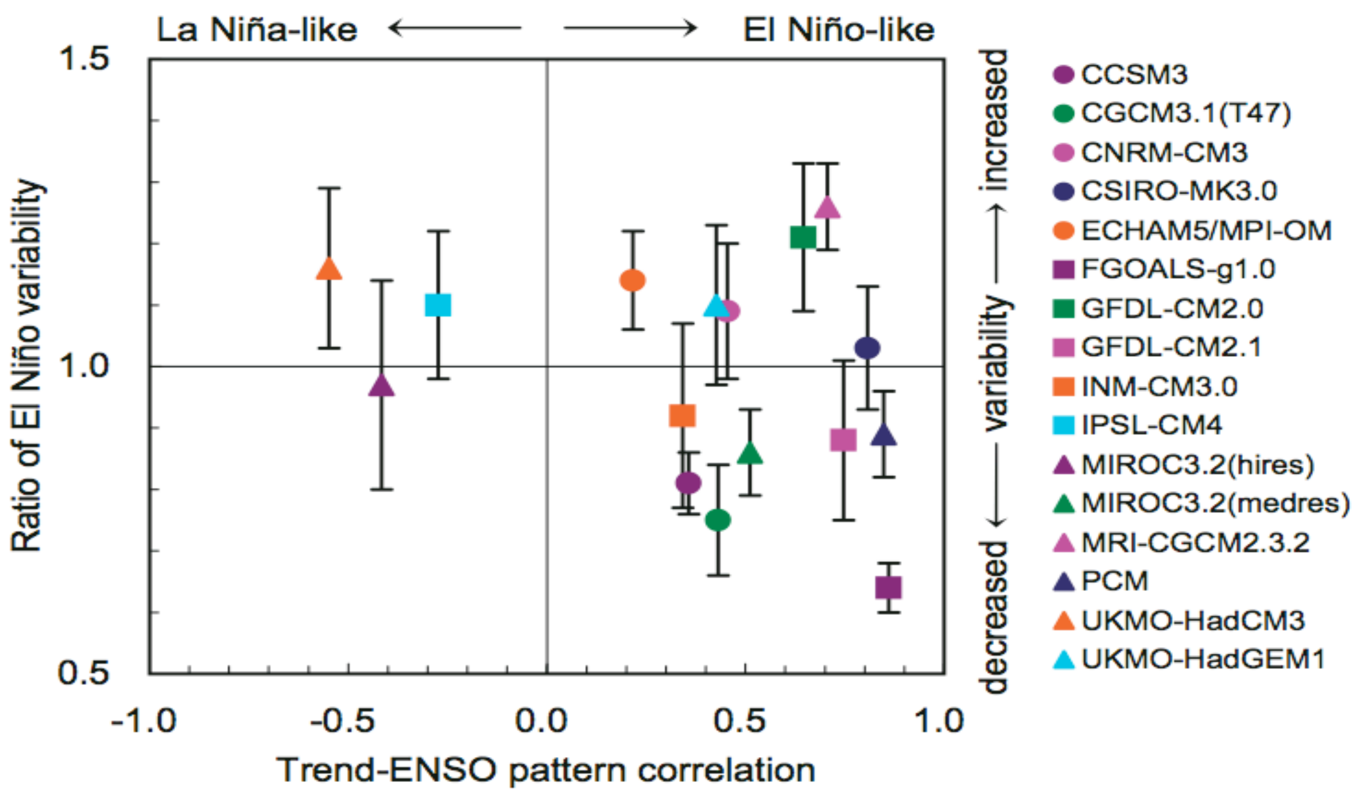
"El Niño like" vs. "La Niña like"

"Weaker Walker" vs. "Ocean Thermostat"

Which theory is right?
Both are sound physics.
Which is applicable?

The tropical Pacific in AR4

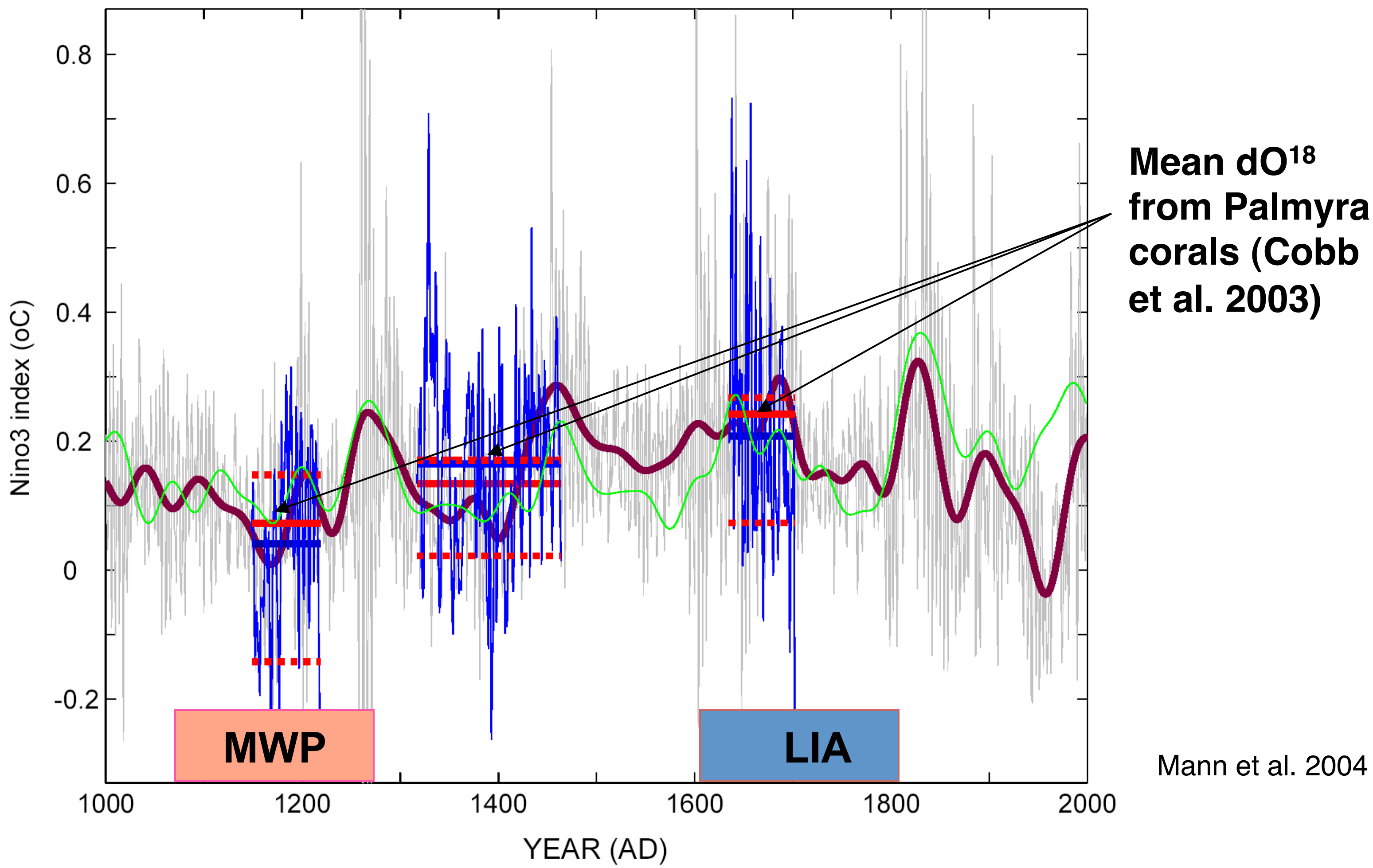
Weaker Walker ➔ El Niño-like



Yamaguchi, K., and A. Noda, 2006: Global warming patterns over the North Pacific: ENSO versus AO. *J. Meteorol. Soc. Japan*, **84**, 221–241.

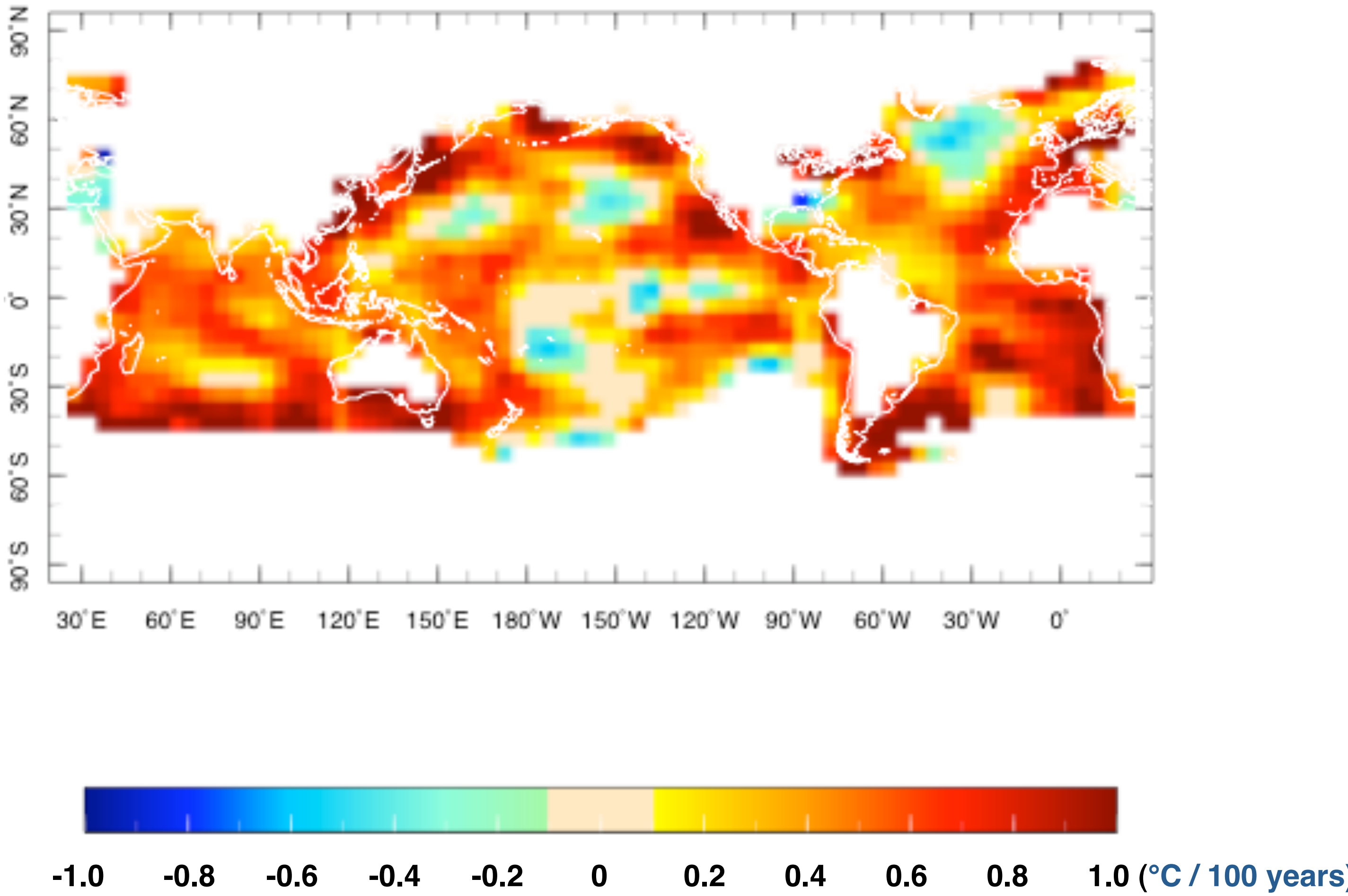
Zebiak-Cane Model Comparison with Fossil Corals from the Central Pacific

Ocean Thermostat ➔ La Niña-like



Mann et al. 2004

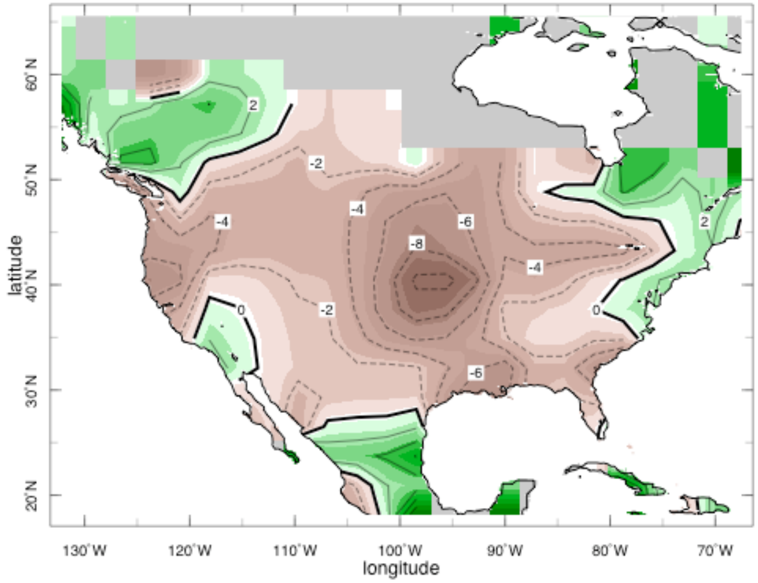
20th Century Temperature Trends



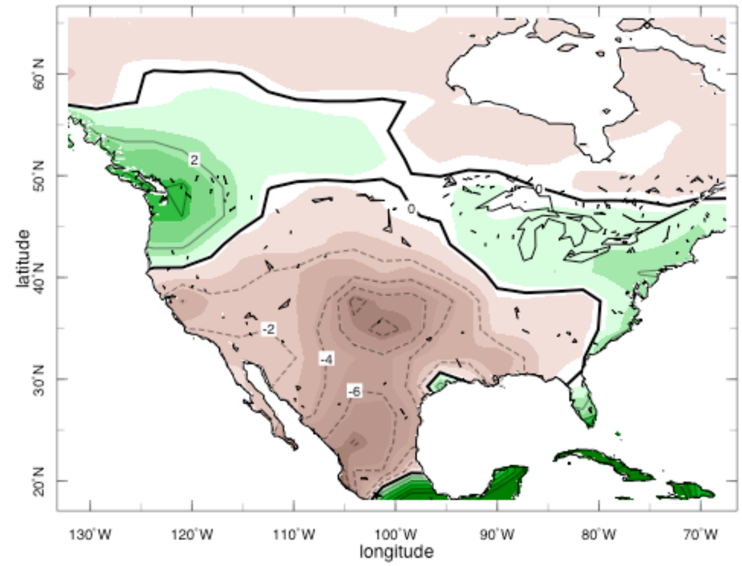
Updated from
Cane et al *Science* 1997

Precipitation Anomaly 1932-1939

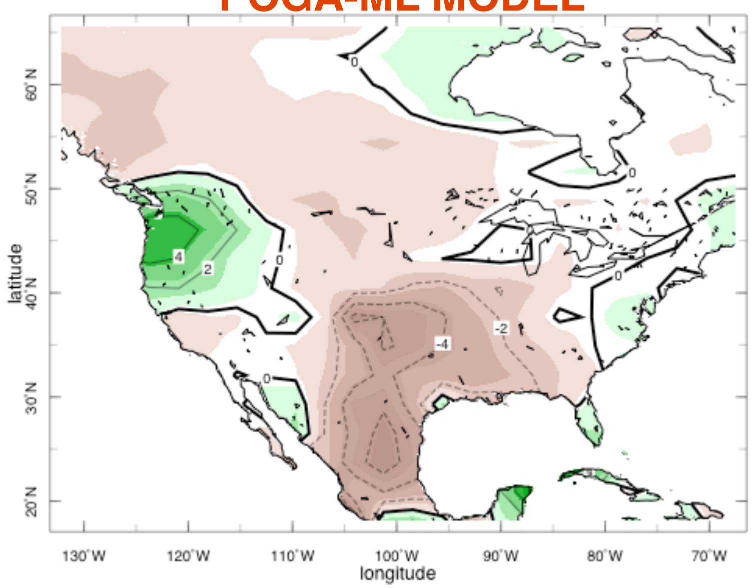
OBSERVED



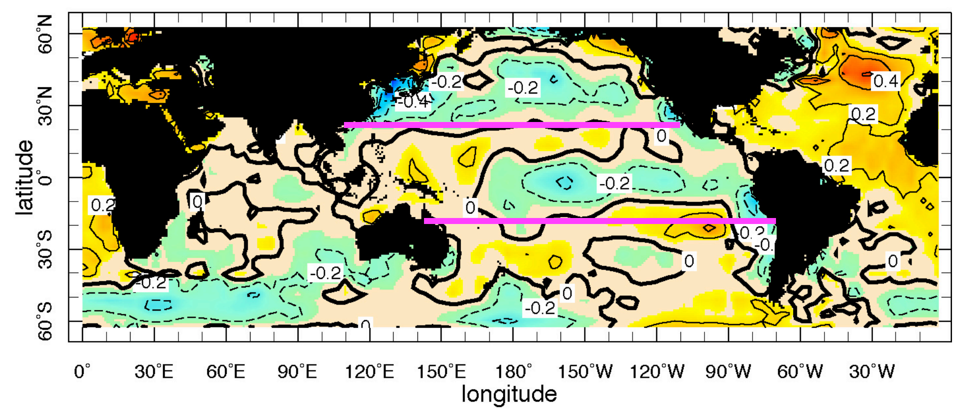
GOGA MODEL



POGA-ML MODEL

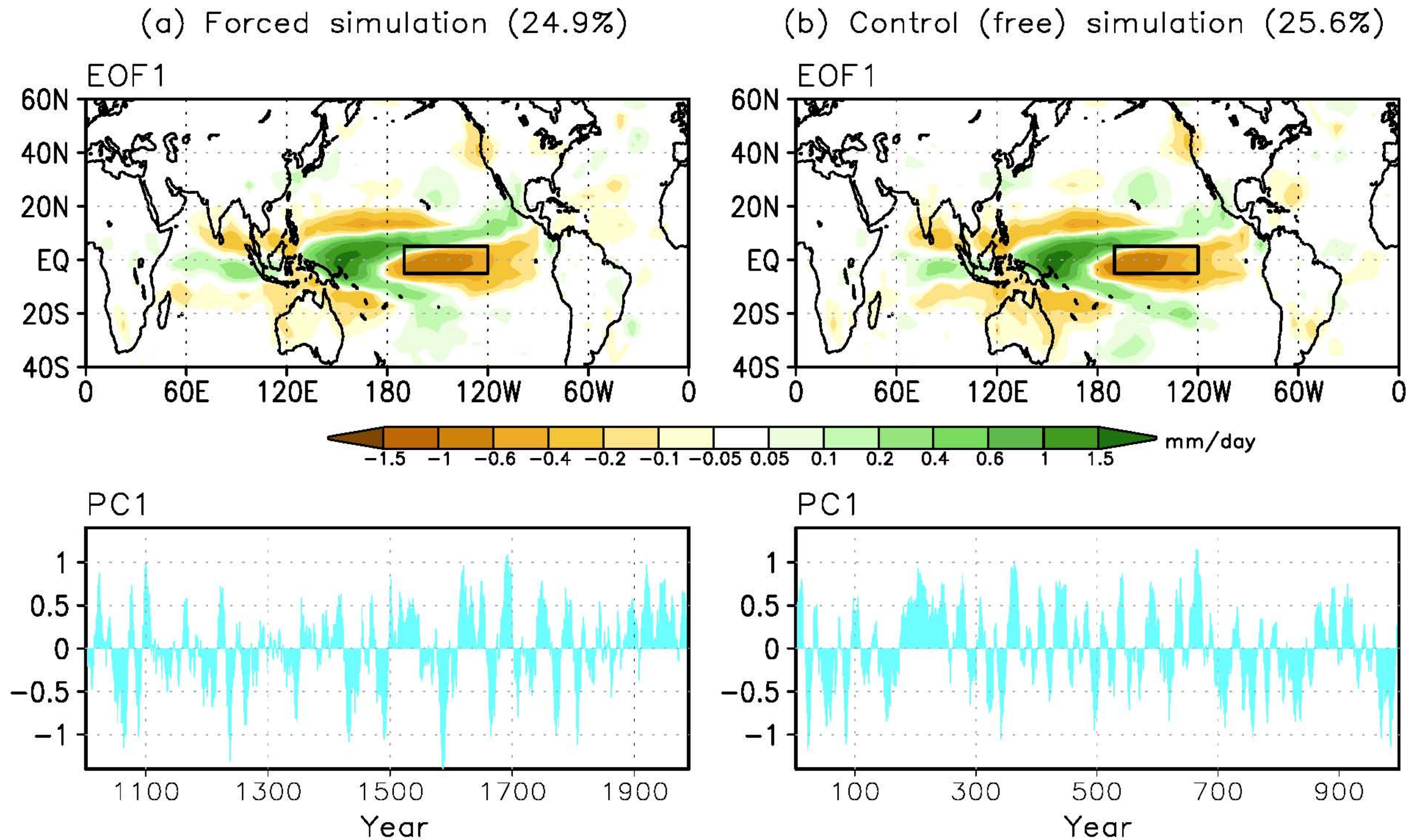


OBSERVED SEA SURFACE TEMPERATURE



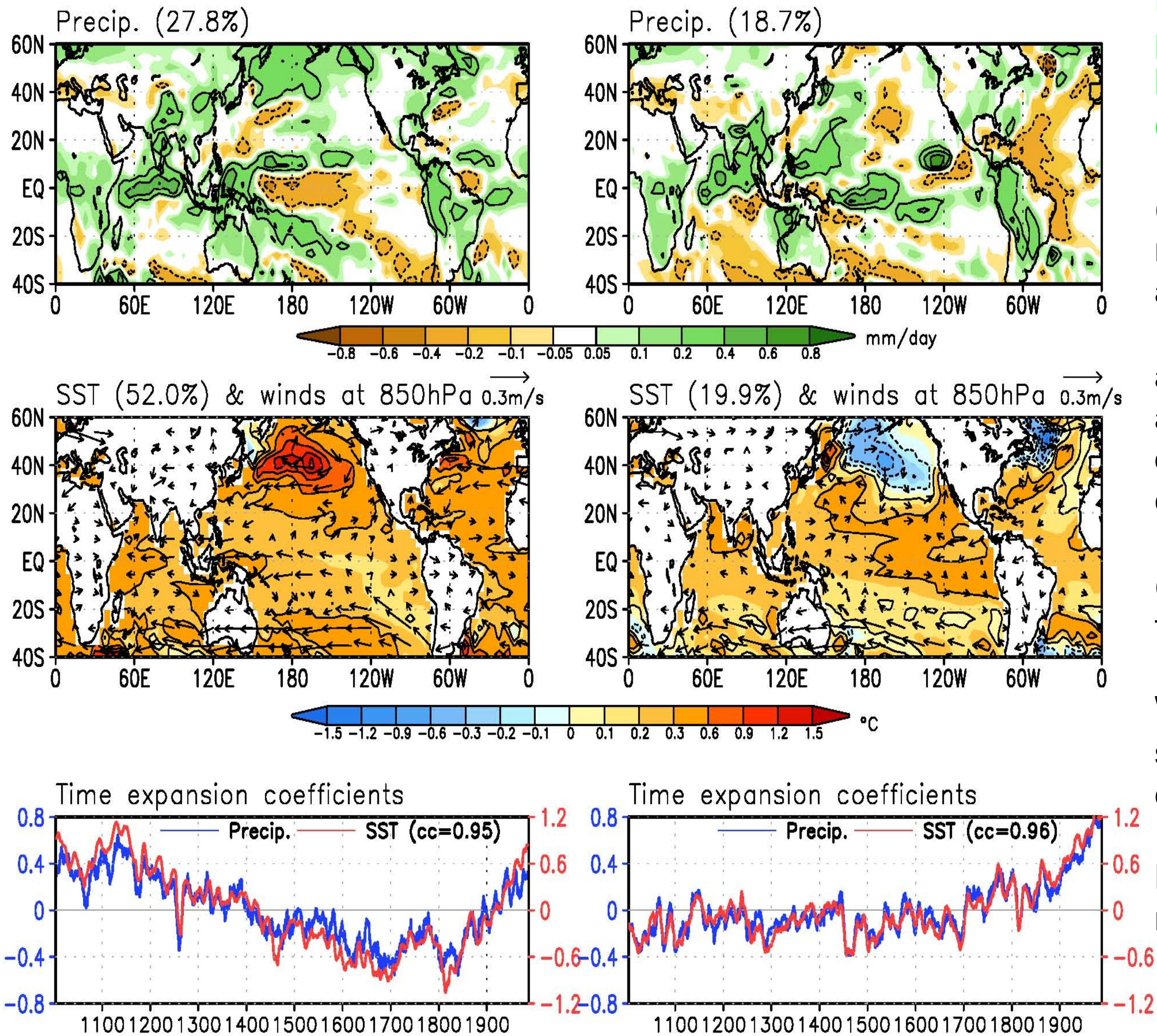
Courtesy of Richard Seager

The internal mode of global precipitation



Spatial structure (upper) and principal component (lower) of the internal (unforced) mode. Based on 11-year running means. The box is the Nino3.4 region.

MCA1 – THE SV MODE **MCA2 – THE GHG MODE**



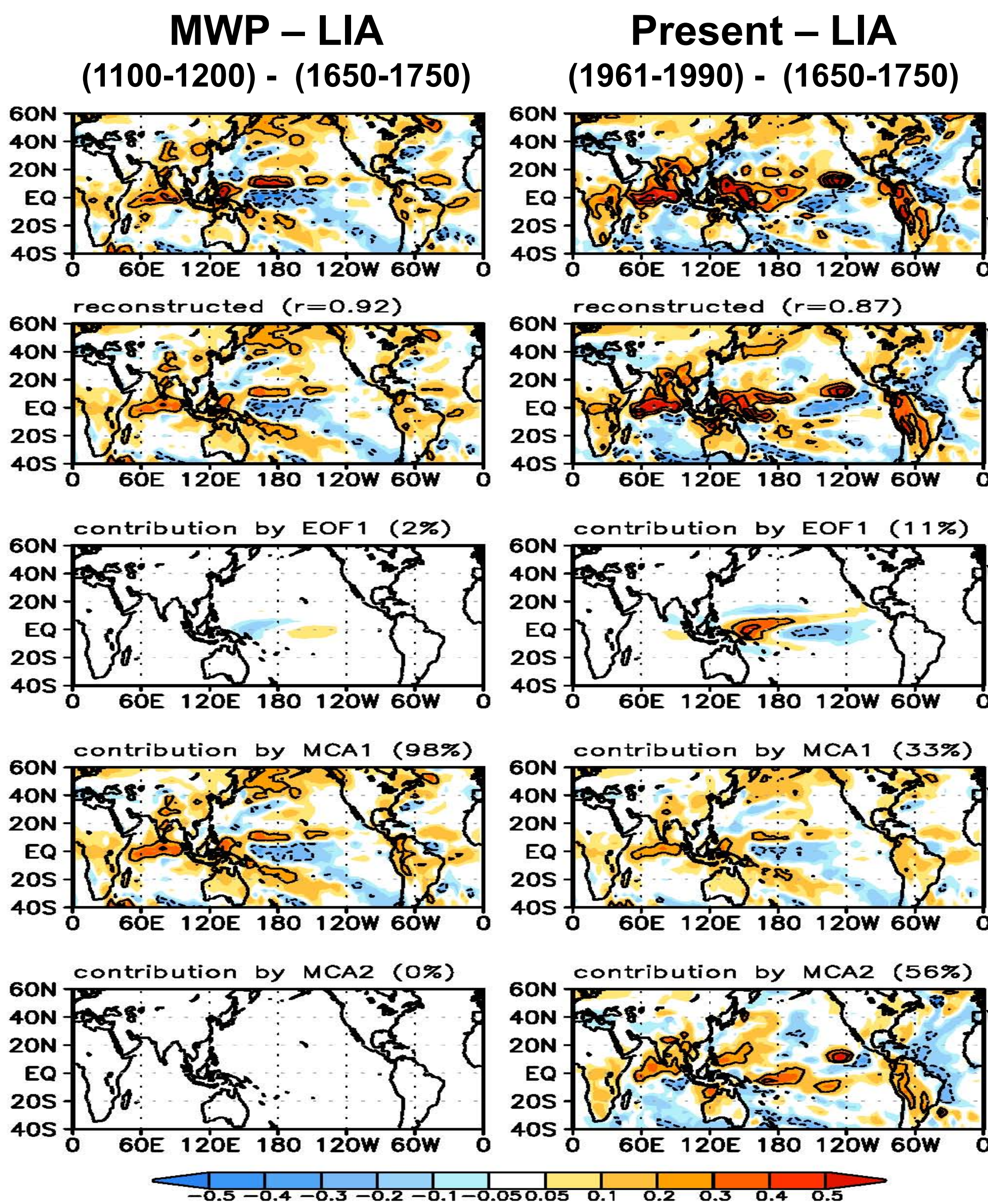
First remove PC1 of precipitation, the leading internal mode (IM).

(left) The leading SVD mode of the precipitation and SST for the period 1000-1990. Also shown are the 850hPa wind anomalies regressed onto the time expansion coefficient of SST.

(right) As above but for the second SVD mode.

Wind vectors shown are significant above 95% confidence level.

Based on 11-year running means.



Reconstruction and attribution of the global precipitation changes

Total precipitation in the forced run.

Reconstructed precipitation = internal (IM) + SV + GHG modes.

The r values (.92, .87) are the correlation coefficients between the reconstructed and total fields.

IM contribution (2%, 11%)

The % values is the fractional variance explained by each mode in the reconstructed fields.

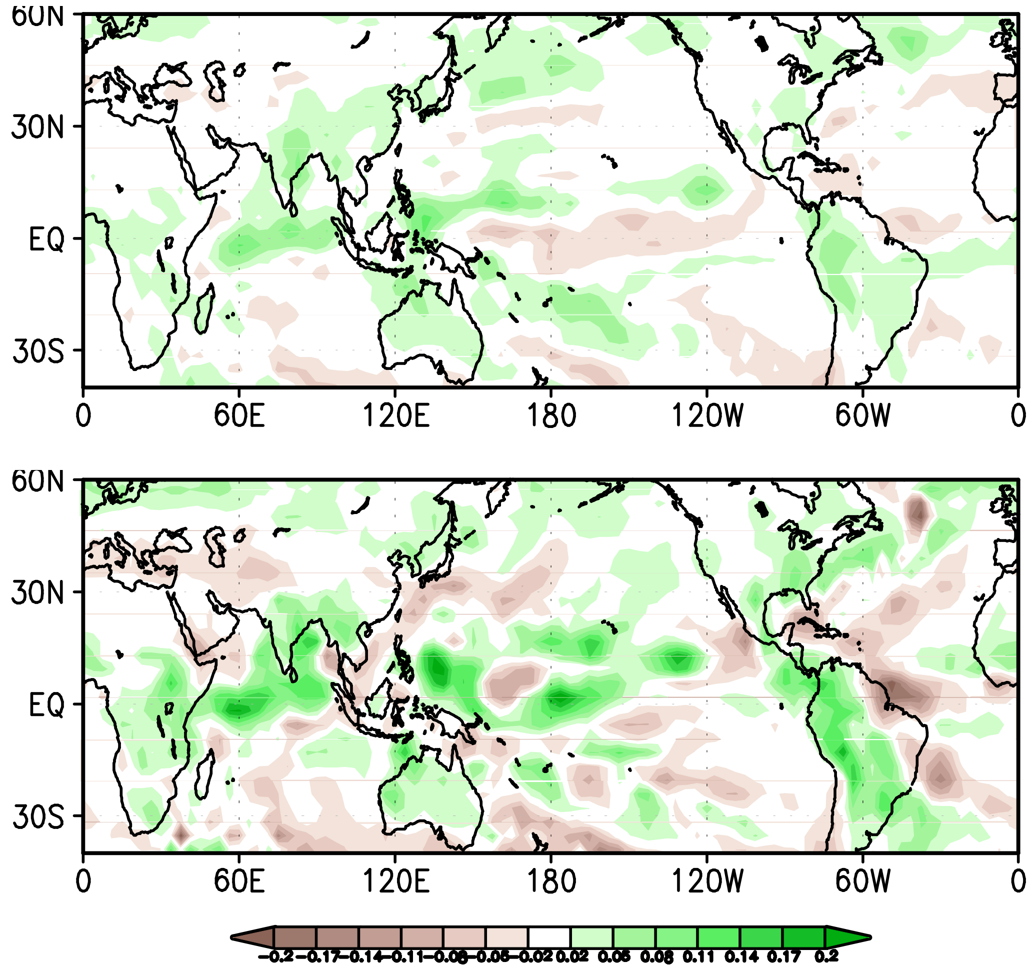
SV mode contribution (98%, 33%)

GHG mode contribution (0%, 56%)

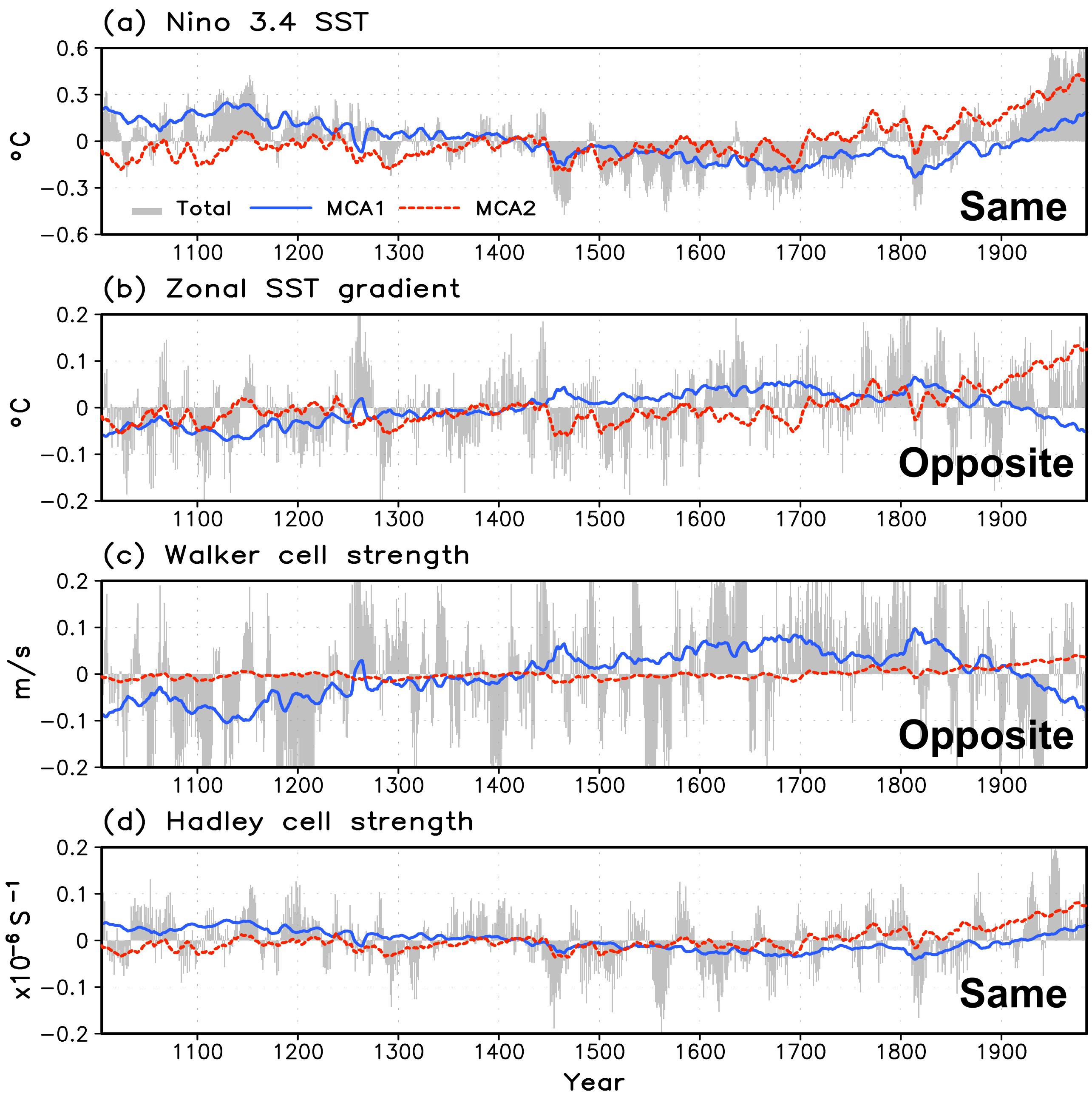
Precipitation regressed onto

Solar-volcanic (SV) forcing

Greenhouse Gas(GHG) forcing



SV MODE (MCA1) and GHG MODE (MCA2) Characteristics 1000-1990



The grey curve is the total anomaly.

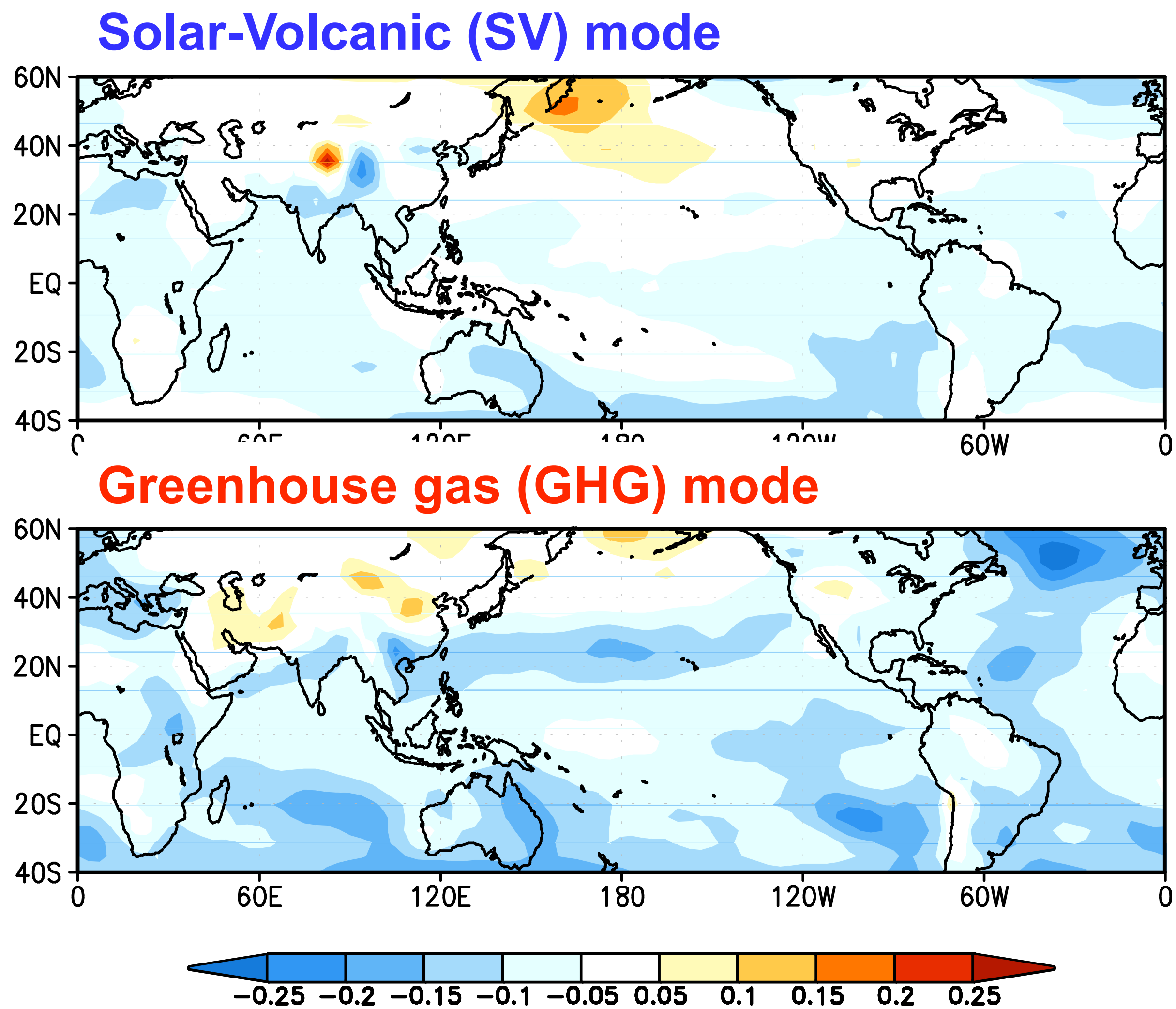
(a)Nino 3.4 SST.

(b) Zonal SST gradient: the eastern Pacific (10°S-10°N, 160°-90°W) minus the western Pacific (10°S-10°N, 120°-160°E) SST.

(c) Walker Cell strength: the zonal wind at 850 hPa averaged in (10°S -10°N, 120°E-150°W).

(d) Hadley Cell strength: differential divergence between 200 hPa and 850 hPa, averaged over (0-360°E, 15°S-0°) for DJF.

Stability (T850- T500) regressed onto



Static s
forced r
Negativ
stabiliza

V

GHG response is more stable, favoring Weaker Walker mechanism

Summary

In many theories for the response to warming,
warming is warming, but
the type of forcing does matter.

Greenhouse gases vs. Solar-Volcanic

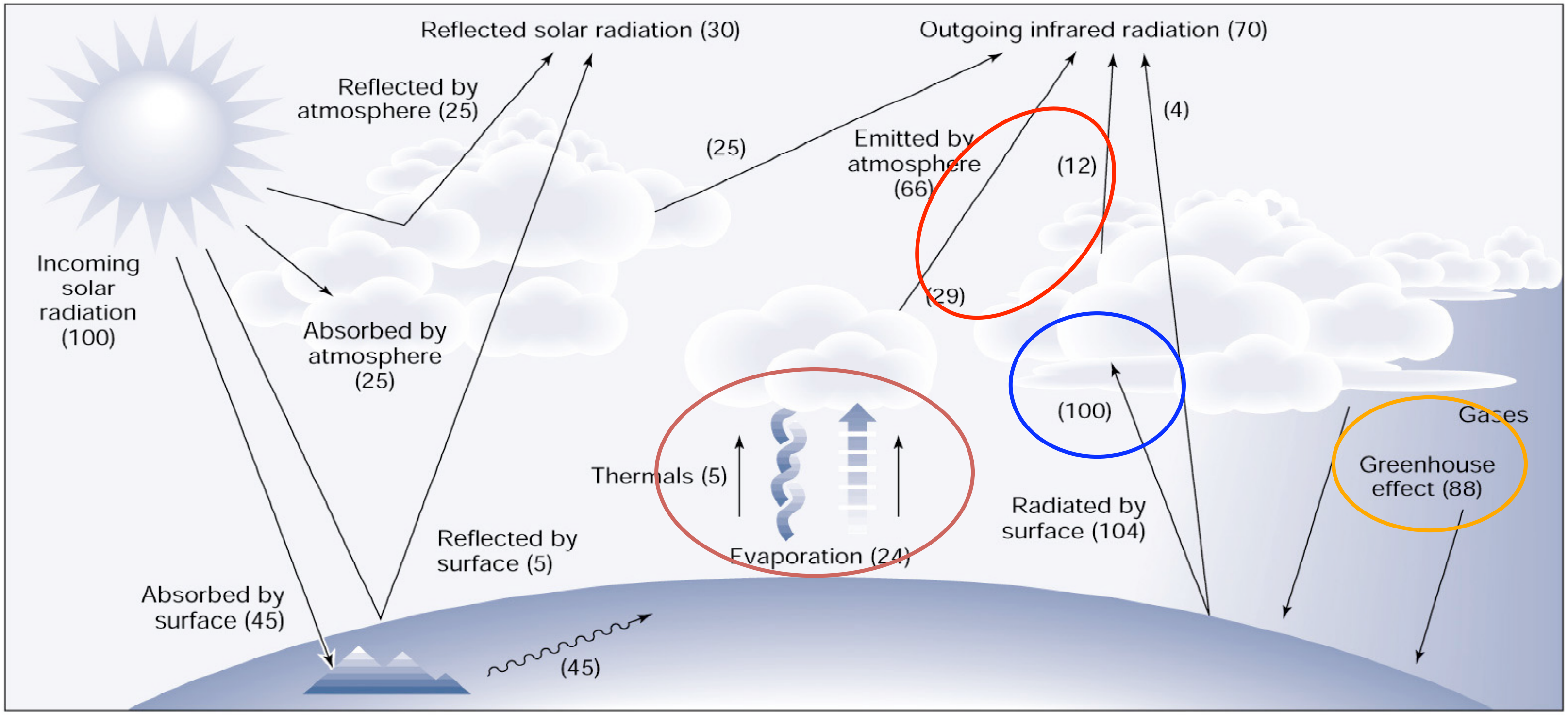
More precip than normal vs. Even more precip
A consequence of global tropospheric energy budget

"El Niño like" vs. "La Niña like"
"Weaker Walker" vs. "Ocean Thermostat"

Favored by static stability differences,
Also see Meehl et al (2003,…) on differences in spatial heating,
DiNezio et al on changes in the thermocline


Thank you
Mesa Verde

Net Radiative Cooling Balances Latent Heating of Troposphere

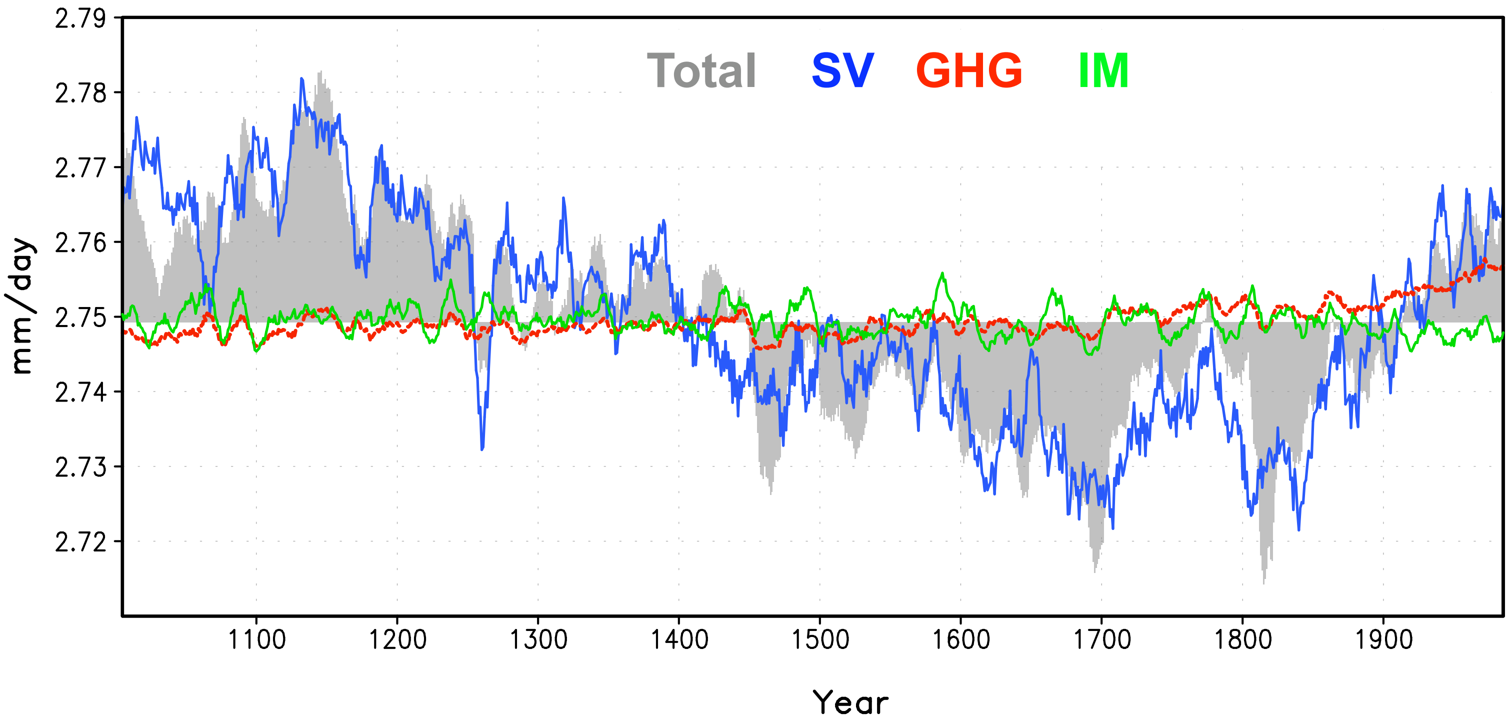


R = 29+12 + 88 – 100 = 29 = LP

IR emitted to space	IR emitted to surface	IR absorbed By atmos.	Latent Heat Flux

ΔR = LΔP

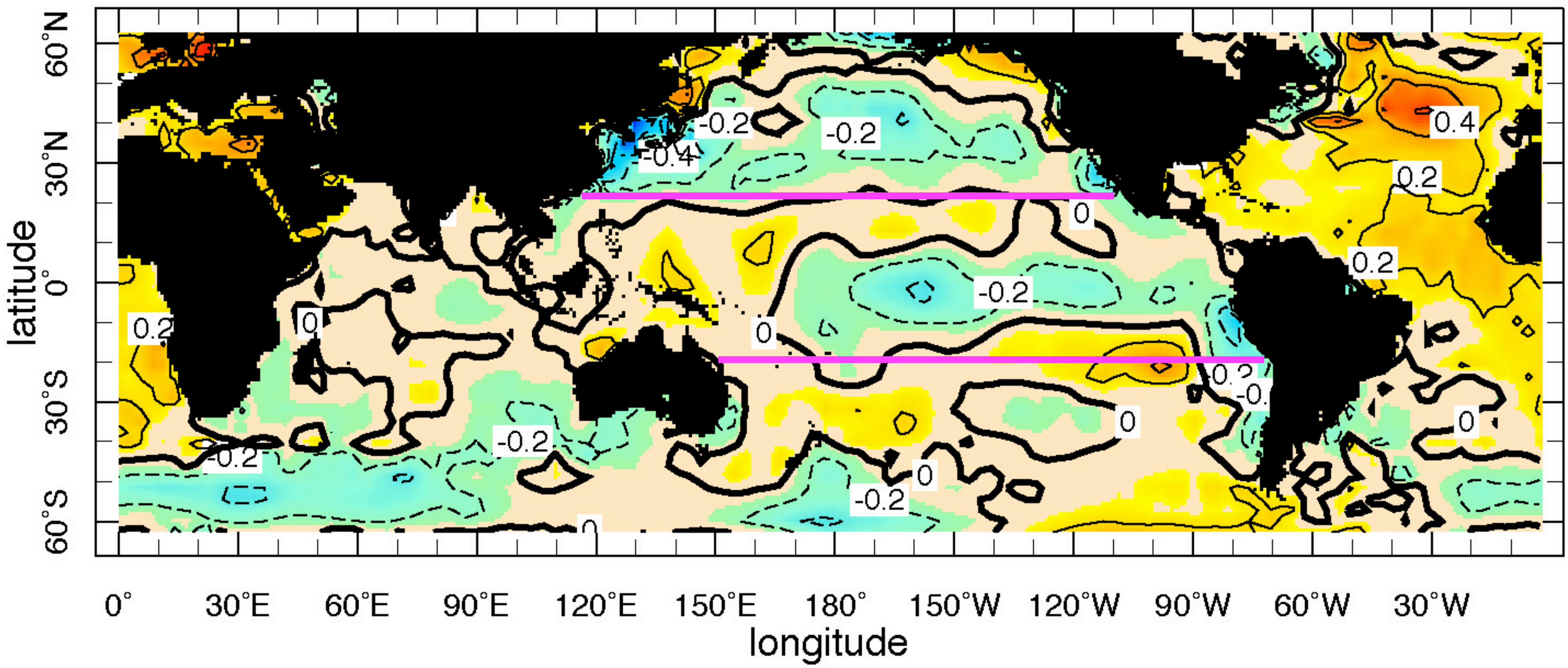
Total and Reconstructed Global Mean Precipitation



Entire period: SV (CC=0.90, FV=79.6%), GHG (CC=0.01, FV=1.0%), IM (CC=0.16, FV=2.4%)
Preindustrial: SV (CC=0.90, FV=79.8%), GHG (CC=-0.01, FV=-1.4%), IM (CC=0.21, FV= 3.7%)
Industrial: SV(CC=0.88, FV=75.1%) GHG (CC=0.62, FV=36.7%), IM (CC=-0.41, FV=-20.2%)

Sea Surface Temperature Anomaly 1932-1939

OBSERVED

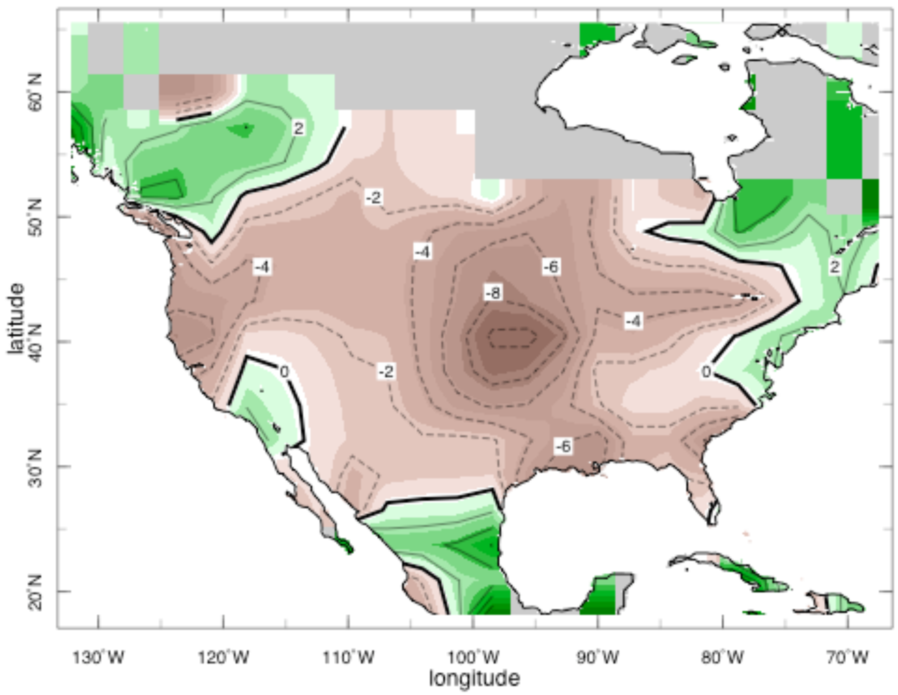


Contour interval = 0.2°C

Courtesy of Richard Seager

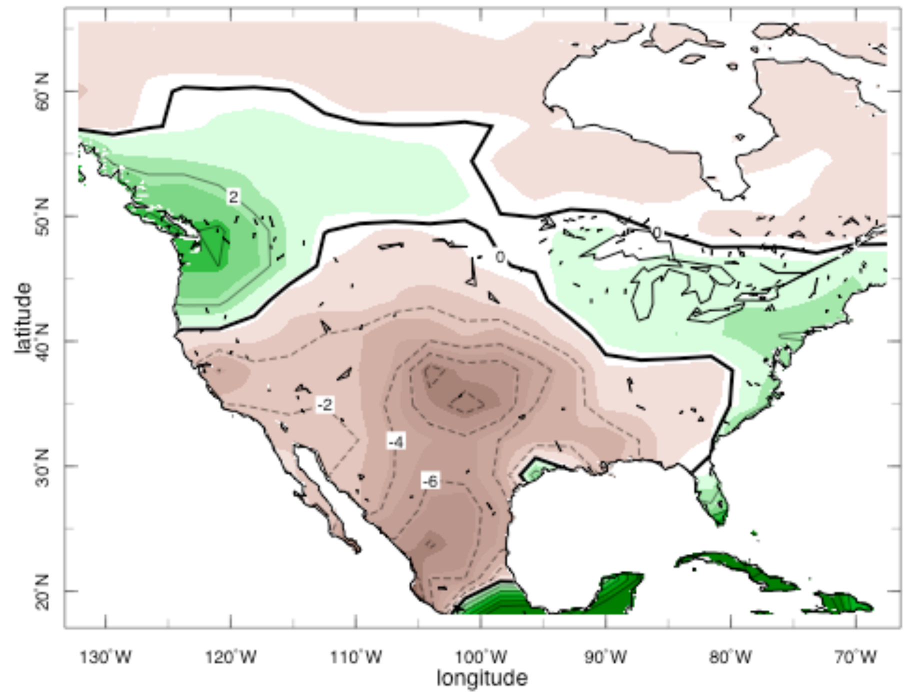
Precipitation Anomaly 1932-1939

OBSERVED



Contour interval = 2 mm/month

GOGA MODEL



GOGA MODEL = AGCM with Global Sea Surface Temperature Specified

Courtesy of Richard Seager