

# Most River Basins will Follow their Budyko Curves under Global Warming

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November 23, 2022

## Abstract

The Budyko framework consists of a curvilinear relationship between the evaporative ratio (i.e., actual evaporation over precipitation) and the aridity index (potential evaporation over precipitation) and defines evaporation's water and energy limits. A basin's movement within the Budyko space illustrates its hydroclimatic change and can help identify the main drivers of change. Basins are expected to move along their Budyko curves when only long-term changes in the aridity index drive changes in the evaporative ratio. We hypothesize that the increasing effects of global warming on the hydrological cycle will cause basins to move along their Budyko curves. To test our hypothesis, we quantify the movement in Budyko space of 353 river basins from 1901 to 2100 based on the outputs of nine models from the Coupled Model Intercomparison Project - Phase 5 (CMIP5). We find that significant increases in potential evaporation due to global warming will lead to basins moving primarily horizontally in Budyko space accompanied by minor changes in the evaporative ratio. However, 37% of the basins will still deviate from their Budyko curve trajectories, with less evaporation than expected by the framework. We elaborate on how land-use change, vegetation changes, or shifts in precipitation or snow to rain ratios can explain these deviations.

1 **Most River Basins will Follow their Budyko Curves under Global Warming**

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13 **Key Points:**

- 14 • We quantify CMIP5-simulated movements in Budyko space of 353 river basins from  
15 1901 to 2100
- 16 • We find predominant horizontal movements in Budyko space as the evaporative ratio  
17 barely changes under increasing aridity index
- 18 • Most basins will follow their Budyko curve trajectories under global warming scenarios

19

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34 framework. We elaborate on how land-use change, vegetation changes, or shifts in precipitation  
35 or snow to rain ratios can explain these deviations.

## 36 **1 Introduction**

37 Assessing future shifts in water resources and secure these resources through adaptation  
38 and mitigation requires an understanding of hydroclimatic change (Baldassarre et al., 2015;  
39 Brown et al., 2019; Nissan et al., 2019; Sivapalan and Blöschl, 2015). For decades, the Budyko  
40 framework (Budyko, 1974, 1948) has been used to understand hydroclimatic change by studying  
41 the relationship between water and energy available on the land surface and considering  
42 evaporation's water and energy limits. The framework provides curvilinear relationships for a  
43 given hydrological basin, known as Budyko-type curves, between the evaporative ratio (i.e.,  
44 actual evaporation over precipitation) and the aridity index (i.e., potential evaporation over  
45 precipitation) at mean annual or longer scales. Every basin on Earth has a set of combinations of  
46 evaporative ratio and aridity index related to its vegetation, soils, topography, climate  
47 seasonality, and snow to rain ratio, conforming a Budyko curve.

48  
49 The mathematical space spanned by these the evaporative ratio and the aridity index is  
50 often named the Budyko space (e.g., Greve et al., 2015; Gudmundsson et al., 2016; Jaramillo and  
51 Destouni, 2014; Moussa and Lhomme, 2016). Analysis in this space has been widely used to  
52 quantify the contribution of different drivers to changes in runoff and evaporation (e.g., Destouni  
53 et al., 2013; Koster and Suarez, 1999; Milly and Dunne, 1994; Schaake, 1990; Vogel et al., 1999;  
54 Wang and Hejazi, 2011). Many Budyko studies have focused on understanding the physical and  
55 hydrological mechanisms underlying basins' locations in the Budyko space (e.g., Berghuijs et  
56 al., 2020, 2014; Gan et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2016; Xu et al., 2013). In addition, the Budyko  
57 space has been used extensively to develop stochastic and deterministic approaches that quantify  
58 the sensitivity of water resources to climatic conditions (Berghuijs et al., 2017; Chen et al., 2021;  
59 Gudmundsson et al., 2016; Liu et al., 2019; Roderick and Farquhar, 2011) (Fig. 1).

60  
61 The change in the location in Budyko space of a particular region or basin can be referred  
62 to as "movement in Budyko space" and corresponds to the joint change in the aridity index and  
63 evaporative ratio between two time periods (Destouni et al., 2013; Jaramillo et al., 2018;  
64 Jaramillo and Destouni, 2014; van der Velde et al., 2013). The movement in the Budyko space

65 can help estimate the effects of particular drivers of change in the evaporative ratio. For example,  
66 under stable landcover and water storage conditions, a hydrological basin is expected to move  
67 along its Budyko curve if mean-annual changes in the aridity index are the main driver of  
68 changes in the evaporative ratio. However, in a more common scenario, other drivers than  
69 aridity, such as land cover changes, water use, changes in water storage or snow to rain ratios, or  
70 even in the seasonality of both precipitation and potential evaporation may change the  
71 evaporative ratio (Jaramillo and Destouni, 2014). For instance, Donohue et al. (2007) state that  
72 under stable conditions of the aridity index, land conversion from forest to grassland decreases  
73 evaporation and root zone capacity, eventually increasing runoff and decreasing the evaporative  
74 ratio (Nijzink et al., 2016; Sterling et al., 2013). In other words, a basin experiencing such wide-  
75 scale land conversion would move vertically downwards in the Budyko space, in the absence of  
76 any other driver. On the contrary, land conversion from grassland to forest cover would increase  
77 evaporation, would typically move a basin vertically upwards in the Budyko space. Other  
78 examples of upward movements in Budyko space include the expansions of irrigation (Wang and  
79 Hejazi, 2011) or the impounding effects of reservoirs on rivers (Levi et al., 2015). Furthermore,  
80 the non-stationarity conditions of energy and water availability reflected by changes in the snow  
81 to rain ratios, shifts in the precipitation regime, or the seasonality of energy availability in a  
82 given basin may also drive a movement in Budyko space. For example, a change from snow  
83 towards rain decreases runoff (Berghuijs et al., 2014), also translating into an upward movement  
84 in the Budyko space.

85

86 Hence, the combined effect of changes in the aridity index and any of these different  
87 drivers may move basins in Budyko space along trajectories that deviate from the Budyko  
88 curves. For instance, on a global scale, Jaramillo and Destouni (2014) studied almost 900 river  
89 basins worldwide during 1901-2018 to find that 74% deviated from their potential Budyko  
90 curves, that is, they moved beyond the range of 45 to 90 degrees that characterizes the slope of  
91 any Budyko curve (Fig. 1). This result pointed to the additional effects of other drivers such as  
92 land and water use, changes in water storage or precipitation seasonality in the river basins on  
93 the evaporative ratio.

94

95 The question to what extent these other drivers of change (besides the aridity index) will  
96 be still significant with ongoing and accelerating global warming. For example, can we expect  
97 future movements of hydrological basins under global warming to occur along their Budyko  
98 curves, and how will these compare to historical movements? The question becomes  
99 increasingly relevant with the growing effects of greenhouse gas emissions on Earth's water  
100 cycle (Gudmundsson et al., 2021, 2017; Huntington, 2006) and its intensification (Huntington,  
101 2006; Koutsoyiannis, 2020).

102

103 Here we test the hypothesis that most river basins in the world will move along their  
104 Budyko curves due to a dominant effect from increasing aridity index as potential evaporation  
105 increases due to global warming. We first calculate movements in Budyko space under historical  
106 and future hydroclimatic change from 1900 to 2100 for 353 large river basins worldwide based  
107 on hydroclimatic outputs from nine models from the Coupled Model Intercomparison Project -  
108 Phase 5 (CMIP5). We then compare these simulated Budyko-space movements with those  
109 expected from long-term theoretical and analytically-derived changes in the aridity index.  
110 Finally, we discuss the causes and implications of our findings.

111 **2 Materials and Methods**

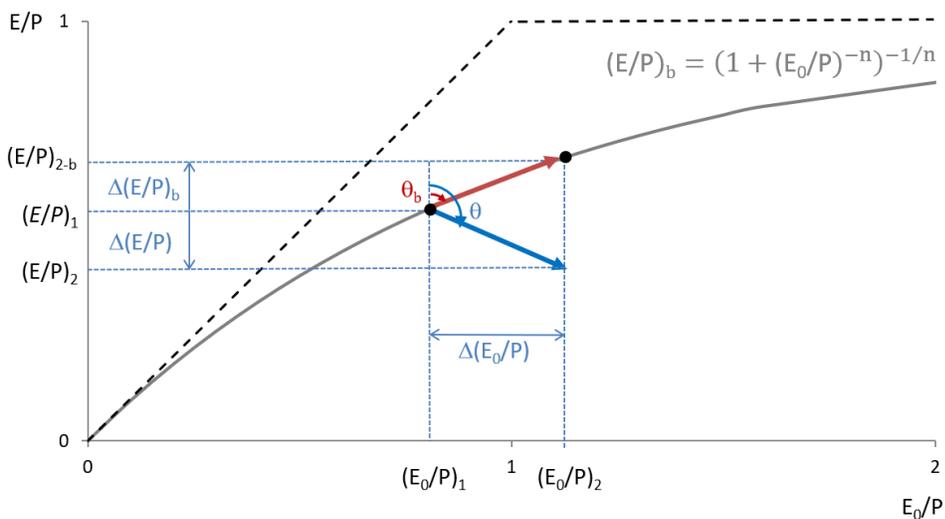
## 112 2.1. Hydroclimatic data

113 We selected nine Earth System Models that provide monthly data at a high spatial  
 114 resolution on net radiative forcing ( $R_n$ ; surface downwelling shortwave radiation), precipitation  
 115 ( $P$ ), and actual evaporation ( $E$ ) (Table 1). These data are required to estimate potential  
 116 evaporation ( $E_0$ ), the aridity index ( $E_0/P$ ) and the evaporative ratio ( $E/P$ ) for any location on the  
 117 Earth's land surface. This selection of models has been previously used to assess hydroclimatic  
 118 change over the African continent (Piemontese et al., 2019) and excludes models with  
 119 resolutions coarser than 2.5 degrees to reduce the use of models with poor performance,  
 120 especially in coastal hydrological basins. Furthermore, all CMIP5 models use the same present  
 121 and future land cover and land-use scenarios based on Hurtt et al. (2011).

122  
 123 The CMIP5 data was downloaded from the Earth System Grid (ESG,  
 124 <http://www.earthsystemgrid.org>), using the realization r1i1p1 (r: realization, i: initialization, p:  
 125 perturbation) as it provides the largest number of simulations (Taylor et al., 2012). In addition,  
 126  $E_0$  was estimated using the original energy-only method as it is the best suited for climate model  
 127 outputs (Milly and Dunne, 2016) (Eq. 1). The  $E_0$  estimate is expressed as

$$128 \quad E_0 = 0.8(R_n - G) \quad (1)$$

129  
 130 where  $R_n$  is the water equivalent of net radiation (net radiation divided by the latent heat of  
 131 vaporization) in mm/day and  $G$  the heat flux into the subsurface (also in mmd/day). We used the  
 132 surface downwelling shortwave radiation output of the models (rsds) as the net radiation and  
 133 assumed  $G$  to be zero since mean annual potential evaporation is mainly insensitive to seasonal  
 134 variations (Cook et al., 2014). The constant 0.8 reflects the fraction of available energy (~80%)  
 135 going into latent heat flux (Koster and Mahanama, 2012). The estimates of  $P$  and  $E$  estimates are  
 136 the outputs of the CMIP5 models, pr and evpbs, respectively, and coastal grid cells were  
 137 eliminated to remove the effect of ocean evaporation on evpbs.  
 138



140 **Figure 1.** Movement in Budyko space based on CMIP5 projections. The horizontal component  
 141 of the movement from period 1 to period 2 is the change in the aridity index ( $E_0/P$ ),  $\Delta(E_0/P)$ ,  
 142 while the vertical component is the change in the evaporative ratio ( $E/P$ ),  $\Delta(E/P)$ . The  
 143 hypotenuse of both components yields the intensity of movement ( $I$ ), and the angle ( $\theta$ ) represents  
 144 the direction of movement. The direction ( $\theta_b$ ) and magnitude ( $I_b$ ) of movement along the Budyko  
 145 curve represents long-term changes in the aridity index (Eq. 4; Yang et al., 2008). Dashed lines  
 146 represent the energy and water limits constraining hydroclimatic conditions of energy and water  
 147 availability.

148  
 149 **Table 1.** List of CMIP5 climate models analyzed in the study, including their spatial resolutions  
 150 and main model components.  
 151

Model	Spatial resolution	Specifications
NorESM1-ME	2.5°x1.9°	Norwegian Earth System Model with interactive carbon cycle, version 1 (medium resolution)
NorESM1-M	2.5°x1.9°	Norwegian Earth System Model, version 1 (medium resolution)
MRI-CGCM3	1.12°x1.12°	Meteorological Research Institute – Coupled Atmosphere-Ocean General Circulation Model, version 3
MIROC5	1.4°x1.4°	Model for Interdisciplinary Research on Climate
CNRM-CM5	1.4°x1.4°	Centre National de Recherches Meteorologiques – Coupled Global Climate Model, version 5
CMCC-CM	0.75°x0.75°	Centro Euro-Mediterraneo per i Cambiamenti Climatici – General Ocean-Atmosphere Circulation Model
inmcm4	2°x1.5°	Institute of Numerical Mathematics – Coupled Model, version 4.0
IPSL-CM5A-MR	2.5°x1.26°	L’Institut Pierre-Simon Laplace – Coupled Model, version 5, coupled with NEMO, mid resolution
MPI-ESM-MR	1.865°x .875°	Max Planck Institute for Meteorology Earth System Model, mid-resolution

152  
 153 The 353 hydrological basins selected for the study are the largest available in the Global  
 154 Runoff Database Centre GRDC (grdc@bafg.de). All climatic variables were calculated based on  
 155 the average of all the pixels within each river basin.

## 156 2.2 Movement in Budyko space from CMIP5 projections

157 We quantified terrestrial hydroclimatic change by defining four 30-year periods: 1910-1939,  
 158 1961-1990, 2010-2039 and 2070-2099. We defined hydroclimate changes as the magnitude and  
 159 direction of movement in Budyko space between any of these periods, now referred to “change  
 160 periods”, caused by changes in  $E_0/P$  and  $E/P$ . We determined the aridity index and evaporative  
 161 ratio based on the 30-year averages of  $E_0$ ,  $E$  and  $P$ , calculated or obtained directly from the  
 162 projections of the historical experiment and two of CMIP5’s Representative Greenhouse Gas  
 163 Concentration Pathways (RCP4.5 and RCP8.5). The historical experiment is based on  
 164 simulations forced by observations of atmospheric conditions and accounts for land cover

165 changes during the twentieth century (Moss et al., 2010). RCP4.5 corresponds to the midrange  
 166 mitigation emission scenario adopted by the Paris Agreement, while RCP8.5 reflects the highest  
 167 emission rate scenario without carbon emission mitigation strategies. We focused on RCP8.5  
 168 since it results in the largest imbalance in the Earth's radiative budget by 2100 (i.e.,  $8.5\text{Wm}^{-2}$  at  
 169 the top of the atmosphere) and therefore represents the largest impacts of carbon emissions and  
 170 global warming on the water cycle.

171  
 172 We determined the direction and magnitude of the vectors representing movement in  
 173 Budyko space for the change periods 1910-1939 to 1961-1990, 1961-1990 to 2010-2039, and  
 174 2010-2039 to 2070-2099. The movement vector ( $\vec{v}$ ) represents the hydroclimatic change  
 175 experienced by any hydrological basin over time, with direction ( $\theta$ ), magnitude ( $I$ ), and  
 176 horizontal and vertical components of change in  $E_0/P$  and  $E/P$ ,  $\Delta(E_0/P)$  and  $\Delta(E/P)$ , respectively.  
 177 For example, the changes  $\Delta(E_0/P)$  between 1910-1939 and 1961-1990 were calculated as  $\Delta(E_0/P)$   
 178  $= (E_0/P)_{1961-1990} - (E_0/P)_{1911-1940}$ . The direction and magnitude of movement were calculated as:

$$180 \quad \theta = b - \arctan\left(\frac{\Delta(E/P)}{\Delta(E_0/P)}\right) \quad (2)$$

$$181 \quad m = \sqrt{(\Delta(E/P))^2 + (\Delta(E_0/P))^2} \quad (3)$$

182  
 183 where  $\theta$  is in degrees,  $0^\circ < \theta < 360^\circ$ , clockwise and from the upper vertical,  $b = 90^\circ$  when  $\Delta(E_0/P) > 0$   
 184 and  $b = 270^\circ$  when  $\Delta(E_0/P) < 0$  (Fig. 1). It is worth noting that the direction and magnitude of  
 185 movement depend on the variables used to determine the Budyko space, both in x- and y-axis.  
 186 Some applications of the Budyko framework plot the runoff coefficient ( $R/P$ ) instead of  $E/P$  on  
 187 the y-axis, and this would indeed change the meaning of the physical processes behind the  
 188 movement in Budyko space.  
 189

### 190 2.3 Budyko-type movement in Budyko space

191 We define the movement in Budyko space expected from the long-term changes in  $E_0/P$   
 192 (i.e., based only on changes in precipitation and potential evaporation) as “along the Budyko  
 193 curve”. We used the “Budyko-type” analytical climatic model of Yang et al. (2008) expressed by  
 194 Zhang et al. (2015) as

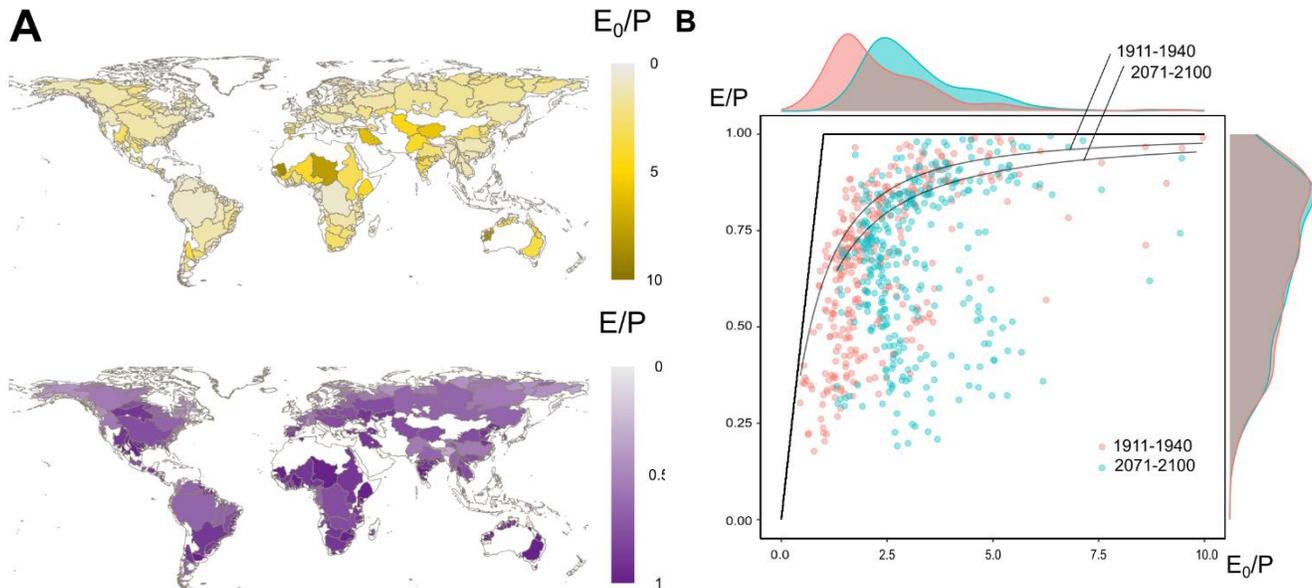
$$195 \quad (E/P)_b = \left(1 + \left(E_0/P\right)^{-n}\right)^{-1/n} \quad (4)$$

196 where the parameter  $n$  represents the contributing effect of catchment characteristics (e.g.,  
 197 vegetation, soils, topography, seasonality in precipitation and potential evaporation, snow-rain  
 198 characteristics) in each basin, and where the suffix “b” relates to the Budyko nature of the  
 199 estimate of  $E/P$  by this formulation  $(E/P)_b$ . We solved the value  $n$  for each hydrological basin  
 200 using the mean values of  $E/P$  and  $E_0/P$  obtained from the CMIP5 models (Table 1) in Equation 4  
 201 from the periods 1910-1939 and 1961-1990 and calculated  $(E/P)_b$  for the third and fourth  
 202 periods, 2010-2039 and 2070-2099. Note that each hydrological basin should have a  
 203 characteristic Budyko curve as there is one specific value of  $n$  for each basin. The direction ( $\theta_b$ )  
 204 and magnitude ( $I_b$ ) of movement along the Budyko curves is then calculated based on  $(E/P)_b$   
 205 using once again Eq. 2 and 3.

206 The comparison between movements estimated from CMIP5 projections and those along  
207 the Budyko curve can help explain the different drivers behind changes in the evaporative ratio.  
208 For instance, if the CMIP5 movements resemble those along the Budyko curve, we can ratify a  
209 significant role of long-term changes in the aridity index as a driver of changes in the evaporative  
210 ratio. On the other hand, if CMIP5 movements deviate from the Budyko curves, we expect  
211 significant contributions to evaporative ratio change from other drivers such as vegetation and  
212 land cover change, seasonality in precipitation and potential evaporation and snow-rain  
213 characteristics. We assume no deviation when directions of movement from CMIP5 estimates  
214 and along the Budyko curve ( $\theta_b$  and  $\theta$ ) fall in the same 10-degree interval. We used Jaramillo  
215 and Destouni's (2014) approach to illustrate hydroclimatic change as 'windroses' that summarize  
216 change for a large set of river basins.

### 217 **3 Results**

218 The selected large river basins cover a wide variety of Earth's hydroclimatic conditions  
219 (Fig. 2). The  $E_0/P$  ranges from river basins where atmospheric energy demand is low and  
220 precipitation high— such as those in Scandinavia or Canada— to regions experiencing the  
221 opposite such in the Sahel and Australia (Fig. 2a). Water partitioning from precipitation into  
222 evaporation on the Earth's surface, described by  $E/P$ , is also in general higher in the latter river  
223 basins than in the former. The distribution of hydroclimatic conditions of the early 20th century  
224 (1911-1940) is more skewed towards low  $E_0/P$  in comparison to future conditions in the late 21<sup>st</sup>  
225 century (2071-2100), when anthropogenic climate change will have already increased the Earth's  
226 temperature by about 4 °C in RCP8.5 (IPCC, 2014) (Fig. 2b). The higher temperatures of the  
227 future can preliminarily explain the shift of the distribution of  $E_0/P$  towards higher aridity (Fig.  
228 2b). During 1911-1940, 168 river basins were considered humid since their aridity index was less  
229 than two (Barrow, 1992; Greve et al., 2014); by 2071-2100, only 33 river basins will be humid,  
230 confirming recent studies finding areas of low  $E/P$  to experience a considerable increase in their  
231 aridity index (Feng and Fu, 2013; Greve et al., 2019; Lin et al., 2018; Park et al., 2018).

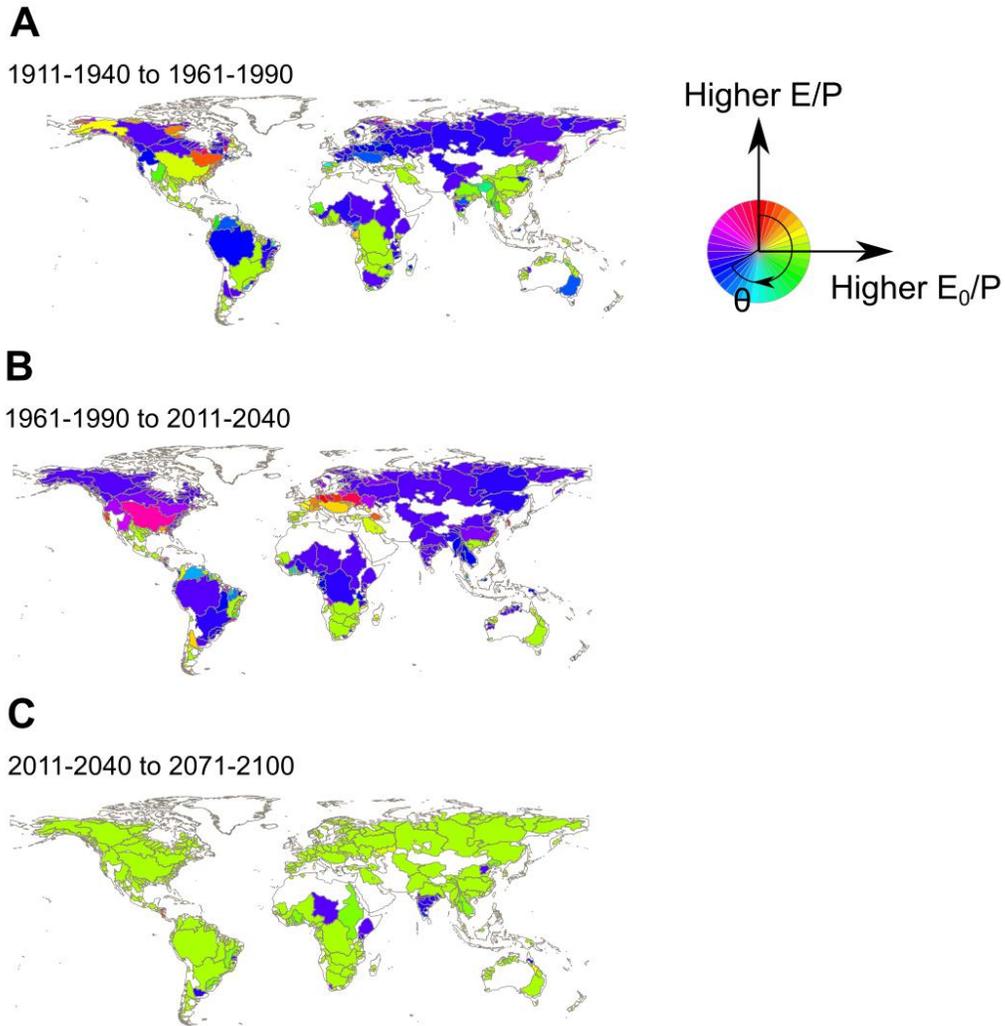


232 **Figure 2.** The mean values from the nine models for a) aridity index ( $E_0/P$ ; yellow) and  
 233 evaporation ratio ( $E/P$ ; purple) during the period 1910 to 2100 for 353 large river basins and  
 234 during the historic and RCP8.5 scenarios. b) Location in Budyko space of the river basins  
 235 according to the 30-year periods 1911-1940 (red) and 2071-2100 with RCP8.5 (blue), along with  
 236 the corresponding Budyko curves based on the mean parameter  $n$  of all basins. The water and  
 237 energy limits constraining water and energy availability are straight black lines.

238 Dividing the 200 years into the three change periods helps illustrate hydroclimatic change  
 239 and its variability in space (Fig. 3). For example, early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century before the effects of  
 240 global warming became important, from 1911-1940 to 1961-1990, river basins in Central and  
 241 Northern Europe such as the Oder, Wisla, Rhine and Elbe, the Amazon river basin in South  
 242 America, and most basins in northern Asia saw a simultaneous decrease in  $E_0/P$  and  $E/P$  (Fig. 3a,  
 243  $230^\circ < \theta < 260^\circ$ , blue hues). On the other hand, regions such as South East Asia and North America  
 244 presented a considerable heterogeneity of hydroclimatic change among basins, experiencing  
 245 different directions of movement in Budyko space. For example, Canada's Saint Lawrence and  
 246 Moose River basins experienced vertical changes as  $E/P$  increased much more than  $E_0/P$   
 247 ( $0^\circ < \theta < 30^\circ$ ; red and orange). At the same time, the Yukon River basin in Alaska presented similar  
 248 increases in  $E/P$  and  $E_0/P$ , resulting in diagonal changes ( $60^\circ < \theta < 70^\circ$ ; yellow). Furthermore, the  
 249 largest river basins in China, the Yangtze, Yellow and Xi Jang, moved horizontally to the right,  
 250 as  $E_0/P$  increased much more than  $E/P$  ( $80^\circ < \theta < 90^\circ$ ; light green).

251 Although the change period 1961-1990 to 2011-2040 shows similar overall patterns of  
 252 direction to 1911-1940 to 1961-1990 (Fig. 3b), striking differences emerge between these  
 253 change periods and 2011-2040 to 2071-2100 (Fig. 3c). In the latter, movements in Budyko space  
 254 will converge to predominantly horizontal directions ( $80^\circ < \theta < 100^\circ$ ), with a dominant increase in  
 255  $E_0/P$  accompanied by relatively minor changes in  $E/P$  across all continents. The few river basins  
 256 with decreasing  $E_0/P$  will also move horizontally, such as the Shebelle river basin in Africa and  
 257 the Krishna, Godavari, Tapti and Mahanadi river basins in India. Thus, it appears that horizontal

258 directions of movement in the space  $E/P$  vs  $E_0/P$  will be the new norm, regardless of the water  
 259 and energy availability conditions in the river basins and the magnitude of their change.



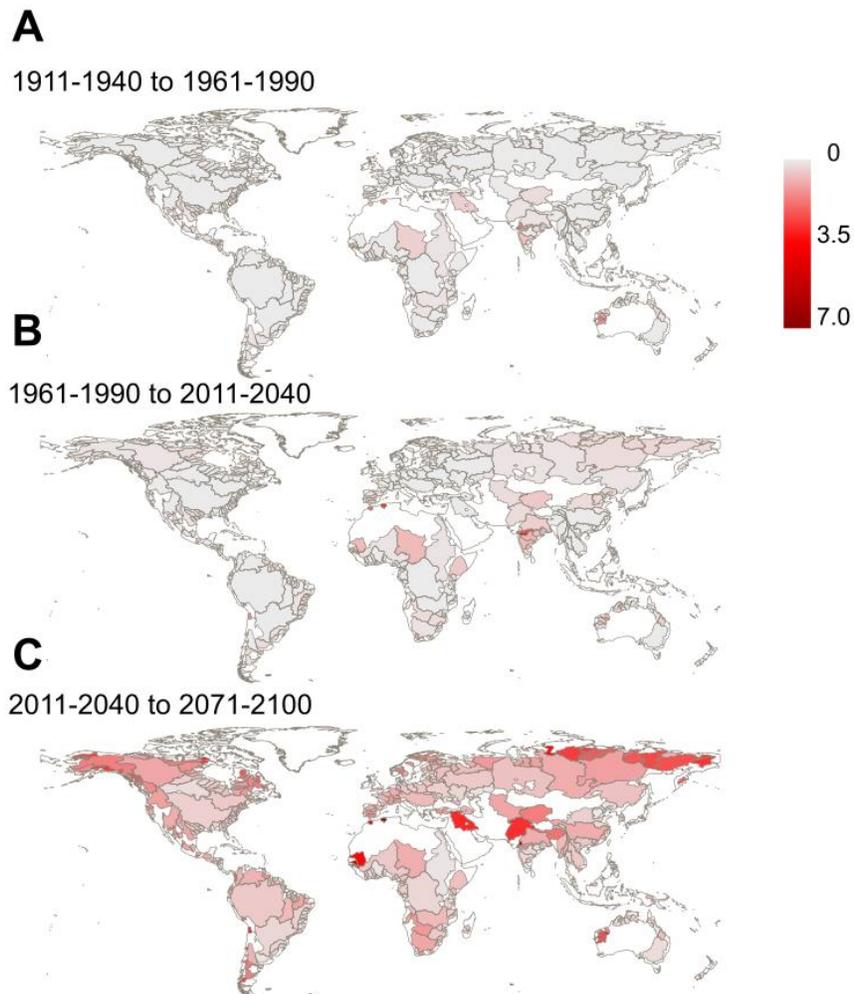
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261 **Figure 3.** Direction of movement in Budyko space ( $\theta$ ) in the three change periods under the  
 262 historical and RCP8.5 scenarios.

263

264

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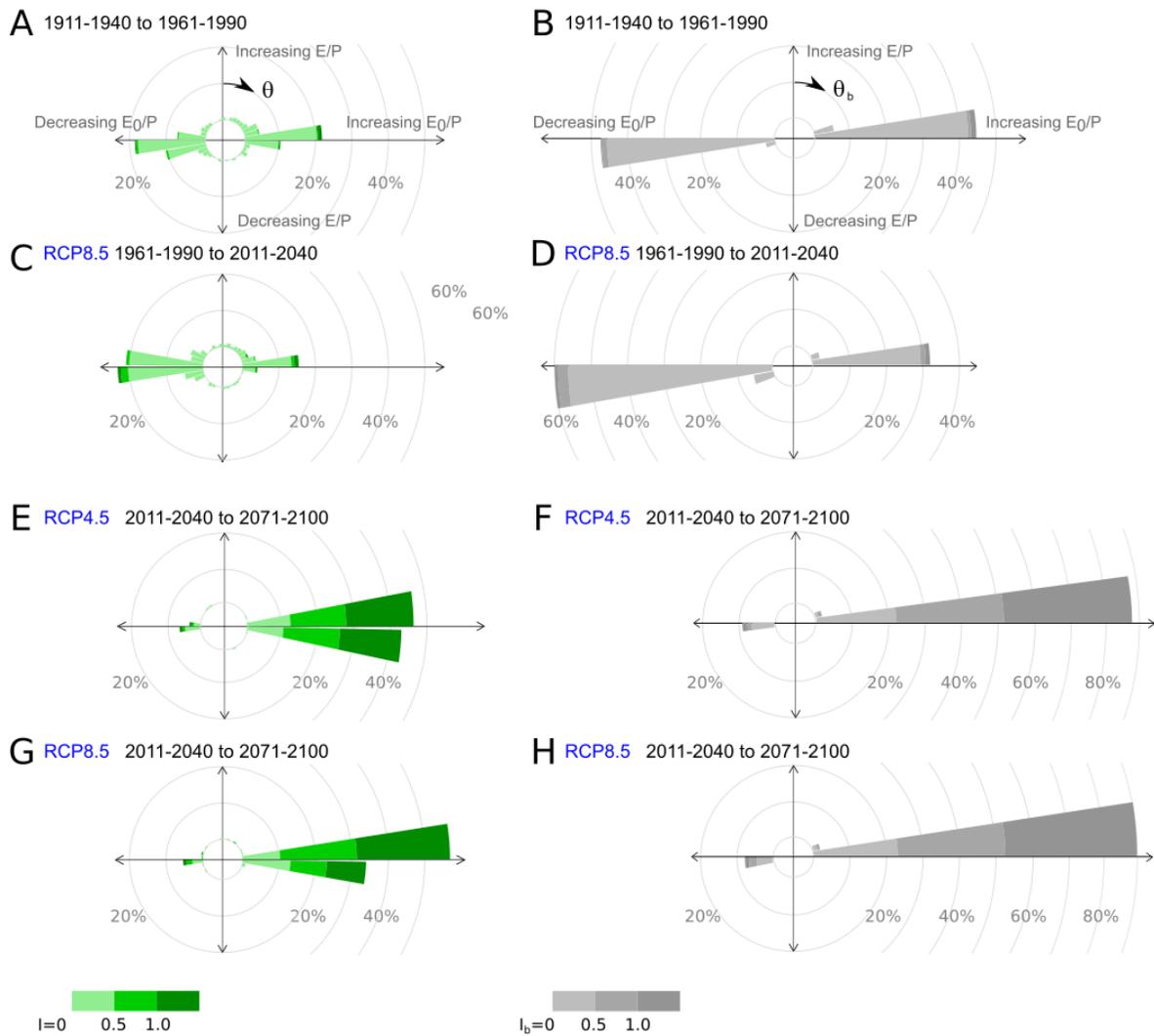


266 **Figure 4.** Magnitude of movement in Budyko space ( $I$ ; Eq. 3) in the three change periods under  
 267 the historical and RCP8.5 scenarios.

268 The magnitude of movement of the river basins will also increase considerably in the  
 269 future and under climate change compared to the first two change periods, mostly as  $E_0/P$   
 270 increases its rate of change (Fig. 4a,b). In general, the rate of change of  $I$  increases in most river  
 271 basins across time, with the largest gains found in high-latitude river basins in Northern Asia,  
 272 such as Khatanga, Yana, Indigirka and Pyasina, and Alaska in North America. Isolated river  
 273 basins with important gains in  $I$  include the Senegal river basin in Africa and central Asia's  
 274 Indus, Tigris, and the Euphrates. This finding may be an artifact since as basins are getting more  
 275 arid, the rate of change of  $E_0/P$  should mathematically typically increase; higher aridity indices  
 276 will have higher change values per unit of  $P$  when change compared to lower aridity basins.

277 The combination of  $\theta$  and  $I$  for all basins and each of the three change periods based on  
 278 CMIP5 simulations can be seen in roses (Fig. 5a,c,e), which are interpreted in the same way as  
 279 typical wind roses of wind direction and speed. These roses summarize the combined effect of  
 280 changes in  $E_0/P$  and  $E/P$ . The first two change periods exhibit a binomial distribution of  
 281 movement along the horizontal axis, with most movements occurring horizontally but with either

282 increasing or decreasing  $E_0/P$  (Fig 5a,c). The horizontality is evident across the roses of all nine  
 283 models (Fig. S1, Supplementary materials). For instance, during the change period from 1911-  
 284 1940 to 1961-1990, 21% of the river basins moved in the range of directions  $80^\circ < \theta < 90^\circ$  and 19%  
 285 in  $260^\circ < \theta < 270^\circ$  (light and dark green), of which 1% moved with magnitudes larger than one  
 286 (dark green) (Fig. 5a). In total, 68% of basins follow their Budyko curves as they move in the  
 287 range of directions  $60^\circ < \theta_{\text{clim}} < 90^\circ$  (32%) and  $150^\circ < \theta_{\text{clim}} < 180^\circ$  (36%). These percentages of basins  
 288 are less than the ones if all basins would have moved along their Budyko curves (Fig. 5b; 50%  
 289 when  $60^\circ < \theta_{\text{clim}} < 90^\circ$ ; 50% and  $150^\circ < \theta_{\text{clim}} < 180^\circ$ ). In total, a considerable amount of hydrological  
 290 basins (32%) experienced in the past movements that deviate from the Budyko curves and cannot  
 291 be explained by just long-term changes in the aridity index (i.e.,  $0^\circ < \theta < 60^\circ$ ,  $90^\circ < \theta < 250^\circ$ , and  
 292  $270^\circ < \theta < 360^\circ$ ).



293

294 **Figure 5.** Roses of movement in Budyko space for the three change periods based on CMIP5  
 295 simulations (a, c, e, g; green roses) and according to the Budyko type model by Yang et al.  
 296 (2008) (b, d, f, h; grey roses). We construct roses for the three change periods 1911-1940  
 297 to 1961-1990 (a, b), 1961-1990 to 2011-2040 (c, d) under the RCP8.5 scenario, and for the change  
 298 period 2011-2040 to 2071-2100 under both e) RCP4.5 and g) RCP8.5 scenarios. The range of

299 directions of movement ( $0 < \theta < 360^\circ$ ) is divided into  $10^\circ$  interval-paddles that group all basins  
 300 moving in each direction interval, with directions ( $\theta$  and  $\theta_b$ ) starting from the upper vertical and  
 301 clockwise, based on CMIP5 simulations and along the Budyko curve, respectively. The colour  
 302 intervals represent the intensity of the movements ( $I$  and  $I_b$ ) in Budyko space in such given  
 303 direction  $\theta$  (a,c,e,g) or  $\theta_b$  (b,d,f,h).

304 Contrary to the first two change periods, the distribution of directions from 2011-2040 to  
 305 2071-2100 is mostly unimodal in terms of  $E_0/P$ , as most basins experience an increase (Fig. 5e).  
 306 In this future change period, as global warming increases temperatures worldwide, the  
 307 movements along the Budyko curves are almost always horizontal and towards increasing  $E_0/P$   
 308 ( $70^\circ < \theta_b < 90^\circ$ ; Fig. 5f, h), for both RCP4.5 and RCP8.5 scenarios. Nevertheless, the CMIP5  
 309 simulations show that only 55% (Fig. 5e) and 63% (Fig. 5g) of river basins will move along their  
 310 Budyko curves, respectively, leaving 45% and 37% of river basins with movements that deviate  
 311 from the curves.

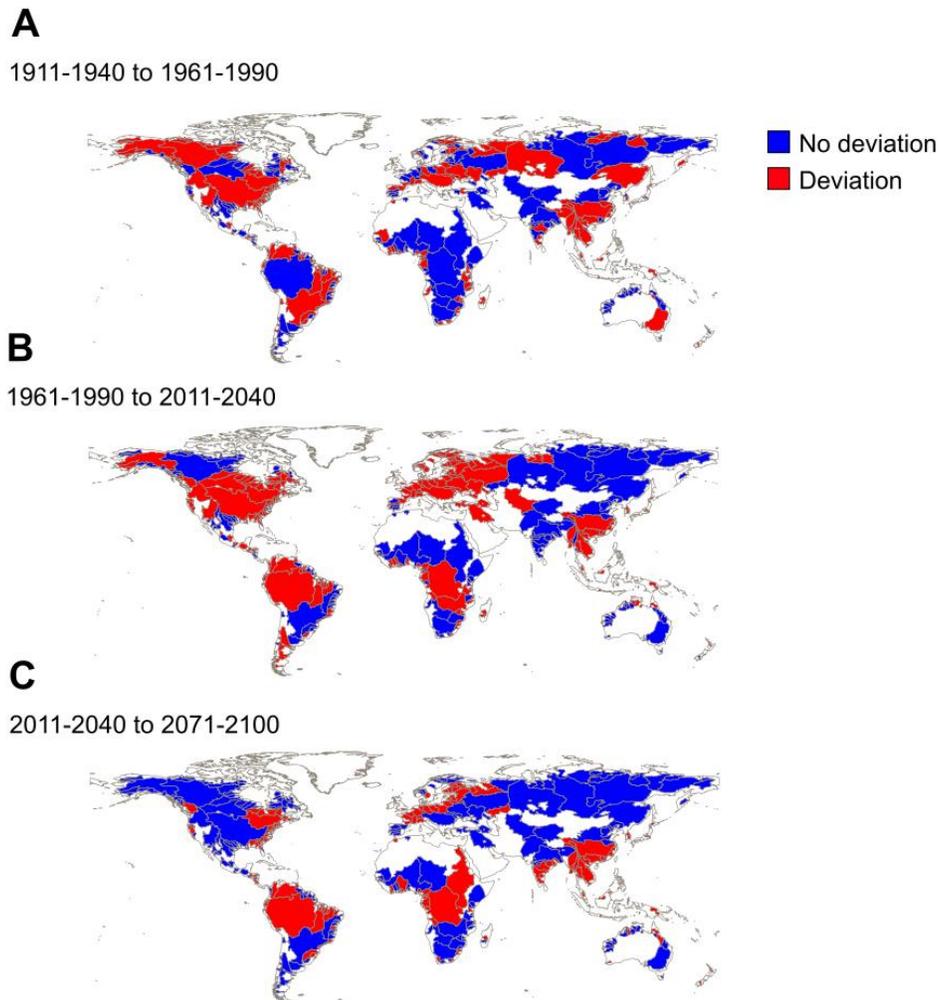
312 For RCP8.5 and the mean of the nine models, the number of river basins where  
 313 movements from CMIP5 simulations follow the Budyko curves increases from 166 in the first  
 314 change period to 204 in the third (Fig. 6 and Table 2). The Institut Pierre-Simon Laplace Climate  
 315 Modeling Center model, IPSL-CM5A-MR, and the Norwegian Earth System Model, NorESM1-  
 316 M, present the highest agreements for the last change period 2011-2040 to 2071-2100. The  
 317 number of basins with movements following the curves increases into the future as movements  
 318 become more horizontal in Budyko space, with dominating increases in  $E_0/P$  and small changes  
 319 in  $E/P$ . Entire regions where basins were deviating from their Budyko curves in the first two  
 320 change periods will start following the curve trajectories in the future, such as mainland North  
 321 America (e.g., Mississippi River basin) and the large basins of Mediterranean Europe and  
 322 Western Asia. Nevertheless, 68 river basins such as the Orinoco, Paraiba do Sul and Tocantins in  
 323 South America, and Potomac, Saint Lawrence and Savannah River basins in North America  
 324 consistently deviate from the Budyko curves across the three change periods. South-East Asia is,  
 325 in particular, a region where river basins consistently deviate. Furthermore, movements in 26  
 326 river basins will deviate from their Budyko curves across all nine models, including the Indigirka  
 327 and Kolima in Asia, the Niger, Orange, Senegal and Gambia in Africa, the Negro and Colorado  
 328 (Argentina) rivers in South America, or the Back, Coppermine and Yukon Rivers in North  
 329 America (Suppl. Materials).

330 **Table 2.** Nr. of basins where movement in Budyko space according to CMIP5 projections  
 331 follows the Budyko curves and statistics of linear regressions between changes in  $E/P$  and  
 332  $(E/P)_b$  for the last change period.

Model	1911-1940 to 1961-1990	1961-1990 to 2011-2040	2011-2040 to 2071-2100	$\Delta(E/P)$ vs. $\Delta(E/P)_b$
	<i>Nr. of basins following their Budyko curves</i>			$R^2$
CMCC-CM	144	168	272	0.01
CNRM-CM5	155	167	240	0.00
inmcm4	190	200	238	0.00
IPSL-CM5A-MR	115	172	281	0.01
MIROC5	146	184	258	0.01

Model	1911-1940 to 1961-1990	1961-1990 to 2011-2040	2011-2040 to 2071-2100	$\Delta(E/P)$ vs. $\Delta(E/P)_b$
MPI-ESM-MR	172	172	212	0.04
MRI-CGCM3	157	147	233	0.01
NorESM1-M	139	159	280	0.00
NorESM1-ME	133	123	224	0.00

333 Lastly, even though CMIP5 projections follow the Budyko curves in 63% of the river  
 334 basins from 2011-2040 to 2071-2100, there is no significant linear relationship between  $\Delta(E/P)$   
 335 and  $(E/P)_b$  (Table 2) as correlation coefficients ( $R^2$ ) are never above 0.04. This applies to all nine  
 336 Earth system models used. Hence, changes in  $(E/P)_b$  or movements along the Budyko curve  
 337 should not be used to predict E/P or movements from CMIP5 simulations.



338 **Figure 6.** Deviations of CMIP5-movements (RCP8.5) from their Budyko curves. We assume no  
 339 deviation when directions of movement from CMIP5 estimates and along the Budyko curve ( $\theta_b$   
 340 and  $\theta$ ) fall in the same 10-degree interval (See. Fig. 5).

341 **4 Discussion**

342 We see that movement in the Budyko space of river basins worldwide will converge in  
343 the future towards more horizontal directions, regardless of their water and energy availability  
344 conditions. The “horizontality” of these movements arises in gains in terrestrial energy  
345 availability for evaporation (Arora, 2002; Brutsaert and Parlange, 1998; Donohue et al., 2010)  
346 and increasing atmospheric thirst (Falkenmark et al., 2004), accompanied by relatively small  
347 changes in the evaporative ratio. As such, the ratio of changes in E/P to changes in  $E_0/P$   
348 drastically decrease from the second to the third change period, regardless of the model used  
349 (Fig. S2). The evaporative ratio will remain largely unaffected despite increasing aridity in  
350 basins worldwide. Furthermore, the fact that there is no relationship between changes in the  
351 evaporative ratio from CMIP-projections and theoretical Budyko-type estimates  $(E/P)_b$  (Table 2)  
352 calls for caution when predicting changes in runoff or evaporation via the Budyko framework.

353 The negligible relationship between  $\Delta(E_0/P)$  and  $\Delta(E/P)$  may also explain why only 41%  
354 (1911-1940 to 1961-1990) and 38% (1961-1990 to 2011-2040) of river basins follow their  
355 corresponding Budyko curves. Past global studies calculating movement in Budyko space based  
356 on precipitation, temperature and runoff observations had found that 74% of a set of almost 900  
357 river basins worldwide were deviating from their Budyko curves in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Jaramillo  
358 and Destouni, 2014). Hence, future CMIP5 projections show considerably fewer deviations of  
359 hydrological basins from the trajectories of their Budyko curves than historical observations  
360 based on runoff, precipitation and temperature.

361 Furthermore, the number of hydrological basins that are still deviating from their Budyko  
362 trajectories under RCP4.5 and RCP8.5 is surprising. The deviations during 1911-1940 to 1961-  
363 1990 and 1961-1990 to 2011-2040 mainly occur in hydrological basins experiencing increases in  
364 E/P that are larger than expected from their Budyko trajectories (i.e.,  $0^\circ < \theta < 60^\circ$ ; Fig. 5a, c). On  
365 the contrary, during 2011-2040 to 2071-2100, the deviations are due to a slight decrease in E/P  
366 even when being subject to an increase in  $E_0/P$  (i.e.,  $90^\circ < \theta < 100^\circ$ ; Fig. 5e, g), which goes against  
367 the principles of water and energy availability, which rather expect a mild increase in E/P (i.e.,  
368 the shape of Budyko curve). Such deviations are evident across all nine models. We now  
369 highlight several possibilities explaining the relatively high number of basins deviating from  
370 their Budyko curve trajectories.

371 First of all, land-use change is known to push the long-term movement of river basins in  
372 Budyko space beyond the range of slopes given by a typical Budyko-shaped curve (Destouni et  
373 al., 2013; Donohue et al., 2007; Renner et al., 2013). Nevertheless, land-use changes would need  
374 to explain the large spatial patterns of disagreement beyond these river basins’ borders (Fig. 6c).  
375 For instance, all the river basins with the confluence in the North and Baltic Seas evidence a  
376 similar disagreement pattern in 2011-2040 to 2071-2100, and a large-scale vegetation conversion  
377 is unlikely to explain this pattern alone.

378 According to Taylor et al. (2012), all CMIP5 models use the same present and future land  
379 cover and land-use scenarios based on Hurtt et al. (2011). However, most CMIP5 participating  
380 climate models do not provide simulations of forcing due to only land management and  
381 vegetation cover change, making it a challenge to ratify if all disagreements of movement in  
382 Budyko space are related to these. The Land-Use and Climate, Identification of Robust Impacts

383 (LUCID) experiment found large uncertainties regarding the impacts of vegetation change and  
384 land management on hydroclimatic characteristics, based on seven CMIP5 (Brovkin et al., 2013;  
385 Noblet-Ducoudré et al., 2012; Pitman et al., 2009) and CMIP6 simulations (Hurtt et al., 2020).  
386 Our study uses the outputs of three of the models included in the LUCID project; the Max Planck  
387 Institute for Meteorology Earth system model (MPI-ESM), the Institut Pierre-Simon Laplace  
388 Climate Modeling Center model (IPSL-CM) and the Model for Interdisciplinary Research on  
389 Climate (MIROC). Other efforts to disentangle the effects of land use on the hydroclimate based  
390 on CMIP5 projections (Kumar et al., 2013) have found that areas with large land cover changes  
391 experience a net increase in summer surface albedo, decrease in summer evaporation and  
392 increase in summer temperature (i.e., in North America and Eurasia) which may explain some of  
393 the disagreements.

394 Second, adding to the complexity of the effects on land-use change on water partitioning  
395 are the potential effects of “greening” of the Earth system by CO<sub>2</sub> fertilization (Zeng et al., 2016)  
396 or its counterpart; a water-saving response that reduces stomatal conductance and transpiration  
397 (Ainsworth and Rogers, 2007; Betts et al., 2007; Medlyn et al., 2001). If any of these two effects  
398 could explain a large number of deviations from Budyko-type trajectories, it would be the  
399 second, as most deviations exhibit decreases in E/P in a considerable number of basins, despite  
400 an increase in E<sub>0</sub>/P. However, there are also deviations during the first two periods, 1911-1940 to  
401 1961-1990 and 1961-1990 to 2011-2040, when the increase in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions is not yet as  
402 significant as in the future. Everything depends on how well do CMIP5 models can simulate the  
403 delicate balance between the stomatal closure effect of increased atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> on plants and  
404 the fertilization effect arising from increasing vegetation or greening (Zeng et al., 2016; Zhang et  
405 al., 2016; Zhu et al., 2016; Jaramillo et al., 2018). This improved understanding of vegetation  
406 responses under global warming is essential for ecohydrological adaptation and coping strategies  
407 under future climate change (Singh et al., 2020).

408 Thirdly, the deviations of a large number of basins from their Budyko curves may also be  
409 attributed to the potential evaporation model chosen to quantify the aridity index. Global studies  
410 have seen differences in estimates of aridity when using different potential evaporation models  
411 (Greve et al., 2019), such as Penman-Monteith-based models or the radiation-based method here  
412 used or its corrections. Nevertheless, it is worth stating that although these imprints some range  
413 of uncertainty to the estimates of the aridity index and then of horizontal movement, it is the  
414 vertical movement (i.e.,  $\Delta(E/P)$ ) that seems to contribute mainly to the deviations of movements  
415 from their Budyko-curve trajectories.

416 Fourthly, long-term intra-annual changes in energy and water availability related to  
417 seasonality may also account for deviations from the Budyko curves (Chen et al., 2013; Zanardo  
418 et al., 2012); the evaporative ratio may gradually change if precipitation patterns shift within the  
419 year, even with the same total annual precipitation. For instance, if precipitation shifts from  
420 months of high to low potential evaporation, the amount of precipitation partitioning into actual  
421 evaporation will decrease, decreasing the evaporative ratio (Xing et al., 2018). Similarly, a  
422 precipitation shift from snow to rain due to higher temperatures in winter and spring will  
423 decrease runoff (Berghuijs et al., 2017, 2014), which under constant conditions of annual  
424 precipitation will increase the evaporative ratio, moving basins upward in Budyko space.

425 Based on these last points, it appears that the Budyko framework is not enough to  
426 represent all hydrological change, which the CMIP5 models may indeed capture. The Budyko  
427 framework is based on the spatial distribution of catchments at a specific point in time and not  
428 necessarily on the temporal distribution of catchments across time (Budyko, 1974). Furthermore,  
429 the non-stationarity of climate parameters and basin characteristics related to water storage,  
430 vegetation and land cover pose complications to resolving changes in water fluxes via the  
431 framework and separating all drivers of change.

432 To date, the interpretation of movement in Budyko space has been used for a large set of  
433 applications such as to determine: 1) how hydroclimatic change manifests in different biomes  
434 (van der Velde et al., 2014), 2) hydroclimatic change global effects of water use and water  
435 footprint estimations (Jaramillo and Destouni, 2015; Sun et al., 2021), 3) the influence of forest  
436 characteristics on water yield resilience to climate warming (Creed et al., 2014), 4) hydroclimatic  
437 change and implications for land water management (Piemontese et al., 2019), 5) the existence  
438 of shifts in hydroclimatology (Heidari et al., 2021) and drought (Maurer et al., 2021), and 6) the  
439 hydrological effects of vegetation change (Chen et al., 2021). Our study indicates that although  
440 we foresee a dominant effect of climate change and global warming in the partitioning of  
441 precipitation on land and movement in Budyko space, around half of the largest basins in the  
442 world will still deviate from their Budyko curves. Regardless of the reasons for such findings,  
443 techniques quantifying and separating the climatic and non-climatic drivers of hydrological  
444 change will still be needed for future attribution of changes. In addition, these techniques help  
445 quantify human water consumption, water footprint, and impacts of humans on the water cycle  
446 and water resources.

447

## 448 **5 Conclusions**

449 We find that 1901 to 2100 movements in Budyko space (in this case,  $E/P$  vs  $E_0/P$ ) are  
450 predominantly horizontal and will become more horizontal in the foreseeable future. The trend  
451 towards horizontal directions of movement arises as global warming increases the aridity index  
452 accompanied by much smaller changes in the evaporative ratio. Although the rate of change of  
453 movements of most basins increased from 1901 to 2100, this increase results from increasing  
454 potential evaporation worldwide and the variables used to construct this space. We find that with  
455 global warming, more hydrological basins will also converge towards movement along their  
456 Budyko curves; however, 37% will still deviate from their Budyko curve trajectories under  
457 RCP8.5. The deviations correspond to a slight decrease in the evaporative ratio and a high  
458 increase in the aridity index, which goes against the water and energy availability principles of  
459 the Budyko framework and implies less evaporation than expected by the framework. Such  
460 deviations can be explained by land-use and vegetation changes or shifts in the seasonality of  
461 precipitation or snow to rain ratios.

462

## 463 **Acknowledgements**

464 The Baltic Sea Centre, Stockholm University and the Swedish Research Council (VR) Project  
465 2021-05774 have funded this study. LWE acknowledge financial support from Formas, the  
466 Swedish research council for sustainable development (no. 2019-01220) and the European  
467 Research Council through the “Earth Resilience in the Anthropocene” project (no. ERC-2016-  
468 ADG 743080).

469 All data will be available on the Bolin Centre Database (<https://bolin.su.se/data/>), Stockholm  
470 University, freely available.

471

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