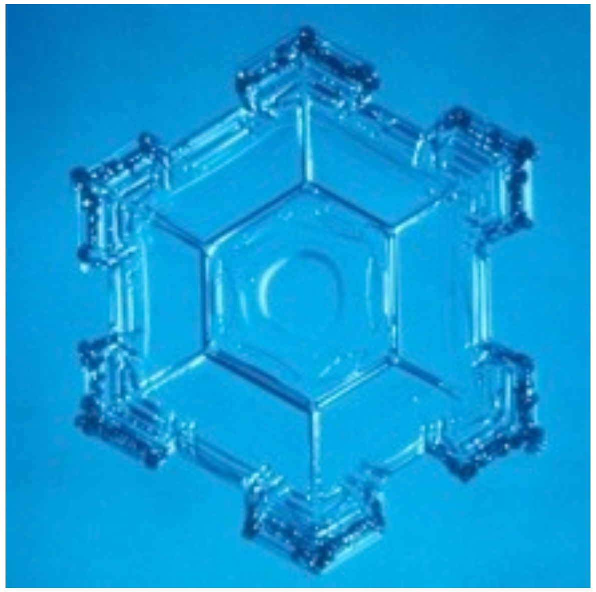
Quantifying the limits of convection parameterization

Modeling Across Scales

Global circulation

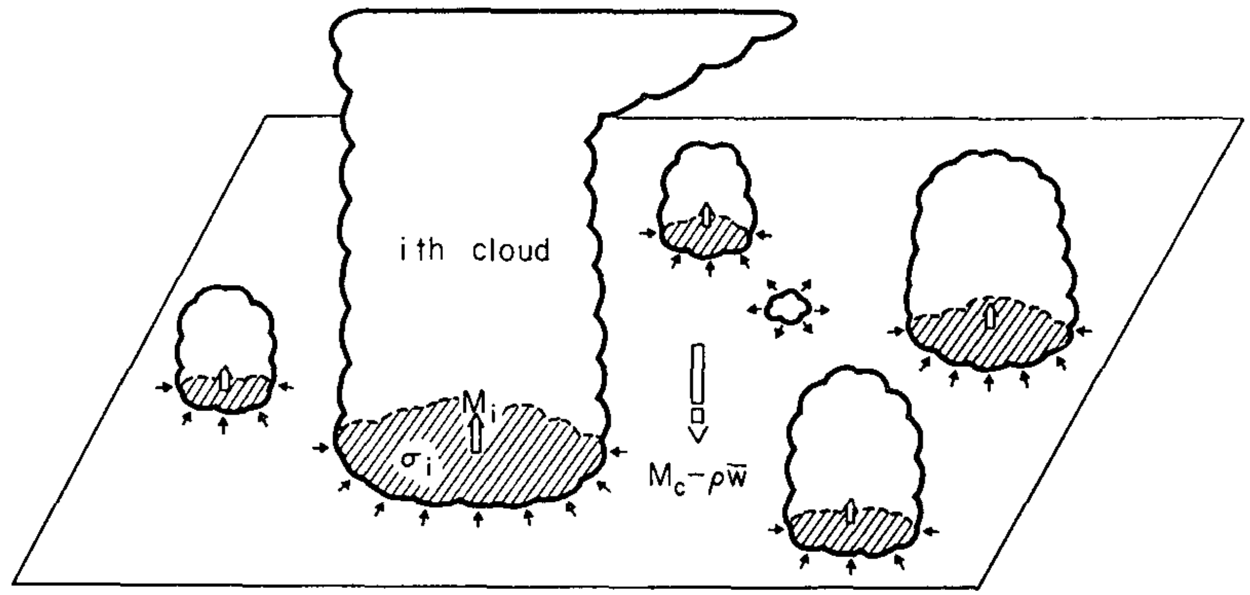
Cloud-scale &mesoscale processes



Radiation, Microphysics, Turbulence

Parameterized

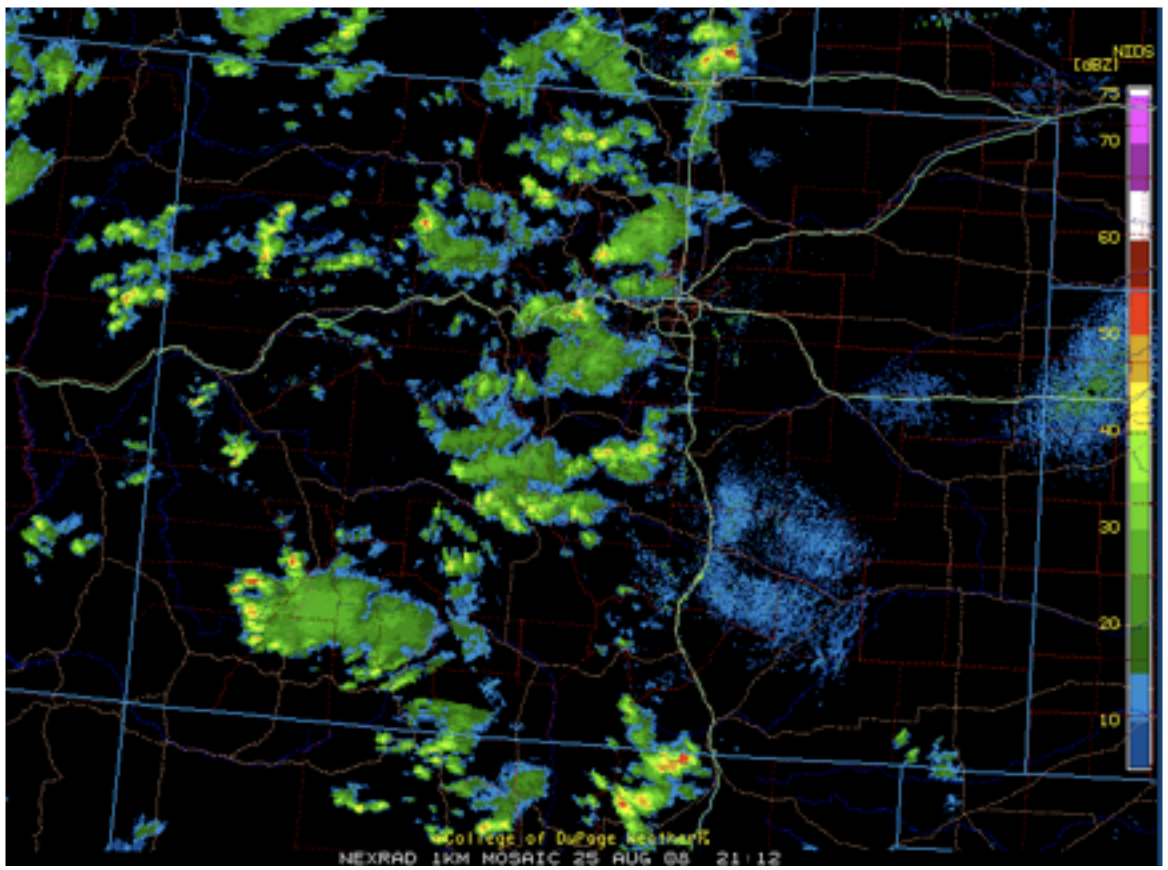
Scale Separation



“Consider a horizontal area … large enough to contain an ensemble of cumulus clouds, but small enough to cover only a fraction of a large-scale disturbance. The existence of such an area is one of the basic assumptions of this paper.”

-- AS 74

A summer afternoon in Colorado

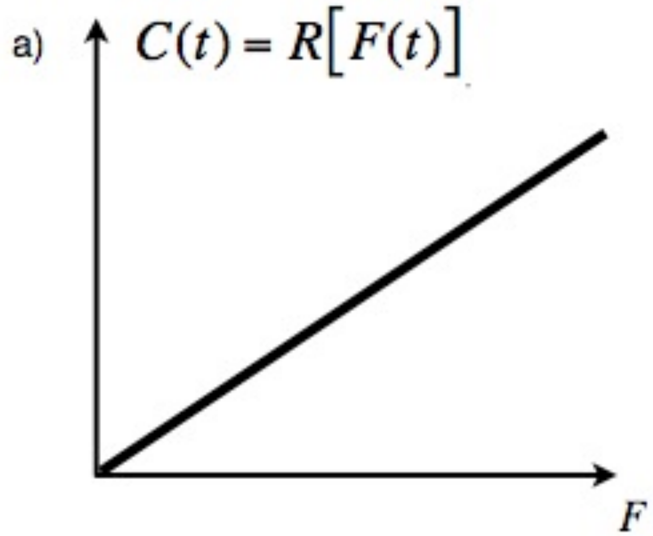


A parameterization determines the "expected" collective effects of many clouds over a large area.

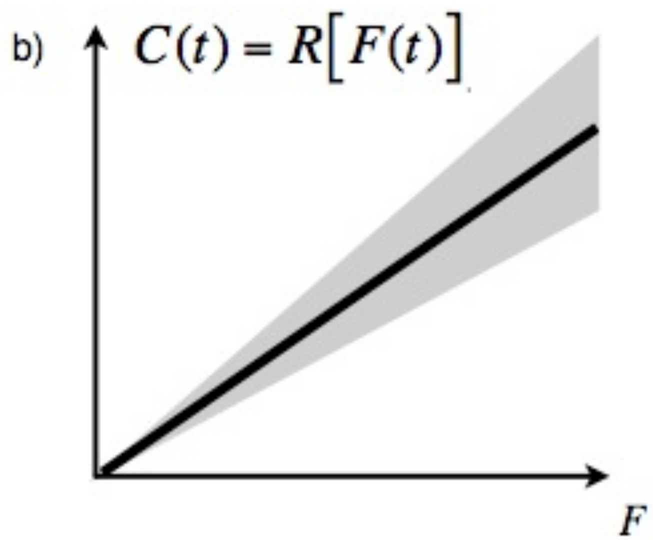
One of the issues is that the sample size is not very large.

The space scales are not sufficiently separated.

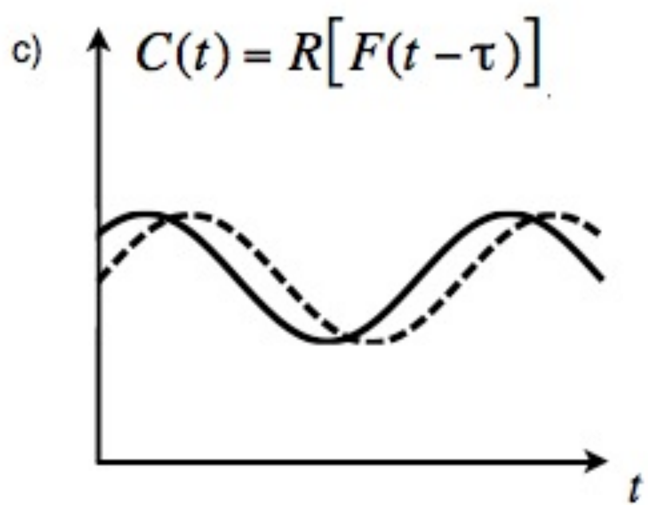
Limiting Cases



Quasi-Equilibrium Convection



Non-Deterministic Convection

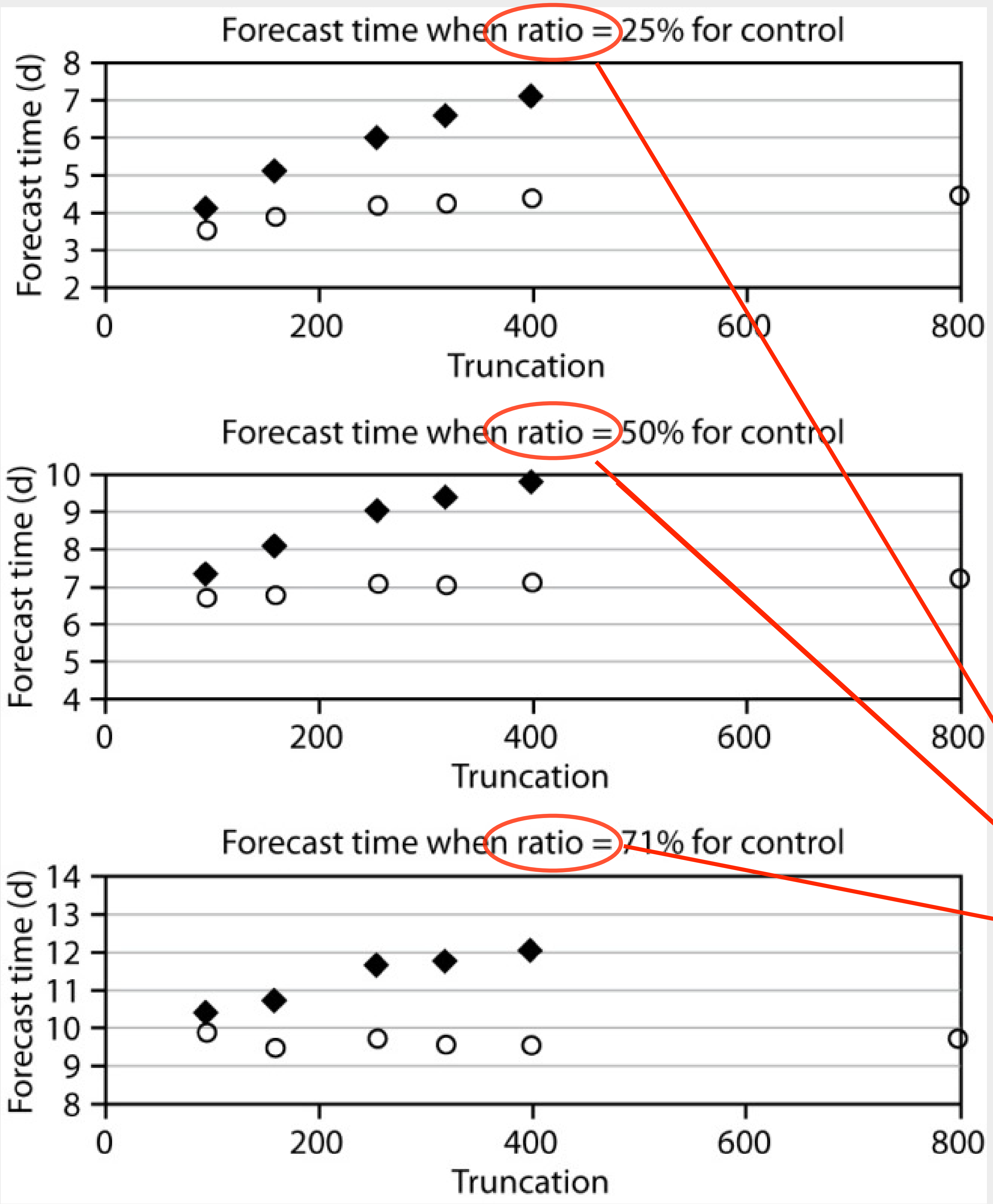


Deterministic but Non-Equilibrium Convection

Higher resolution

- Gradualist approach: dx gradually decreases, without changing parameterizations
    - OK for NWP, not so good for climate
    - No qualitative change until dx~5 km
- Aggressive approach: dx~5 km right now
    - Currently too expensive for climate
    - Super-parameterization as a compromise

Does increased resolution improve the results?



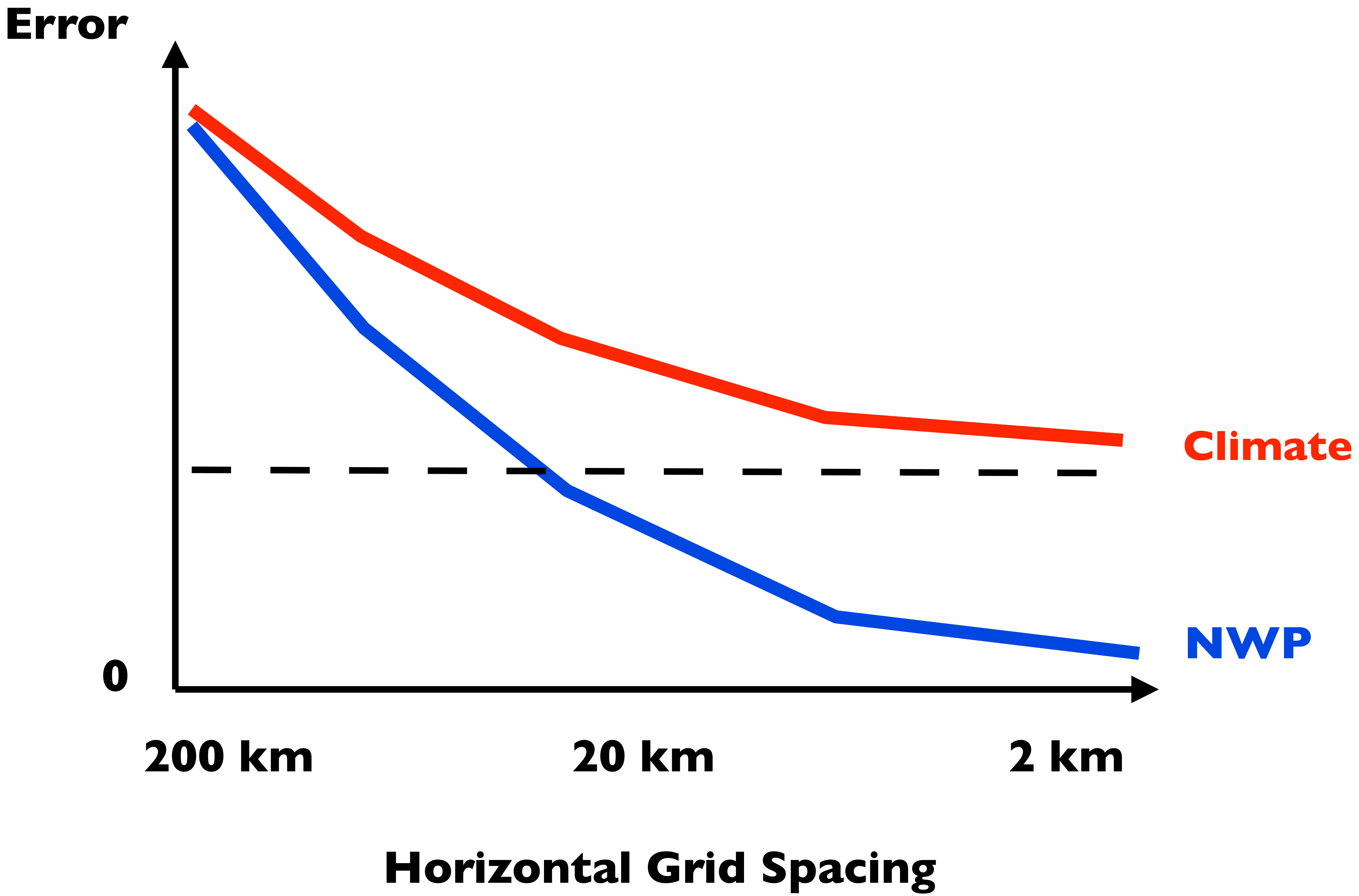
Buizza 2010:

"...although further increases in resolution are expected to improve the forecast skill in the short and medium forecast range, simple resolution increases without model improvements would bring only very limited improvements in the long forecast range."

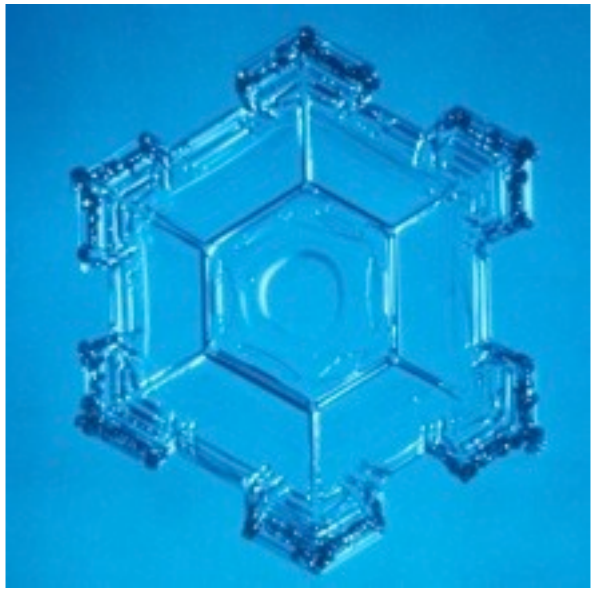
"Ratio" refers to the ratio of forecast error to its saturation value. Black symbols for the T799 "perfect model," grey symbols for real forecasts.

Error versus resolution

without changing the parameterizations



Parameterize less.



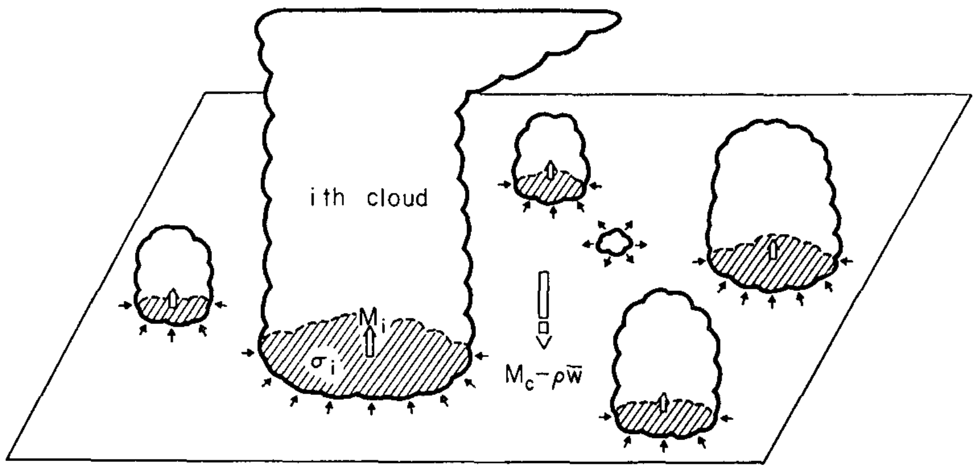
Global circulation

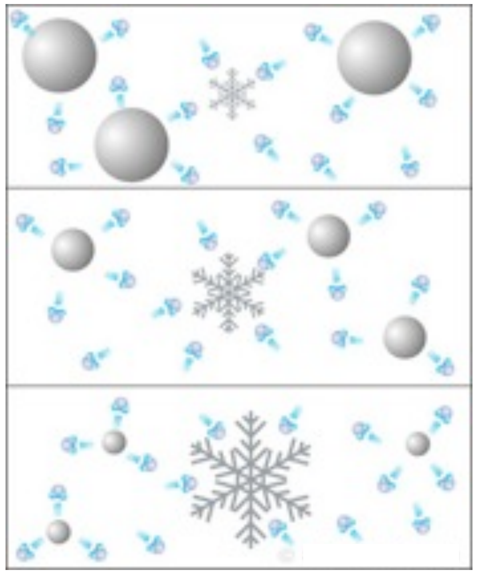
Cloud-scale &mesoscale processes

Radiation, Microphysics, Turbulence

Parameterized

Parameterize Different.





Increasing resolution

GCM

Parameterizations for low-resolution models are designed to describe the collective effects of ensembles of clouds.

CRM

Parameterizations for high-resolution models are designed to describe what happens inside individual clouds.

Expected values --> Individual realizations

Todd Jones

Ensembles of CRM runs

An extension of

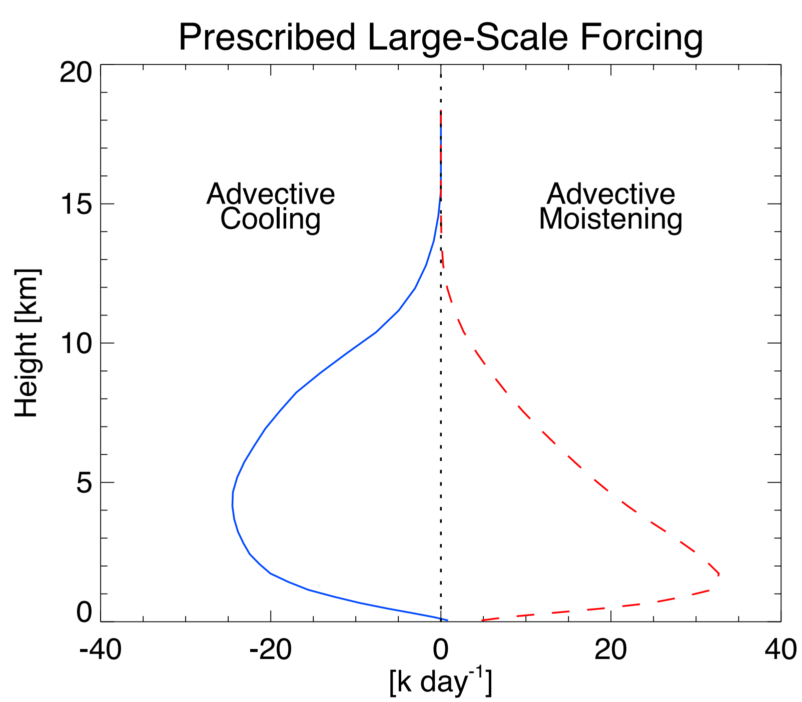
Xu, Kuan-Man, Akio Arakawa, Steven K. Krueger, 1992: The Macroscopic Behavior of Cumulus Ensembles Simulated by a Cumulus Ensemble Model. *J. Atmos. Sci.*, **49**, 2402-2420.

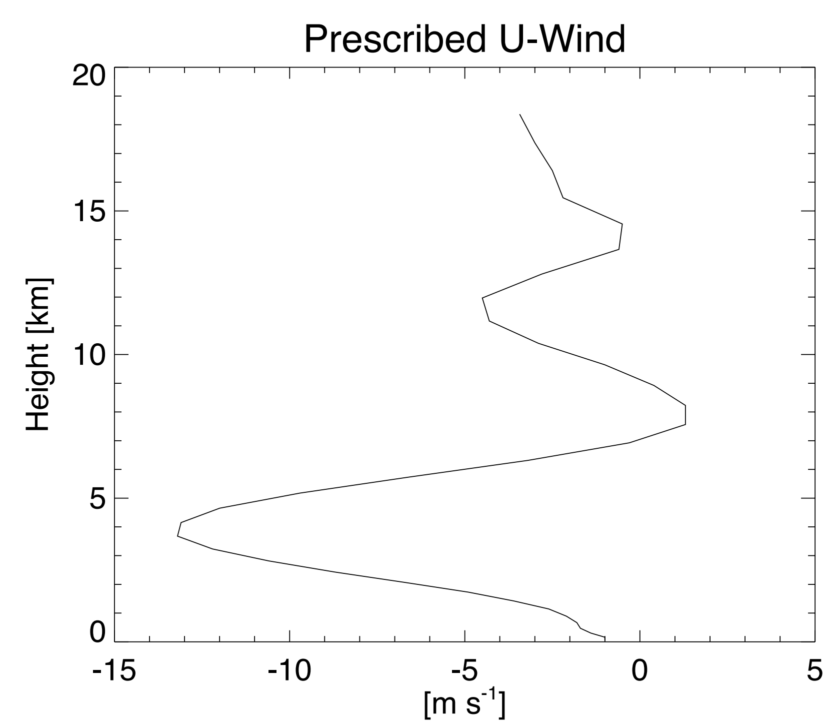
Extended how?

- **Three-dimensional model (important for sample size)**
- **Sensitivity to forcing period**
- **Sensitivity to domain size**

Experiment Design

- **Constant SST**
- **Prescribed radiation**
- **256 km square domain**
- **~18 km depth**
- **2-km horizontal grid spacing**
- **Large-scale forcing by advective cooling and moistening**
- **Some wind shear**
- **Domain-averaged wind relaxed to “obs”**



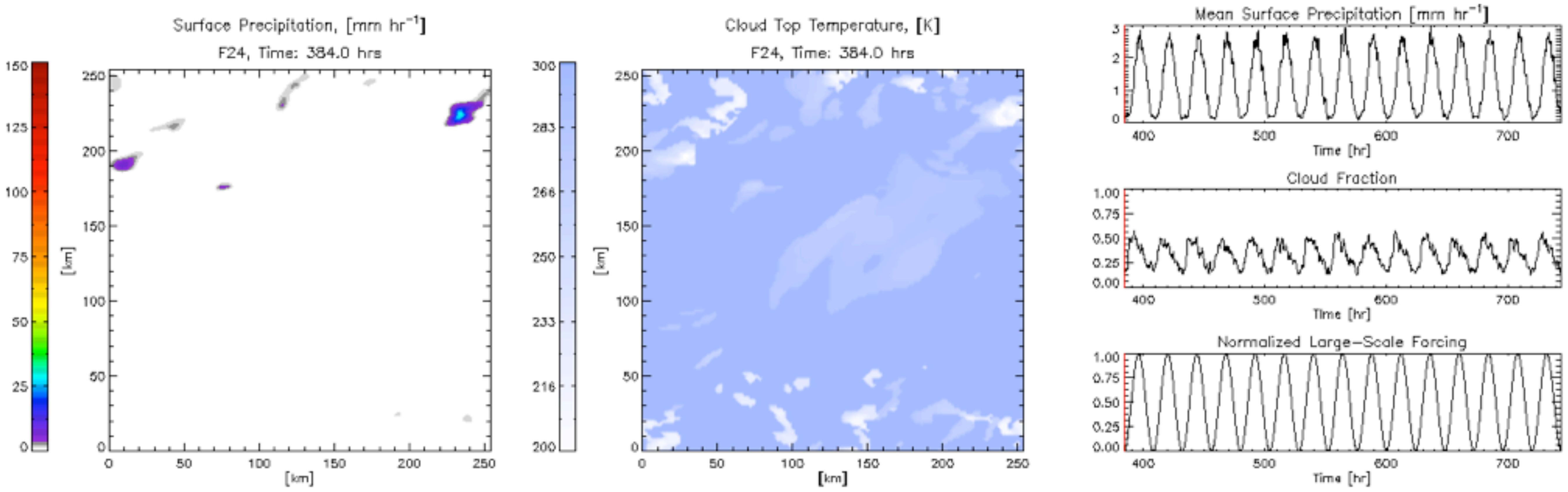


Experiment Design

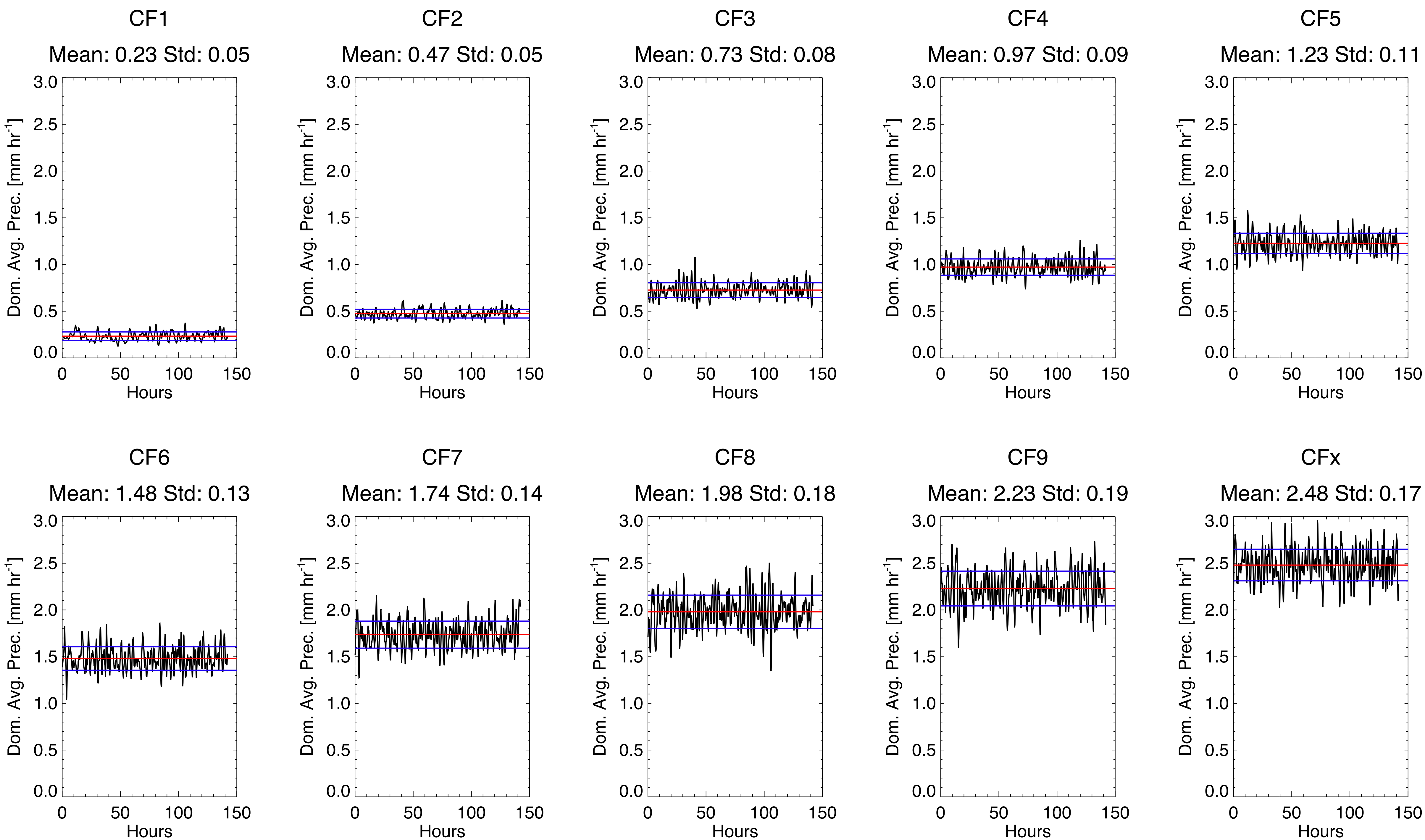
- Series of constant forcing simulations
- Series of periodically forced simulations
  - Periods range from 120 hours down to 2 hours
  - 15 cycles each
- Subdomains:

Fraction	Whole	Quarter	16th	64th	256th
Width, km	256	128	64	32	16

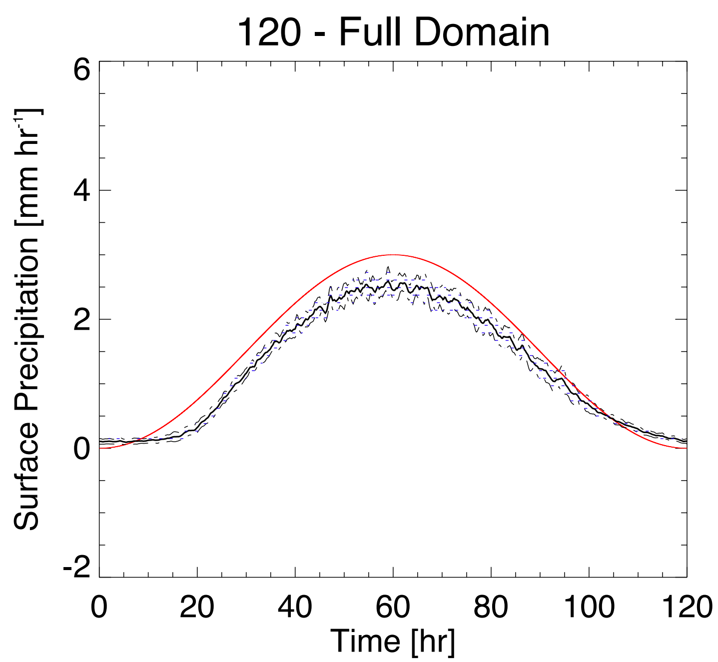
3D Numerical Simulation



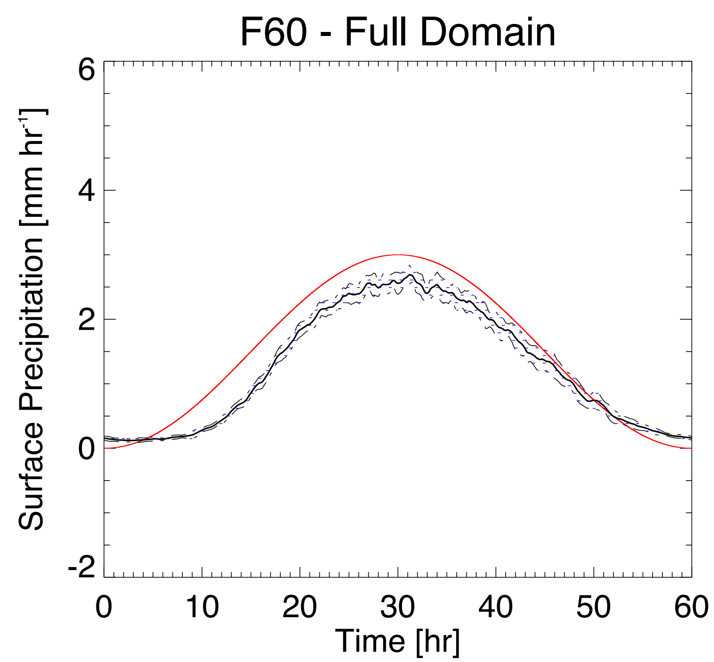
Constant Forcing



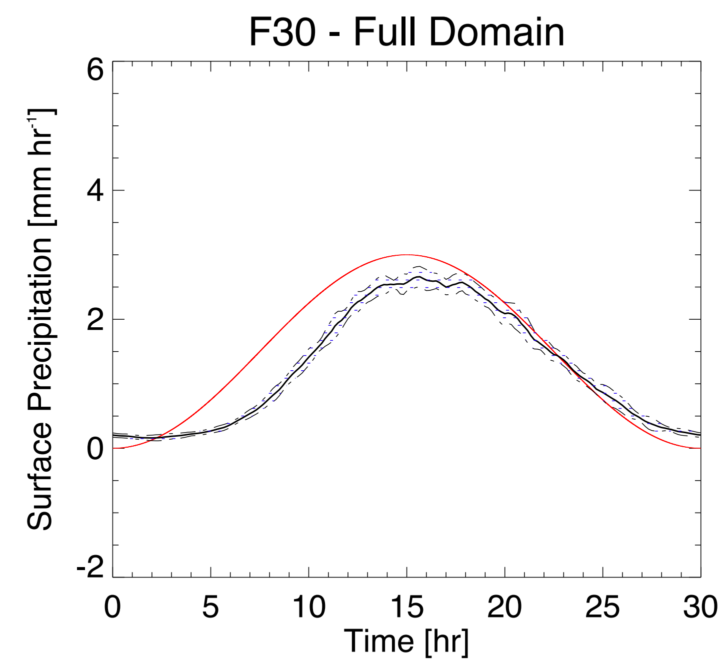
Dependence on Period



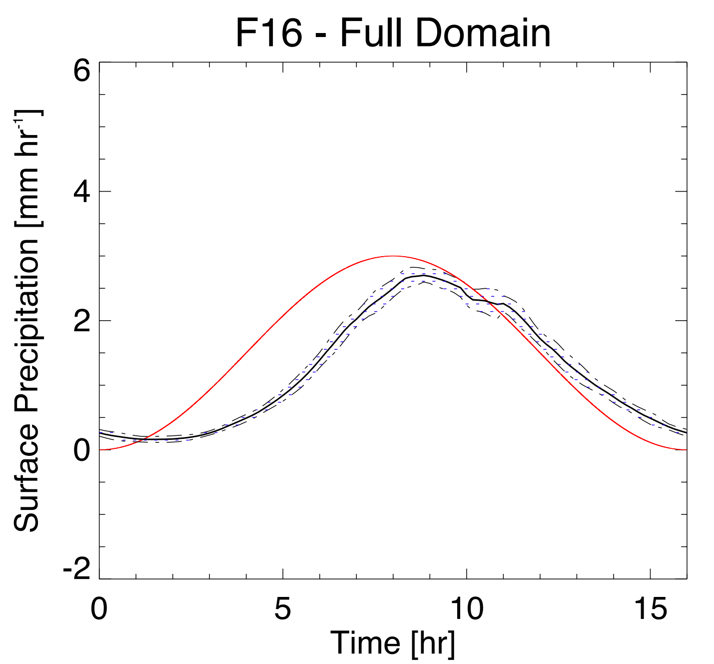
Forcing leads Precip by:
70.0 minutes (0.97 % of the forcing period)



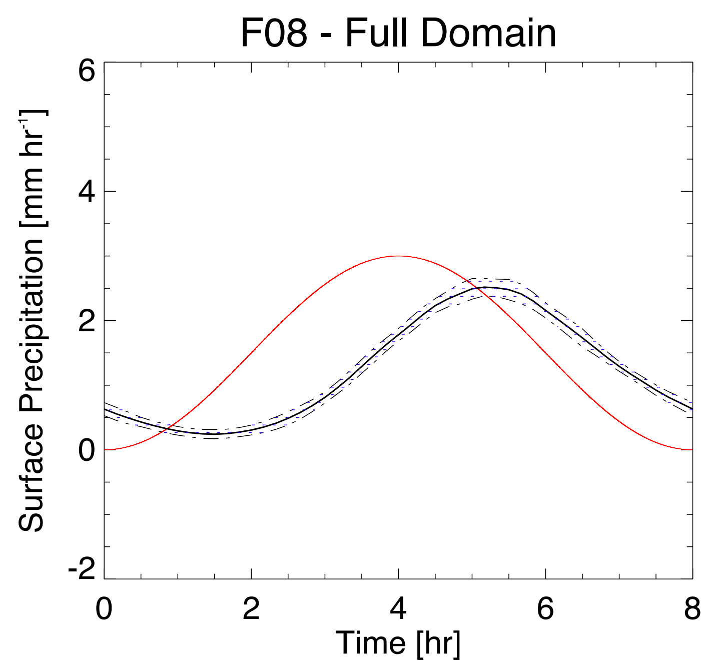
Forcing leads Precip by:
80.0 minutes (2.22 % of the forcing period)



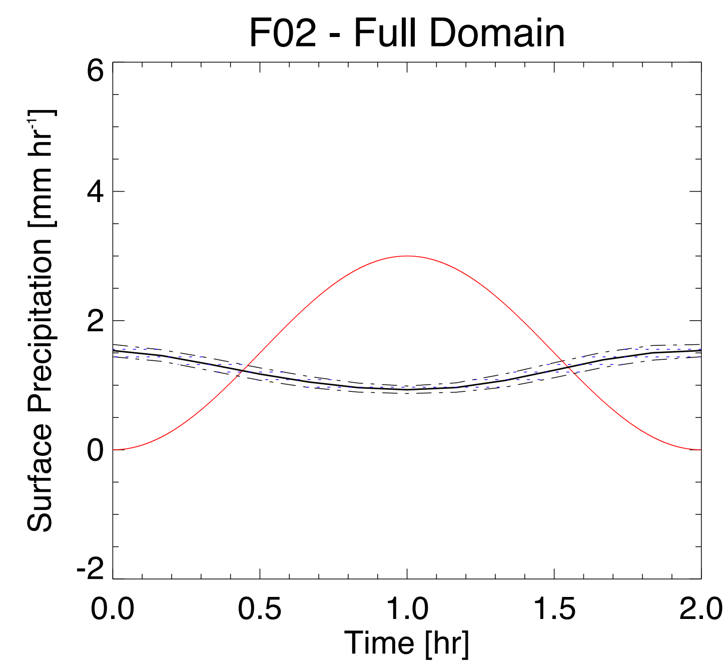
Forcing leads Precip by:
80.0 minutes (4.44 % of the forcing period)



Forcing leads Precip by:
80.0 minutes (8.33 % of the forcing period)

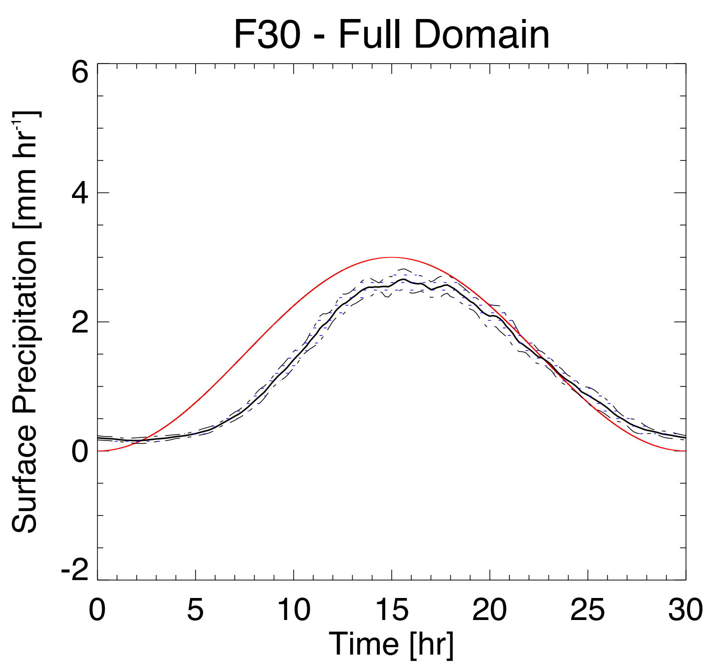


Forcing leads Precip by:
80.0 minutes (16.67 % of the forcing period)

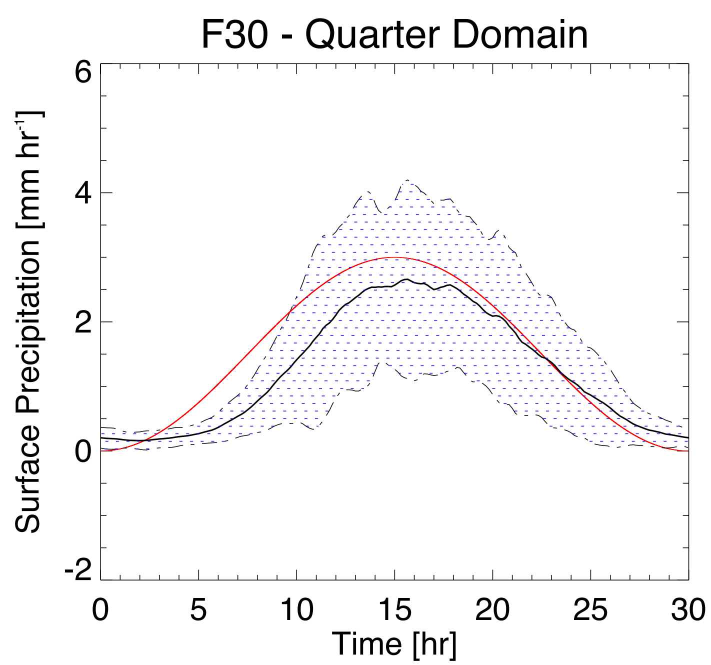


Forcing leads Precip by:
60.0 minutes (50.00 % of the forcing period)

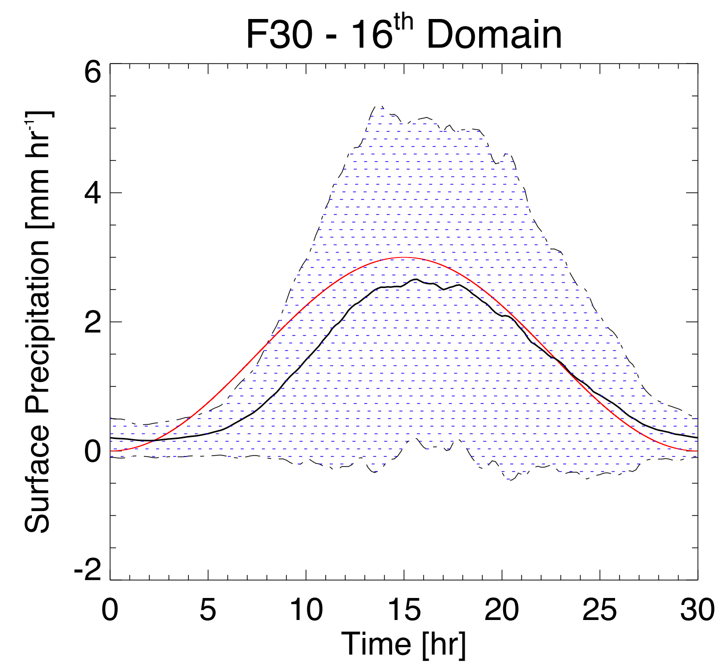
Dependence on Domain Size



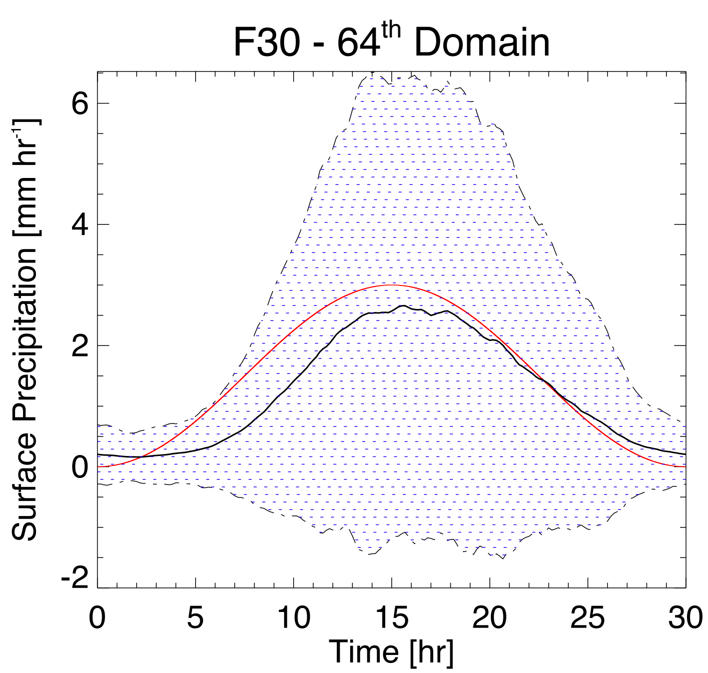
Forcing leads Precip by:
80.0 minutes (4.44 % of the forcing period)



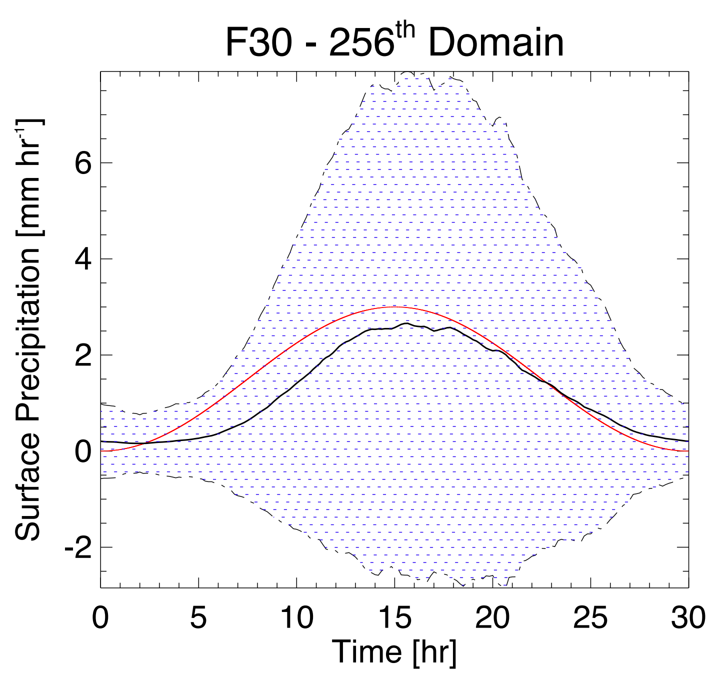
Forcing leads Precip by:
82.5 minutes (4.58 % of the forcing period)



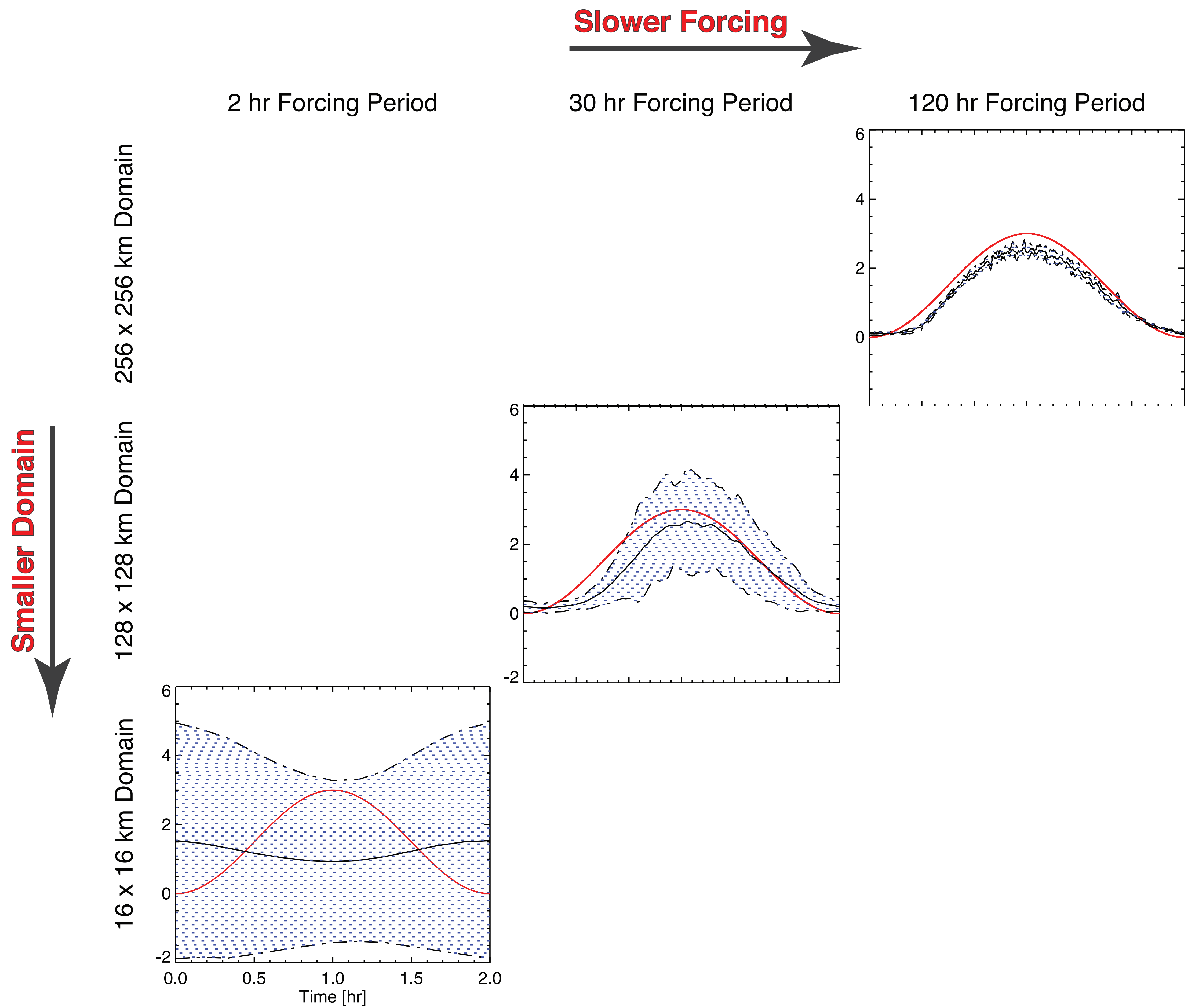
Forcing leads Precip by:
86.9 minutes (4.83 % of the forcing period)



Forcing leads Precip by:
113.8 minutes (6.32 % of the forcing period)



Forcing leads Precip by:
149.0 minutes (8.28 % of the forcing period)



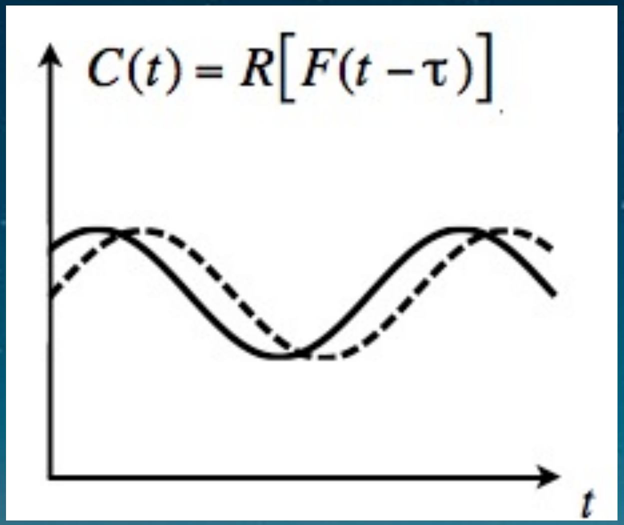
Slower Forcing
2 hr Forcing Period
30 hr Forcing Period
120 hr Forcing Period
256 x 256 km Domain
Smaller Domain
128 x 128 km Domain
16 x 16 km Domain
Time [hr]

A perfect parameterization

The ensemble mean represents a

perfect deterministic non-equilibrium parmeterization.

It is, of course, a perfect parameterization *of the CRM*, not of the real world.



Standard Deviation / Mean

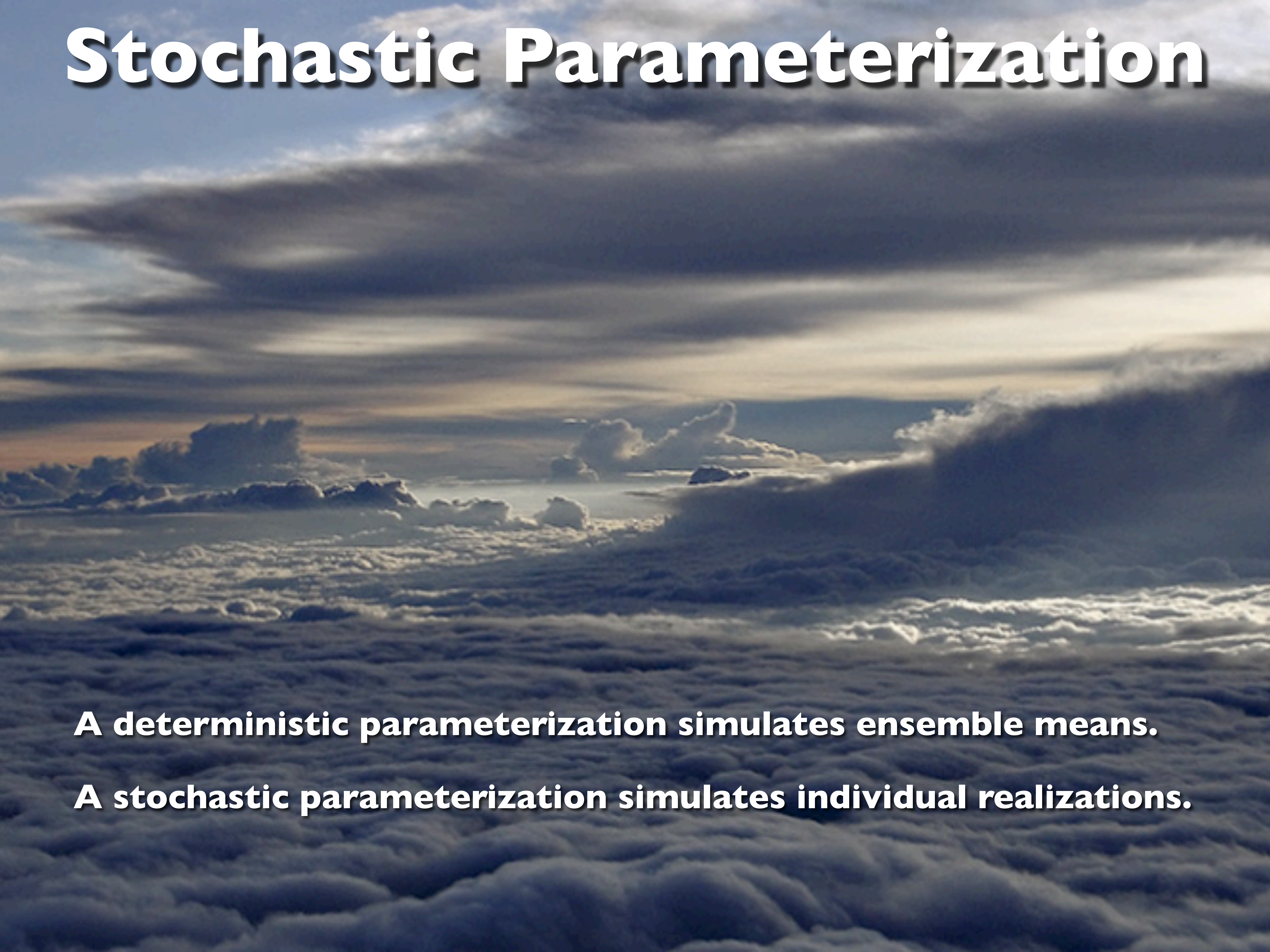
What is the best we can do?

	Subdomain Side Length (km)				
Period (hr)	**256**	**128**	**64**	**32**	**16**
15	**0.125**	**0.698**	**1.205**	**1.745**	**2.215**
30	**0.113**	**0.656**	**1.177**	**1.693**	**2.185**
60	**0.116**	**0.664**	**1.222**	**1.760**	**2.227**
120	**0.147**	**0.707**	**1.282**	**1.815**	**2.257**

A stochastic parameterization should be able to explain these numbers.

Even with a large domain and slowly varying forcing, *a perfect parameterization* will routinely produce ~10% errors, due to inadequate sample size.

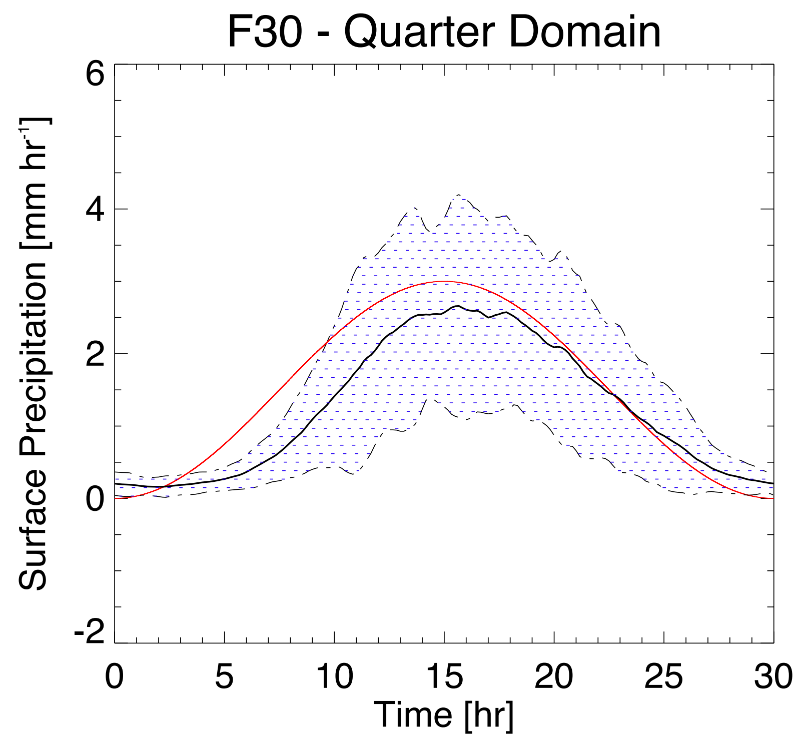
Stochastic Parameterization



A deterministic parameterization simulates ensemble means.

A stochastic parameterization simulates individual realizations.

Is “stochastic” equivalent to “It doesn’t do the same thing every time?”

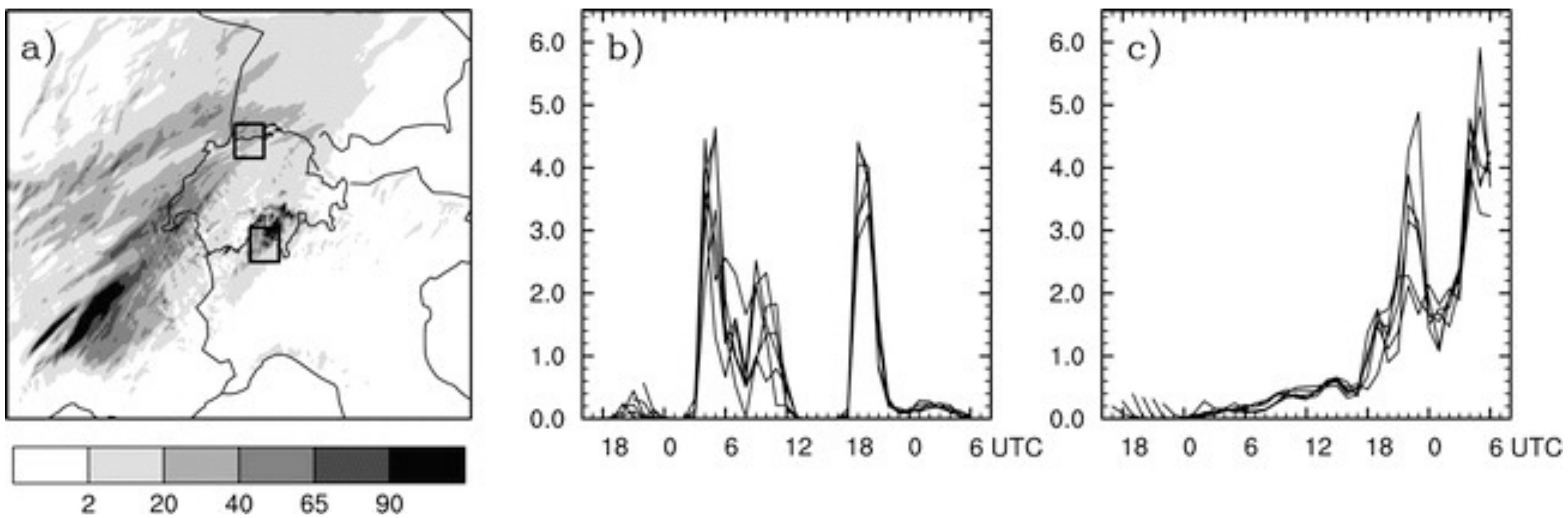


Forcing leads Precip by:
82.5 minutes (4.58 % of the forcing period)

If so, self-sustaining, long-lived mesoscale structures may contribute to “stochastic” behavior.

Can we identify stochastic behavior in observations of convection?

Does temporal variability reflect the spread of the ensemble?



Precipitation simulated by the six integrations SHIFT1 to SHIFT6 with (a) ensemble mean of the accumulated precipitation (mm; from 0000 UTC 25 Sep 1999 to 0600 UTC 26 Sep 1999), and precipitation rates (mm h^{-1}) for individual ensemble members averaged over (b) the Basel and (c) the Lago Maggiore subdomain.

Cathy Hohenegger and Christoph Schär, 2007

Super-Parameterization

An embedded CRM (super-parameterization) is a stochastic parameterization. It has a memory, and it exhibits sensitive dependence on its past history.

Because of its two-dimensionality, the MMF probably exaggerates the stochastic component of convection.

A super-parameterization can simulate the lag between the forcing and the convective response.

We don't know whether or to what extent the successes of super-parameterization are due to these attributes.

Concluding Thoughts

- Because a super-parameterization has built-in memory and exhibits sensitive dependence on its past history, it can represent non-equilibrium, non-deterministic convection.
- “Expected values” give 10% errors even with wide (256 km) grid cells. Non-deterministic behavior becomes very strong with just slightly finer resolution.
- Do we need “stochastic backscatter” in global cloud-resolving models, or in super-parameterizations?