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1 Contribution of ocean physics and dynamics at different
2 scales to heat uptake in low-resolution AOGCMs

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ABSTRACT

5 Using an ensemble of atmosphere-ocean general circulation models (AOGCMs) in an idealized
6 climate change experiment, this study quantifies the contributions to ocean heat uptake (OHU)
7 from ocean physical parameterizations and resolved dynamical processes operating at different
8 scales. Analysis of heat budget diagnostics reveals a leading-order global heat balance in the sub-
9 surface upper ocean in a steady state between the large-scale circulation warming it and mesoscale
10 processes cooling it, and shows that there are positive contributions from processes on all scales
11 to the subsurface OHU during climate change. There is better agreement among the AOGCMs in
12 the net OHU than in the individual scales/processes contributing to it. In the upper ocean and at
13 high latitudes, OHU is dominated by small-scale diapycnal processes. Below 400 m, OHU is dom-
14 inated by the super-residual transport, representing large-scale ocean dynamics combined with all
15 parameterized mesoscale and submesoscale eddy effects. Weakening of the AMOC leads to less
16 heat convergence in the subpolar North Atlantic and less heat divergence at lower latitudes, with a
17 small overall effect on the net Atlantic heat content. At low latitudes, the dominance of advective
18 heat redistribution is contrary to the diffusive OHU mechanism assumed by the commonly used
19 upwelling-diffusion model. Using a density watermass framework, it is found that most of the
20 OHU occurs along isopycnal directions. This feature of OHU is used to accurately reconstruct the
21 global vertical ocean warming profile from the surface heat flux anomalies, supporting advective
22 (rather than diffusive) models of OHU and sea-level rise.

1 Introduction

Among the major components of the Earth system (ocean, land, ice and atmosphere), the ocean by far dominates the uptake of heat associated with anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions (e.g., Otto et al., 2013). Once in the ocean, heat anomalies are transported by a variety of processes that allow heat to penetrate into the ocean interior well beneath the surface boundary (e.g., Levitus et al., 2012). This ocean heat uptake (OHU) moderates surface atmospheric climate warming and, through thermal expansion of seawater and melting of ice shelves (with associated increased land-ice melt), contributes to global and regional sea-level rise (e.g., Church et al., 2013). Observation-based reconstructions (e.g., Zanna et al., 2019) and climate change simulations based on atmosphere-ocean general circulation models (AOGCMs) (e.g., Gregory, 2000; Kuhlbrodt et al., 2015; Exarchou et al., 2015) indicate that OHU is highly non-uniform in space, which in turn contributes to regional changes in dynamic sea-level. Projected magnitudes of dynamic sea-level change can be comparable to global-mean sea-level rise due to thermal expansion (e.g., Yin et al., 2010; Gregory et al., 2016). Therefore, improved understanding of OHU, including its vertical and horizontal structure and its spread among AOGCMs, is essential for improved projections of surface climate and sea-level changes.

Several previous studies performed process-based analyses of OHU in climate change experiments, typically based on either one or a few AOGCMs (Gregory, 2000; Kuhlbrodt et al., 2015; Exarchou et al., 2015), or on idealized-basin models (Saenko, 2006; Morrison et al., 2013). Among other findings, these studies highlighted the importance of different physical processes for OHU in different regions. In particular, for high-latitude regions with weak vertical stratification, OHU was found to be dominated by changes in the processes affecting ventilation, such as vertical convec-

45 tive mixing and parameterized mesoscale eddy-induced effects. In low-latitude regions, changes in
46 ocean heat content (OHC) were dominated by changes in large-scale heat advection. These find-
47 ings are broadly supported by our analysis using a more thorough suite of models. In particular, we
48 find that the main effect from diapycnal mixing processes is to make the subsurface North Atlantic
49 and Southern Ocean warmer, while the combined effect from all other processes is to make the
50 subpolar Atlantic colder and most of the rest of the ocean warmer (Fig. 1, with a more detailed
51 discussion provided in Section 3).

52 Despite considerable progress in understanding the contribution of individual processes to
53 OHU in AOGCMs, many questions remain. In particular, the substantial spread among AOGCMs
54 in terms of the processes regulating OHU (Exarchou et al., 2015), both parameterized and resolved,
55 needs to be better understood. Here, we further elaborate on these processes by building on earlier
56 studies by Gregory (2000), Kuhlbrodt et al. (2015) and Exarchou et al. (2015). Specifically, using
57 a larger suite of AOGCMs, we focus on contributions to OHU arising from both parameterized
58 and resolved ocean physical processes that operate at different space/time scales; namely, resolved
59 large-scale circulation along with parameterized mesoscale and submesoscale eddy motions as
60 well as small-scale turbulent mixing. We also present the associated uncertainties and show that,
61 separately for individual scales, the uncertainties are larger than the uncertainty in the net global
62 OHU. We apply two frameworks for our heat budget analysis: a traditional framework working in
63 native model grid space and involving horizontal and vertical integration of heat budget equations,
64 and a density space watermass framework described in the next section.

65 **2 Model diagnostics and analysis frameworks**

66 In this section we describe the model diagnostics used for the heat budget and outline the analysis
67 frameworks.

68 **2.1 Models, experiments and diagnostics**

69 We analyze model output from a climate change experiment where atmospheric CO₂ concentra-
70 tion increases at 1% year⁻¹ (1pctCO2), along with the corresponding output from a pre-industrial
71 control experiment (piControl). In what follows, unless stated otherwise, all heat budget terms
72 represent changes (1pctCO2 with respect to piControl), averaged over the first 70 years; i.e., until
73 atmospheric CO₂ has doubled. The analyzed AOGCMs, all having a nominal ocean resolution
74 of about 1°, are listed in Table 1 and information on the heat budget diagnostics we analyze is
75 provided in Table 2. A detailed explanation of the heat budget terms in Table 2 is given in Griffies
76 et al. (2016; Sect. 9) (see also Gregory et al., 2016; Sect. 2.6). Briefly, these diagnostics are as
77 follows:

- 78 • `temprmadvect` contains heat convergence from all forms of advection, both resolved and
79 parameterized eddy-induced;
- 80 • `temppadvect` contains heat convergence from parameterized mesoscale eddy-induced ad-
81 vection (e.g., Gent et al., 1995) and parameterized submesoscale eddy-induced advection
82 (e.g., Fox-Kemper et al., 2011; not all models include this latter term in their simulations);
- 83 • `temppsmadvect` contains heat convergence from parameterized submesoscale eddy-induced
84 advection alone (for those models which include this term; see Table 1);

85 • `temppmdiff` represents heat convergence from parameterized diffusive fluxes associated
86 with transient mesoscale eddies (i.e., isopycnal diffusion as in Redi 1982 and Griffies et
87 al. 1998);

88 • `tempdiff` contains heat convergence from parameterized diapycnal processes including ver-
89 tical convective adjustment.

90 The choices for mesoscale eddy-induced advection and isopycnal diffusion, along with the
91 constraints on the associated eddy transfer coefficients made by each of the models, are presented
92 in Table 1.

93 **2.2 Partitioning the heat budget**

94 In the traditional framework, we focus on OHU below 200 m depth, thus excluding (in most
95 regions) the upper layer of strong surface-intensified mixing and solar penetration. Therefore the
96 grid cell heat budget takes the following form (Griffies et al., 2016)¹:

$$97 \quad \text{temptend} = \text{temprmadvect} + \text{temppmdiff} + \text{tempdiff} + \text{other}. \quad (1)$$

98 The heat budget terms in Table 2 are grouped to reflect the physical and dynamical processes
99 operating at different spatial scales. For this purpose, the net OHU (*All scales*), as given by the
100 `temptend` term, is partitioned into the following contributions:

- 101 • *Large*: large-scale ocean flows explicitly represented by the model’s resolved velocity field;
- 102 • *Meso*: parameterized ocean mesoscale eddy effects, both advective and diffusive, as well as
103 parameterized submesoscale eddy-induced advection (if included in the model);

¹There is a typo in Eqs. L5 and L6 in Griffies et al., (2016) where instead of `opottempadvect` there should be
`opottemprmadvect`.

- *Small*: parameterized processes associated with diapycnal mixing, such as gravitationally induced convection, boundary layer and shear-driven mixing, tidal mixing, as well as all remaining diapycnal effects (e.g., parameterized overflow-driven mixing).

In the adopted notations,

$$Large = \text{tempmadvect} - \text{temppadvect} \quad (2)$$

$$Meso = \text{temppadvect} + \text{temppmdiff} \quad (3)$$

$$Small = \text{tempdiff} + \text{other} \quad (4)$$

$$All \text{ scales} = Large + Meso + Small. \quad (5)$$

In addition, we shall present the OHU associated with the super-residual transport (*SRT*) (Kuhlbrodt et al., 2015; Dias et al., 2020a), where *SRT* is defined as the sum

$$SRT = Large + Meso. \quad (6)$$

The *SRT* is the contribution to OHU associated with the explicitly resolved advection combined with all forms of parameterized mesoscale and submesoscale eddy-induced advection and isopycnal diffusion. The *SRT* contribution to OHU (e.g., Fig. 1c) provides a direct link between ocean models that parameterize mesoscale eddy-induced advection and isopycnal diffusion (such as the models in the current study) and the growing suite of ocean and climate models that explicitly resolve rather than parameterize these eddy transport processes. Note that with the adopted notations,

$$All \text{ scales} = SRT + Small. \quad (7)$$

We will also consider separately the OHU effect from all parameterized (in these AOGCMs)

125 processes, $Param = Meso + Small$, so that

$$126 \quad All\ scales = Large + Param. \quad (8)$$

127 This decomposition is aimed at estimating the combined contribution of all subgrid-scale processes
128 to OHU in AOGCMs with low-resolution ocean components, along with the associated OHU un-
129 certainties.

130 **2.3 Projection of the Eulerian heat budget onto density surfaces**

131 In addition to heat budget analysis involving horizontal and vertical integration of Eq. (5), in Sec-
132 tion 3.2 we employ a potential density space watermass framework as first introduced using a
133 temperature space framework by Walin (1982) and more recently by Holmes et al., (2019). Our
134 analysis of an Eulerian heat budget projection onto density surfaces provides further insight on the
135 OHU processes active in AOGCMs and, in particular, on the link between heat input to different
136 density classes at the surface and vertical OHU profiles in the ocean interior. It also helps to clarify
137 the role of heat advection by the residual mean velocity. Namely, in the potential density space
138 framework, advective heat transport across isopycnals can naturally arise as an important (physi-
139 cal) component of the heat budget in the presence of mixing, while in the diathermal framework
140 the role of temperature advection in the heat budget is not considered (Walin, 1982; Holmes et al.,
141 2019).

142 For our purposes of separating the role of ocean physics and dynamics at different scales, the
143 applied projection of the Eulerian heat budget onto the position of potential density surfaces is as
144 follows. Consider the whole ocean domain, so that Eq. (5) takes the form:

$$145 \quad All\ scales = Large + Meso + Small + Flux \delta(z - \eta), \quad (9)$$

146 where we assume that there are no sources or sinks of heat other than due to the net heat flux (*Flux*)
 147 across the surface boundary, with $\delta(z - \eta)$ the Dirac delta function that enables us to incorporate
 148 surface boundary fluxes within the same formalism as interior processes (with $z = \eta(x, y, t)$ being
 149 the ocean free surface height). Integrating Eq. (9) over all ocean regions with densities larger than
 150 any given density ρ gives

$$151 \quad \mathcal{H}(\rho, t) = \iiint_{\rho'(x,y,z,t) \geq \rho} (Large + Meso + Small) dV + \iint_{\rho'(x,y,0,t) \geq \rho} Flux dA, \quad (10)$$

152 where $\mathcal{H}(\rho, t) = \iiint_{\rho'(x,y,z,t) \geq \rho} (All\ scales) dV$ represents the net heat convergence within all water
 153 classes denser than ρ , while the terms on the right side represent contributions from diapycnal
 154 heat transports associated with the three different scales as well as the surface transformation.

155 Averaging in time, represented with overbar, gives

$$156 \quad \overline{\mathcal{H}(\rho, t)} = \overline{\iiint_{\rho'(x,y,z,t) \geq \rho} (Large + Meso + Small) dV} + \overline{\iint_{\rho'(x,y,0,t) \geq \rho} Flux dA}, \quad (11)$$

157 We note that, because the time averaging is applied to $\iiint_{\rho'(x,y,z,t) \geq \rho} (\cdot) dV$, the term on the left side
 158 of Eq. (11) does not have to vanish even if the averaged in time Eulerian time derivative of ocean
 159 temperature does so locally (see Groeskamp et al. (2014) for a comprehensive discussion on the
 160 subject with insightful examples). However, as we shall see in Section 3.2 (Fig. 9a), at a statistical
 161 steady state this term is, in general, small compared to the other terms (although non-negligible).
 162 This implies that at a statistical steady state heat loss at the surface by water classes denser than
 163 ρ is mostly resupplied by diapycnal heat transport at different scales in the ocean interior. The
 164 diapycnal transports can be associated with different physical and dynamical processes, including
 165 the heat advection across density surfaces that occurs in the presence of mixing.

166 When the simulated climate system is perturbed, such as in 1pctCO₂, $\mathcal{H}(\rho)$ departs from zero.

167 In a special case when ρ corresponds to the lightest water ($\rho = \rho_{\text{lightest water}}$), Eq. (10) simplifies to

$$168 \quad \mathcal{H}(\rho_{\text{lightest water}}) = \iint_{\rho'(x,y,0,t) \geq \rho_{\text{lightest water}}} Flux \, dA, \quad (12)$$

169 which simply states that the net OHU is given by the net heat input at the surface (in the absence
170 of other heat sources).

171 For the projection of the Eulerian heat budget onto the position of potential density surfaces
172 in Section 3.2, in addition to the heat budget terms listed in Table 2, we also use surface heat flux
173 with solar flux and ocean temperature and salinity (to compute density). In practice, the calculation
174 involves binning the ocean into density classes, which is conceptually similar to the temperature
175 binning procedure employed by Holmes et al., (2019) for their heat budget analysis. We use 0.1
176 σ_θ bins, where $\sigma_\theta = \rho_\theta - 1000 \text{ kg m}^{-3}$, with ρ_θ being potential density referenced to 0 dbar. It
177 was found that further decrease in the size of the density bins had little impact on the results and
178 did not affect the conclusions. Ideally, such a calculation should be performed “online” while
179 models are running. Online binning is needed to reduce inaccuracies associated with non-linear
180 effects. However, we did not have access to online diagnostics in the suite of models, so we instead
181 did the calculation “offline”, using monthly data. In selected tests, we found that in AOGCMs
182 with relatively coarse resolution oceans, such as analyzed in this study, using monthly data in this
183 calculation leads to almost the same results as when using daily data. Models with all the required
184 output available as monthly averages are marked with an asterisk in Table 1. The results of the
185 density space heat budget analysis presented in Section 3.2 represent model-mean and time-mean
186 quantities corresponding to years 61-70 of 1pctCO2 and piControl. More details on the calculation
187 as well as on how it relates with the water mass transformation (WMT) framework described in
188 Groeskamp et al. (2019) are presented in Appendix A.

189 2.4 Comments on observational constraints

190 Before proceeding with the OHU analysis, it is useful to understand how the simulated heat trans-
191 ports that correspond to ocean physics and dynamics operating at different scales compare against
192 observational counterparts. Unfortunately, reliable observations of vertical heat fluxes are not
193 available for the global ocean. However, indirect approaches can be used for estimating some
194 of them. In particular, Cummins et al. (2016) present near-global observational estimates of the
195 vertical heat transport associated with time-mean, large-scale motions. Cummins et al. (2016)
196 obtained their vertical heat transports using climatological ocean temperature and the linear vor-
197 ticity balance, $fw_z = \beta v$. The latter was used to estimate climatological vertical velocity (w) in the
198 ocean interior from climatological windstress and density and from observational estimates of the
199 meridional component of absolute geostrophic velocity (v) at a reference depth.

200 Fig. 2 compares the Cummins et al. (2016) observational estimates with the model-mean verti-
201 cal heat transport due to *Large*. Overall, the simulated vertical heat transport is consistent with the
202 observational estimates. However, there is a considerable spread among the AOGCMs even in this
203 vertical heat flux which these models are expected to simulate explicitly. Discrepancies between
204 the model-simulated and observation-estimated heat transports are large in the upper several hun-
205 dred meters, also noted in Cummins et al. (2016; their Fig. 6). These discrepancies could originate
206 from model biases in either the large-scale temperature field or vertical velocity or both. While a
207 detailed analysis of these discrepancies is beyond our scope here, we note that biases in simulated
208 vertical velocity, particularly in the upper ocean, can be strongly affected by biases in wind-stress
209 curl simulated by AOGCMs. In the deep ocean, they provide two observational heat transports
210 corresponding to somewhat different assumptions that are equally justified (see Cummins et al.,

211 2016 for details). Unfortunately, these two estimates diverge. While this divergence complicates a
 212 comparison with the model-simulated transports, we note that the model-mean heat transport curve
 213 is positioned roughly in-between the two observational curves in the deep ocean, with the model
 214 spread decreasing towards the abyssal ocean. Since our analysis of OHU is confined to the upper
 215 2000 m, difficulties with deep ocean heat transport are not directly relevant to our analysis.

216 Fig. 2 also confirms a finding by Gregory (2000), and more recently confirmed by others (e.g.,
 217 Griffies et al., 2015), that large-scale ocean circulation transports heat downward when horizon-
 218 tally averaged over the globe. This transport can also be understood based on energetic arguments
 219 (Gnanadesikan et al., 2006; Gregory and Tailleux, 2011), suggesting that large-scale wind-driven
 220 ocean circulation is expected to generate potential energy, via fluxing more buoyant waters down-
 221 ward and less buoyant upward on global-mean. A major contribution to this process comes from
 222 the Southern Ocean where Ekman pumping fluxes relatively warm (cold) waters downward (up-
 223 ward) roughly north (south) of 45°S (e.g., Gregory, 2000; Cummins et al., 2016).

224 **2.5 A kinematic constraint on steady vertical heat transport**

225 In a steady state there is zero horizontal area integrated vertical heat convergence in the interior
 226 ocean

$$227 \text{ steady state interior ocean } \implies \int_{\text{global ocean}} \frac{\partial(w\rho C_p \Theta + J^z)}{\partial z} dx dy = 0, \quad (13)$$

228 where $w\rho C_p \Theta$ is the vertical advective flux of heat from the resolved model flow (w is vertical
 229 velocity, ρ is ocean density, C_p heat capacity, and Θ Conservative Temperature), and J^z is the ver-
 230 tical component of the subgrid scale heat flux. We next observe that the ocean gains and loses
 231 heat predominantly through the sea-surface, with negligible sources from viscous dissipation (i.e.,
 232 Joule heating) and only a small amount from bottom geothermal heating (order tens of mW m^{-2}).

233 If we disregard the latter as well, a vertical integral of equation (13) from the ocean bottom up-
 234 wards means that the steady, global horizontally integrated, vertical heat transport vanishes on any
 235 horizontal level below the influence of surface boundaries; i.e.,

236 steady, interior ocean, zero geothermal, zero Joule $\implies \int_{\text{global ocean}} (w \rho C_p \Theta + J^z) dx dy = 0.$ (14)

237 Consequently, if we partition vertical heat transport into any variety of terms, such as the separa-
 238 tions described above, then the net vertical heat transport by all processes at any depth must sum
 239 to zero (as illustrated by arrows in Fig. 2). We make use of the constraint (14) as part of our
 240 analysis of vertical heat transport. Note that a similar constraint cannot be applied to meridional
 241 heat transport since it is strongly affected by surface fluxes at all latitudes.

242 **3 Results**

243 **3.1 Controls on the heat budget**

244 *a. Vertical heat convergence at statistical steady state*

245 We begin our analysis with a brief discussion of the heat budget in piControl for the model
 246 ensemble mean, focusing on the ocean between 200 m and 2000 m, which takes up most of the
 247 heat (we discuss heat uptake in 1pctCO2 in Section 3.1b). In the global horizontal area mean,
 248 the heat convergence due to *Large* warms the 200-2000 m layer (Fig. 3a), as implied by the
 249 corresponding transport (Fig. 2). The interior ocean heating by *Large* is compensated by a cooling
 250 from *Param*, with the dominant contribution to *Param* coming from *Meso*. A similar leading order
 251 ocean heat balance was found by Gregory (2000)², who also demonstrated the dominant role of

²The AOGCM used by Gregory (2000) did not have eddy-induced advection, so *Meso* consisted only of isopycnal

252 the Southern Ocean in maintaining this balance. For the model ensemble mean, *SRT* (the sum of
253 *Large* and *Meso*) tends to make the ocean below roughly 400 m slightly colder (Fig. 3a). Thus,
254 *Small*, which must balance *SRT* at steady state, tends to make it warmer. Two major components
255 contributing to *Small* are due to small-scale vertical mixing and convection which, respectively, act
256 to warm and cool the subsurface ocean. Convection takes place at specific locations of the global
257 ocean, while small-scale mixing is typically more evenly distributed in the ocean interior away
258 from rough topography. Since *Small* is relatively small but positive below about 400 m (Fig. 3a),
259 we infer that the heating rate associated with small-scale mixing is marginally stronger than the
260 cooling rate associated with convection.

261 The spreads in the heating rate corresponding to each scale, as given by inter-model standard
262 deviations (STD), increase towards the surface (Fig.3b). Notably in the 400–1500 m layer, which
263 mostly corresponds to the pycnocline, the spread in *Small* is considerably lower than the spreads
264 in *Large* or *Meso*. Observations and tracer release experiments (e.g., Ledwell et al. 1993) suggest
265 that vertical diffusivity is of the order of $10^{-5} \text{ m}^2 \text{ s}^{-1}$ over vast ocean regions in the pycnocline,
266 away from regions with rough topography. Such values have now been adopted for background
267 ocean diffusivity in most AOGCMs, which may in part explain the relatively low spread in *Small*
268 in the 400–1500 m layer. Note that, because of the balances given by Eqs. (7) and (8) and because
269 the spread in the *All scales* term is negligible in piControl, the spread in *SRT* is essentially the
270 same as the spread in *Small*, while the spread in *Param* is the same as in *Large*. This implies, in
271 particular, that in the 400–1500 m layer the spread in *SRT* is as low as it is in *Small*, adding to the
272 usefulness of the decomposition given by equation (7).

273 Also presented separately in Fig.3b are the spreads corresponding to eddy-induced advection
eddy diffusion.

274 and isopycnal diffusion composing *Meso* (Eq. 3). Their STD profiles closely follow the *Meso* STD
275 profile, so that their sum is about twice as large as the *Meso* STD. This result indicates that the
276 uncertainties in heat convergence due to eddy advection and diffusion anticorrelate; i.e., models
277 with stronger than average subsurface ocean cooling rate due to eddy-induced heat advection tend
278 to have lower than average subsurface ocean cooling due to eddy isopycnal heat diffusion. This
279 behavior may be expected given the main heat balance in the subsurface ocean (Fig.3a), in which
280 the ocean interior warming due to *Large* must be balanced by *Meso* either through eddy advection
281 or diffusion or both.

282 The heat balance implied by *SRT* and *Small*, with the former cooling the ocean interior below
283 400 m and the latter warming it, appears to be consistent with the advective–diffusive balance
284 considered by Munk (1966) and more recently by Munk and Wunsch (1998). A similar result
285 was arrived at by Dias et al. (2020a), who proposed reinterpreting *SRT* as the advective part
286 of the classical advective–diffusive balance. While a more detailed discussion of this subject is
287 beyond our scope, we note that caution is required when comparing our global *SRT* and *Small*
288 profiles to Munk’s analysis. In particular, Munk (1966) focused his analysis on the 1–4 km layer
289 in the Pacific Ocean where, as he argued, the warming associated with his inferred layer-mean
290 vertical diffusivity (of the order of $10^{-4} \text{ m}^2 \text{ s}^{-1}$) is consistent with estimates of the bottom water
291 upwelling originating in the Southern Ocean. Munk and Wunsch (1998) arrived at essentially the
292 same conclusion, except reinterpreting Munk’s diffusivity estimate as possibly resulting from a
293 small number of concentrated mixing sources. In contrast, much of our global *SRT* heating profile
294 in Fig. 3a represents a small residual of larger and opposite effects due to wind-driven and eddy-
295 driven processes in the upper 2 km of the Southern Ocean. The smallness of global-mean *SRT*
296 implies that the potential energy generated by the large-scale wind-driven circulation, via fluxing

297 more buoyant waters downward (Gnanadesikan et al., 2006; Gregory and Tailleux, 2011), is mostly
298 removed by the eddy effects combined in *Meso*, via fluxing more buoyant waters upward, as also
299 seen in higher resolution simulations (e.g., Morrison et al., 2013; Griffies et al., 2015).

300 *b. Vertical structure of OHU*

301 In response to 1pctCO₂, the associated heat input to the ocean results in relatively small
302 changes in the vertical heat transport processes (Fig. 4a), with the net effect of these changes
303 leading to OHU. In the balance of Eq. (5), heating of the uppermost ocean is dominated by *Small*;
304 it becomes less negative above roughly 300 m and more positive below this depth (Figs. 3a and
305 4a). *Meso* controls much of the heating in the 500-1000 m layer by becoming less negative. *Large*
306 also contributes to the subsurface OHU mostly by becoming more positive. In the Eq. (7) balance,
307 the ocean warming below roughly 400 m is dominated by *SRT*, due to both *Meso* and *Large*. In
308 the balance given by Eq. (8), the heating above 1000 m is dominated by the combined effect from
309 all parameterized processes (*Param*). The spreads across the AOGCMs in the ocean heating rate
310 increase towards the surface (Fig. 4b). Notably, at most depths in the upper ocean there is a higher
311 agreement among the AOGCMs in the net heating rate change (*All scales*) than in the contributions
312 to it from the individual scales.

313 Another useful view of the global OHU can be obtained by integrating (or accumulating) the
314 heating rates for each layer from the bottom upward (Fig. 5a). This diagnostic quantifies how much
315 heat is taken up by the ocean below a particular depth, and it is equal to the increase in downward
316 heat transport across that depth arising from global warming. We see that all three scales contribute
317 positively to the subsurface OHU. However, below essentially any depth deeper than 400 m the
318 OHU is dominated by *SRT*, with *Small* being relatively unimportant (Fig. 5a). The contribution

319 of isopycnal diffusion to OHU by *SRT* is less important than the contribution of the net (resolved
 320 plus eddy-induced) advection. However, the contribution of isopycnal diffusion to OHU by *Meso*,
 321 particularly below about 500 m, is as important as the contribution of eddy-induced advection.
 322 Above about 400 m, the contribution from *Small* is much greater, exceeding the contribution from
 323 *Meso* and *Large*.

324 The spreads corresponding to the cumulative OHU profiles in Fig. 5a are quantified in Fig.
 325 5b. The STD corresponding to the *All scales* profile is rather uniform with depth. This feature
 326 indicates that the OHU below any depth is roughly equally uncertain. From the variance (*var*)
 327 profiles corresponding to the individual scales it follows that, in particular,

$$328 \quad \text{var}(\textit{All scales}) < \text{var}(\textit{Large}) + \text{var}(\textit{Param}) \quad (15a)$$

$$329 \quad \text{var}(\textit{SRT}) < \text{var}(\textit{Large}) + \text{var}(\textit{Meso}), \quad (15b)$$

330
 331 indicating an anticorrelated (compensating) behavior between *Large* and *Param* and between *Large*
 332 and *Meso* (since *Small* and its spread are small below 400 m, the near-global compensation implied
 333 by Eq. (15a) is principally between *Large* and *Meso*, as implied by Eq. (15b)). It is also notable
 334 that the spread in the OHU by isopycnal diffusion is smaller than the spread in the OHU by eddy-
 335 induced advection.

336 The spread in the near-global OHU, as given by the uppermost STD values corresponding to
 337 *All scales* (Fig. 5b), is relatively small; i.e., it is smaller than the STDs of the individual scales con-
 338 tributing to the global OHU. The finding that the model spread in global OHU is relatively small is
 339 consistent with the analysis based on a larger ensemble of CMIP5 and CMIP6 AOGCMs presented
 340 in Gregory et al. (2020; in preparation). In other words, the models are more similar in their sim-
 341 ulated net OHU than in the processes through which the heat anomalies are transported into the

342 oceanic interior. This result implies that global OHU tends to self-adjust to the uncertainties in the
 343 representation of unresolved ocean physics in AOGCMs.

344 To put the finding that global OHU varies little across the models into context, Fig. 6a com-
 345 pares the model-mean depth profiles and spreads of two quantities, the first being the OHU below
 346 z , $\text{OHU}(z)$, corresponding to each model $i = 1, \dots, N$ ($=11$) and normalized by the model-mean
 347 effective temperature change in the layer above z , $\langle \Delta T \rangle(z) = N^{-1} \sum_i \Delta T_i(z)$

$$348 \quad \mathcal{E}_1^i(z) = \frac{\text{OHU}_i(z)}{\langle \Delta T \rangle(z)}. \quad (16)$$

349 and the other is $\text{OHU}_i(z)$ normalized instead by the model's own temperature change in the layer
 350 above z

$$351 \quad \mathcal{E}_2^i(z) = \frac{\text{OHU}_i(z)}{\Delta T_i(z)}, \quad (17)$$

352 where $\Delta T(z)$ is given by the heat content change in the layer above z , divided by the layer's thick-
 353 ness, volumetric heat capacity of seawater and ocean surface area. We consider $\mathcal{E}_2(z = -10 \text{ m})$
 354 as a proxy for OHU efficiency (OHUE) – one of the more important characteristics of climate
 355 response to CO_2 increase in AOGCMs (e.g., Kuhlbrodt and Gregory, 2012), more traditionally
 356 defined as the ratio of the net heat flux into the climate system to the global surface air temper-
 357 ature change. Kuhlbrodt and Gregory (2012) found that OHUE varies considerably, by a factor
 358 of two across the AOGCMs they analyzed. This behaviour is consistent with our calculation of
 359 $\mathcal{E}_2(z = -10 \text{ m})$, which ranges from $0.61 \text{ W m}^{-2} \text{ K}^{-1}$ to $0.96 \text{ W m}^{-2} \text{ K}^{-1}$, with the model ensem-
 360 ble mean of $0.75 \text{ W m}^{-2} \text{ K}^{-1}$ and standard deviation of $0.11 \text{ W m}^{-2} \text{ K}^{-1}$. Thus, the coefficient
 361 of \mathcal{E}_2 variation (ratio of model ensemble standard deviation to ensemble mean) is 15%, increasing
 362 to 22% for $\mathcal{E}_2(z = -100 \text{ m})$. For comparison, the ensemble standard deviation of $\mathcal{E}_1(z = -10 \text{ m})$
 363 is only $0.05 \text{ W m}^{-2} \text{ K}^{-1}$ and the coefficient of its variation is 7%. Therefore, we conclude that

364 most of the inter-model variation in $\mathcal{E}_2(z)$ arises from uncertainty in the ocean temperature change
365 above z rather than in OHU below z . A similar conclusion regarding OHUE variation can be drawn
366 from the analysis presented in Kuhlbrodt and Gregory (2012).

367 Moreover, the correlation between the change in heat convergence in an upper ocean layer of
368 thickness z , which drives the global-mean temperature change $\Delta T(z)$ of the layer, and the OHU(z)
369 below it decreases with depth and becomes negative at about 130 m depth (Fig. 6b). This anti-
370 correlated behaviour between $\Delta T(z)$ and OHU(z), for a thick enough upper layer, arises because
371 the covariance between the surface heat flux anomaly and OHU(z) decreases with depth, while the
372 variance of OHU(z) is more uniform (Fig. 6b; see Appendix B). Thus, a stronger warming of the
373 upper ocean, such as in response to CO₂ increase, does not necessarily imply a stronger warming
374 of the ocean below it. This behavior is unlike that in some two-layer box models of OHU, in which
375 heat content change in the lower layer (“deep ocean”) is commonly assumed to be proportional to
376 temperature change in the upper layer. Instead, Fig. 6b suggests that for a thick enough upper layer
377 (100-200 m) its temperature change is not strongly related to the net temperature change in the
378 ocean below it and may even anticorrelate with it. In fact, despite the strong correlation between
379 OHU and temperature change in the upper ~ 50 m of the ocean (Fig. 6b; dashed line), OHU is not
380 proportional to the near-surface temperature change, with much of the former being independent of
381 the latter (not shown). A more detailed analysis of the relationships between OHUE, OHU, surface
382 temperature change and the strength of the Atlantic meridional overturning circulation (AMOC) is
383 presented in Gregory et al. (2020; in preparation).

384 Moreover, the diffusive nature of heat transfer from the surface to subsurface ocean, which
385 is also commonly assumed in box models of OHU, is not supported by the AOGCM-based heat
386 budget analysis in density space presented in Section 3.2.

387 *c. Regional structure of OHU*

388 One conclusion from our analysis so far is that ocean physics and dynamics operating at all
389 scales contributes to subsurface OHU, while the dominance of a particular scale or scales depends
390 on depth. This result raises some further questions. In particular, what are the contributions from
391 different regions to the global subsurface OHU due to *Large*, *Meso* and *Small*? Where in the ocean
392 do the largest contributions to *Param* come from and how are they partitioned between *Meso* and
393 *Small*? How is the global value of *Large* set and what are the contributions to it from different
394 oceans? What are the regions of largest OHU uncertainties?

395 Some answers can be obtained from Fig. 1, which presents spatial structure of OHC change
396 corresponding to the heat budget decomposition given by Eq. (7). In particular, the subsurface
397 ocean warming due to *Small* results from changes in mid- and high-latitude regions (Fig. 1b). The
398 localization of these changes to (mostly) the northern North Atlantic and Southern Ocean suggests
399 their convective origin; i.e., a weakening of convective mixing in response to surface buoyancy
400 input and increased stratification, such as in 1pctCO₂, tends to make the local subsurface ocean
401 warmer. This interpretation of Fig. 1b is consistent with Exarchou et al. (2015) and Kuhlbrodt et al.
402 (2015), who considered a more detailed separation of *Small* into several contributors. In contrast,
403 the changes in *SRT* lead to cooling in the subpolar Atlantic and warming in e.g., the low-latitude
404 Atlantic (Fig. 1c). As we shall see, this north-south heat redistribution in the Atlantic is related to
405 the weakening of the AMOC (Fig. 8a), which causes less heat convergence in the subpolar North
406 Atlantic and less heat divergence in the Atlantic at lower latitudes.

407 In addition to the basin-scale OHC changes, *SRT* also causes some important local OHC
408 changes, such as an enhanced warming in the Gulf Stream region and its extension. Integrated

409 below 200 m, the heat input of 4.6 TW (1 TW = 10^{12} W) to the region (green box in Fig. 1c)
410 is dominated by advective component of *SRT*. Given the narrowness of the Gulf Stream region,
411 its warming due to *SRT* is perhaps reinforced by a slight northward shift in the mean position of
412 the current which could be associated with the weakening of AMOC (Saba et al., 2016). A more
413 in-depth analysis needs to be performed to confirm this suggestion, preferably based on higher
414 resolution models. Overall, these results suggest that, while much of the OHC change in the North
415 Atlantic can be explained by the heat taken up as a passive tracer (Gregory et al., 2016; Couldrey et
416 al., 2020), changes in ocean dynamics and the associated heat redistribution also play an important
417 role.

418 The regions of largest uncertainties in the spatial structure of OHC change are the subpolar
419 North Atlantic, Arctic Ocean and Southern Ocean (Fig. 1d). These are also the regions of largest
420 uncertainties in dynamic sea-level changes (e.g., Gregory et al., 2016; Couldrey et al., 2020).
421 Therefore, while the global OHU is rather similar across the models (Section 3.1*b*; Gregory et
422 al., 2020, in preparation), reducing the uncertainties in the regional OHC changes (and, hence, in
423 spatial sea-level changes) would require a more accurate representation of ocean dynamics and
424 unresolved physics than in the analyzed AOGCMs.

425 To obtain further insight, Fig. 7a,b presents OHU accumulated from the south (OHC change)
426 and its contributions from the considered scales, for the global ocean (Fig. 7a) and separately for
427 the Atlantic Ocean (Fig. 7b). The net global OHU below 200 m is dominated by parameterized
428 processes, as can be deduced from the northernmost values in Fig. 7a (see also the uppermost
429 values in Fig. 5a). This feature is consistent with Exarchou et al. (2015). A major contribution
430 to global *Param* comes from its changes north of 40°N, particularly in the Atlantic (Fig. 7b).
431 This region is where the subsurface ocean warming due to the parameterized processes accounts

432 for roughly half of their contribution to the global OHU (Fig. 7a,b; dashed magenta), but this
433 warming is nearly fully compensated by cooling due to changes in the large-scale heat advection
434 (Fig. 7a,b; green). As a result, the *All scales* line flattens north of 40°N. This near compensation
435 between contributions from *Param* and *Large* to the OHC change in the North Atlantic appears
436 to be related to two main processes (Fig. 8): (A) weakening of the AMOC and the associated
437 northward heat transport which, as part of *Large*, tends to decrease the heat content north of 40°N,
438 and (B) weakening of deep convection which, as part of *Param*, tends to increase the subsurface
439 heat content locally through the increase of heat sequestered at depth. Thus, if the ocean north
440 of 40°N in the Atlantic were excluded from the analysis, then *Large* would become almost as
441 important as *Param* in the budget given by Eq. (8), while *SRT* would contribute twice as much as
442 *Small* to the *All scales* OHU in Eq. (7).

443 We also note that if the whole water column were considered, rather than only the ocean below
444 200 m depth, then the OHU associated with processes that transport heat only vertically (e.g.,
445 convection and vertical diffusion) would integrate to zero. In that case, much of the subpolar North
446 Atlantic cooling associated with the weakening of horizontal heat convergence in the region would
447 instead be balanced by enhanced heat input (or less heat loss) at the surface. Thus, since *Small* is
448 the most important term in OHU near the surface (Figs. 4a and 5a), it is the principal means by
449 which the change in surface heat flux is transmitted to the ocean below 200 m. Indeed, Fig. 1b
450 resembles the surface heat flux change in 1pctCO₂ with respect to piControl (e.g., see Fig. 2b in
451 Gregory et al., 2016).

452 The changes in *Large* not only make the Atlantic north of about 40°N colder, but also make the
453 rest of it warmer (Fig. 7b). However, while *Large* plays an important role in this north-south heat
454 redistribution within the Atlantic, its contribution to the net Atlantic heat content change north of

455 30°S is relatively small on the model-mean (this property can be deduced from the corresponding
456 northernmost value in Fig. 7b; green line). Thus, an interesting result is that, while the whole At-
457 lantic Ocean accounts for about 30% of the net subsurface OHU, this OHU is mostly due to *Param*
458 rather than *Large* (Fig. 7b). Weak stratification in the northern North Atlantic and the associated
459 deep convective mixing intimately link *Param* and *Large* to form the basin-scale AMOC, which
460 takes up heat via *Param* and redistributes it southward via *Large*. This finding is supported by the
461 heat budget analysis presented in Dias et al. (2020b).

462 *Meso*, which is part of *Param*, importantly contributes to the North Atlantic OHU, particularly
463 between 40°N–60°N (Fig. 7b). When combined with *Small*, it more than offsets the negative con-
464 tribution from *Large* to OHC change in the region. Exarchou et al. (2015) also found a contribution
465 from eddy processes to heat uptake in the North Atlantic and attributed it to changes in isopycnal
466 temperature gradients and shallower isopycnal slopes in their models. In the models we analyze,
467 the increased subsurface heat convergence due to *Meso* in the North Atlantic of about 0.025 PW
468 (1 PW = 10^{15} W) is dominated by changes in eddy-induced heat advection. The contribution of
469 isopycnal diffusion to North Atlantic OHU is less important (Fig. 7b), subject to uncertainties (Fig.
470 7d). It should also be noted that in the Labrador Sea, eddy heat convergence associated with lateral
471 fluxes of warmer water from the boundary currents into the interior is thought to be the principal
472 means balancing the local heat loss to the atmosphere (e.g., Khatiwala and Visbeck, 2000). In ad-
473 dition, eddies typically flux heat upward, cooling the subsurface Fig.3a. Taking, for example, the
474 estimate of Khatiwala and Visbeck (2000) for the local eddy-induced overturning in the Labrador
475 Sea of 1.3 Sv and assuming, also following them, that it operates on the horizontal temperature
476 contrast of 2 K gives about 0.01 PW for the associated upward eddy heat transport. Thus, the
477 subsurface warming by *Meso* in the North Atlantic could be explained, at least in part, by a de-

478 crease in this eddy-induced transport, as may be expected in response to the increased stratification
479 (decreased isopycnal slopes) and decreased mixed layer depth in 1pctCO₂ (Fig. 8c).

480 The low latitude OHC change, between 30°S–30°N, accounts for about 35% of the net sub-
481 surface OHU, with *Large* making the largest contribution (Fig. 7a). Using an OGCM forced with
482 the FAFMIP surface perturbations corresponding to 2×CO₂ (see Gregory et al., 2016), Dias et al.
483 (2020b) estimate that 65% of the OHC change at low latitudes is due to the redistribution of heat
484 associated with *SRT*, dominated by the large-scale advection. The contributions from *Meso* and
485 *Small* are relatively weak (i.e., the red and blue lines in Fig. 7a,b are essentially flat at the low lati-
486 tudes). This feature is unlike in one-dimensional upwelling-diffusion models, in which diapycnal
487 diffusion is the main process of OHU (e.g., Raper et al., 2001). Moreover, the global low-latitude
488 OHU due to *Large* is dominated by its changes in the Atlantic Ocean (Figs. 7a,b), with the asso-
489 ciated advective convergence being latitudinal redistribution of heat, rather than low-latitude heat
490 uptake (as assumed by the upwelling-diffusion model).

491 The ocean south of 30°S accounts for about 40% of the net subsurface OHU in the model-mean
492 (Fig. 7a). In this region, the contribution to OHU from the different scales strongly depends on
493 latitude. Perhaps a preferable frame for analyzing an integrated heat uptake in the Southern Ocean
494 would be along streamlines of depth-integrated transport. Nevertheless, we can conclude that *Meso*
495 and *Small* (and, hence, *Param*) are the largest contributors to the (positive) OHU south of 50°S.
496 *Large* opposes *Meso* and *Small* south of 50°S, but contributes considerably to the (positive) OHU
497 between 50°S and 40°S. The latitudinal structure of the *Large* contribution to the Southern Ocean
498 OHU is broadly consistent with the structure of wind-driven upwelling and downwelling in the
499 region.

500 The spatial pattern of OHC change in the Southern Ocean is non-uniform, with stronger warm-

501 ing in the Atlantic Ocean and Indian Ocean sectors than in the Pacific Ocean sector (Fig. 1a),
502 consistent with Gregory et al. (2016; their Fig. 9d). This pattern is related to the positive con-
503 tribution from *SRT* in the Atlantic and Indian sectors (Fig. 1c). In the Atlantic sector, the local
504 OHU is likely reinforced by advective heat redistribution to the south (Fig. 7b) associated with the
505 weakening of the AMOC (Fig. 8a). In the Indian sector, decomposition of the net OHC change into
506 contributions from the added and redistributed heat shows enhanced contribution from the latter
507 south of about 40°S (Gregory et al., 2016; Couldrey et al., 2020); some of it might be connected
508 with the Atlantic Ocean (Dias et al., 2020b). In the Pacific sector the Atlantic warming signal
509 becomes weaker, and so does the contribution of *SRT* to the local OHC change (Fig. 1a,c). In the
510 southeast Pacific, upstream of the Drake Passage, the local warming is dominated by the changes
511 in *Small* (Fig. 1b). This region has been identified as a key site of Antarctic Intermediate Water
512 (AAIW) and Subantarctic Mode Water (SAMW) formation characterized by deep mixed layers,
513 with another site of SAMW formation located in the southern Indian Ocean (see Naveira Garabato
514 et al., 2009, and references therein). The AOGCMs do simulate deep mixed layers in these regions
515 of the Southern Ocean in piControl (Fig. 8d), with the mixing becoming less deep in 1pctCO2 (Fig.
516 8e). The latter indicates a weakening of convective mixing, induced by stronger stratification, lead-
517 ing to the local subsurface warming due to *Small* (Fig. 1b). It can therefore be concluded that the
518 net OHC change in the southeast Pacific results from a subtle interplay between the contributions
519 from *Small*, making it warmer, and from *SRT* tending to make it colder. The latter could be related
520 to an enhanced upwelling and northward flux of relatively cold water south of 60°S in response to
521 CO₂ (e.g., Saenko et al., 2005).

522 The spreads corresponding to the OHC changes accumulated from the south in Fig. 7a,b are
523 quantified in Fig. 7c,d. The spread in the (near) global OHU, as given by the northernmost STD

524 value corresponding to *All scales* in Fig. 7c, is smaller than the STDs of *Large*, *Meso* and *Small*
525 (cf. Fig. 5b). North of about 40°N the spreads in the individual scales increase, mostly due
526 to their increase in the Atlantic (Fig. 7d), while the STD corresponding to *All scales* remains
527 relatively uniform. There is a better agreement among the AOGCMs in the net OHU, globally and
528 in the Atlantic, than in the individual scales/processes. Again, this behavior implies a degree of
529 compensation between different scales in their contribution to OHU.

530 *d. OHU below the thermocline*

531 So far, we have discussed the OHU below fixed depth levels. In the next section the focus is
532 on the OHU projected onto potential density surfaces. Here, as an intermediate step, we briefly
533 discuss the OHU below the seasonal thermocline. Different criteria are used to define the depth
534 of seasonal thermocline, such as based on vertical temperature gradient or on the depth of specific
535 isotherms (e.g., 20°C). The former requires a high enough vertical resolution and may not be suit-
536 able for all models, while the latter is not applicable everywhere in the ocean (the corresponding
537 heat budget represents a special case of the OHU in temperature or density coordinates). Here we
538 employ a simple criterion which avoids these difficulties and, at the same time, helps to identify the
539 major processes fluxing the CO₂-induced heat anomalies from the upper ocean and high-latitude
540 regions to the low-latitude oceanic interior. The criterion is based on the depth where the potential
541 temperature differs from the temperature at the surface by more than 0.5°C, which is representative
542 of the seasonal thermocline depth (Tomczak and Godfrey, 1994). As defined this way, the thermo-
543 cline depth is typically within 100-300 m between 35°S and 35°N, but is much deeper at middle
544 and high latitudes, as intended.

545 The key findings are summarized and compared with OHU below several fixed depths in Table

546 3. In particular, the net OHU below the seasonal thermocline (*All scales*) is similar to that below
547 400 m depth. It is dominated by *Large*, representing the propagation of heat anomalies from both
548 the upper ocean and high-latitude oceans towards the low-latitude regions. *Small* also plays a role
549 and is the same as OHU due to *Small* below 400 m depth (although this does not necessarily imply
550 the same physics). The main difference between the processes driving the OHU below 400 m depth
551 and below the thermocline is that in the latter case the contribution from *Meso* is quite small. One
552 reason for this behavior, as already noted, is that the thermocline (as defined the way described
553 above) penetrates to large depths at middle and high latitudes, including in most of the Southern
554 Ocean. This deep thermocline effectively excludes the Southern Ocean eddy effects from a direct
555 contribution to OHU below the thermocline. However, the combined contribution of *Large* and
556 *Meso* (i.e., *SRT*) to OHU below the thermocline is similar to that below fixed depth levels in the
557 upper ocean.

558 **3.2 Potential density space OHU analysis**

559 A heat budget in potential density space (density referenced to 0 dbar), following the procedure
560 described in Section 2.3 (see also Appendix A), provides further insight on the OHU process. In
561 piControl (Fig. 9a), surface heat loss at densities larger than about $25 \sigma_\theta$ (e.g., regions of western
562 boundary currents and, at higher densities, deep water formation regions) is resupplied by diapyc-
563 nal mixing processes included in *Small* and by the resolved advection in *Large*, particularly at the
564 highest density classes. The heating by *Large* is partly offset by *Meso* due to the eddy-induced
565 advection of heat (isopycnal diffusion of temperature, which is also included in *Meso*, cannot flux
566 temperature across isopycnals). The time-mean net (“All scales” or $\mathcal{H}(\rho)$, as given by Eq. (11)) is
567 relatively small in piControl since it is close to a statistical steady state in piControl. However, it is

568 not negligible. For example, the associated warming of waters denser than $26.5 \sigma_\theta$ is of the order
569 of 0.1 PW.

570 Taking the difference between 1pctCO2 and piControl gives the net OHU ($= \mathcal{H}(\rho_{\text{lightest water}})$) of
571 about 0.65 PW and shows the contributing processes (Fig. 9b). For densities lower than $25.5 \sigma_\theta$ the
572 shape of the individual curves reflects, in part, the creation of new light density classes in response
573 to CO₂ increase and the associated warming. It should be noted, however, that waters with densities
574 less than $25.5 \sigma_\theta$ are mostly confined to 35°S–35°N and, on average, do not penetrate deeper than
575 200 m.

576 Most of the heat uptake takes place at densities larger than $25.5 \sigma_\theta$. This behavior is expected
577 since waters with these densities occupy most of the ocean volume. Furthermore, for $\sigma_\theta > 25.5$, the
578 net OHU line closely follows the heat accumulation given by the surface heat flux anomaly (solid
579 and dashed lines in Fig. 9b), with the contributions from different scales being relatively small and
580 nearly cancelling each other. This result suggests that most of the OHU can be characterized as an
581 isopycnal process. This behavior is unlike one-dimensional upwelling-diffusion models, in which
582 diapycnal (i.e., vertical) diffusion is the main process for OHU (e.g., Raper et al., 2001). Instead, in
583 the analyzed AOGCMs, most OHU occurs through the *SRT* ($= \textit{Large} + \textit{Meso}$). This result follows
584 since *Small* contains only diapycnal processes, while *SRT* is represented by both diapycnal and
585 isopycnal processes. However, since diapycnal processes do not contribute much to the OHU at
586 densities larger than $25.5 \sigma_\theta$, we infer that isopycnal transport processes as part of the *SRT* perform
587 the bulk of the heat uptake, and they do so by linking the interior $\mathcal{H}(\rho)$ to heat input at the surface
588 (Eq. (10)).

589 Moreover, applying the diathermal framework (i.e., replacing in Eq. (10) potential density with
590 temperature) leads to a similar result. Namely, for temperatures colder than 25°C, the net OHU

591 (“All scales” anomaly) closely follows the surface heat flux anomaly (not shown), implying that
592 most of the OHU is isothermal. This result, combined with the analysis in Section 3.1b (Fig. 5a;
593 see also Fig. 7a), further suggests that it is the advective component of *SRT* that accounts for most
594 of the OHU. We make this inference since there is no heat diffusion along isothermal surfaces.

595 It also follows from Fig. 9b that, if the flows in the ocean interior were mostly along isopycnals,
596 such as expected away from regions of strong diapycnal mixing, then it should be possible to
597 reconstruct the vertical structure of the OHU profile from the surface heat flux anomaly (i.e., using
598 the last term in Eq. (10)). We demonstrate this reconstruction by projecting the surface heat flux
599 anomaly from density space for 25.5–27.8 σ_θ (Fig. 9c) onto the mean depths of the corresponding
600 density surfaces for the 150–2000 m layer (Fig. 9d); i.e, where most of the OHU takes place and
601 where σ_θ is mostly monotonic with depth. Thus, because of the near isopycnal nature of the OHU
602 process, the input of heat at the surface for $\sigma_\theta > 25.5$ and its penetration into the ocean interior
603 within the same density classes is reflected in the global profile of $\text{OHU}(z)$ (Fig. 9d). This process
604 is schematically illustrated in Fig. 10.

605 It should be noted that one way to reconcile the isopycnal and horizontal averaging approaches
606 of OHU analysis is to constrain the integration in Eq. (10) to the ocean volume below some depths.
607 In this case the OHU below, for example, 100 m depth is dominated by *Small*, while the OHU
608 below 400 m depth is dominated by *SRT* (not shown), as expected based on the results in Section
609 3.1b.

610 **4 Discussion and conclusions**

611 Using heat budget diagnostics from a set of coarse-resolution (non-mesoscale eddying) AOGCMs
612 run in pre-industrial control (piControl) and an idealized (1pctCO2) climate change experiment, we
613 study the contribution to OHU arising from parameterized ocean physical processes and resolved
614 dynamical features operating across a range of scales. Two complementary approaches are used
615 for the heat budget analysis: a traditional approach that uses horizontal and/or vertical integration
616 of the heat budget components, and an approach that formulates the heat budget within potential
617 density layers (i.e., diapycnal/isopycnal framework).

618 Using the traditional approach, we find that at statistical steady-state (in the piControl simula-
619 tion) a leading order global heat balance in the subsurface upper ocean (~ 200 - 2000 m layer) is
620 between the large-scale circulation warming it and mesoscale processes cooling it. This result is
621 consistent with Gregory (2000) and some others (e.g., Griffies et al., 2015; Morrison et al., 2013;
622 Saenko, 2006). Parameterized small-scale diapycnal processes do not contribute substantially to
623 the global heat balance in this layer and have a relatively small quantitative spread across the mod-
624 els when compared to the spread in processes operating at larger scales. In general, inter-model
625 spread increases towards the surface for all scales.

626 In the climate change experiment, the processes representing all scales contribute positively
627 to the subsurface OHU. The contribution from small-scale processes is largest in the upper ocean
628 regions poleward of roughly 40°S – 40°N . These regions are where weakening of convective mixing
629 leads to more heat being trapped in the subsurface ocean rather than being ventilated through
630 convection. Below about 300-400 m, OHU is dominated by the super-residual transport, *SRT*,
631 representing large-scale ocean dynamics combined with all parameterized (in these AOGCMs)

632 mesoscale and submesoscale advective and diffusive eddy effects. Thus, the processes included
633 in *SRT* not only contribute to the subduction of newly formed water masses (Luyten et al., 1983;
634 Marshall, 1997; England and MaierReimer, 2001; Dias et al. 2020a), but also control the along-
635 isopycnal penetration of heat anomalies from the mixed layer into the oceanic interior, as described
636 in Section 3.2. The contribution of isopycnal diffusion to OHU by *SRT* is less important than
637 the contribution of the net (resolved plus eddy-induced) advection. Overall, there is much better
638 agreement among the AOGCMs in the net global OHU than in the individual scales/processes
639 contributing to it; the same applies to the Atlantic OHU. This behavior implies some degree of
640 compensation between different scales contributing to the global OHU, with the latter tending to
641 self-adjust to the uncertainties in the representation of unresolved ocean physics in AOGCMs.
642 Uncertainties generally increase toward the surface.

643 While the spatial structure of OHU varies across the models, with the spread being particularly
644 large in the North Atlantic and in the Southern Ocean, the net integrated OHU values simulated by
645 the AOGCMs are remarkably similar. This behavior is despite many differences among the models,
646 including choices made to represent parameterized ocean eddy effects. To put the smallness of
647 the OHU spread into context, we show that the subsurface OHU normalized by the model-mean
648 temperature change in the upper ocean varies much less than does a proxy to OHU efficiency.
649 There are also some common features in the analyzed models, which may have contributed to
650 the small spread in the global OHU. One such feature is that, unlike in some older models (e.g.,
651 Wiebe and Weaver, 1999), all analyzed models employ neutral physics (Redi, 1982; Gent and
652 McWilliams, 1990; Gent et al., 1995; Griffies, 1998) to represent tracer diffusive mixing and
653 advection by mesoscale eddies. Another common feature is that most of these models impose a
654 rather small (order of $10^{-5} \text{ m}^2\text{s}^{-1}$) vertical diffusivity over vast ocean regions in the pycnocline,

655 such as estimated by field measurements (e.g., Ledwell et al. 1993). These common model features
656 thus lead to the interior ocean circulation that tends to follow isopycnals. As a result, the models
657 favour heat uptake that occurs along isopycnals rather than across, with this process contrary to the
658 assumptions of one-dimensional box models of OHU (e.g., Raper et al 2001).

659 Regionally, weakening of the large-scale component of the AMOC leads to less heat conver-
660 gence north of about 40°N in the Atlantic and less heat divergence at lower latitudes. As a result
661 of this north-south heat redistribution, the subpolar Atlantic becomes colder, while the rest of the
662 Atlantic becomes warmer, with little overall impact on the net Atlantic Ocean heat content from
663 changes in the large-scale ocean circulation. However, while in the subpolar North Atlantic the
664 cooling induced by changes in the large-scale dynamics is more than offset by subsurface warming
665 due to changes in the parameterized processes (convection and eddy effects), at low latitudes the
666 large-scale heat convergence is not offset by any major process, thereby dominating the local heat
667 content change. In the Southern Ocean, which accounts for about 40% of the net subsurface OHU
668 on the model-mean, the importance of a particular scale strongly depends on latitude, with the
669 OHU south of 50°S being mainly due to the parameterized processes.

670 Using a potential density (diapycnal/isopycnal) framework for the heat budget analysis we
671 find that, at statistical steady state, heat loss at the surface within denser waters is resupplied by
672 small-scale diapycnal mixing and also by the large-scale circulation, particularly at the highest
673 density classes. In the climate change experiment, the potential density framework reveals that
674 most of the interior OHU processes are isopycnal in nature, at least outside of the near-surface
675 low-latitude regions. Consequently, we are able to show that most of the global vertical ocean
676 warming profile can be reconstructed by projecting surface heat flux anomalies in the analyzed
677 AOGCMs from potential density space onto the mean depths of the corresponding isopycnals. It

678 can therefore be concluded that heat uptake in the ocean can be broadly explained by heat fluxes
679 into outcropping density layers and near-adiabatic distribution of heat within those layers. This
680 feature, combined with the mostly advective nature of OHU, may have important applications.
681 For example, it supports the construction of simple models of thermosteric sea-level rise that are
682 based on the assumptions that a) the upper layers of the low-latitude ocean are ventilated by the
683 subduction of water at higher latitudes along surfaces of constant density and b) heat enters the
684 ocean interior mostly by an advection process rather than by vertical diffusion (Church et al.,
685 1991).

686 To summarize, our main conclusions are as follows:

687 1. At steady-state a leading order global heat balance in the subsurface upper ocean is between
688 the large-scale circulation warming it and mesoscale processes cooling it.

689 2. The CO₂-induced OHU is dominated by the advective component of the super-residual
690 transport, away from the localized high-latitude regions of strong vertical mixing.

691 3. The model spread of net OHU is small compared with the spread in components of it, with
692 the ocean warming uncertainties generally increasing toward the surface.

693 4. There are large uncertainties in the regional OHC changes, especially in the subpolar North
694 Atlantic, Arctic Ocean and Southern Ocean.

695 5. In the Atlantic, most of the OHU is due to the parameterized processes, with changes in the
696 large-scale heat convergence (e.g., due to AMOC weakening) mostly redistributing heat from the
697 north to the south.

698 6. The dominance of advective heat redistribution in the low-latitude heat content change is
699 contrary to the diffusive OHU mechanism assumed by the upwelling-diffusion model.

700 7. Most of the interior OHU processes are isopycnal in nature, which makes it possible to quite

701 accurately reconstruct much of the global vertical ocean warming profile from the surface heat
702 flux anomalies. This result supports the construction of advective (rather than diffusive) models of
703 OHU and sea-level rise.

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714 **Appendix A: Projection of the Eulerian budgets of heat and salt onto density surfaces**

715 Here we present the approach we use for projecting the Eulerian heat budget terms onto the
 716 position of density surfaces. We also show how this approach can be applied to the Eulerian salinity
 717 budget and draw some parallels with the water mass transformation (WMT) framework described
 718 in Groeskamp et al. (2019).

719 Consider the heat budget in the following form (cf. Eq. 51 in Groeskamp et al., 2019):

$$\begin{aligned}
 720 \quad C_p \rho \partial_t \Theta = & -C_p \rho \mathbf{u}^\dagger \cdot \nabla \Theta - \nabla \cdot \mathbf{J}_Q - \nabla \cdot \mathbf{J}_Q^{\text{SWR}} + \\
 & [F_Q + C_p Q_m (\Theta_m - \Theta)] \delta(z - \eta),
 \end{aligned}
 \tag{18}$$

721 where Θ is the Conservative Temperature and $\nabla \Theta$ is its gradient, \mathbf{u}^\dagger is the sum of resolved (\mathbf{u})
 722 and eddy-induced (\mathbf{u}^*) velocities in the analyzed models; i.e., $\mathbf{u}^\dagger = \mathbf{u} + \mathbf{u}^*$. Other terms represent:
 723 $-\nabla \cdot \mathbf{J}_Q$ heat convergence due to interior mixing processes, $-\nabla \cdot \mathbf{J}_Q^{\text{SWR}}$ heat convergence due to pen-
 724 etrating shortwave radiation, F_Q heat fluxes at the ocean surface [$z = \eta(x, y, t)$], with the penetrated
 725 shortwave radiation excluded, $C_p Q_m (\Theta_m - \Theta)$ accounts for the heat content of mass transferred
 726 through the surface, with Θ_m being the conservative temperature of the corresponding mass flux
 727 Q_m which can be associated with e.g. precipitation minus evaporation and river runoff. Some other
 728 terms, such as the geothermal heat flux at the ocean bottom, can also be included in Eq. (18). Inte-
 729 grating Eq. (18) over all ocean regions with densities larger than any given density ρ and averaging

730 in time (denoted with overbar) gives

$$\begin{aligned}
& \underbrace{\overline{\iiint_{\rho'(x,y,z,t) \geq \rho} C_p \rho \partial_t \Theta \, dV}}_{\text{All scales}} = \underbrace{\overline{\iiint_{\rho'(x,y,z,t) \geq \rho} -C_p \rho \mathbf{u} \cdot \nabla \Theta \, dV}}_{\text{Large}} + \\
& \underbrace{\overline{\iiint_{\rho'(x,y,z,t) \geq \rho} -C_p \rho \mathbf{u}^* \cdot \nabla \Theta \, dV}}_{\text{Meso and Small}} + \underbrace{\overline{\iiint_{\rho'(x,y,z,t) \geq \rho} -\nabla \cdot \mathbf{J}_Q \, dV}}_{\text{Meso and Small}} + \\
& \underbrace{\overline{\iiint_{\rho'(x,y,z,t) \geq \rho} -\nabla \cdot \mathbf{J}_Q^{\text{SWR}} \, dV}}_{\text{Flux}} + \underbrace{\overline{\iint_{\rho'(x,y,0,t) \geq \rho} [F_Q + C_p Q_m (\Theta_m - \Theta)] \, dA}}_{\text{Flux}}
\end{aligned} \tag{19}$$

732 This equation (cf. Eq. (11)) presents the essence of our approach for projecting the Eulerian heat
733 budget onto the position of density surfaces, followed by averaging in time. Note that the terms
734 containing \mathbf{u} and \mathbf{u}^* represent the diapycnal transports associated with, respectively, the resolved
735 and eddy-induced heat advection across density surfaces that occurs in the presence of mixing and
736 heat input at the surface. In the heat budget projection onto density surfaces presented in Section
737 3.2, focused mostly on the upper 2 km of the ocean, we use σ_θ ; a similar calculation can be applied
738 using other types of density.

739 Consider now the budget of salinity (S) (cf. Eq. 50 in Groeskamp et al., 2019):

$$\rho \partial_t S = -\rho \mathbf{u}^\dagger \cdot \nabla S - \nabla \cdot \mathbf{J}_S + [F_S + Q_m (S_m - S)] \delta(z - \eta), \tag{20}$$

741 where $-\nabla \cdot \mathbf{J}_S$ represents the interior mixing, F_S the exchange of salt and freshwater across the
742 surface and $S_m - S$ the difference between the salinity in the transferred mass and the sea surface
743 salinity. By applying the operator $\overline{\iiint_{\rho'(x,y,z,t) \geq \rho} (\cdot) \, dV}$ to each its term and averaging in time, a
744 projection of the Eulerian salt budget onto density surfaces can be constructed, similar to Eq. (19).

745 We note that the described projection of the Eulerian heat and salinity budgets onto density
746 surfaces is more straightforward than the isopycnal tracer budget discussed by Groeskamp et al.
747 (2019). The latter has many intricacies, discussion of which is beyond our scope. Instead, we draw

748 only some parallels with the WMT framework presented in Groeskamp et al. (2019). In particular,
 749 Groeskamp et al. (2019) use the material evolution of Conservative Temperature

$$750 \quad C_p \rho \dot{\Theta} = -\nabla \cdot \mathbf{J}_Q - \nabla \cdot \mathbf{J}_Q^{\text{swr}} + [F_Q + C_p Q_m(\Theta_m - \Theta)] \delta(z - \eta), \quad (21)$$

751 where in our case $\dot{\Theta} = \partial_t \Theta + \mathbf{u}^\dagger \cdot \nabla \Theta$, and the material evolution of salinity

$$752 \quad \rho \dot{S} = -\nabla \cdot \mathbf{J}_S + [F_S + Q_m(S_m - S)] \delta(z - \eta), \quad (22)$$

753 where $\dot{S} = \partial_t S + \mathbf{u}^\dagger \cdot \nabla S$. By multiplying Eq. (21) by $-\frac{\alpha}{C_p}$, where α is the thermal expansion coeffi-
 754 cient, and Eq. (22) by the haline contraction coefficient β , and adding the results, one can arrive at
 755 the equation for material evolution of locally referenced potential density; i.e., similar to Eq. (21)
 756 in Groeskamp et al. (2019). The latter, upon conversion to the material evolution of neutral density
 757 γ (Eq. 12 in Groeskamp et al., 2019) and applying the operator $\frac{\partial}{\partial \gamma} \iiint_{\gamma' \leq \gamma} (\cdot) dV$, forms the core of
 758 the WMT framework. For example, the term $\frac{\alpha}{C_p} \nabla \cdot \mathbf{J}_Q - \beta \nabla \cdot \mathbf{J}_S$ in the resulting WMT equation
 759 leads to the transformation associated with mixing at different scales as well as to transformation
 760 arising due to nonlinearities in the equation of state (i.e., cabbeling and thermobaricity). In turn,
 761 the terms $(-\frac{\alpha}{C_p} F_Q + \beta F_S) \delta(z - \eta)$ and $[-\alpha Q_m(\Theta_m - \Theta) + \beta Q_m(S_m - S)] \delta(z - \eta)$ lead to WMT
 762 associated, respectively, with the surface flux of density and the density source due to mass influx
 763 at the surface.

764 **Appendix B: Covariance between the upper ocean warming to subsurface OHU**

765 Consider the evolution of global-mean profile of ocean temperature anomaly, $\theta(z, t)$, as de-
 766 fined relative to some unforced control state. For example, in our study $\theta(z, t)$ is the horizontally
 767 averaged vertical profile of temperature in the 1pctCO2 simulation relative to the piControl. The

768 evolution of $\theta(z, t)$ can be described by the following equation

$$769 \quad C \partial_t \theta = \partial_z \mathcal{F}, \quad (23)$$

770 where C is the volumetric heat capacity of seawater, \mathcal{F} is the forcing due to global-mean air-sea
 771 heat flux anomaly as well as all vertical heat transport processes, and $\theta(z, t = 0) = 0$. Integrating
 772 equation (23) vertically from the surface to some depth and then averaging over time $0 \leq t \leq \tau$,
 773 with $\theta(t = \tau) = \theta_\tau$, gives

$$774 \quad \Delta \mathcal{T}(z) = \mathcal{F}_0 - \text{OHU}(z), \quad (24)$$

775 where $\Delta \mathcal{T}(z) = \frac{C}{\tau} \int_z^0 \theta_\tau dz$ is the heat convergence in the layer above z , which is proportional to the
 776 layer's temperature change, \mathcal{F}_0 (> 0 when comparing 1pctCO2 relative to piControl) is the time-
 777 mean air-sea heat flux anomaly and $\text{OHU}(z) \equiv \mathcal{F}(z)$ is the time-mean heat uptake by the ocean
 778 below z (assuming no geothermal or Joule heating).

779 Now introduce a model ensemble-mean by $\langle a \rangle$ and recall the definitions of variance, $\text{var}(a) \equiv$
 780 $\langle (a - \langle a \rangle)^2 \rangle$ and covariance, $\text{cov}(a, b) \equiv \langle (a - \langle a \rangle)(b - \langle b \rangle) \rangle$. The heat budget equation (24) thus
 781 gives

$$782 \quad \text{cov}(\Delta \mathcal{T}, \text{OHU}) = \text{cov}(\mathcal{F}_0, \text{OHU}) - \text{var}(\text{OHU}). \quad (25)$$

783 Hence, we see that the covariance between the heat convergence in the upper ocean (or upper
 784 ocean temperature change) and heat flux anomaly into the ocean below ($\text{OHU}(z)$) increases with
 785 the covariance between the surface heat flux anomaly and $\text{OHU}(z)$ and decreases with the variance
 786 of $\text{OHU}(z)$.

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Table Captions

916

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918 approximately; it varies in some AOGCMs. The choices for representation of mesoscale eddy advec-
919 tion (Meso. adv.) and diffusion (Meso. dif.) follow either the formulations in Gent and McWilliams
920 (1990; GM90) and Redi (1982; R82), or the skew flux formulation in Griffies (1998; G98); V and
921 F indicate if the corresponding eddy transfer coefficients are variable in space and time or fixed; the
922 ranges or values of these coefficients (in m^2s^{-1}) are also indicated, if known. Some models include
923 the Fox-Kemper et al. (2011) parameterization of mixed layer eddies (Submeso.). Marked with * are
924 the AOGCMs for which the heat tendency diagnostics (Table 2) were available as monthly averages
925 and were used in the heat budget analysis in density space discussed in Section 3.2; for all other
926 models these diagnostics were available only as annual averages.

927 **Table 2:** Heat budget terms (W m^{-2}) analyzed in this study. Detailed explanation is provided in Griffies
928 et al. (2016), where terms (1)–(6) are prefixed by “opot” or “ocon” for, respectively, potential or
929 conservative temperature. Note that (2) includes (3), and (3) includes (4). Term (7) “other” represents
930 the combined effect from the processes not included in terms (1)–(6) (see Griffies et al. (2016) for
931 examples), inferred by taking the difference between the net tendency (1) and the sum of residual
932 mean advection (2), mesoscale diffusion (5) and diapycnal mixing (6).

933 **Table 3:** Contribution of physics and dynamics at different scales to ocean heat uptake (PW; $1 \text{ PW} = 10^{15} \text{ W}$)
934 below several indicated depths and below the thermocline depth (TD). The numbers represent model-
935 mean values for years 61-70 of 1pctCO2 with respect to piControl and correspond to the models for
936 which the heat tendency diagnostics were available as monthly averages (see Table 1).

Figure Captions

937

938 **Figure 1:** (a-c) Model-mean rate of ocean heat content (OHC) change below 200 m (1pctCO₂ wrt piControl)
939 over the first 70 years: (a) net OHC change due to all processes and its partitioning into contributions
940 from (b) all forms of the diapycnal mixing in the analyzed AOGCMs and (c) the super-residual
941 transport which combined the large-scale heat advection with all eddy heat transport processes (see
942 text for details). Positive values correspond to heat being added to the region deeper than 200 m,
943 whereas a negative number sees cooling below 200 m. The color scale is limited to $\pm 3 \text{ W m}^{-2}$ for
944 plotting purposes. (d) Ensemble standard deviation of the net OHC change shown in panel (a). The
945 green box in (c) is the Gulf Stream region to which we refer in Section 3.1c.

946 **Figure 2:** Time-mean (70 years of piControl) and model-mean global vertical heat transport (PW) due to the
947 explicitly simulated (by the analyzed AOGCMs) large-scale ocean circulation (green), with thin lines
948 corresponding to ± 1 inter-model standard deviation. Also presented are two observational estimates
949 (black) of heat transport associated with ocean circulation which obeys the linear vorticity balance
950 (Cummins et al., 2016). These two estimates are based on somewhat different assumptions about
951 the reference meridional geostrophic velocity (see Cummins et al. (2016) for details). On long-term
952 mean, the downward heat transport due to the large-scale advection is expected to be closely balanced
953 by an equal and opposite (i.e., upward) transport associated with the combined effect from all other
954 (parameterized in these AOGCMs) processes, as illustrated by arrows.

955 **Figure 3:** (a) Global-mean and time-mean (70 years) profiles of heat convergences in piControl correspond-
956 ing to the net heating rate (“All scales”) and its partitioning into contributions from the resolved
957 circulation (“Large”), all mesoscale and submesoscale eddy-related processes (“Meso”) and all di-
958 apycnal and other effects (“Small”). Also presented separately are the contributions from the super-
959 residual transport (SRT = Large+Meso) and all parameterized (in these AOGCMs) processes (Param

960 = Small+Meso); (b) Profiles of inter-model standard deviations (STDs) corresponding to the heat
 961 convergence profiles in panel (a); also presented are the STDs corresponding to heat convergence due
 962 to eddy advection (Meso adv.) and diffusion (Meso dif.).

963 **Figure 4:** (a) Global-mean and time-mean (70 years) profiles of changes in heat convergences (1pctCO₂
 964 wrt piControl) corresponding to the net heating rate (“All scales”) and its partitioning into contribu-
 965 tions from the resolved circulation (“Large”), all mesoscale and submesoscale eddy-related processes
 966 (“Meso”) and all diapycnal and other effects (“Small”). Also shown are the contributions from the
 967 super-residual transport (SRT = Large+Meso) and all parameterized (in these AOGCMs) processes
 968 (Param = Small+Meso) ; (b) Inter-model standard deviations (STDs) corresponding to the curves in
 969 panel (a).

970 **Figure 5:** (a) Integrated horizontally and from the bottom to each depth OHU (i.e., increase in downward
 971 heat transport in 1pctCO₂ from piControl across each depth) due to all scales (“All scales”) and
 972 its partitioning into contributions from the resolved circulation (“Large”), all mesoscale and subme-
 973 soscale eddy-related processes (“Meso”) and all diapycnal and other effects (“Small”). Also shown
 974 are the contributions from the super-residual transport (SRT = Large+Meso) and all parameterized (in
 975 these AOGCMs) processes (Param = Small+Meso), as well as the partitioning of Meso into contribu-
 976 tions from eddy advection (Meso adv.) and diffusion (Meso dif.); (b) Inter-model standard deviations
 977 (STDs) corresponding to the curves in panel (a).

978 **Figure 6:** (a) Depth profiles of \mathcal{E}_1 and \mathcal{E}_2 in the upper ocean, given by Eq. (16) and Eq. (17), with thick lines
 979 corresponding to model-mean quantities and thin lines corresponding to model-mean ± 1 inter-model
 980 standard deviation; (b) Depth profile of covariance between the heat convergence change in the upper
 981 ocean above a particular depth, $\Delta\mathcal{T}(z)$, and OHU below this depth, $\text{OHU}(z)$ ($\text{cov}(\Delta\mathcal{T}, \text{OHU})$) and its
 982 two components: covariance between the surface heat flux anomaly \mathcal{F}_0 and $\text{OHU}(z)$ and variance of
 983 $\text{OHU}(z)$ (see Appendix B). Dashed line shows correlation between $\Delta\mathcal{T}(z)$ and $\text{OHU}(z)$.

984 **Figure 7:** (a) Integrated zonally and vertically below 200 m depth and from the south to each latitude
985 (i.e., cumulative from the south) OHU (PW) due to all scales (“All scales”) and its partitioning into
986 contributions from the resolved circulation (“Large”), all mesoscale and submesoscale eddy-related
987 processes (“Meso”) and all diapycnal and other effects (“Small”). Also shown are the contributions
988 from the super-residual transport (SRT = Large+Meso), all parameterized (in these AOGCMs) pro-
989 cesses (Param = Small+Meso), and diffusive component of Meso (“Meso dif”); (b) same as in panel
990 (a), except for the Atlantic Ocean only and north of 30°S; (c) and (d) present inter-model standard
991 deviations (STDs) corresponding to the curves in panels (a) and (b), respectively.

992 **Figure 8:** Model-mean (a) time series of the Atlantic meridional overturning circulation (AMOC) maximum
993 in piControl and 1pctCO₂, (b) winter (January-March) mixed layer depth (MLD) in the North Atlantic
994 in piControl, (c) the North Atlantic MLD change in 1pctCO₂ with respect to piControl, (d) summer
995 (July-September) MLD in the Southern Ocean in piControl and (e) the Southern Ocean MLD change
996 in 1pctCO₂ with respect to piControl. The MLD changes in (c) and (e) represent averages for years
997 61-70 of 1pctCO₂. The MLD corresponds to the `m1otst` variable (see Griffies et al., 2016 for details).
998 For two models, HadCM3 and HadGEM2-ES, `m1otst` was estimated using monthly temperature and
999 salinity.

1000 **Figure 9:** Model-mean heat budget in potential density (referenced to the surface) (σ_θ) coordinates (see
1001 text for details) corresponding (a) piControl (positive values correspond to heat convergence within
1002 higher density classes), (b) its change (1pctCO₂ wrt piControl), and (c) plotted separately the surface
1003 heat flux anomaly and net OHU (“All scales”) corresponding to the (rotated) light-blue box in panel
1004 *b*, plotted relative to their values at $\sigma_\theta = 27.8$; (d) projection of the surface flux anomaly from density
1005 space in panel (c) onto mean depths of the corresponding isopycnals, along with the mean profile of
1006 net OHU computed using 3D temperature tendencies directly from the ocean interior; both quantities
1007 are plotted relative to their values at 2000 m depth, which roughly corresponds to the model-mean

1008 depth of the $\sigma_{\theta} = 27.8$ surface. The plots correspond to the model-mean (see Table 1) and time-
1009 mean quantities for years 61-70 of 1pctCO2 and the corresponding years of piControl. In panels (*c*
1010 and *d*), thick lines represent model-mean quantities, while thin lines represent the corresponding ± 1
1011 inter-model standard deviations.

1012 **Figure 10:** Schematic view of the OHU process as revealed by the heat budget analyses. Most of the OHU
1013 occurs by the advective component of the super residual transport (SRT), which links heat input to
1014 different density classes at the surface at mid and high latitudes with OHU anomalies in the ocean
1015 interior, through subduction along isopycnals and heat redistribution from the regions of deep mixing
1016 (shaded).

	AOGCM	Res. (lat×lon; lev)	Meso. adv.	Meso. dif.	Submeso.	Reference
1	ACCESS-CM2*	1.0°×1.0°; 50	G98, V, 100–1200	G98, F, 300	Yes	Bi et al. (2020)
2	CanESM2	1.0°×1.4°; 40	GM90, V, 100–2000	R82, F, 1000	No	Yang and Saenko (2012)
3	CanESM5	1.0°×1.0°; 45	GM90, V, 100–2000	R82, V, ≤1000	No	Swart et al. (2019)
4	CESM2	1.0°×1.0°; 60	G98, V, 300–3000	G98, V, 300–3000	Yes	Danabasoglu et al. (2012)
5	GFDL-ESM2M*	1.0°×1.0°; 50	G98, V, 100–800	G98, F, 600	Yes	Dunne et al. (2012)
6	HadCM3*	1.2°×1.2°; 20	GM90, V, 350–2000	G98, F, 1000	No	Gordon et al. (2000)
7	HadGEM2-ES*	1.0°×1.0°; 40	G98, V, ≥150	G98, F, 500	No	Johns et al. (2006)
8	HadGEM3-GC31-LL*	1.0°×1.0°; 75	GM90, V, ≤1000	R82, F, 1000	No	Kuhlbrodt et al. (2018)
9	IPSL-CM6A-LR	1.0°×1.0°; 75	GM90, V, No info	G98, V, ≤1000	Yes	Boucher et al. (2020)
10	MPI-ESM1.2-LR	1.0°×1.4°; 40	G98, V, ≤250	G98, V, ≤1000	No	Gutjahr et al. (2019)
11	MRI-ESM2.0	0.5°×1.0°; 61	GM90, V, 300–1500	R82, F, 1500	No	Yukimoto et al. (2019)

Table 1: Information on the AOGCMs analyzed in this study. Ocean grid spacing (Res.) is indicated approximately; it varies in some AOGCMs. The choices for representation of mesoscale eddy advection (Meso. adv.) and diffusion (Meso. dif.) follow either the formulations in Gent and McWilliams (1990; GM90) and Redi (1982; R82), or the skew flux formulation in Griffies (1998; G98); V and F indicate if the corresponding eddy transfer coefficients are variable in space and time or fixed; the ranges or values of these coefficients (in m^2s^{-1}) are also indicated, if known. Some models include the Fox-Kemper et al. (2011) parameterization of mixed layer eddies (Submeso.). Marked with * are the AOGCMs for which the heat tendency diagnostics (Table 2) were available as monthly averages and were used in the heat budget analysis in density space discussed in Section 3.2; for all other models these diagnostics were available only as annual averages.

	Name	Heat budget terms
1	temptend	net temperature tendency
2	temprmadvect	residual mean advection
3	temppadvect	net eddy-induced advection
4	temppsmadvect	submesoscale eddy-induced advection
5	temppmdiff	mesoscale diffusion
6	tempdiff	diapycnal mixing
7	other	remaining processes

Table 2: Heat budget terms (W m^{-2}) analyzed in this study. Detailed explanation is provided in Griffies et al. (2016), where terms (1)–(6) are prefixed by “opot” or “ocon” for, respectively, potential or conservative temperature. Note that (2) includes (3), and (3) includes (4). Term (7) “other” represents the combined effect from the processes not included in terms (1)–(6) (see Griffies et al. (2016) for examples), inferred by taking the difference between the net tendency (1) and the sum of residual mean advection (2), mesoscale diffusion (5) and diapycnal mixing (6).

	200 m	400 m	700 m	TD
Large	0.13	0.17	0.15	0.26
Meso	0.11	0.12	0.06	0.01
Small	0.20	0.07	0.04	0.07
All scales	0.44	0.36	0.25	0.34

Table 3: Contribution of physics and dynamics at different scales to ocean heat uptake (PW; 1 PW = 10^{15} W) below several indicated depths and below the thermocline depth (TD). The numbers represent model-mean values for years 61-70 of 1pctCO2 with respect to piControl and correspond to the models for which the heat tendency diagnostics were available as monthly averages (see Table 1).

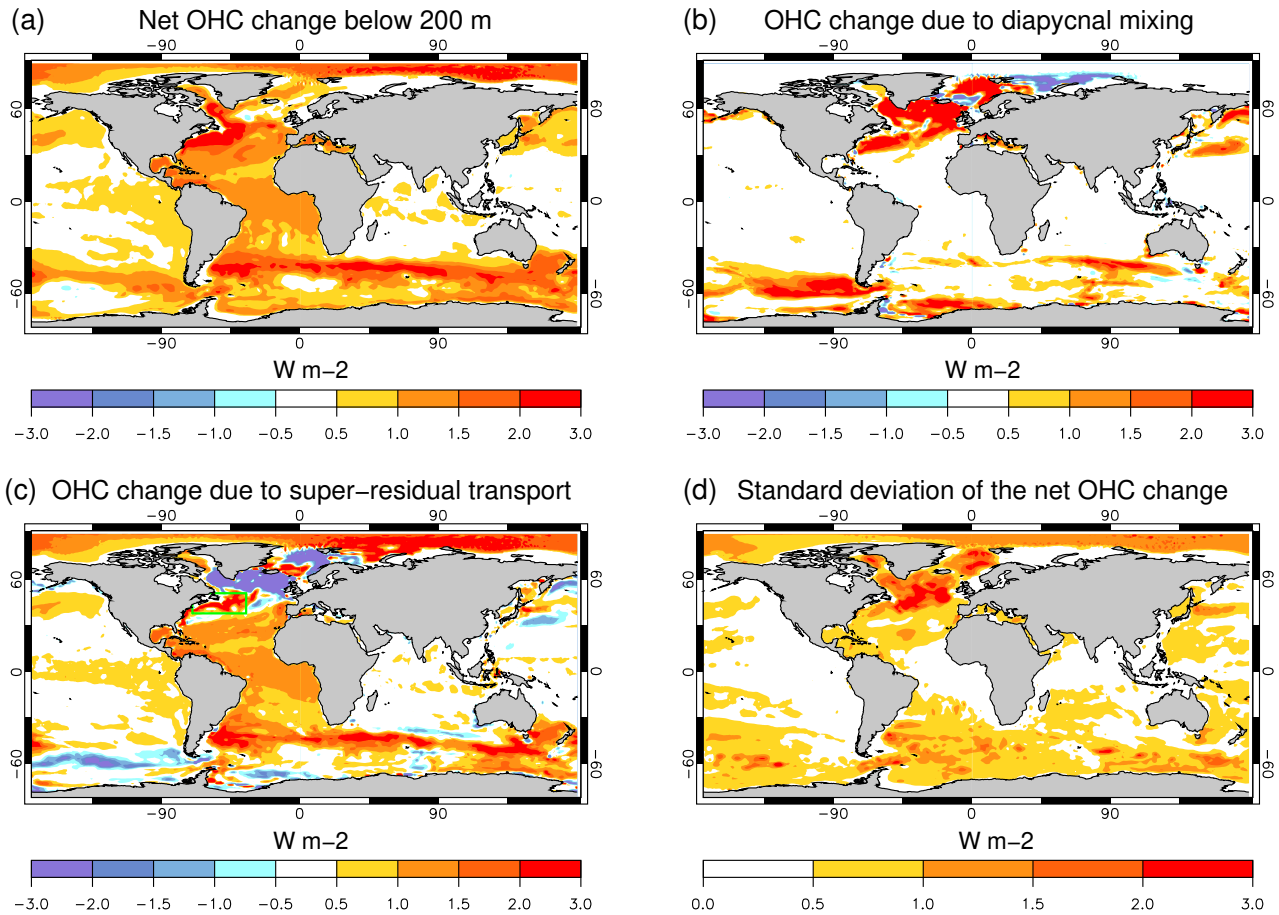


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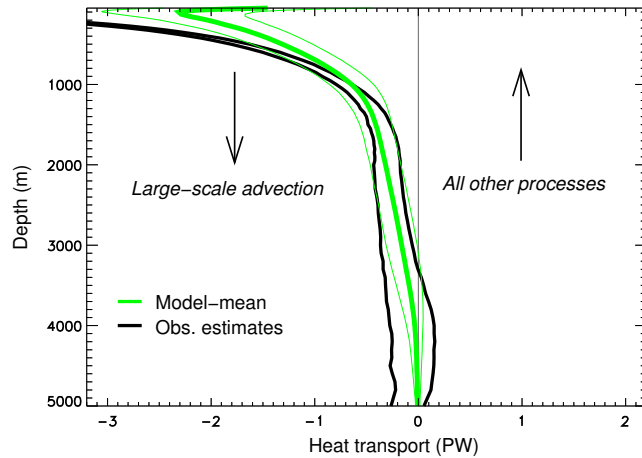


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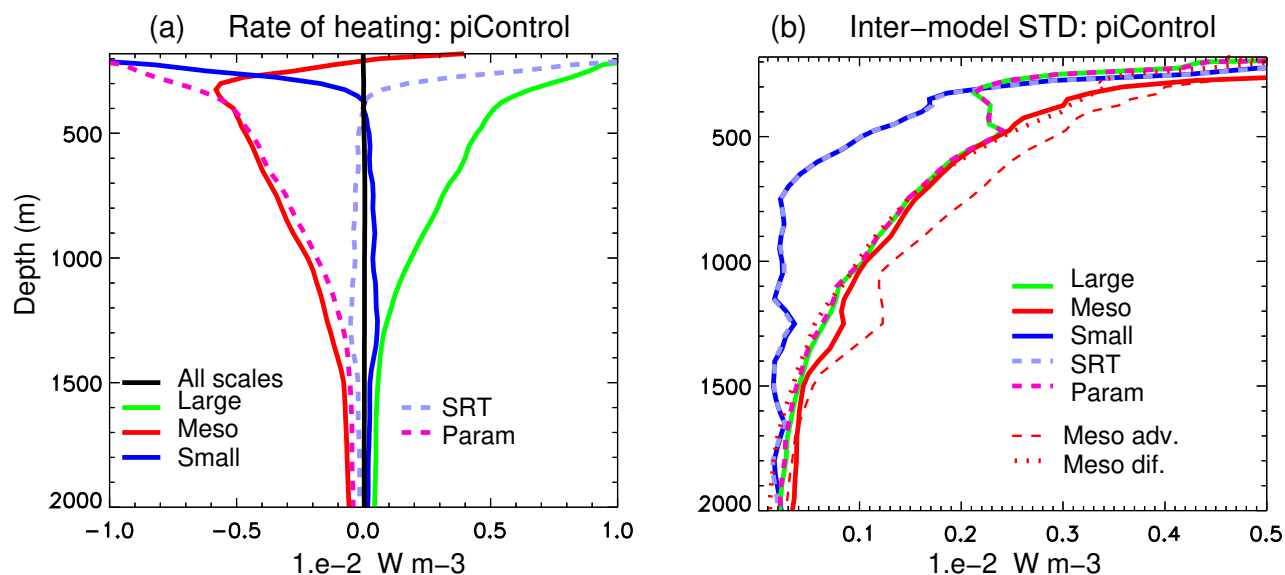


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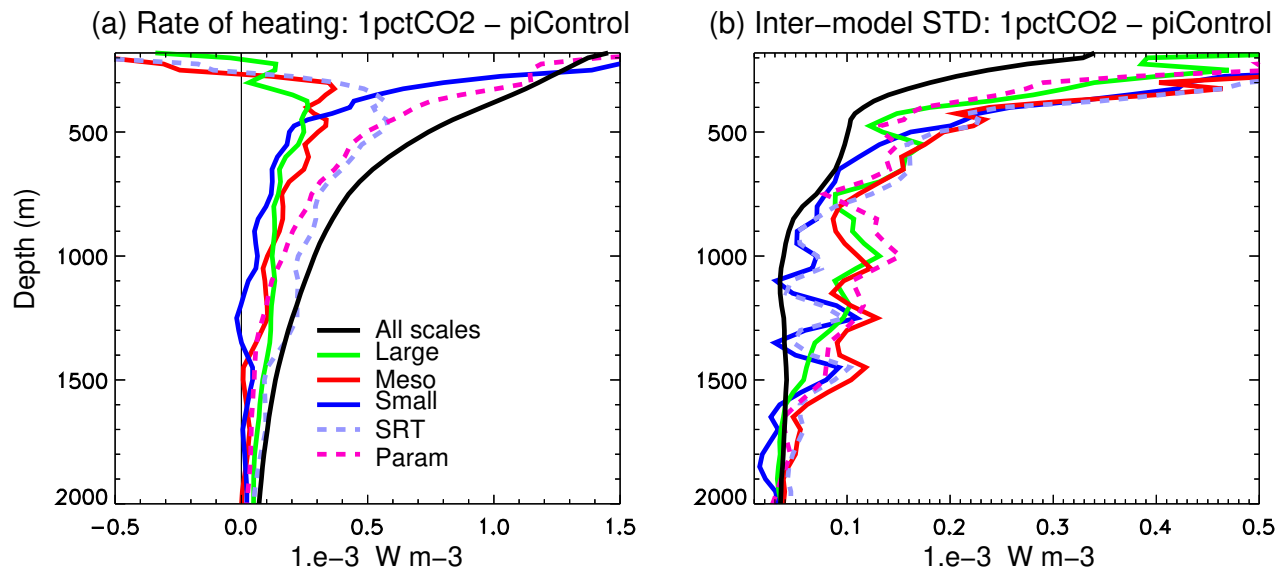


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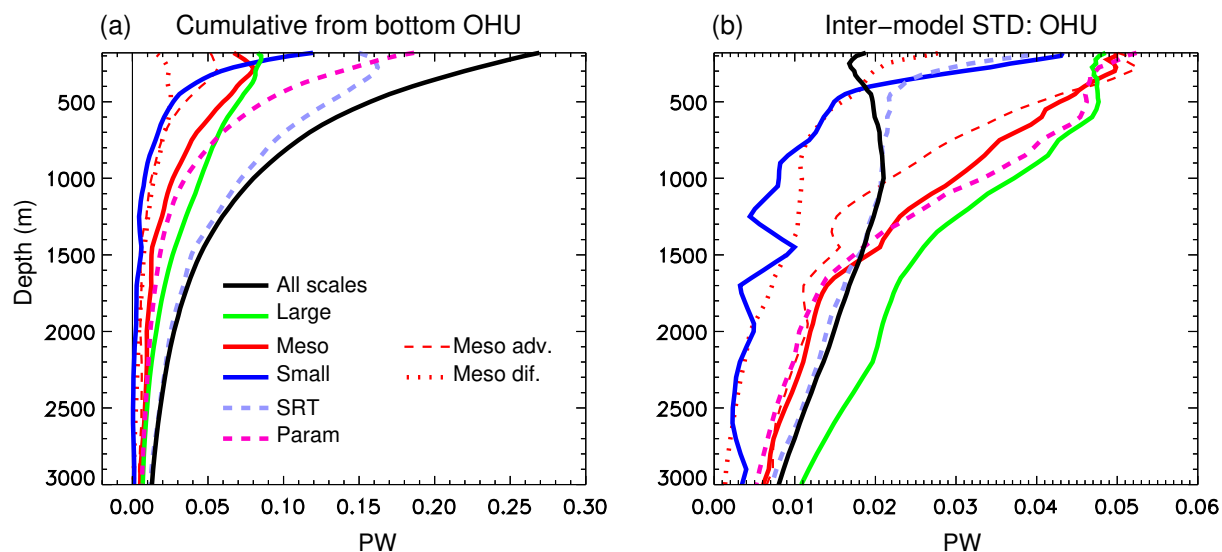


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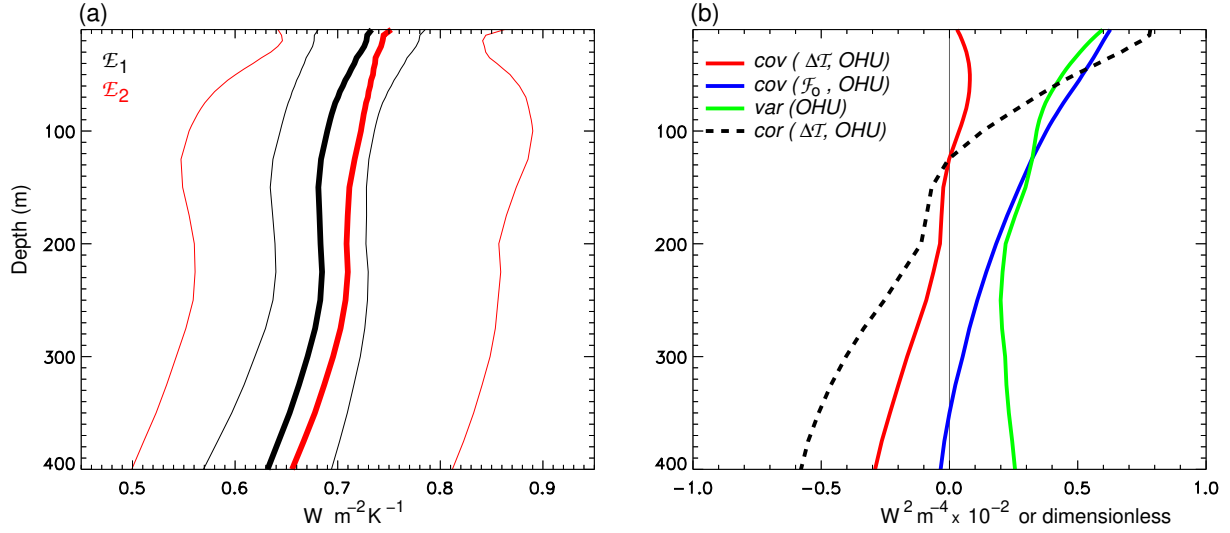


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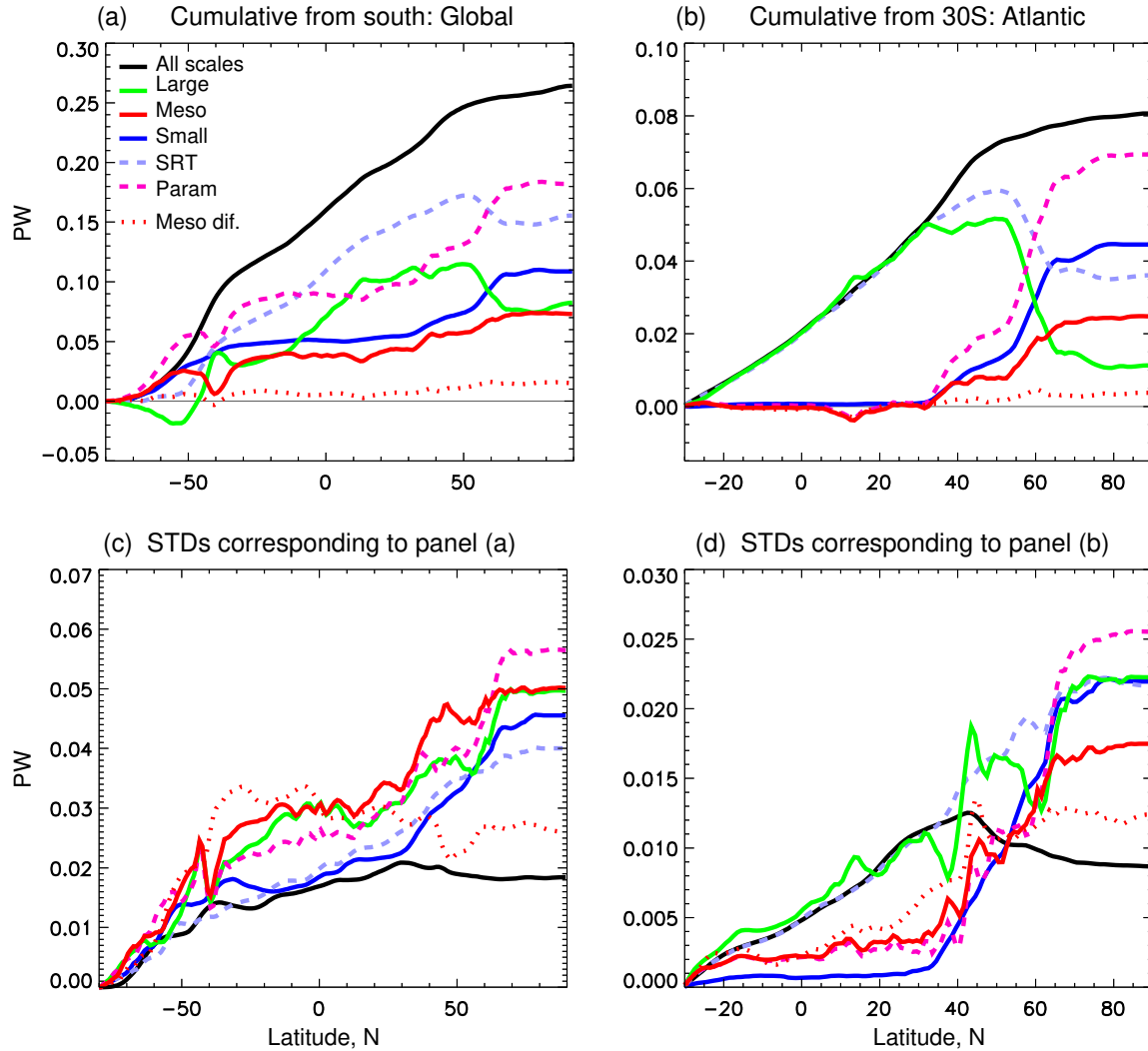


Figure 7: (a) Integrated zonally and vertically below 200 m depth and from the south to each latitude (i.e., cumulative from the south) OHU (PW) due to all scales (“All scales”) and its partitioning into contributions from the resolved circulation (“Large”), all mesoscale and submesoscale eddy-related processes (“Meso”) and all diapycnal and other effects (“Small”). Also shown are the contributions from the super-residual transport (SRT = Large+Meso), all parameterized (in these AOGCMs) processes (Param = Small+Meso), and diffusive component of Meso (“Meso dif”); (b) same as in panel (a), except for the Atlantic Ocean only and north of 30°S; (c) and (d) present inter-model standard deviations (STDs) corresponding to the curves in panels (a) and (b), respectively.

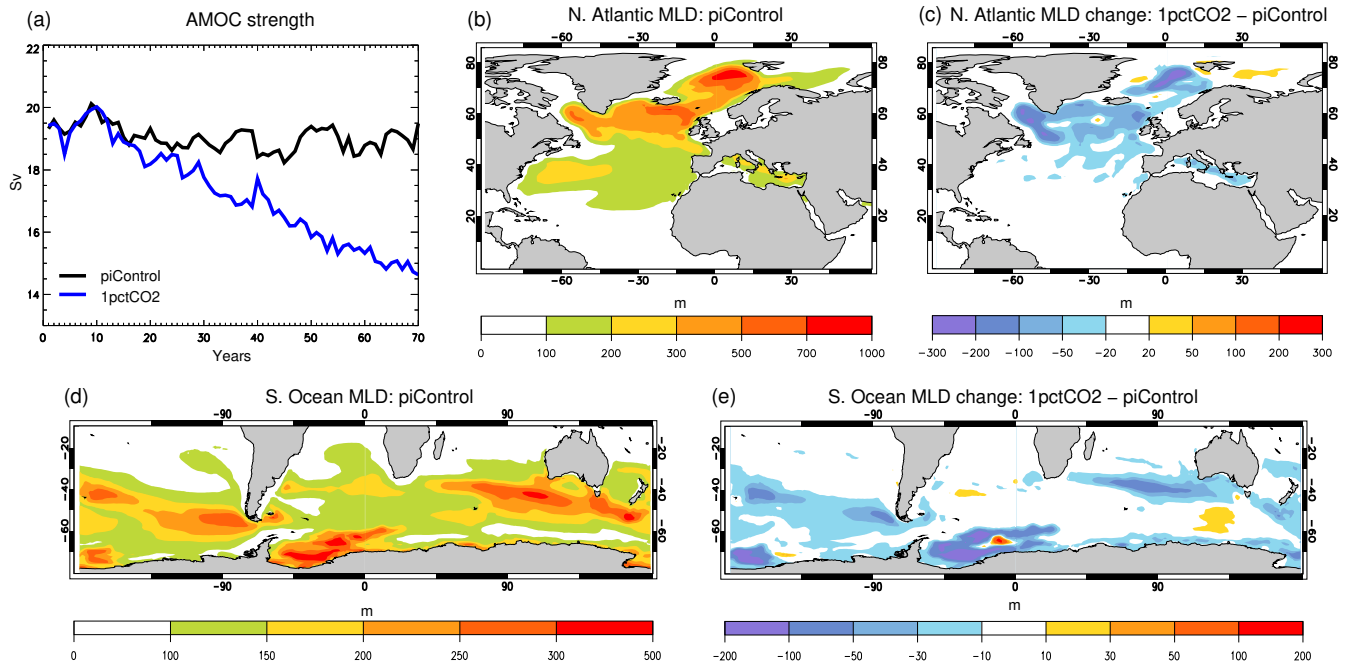


Figure 8: Model-mean (a) time series of the Atlantic meridional overturning circulation (AMOC) maximum in piControl and 1pctCO₂, (b) winter (January-March) mixed layer depth (MLD) in the North Atlantic in piControl, (c) the North Atlantic MLD change in 1pctCO₂ with respect to piControl, (d) summer (July-September) MLD in the Southern Ocean in piControl and (e) the Southern Ocean MLD change in 1pctCO₂ with respect to piControl. The MLD changes in (c) and (e) represent averages for years 61-70 of 1pctCO₂. The MLD corresponds to the `m1otst` variable (see Griffies et al., 2016 for details). For two models, HadCM3 and HadGEM2-ES, `m1otst` was estimated using monthly temperature and salinity.

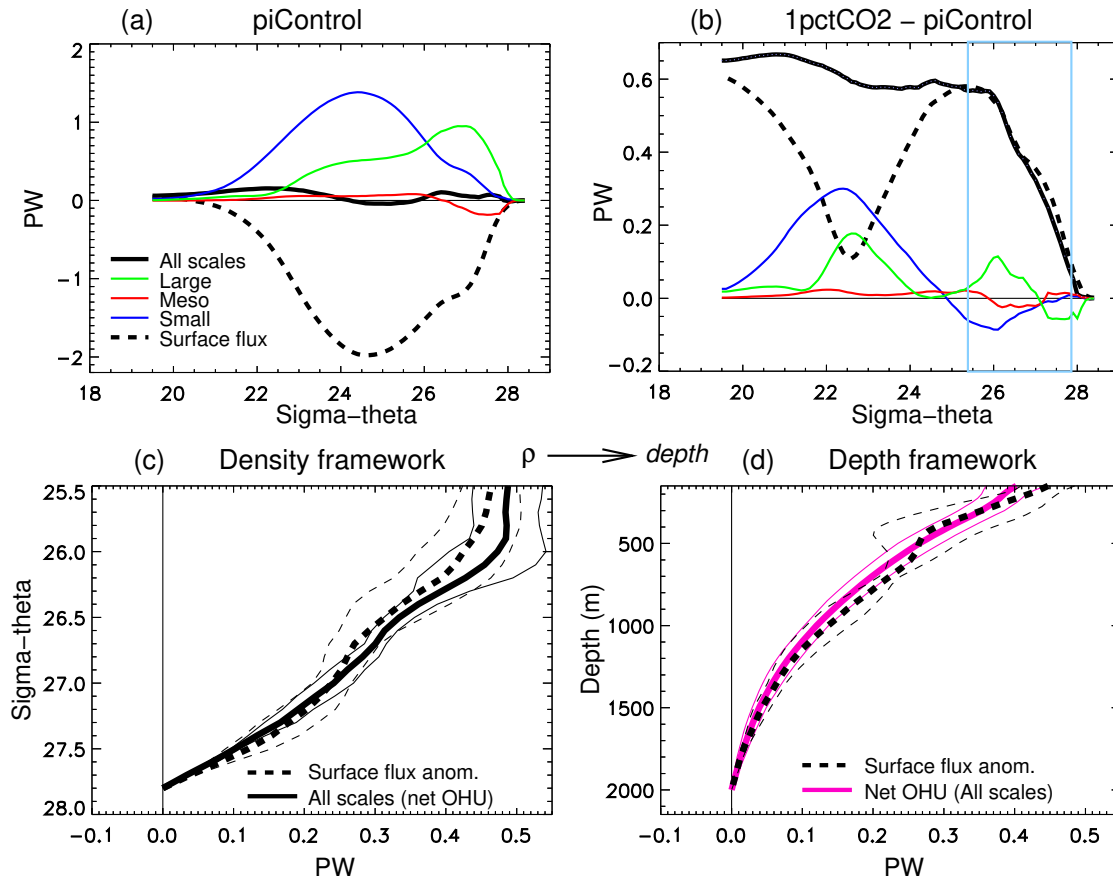


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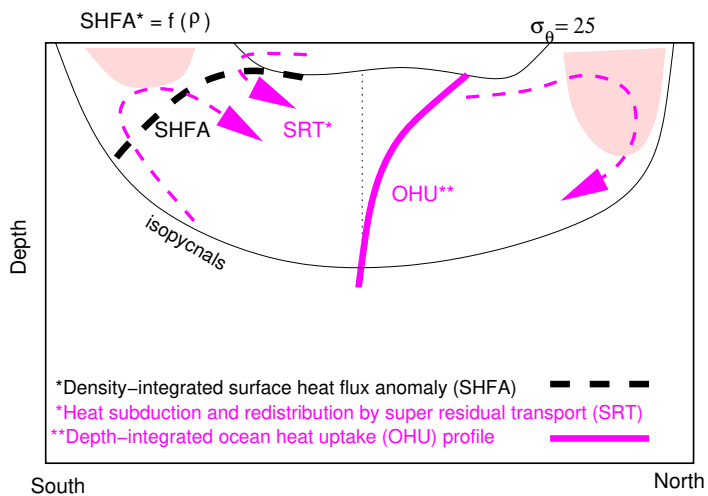


Figure 10: Schematic view of the OHU process as revealed by the heat budget analyses. Most of the OHU occurs by the advective component of the super residual transport (SRT), which links heat input to different density classes at the surface at mid and high latitudes with OHU anomalies in the ocean interior, through subduction along isopycnals and heat redistribution from the regions of deep mixing (shaded).