# Evaluation of the N<sub>2</sub>O rate of change to understand the stratospheric Brewer-Dobson Circulation in a Chemistry-Climate Model

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19	Key Points:
20	• Sparse sampling of Atmospheric Chemistry Experiment Fourier Transform Spec-
21	trometer exaggerates the stratospheric nitrous oxide trends
22	• Transformed Eulerian Mean analysis shows that the residual mean advection con-
23	tributes to the positive nitrous oxide trend in the Tropics
24	• The Whole Atmosphere Community-Climate Model simulates weaker hemispheric
25	asymmetries of the nitrous oxide trends compared to reanalyses

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#### 26 Abstract

The Brewer-Dobson Circulation (BDC) determines the distribution of long-lived trac-27 ers in the stratosphere; therefore, their changes can be used to diagnose changes in the 28 BDC. We evaluate decadal (2005-2018) trends of nitrous oxide  $(N_2O)$  in two versions of 29 the Whole Atmosphere Chemistry-Climate Model (WACCM) by comparing them with 30 measurements from four Fourier transform infrared (FTIR) ground-based instruments, 31 the Atmospheric Chemistry Experiment Fourier Transform Spectrometer (ACE-FTS), 32 and with a chemistry-transport model (CTM) driven by four different reanalyses. The 33 limited sensitivity of the FTIR instruments can hide negative  $N_2O$  trends in the mid-34 stratosphere because of the large increase in the lowermost stratosphere. When apply-35 ing ACE-FTS measurement sampling on model datasets, the reanalyses from the Eu-36 ropean Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecast (ECMWF) compare best with ACE-37 FTS, but the  $N_2O$  trends are consistently exaggerated. The  $N_2O$  trends obtained with 38 WACCM disagree with those obtained from ACE-FTS, but the new WACCM version 39 performs better than the previous above the Southern Hemisphere in the stratosphere. 40 Model sensitivity tests show that the decadal  $N_2O$  trends reflect changes in the strato-41 spheric transport. We further investigate the  $N_2O$  Transformed Eulerian Mean (TEM) 42 budget in WACCM and in the CTM simulation driven by the latest ECMWF reanal-43 ysis. The TEM analysis shows that enhanced advection affects the stratospheric  $N_2O$ 44 trends in the Tropics. While no ideal observational dataset currently exists, this model 45 study of  $N_2O$  trends still provides new insights about the BDC and its changes because 46 of the contribution from relevant sensitivity tests and the TEM analysis. 47

#### <sup>48</sup> Plain Language Summary

The circulation in the stratosphere is characterized by upward motion above the 49 Tropics, followed by poleward and downward motions above the high latitudes. Changes 50 in the pattern of this stratospheric circulation are currently a challenging topic of research. 51 We investigate the decennial changes of this stratospheric circulation using observations 52 and numerical simulations of the long-lived tracer nitrous oxide. Observations are ob-53 tained from ground-based and satellite instruments. Numerical simulations include com-54 plex atmospheric models that reproduce the chemistry and dynamics of the stratosphere. 55 Both observations and models show differences between the hemispheres in the nitrous 56 oxide decennial changes. Unfortunately, the current observations of nitrous oxide are not 57 perfect. The ground-based instruments cannot correctly measure the changes of nitrous 58 oxide in the northern hemisphere. The satellite does not measure at all times, and it spa-59 tially covers more the high latitudes, which negatively affects the measurements of ni-60 trous oxide. On the other hand, model simulations can provide valuable insights into the 61 changes in the stratospheric circulation. They show that changes in the stratospheric cir-62 culation cause the differences between hemispheres in the nitrous oxide trends and show 63 that the circulation changes can be associated with different physical processes. 64

# 65 1 Introduction

Nitrous oxide  $(N_2O)$  is continuously emitted in the troposphere, with a nearly con-66 stant rate of change of 2% per decade, and transported into the stratosphere, where it 67 is destroyed by photodissociation mainly in the Tropics above 35 km (Tian et al., 2020). 68 The atmospheric lifetime of N<sub>2</sub>O is approximately 120 years, which makes it an excel-69 lent tracer for stratospheric transport studies (Seinfeld & Pandis, 2016). Within the strato-70 sphere, the lifetime of  $N_2O$  depends also on the solar activity because of its influence on 71 the photolysis rates, with slightly decreased lifetime during solar maxima and increased 72 lifetime during solar minima (Prather et al., 2015). 73

 $^{74}$  N<sub>2</sub>O enters the stratosphere in the Tropics, and is transported towards higher latitudes by the Brewer-Dobson Circulation (BDC, Dobson et al., 1929; Brewer, 1949; Dob-

son, 1956). The BDC is driven by the breaking of tropospheric waves that propagate into 76 the stratosphere (e.g., Charney & Drazin, 1961) and is often separated into an advec-77 tive component, the residual mean meridional circulation (hereafter residual circulation), 78 and a mixing component (Garny et al., 2014). The residual circulation consists in up-79 welling in the Tropics, followed by poleward flow and downwelling over the middle and 80 high latitudes (Plumb, 2002). The mixing is a two-way exchange of mass that, within 81 the stratosphere, occurs mostly on isentropic surfaces, thus, it is mainly quasi-horizontal 82 (Shepherd, 2007). The BDC has a significant impact in determining the stratospheric 83 distribution of chemical tracers, like ozone and greenhouse gases (e.g., Butchart, 2014). 84 and in maintaing the observed meridional and vertical temperature structure of the strato-85 sphere (Holton, 2004). Long-term changes in the BDC can have significant impacts on 86 the climate system. One of the most important is the effect on the recovery of strato-87 spheric ozone, as a changing BDC would result in changes of its meridional distribution 88 (e.g., Shepherd, 2008; Dhomse et al., 2018). Changes in the BDC also impact the life-89 time of Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS) in the stratosphere (Butchart & Scaife, 2001; 90 Waugh & Hall, 2002), as well as the water vapor entering the stratosphere through the 91 Tropics (e.g., Randel & Park, 2019). The troposphere is also affected by BDC changes 92 because of the impact on the mass exchange with the stratosphere (e.g., ozone, Meul et 93 al., 2018), and on the ultra-violet radiation reaching the surface (Meul et al., 2016). 94

Given the relevance of the BDC changes, understanding them is thus fundamen-95 tal to fully comprehend the past and future evolution of climate. Simulations by Chemistry-96 Climate Models (CCMs) robustly project an acceleration of the BDC throughout the strato-97 sphere in recent and coming decades due to the increase of greenhouse gases (e.g., Aba-98 los et al., 2021). On the other hand, Oberländer-Hayn et al. (2016) argue that the global BDC trends in the lower stratosphere in CCMs are caused to a large extent by a lift of 100 the troppopulate level in response to global warming rather than an actual speedup of the 101 circulation. Another significant impact of the increase of greenhouse gases is the shrink-102 age of the stratosphere, i.e., the combination of the tropopause rise and the downward 103 shift of the height of the pressure levels above 55 km, that results from its cooling over 104 the last decades (Pisoft et al., 2021). Modelling studies have shown that this stratospheric 105 shrinking can impact the BDC and modulate its changes over the past decades (Sácha 106 et al., 2019; Eichinger & Sácha, 2020). Such modulation consists in a BDC acceleration 107 similar to that resulting from the impact of the tropopause lift (Eichinger & Sácha, 2020). 108 In addition, CCMs simulations show that also the vertical and meridional structure of 109 the BDC has changed in the past decades in response to climate change (Hardiman et 110 al., 2014). Other modeling studies have shown that mixing, both on resolved and un-111 resolved scales, also plays an important role in the simulated magnitudes of the BDC 112 changes in addition to changes in the residual circulation among CCMs (e.g., Eichinger 113 et al., 2019). Recent studies have also shown that ODS, through their impact on ozone, 114 115 play a significant role in the modeled BDC changes (Abalos et al., 2019). In particular, the ODS decrease resulting from the Montreal Protocol, will reduce the global warming-116 induced acceleration of the BDC and potentially lead to hemispheric asymmetries in the 117 BDC trends (Polvani et al., 2019). 118

The BDC and its changes cannot be measured directly (e.g., Minschwaner et al., 119 2016), but can be indirectly examined from measurements of stratospheric long-lived trac-120 ers (e.g., Engel et al., 2009; Hegglin et al., 2014) or temperature (Fu et al., 2015). Re-121 cently, Strahan et al. (2020) used ground-based observations of nitric acid and hydro-122 gen chloride to investigate hemispheric-dependent BDC changes in the stratosphere. Sim-123 ilarly, space-borne observations of stratospheric tracers are often used to investigate decadal 124 changes in the BDC using, e.g., hydrogen fluoride (Harrison et al., 2016), ozone (Nedoluha 125 et al., 2015) or  $N_2O$  (Han et al., 2019). Measurements of stratospheric tracers are often 126 used to calculate the mean Age of Air (AoA, Hall & Plumb, 1994). The mean AoA is 127 a widely used diagnostic for stratospheric transport and is defined as the transit time 128 of an air parcel from the tropical trop pause (or the surface, depending on the defini-129

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tion) to a certain point of the stratosphere (Waugh & Hall, 2002). Engel et al. (2017) 130 used balloon-borne observations of carbon dioxide and methane to derive mean AoA trends 131 above the northern mid-latitudes in the mid-lower stratosphere. Engel et al. (2017) found 132 positive but not statistically significant mean AoA trends over about 40 years (correspond-133 ing to a possible slowdown of the BDC), which is in contrast with the modeling stud-134 ies that simulate a significant acceleration of the BDC over the same region (e.g., Aba-135 los et al., 2021). These discrepancies can be partly attributed to the temporal and spa-136 tial sparseness of the measurements and to uncertainties in the mean AoA trends derived 137 from real tracers (Garcia et al., 2011; Fritsch et al., 2020). In addition to ground-based 138 measurements, space-borne observations have been used to compute mean AoA trends 139 as well (e.g., Stiller et al., 2012; Haenel et al., 2015). These observational studies using 140 remote sensing measurements have shown a hemispheric asymmetry in the mean AoA 141 trends over 2002-2012, with positive changes in the Northern Hemisphere (NH) and neg-142 ative changes in the Southern Hemisphere (SH) (e.g., Mahieu et al., 2014; Stiller et al., 143 2017). The mean AoA indirectly obtained from satellite measurements in these studies 144 does not allow the separation between residual circulation and mixing, which was proven 145 to be important in CCMs (Dietmüller et al., 2018). However, Linz et al. (2021) showed 146 that the effect of mixing can be explicitly calculated using AoA vertical gradients from 147 both models and satellite measurements. In addition, von Clarmann and Grabowski (2021) 148 (similarly to the early study of Holton & Choi, 1988) proposed an alternative method 149 to infer the stratospheric circulation from satellite measurements of long-lived tracers 150 by a direct inversion of the continuity equation. 151

Reanalysis datasets try to fill the gap between observations and free-running mod-152 els, providing a global multi-decadal and continuous state of the past atmosphere by as-153 similating available observations. Dynamical fields from reanalyses can be used to drive 154 Chemistry-Transport Models (CTMs) to simulate the distribution of real and synthetic 155 tracers in the atmosphere. In the past decade, these CTM experiments have been used 156 to investigate BDC changes in reanalyses using the AoA diagnostic (e.g., Monge-Sanz 157 et al., 2012; Diallo et al., 2012; Ploeger et al., 2015). However, significant differences ex-158 ist in the BDC changes obtained from different reanalyses, both over multi-decadal and 159 decadal time scales (e.g., Abalos et al., 2015; Chabrillat et al., 2018). Furthermore, the 160 computation of mean AoA largely depends on whether the kinematic velocities or the 161 heating rates are used to drive the CTMs, leading to significant differences within the 162 same reanalysis (Ploeger et al., 2019). 163

This study is based on the work performed by Minganti et al. (2020, hereafter M2020), 164 who evaluated the climatological BDC in the Whole Atmosphere Community Climate 165 Model (WACCM) version 4 (Garcia et al., 2017). The evaluation in M2020 consisted in 166 studying the impact of the BDC on the climatologies of the stratospheric  $N_2O$  abundan-167 cies and of the  $N_2O$  Transformed Eulerian Mean (TEM) budget (Andrews et al., 1987). 168 This evaluation was performed by comparison with simulations of the Belgian Assim-169 ilation System for Chemical ObsErvation Chemistry-Transport Model CTM (BASCOE 170 CTM, Chabrillat et al., 2018) driven by dynamical reanalyses and with the BASCOE 171 reanalysis of Aura Microwave Limb Sounder (MLS) version 2 (BRAM2, Errera et al., 172 2019). The TEM diagnostic was included in M2020 because it allows separating the ef-173 fects of transport and chemistry on the rate of change of a stratospheric tracer such as 174  $N_2O$  (Randel et al., 1994). Within the TEM framework, the impact of transport can be 175 further separated into the impact from the residual circulation and mixing, as was done 176 for ozone and carbon monoxide in Abalos et al. (2013). It is important to note that the 177 mixing obtained from the TEM analysis generally includes contributions from advective 178 transport that are not represented by the residual circulation (Holton, 2004). After study-179 ing the climatologies in M2020, the present study aims to evaluate the changing BDC 180 in WACCM in its versions 4 and 6 (Gettelman et al., 2019) by studying multi-decadal 181 and decadal changes of  $N_2O$  in the stratosphere, comparing them with ground-based and 182 space-borne observations and BASCOE CTM simulations. We also evaluate the changes 183

in TEM N<sub>2</sub>O budget in WACCM and in the BASCOE CTM. We compare the model 184 simulations with ground-based observations of  $N_2O$  from Fourier transform infrared (FTIR) 185 spectrometers that are part of the Network for the Detection of Atmospheric Compo-186 sition Change (NDACC) at four stations in the SH and NH subtropics as well as at mid-187 latitudes (De Mazière et al., 2018, http://www.ndaccdemo.org/). We also use satellite 188 measurements from the Atmospheric Chemistry Experiment Fourier Transform Spec-189 trometer (ACE-FTS, Bernath et al., 2021). Contrary to M2020, we cannot use N<sub>2</sub>O from 190 BRAM2 because of the unrealistic negative drift in the MLS  $N_2O$  dataset (Livesey et 191 al., 2021). The BASCOE CTM is driven by four modern reanalyses that are part of the 192 SPARC (Stratosphere-troposphere Processes and their Role in Climate) Reanalysis In-193 tercomparison Project (S-RIP, Fujiwara et al., 2017). 194

The present study is structured as follows. Section 2 describes the observational 195 and modeling datasets used in this study, as well as the TEM diagnostics and the regres-196 sion model used to derive linear trends. In Section 3, we use FTIR observations to eval-197 uate the trends in the stratospheric  $N_2O$  columns obtained from WACCM and the CTM 198 simulations and from satellite measurements. In Section 4, using ACE-FTS as a refer-199 ence, we study the global  $N_2O$  trends in the stratosphere and focus on the differences 200 in the trend patterns among datasets. In Section 5, we investigate the  $N_2O$  TEM bud-201 get from WACCM version 6 and a BASCOE simulation in order to separate the impact 202 of the residual circulation and mixing on the  $N_2O$  trends. Finally, Section 6 concludes 203 the study with a summary of the principal findings. 204

## <sup>205</sup> **2** Data and Methods

This section describes the observational and model data as well as the methods used in this study (see Tables 1 and 2). Throughout the study, we will refer to the CCMs and the BASCOE CTM simulations as "models" to distinguish them from the observations obtained from the FTIR and ACE-FTS. For the sake of brevity, we refer to M2020 for a more detailed description of the dataset (BASCOE CTM, WACCM version 4, and S-RIP reanalyses) and methods (TEM framework) already used there.

Dataset name	Full Name	Reference	Year range	Vert. resol. $+$ top
WACCM-REFC1	Whole Atmosphere Commu- nity Climate Model	Marsh et al. (2013) Garcia et al. (2017)	1985-2018	L66, 5.96 $10^{-6}$ hPa
WACCM-REFD1	Whole Atmosphere Commu- nity Climate Model	Gettelman et al. (2019)	1985-2018	L70, 5.96 $10^{-6}$ hPa
CTM+ERAI	ECMWF Reanalysis Interim	Dee et al. (2011)	1985-2018	L60, 0.1 hPa
CTM+ERA5	ECMWF Reanalysis 5	Hersbach et al. $(2020)$	1985-2019	L86, 0.01 hPa
CTM+JRA55	Japanese 55-year Reanalysis	Kobayashi et al. (2015)	1985-2018	L60, $0.2 \text{ hPa}$
CTM+MERRA2	Modern-Era Retrospective analysis for Research and Applications	Gelaro et al. (2017)	1985-2018	L72, 0.01 hPa
ACE-FTS	Atmospheric Chemistry Experiment Fourier Transform Spectrometer	Bernath et al. (2021)	2005-present	L42, 150 km

Table 1. Overview of the models and satellite measurements used in this study.

Station name	Reference	Location (lat and lon)	Altitude	strato DOFS
Lauder	Zhou et al. $(2019)$	$45.4^\circ\mathrm{S}$ and $169.68^\circ\mathrm{E}$	370 m	2
Wollongong	Griffith et al. $(2012)$	$34.45^\circ\mathrm{S}$ and $150.88^\circ\mathrm{E}$	$30 \mathrm{m}$	2
Izaña	García et al. $\left(2021\right)$	$28.30^\circ\mathrm{N}$ and $16.48^\circ\mathrm{E}$	$2367~\mathrm{m}$	1.5
Jungfraujoch	Zander et al. $\left(2008\right)$	46.55°N and 7.98°E	$3580~\mathrm{m}$	1.1

Table 2. Overview of FTIR stations considered in this study.

# 2.1 Ground-based FTIR Observations

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We use ground-based measurements of stratospheric N<sub>2</sub>O columns obtained at four stations that are part of NDACC: Lauder (New Zealand, 45°S), Wollongong (Australia, 34°S), Izaña (Spain, 28°N) and Jungfraujoch (Switzerland, 46°N) (Zhou et al., 2019). The solar absorption spectra under clear-sky conditions with the ground-based FTIR measurements taken under the auspices of the NDACC allow the acquisition of long-term consistent data sets. The stations have been chosen at the mid-latitudes and subtropics where the observed BDC changes are the largest (e.g., Strahan et al., 2020).

At Jungfraujoch, measurements have been obtained from two spectrometers: an 220 instrument developed at the University of Liège (1984-2008), and a Bruker IFS 120HR 221 (early 1990's-present) (Zander et al., 2008; Prignon et al., 2019). In this study, we use 222 the spectra taken by the Bruker spectrometer to investigate the most recent period. Ground-223 based measurements of  $N_2O$  profiles at Lauder started in 2001 with a Bruker 120HR spec-224 trometer, replaced in 2018 (with 6 months overlap) by a Bruker 125HR (Strong et al., 225 2008; Zhou et al., 2019). The Lauder station is particularly relevant as is the only FTIR 226 site of NDACC located in the SH mid-latitudes. The Wollongong station has provided 227 data for the SH subtropics since 1996. Solar spectra were measured with a Bomem in-228 strument until 2007, which was then replaced by a Bruker 125HR (Griffith et al., 2012). 229 N<sub>2</sub>O profiles are also measured at the Izaña Observatory since 1999. This high-altitude 230 station is characterized by excellent conditions for FTIR spectroscopy, with clear sky con-231 ditions for most of the year. Observations started using a Bruker 120M spectrometer and 232 continued, since 2005, with a Bruker 125HR (García et al., 2021). The retrieval code for 233 the  $N_2O$  profiles is the SFIT-v4 (v0.9.4.4) for the Jungfraujoch, Lauder and Wollongong 234 stations, and PROFITT9 for the Izaña station (Zhou et al., 2019). 235

We consider stratospheric  $N_2O$  columns between 12 and 40 km of altitute because 236 the instruments at all stations are the most sensitive to the measured  $N_2O$  profiles over 237 this stratospheric region (not shown). The degrees of freedom for signal (DOFS), which 238 quantify the vertical resolution of the measurement (Rodgers, 2000), vary largely between 239 the stations. For  $N_2O$ , the stratospheric DOFS between 12 and 40 km of the instruments 240 in the SH are approximately 2, allowing the separation of two layers within the strato-241 sphere. On the other hand, the stratospheric DOFS of the instruments in the NH are 242 around 1.5 for Izaña, and 1 for Jungfraujoch, limiting the analysis to one stratospheric 243 layer between 12 and 40 km. Thus, in order to perform a fair comparison, we compute 244 one stratospheric  $N_2O$  column between 12 and 40 km for all stations. In order to take 245 into account the limited sensitivity of the FTIR measurements, we smooth the ACE-FTS 246 data and the model output on the FTIR vertical grid using the FTIR averaging kernels 247 as described in Langerock et al. (2015). 248

# 249 2.2 Spaceborne Measurements - ACE-FTS

ACE-FTS, onboard the SCISAT Canadian satellite, was launched in August 2003 on a high inclination (74°) low earth orbit (650 km) and is still in operation in 2022 (Bernath et al., 2005; Bernath, 2017). The ACE-FTS instrument measures the infrared absorptions from solar occultations between 2.2 and 13.3  $\mu$ m with a spectral resolution of 0.02 cm<sup>-1</sup>. This allows the retrieval of vertically resolved mixing ratio profiles for 44 molecules and 24 isotopologues from each measurement (Bernath et al., 2020).

In this study, we use version 4.1 of the ACE-FTS data. It differs from previous ver-256 sions by the significantly better retrievals at low altitudes and led to substantially im-257 proved trends compared to the earlier version 3.5 (Bernath et al., 2021). For  $N_2O$ , pre-258 vious comparisons of v3.6 with independent satellite instruments showed a good agree-259 ment below 35 km (within 10%) and larger biases above that level (within 20%, Sheese 260 et al., 2017). In our study,  $N_2O$  profiles are filtered for outliers using the method described 261 in Sheese et al. (2017) and are then vertically regridded to a constant pressure vertical 262 grid using a mass-conservative scheme (Bader et al., 2017). For trend analysis, profiles 263 are monthly averaged on latitude bins with 5° spacing from pole to pole. 264

In order to compare the trend analysis of model simulations with those obtained 265 by ACE-FTS, the model datasets are first re-sampled from their native temporal and 266 spatial grids (model space) to match those of ACE-FTS (observational space). This is 267 important in particular due to the low sampling of ACE-FTS - only 30 daily profiles due 268 to the solar occultation method. The re-sampling is done by finding model output ad-269 jacent in time to each ACE-FTS profile (BASCOE and WACCM datasets used in this 270 study have, respectively, 6 hourly and daily output) and then by linearly interpolating 271 the model values in time and space at the profile geolocation. The re-sampled model datasets 272 are then averaged over a month as done with ACE-FTS. 273

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# 2.3 BASCOE CTM and Driving Reanalyses

In this study, we use the BASCOE CTM driven by four dynamical reanalyses: the 275 European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecast Interim reanalysis (ERAI, Dee 276 et al., 2011), and its newer version ERA5 (Hersbach et al., 2020), the Modern-Era Ret-277 rospective analysis for Research and Applications version 2 (MERRA2, Gelaro et al., 2017), 278 and the Japanese 55-year Reanalysis (JRA55, Kobayashi et al., 2015). In the following, 279 we provide a brief overview of the BASCOE CTM and the ERAI, MERRA2 and JRA55 280 reanalyses, as more detailed information can be found in such companion studies: Chabrillat 281 et al. (2018); Prignon et al. (2019, 2021) and M2020. Since ERA5 is not detailed in these 282 publications, we provide a more detailed description. 283

The BASCOE CTM is built on a kinematic transport module (that takes as input 284 the surface pressure and the horizontal winds) with a flux-form semi-Lagrangian (FFSL) 285 advection scheme (Lin & Rood, 1996). The FFSL scheme is run on a common horizon-286 tal grid of 2°x2.5° for all the reanalyses, while the vertical grid depends on the input re-287 analysis. The chemical scheme explicitly solves for stratospheric chemistry, and includes 288 65 chemical species and 243 reactions (Prignon et al., 2019). ERAI and JRA55 have 60 289 levels up to 0.1 hPa, MERRA2 has 72 levels up to 0.01 hPa. The model setup, as well 290 as the boundary conditions (including those for  $N_2O$ ), are the ones used in Prignon et 291 al. (2019), M2020 and Prignon et al. (2021). Readers are directed towards Chabrillat et 292 al. (2018) for a detailed description of the BASCOE CTM and its driving by the ERAI, 293 JRA55 and MERRA2 reanalyses. 294

The ERA5 reanalysis is the fifth generation of reanalysis produced by the ECMWF and covers the 1979-present period, with a programmed extension back to 1950 (Hersbach et al., 2020). The horizontal resolution is 31 km, with hourly output frequency, and the vertical grid ranges from the surface to 0.01 hPa with 137 levels and with 300-600 m ver-

tical spacing in the troposphere and stratosphere, which increases to 1-3 km above 30 299 km. ERA5 suffers from a cold bias in the lower stratosphere from 2000 to 2006. For this 300 reason, a new analysis (ERA5.1) has been produced for that period to correct for that 301 bias (Simmons et al., 2020). In this study, the BASCOE CTM was driven by ERA5.1 302 for the 2000-2006 period. For computational reasons, the vertical resolution is reduced 303 to 86 levels from the original 137 keeping the original vertical spacing in the stratosphere, 304 and we used 6-hourly (0000, 0600, 1200, 1800 UTC) data. As done for the other reanal-305 yses, the ERA5 data on the fine 31-km grid were truncated at wavenumber 47 to avoid 306 aliasing on the target 2.5°x2° horizontal grid (Chabrillat et al., 2018). 307

In order to further investigate the contribution of transport in ERA5, we performed 308 two sensitivity tests with the BASCOE CTM driven by that reanalysis. To isolate the 309 contribution of transport, the first sensitivity test consists of a fixed N<sub>2</sub>O run, i.e., a BAS-310 COE CTM simulation where  $N_2O$  does not increase over time. We accomplished that 311 by performing a BASCOE CTM run exactly as the ERA5 simulation but keeping the 312  $N_2O$  volume mixing ratios at the surface fixed to their values at the beginning of the sim-313 ulation (cst- $N_2O$ ). Any  $N_2O$  trend for the cst- $N_2O$  simulation is therefore due only to 314 the effect of transport. The second sensitivity test is a perpetual year simulation that 315 is complementary to  $cst-N_2O$ , and consists of an experiment where the transport does 316 not change over time (cst-dyn). In order to include a complete Quasi Biennial Oscilla-317 tion cycle (QBO, Baldwin et al., 2001), we used the years 2006 and 2007 from ERA5.1 318 and ERA5, respectively. Those years are unusual (but convenient) because the QBO lasted 319 exactly 24 months (see the zonal wind data at Singapore https://www.geo.fu-berlin 320 .de/met/ag/strat/produkte/qbo/singapore.dat). We used the dynamics of the year 321 2006 to simulate even years and from the year 2007 for odd years. All the  $N_2O$  changes 322 simulated by cst-dyn are due to its constant increase at the surface. 323

# 2.4 WACCM

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In this study, we use two versions of WACCM: version 4 (Marsh et al., 2013; Gar-325 cia et al., 2017) and version 6 (Gettelman et al., 2019). WACCM version 4 (WACCM4) 326 is the atmospheric component of the Community Earth System Model version 1.2.2 (CESM, 327 Hurrell et al., 2013), which has been developed by the U.S. National Center of Atmo-328 spheric Research. It is the extended (whole atmosphere) version of the Community At-329 mosphere Model version 4 (CAM4, Neale et al., 2013). WACCM4 has a longitude-latitude 330 grid of  $2.5^{\circ}$ x1.9° and 66 vertical levels from the surface to about 140 km altitude, with 331 1.1-1.75 km vertical spacing in the stratosphere. The physics of WACCM4 is the same 332 as CAM4 and the dynamical core is a finite volume with a horizontal discretization based 333 on a conservative flux-form semi Lagrangian (FFSL) scheme (Lin, 2004). WACCM4 is 334 not able to internally generate the QBO; thus, it is nudged towards observations of strato-335 spheric winds (Matthes et al., 2010). In this study, we use the WACCM4 version included 336 within the SPARC (Stratosphere-troposphere Processes And their Role in Climate) Chemistry-337 Climate Model Intercomparison phase 1 (CCMI-1, Morgenstern et al., 2017). In partic-338 ular, we use the REFC1 experiments (WACCM-REFC1), which consist of simulations 339 of the recent past (1960-2018) using state-of-the-art historical forcings and observed sea-340 surface temperatures (Morgenstern et al., 2017). For  $N_2O$ , the boundary conditions are 341 prescribed using the forcing recommended by the CCMI (Eyring et al., 2013). Compared 342 to the default WACCM4 version, WACCM-REFC1 includes important modifications of 343 the treatment of heterogeneous chemistry and of the gravity waves parameterization, which 344 ultimately improve the simulation of ozone in the Southern Hemisphere (Garcia et al., 345 2017). In this study, we use three realizations of the WACCM-REFC1 configuration for 346 347 the 1985-2018 period.

Version 6 of WACCM (WACCM6) is the extension to the whole atmosphere of version 6 of CAM that is part of version 2 of CESM (Danabasoglu et al., 2020). The default horizontal resolution of WACCM6 is 0.9°x1.25°latitude-longitude, with 70 levels

in the vertical from the ground to around 140 km, with vertical resolution similar to WACCM4. 351 The transition from WACCM4 to WACCM6 involved several changes in the physics and 352 chemistry that are described in Gettelman et al. (2019). WACCM6 is part of the Cou-353 pled Model Intercomparison Project Phase 6 (CMIP6, Eyring et al., 2016), and is used 354 in the CCMI-2022 activity (i.e., the successor of CCMI-1, Plummer et al., 2021). Within 355 CCMI-2022, we use the REFD1 WACCM6 experiments (WACCM-REFD1), i.e., a suite 356 of hindcast experiments for the recent past (1960-2018) used to compare with observa-357 tions. The REFD1 experiments use the databases for historical forcings and observed 358 sea surface temperatures developed for the CMIP6. The  $N_2O$  emissions are specified fol-359 lowing the CMPI6 recommendation for historical simulations, i.e., following Meinshausen 360 et al. (2020). Although WACCM6 can internally produce the QBO, the REFD1 experiments require a nudged QBO towards observed winds to ensure synchronization with 362 historical variability. In this study, we use one realization of the WACCM-REFD1 ex-363 periments for the 1985-2018 period. 364

365

# 2.5 TEM Diagnostics

For stratospheric tracers, the TEM diagnostics (Andrews et al., 1987) allows separating the impact of transport and chemistry on the zonal mean local rate of change of a tracer with mixing ratio  $\chi$ :

$$\overline{\chi}_t = -v^* \overline{\chi}_y - w^* \overline{\chi}_z + e^{z/H} \nabla \cdot \mathbf{M} + \overline{S} + \overline{\epsilon}, \tag{1}$$

where  $\chi$  represents N<sub>2</sub>O,  $\mathbf{M} = -e^{-z/H}(\overline{v'\chi'} - \overline{v'\theta'}\bar{\chi}_z/\bar{\theta}_z, \overline{w'\chi'} + \overline{v'\theta'}\bar{\chi}_u/\bar{\theta}_z)$  is the eddy 366 flux vector, and  $(v^*, w^*)$  are the meridional and vertical components of the residual cir-367 culation, respectively. Overbars denote zonal means and prime quantities indicate de-368 viations from it, while subscripts indicate partial derivatives. H = 7 km is the scale height, 369 and  $z \equiv -Hlog_e(p/p_s)$  is the log-pressure altitude, with the surface pressure  $p_s = 10^5$ 370 Pa. The S term is the net rate of change due to chemistry, defined as the difference be-371 tween the production (P) and loss ( $\overline{L}$ ) rates  $S = \overline{P} - \overline{L}$ . The  $\overline{\epsilon}$  contribution represents 372 the residual of the budget, i.e., the difference between the actual rate of change of  $\overline{\chi}$  and 373 the sum of the transport and chemistry terms on the right-side hand of Eq. 1. 374

The transport terms in Eq. 1 can be grouped as follows:

$$\overline{\chi}_t = ADV + MIX + \overline{S} + \overline{\epsilon},\tag{2}$$

where  $ADV = (-v^* \overline{\chi}_y - w^* \overline{\chi}_z)$  and  $MIX = e^{z/H} \nabla \cdot \mathbf{M}$  represent the contribution of the residual circulation and of the resolved mixing, respectively. We refer to M2020 for a more detailed description of the TEM framework applied to the N<sub>2</sub>O mixing ratios in the stratosphere and for a comprehensive discussion of the contribution of each term to the N<sub>2</sub>O budget.

380

# 2.6 Derivation of Trends with the Dynamical Linear Modelling Tool

In this study, we investigate decadal trends using the Dynamical Linear Modeling regression tool (DLM, Alsing, 2019). DLM is based on Bayesian inference and provides a number of possible models to analyze time series. Each model is characterized by some unknown parameters, and the DLM computes the posterior probability distribution of those parameters using a combination of Kalman filtering and Markov chain Monte Carlo method.

For a given atmospheric time-series  $y_t$ , a generic DLM model is composed of four components: a linear background trend, a seasonal cycle with 12- and 6-months periods, forcing terms decribed by a number of regressor variables and an auto-regressive com-

(3)

390	ponent:		
391		$y_t$ =	$= \beta_{1,t} z_{1,t} + \beta_{2,t} z_{2,t} \dots + \beta_{n,t} z_{n,t}$
392			$+\beta_{1,t}^{12}\sin(2\pi t/12) + \beta_{2,t}^{12}\cos(2\pi t/12)$
393			$+\beta_{1,t}^6 \sin(2\pi t/6) + \beta_{2,t}^6 \cos(2\pi t/6)$
394			$+\mu_t$
395			$+z_t^{AR}$
396			$+\epsilon_t.$

In Eq. 3, the terms  $\beta_{i,t} z_{i,t}$  represent the contribution to  $y_t$  from the regressors, where  $z_{i,t}$  is the corresponding time-series for each regressor. The 6- and 12-months seasonal cycles are modeled respectively by  $\beta_{1,t}^6 \sin(2\pi t/6) + \beta_{2,t}^6 \cos(2\pi t/6)$  and  $\beta_{1,t}^{12} \sin(2\pi t/12) + \beta_{2,t}^{12} \cos(2\pi t/12)$ . The  $\mu_t$  term denotes the linear fit term, and  $z_t^{AR}$  the auto-regressive term, defined similarly to the Cochrane-Orcutt correction (Kyrölä et al., 2013), and  $\epsilon_t$ is the uncertainty.

Contrarily to a multi-linear regression (MLR) model, the background linear fit  $\mu_t$  and the amplitudes of the seasonal cycles  $\beta_{i,t}^{6,12}$  in DLM can vary with time (i.e., they 403 404 are non-parametric). Their degrees of time-dependence are the unknown model param-405 eters and are initially set by the user and inferred from the data during the model run. 406 Furthermore, the auto-regressive process in the DLM is computed within the model run 407 together with the other parameters, not as a post-run correction as done in the MLR, 408 and its uncertainties are carefully taken into account within the error propagation. In 409 addition, the standard DLM implementation has time-varying (heteroscedastic) uncer-410 tainty distribution, when time-varying uncertainties are available. DLM was recently used 411 to investigate stratospheric ozone trends in observations and models (Ball et al., 2017, 412 2018). A more detailed description of the DLM models and their implementation can 413 be found in Laine et al. (2014). For a more comprehensive review of time-series analy-414 sis using DLM, refer to Durbin and Koopman (2012). 415

As regressor variables, we used the 30 cm radio flux as a solar proxy (de Wit et al., 416 2014), an index for the El-Nino Southern Oscillation (Wolter & Timlin, 2011) from the 417 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (http://www.esrl.noaa.gov/psd/ 418 enso/mei/), and two indices for the QBO at 30 and 50 hPa from the Freie Universität 419 Berlin (http://www.geo.fu-berlin.de/en/met/ag/strat/produkte/qbo/index.html). 420 We fed the DLM model with monthly data, running 3000 samples where the first 1000 421 were considered as a warmup and discarded. We also tried 10000 realizations and 3000 422 as warmup with very similar results (not shown). We performed several sensitivity tests 423 to determine the appropriate values of the initial model parameters, i.e., the degree of 424 time-dependence of the linear trend and seasonal cycles, in order to allow a reasonable 425 time-dependence without being unrealistic. The different combinations of these values 426 did not provide significant differences, so we kept the recommended values. 427

The linear trends are computed from the distribution of the fit samples  $\mu_t$  as the difference between the end and start dates of the considered period (delta= $\mu_t[end] - \mu_t[start]$ ), weighted by the number of the years. From the resulting delta distribution, the uncertainties associated with the trend are computed as the percentage of its positive (negative) values. This percentage can be interpreted as the posterior probability that the trend is positive (negative) between the considered dates. In this way, we do not make any assumption on the shape of the distribution of the trends.

## <sup>435</sup> 3 Stratospheric N<sub>2</sub>O Columns and their Trends

Figure 1 shows the linear fits of the monthly stratospheric  $N_2O$  columns (12-40 km) at the four FTIR stations, together with the initial  $N_2O$  columns from the observations ESSOAr | https://doi.org/10.1002/essoar.10510213.2 | CC\_BY\_

and the ERA5 simulation. In this analysis, we do not apply the FTIR time sampling to 438 the model output because sensitivity tests using WACCM-REFD1 at each station showed 439 no significant impact of the FTIR time sampling on the recovered trends of the  $N_2O$  columns 440 (not shown). The stratospheric  $N_2O$  columns computed between 12 and 40 km of alti-441 tude are highly sensitive to the  $N_2O$  increase in the lower stratosphere, which is mainly 442 the result of the continuous growth in the troposphere (Tian et al., 2020) and can also 443 be impacted by structural changes of the atmosphere (e.g., the global rise of the tropopause, 444 Xian & Homeyer, 2019). Consequently, all datasets exhibit an increase in the stratospheric 445  $N_2O$  columns over the last two decades. 446

Above Lauder, the linear fit of the stratospheric  $N_2O$  columns from the ERA5 sim-447 ulation is in agreement with the observations, similarly to JRA55 and ERAI. WACCM-448 REFD1 underestimates the stratospheric  $N_2O$  columns compared to the observations by 449 around 10%, and performs worse than its earlier version WACCM-REFC1, which dif-450 fers from the observations by only 5%. At Wollongong, the slope of the linear fit of the 451  $N_2O$  columns measured by the FTIR, and to a lesser extent by ACE-FTS, is steeper be-452 fore 2005 compared to the following period. This change of gradient is not visible in any 453 of the model simulations. On the contrary, some of the models show a slower increase 454 before 2005, followed by a more rapid increase (e.g., the ERA5 simulation). Contrarily 455 to Lauder, the WACCM-REFD1 simulation delivers more realistic stratospheric  $N_2O$  columns 456 compared to its previous version WACCM-REFC1. 457

Above Izaña, all the models underestimate the stratospheric  $N_2O$  columns with re-458 spect to the FTIR observations, with the largest difference reaching 14% for MERRA2. 459 Concerning ACE-FTS, the bias with FTIR measurements is around 8%, which is qual-460 itatively consistent with the results of Strong et al. (2008), even though they used v2.2 461 of ACE-FTS. However, García et al. (2021) showed good agreement above Izaña for tro-462 pospheric N<sub>2</sub>O abundances and total N<sub>2</sub>O columns obtained from independent measure-463 ments. The difference between the stratospheric  $N_2O$  columns measured by FTIR and 464 ACE-FTS could be explained by the poor coverage of ACE-FTS over the tropical and 465 subtropical regions. Since the ACE-FTS measurements represent a latitude band, the 466 observed  $N_2O$  results biased towards the values measured at higher latitudes, where more 467 occultations are available (Kolonjari et al., 2018). Since the  $N_2O$  abundances decrease 468 poleward (Jin et al., 2009), this could explain the low bias in the stratospheric  $N_2O$  columns 469 measured by ACE-FTS compared to those obtained from FTIR. 470

Above Jungfraujoch, there is the largest spread in the linear fits of the stratospheric 471  $N_2O$  columns, with the largest differences reaching around 25% between ACE-FTS and 472 WACCM-REFD1. Prignon et al. (2019) compared lower stratospheric columns of chlorod-473 ifluoromethane (HCFC-22) between an earlier WACCM version and FTIR measurements, 474 and showed that WACCM consistently underestimates the HCFC-22 columns compared 475 to the FTIR measurements. Since both  $N_2O$  and HCFC-22 (which has an atmospheric 476 lifetime of 12 years, Prignon et al., 2019) are produced at the surface and transported 477 into the stratosphere, this underestimation in WACCM could indicate a shortcoming in 478 simulating the accumulation of long-lived tracers in the stratosphere above the north-479 ern mid-latitudes. Indeed, Angelbratt et al. (2011) already highlighted that the strato-480 spheric transport has a large impact on the N<sub>2</sub>O columns above Jungfraujoch compared 481 to stations at higher latitudes. Regarding the observational datasets, there is a consid-482 erable disagreement between the FTIR instrument and ACE-FTS before 2012, showing 483 increasing and decreasing  $N_2O$  columns, respectively. This is in contrast with the remark-484 ably good agreement in the SH between the two datasets. This difference between the 485 stratospheric  $N_2O$  columns in ACE-FTS and FTIR measurements will be further addressed 486 in Sect. 4. 487

In the Tropics and above the lower stratospheric mid-latitudes, the N<sub>2</sub>O abundances are inversely proportional to the mean AoA (Andrews et al., 2001; Strahan et al., 2011; Galytska et al., 2019). The stratospheric N<sub>2</sub>O columns at mid-latitudes considered here

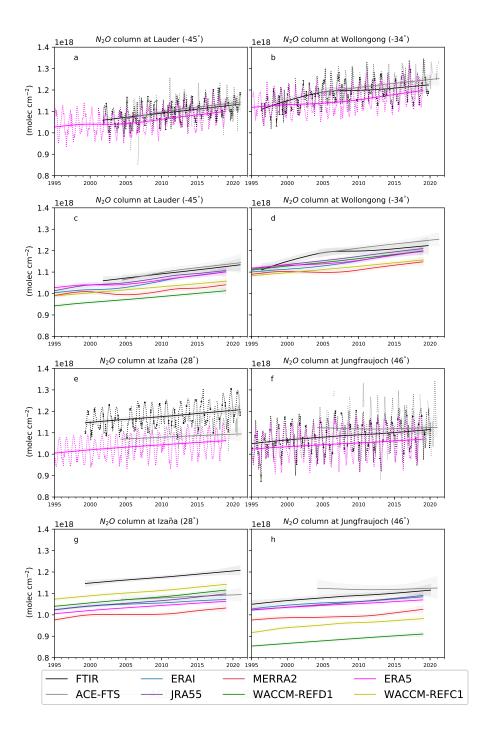


Figure 1. Time-series of stratospheric  $N_2O$  columns (12-40 km) from observations and models at four stations. Continuous lines show the linear fit obtained by the DLM regression, dashed lines depict the  $N_2O$  column data. The color code is shown in the legend. The vertical error bars in panels a,b,e,f represent the standard error of the monthly mean. Panels a,b show Lauder, panels b,d show Wollongong, panels e,g show Izaña and panels f,h show Jungfraujoch. Panels a,b,e,f: DLM fits and data for FTIR and ACE-FTS measurements and the BASCOE simulation driven by ERA5. Panels c,d,g,h: DLM fits for all the datasets considered. The model and satellite data are interpolated to the longitude and latitude of the station, and vertically regridded to match the retrieval layering schemes. After the regridding, the data were smoothed using the FTIR averaging kernels. The colored shadings represent the uncertainties from the 2.5 and 97.5 percentiles of the distributions from the DLM.

are highly sensitive to the  $N_2O$  abundances in the lower stratosphere, hence the inverse 491 relationship also holds for the stratospheric  $N_2O$  columns above the mid-latitudes. Thus, 492 the lower stratospheric  $N_2O$  columns in MERRA2 compared to the other datasets across 493 the stations are consistent with the older mean AoA throughout the stratosphere found using MERRA2 by Chabrillat et al. (2018). The  $N_2O$  distribution in the stratosphere 495 is opposite also to the total inorganic fluorine  $F_y$ . N<sub>2</sub>O is emitted in the troposphere while 496  $F_y$  is produced in the stratosphere, and, as a consequence of the poleward transport of 497 the BDC,  $N_2O$  is removed and  $F_y$  is increased in the stratospheric mid-latitudes. In the 498 light of this relationship between  $N_2O$  and  $F_y$ , the underestimated  $N_2O$  columns above 499 Lauder and Jungfraujoch in MERRA2 are consistent with larger stratospheric  $F_{u}$  columns 500 in MERRA2 compared to the other reanalyses above those stations (Prignon et al., 2021). 501

Figure 2 shows distributions of the trend of the stratospheric N<sub>2</sub>O columns obtained from the respective linear fits over the common period 2005-2018. The N<sub>2</sub>O trends at the surface have already been compared for a number of FTIR stations (including Lauder, Wollongong and Izaña) against observations from flask samples, showing an excellent agreement (Zhou et al., 2019).

Above Lauder, the  $N_2O$  trends obtained with ERA5 and JRA55 are in good agree-507 ment with the FTIR measurements, but are underestimated in WACCM-REFD1 (around 508 25%) with no particular improvement with respect to WACCM-REFC1. The ERAI sim-509 ulation delivers the largest  $N_2O$  trends, with more than 30% difference with respect to 510 the FTIR measurements. At Wollongong, the  $N_2O$  trend obtained with the FTIR mea-511 surements is the smallest because the  $N_2O$  increase above that station is smoother com-512 pared to the other datasets. Interestingly, the N<sub>2</sub>O trend simulated by WACCM-REFD1 513 is the closest to the trend obtained from the FTIR observations, while the trend obtained 514 with ERA5 is almost twice as large. As for Lauder, the  $N_2O$  trends obtained from ERAI 515 are the largest at this station. Above Izaña, WACCM-REFD1 agrees remarkably well 516 with the FTIR (difference around 3%), while the trend from ERA5 lies between the trends 517 measured from FTIR and ACE-FTS, with around 20% difference compared to FTIR. 518 Above Jungfraujoch, the trend in the  $N_2O$  columns from WACCM-REFD1 agrees with 519 the trend from the FTIR within 10% difference and is similar to what is obtained with 520 ERA5. The largest trends are obtained with MERRA2 and JRA55, reaching 13% and 521 30% difference compared to the FTIR, respectively. The decreasing N<sub>2</sub>O stratospheric 522 column in ACE-FTS before 2012 results in a near-zero trend, which is in contrast with 523 the trends obtained by the other datasets, which approximately range from 2 to  $3 \times 10^{15}$ 524 molec cm<sup>-2</sup> year <sup>-1</sup>. 525

Considering decadal changes, the observations and the ERA5 and ERAI simula-526 tions show larger trends of the stratospheric  $N_2O$  columns in the SH than in the NH, 527 especially at mid-latitudes (respectively Lauder and Jungfraujoch). WACCM-REFD1 528 also shows this hemispheric difference at mid-latitudes, which is a clear improvement with 529 respect to WACCM-REFC1. Those asymmetries are consistent with the results of Strahan 530 et al. (2020), who found significantly negative mean AoA trends in the SH compared to 531 the NH using HCl and HNO<sub>3</sub> measured at several ground-based FTIR stations. In ad-532 dition, the hemispheric differences of the  $N_2O$  trends are also consistent with the results 533 of Prignon et al. (2021), who found larger and more significant  $F_{y}$  trends from FTIR above 534 Jungfraujoch than above Lauder. 535

We conclude the section by providing a short description of the limits of using strato-536 spheric columns of  $N_2O$  from FTIR measurements. As mentioned earlier, the stratospheric 537  $N_2O$  columns between 12 and 40 km are primarily influenced by the steady increase in 538 539 the lowermost stratosphere below 15 km. The DOFS of the FTIR instrument at Jungfraujoch for the stratosphere (12-40 km) is close to 1.1. Thus, the FTIR measurements at 540 that station cannot resolve more than one partial column between 12 and 40 km, which 541 can hinder the detection of  $N_2O$  trends in the middle and upper stratosphere (i.e., above 542 30 km) because of the influence of the increase in the lowermost stratosphere. Indeed, 543

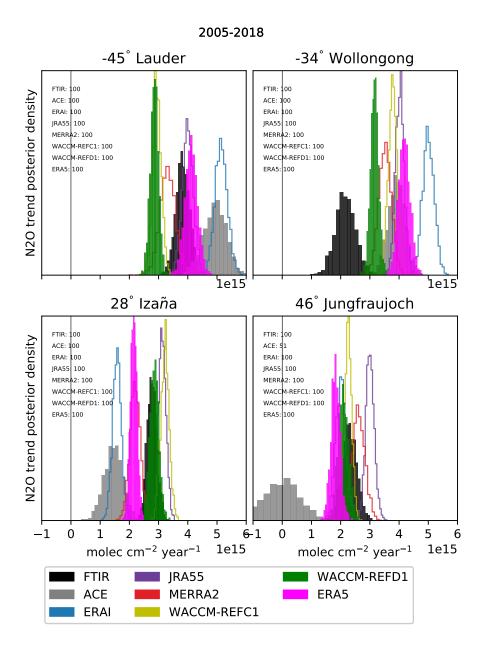


Figure 2. Posterior probability of positive changes of the DLM linear trend of the stratospheric N<sub>2</sub>O columns (12-40 km) for the four FTIR stations (2005-2018). The color code is shown in the legend. For reference, the N<sub>2</sub>O trend in the troposphere (5.5-10.5 km) is approximated from the data in Bernath et al. (2020) as 4.3e15 molec cm<sup>-2</sup> year<sup>-1</sup>.

it was shown that stratospheric N<sub>2</sub>O trends over the last decades, obtained both from
satellite measurements and model simulations, do not consist of just a global increase,
but largely depend on latitude and height (e.g., Froidevaux et al., 2019). Therefore, we
will consider latitudinal- and vertical-dependent trends of N<sub>2</sub>O mixing ratios in the following section.

# <sup>549</sup> 4 Global N<sub>2</sub>O Linear Trends

550

# 4.1 Trends in the ACE-FTS Observational Space

Figure 3 shows latitude-vertical cross sections of the linear trends of the N<sub>2</sub>O mixing ratios for the various datasets, over the 2005-2018 period. In order to reduce the sampling bias, the model datasets are sampled in space and time as the ACE-FTS measurements before the computation of the trends. We use the ACE-FTS measurements as a reference, because they encompass this period with global coverage and good stability (Bernath et al., 2020, 2021).

In the upper stratosphere above 10 hPa, the N<sub>2</sub>O trends from ACE-FTS are positive, with larger trends in the NH that are found significant at lower levels than in the SH. The ERAI-driven simulation qualitatively reproduces these patterns in the upper stratosphere, while the other model datasets differ from ACE-FTS, especially ERA5. A common feature among all datasets is an increase in N<sub>2</sub>O above the Equator in the upper stratosphere, around 5 hPa. At those altitudes of the tropical pipe, the upward transport of N<sub>2</sub>O by the residual circulation reaches its maximum (see M2020).

In the mid-lower stratosphere below 20 hPa, ACE-FTS shows a clear hemispher-564 ical asymmetry (meridional dipole) in the N<sub>2</sub>O trends, with significantly negative val-565 ues in the NH and significantly positive in the SH. Above the location of Jungfraujoch 566 (the most northern vertical green line), the negative  $N_2O$  trend detected by ACE-FTS 567 in the mid-lower stratosphere is responsible for the disagreement with the FTIR obser-568 vations discussed in the previous section, as the layer of the stratospheric  $N_2O$  column 569 encompasses regions of both positive (lowermost and upper stratosphere) and negative 570 (mid-lower stratosphere)  $N_2O$  trends. The meridional dipole is significant also over a shorter 571 period (2005-2012, not shown) and corroborates a number of previous findings over that 572 period using satellite measurements of HCl (Mahieu et al., 2014) and mean AoA derived 573 from space-borne measurements of  $SF_6$  (Haenel et al., 2015). In regions where the  $N_2O$ 574 abundances are larger than 100 ppbv, i.e., approximately below 10 hPa, the  $N_2O$  linear 575 trends are opposite to those obtained with its product  $NO_2$ , because the two tracers are 576 correlated by an inverse linear relationship (Plumb & Ko, 1992). Below 20 hPa, the  $N_2O$ 577 meridional dipole from ACE-FTS is consistent with the pattern of the decadal trends 578 of NO<sub>2</sub> obtained from independent satellite measurements (Galytska et al., 2019; Dubé 579 et al., 2020). 580

The meridional dipole in the  $N_2O$  trends derived from ACE-FTS is generally re-581 produced by the CTM simulations, with ERAI and ERA5 delivering trends that are most 582 similar to the satellite measurements. Prignon et al. (2021) used the same simulations 583 as the present study to investigate global stratospheric trends of total inorganic fluorine 584  $F_{y}$ . The dipoles obtained here in the N<sub>2</sub>O trends from the ECMWF reanalyses are con-585 sistent with the opposite trends of  $F_y$  for almost the same period (Prignon et al., 2021). 586 For WACCM, the strength of the  $N_2O$  meridional dipole is globally reduced compared 587 to ACE-FTS, with weaker and not significant negative  $N_2O$  trends over the NH. How-588 ever, WACCM-REFD1 performs better than WACCM-REFC1 over the SH, with stronger 589 and significant positive  $N_2O$  trends that reach 30 hPa, similarly to those obtained with 590 ACE-FTS in the same region. This improvement is possibly related to the changes in 591 the parametrization of the gravity waves (i.e., small-scale tropospheric waves that drive 592 the BDC) in WACCM version 6 compared to version 4 that followed the increase of its 593

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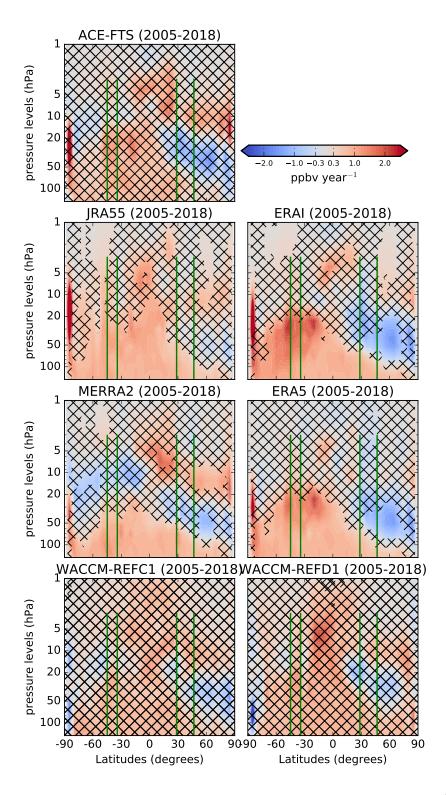


Figure 3. Latitude-pressure cross-sections of  $N_2O$  linear trends (pptv year<sup>-1</sup>) obtained from the DLM (2005-2018). The  $N_2O$  simulated by the model is interpolated to the location and timing of the observations, see text for details. The black crosses indicate grid-points where the probability of positive/negative  $N_2O$  changes is smaller than 95%. The green vertical lines identify the position of the FTIR stations together with their vertical coverage.

horizontal resolution (Gettelman et al., 2019). This new parametrization results in a good 594 agreement between the gravity waves simulated by WACCM and the observations in the 595 Tropics (Alexander et al., 2021). For tracers, the favorable effect of adjusting the param-596 eterization of the gravity waves in WACCM was shown for ozone in the extratropical SH 597 by Mills et al. (2017). Over the same region, the improved  $N_2O$  trends in WACCM-REFD1 598 compared to WACCM-REFC1 could be attributed to the new parameterization of the 599 gravity waves. This beneficial impact would be consistent with the results of M2020, which 600 showed similar improvements in the  $N_2O$  climatologies between two WACCM versions 601 differing by the parametrization of gravity waves over the SH. 602

In the lowermost stratosphere (pressure greater than 100 hPa), all models and ACE-603 FTS show positive  $N_2O$  trends, resulting from the constant increase in the troposphere. 604 However, the  $N_2O$  increase in the lowermost stratosphere (below 70 hPa) over the Trop-605 ics and the NH is not significant in ACE-FTS, contrary to the model simulations. This 606 difference could be related to the stronger trends in the tropopause rise in the models: 607 around 50 m/decade in CCMs (including WACCM) and ERA5 (Pisoft et al., 2021; Dar-608 rag et al., 2022) compared to the observations (around 35 m/decade, Darrag et al., 2022) 609 when using the tropopause definiton from the World Meteorological Organization. 610

4.2 Trends in the Model Space

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Figure 4 shows the  $N_2O$  trends as in Fig. 3, but without applying the ACE-FTS 612 spatial and temporal sampling. A comparison between each model simulation in the ob-613 servation and model space (respectively Fig. 3 and Fig. 4) reveals large differences in 614 the  $N_2O$  decadal trends. Generally, the sampling of the ACE-FTS observations enhances 615 the trends simulated by the models, both in the negative and positive directions. For the 616 ERA5 simulation, the significantly negative trend in the NH in observational space be-617 comes insignificant in model space. In addition, one notes immediately that the  $N_2O$  trends 618 in the WACCM simulations change sign, with negative trends in the NH in the obser-619 vational space becoming weakly positive in model space. In particular for WACCM-REFD1, 620 the  $N_2O$  trends over the northern mid-latitudes in the mid-low stratosphere substantially 621 increase from -0.5 ppby year<sup>-1</sup> in observational space to 0.3 ppby year<sup>-1</sup> in native model 622 space. However, this difference is not significant because neither of the  $N_2O$  trends above 623 that region is statistically significant with 95% probability. 624

For satellite measurements, the impact of the sampling in the detection of trends 625 in long-lived species (including  $N_2O$ ) has been evaluated in Millán et al. (2016). They 626 concluded that large errors may arise in the detected trends for coarse and non-uniform 627 sampling obtained with occultation instruments (such as ACE-FTS), and that long time 628 scales are required for a robust trend detection from these datasets. Such errors also oc-629 cur in the models when they are sampled in space and time as the observations. In par-630 ticular, within the DLM, the non-uniform time sampling of ACE-FTS considerably in-631 creases the standard deviation of the error in the  $N_2O$  time series, which is zero for reg-632 ular time sampling. This difference plays a role when deriving trends over these relatively 633 short (decadal) time scales. For example, the non-uniform ACE-FTS sampling applied 634 to the ERA5 output results in negative  $N_2O$  trends that are 4 times stronger compared 635 to the native grid above the northern mid-latitudes between 50 and 70 hPa. For WACCM, 636 the issue of downsampling was also raised by Garcia et al. (2011) when comparing mean 637 AoA trends obtained from balloon-borne observations and simulated by the model. Garcia 638 et al. (2011) showed that sampling the model as the observations would deliver positive 639 and non-significant mean AoA trends, similarly to the observations. We find consistent 640 results with the WACCM simulations: sampling the WACCM output as the observations 641 drives the N<sub>2</sub>O trends towards the observed values. In addition, the non-significant neg-642 ative  $N_2O$  trends simulated by WACCM are compatible with the non-significant pos-643 itive mean AoA trends found by Garcia et al. (2011) when downsampling WACCM at 644

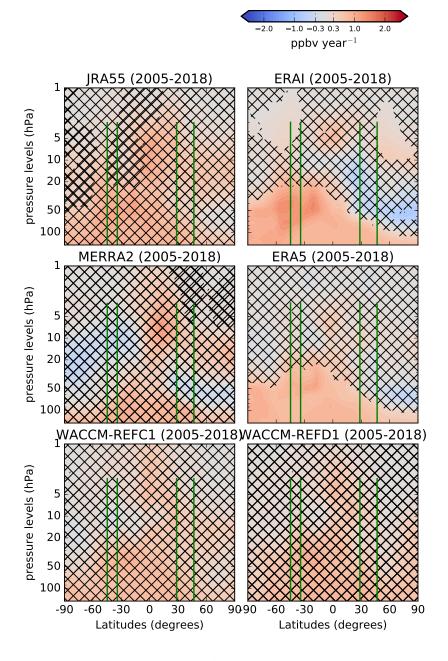


Figure 4. As in Figure 3, but in the model space.

the mean AoA observations. Hence, the ACE-FTS sampling exaggerates the simulated  $N_2O$  trends obtained with the DLM in the stratosphere.

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In order to understand the trends from the models and compare them with other 647 modeling studies, we now focus on the  $N_2O$  trends obtained from the model datasets in 648 model space (Fig. 4). We mentioned earlier that the mean AoA and the  $N_2O$  abundances 649 are inversely correlated in the Tropics and above the lower stratospheric mid-latitudes. 650 Thus, the stratospheric  $N_2O$  trends have opposite signs compared to trends of mean AoA. 651 For ERAI, the meridional  $N_2O$  trend dipole is consistent with mean AoA trends derived 652 over a shorter period with the same CTM (Chabrillat et al., 2018) and also with differ-653 ent CTMs (Ploeger et al., 2015; Han et al., 2019; Ploeger & Garny, 2022). ERAI shows 654 positive  $N_2O$  trends in the equatorial upper stratosphere, around 5 hPa, which is con-655 sistent with the findings of Galytska et al. (2019) using the same reanalysis to drive a 656 different CTM in that region, but no significant trend can be found with ERA5 in the 657 upper stratosphere. The ERA5 simulation confirms the meridional dipole in the mid-658 lower stratosphere of ERAI, although the negative  $N_2O$  trend over the NH is not sta-659 tistically significant at 95% probability. The results obtained with ERA5 are consistent with recent  $N_2O$  and mean AoA trends obtained with a different CTM over a very sim-661 ilar period (Ploeger & Garny, 2022). 662

Above the southern mid-latitudes in the mid-lower stratosphere, the  $N_2O$  trends 663 obtained with MERRA2 are biased low compared to the other models, and do not repli-664 cate the hemispheric asymmetry that is visible in the ECMWF reanalyses. Wargan et 665 al. (2018) have shown that the tropopause height has changed in MERRA2 in the past 666 decades, with a decrease in the extratropics and an increase above the Tropics. The pat-667 tern of the  $N_2O$  trends in MERRA2 is qualitatively consistent with the changing tropopause 668 height: a rise of the tropopause would lead to positive  $N_2O$  trends, while a sinking tropopause 669 would lead to negative  $N_2O$  trends. In addition, the patterns of the  $N_2O$  trends obtained 670 with MERRA2 disagree with those obtained with the same reanalysis using a different 671 CTM (Ploeger & Garny, 2022), and do not match the mean AoA trends obtained with 672 the same CTM (Chabrillat et al., 2018), at least in the regions where the inverse rela-673 tionship between  $N_2O$  and mean AoA holds (Galytska et al., 2019). The large differences 674 between JRA55 and MERRA2 and the ECMWF reanalyses in the extratropical mid-675 stratosphere highlight that decadal changes in the stratospheric transport are not as ro-676 bustly detected in JRA55 and MERRA2 as in the ERAI and ERA5. In the equatorial 677 lower stratosphere, all the CTM simulations deliver a significant  $N_2O$  increase, which 678 can partly be attributed to the effect of the tropopause rise that was robustly detected 679 in the reanalyses in the past decades (Manney & Hegglin, 2018). 680

WACCM does not simulate the  $N_2O$  decrease in the northern polar stratosphere 681 seen in the ECMWF reanalyses, but rather a global N<sub>2</sub>O increase that is largest in the 682 lower stratosphere. The  $N_2O$  increase in the tropical lower stratosphere can be related 683 to the structural changes of the stratosphere in response to global warming that were robustly predicted in CCMs (e.g., Oberländer-Hayn et al., 2016; Sácha et al., 2019; Eichinger 685 & Sácha, 2020). As discussed in the previous Section, WACCM-REFD1 improves the 686 representation of the  $N_2O$  trends with respect to WACCM-REFC1 in the southern mid-687 latitudes. The newer WACCM version simulates a significant  $N_2O$  increase up to 20 hPa, 688 which makes the  $N_2O$  trends in the southern mid-lower stratosphere more similar to those 689 from ERAI and ERA5, even though the decreasing  $N_2O$  trends in the NH are not re-690 produced. As discussed in the previous Section, this improvement in the  $N_2O$  trends over 691 the SH could be attributed to the adjusted parametrization of gravity waves in version 692 6 of WACCM compared to its version 4. 693

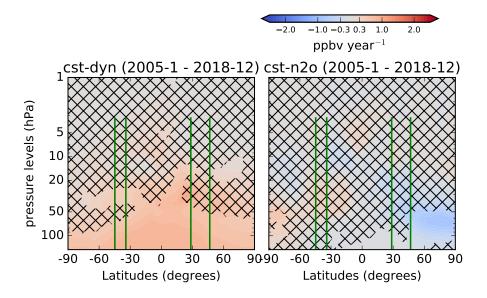


Figure 5. Latitude-pressure cross sections of  $N_2O$  linear trends (pptv year<sup>-1</sup>) obtained from the DLM from a BASCOE run driven by ERA5 with fixed dynamics and increasing  $N_2O$  (left panel), and from the same model setup but with  $N_2O$  kept constant at the surface and timevarying dynamics (right panel). The black crosses indicate grid-points where the probability of positive/negative  $N_2O$  changes is smaller than 95%. The green vertical lines identify the position of the FTIR stations together with their vertical coverage.

Figure 5 shows the  $N_2O$  trends obtained from the two sensitivity tests done with 694 ERA5 (cst-dyn and cst- $N_2O$ ). As expected, the cst-dyn experiment does not simulate 695 any  $N_2O$  decrease in the stratosphere, showing only a steady  $N_2O$  increase as a conse-696 quence of the constant buildup at the surface. Between 30 and 50 hPa, the  $N_2O$  increase 697 in the SH is significant with 95% probability, while this is not the case over the NH. This 698 difference can be attributed to the larger variability of the NH over one QBO cycle com-699 pared to the SH due to its larger wave activity (Scaife & James, 2000), and was already 700 shown for the significance of ozone trends (Shepherd, 2008). This highlights the impor-701 tance of considering a sufficiently long period for the trend detection in the stratosphere 702 (Garcia et al., 2011; Hardiman et al., 2017; Strahan et al., 2020). In particular, the 14 703 years considered here are sufficient to propagate the  $N_2O$  increase to the mid-stratospheric 704 mid-latitudes in the SH but not in the NH. The cst-N<sub>2</sub>O sensitivity test confirms that 705 the extratropical  $N_2O$  trends in the mid-lower stratosphere are due to the impact of changes 706 in the stratospheric transport. In addition, Ploeger and Garny (2022) recently showed 707 that structural changes of the stratospheric circulation also determine the hemispheric 708 asymmetry in the  $N_2O$  trends in the reanalyses. Contrarily to the cst-dyn experiment, 709 a changing dynamics impacts the sign of the obtained trends, with an  $N_2O$  decrease above 710 the NH and increase in the SH. From these sensitivity tests, we show that both the mean 711 stratospheric transport and its decadal changes can contribute to the hemispheric asym-712 metry in the recovered  $N_2O$  trends. The mean stratospheric transport contributes with 713 differences in the significance of the  $N_2O$  trends, and the decadal changes in the strato-714 spheric transport with differences in their respective signs. 715

## <sup>716</sup> 5 N<sub>2</sub>O TEM Budget

This section further investigates the  $N_2O$  trends from the model simulations using the TEM budget. Equation 2 allows separating the contributions of the residual cirESSOAr | https://doi.org/10.1002/essoar.10510213.2 | CC\_BY\_

culation and mixing terms (respectively ADV and MIX) to the N<sub>2</sub>O rate of change. In 719 particular, we aim to identify the contributions from changes in the ADV and MIX terms 720 to the  $N_2O$  trends shown in the previous section (Fig. 4). To that end, we compute the 721 changes of the ADV and MIX terms as the differences between their linear fits (i.e., the 722  $\mu_t$  term of Eq. 3) at the end and the beginning of the considered period. A similar anal-723 ysis was also done in the recent study of Abalos et al. (2020), who used the outputs of 724 several CCMs to compute changes of the TEM budget terms of synthetic tracers. For 725 a detailed description of the climatologies of the ADV and MIX terms, we refer to M2020. 726

727 Here, we provide a qualitative analysis of the contributions from changes in the advection and mixing to the  $N_2O$  trends, by comparing the signs of the changes of ADV728 and MIX with those of the N<sub>2</sub>O trends discussed in the previous section. With this ap-729 proach, we aim to evaluate separately the contributions from changes in ADV and MIX730 to the  $N_2O$  trends, and we do not consider their compensation mechanisms that arise 731 from the common driving from the breaking of tropospheric waves (M2020). The com-732 plete N<sub>2</sub>O TEM budget also includes the chemistry term  $\overline{S}$  (i.e., loss due to photolysis, 733 Tian et al., 2020), which is large in the tropical mid-high stratosphere, and the residual 734 term  $\overline{\epsilon}$ , which accounts for all the processes not resolved by the TEM analysis (includ-735 ing mixing on unresolved scales, Eq. 2). Figure 6 shows the latitude-vertical cross sec-736 tions of those changes in the ADV and MIX terms over 2005-2018. We limit the anal-737 ysis to the simulations by ERA5 and WACCM-REFD1 in order to investigate further 738 the differences in their  $N_2O$  trends discussed in the previous section. In the following, 739 we refer to N<sub>2</sub>O trends discussed in the previous section as "direct" N<sub>2</sub>O trends, in or-740 der to distinguish them from the  $N_2O$  changes derived from changes in the ADV and 741 MIX contributions. 742

Considering the changes in the ADV term, the ERA5 and WACCM-REFD1 sim-743 ulations agree over the tropical high stratosphere (above 5 hPa), with a significant in-744 crease of the  $N_2O$  abundances due to the impact of the residual circulation, similar to 745 the weak positive direct  $N_2O$  trends in the same region in both simulations. Over this 746 region, the main contribution to the ADV term is the transport due to the vertical com-747 ponent of the residual circulation, i.e.,  $-w^*\overline{\chi}_z$  in Eq. 1 (M2020). We found that the ADV 748 changes are mainly due to an enhanced tropical upwelling  $-w^*$  over the tropical high 749 stratosphere rather than to changes of the N<sub>2</sub>O vertical gradients  $\overline{\chi}_z$  (not shown). These 750 results of ADV changes agree with recent studies showing a strengthening of the advec-751 tive part of the BDC over the Tropics over longer periods in ERA5 (Diallo et al., 2021) 752 and in version 6 of WACCM (Abalos et al., 2021). In the northern subtropics in the lower 753 stratosphere, both WACCM-REFD1 and the CTM driven by ERA5 consistently sim-754 ulate positive  $N_2O$  changes due to an enhanced ADV contribution that can contribute 755 to the positive direct  $N_2O$  trend over the same region. This significant contribution from 756 ADV can be associated with the strengthening of the shallow branch of the BDC (Lin 757 & Fu, 2013), which was recently detected in ERA5 using the AoA diagnostic (Ploeger 758 et al., 2021) and predicted by CCMs (Butchart, 2014). In the mid-latitudes in both hemi-759 spheres, the changes in the ADV term are largely non-significant in both datasets, es-760 pecially in WACCM-REFD1, and do not correspond to any direct N<sub>2</sub>O trend, prevent-761 ing to draw robust conclusions. In the polar regions, WACCM-REFD1 and the CTM 762 driven by ERA5 disagree over the Antarctic, where the CCM simulates negative ADV763 changes, while the CTM shows positive non-significant changes across almost the whole 764 stratosphere. In the Arctic, the two simulations agree well in the lower stratosphere (be-765 low 30 hPa) with negative changes of the ADV term that can explain the negative di-766 rect  $N_2O$  trend and are consistent with the enhanced ADV term over the tropical re-767 gion. 768

<sup>769</sup> Concerning the MIX term, its changes are more irregular compared to those of <sup>770</sup> the ADV term in both WACCM-REFD1 and ERA5, and do not correspond to the di-<sup>771</sup> rect N<sub>2</sub>O trends over the NH. In addition, the MIX changes obtained with the CCM

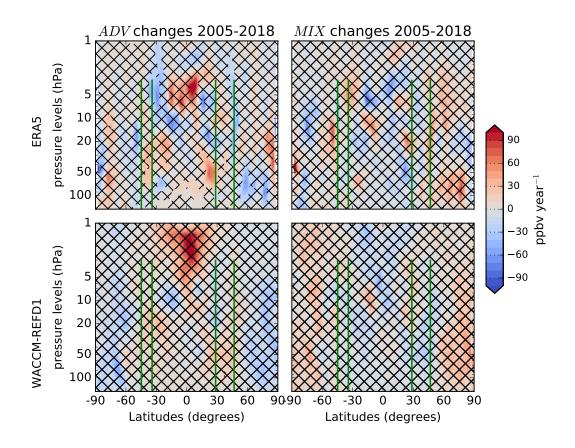


Figure 6. Latitude-pressure cross sections of the changes of the advection term  $(A_z+A_y)$ , left panels, ppbv year<sup>-1</sup>) and mixing term  $(M_z+M_y)$ , right panels, ppbv year<sup>-1</sup>) of the TEM N<sub>2</sub>O budget for ERA5 (top) and WACCM-REFD1 (bottom) for 2005-2018. The black crosses indicate grid-points where the probability of positive/negative N<sub>2</sub>O changes is smaller than 95%. The green vertical lines identify the position of the FTIR stations together with their vertical coverage.

largely disagree with those from the CTM and their significance is considerably smaller. 772 Large differences between WACCM and the CTM driven by reanalyses were already shown 773 by M2020 for the climatologies of the mixing terms of the  $N_2O$  TEM budget. Further-774 more, the weaker effect of mixing in WACCM-REFD1 compared to ERA5 is consistent 775 with Dietmüller et al. (2017), who found weaker AoA trends in the resolved aging by mix-776 ing in a free-running CCM compared to its specified-dynamics version and a reanalysis. 777 Concerning the MIX term in ERA5, in the SH between 10 and 30 hPa, there is enhanced 778 poleward mixing that transports  $N_2O$  from the subtropics (where *MIX* changes are neg-779 ative) to the mid-latitudes (where the MIX changes are positive). Such positive  $N_2O$ 780 changes in the southern mid-latitudes can be associated with the positive but not sig-781 nificant direct  $N_2O$  trends over the same region. The role of both resolved and unresolved 782 mixing in the decadal BDC trends has been studied in ECMWF reanalyses, especially 783 using AoA (e.g., Ploeger et al., 2015; Dietmüller et al., 2017). Recent studies have as-784 sociated the  $N_2O$  trend dipole discussed in the previous section with a southward shift 785 of the circulation pattern, which in turn is related to the impact of mixing on the BDC 786 changes (Stiller et al., 2017; Ploeger et al., 2019). Our results with  $N_2O$  from ERA5 con-787 firm the role of mixing processes above the southern mid-latitudes in determining changes 788 in the  $N_2O$  abundances, and indirectly support the hypothesis of the southward shift of 789 the circulation as a contribution to the dipole structure. 790

This qualitative analysis suggests that, within the  $N_2O$  TEM framework, changes in the residual circulation have a stronger impact on the direct  $N_2O$  trends compared to those in mixing. However, the ERA5 simulation also delivers significant  $N_2O$  changes due to mixing that are consistent with previous studies using ECMWF reanalyses and that can be associated to the hemispheric asymmetry in the direct  $N_2O$  trends simulated by ERA5.

#### <sup>797</sup> 6 Summary and Conclusions

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We have evaluated the stratospheric  $N_2O$  columns (12-40 km) and their decadal 798 (2005-2018) rates of change in two versions of WACCM: WACCM-REFC1 (version 4) 799 and WACCM-REFD1 (version 6). We compared those changes with ground-based ob-800 servations at four ground-based FTIR stations: Lauder (45°S), Wollongong (34°S), Izaña 801  $(28^{\circ}N)$  and Jungfraujoch  $(46^{\circ}N)$ , with space-borne measurements from ACE-FTS, and 802 with the output of the BASCOE CTM driven by four modern reanalyses: ERAI, ERA5, 803 JRA55 and MERRA2. We also studied the latitudinal and vertical distributions of these 804 trends of the  $N_2O$  mixing ratios from model output and satellite measurements, both 805 in the observation and model space. Also, we use the Transformed Eulerian Mean (TEM) 806 budget to investigate further the decadal trends in the BASCOE CTM driven by ERA5 807 and in WACCM-REFD1. 808

The comparison of the stratospheric  $N_2O$  columns reveals a good agreement above 809 Wollongong, and Lauder to a lesser extent, and larger differences above Jungfraujoch and 810 Izaña. The trends in the stratospheric  $N_2O$  columns obtained from FTIR are larger in 811 the SH compared to the NH, which is consistent with hemispherical differences in trends 812 of stratospheric tracers measured at FTIR stations over the past decade (Strahan et al., 813 2020; Prignon et al., 2021). This hemispheric asymmetry is present in the ECMWF re-814 analyses but is weaker in WACCM. We find that the decadal trends in the stratospheric 815 N<sub>2</sub>O columns are consistently positive in all cases except for ACE-FTS observations above 816 Jungfraujoch. However, the vertical resolution of the FTIR retrievals above the NH for 817  $N_2O$  limits our analysis to one stratospheric column, hence (in this analysis) the detec-818 tion of potentially negative  $N_2O$  trends in the mid-stratosphere is hindered by the large 819  $N_2O$  increase in the lowermost stratosphere which arises from its continuous increase at 820 the surface. 821

Global and vertically resolved trends of N<sub>2</sub>O volume mixing ratios provide a more 822 detailed picture compared to the stratospheric  $N_2O$  columns obtained from FTIR mea-823 surements. The ACE-FTS measurements show a meridional dipole in the  $N_2O$  trends 824 in the mid-lower stratosphere, with negative values in the NH mid-latitudes and posi-825 tive values in the SH. When applying the temporal and spatial sampling of ACE-FTS 826 on model datasets, ERAI and ERA5 compare best with the satellite measurements while 827 the other reanalyses and WACCM do not reproduce the meridional dipole in the mid-828 lower stratosphere as clearly as the ECMWF reanalyses. However, this application of 829 the irregular sampling of ACE-FTS to the model output consistently enhances the  $N_2O$ 830 trends, both positive and negative. Using continuous time sampling on native model grids, 831 ERAI, and ERA5 to a lesser extent, still simulate the meridional dipole in the  $N_2O$  trends, 832 consistently with a large number of modeling studies using both idealized and real trac-833 ers (e.g., Chabrillat et al., 2018; Prignon et al., 2021; Ploeger & Garny, 2022), but MERRA2, 834 JRA55 and both WACCM versions fail to reproduce the meridional dipole. The inher-835 ently limited spatial and temporal sampling of ACE-FTS, and its effect on  $N_2O$  trends, 836 highlight the necessity to carry out the  $N_2O$  trend analysis discussed here using a satel-837 lite instrument with a more regular coverage. To this end, MLS is a very good candi-838 date, once its drift in the N<sub>2</sub>O retrievals will be corrected. 839

Concerning the WACCM simulations, the too weak hemispheric asymmetries in 840 the trends of the stratospheric  $N_2O$  columns and volume mixing ratios highlights small 841 inter-hemispheric differences in the stratospheric transport. However, the adjusted parametriza-842 tion of gravity waves in version 6 of WACCM improves the trends in  $N_2O$  volume mix-843 ing ratios above the southern mid-latitudes compared to its version 4. This highlights 844 the importance of the parametrization of the gravity waves for a correct reproduction 845 of trends in long-lived tracers in the SH in WACCM. Therefore, we emphasize that mod-846 eling groups should continue their efforts in improving the horizontal resolution and ad-847 justing the gravity waves parametrization in CCMs. 848

We carried out two sensitivity tests using the BASCOE CTM driven by ERA5: one 849 keeping  $N_2O$  constant at the surface with time-dependent dynamics (cst- $N_2O$ ), and the 850 other using fixed dynamics with increasing  $N_2O$  at the surface (cst-dyn). The cst- $N_2O$ 851 experiment confirms that the extratropical N<sub>2</sub>O trends in the mid-lower stratosphere are 852 due to the impact of changes in the stratospheric transport. As expected, the cst-dyn 853 simulation shows that  $N_2O$  increases everywhere, but the trend over 2005-2018 is not 854 significantly positive in the NH mid-stratosphere. From these sensitivity tests with ERA5, 855 we confirm that the hemispheric asymmetry of the decadal  $N_2O$  trends arises from decadal 856 changes in the transport strength in combination with structural changes of the trans-857 port pattern. For the 2005-2018 period and in the 20-50 hPa layer, the hemispheric asym-858 metry in the significance of these trends arises from the larger dynamical variability which 859 is found in the northern extratropics on shorter timescales, i.e. within one QBO cycle. 860

We found a strong impact of transport on the stratospheric trends of  $N_2O$  volume 861 mixing ratios for the ERA5 simulations and large differences between ERA5 and WACCM-862 REFD1. This prompted us to study the TEM budget of  $N_2O$  in these two datasets, in 863 order to separate the possible impacts of the residual circulation and mixing. For both 864 datasets, the analysis of the TEM budget reveals positive  $N_2O$  changes in the tropical 865 mid-high stratosphere and negative changes in the northern extratropical lower strato-866 sphere, as a result of enhanced tropical upwelling and extratropical downwelling, respec-867 tively. This is in agreement with the acceleration of the advective part of the BDC over 868 this relatively short period both in models (Butchart, 2014) and reanalyses (Ploeger et al., 2019). For the ERA5 simulation, the positive  $N_2O$  trend above the southern mid-870 latitudes (part of the meridional dipole) can be due to the impact of changes in resolved 871 mixing, which is consistent with previous studies, both using Age of Air (AoA, Ploeger 872 et al., 2015) and  $N_2O$  (Stiller et al., 2017). 873

Using a measurable tracer for stratospheric transport studies allows direct com-874 parisons with observations. The rate of change of  $N_2O$  at the surface is well-known and 875 approximately linear and the chemical losses are limited to the higher stratosphere. In 876 theory, this relatively simple chemistry, combined with its long life, makes  $N_2O$  a very 877 good tracer for stratospheric transport studies. Unfortunately, no ideal observational dataset 878 currently exists for  $N_2O$ -based investigations such as the present study: FTIR observa-879 tions generally lack adequate vertical resolution, the  $N_2O$  product from the latest MLS 880 version suffers from an unrealistic drift, and ACE-FTS has poor spatial and temporal 881 sampling. Here, we showed how model studies of  $N_2O$  trends still provide new insights 882 about the BDC and its changes thanks to properly taking into account the ACE-FTS 883 sampling, complementary sensitivity tests, and the TEM analysis. In particular, the im-884 provements in version 6 of WACCM compared to version 4 highlight that the next-generation 885 CCMs can potentially reach the quality of the reanalyses in terms of decadal changes 886 of long-lived tracers in the stratosphere. Despite the shortcomings of the TEM approach, 887 i.e., the difficulty of closing its budget, its combination with sensitivity tests provides new 888 insights on transport changes and their impacts on the composition of the stratosphere. 889 This approach could be extended to other tracers that are both measured and modeled 890 - e.g., carbon monoxide, methane, and inorganic fluorine. 891

# <sup>892</sup> Open Research

The WACCM and BASCOE CTM data used for the  $N_2O$  trends and TEM com-893 parisons in the study are available at the BIRA-IASB repository (http://repository 894 .aeronomie.be) via https://dx.doi.org/10.18758/71021071 with CC BY license (Minganti 895 & Errera, 2022). FTIR data at the various stations are available at https://www-air 896 .larc.nasa.gov/pub/NDACC/PUBLIC/stations/. ACE-FTS data are available at https:// 897 databace.scisat.ca/level2/ace\_v4.1/display\_data.php. ERA5 data are available 898 at https://cds.climate.copernicus.eu/. ERA-Interim data are available at https:// 800 apps.ecmwf.int/datasets/. JRA-55 data are available at https://rda.ucar.edu/. 900 MERRA2 data are available at https://disc.gsfc.nasa.gov/datasets/. The DLM 901 source code is available at https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.2660704. 902

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