# Tropopause Evolution in a Rapidly Intensifying Tropical Cyclone: A Static

# **Stability Budget Analysis**

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## ABSTRACT

<sup>8</sup> We have some cool results!

#### 9 1. Introduction

After undergoing a remarkably rapid intensification (RI), Hurricane Patricia (2015) set a new record as the strongest tropical cyclone (TC) ever observed in the Western Hemisphere (Kimberlain et al. 2016; Rogers et al. 2017). High-altitude dropsonde observations taken during the Tropical Cyclone Intensity (TCI) experiment captured this RI in unprecedented detail (Doyle et al. 2017). These observations revealed remarkable changes in the structure of the cold-point tropopause and upper-level static stability as the storm intensified (Duran and Molinari 2018). 15 At tropical storm intensity, shortly before RI commenced, a strong inversion layer existed just 16 above Patricia's cold-point tropopause, which was located near 17.2 km. During the first half of 17 the RI period, this inversion layer weakened throughout Patricia's inner core, with the weakening most pronounced over the developing eye. By the time the storm reached its maximum intensity, the inversion layer over the eye had disappeared almost completely, which was accompanied by an increase in the tropopause height to a level at or above the highest-available dropsonde data point 21 (18.3 km) at two locations. Meanwhile over the eyewall region, the static stability re-strengthened 22 and the tropopause was limited to a level at or below 17.5 km. The mechanisms that led to these changes in upper-level static stability and tropopause height are the subject of the current paper. 24 Despite the importance of tropopause-layer thermodynamics in theoretical models of hurricanes 25 (Emanuel and Rotunno 2011; Emanuel 2012), few papers have examined the upper-tropospheric evolution of TCs. Komaromi and Doyle (2017) found that stronger TCs tended to have a higher 27 and warmer tropopause over their inner core than weaker TCs. Their results are consistent with the evolution observed over the inner core of Hurricane Patricia, in which the tropopause height increased and the tropopause temperature warmed throughout RI (Duran and Molinari 2018). The simulations of Ohno and Satoh (2015) suggested that the development of an upper-level warm core

- within the eye acted to decrease the static stability near the tropopause. Although the mechanisms
- that drive this static stability evolution have not been examined explicitly, the potential temperature
- $_{94}$  ( $\theta$ ) budget analysis of Stern and Zhang (2013) examined the development of the TC warm core.
- They found that radial and vertical advection both play important roles in warm core development
- throughout RI, with subgrid-scale diffusion becoming particularly important during the later stage
- of RI.
- The analysis herein is based upon that of Stern and Zhang (2013), except using a static stability
- budget similar to that of Kepert et al. (2016) rather than a  $\theta$  budget.

#### 40 2. Model Setup

The numerical simulations were performed using version 19.4 of Cloud Model 1 (CM1) described in Bryan and Rotunno (2009). The equations of motion were integrated on a 3000-kmwide, 30-km-deep axisymmetric grid with 1-km horizontal and 250-m vertical grid spacing. The
computations were performed on an *f*-plane at 15°N latitude, over a sea surface with constant
temperature of 30.5°C, which matches that observed near Hurricane Patricia (2015; Kimberlain
et al. 2016). Horizontal turbulence was parameterized using the Smagorinsky scheme described in
Bryan and Rotunno (2009, pg. 1773), with a prescribed mixing length that varied linearly from 100
m at a surface pressure of 1015 hPa to 1000 m at a surface pressure of 900 hPa. This formulation
allows for realistically-large horizontal mixing lengths near the hurricane's inner core, consistent
with the results of Bryan (2012), while not over-representing horizontal turbulence in convection
at outer radii. Vertical turbulence was parameterized using the formulation of Markowski and
Bryan (2016, their Eq. 6), using an asymptotic vertical mixing length of 100 m. A Rayleigh
damping layer was applied outside of the 2900-km radius and above the 25-km level to prevent
spurious gravity wave reflection at the model boundaries. Microphysical processes were param-

eterized using the Thompson et al. (2004) microphysics scheme and radiative heating tendencies
were computed every two minutes using the Rapid Radiative Transfer Model for GCMs (RRTMG)
longwave and shortwave schemes (Iacono et al. 2008). The initial temperature and humidity field
was horizontally homogeneous and determined by averaging all Climate Forecast System Reanalysis (CFSR) grid points within 100 km of Patricia's center of circulation at 18 UTC 21 October
2015. The vortex described in Rotunno and Emanuel (1987, their Eq. 37) was used to initialize
the wind field, setting all parameters equal to the values used therein.

Although hurricanes simulated in an axisymmetric framework tend to be more intense than
those observed in nature, the intensity evolution of this simulation matches reasonably well with
that observed in Hurricane Patricia. After an initial spin-up period of about 20 hours, the modeled
storm (Fig.1, blue lines) began an RI period that lasted approximately 30 hours. After this RI, the
storm continued to intensify more slowly until the maximum 10-m wind speed reached 89 m s<sup>-1</sup>
and the minimum sea-level pressure reached its minimum of 846 mb, 81 hours into the simulation.

Hurricane Patricia (red stars) exhibited a similar intensity evolution, with an RI period leading to a
maximum 10-m wind speed of 95 m s<sup>-1</sup> and a minimum sea-level pressure of 872 hPa. Despite the
limitations of the axisymmetric framework, the extraordinary intensity of Hurricane Patricia and
the rapidity of its intensification makes Patricia a particularly good candidate for axisymmetric
analysis.

### **3. Budget Computation**

The static stability can be expressed as the squared Brunt Väisälä frequency:

$$N_m^2 = \frac{g}{T} \left( \frac{\partial T}{\partial z} + \Gamma_m \right) \left( 1 + \frac{T}{R_d/R_v + q_s} \frac{\partial q_s}{\partial T} \right) - \frac{g}{1 + q_t} \frac{\partial q_t}{\partial z}, \tag{1}$$

where g is gravitational acceleration, T is temperature,  $R_d$  and  $R_v$  are the gas constants of dry air and water vapor, respectively,  $q_s$  is the saturation mixing ratio,  $q_t$  is the total condensate mixing ratio, and  $\Gamma_m$  is the moist-adiabatic lapse rate:

$$\Gamma_m = g(1+q_t) \left( \frac{1 + L_\nu q_s / R_d T}{c_{pm} + L_\nu \partial q_s / \partial T} \right), \tag{2}$$

where  $L_{\nu}$  is the latent heat of vaporization and  $c_{pm}$  is the specific heat of moist air at constant pressure. In the tropopause layer,  $q_s$ ,  $\partial q_s/\partial T$ , and  $\partial q_t/\partial z$  approach zero. In this limiting case, Eq. 1 reduces to:

$$N^2 = \frac{g}{\theta} \frac{\partial \theta}{\partial z},\tag{3}$$

- where  $\theta$  is the potential temperature.
- To compute  $N^2$ , CM1 uses Eq.1 in saturated environments and Eq. 3 in sub-saturated environments. For simplicity, however, only Eq. 3 will be employed for the budget computations herein<sup>1</sup>.
- Taking the time derivative of Eq. 3 yields the static stability tendency:

$$\frac{\partial N^2}{\partial t} = \frac{g}{\theta} \frac{\partial}{\partial z} \frac{\partial \theta}{\partial t} - \frac{g}{\theta^2} \frac{\partial \theta}{\partial z} \frac{\partial \theta}{\partial t},\tag{4}$$

where the potential temperature tendency,  $\partial \theta / \partial t$ , can be written:

$$\frac{\partial \theta}{\partial t} = HADV + VADV + HTURB + VTURB + MP + RAD + DISS \tag{5}$$

Each term on the right-hand side of Eq. 5 represents a θ budget variable, each of which is output directly by the model every minute. HADV and VADV are the radial and vertical advective
tendencies, HTURB and VTURB are the radial and vertical tendencies from the turbulence parameterization, MP is the tendency from the microphysics scheme, RAD is the tendency from the
radiation scheme, and DISS is the tendency due to turbulent dissipation. This equation neglects
Rayleigh damping, since this term is zero everywhere below 25 km, and the analysis domain does

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>The validity of this approximation will be substantiated later in this section.

not extend to that level. Each term in Eq. 5 is substituted for  $\partial \theta / \partial t$  in Eq. 4, yielding the contribution of each budget term to the static stability tendency. These terms are summed, yielding an instantaneous "budget change" in  $N^2$  every minute. The budget changes are then averaged over 24-hour periods and compared to the total model change in  $N^2$  over that same time period, i.e.:

$$\Delta N_{budget}^2 = \frac{1}{\delta t} \sum_{t=t_0}^{t_0 + \delta t} \frac{\partial N^2}{\partial t} \bigg|_t$$
 (6)

$$\Delta N_{model}^2 = N_{t_0 + \delta t}^2 - N_{t_0}^2 \tag{7}$$

$$Residual = \Delta N_{model}^2 - \Delta N_{budget}^2$$
 (8)

where  $t_0$  is an initial time and  $\delta t$  is 24 hours.

Eqs. 6-8 are plotted for four consecutive 24-hour periods in Fig. 2. For this and all subsequent 99 radial-vertical cross sections, a 1-2-1 smoother is applied once in the radial direction to eliminate 100  $2\Delta r$  noise that appears in some of the raw model output and calculated fields. The left column of Fig. 2 depicts the model changes (Eq. 7), the center column depicts the budget changes (Eq. 6), 102 and the right column depicts the residuals (Eq. 8). In every 24-hour period, the budget changes 103 are nearly identical to the model changes, which is reflected in the near-zero residuals in the right column. This indicates that the budget accurately represents the model variability, which 105 implies that the neglect of moisture in the budget computation introduces negligible error within 106 the analysis domain<sup>2</sup>. 107

In the tropopause layer, some of the budget terms are small enough to be ignored. To determine
which of the budget terms are most important, a time series of the contribution of each of the
budget terms in Eq. 5 to the tropopause-layer static stability tendency is plotted in Fig. 4. For this
figure, each of the budget terms is computed using the method described in Section 3, except with

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>This is not the case in the lower- and mid-troposphere, where the residual actually exceeds the budget variability in many places, likely due to the neglect of moisture; thus we limit this analysis to the upper troposphere and lower stratosphere.

1-hour averaging intervals instead of 24-hour intervals. The absolute values of these tendencies are then averaged over a radius-height domain surrounding the tropopause and plotted as a time 113 series<sup>3</sup>. Advection (Fig. 4, red line) plays an important role in the mean tropopause-layer static 114 stability tendency at all times, and vertical turbulence (Fig. 4, blue line) and radiation (Fig. 4, dark 115 green line) also contribute significantly. Although the contribution from horizontal turbulence (Fig. 4, purple line) becomes more important after 48 hours, it is confined to a very small region 117 immediately surrounding the eyewall tangential velocity maximum (not shown), and is negligible 118 throughout the rest of the tropopause layer. The remaining two processes - microphysics and dissipative heating (Fig. 4, orange and light green lines, respectively) - lie atop one another near 120 zero. These time series indicate that, at all times, three budget terms dominate the tropopause-layer 121 static stability tendency: advection, vertical turbulence, and radiation. Variations in the magnitude 122 and spatial structure of these terms drive the static stability changes depicted in Fig. 2; subsequent 123 sections will focus on these variations and what causes them. 124

#### 4. Results

a. Static stability evolution

The average  $N^2$  over the first day of the simulation (Fig. 3a) indicates the presence of a weak static stability maximum just above the cold-point tropopause. Over the subsequent 24 hours, during the RI period, the static stability within and above this layer decreased near the storm center (Fig. 3b). This decreasing  $N^2$  corresponded to an increase in the tropopause height within the developing eye, maximized at the storm center. Outside of the eye, meanwhile, the tropopause

 $<sup>^{3}</sup>$ It will be seeen in subsequent figures that each of the terms contributes both positively and negatively to the  $N^{2}$  tendency within the analysis domain. Thus, taking an average over the domain tends to wash out the positive and negative contributions. To circumvent this problem, the absolute value of each of the terms is averaged.

height decresed over the eyewall region (25-60-km radius) and increased only slightly outside of the 60-km radius. In this outer region, the  $N^2$  maximum just above the tropopause strengthened during RI. These trends continued as the storm's intensity leveled off in the 48-72-hour period (Fig. 3c). The tropopause height increased to nearly 21 km at the storm center and sloped sharply downward to 16.3 km on the inner edge of the eyewall, near the 30 km radius. Static stability outside of the eye, meanwhile, continued to increase just above the cold-point tropopause. This  $N^2$  evolution closely follows that observed in Hurricane Patricia (2015; Duran and Molinari 2018). The mechanisms that led to these static stability changes will be investigated in the subsequent sections.

### b. Static stability budget analysis

The weakening of the lower-stratospheric static stability maximum during the 142 initial spin-up period is reflected in the total  $N^2$  budget change over this time (Fig. 5a). The 143 17-18-km layer was characterized by decreasing  $N^2$  (purple shading), maximizing at the storm center. The layer immediately below the tropopause, meanwhile, saw strengthening  $N^2$  during this 145 time period. Although these tendencies extended out to the 200-km radius, they were particularly 146 pronounced at innermost radii. A comparison of the contributions of advection (Fig. 5b), vertical turbulence (Fig. 5c), and radiation (Fig. 5d) reveals that advection is primarily responsible for 148 the change in static stability during this period. Although vertical turbulence acts in opposition 149 to advection (i.e. it acts to stabilize regions that advection acts to destabilize), the magnitude of 150 the advective tendencies is larger, particularly at the innermost radii. The sum of advection and 151 vertical turbulence (Fig. 5e) almost exactly replicates the static stability tendencies above 17 km. 152 Radiative tendencies (Fig. 5d) act to destabilize the layer below about 16 km and stabilize the

- layer between 16 and 17 km. The sum of advection, vertical turbulence, and radiation (Fig. 5f) reproduces the total change in  $N^2$  almost exactly.
- ...Explain this in the context of radial and vertical velocities... ...See Stern and Zhang, Page 84,
  Section 3d... ...Add mention of total condensate and radiative heating tendencies as it relates to
  statistity tendency due to rad...
- (ii) 24-48 hours During the RI period,  $N^2$  within the eye generally decreased above 16 km and increased below (Fig. 6a). These tendencies at the innermost radii were driven almost entirely by advection (Fig. 6b); vertical turbulence (Fig. 6c) and radiation (Fig. 6d) contributed negligibly to the static stability tendencies in this region.
- Outside of the eye, the  $N^2$  evolution exhibited alternating layers of positive and negative tenden-163 cies. Near and above 18 km existed an upward-sloping region of decreasing  $N^2$  that extended out to the 180-km radius. In this region, neither vertical turbulence nor radiation exhibited negative 165  $N^2$  tendencies; advection was the only forcing for destabilization. Immediately below this layer was a region of increasing  $N^2$ , which sloped upward from 17 km near the 30-km radius to just below 18 km outside of the 100-km radius. Advection and vertical turbulence both contributed to 168 this positive  $N^2$  tendency, with advection playing an important role below about 17.5 km and and 169 turbulence playing an important role above. The sum of advection and turbulence (Fig. 6e) reveals two discontiguous regions of increasing  $N^2$  in the 17-18-km layer rather than one contiguous re-171 gion. The addition of radiation to these two terms, however, (Fig. 6f) provides the link between 172 these two regions, indicating that radiation also plays a role in strengthening the stable layer just above the tropopause. In the 16-17-km layer, a horizontally-extensive layer of decreasing  $N^2$  also 174 was forced by a combination of advection, vertical turbulence, and radiation. The sum of advec-175 tion and vertical turbulence accounts for only a portion of the decreasing  $N^2$  in this layer, and

- actually indicates forcing for stabilization near the 50-km radius and outside of the 130-km radius.
- Radiative tendencies overcome this forcing for stabilization in both of these regions to produce the radially-extensive region of destabilization observed just below the tropopause.
- TWO REGIONS WHERE Panel (f) differs from panel (a): 30-60 km radial band below 16 km, which is actually canceled out by a vertical gradient of latent heating, and the thin region of strong stabilization between 15-17.5 km near r=30 km, which is canceled out by horizontal turbulence.

(iii) 48-72 hours After the storm's maximum wind speed leveled off near 80 m s<sup>-1</sup>, the magnitude of the static stability tendencies within the eye decreased to near zero (Fig. 7a).

Outside of the eye, however,  $N^2$  continued to increase just above the tropopause and decrease 185 just below. The sum of advection and vertical turbulence (Fig. 7e) indicates that the increase of  $N^2$  observed in the 17-18-km layer and inside of the 80-km radius cannot be attributed to 187 these processes, since the sum of these two terms provided forcing for destabilization. Instead, 188 radiation (Fig. 7d), provided the forcing for stabilization in this region. Outside of the 80-km radius, both advection (Fig. 7b) and vertical turbulence (Fig. 7c) provided forcing for stabilization 190 near the 18-km level. The sum of the two terms indicates increasing  $N^2$  near the 18-km level 191 everywhere outside of the 80-km radius, but this stabilization is slightly weaker in the 90-120-km radial band than the observed value. The addition of radiation (Fig. 7f) provides the extra forcing 193 for stabilization required to account for the observed increase in  $N^2$ . Outside of the 120-km radius, 194 the region of radiative forcing for stabilization slopes downward, and the increase in  $N^2$  observed near 18 km can be explained entirely by a combination of advection and vertical turbulence. The 196 layer of decreasing  $N^{@}$  observed near 17 km was forced primarily by vertical turbulence and 197 radiation. Within most of this region, advection provided strong forcing for stabilization, but this forcing was outweighed by the negative  $N^{@}$  tendencies induced by a combination of vertical turbulence and radiation.

#### 5. Discussion

#### 202 a. The role of advection

Advection played an important role in the tropopause-layer  $N^2$  evolution at all stages of intensification. To investigate the advective processes more closely, the individual contributions of horizontal and vertical advection are shown for all three time periods in Figs. 8-10, along with the corresponding time-mean velocities and  $\theta$ . In each of the three time periods, the  $N^2$  tendencies due to the two advective components exhibit strong cancellation, consistent with flow that is nearly isentropic. There are, however, some regions in which flow crosses  $\theta$  surfaces; this flow accounts for all non-zero  $N^2$  tendencies due to advection in the budget analyses.

During the first day of the simulation, horizontal advection (Fig. 8a) generally forced a decrease in  $N^2$  below 17 km and an increase in  $N^2$  above. The mean radial velocity during 211 this period (Fig. 8c) reveals a region of outflow at and below 17 km and near-zero radial velocity 212 above, with a layer of strong vertical wind shear straddling the tropopause. The slight downward slope with radius of the  $\theta$  surfaces near the tropopause (i.e.,  $\theta$  increases with radius) implies that 214 the outflow in this layer locally acted to decrease  $\theta$ . This negative  $\theta$  tendency must decrease with 215 height within the region of strong vertical wind shear and approach zero as the radial velocity diminishes to zero near 17 km. These tendencies thus yielded an increase in the vertical gradient 217 of  $\theta$  above 17 km, which implies an increase in  $N^2$ , as was seen in Fig. 8a. Note that although 218 the radial gradient of  $\theta$  was stronger in the 15-16-km layer than it was closer to the tropopause,

- the vertical shear of the radial wind was much smaller there, yielding a smaller  $N^2$  tendency due to horizontal advection.
- Notably, there existed strong  $N^2$  tendencies due to horizontal advection inside of the 30-km radius even though the mean radial velocity in that region was near zero. Close examination of the radial velocity each output time step reveals the presence of waves in the lower stratosphere with an inward phase propagation. These waves amplified upon reaching r=0 and forced strong but highly transient  $\theta$  tendencies due to non-linear advective processes. Thus, although the radial velocity perturbations associated with these waves averaged out to zero, the non-linear effect of these waves on the  $N^2$  field remained.
- The  $N^2$  tendencies forced by horizontal advection were completely canceled out by vertical advective tendencies (Fig. 8b). As was seen in Fig. 5b, the sum of the two terms yielded a layer of increasing  $N^2$  below 17 km and decreasing  $N^2$  above, meaning that vertical advective processes dominated the  $N^2$  tendency during the initial spin-up period.
- Radiative heating and turbulence viscosity figures?
- Discuss how turbulence increases the static stability in some regions -i vertical gradients of turblence intensity.
- Diurnal variability of of static stability in the upper troposphere is an interesting area of future research.

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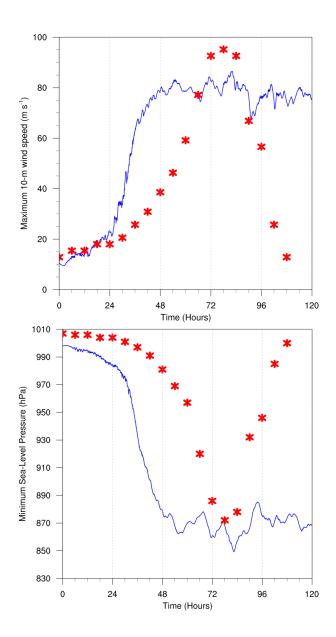


FIG. 1. The maximum 10-m wind speed (top panel; m s<sup>-1</sup>) and minimum sea-level pressure (bottom panel; hPa) in the simulated storm (blue lines) and from Hurricane Patricia's best track (red stars).

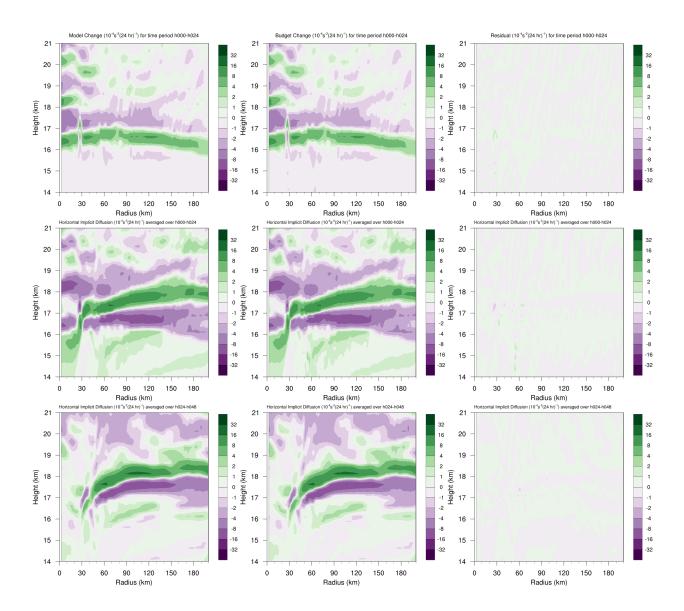


FIG. 2. Left panels: Twenty-four-hour changes in squared Brunt-Väisälä frequency ( $N^2$ ;  $10^{-4}$  s<sup>-2</sup>) over (a) 0-24 hours, (b) 24-48 hours, (c) 48-72 hours, (d) 72-96 hours. Middle Panels: The  $N^2$  change over the same time periods computed using Eq. 6. Right Panels: The budget residual over the same time periods, computed by subtracting the budget change (middle column) from the model change (left column).

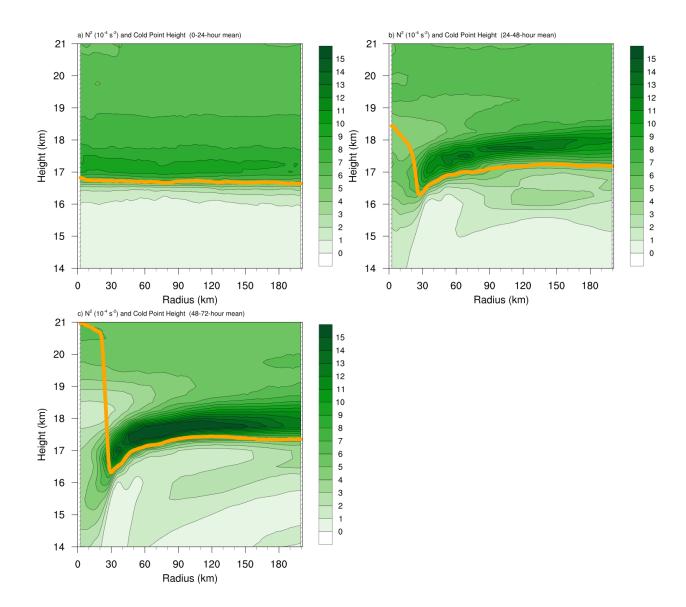


FIG. 3. Twenty-four-hour averages of squared Brunt-Väisälä frequency (10<sup>-4</sup> s<sup>-2</sup>) over the first four days of the simulation. Orange lines represent the cold-point tropopause determined by the mean temperature field over the same time periods.

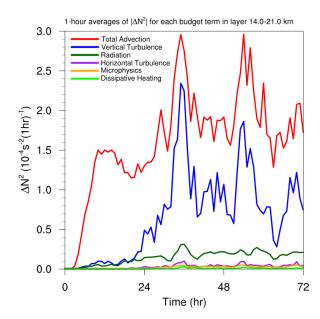


FIG. 4. Time series of the contribution of each of the budget terms to the time tendency of the squared Brunt-Väisälä frequency ( $N^2$ ;  $10^{-4}$  s<sup>-2</sup>). For each budget term, the absolute value of the  $N^2$  tendency is averaged temporally over 1-hour periods (using output every minute), and spatially in a region extending from 0 to 200 km radius and 14 to 21 km altitude.

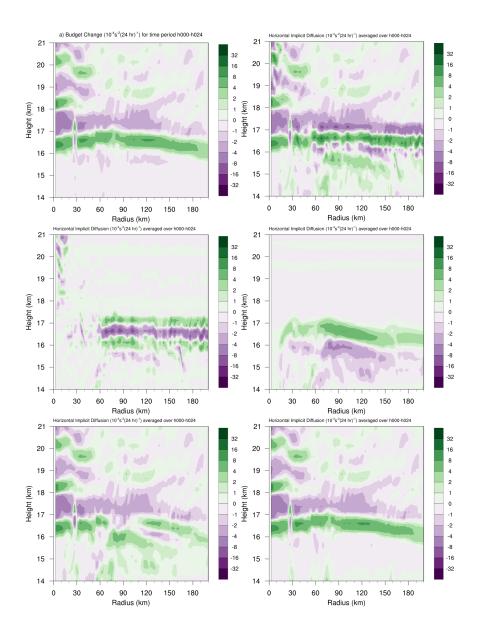


FIG. 5. (a) Total change in N<sup>2</sup> over the 0-24-hour period (10<sup>-4</sup> s<sup>-2</sup> (24 hr)<sup>-1</sup>) and the contributions to that change from (b) the sum of horizontal and vertical advection, (c) vertical turbulence, (d) longwave and shortwave radiation, (e) the sum of horizontal advection, vertical advection, and vertical turbulence, and (f) the sum of horizontal advection, vertical turbulence, and longwave and shortwave radiation.

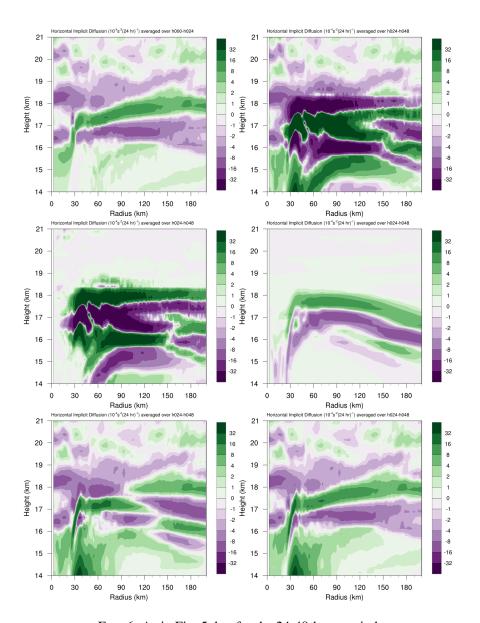


FIG. 6. As in Fig. 5, but for the 24-48-hour period.

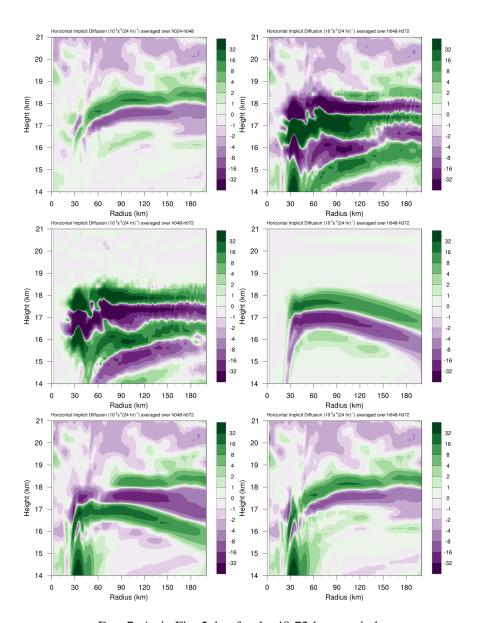


FIG. 7. As in Fig. 5, but for the 48-72-hour period.

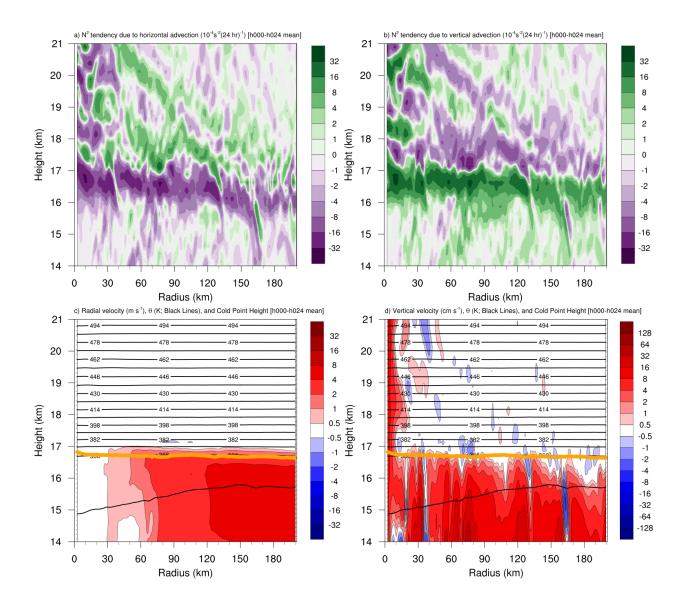


FIG. 8. The contribution to the change in  $N^2$  over the 0-24-hour period ( $10^{-4} \text{ s}^{-2}$  (24 hr)<sup>-1</sup>) by (a) horizontal advection and (b) vertical advection. (c) The radial velocity (m s<sup>-1</sup>; filled contours), potential temperature (K; thick black contours), and cold-point tropopause height (orange line) averaged over the 0-24-hour period. (d) The vertical velocity (cm s<sup>-1</sup>; filled contours), potential temperature (K; thick black contours), and cold-point tropopause height (orange line) averaged over the 0-24-hour period.

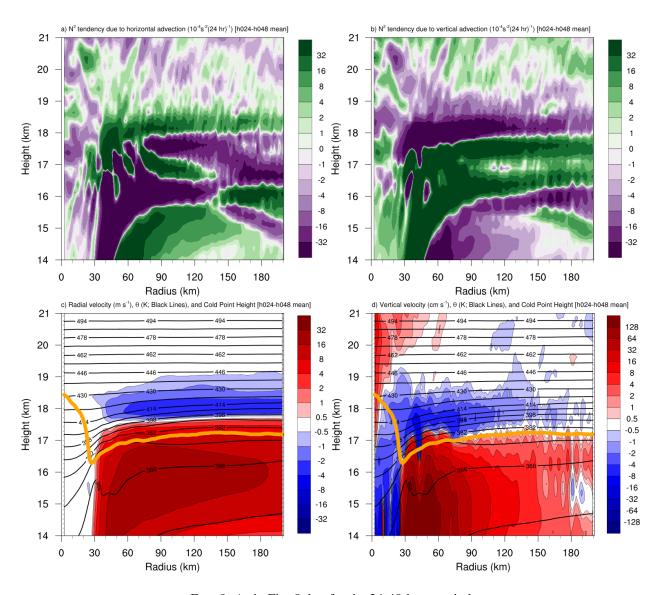


FIG. 9. As in Fig. 8, but for the 24-48-hour period.

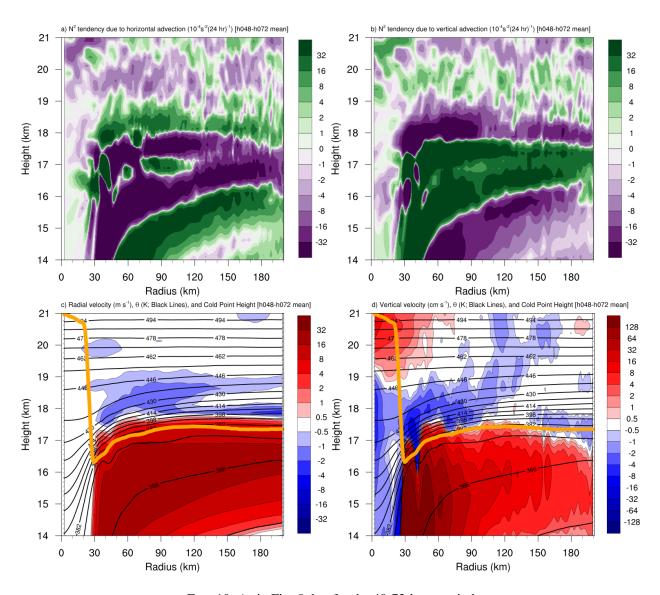


FIG. 10. As in Fig. 8, but for the 48-72-hour period.

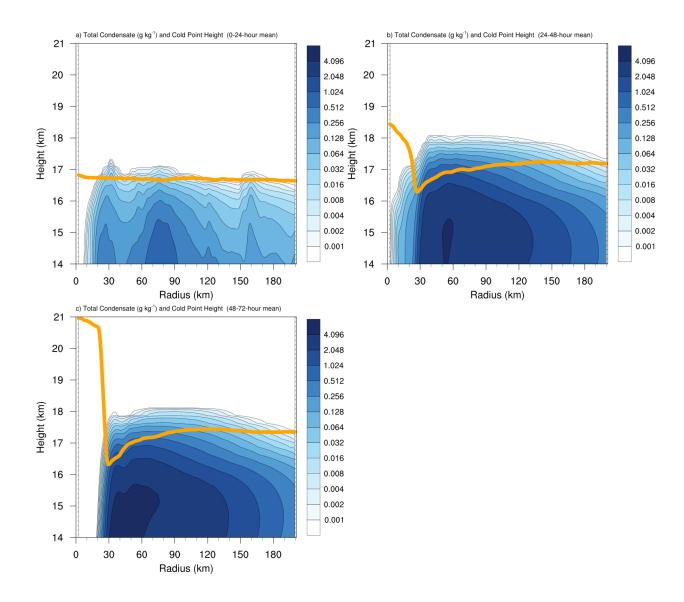


FIG. 11. Total condensate mixing ratio (g  $kg^{-1}$ ) and cold point tropopause height (orange lines) averaged over (a) 0-24 hours, (b) 24-48 hours, and (c) 48-72 hours.

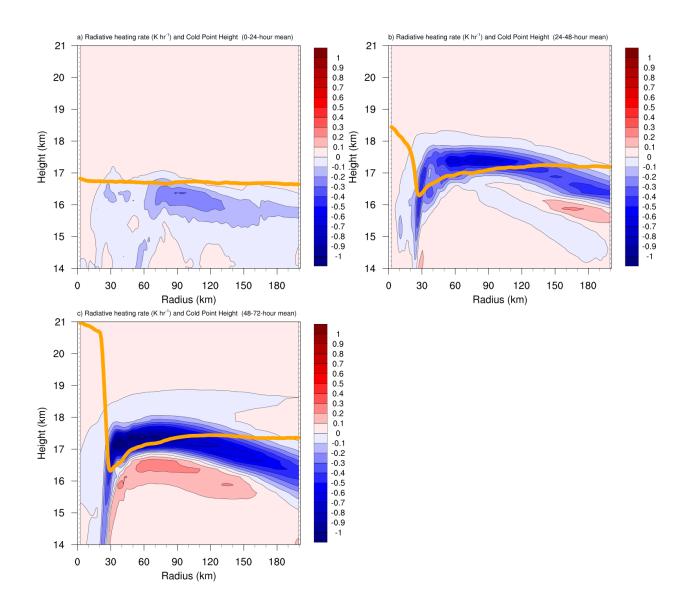


FIG. 12. Radiative heating rate (K hr<sup>-1</sup>) and cold point tropopause height (orange lines) averaged over (a) 0-24 hours, (b) 24-48 hours, and (c) 48-72 hours.

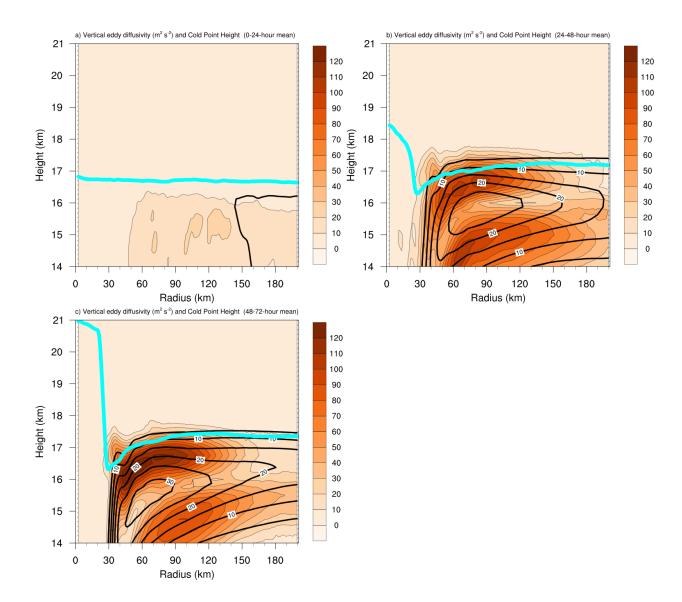


FIG. 13. Vertical eddy diffusivity ( $m^2$  s<sup>-2</sup>; filled contours), cold point tropopause height (cyan lines), and radial velocity (m s<sup>-1</sup>; thick black lines) averaged over (a) 0-24 hours, (b) 24-48 hours, and (c) 48-72 hours.