Exceptional 20th Century Ocean Circulation in the Northeast Atlantic

Citation for published version:
Spooner, PT, Thornalley, DJR, Oppo, DW, Fox, AD, Radionovskaya, S, Rose, NL, Mallett, R, Cooper, E & Roberts, JM 2020, ‘Exceptional 20th Century Ocean Circulation in the Northeast Atlantic’, Geophysical Research Letters, vol. 47, no. 10. https://doi.org/10.1029/2020GL087577

Digital Object Identifier (DOI):
10.1029/2020GL087577

Link:
Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer

Document Version:
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Published In:
Geophysical Research Letters

Publisher Rights Statement:
© 2020. The Authors.

General rights
Copyright for the publications made accessible via the Edinburgh Research Explorer is retained by the author(s) and / or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing these publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

Take down policy
The University of Edinburgh has made every reasonable effort to ensure that Edinburgh Research Explorer content complies with UK legislation. If you believe that the public display of this file breaches copyright please contact openaccess@ed.ac.uk providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.
Exceptional 20th Century Ocean Circulation in the Northeast Atlantic

Peter T. Spooner1, David J. R. Thornalley1,2, Delia W. Oppo2, Alan D. Fox3,4, Svetlana Radionovskaya1,5, Neil L. Rose1, Robbie Mallett1, Emma Cooper1,5 and J. Murray Roberts4

1Department of Geography, University College London, London, UK, 2Department of Geology and Geophysics, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, Woods Hole, MA, USA, 3SAMS, Scottish Marine Institute, Oban, Argyll, UK, 4School of Geosciences, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, UK, 5Department of Earth Sciences, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK, 6Department of Geography, Royal Holloway University of London, Egham, UK

Abstract The North Atlantic subpolar gyre (SPG) connects tropical and high-latitude waters, playing a leading role in deep-water formation, propagation of Atlantic water into the Arctic, and as habitat for many ecosystems. Instrumental records spanning recent decades document significant decadal variability in SPG circulation, with associated hydrographic and ecological changes. Emerging longer-term records provide circumstantial evidence that the North Atlantic also experienced centennial trends during the 20th century. Here, we use marine sediment records to show that there has been a long-term change in SPG circulation during the industrial era, largely during the 20th century. Moreover, we show that the shift and late 20th century SPG configuration were unprecedented in the last 10,000 years. Recent SPG dynamics resulted in an expansion of subtropical ecosystems into new habitats and likely also altered the transport of heat to high latitudes.

Plain Language Summary The Northeast Atlantic is of crucial importance for the global climate system and marine ecosystems. We can use sediment from the bottom of the ocean to reconstruct how the Northeast Atlantic has changed over thousands of years. In this study, we present the first evidence that 20th century Northeast Atlantic surface ocean circulation was unusual compared to the last 10,000 years. This change caused a replacement of cool, subpolar waters with warmer subtropical waters near Iceland and has impacted the distribution of marine organisms. The most striking aspect of our work is the exceptional nature of the shift in the 20th century (in contrast to thousands of years of relative stability), with implications for understanding future change.

1. Introduction

The North Atlantic is a critical region in the climate system. The subpolar gyre (SPG) provides the connection between the tropical Atlantic and the deep-water formation regions of the Iceland Basin, Nordic and Labrador Seas, and the Arctic Ocean (Lozier et al., 2019; Tiedje et al., 2012). It is characterized by cyclonic flow in the Iceland Basin and Irminger and Labrador Seas (Figure 1). On its southern edge, the North Atlantic Current (NAC) and subpolar front (SPF) separate the cold, fresh SPG waters from the warmer, saltier waters originating in the subtropical gyre. The NAC carries those warm waters into the northeast Atlantic. Changes in SPG dynamics influence the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC), Arctic ocean temperature, stratification and sea ice cover, and economically important ecosystems (Árthun et al., 2012; Hátún et al., 2009; Jansen et al., 2016; Østerhus et al., 2005; Rhein et al., 2011).

The short SPG observational record is dominated by decadal variability, including Arctic freshwater input, warming, salinification, redistribution of heat and salt, and faunal fluctuations (Haak et al., 2003; Hátún et al., 2009; Holliday et al., 2020; Robson et al., 2012). For example, from 1997 to 2005, the northeast Atlantic underwent warming, salinification, and nutrient decline (Bersch et al., 2007; Foukal & Lozier, 2017; Holliday et al., 2015; Johnson et al., 2013; Robson et al., 2012). Since 2012, this pattern has reversed, with the eastern SPG experiencing its greatest freshening in 120 years (Holliday et al., 2020). While still debated, the mechanisms to explain these trends include a retreat and subsequent advance of the eastward extent of the SPG/SPF and changes in northward heat transport associated with the AMOC.
Detailed observational data are limited to the last few decades, and, while there are a few reconstructions of the SPG that extend back to the preindustrial era with the resolution to capture the recent decadal variability, they are based on ice-core data or temperature reconstructions using continental records and are therefore indirect recorders of SPG variability (Osman et al., 2019; Rahmstorf et al., 2015). Nevertheless, these records hint that 20th century SPG decadal variability was superimposed on long-term trends. For example, analysis of Greenland ice-core dimethyl-sulfide products indirectly suggests a long-term decline in SPG productivity over the 20th century (Figure 2; Osman et al., 2019). Furthermore, reconstructions suggest an increasing intensity of the North Atlantic “warming hole” during the 20th century, a portion of the eastern SPG that has cooled relative to the northern hemisphere (Caesar et al., 2018; Rahmstorf et al., 2015; Thornalley et al., 2018). While this temperature fingerprint is associated with AMOC strength in coupled climate models, similar fingerprints are observed in simulations for changes in SPG strength (Jungclaus et al., 2014; Sgubin et al., 2017). Therefore, these reconstructions may also suggest changing SPG dynamics. Establishing the presence of any long-term trend in the SPG is important for developing our understanding of its future behavior.

Here, we develop a 10,000-year record of eastern SPG extent by applying established paleoceanographic techniques to a suite of rapidly accumulating sediment cores from the northern Iceland Basin (sedimentation rates of 30–140 cm/kyr). Their location near the eastern boundary of the SPG is ideal for evaluating changes in northward subtropical water penetration (Figure 1).

Our main findings derive from planktic foraminifera which, because of their habitat preferences (Be & Tolderlund, 1971), document changes in past ocean conditions (Jonkers et al., 2019). We also report the total abundances of planktic and benthic foraminifera which reflect surface export productivity (Eguchi et al., 2003; Herguera & Berger, 1991) and bulk sediment nitrogen isotope ratios (δ15N) which record the extent of nutrient utilization in surface waters (Altabet & Francois, 1994).
2. Materials and Methods

Standard paleoceanographic methods were employed in this study, outlined below. Details are provided in the supplementary information (Blindheim & Østerhus, 2005; Döös, 1995; Eiriksson et al., 2004; Griffies et al., 2009; Kostianoy & Nihoul, 2009; Miettinen et al., 2011; Piechura & Walczowski, 1995; Ramsey, 2008; Reimer et al., 2013; Siccha & Kucera, 2017; Stuiver et al., 2020; Swift & Aagaard, 1981; Takahashi & Be, 1984).

2.1. Sediment Cores

A suite of multicores (MCs) was collected in Summer 2014 during cruise EN539 (Figure 1, Table S1), each preserving the sediment–water interface. Continuous sediment accumulation up to the date of coring was therefore assumed. RAPID-17-5P is our only core to span the Holocene (to ~1,750 CE) and has been discussed previously (Moffa-Sanchez et al., 2014, 2015). Its collection location is within ~100 m of EN539-MC16 (Text S1). Records from these cores should therefore be comparable. We use the joint EN539-MC16-A and RAPID-17-5P cores (MC16-A/17-5P) as our primary data source. Comparisons with the other MCs and RAPID-21-3K (Sicre et al., 2011) are briefly discussed and shown in the supplementary figures.

2.2. Age Models

Age models for each core are based on a combination of $^{210}$Pb and $^{14}$C (Figure S7, Text S1). Sediment ages falling within the mid-20th century were verified by the presence of radiogenic $^{137}$Cs (e.g., Perner et al., 2017) and spheroidal carbonaceous particles (SCPs; Rose, 2008, 2015).

2.3. Faunal Assemblages

Approximately 300 planktonic foraminifera per sample were identified in the >150 μm size fraction (Text S1). Benthic foraminifera were counted in the same size fraction. Uncertainty on relative abundances was estimated using a binomial approach (Heslop et al., 2011). The possibility of preservation bias was assessed using a simple fragmentation index (Pfuhl & Shackleton, 2004).

To obtain a more robust estimate of the numbers of the subtropical foraminifera *Orbulina universa*, we also counted this species in the >250 μm fraction of the whole sample. The conclusions were the same regardless of counting method.

Planktic faunal assemblages were used to reconstruct temperature at 100 m depth for RAPID-17-5P/EN539-MC16-A, using the SIMMAX modern analogue technique equations outlined in Pflaum et al. (1996) in MATLAB (Text S1).

2.4. $\delta^{15}$N Measurements

We measured the $\delta^{15}$N of bulk sediment after carbonate removal (Text S1).

2.5. Particle Tracking Experiments

Due to transport by the time-varying circulation over their lifetimes (up to 4 weeks), planktic foraminifera reflect the conditions over a wider area than directly above the core site. To determine possible provenance for our specimens, we ran particle tracking experiments using the VIKING20, 1/20th degree ocean model (Breckenfelder et al., 2017; Text S1).
3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Industrial Era Changes in Proxy Data

_Turborotalita quinqueloba_, a species that prefers cool, productive waters and frontal systems (Be & Tolderlund, 1971; Husum & Hald, 2012) shows exceptional recent changes (Figures 2 to 4 and S5). For most of the Holocene, it made up ~40% of the planktic foraminiferal assemblage, suggesting subpolar (cold) conditions. Beginning at ~1750 C.E. (1675–1800, 95% confidence), the relative abundance of this species declined dramatically, with major declines occurring between 1675 and 1880, and between 1940 and 1970 (95% confidence). This species was replaced by a transitional (warmer) assemblage having a weaker association with ocean fronts (Figures 2 to 4), which the SIMMAX similarity index shows is similar to that found in the Rockall Bank/Trough area. Mean abundances of _T. quinqueloba_ for the periods 1750–1950 (27%), 1950–2000 (15%), and 2000–2010 (4%) were more than two, five, and six standard deviations below the Holocene mean, respectively.

With respect to the timing of the initial decrease in _T. quinqueloba_ abundance, it occurs between the two uppermost samples in RAPID-17-5P and may therefore be an artifact of the piston coring process. The radiocarbon dates are inconclusive as to whether RAPID-17-5P and EN539-MC16-A overlap in time. However, the very close spatial proximity of these cores means that their faunal assemblage should be comparable. The top of RAPID-17-5P must therefore be older than the base of EN539-MC16-A, and the drop in _T. quinqueloba_ abundance occurs in the missing section, constrained by two radiocarbon dates to 1675–1800 C.E. (95% confidence).

The same general trends, although of smaller magnitude, are evident in EN539-MC14 and -MC20 after ~1850 C.E. (Figure S5). A downward step change also occurred in EN539-MC25 between 1750 and 1800 C.E. Prior to 1750 C.E., the highest relative abundances of _T. quinqueloba_ occurred at the site of MC16-A/17-5P. Prior to ~1500 C.E., fluctuating relative abundances were found in the nearby EN539-MC14-A (3%–30%, Figure S5).

Since ~1750 C.E., the accumulation rates of planktonic foraminifera in MC16-A/17-5P also decreased (Figures 4 and S2), including decreasing fluxes of all major species (_T. quinqueloba_, _Neogloboquadrina incompta_, _Globigerinita glutinata_, and _Globigerina bulloides_). The total abundance of benthic foraminifera also collapsed during the 20th century (Figure 4), indicating declining export productivity (Herguera & Berger, 1991). A significant increase in _G. glutinata_ relative abundance late in the record, which is quite insensitive to temperature (Be & Tolderlund, 1971; Jonkers & Kučera, 2018), suggests a change in factors such as food-type availability (Figure 3). Bulk sediment δ¹⁵N increased by 3% during the 20th and 21st centuries in each of the cores analyzed for this proxy (MC16-B/17-5P, EN539-MC20-B, EN539-MC25-A; Figures 3, 4, and S5), indicating more complete nutrient utilization typical of subtropical oligotrophic waters. If we assume the δ¹⁵N effect of nitrate consumption to be ~8‰ (Straub et al., 2013), then to first order, the 3‰ increase in δ¹⁵N we observe towards the top of EN539-MC16-A suggests that nutrient utilization rose from ~80% to ~100% over the last 200 years, with most of the change occurring during the late 1990s/early 2000s.

The planktic foraminiferal species whose accumulation rate did not decrease during the industrial era are the subtropical species. _O. universa_ appeared near the core tops of EN539-MC16-A/B, -MC14A/B, and
-MC20-B (Figures 3 and S5), along with the rare presence of specimens of Globigerinoides ruber (both pink and white forms) in MC16-A (Data Set S1). Around the mid-1990s, these species rapidly increased to a peak in relative abundance higher than anything found earlier in the Holocene, although the accumulation rate of O. universa was likely greater in the early-mid Holocene (Figures 3 and 4).

3.2. Inferred Industrial-Era Changes in Iceland Basin Hydrography

High relative abundances (>30%) of T. quinqueloba in the modern ocean are restricted to a narrow range of average annual sea-surface temperature (SST) between 4°C and 8°C, located on the southern side of the Arctic and Polar Fronts (Figure S3) (Blindheim & Østerhus, 2005; Döös, 1995; Eiríksson et al., 2004; Griffies et al., 2009; Kostianoy & Nihoul, 2009; Miettinen et al., 2011; Piechura & Walczowski, 1995; Ramsey, 2008; Reimer et al., 2013; Siccha & Kucera, 2017; Stuiver et al., 2020; Swift & Aagaard, 1981; Takahashi & Be, 1984). Annual average climatological SST in the likely source area of T. quinqueloba fossils in MC16-A/17-5P (Figure S4) is 8.5°C–10°C (Figure 1). Our data therefore suggest an increase of 0.5°C–2°C in the annual mean SST of the Iceland Basin during the industrial-era, mostly accomplished during the 20th century. The SIMMAX reconstruction of temperature at 100 m depth from MC16-A/17-5P also suggests a significant warming of ~1°C in the Iceland Basin since 1750, with variability that matches observed temperatures since 1948, although the magnitude of the reconstructed change is lower than observed (Figure 2).

In order to achieve the temperature increase outlined above, we suggest that there must also have been a change in the dominant water mass (from subpolar to warmer transitional Atlantic Water), which may also explain the other impacts. For example, very high Holocene T. quinqueloba, planktic, and benthic abundances are driven by higher productivity as well as lower temperature. In addition, widely differing preindustrial abundances of T. quinqueloba in closely located core sites suggest the presence of a strong barrier to particle transport in the upper ocean (Figures 3 and S5). This evidence suggests the presence of a frontal system close to MC16-A/17-5P that separated the northern and southern parts of the Iceland Basin, stimulating the very high productivity—absent in modern times. The late increase in nutrient utilization implied by the 515N data, in the presence of evidence for declining productivity, suggests a lower nutrient load in surface waters, which could also be explained by changes in frontal systems.

Hypothetically, the abrupt peak in (sub-) tropical species near the tops of EN539-MC16-A, -MC14-A, and -MC25-A may be an artifact of preservation bias (Zamelczyk et al., 2013). However, high fluxes of O. universa are also observed in the mid- and early-Holocene sections of 17-5P, showing that this species is not necessarily lost due to fragmentation/dissolution. In addition, other species such as G. bulloides may be more susceptible to dissolution than O. universa (Thunell & Honjo, 1981), and these and other fragile species (T. quinqueloba) show opposite trends in relative abundance and flux at the top of EN539-MC16-A when compared to O. universa (Figures S1 and S2). The sudden increase in O. universa therefore suggests a response to the gradual 20th century warming, amplified by sustained warmth during the 1990s–2000s. Additional evidence for a threshold response in northeast Atlantic ecology comes from the northward migration of Atlantic mackerel (Scomber scombrus), first observed in Icelandic waters in the late 1800s. During the 20th century, shoals were observed, and in the early 2000s, fisheries were established in both Iceland and Greenland (Figure 3; Astthorsson et al., 2012; Jansen et al., 2016).

In summary, our data suggest that during the Holocene prior to 1750 CE, the Iceland Basin was bathed by cool, productive, subpolar water and was separated from the warmer transitional water to the south by a
marked frontal system. After ~1750 CE, and mainly during the 20th century, warmer, less productive conditions expanded northwest to occupy the whole basin, affecting the distributions of plankton and animals from higher trophic levels.

3.3. Relationship of Iceland Basin Records to Changes Across the North Atlantic

The dramatic 20th century planktic foraminiferal faunal changes seen in our records are not found in other sites located either in the SPG interior (RAPID-21-3K and Perner et al., 2017, Figure S6) nor within the main body of the warm Atlantic water flowing into the Nordic Seas (Figure 3; Andersson et al., 2010; Mary et al., 2015; Staines-Urías et al., 2013). While these records tend to be of lower resolution than those presented here, the absence of similar trends in these regions highlights that the 20th century trends we observe were not predominantly caused by the mean effects of global warming, but instead reflect a northwestward expansion of the warm conditions in the Iceland Basin due to a change in ocean circulation.

Lateral expansion of warm Atlantic water also occurred in the Nordic Seas (Hald et al., 2011; Spielhagen et al., 2011), with the same timing as in the Iceland Basin (Figure 2). It is likely that areas close to water mass boundaries are particularly sensitive recorders of oceanographic variability because of the strong impact of changing water mass on the species assemblage, more so than relatively small changes in temperature within water masses. We note that the details of the timing of these changes in the Nordic Seas differ slightly amongst taxa (e.g., coccolithophores; Dylmer et al., 2013), likely due to differing habitat preferences such as depth.

Several other lines of evidence suggest that the changes we report are not limited to the Iceland Basin, but instead are symptomatic of larger scale reorganization of North Atlantic circulation. Long-term reconstructions of temperature, indicating warming in the western Atlantic and little change in the “warming hole,” have similar timing to the changes we observe (Figure 2; Thibodeau et al., 2010; Thornalley et al., 2018). The North Atlantic warming hole, while possibly a fingerprint of AMOC weakening, could also be a consequence of the inferred changes in the SPG (Jungclaus et al., 2014; Sgubin et al., 2017). In addition, our record of *T. quinqueloba* from MC16-A/17-5P closely parallels the Greenland ice core records of productivity decline over much of the SPG (Figure 2; Osman et al., 2019).

Thus, a suite of reconstructions now suggests that 20th century physical and ecological change in the North Atlantic were part of a unique basin-wide change in ocean dynamics. Moreover, our records show for the first time that subpolar North Atlantic 20th century levels of productivity and warmth were unprecedented during the Holocene.

3.4. Mechanisms for the Lateral Expansion of Warm Water in the Northeast Atlantic

Expansion of warm transitional water in the northeast Atlantic is related to an increase in the northward heat-flux to the region, for which the ocean is a primary driver (Asbjørnsen et al., 2019; Foukal & Lozier, 2018). Several mechanisms have been proposed that could explain such an increase, including SPG contraction (Hättn et al., 2005) and/or westward movement of the SPF (Holliday et al., 2020), wind-driven entrainment of subtropical water in the NAC (Hakkinen & Rhines, 2009; Marzocchi et al., 2015), and a delayed response to increased AMOC (Bryden et al., 2019; Robson et al., 2012).

While decadal warming/cooling in the Iceland Basin can be ascribed to propagation of anomalies across ~45°N or around the SPG (Bryden et al., 2019; Holliday et al., 2020), these anomalies tend to propagate throughout the SPG (e.g., Robson et al., 2012). The centennial trend of warming in the eastern subpolar North Atlantic as well as the relative lack of warming within the warming hole (Caesar et al., 2018) requires a more permanent redistribution of heat within the subpolar region, which may nevertheless be related to northward heat transport.

Modeling studies suggest that a spin-up of the eastern SPG can cause heat divergence within the SPG itself and heat convergence in the Iceland Basin, Nordic Seas, and eventually the Arctic (Jungclaus et al., 2014; Oldenburg et al., 2018). Mode shifts in SPG strength have also been modeled and can be achieved via freshwater addition to the North Atlantic, which also acts to weaken the AMOC (Sgubin et al., 2017). Freshening of the high latitudes due to greenhouse gas forcing is a common projection in coupled climate models (Held & Soden, 2006), and 20th century freshening trends have been documented for the SPG (Curry & Mauritzen, 2005; Friedman et al., 2017), mainly arising from a series of events known as great salinity
anomalies (e.g., Haak et al., 2003). Although the major assemblage changes occurred during the 20th century and may thus be attributable to this freshening trend, the earliest changes in the species assemblage (~1750 CE) seem too early to be influenced by anthropogenic greenhouse warming. Instead, they may have been a result of freshwater addition during the late Little Ice Age (Thornalley et al., 2018).

Alternatively, changes in wind forcing involving the North Atlantic Oscillation (NAO) can also alter the entrainment of water from the cold Labrador current into the NAC, the position of the SPF in the northeast, and being linked to North Atlantic freshening (Bersch et al., 2007; Holliday et al., 2020). Modeling and historical records have also suggested that the North Atlantic Ocean may be sensitive to volcanic forcing, via its impact on atmospheric circulation systems such as the NAO (Swingedouw et al., 2015). However, records of atmospheric circulation spanning the 20th century are contradictory, with reconstructions of the NAO index showing no long-term trend (but an increase in variability), and frequency of storms in the Northeast Atlantic either increasing, showing no change, or decreasing (Feser et al., 2015). In addition, volcanic eruptions of similar size to those thought to have caused changes during the 20th century have occurred at least four other times in the last 1,000 years (Swingedouw et al., 2015) and do not appear to have had a noticeable effect on our records.

Therefore, although there is some uncertainty regarding, the cause of 20th century trends in the SPG region, we propose that freshwater input into the North Atlantic basin is the most likely candidate to explain the basin-wide change in SPG circulation. This hypothesis could be tested by further quantifying the sensitivity of the SPG to a range of freshwater fluxes and input locations.

4. Conclusions

We present new data from northeast Atlantic sediment cores. The foraminiferal faunal assemblages, abundances, and isotopic trends suggest warming and declining productivity in the Iceland Basin, likely beginning at ~1750 CE, but most prominent during the 20th century. Twentieth century trends exceed the range of variability observed in records from the same site spanning the last 10,000 years. The spatial structure of the changes and other reconstructions of the SPG indicate a basin-wide, 20th century shift in the ocean dynamics of the North Atlantic region. Although uncertainty remains, we suggest that increased freshwater input to the SPG was a likely cause for the circulation change. Given the important role that the SPG plays in modifying the impacts of climate change around the region, including in the climate-sensitive Arctic Ocean and for economically important ecology, it is imperative that future studies aim to constrain the underlying driver of this long-term shift in dynamics.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Data Availability Statement

Sediment core data are available from the World Data Service for Paleoclimatology (https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/paleo/study/29030) and supplementary information files. Particle tracking data are available from Zenodo (https://zenodo.org/record/3727170).

References

Altabet, M. A., & Francois, R. (1994). Sedimentary nitrogen isotopic ratio as a recorder for surface ocean nitrate utilization. Global Biogeochemical Cycles, 8(1), 103–116. https://doi.org/10.1029/93GB03396

Andersson, C., Pausata, F. S. R., Jansen, E., Risebrobakken, B., & Telford, R. J. (2010). Holocene trends in the foraminifer record from the Norwegian Sea and the North Atlantic Ocean. Climate of the Past, 6(2), 179–193. https://doi.org/10.5194/cp-6-179-2010

Årthun, M., Eldevik, T., Smedsrud, L. H., Skagseth, Ø., & Ingvaldsen, R. B. (2012). Quantifying the influence of Atlantic heat on Barents Sea ice variability and retreat. Journal of Climate, 25(13), 4736–4743. https://doi.org/10.1175/JCLI-D-11-00466.1

Asbjørnsen, H., Årthun, M., Skagseth, Ø., & Eldevik, T. (2019). Mechanisms of ocean heat anomalies in the Norwegian Sea. Journal of Geophysical Research: Oceans, 124, 2908–2923. https://doi.org/10.1029/2018JC014649

Astthorsson, O. S., Valdimarsson, H., Gudmundsdottir, A., & Óskarsson, G. J. (2012). Climate-related variations in the occurrence and distribution of mackerel (Scomber scombrus) in Icelandic waters. ICES Journal of Marine Science, 69(7), 1289–1297. https://doi.org/10.1093/icemodel/sfs084
Be, A. W. H., & Tollerlund, D. S. (1971). Distribution and ecology of living planktonic foraminifera in surface waters of the Atlantic and Indian oceans. In B. M. Funnell & W. R. Riedel (Eds.), The micropaleontology of oceans (pp. 105–149). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Bersch, M., Yashayaev, I., & Koltermann, K. P. (2007). Recent changes of the thermohaline circulation in the subpolar North Atlantic. Ocean Dynamics, 57(3), 223–235. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10236-007-0104-7

Blindheim, J., & Østerhus, S. (2005). The Nordic Seas, main oceanographic features. In The Nordic Seas: An integrated perspective: Oceanography, climatology, biogeochemistry, and modeling (pp. 11–37). USA: Wiley Blackwell. https://doi.org/10.1002/1586-0078.1

Breckenfelder, T.; Rhee, M.; Roesler, A.; Böning, C. W.; Blaasch, A.; Behrens, E., & Mertens, C. (2017). Flow paths and variability of the North Atlantic Current: A comparison of observations and a high-resolution model. Journal of Geophysical Research: Oceans, 122, 2686–2708. https://doi.org/10.1002/2016JC012444

Bryden, H. L., Johns, W. E., King, B. A., McCarthy, G., McDonagh, E. L., Moat, B. I., & Smeed, D. A. (2019). Reduction in ocean heat transport at 26°N since 2008 cools the eastern subpolar gyre of the North Atlantic Ocean. Journal of Climate. https://doi.org/10.1175/jcli-d-19-0323.1

Caesar, L., Rahmstorf, S., Robinson, A., Feulner, G., & Saba, V. (2018). Observed fingerprint of a weakening Atlantic Ocean overturning circulation. Nature, 556(7700), 191–196. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-018-0006-5

Curry, R., & Mauritzen, C. (2005). Dilution of the Northern North Atlantic Ocean in recent decades. Science, 308(5729), 1772–1774. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1109477

Daniault, N., Mercier, H., Lherminier, P., Sarafanov, A., Falina, A., Husum, K., & De Vernal, A. (2013). Northward advection of Atlantic water in the eastern Nordic Seas over the last 3000 yr. Climate of the Past, 9(4), 1505–1518. https://doi.org/10.5194/cp-9-1505-2013

Eguchi, N. O., Ujiié, H., Kawahata, H., & Taira, A. (2003). Seasonal variations in planktonic foraminifera at three sediment traps in the subarctic, transition and subtropical zones of the central North Pacific Ocean. Marine Micropaleontology, 48(1–2), 149–163. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0377-8896(03)00020-3

Erikksson, J., Larsen, G., Knudsen, K. L., Heinemeier, J., & Simonarson, L. A. (2004). Marine reservoir age variability and water mass distribution in the Iceland Sea. Quaternary Science Reviews, 23, 2247–2268. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.quascirev.2004.08.002

Feuer, F., Barrickowsa, M., Krueger, O., Schenk, F., Weisse, R., & Xia, L. (2015). Storminess over the North Atlantic and Northwestern Europe—A review. Quarterly Journal of the Royal Meteorological Society, 141(687), 350–382. https://doi.org/10.1002/qj.2364

Foukal, N. P., & Lozier, M. S. (2017). Assessing variability in the size and strength of the North Atlantic subpolar gyre. Journal of Geophysical Research: Oceans, 122, 6295–6308. https://doi.org/10.1002/2017JC012798

Foukal, N. P., & Lozier, M. S. (2018). Examining the origins of ocean heat content variability in the eastern North Atlantic subpolar gyre. Geophysical Research Letters, 45, 11,275–11,283. https://doi.org/10.1029/2018GL079122

Friedman, A. R., Reverdin, G., Khodri, M., & Gastineau, G. (2017). A new record of Atlantic Sea surface salinity from 1896 to 2013 reveals a freshening event for 120 years in eastern subpolar North Atlantic. Micropaleontology, 63(3), 270–288. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026469417000046

Friedlander, M., White, M., Oliver, B., & Martin, J. (2003). Shifting surface currents in the northern North Atlantic Ocean. Geophysical Research Letters, 30(9), 1473. https://doi.org/10.1029/2003GL017065

Hakkinen, S., & Rhines, P. B. (2009). Shifting surface currents in the northern North Atlantic Ocean. Journal of Geophysical Research, 114, C04005. https://doi.org/10.1029/2008JC004683

Hald, M., Salomonsen, G. R., Husum, K., & Wilson, L. J. (2011). A 2000 year record of Atlantic water temperature variability from the Malangen Fjord, northeastern North Atlantic. Holocene, 21(7), 1049–1059. https://doi.org/10.1177/0959683611400457

Hátún, H., & Chafik, L. (2018). On the recent ambiguity of the North Atlantic subpolar gyre index. Journal of Geophysical Research: Oceans, 123, 5072–5076. https://doi.org/10.1029/2018JC014101

Hátún, H., Payne, M. R., Beauchamp, G., Reid, P. C., Sande, A. B., Drange, H., & et al. (2009). Large bio-geographical shifts in the north-eastern Atlantic Ocean: From the subpolar gyre, via plankton, to blue whiting and pilot whales. Progess in Oceanography, 80(3–4), 149–162. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pocean.2009.03.001

Hátun, H., Sando, A. B., Drange, H., Hansen, B., & Valdimarsson, H. (2005). Influence of the Atlantic subpolar gyre on the thermohaline circulation. Science, 309(5742), 1841–1844. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1114777

Held, I. M., & Soden, B. J. (2006). Robust responses of the hydrological cycle to global warming. Journal of Climate, 19(21), 5686–5699. https://doi.org/10.1175/2006JCLI3990.1

Herguera, J. C., & Berger, W. H. (1991). Paleoproductivity from benthic foraminifera abundance: Glacial to postglacial change in the west-equatorial Pacific. Geology, 19(12), 1173. https://doi.org/10.1130/0091-7613(1991)019<1173:PFBAFG>2.3.CO;2

Heslop, D., De Schepper, S., & Prose, U. (2011). Diagnosing the uncertainty of taxa relative abundances derived from count data. Marine Micropaleontology, 79(3–4), 114–120. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marmicro.2011.03.007

Hollanday, N. P., Bersch, M., Berx, B., Chafik, L., Cunningham, S., Florindo, F., & et al. (2020). Ocean circulation causes the largest freshwater event for 120 years in eastern subpolar North Atlantic Nature Communications, 11(1), 585. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-020-14474-y

Hollanday, N. P., Cunningham, S. A., Johnson, C., Gary, S. F., Griffths, C., Read, J. F., & Sherwin, T. (2015). Multidecadal variability of potential temperature, salinity, and transport in the eastern subpolar North Atlantic. Journal of Geophysical Research: Oceans, 120, 5945–5967. https://doi.org/10.1002/2015JC010762

Husum, K., & Hald, M. (2012). Arctic planktic foraminiferal assemblages: Implications for subsurface temperature reconstructions. Marine Micropaleontology, 96, 97–102. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marmicro.2012.07.001

Jansen, T., Post, S., Christiansen, T., Øskarsson, G. J., Boje, J., MacKenzie, B. R., & et al. (2016). Ocean warming expands habitat of a rich natural resource and benefits a national economy. Ecological Applications, 26(7), 2021–2032. https://doi.org/10.1002/emp.1364

Johnson, C., Inall, M., & Häkkinen, S. (2013). Declining nutrient concentrations in the northeast Atlantic as a result of a weakening Subpolar Gyre. Deep Sea Research Part I: Oceanographic Research Papers, 82, 95–107. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dsr.2013.08.007
Jonkers, L., Hillebrand, H., & Kucera, M. (2019). Global change drives modern plankton communities away from the pre-industrial state. *Nature*, 570(7761), 372–375. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-019-2302-3

Jonkers, L., & Kucera, M. (2018). Sensitivity to species selection indicates the effect of nuisance variables on marine microfossil transfer functions. *Climate of the Past Discusions*, 15(3), 1–19. https://doi.org/10.5194/cp-2018-107

Jungclaus, J. H., Lohmann, K., & Zanchettin, D. (2014). Enhanced 20th-century heat transfer to the Arctic simulated in the context of climate variations over the last millennium. *Climate of the Past*, 10(6), 2201–2213. https://doi.org/10.5194/cp-2010-2201-2014

Kostianoy, A. G., & Nihoul, J. C. J. (2009). Frontal zones in the Norwegian, Greenland, Barents and Bering Seas. In *Influence of climate change on the changing Arctic and sub-Arctic conditions* (pp. 171–190). Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer.

Koul, V., Tessler, J. J., Hersch, M., Hätun, H., Brune, S., Borthert, L., et al. (2020). Unraveling the choice of the north Atlantic subpolar gyre index. *Scientific Reports*, 10(1), 1. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-020-57790-5

Locarnini, R. A., Mishonov, A. V., Antonov, J. I., Boyer, T. P., Garcia, H. E., Baranova, O. K., et al. (2020). Retrieved from http://www.nodc.noaa.gov/programs/data-access/physical/nwop.html

Marzocchi, A., Hirschi, J. M. M., Holliday, N. P., Cunningham, S. A., Blaker, A. T., & Stewart, C. (2015). Exceptional twenty-first-century slowdown in Atlantic Ocean overturning circulation. *Geophysical Research Letters*, 42, 1002–1007. https://doi.org/10.1002/2015GL064923

Mary, Y., Eynaud, F., Zaragosi, S., Maliažič, B., Cremer, M., & Schmidt, S. (2015). Enhanced modern heat transfer to the Arctic by warm Atlantic water. *Journal of Geophysical Research: Oceans*, 120(3), 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1002/2014JC010588

Oldenburg, D., Armour, K. C., Thompson, L., & Bitz, C. M. (2018). Distinct mechanisms of ocean heat transport into the Arctic under weak overturning circulation. *Geophysical Research Letters*, 45, 7692–7700. https://doi.org/10.1002/2018GL078719

Osman, M. B., Das, S. B., Trusel, L. D., Evans, M. J., Fischer, H., Griemen, M. M., et al. (2019). Industrial-era decline in subarctic Atlantic productivity. *Nature*, 569(7757), 551–555. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-019-1181-8

Pehlivan, A., Sallenger, W. B., Stueck, S., & Hansen, B. (2005). Measured volume, heat, and salt fluxes from the Atlantic to the Arctic Mediterranean. *Geophysical Research Letters*, 32. https://doi.org/10.1029/2004GL022188

Perner, K., Mores, M., Hansen, J., Kuijpers, A., Trolstva, S. R., & Prins, M. A. (2017). Subarctic Front migration at the Reykjanes Ridge during the late Holocene: Evidence from planktonic foraminifera. *Bioscience*, 47(1), 175–188. https://doi.org/10.1111/bior.12263

Plassmann, U., Duprat, J., Pujol, C., & Labahry, L. D. (1996). SIMMAX: A modern analog technique to deduce Atlantic sea surface temperatures from planktonic foraminifera in deep-sea sediments. *Paleoceanography*, 11(1), 15–35. https://doi.org/10.1029/95PA01743

Plöth, H. A., & Shackleton, N. J. (2004). Two proximal, high-resolution records of foraminiferal fragmentation and their implications for changes in dissolution. *Deep-Sea Research Part I: Oceanographic Research Papers*, 51(6), 809–832. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dsr.2004.02.003

Piechura, J., & Walczowski, W. (1995). The Arctic Front: Structure and dynamics. *Oceanologia*, 37(1), 47–73.

Rahmstorf, S., Box, J. E., Feulner, G., Mann, M. E., Robinson, A., Rutherford, S., & Schaffernicht, E. J. (2015). Exceptional twentieth-century slowdown in Atlantic Ocean overturning circulation. *Nature Climate Change*, 5(5), 475–480. https://doi.org/10.1038/nclimate2554

Ramsey, C. B. (2008). Deposition models for chronologic records. *Quaternary Science Reviews*, 27(1–2), 42–60. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.quascirev.2007.01.019

Reimer, P. J., Bard, E., Bayliss, A., Beck, J. W., Blackwell, P. G., Ramsey, C. B., et al. (2013). IntCal13 and Marine13 radiocarbon age calibration curves 0–50,000 years cal BP. *Radiocarbon*, 55(4), 1869–1887. https://doi.org/10.2458/azu_js_rc.55.16947

Rhein, M., Kecke, D., Hüttil-Kabus, S., Roessler, A., Mertens, C., Meissner, R., et al. (2011). Deep water formation, the subpolar gyre, and the meridional overturning circulation in the subpolar North Atlantic. *Deep-Sea Research Part II: Topical Studies in Oceanography*, 58(17–18), 1819–1832. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dsr2.2010.06.016

Robson, J., Sutton, R., Lohmann, K., Smith, D., & Palmer, M. D. (2012). Causes of the rapid warming of the North Atlantic Ocean in the mid-1990s. *Journal of Climate*, 25(12), 4116–4134. https://doi.org/10.1175/JCLI-D-11-00443.1

Rose, N. L. (2008). Quality control in the analysis of lake sediments for spheroidal carbonaceous particles. *Limnology and Oceanography: Methods*, 6(4), 172–179. https://doi.org/10.4319/lom.2006.6.172

Rose, N. L. (2015). Spheroidal carbonaceous fly ash particles provide a globally synchronous stratigraphic marker for the Anthropocene. *Environmental Science & Technology*, 49(7), 4155–4162. https://doi.org/10.1021/acs.est.5b00543

Sugbin, G., Swingdoudv, D., Drijfhout, S., Mary, Y., & Bennabi, A. (2017). Abrupt cooling over the North Atlantic in modern climate models. *Nature Communications*, 8(1), 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1038/ncomms14375

Siccha, M., & Kucera, M. (2017). Data Descriptor: ForCenS, a curated database of planktonic foraminifera census counts in marine surface sediment samples, 1–12.

Sicre, M. A., Hall, I. R., Mignot, J., Khodri, M., Ezat, U., Truong, M. X., et al. (2011). Sea surface temperature variability in the subpolar Atlantic over the last two millennia. *Paleoceanography*, 26(4), 1. https://doi.org/10.1029/2010PA001918

Spießhagen, R. F., Werner, K., Sorensen, S. A., Zamczuk, Y., Kandiano, E., Budeus, G., et al. (2011). Enhanced modern heat transfer to the Arctic by warm Atlantic water. *Science*, 333(6016), 450–453. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1197397

Staines-Utrías, F., Kuijpers, A., & Korte, C. (2013). Evolution of subpolar North Atlantic surface circulation since the early Holocene inferred from planktonic foraminifera faunal and stable isotope records. *Quaternary Science Reviews*, 76, 66–81. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.quascirev.2013.06.016

Staub, M., Tremblay, M. M., Sigman, D. M., Studer, A. S., Ren, H., Toggweiler, J. R., & Haug, H. G. (2013). Nutrient conditions in the subpolar North Atlantic during the last glacial period reconstructed from foraminifera-bound nitrogen isotopes. *Paleoceanography*, 28(1), 79–90. https://doi.org/10.1002/palo.20103

Stuiver, M., Reimer, P. J., & Reimer, R. W. (2020). CALIB 7.1. Retrieved from http://calib.org

Stuiver, M., Reimer, P. J., & Reimer, R. W. (2020). CALIB 7.1. Retrieved from http://calib.org

SPOONER ET AL. 9 of 10

Geophysical Research Letters

10.1029/2020GL087577
Swift, J. H., & Aagaard, K. (1981). Seasonal transitions and water mass formation in the Iceland and Greenland seas. *Deep Sea Research Part A, Oceanographic Research Papers*, 28(10), 1107–1129. https://doi.org/10.1016/0198-0149(81)90050-9

Swingedouw, D., Ortega, P., Mignot, J., Guilyardi, E., Masson-Delmotte, V., Butler, P. G., et al. (2015). Bidecadal North Atlantic ocean circulation variability controlled by timing of volcanic eruptions. *Nature Communications*, 6(1), 1, 6545–12. https://doi.org/10.1038/ncomms7545

Takahashi, K., & Be, A. W. H. (1984). Planktonic foraminifera: Factors controlling sinking speeds. *Deep Sea Research Part A. Oceanographic Research Papers*, 31(12), 1477–1500. https://doi.org/10.1016/0198-0149(84)90083-9

Thibodeau, B., De Vernal, A., Hillaire-Marcel, C., & Mucci, A. (2010). Twentieth century warming in deep waters of the Gulf of St. Lawrence: A unique feature of the last millennium. *Geophysical Research Letters*, 37. https://doi.org/10.1029/2010GL044771

Thornalley, D. J. R., Oppo, D. W., Ortega, P., Robson, J. I., Brierley, C. M., Davis, R., et al. (2018). Anomalously weak Labrador Sea convection and Atlantic overturning during the past 150 years. *Nature*, 556(7700), 227–230. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-018-0007-4

Thunell, R. C., & Honjo, S. (1981). Calcite dissolution and the modification of planktonic foraminiferal assemblages. *Marine Micropaleontology*, 6(2), 169–182. https://doi.org/10.1016/0377-8398(81)90004-9

Tiedje, B., Köhl, A., & Baehr, J. (2012). Potential predictability of the North Atlantic heat transport based on an oceanic state estimate. *Journal of Climate*, 25(24), 8475–8486. https://doi.org/10.1175/JCLI-D-11-00606.1

Zamelczyk, K., Rasmussen, T. L., Husum, K., & Hald, M. (2013). Marine calcium carbonate preservation vs. climate change over the last two millennia in the Fram Strait: Implications for planktic foraminiferal paleostudies. *Marine Micropaleontology*, 98, 14–27. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marmicro.2012.10.001