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On the multi-fractal scaling properties of sea ice deformation

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Abstract

In this paper, we evaluate the neXtSIM sea ice model with respect to the observed scaling invariance properties of sea ice deformation in the spatial and temporal domains. Using an Arctic set-up with realistic initial conditions, state-of-the-art atmospheric reanalysis forcing and geostrophic currents retrieved from satellite data, we show that the model is able to reproduce the observed properties of these scaling in both the spatial and temporal domains over a wide range of scales as well as their multi-fractality. The variability of these properties during the winter season are also captured by the model. We also show that the simulated scaling exhibit a space-time coupling, a suggested property of brittle deformation at geophysical scales. The ability to reproduce the multi-fractality of these scaling is crucial in the context of downscaling model simulation outputs to infer sea ice variables at the sub-grid scale, and also has implication in modeling the statistical properties of deformation-related quantities such as lead fractions, and heat and salt fluxes.

1   Introduction

The fact that sea ice deformation maps look similar at different scales, with highly localized deformation features intersecting with a wide range of intersection angles (e.g., Hutchings et al., 2005; Wang, 2007; Hutter et al., 2019), suggests scale-invariance in the spatial domain (Erlingsson, 1988). We note that scale-invariance in space is also observed in sea ice for other deformation-related quantities, such floe sizes (Rothrock and Thorndike, 1984; Matsushita, 1985) and keel profiles (Rothrock and Thorndike, 1980). Comprehensive datasets of sea ice drift are now available at different spatial and temporal resolutions, from 50 m/10 min (Oikkonen et al., 2017), 400 m/2 days (Thomas et al., 2004, 2007, 2009) to 5-10 km/3 days (Kwok, 2001; Stern and Moritz, 2002). Analyses of these datasets have confirmed the presence of scale-invariance and, in particular, has confirmed that sea ice deformation is highly localized in both space and time.

In the spatial domain, deformation is observed to be concentrated along quasi one-dimensional, so-called linear kinematic features (LKFs) organized in "web-like arrays" (Kwok et al., 1998; Thomas et al., 2007) that can be clearly identified over a wide range of space scales (Thomas et al., 2007; Linow and Dierking, 2017; Hutter et al., 2019). Sea ice de-
5 formation also appears to be a self-similar, highly localized process in the time domain. Isolated, short-duration fracturing events of various intensity occur over a wide range of frequencies. These events also sustain larger-scale deformation, maintaining the LKFs "active" for many days Coon et al. (2007). The reorganization and formation of new LKFs occur in response to changes in the large scale atmospheric forcing (Kwok, 2001), and perma-
10 nent deformation with high deformation rates in the ice pack is mainly synchronous with high winds events (Oikkonen et al., 2017).

A quantitative indication of *scale-invariance* in sea ice deformation is given by the shape of the distribution of deformation rate invariants (i.e. shear and divergence) and of the total deformation rates, which we refer to here as $\dot{\varepsilon}$. These probability density functions (P) have
15 indeed been shown to be "heavy-tailed", i.e., dominated by extreme values, following a power law decay of the type

$$P(\dot{\varepsilon}) \sim \dot{\varepsilon}^{-\gamma}, \tag{1}$$

where γ is an exponent larger than 1 that depends on the spatial and time scale considered (Lindsay and Stern, 2003; Marsan et al., 2004; Rampal et al., 2008; Hutchings et al., 2011;
20 Bouillon and Rampal, 2015b). This important characteristic expresses scale-invariance, as it is impossible from a power law distribution to determine the scale of a given deformation even by comparing the relative number of deformation events of different sizes.

Localization in the time and space domain is revealed by scaling analysis of the deformation rate invariants. In such analysis, deformation rates are estimated at different spatial and
25 temporal scales, by such methods as "coarse-graining" (see section 3 for more details). The mean deformation rate estimated using coarse-graining analysis (e.g., Lindsay and Stern, 2003; Marsan et al., 2004; Bouillon and Rampal, 2015b) or dispersion analysis of pair of buoys (Rampal et al., 2008), the *mean* has been shown to vary with the spatial scale, L,

and temporal scale of observation, T, as

$$\langle\dot{\varepsilon}\rangle \sim L^{-\beta}, \tag{2}$$
$$\langle\dot{\varepsilon}\rangle \sim T^{-\alpha}, \tag{3}$$

respectively, hence following a power law. The scaling exponents, β and α are both equal
or greater than zero and quantify the degree of localization of the deformation. In the space
domain, $\beta = 0$ characterizes the homogeneous deformation of an elastic solid or viscous
fluid, i.e., a deformation that does not depend on the spatial scale, while $\beta = 2$, i.e. the
topological dimension for the 2D-like sea ice cover, corresponds to a single "point" concentrating all of the deformation in an otherwise undeformed material (Rampal et al., 2008).
Conversely, in the time domain, $\alpha = 0$ corresponds to a homogeneous deformation and
a single, temporally isolated deformation event corresponds to the limit of $\alpha = 1$ (Rampal
et al., 2008). This scaling has been shown to hold over a very wide range of space and time
scales (Rampal et al., 2008; Oikkonen et al., 2017; Weiss, 2017), with that α and β larger
than 0, even for time scales on the order of the winter season and for space scales on the
order of the length of the Arctic basin. This result indicates the absence of a characteristic time and/or space scale for the mean sea ice deformation over these scales and, as a
consequence, that sea ice deformation can not be assumed homogeneous over time/space
scales relevant for simulations of the Arctic system.

The fact that sea ice deformation rates are characterized by a heavy-tailed statistical
distribution, i.e. dominated by extreme events, also indicates that the mean (moment of
order 1) is not a sufficient quantity to describe the distribution of deformation rates at a
given time/space scale. Higher moments of the distribution of deformation rates, such as the
variance (order 2) and skewness (order 3), should indeed be explored to better describe the
distribution and the associated process of sea ice deformation, and considered in temporal
and scaling analyses as proposed in this study.

While the value of the scaling exponents β and α for the first moment (the mean) describes the rate at which the magnitude of deformation events decreases with the scale
of observation, it is the change in the value of β and α with respect to the moment q of

the distribution that indicates how the temporal and spatial localization itself changes with the *magnitude* of deformation events. This change can be described by so-called structure functions of the form

$$\beta(q) = aq^2 + bq, \tag{4}$$

$$\alpha(q) = cq^2 + dq, \tag{5}$$

$$\tag{6}$$

in space and time respectively. In the case of a linear structure function, i.e. no curvature or equivalently $a = 0$ or $c = 0$, the amount of localization of large and small deformation events is the same and the scaling is said to be *mono-fractal*. In the case where both coefficients a and b or c and d are positive the structure functions are convex, meaning that the higher order moments of the distribution therefore increase much faster than the lower order moments with decreasing scale of observation. In other words, *large* deformation events are *more localized* in time and space than smaller events, corresponding to the definition of a *multi-fractal* scaling (e.g., Kolmogorov, 1962; Lovejoy and Schertzer, 2007). Note that in the literature multifractality is also called *intermittency* when present in the time dimension and *heterogeneity* when present in the spatial dimension. The largest the curvature, the stronger the *degree of multifractality* of the scaling.

Spatial scaling analysis of sea ice deformation retrieved from radar or buoy drift data show a clear multi-fractal scaling expressed by a power law scaling of the first, second, and third moments, ranging from the resolution of the data up to hundreds of km (e.g., Marsan et al., 2004; Rampal et al., 2008; Hutchings et al., 2011; Bouillon and Rampal, 2015a). Recently, Weiss and Dansereau (2017) have suggested, based on the combination of all available data, including the ones of Oikkonen et al. (2017), that this multi-fractality also holds in the time domain, over a period of 3 to 160 days. We note that multi-fractality in space has also been observed for open water densities (Weiss and Marsan, 2004) and lead fractions (Olason et al., 2019), and in time for shear stress amplitudes (Weiss and Marsan, 2004) and principal stress directions (Weiss, 2008).

These properties of sea ice deformation imply that observations of these quantities available at large scales can be statistically related, i.e, downscaled, to the same quantities at smaller, unresolved scales. In the case of model simulations, *downscaling* of outputs could be particularly valuable to infer quantities at the sub-grid and/or sub-time-step scale. In this context, the capability to reproduce mono- versus the multi-fractality of these properties becomes very important. Indeed, if one was to estimate the distribution of a variable at the sub-grid scale based on a model that would not reproduce the observed multi-fractality, but only a mono-fractality, then the downscaled distribution of this variable would greatly underestimate extreme values.

The multi-fractal behaviour of sea ice has been the subject of a large number of interesting studies and is hypothesized to be of significant importance for sea-ice rheology (e.g., Weiss and Dansereau, 2017). Bouillon and Rampal (2015a) and Rampal et al. (2016) showed that previous versions of neXtSIM were capable of reproducing the spatial scaling and multi-fractal behaviour of the ice, with a very weak temporal scaling reported by Rampal et al. (2016). Spreen et al. (2017) and Bouchat and Tremblay (2017) have used some scaling analysis to investigate their respective viscous-plastic models, without going into the full details of a multi-fractal analysis or considering the temporal scaling. Hutter et al. (2018) on the other hand does a full multi-fractal analysis of the spatial and temporal scaling in a viscous-plastic model. Their work shows that with a model running at ∼1 km resolution they can reproduce reasonably good spatial scaling and multi-fractality down to the 10 km scale and up to 200 km; it is not shown how well the scaling holds down to the actual model resolution and their spatial scaling does not hold beyond the 200 km scale. Their results on temporal scaling show some inconsistencies: the authors report a reasonably good temporal scaling when considering the full domain (but do not report on multi-fractality), however, in the smaller region covered by the EGPS data the estimated scaling exponents are significantly smaller than for observations. They also only report temporal scaling for up to 30 days. Hutter and Losch (2019) appear to improve on these results, but as this paper is still under review further detailing of their results is premature.

The observed self-similarity and multi-fractality in the deformation and related characteristics of sea ice actually poses great challenges to the development of sea ice models, in particular in the continuum framework. On the one hand, the momentum and evolution equations for sea ice properties are based on *mean* variables. On the other hand, however, the observed multi-fractality in sea ice deformation implies that there is not a clear separation of scales between the strain rate due to mesoscale (50-100 m) heterogeneities in the ice (leads, ridges, etc.) and the strain rates at 10 to 100 km scale. Consequently, no scale appears appropriate to homogenize sea ice motion and thereby define a mean velocity or deformation rate for model resolution ranging from 50 m to 100 km.

In the absence of a characteristic space/time scale for the sea ice deformation perhaps the best a continuum framework for sea ice modelling can do is to correctly reproduce the statistics of deformation from the smallest scales resolved (the *nominal scale*) to the largest scale, i.e. from the resolution of the grid in space and the model time step in time, to the size of the Arctic basin and the time scale of a season. This is one of the motivation in developing neXtSIM, the numerical model used in the current study. Such localization at the nominal scale is the most faithful representation of the discontinuous nature of sea ice possible in a continuum model. Knowing the importance of essentially discontinuous features, such as leads, for atmosphere–ocean interactions modulated by sea ice (e.g. Smith, 1974; Kozo, 1983; Esau, 2007; Marcq and Weiss, 2012), we can expect the effect of using an ice model which localizes features at the nominal scale to be essential for improving the representation of this interactions in a coupled system.

This paper consists in the last step in validating neXtSIM against sea ice deformation statistics. While previous work have shown that the model reproduces the observed scaling of sea ice deformation (Bouillon and Rampal, 2015a; Rampal et al., 2016) in *space*, the temporal scaling and multi-fractality of both types of scaling have not yet been demonstrated for this model. The comparison performed here is based on satellite observations of sea ice deformation and winter-long simulations over the Arctic Ocean.

Section 2.1 and 2.2 discuss the recent developments of neXtSIM, the simulation setup and the observations. Section 3 describes the methodology used to perform the multi-fractal

scaling analyses on both the model and observational data. Results of these analyses are presented in Section 4 and discussed in Section 5.

2 Model and observations

2.1 Model and simulation setup

5 neXtSIM is a finite elements sea ice model that uses a moving Lagrangian mesh. Its original dynamical component was based on the Elasto-Brittle (EB) mechanical framework of Amitrano et al. (1999), first implemented in the context of sea ice by Girard et al. (2011) to account for brittle fracturing processes and the associated spatial localization of deformation. This framework was later adapted by Bouillon and Rampal (2015b) and Rampal
10 et al. (2016) for long-term simulations of the Arctic sea ice cover including thermodynamical processes and advection, using a Lagrangian treatment of the equations of motion and a dynamical remeshing scheme. Year-long simulations were presented in Rampal et al. (2016) and evaluated with respect to sea ice area, extent, volume, drift, and deformation. In particular, the simulated deformation rates were demonstrated to be in good agreement
15 with observations on the basis of their scaling properties *in space*.

However, the Elasto-Brittle model does not, by definition, include a physical mechanism for *irreversible* deformations, as it is based on a strictly linear-elastic constitutive law. It therefore cannot represent the transition between the small, elastic deformations associated with the fracturing of the ice cover and the permanent, potentially large, post-fracturing
20 deformation that dissipates internal stresses. It is therefore not suited to represent the dynamical behavior of a fractured ice cover over long (>day) time scales and cannot represent fully the properties of sea ice deformation *in time*.

The recent Maxwell-Elasto-Brittle (MEB) rheology addresses this limitation of the EB framework by including a mechanism for the relaxation of internal stresses that depends on
25 the degree of fracturing of the sea ice cover (Dansereau et al., 2016). It is implemented in the current version of neXtSIM, which is used for this study. Another addition to the model

is the introduction of a three-thickness-categories scheme that represents explicitly the thin and newly-formed ice. The other model components (thermodynamics, slab ocean, etc.) remain unchanged relative to the version presented by Rampal et al. (2016).

All of the relevant equations of the current version of neXtSIM are presented in the appen-
dices (Sections A1 for the dynamical core and A2 for the three-thickness-categories scheme and sea ice thermodynamics). The numerics (spatial and temporal discretizations, advection scheme and numerical solvers) are the same as described in Rampal et al. (2016).

The initial mesh is generated in pre-processing over a pan-Arctic region by using the mesh generator presented in Remacle and Lambrechts (2016) with a prescribed mean res-
olution (i.e. mean length of the edges of the triangular elements) of 10 km. The coasts are defined from the Global Self-consistent, Hierarchical, High-resolution Geography Database[1]. The domain is restricted to the central Arctic by putting open boundaries on the lines cutting the Bering Strait from (-166.0 , 67.7 N) to (-170.7, 65.7 N) and cutting the Canadian Arctic Archipelago from (-59.0, 76.7 N) to (-121.0 ,69.5 N) and on the 2-segments line cutting
the Greenland and Barents and Kara Seas by joining the coordinates (-19.0, 77.0N), (11.0, 73.0 N), (22.0, 72.9 N), (43.9, 76.1 N), (75.4, 75.7 N) and (88.5, 73.6 N). We checked that using a larger domain with open conditions much further from the zone of interest does not impact the results presented in this paper.

The atmospheric forcing consists of the 10 m wind velocity, 2 m air temperature, mixing
ratio, mean sea level pressure, total precipitation amount and snow fraction, and incoming short-wave and long-wave radiation. All of these quantities are provided as three-hourly means and on a 30 km spatial resolution grid from the atmospheric state of the Arctic System Reanalysis[2] (Bromwich et al., 2016).

The ice-ocean surface stress is computed from monthly ocean surface geostrophic cur-
rents derived as in Armitage et al. (2017) from the Arctic sea surface height data obtained

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[1]GSHHS_f_L1.shp, downloaded from https://www.ngdc.noaa.gov/mgg/shorelines/data/gshhg/latest/gshhg-shp-2.3.5-1.zip, accessed 1 February 2017

[2]https://rda.ucar.edu/datasets/ds631.0, ASRv1 30-km, formerly ASR final version, Byrd Polar Research Centre/The Ohio State University. Accessed 15 April 2015

from altimeters by Armitage et al. (2016). The provided surface height fields have a hole of missing data around the North Pole that we filled using a linear interpolation between the northernmost available points and their mean. A smoother is applied to the ocean velocity components in the filled area to avoid spurious oscillations due to the interpolation method. The final ocean current forcing is at a spatial resolution of 50 km. The slab ocean salinity and temperature are nudged towards the daily sea surface temperature and salinity data provided as daily means and at 12.5 km spatial resolution over the Arctic region by the TOPAZ4 reanalysis[3] (Sakov et al., 2012) with a nudging time scale equal to 30 days. TOPAZ4 is a coupled ocean and sea ice data assimilation system for the North Atlantic and the Arctic that is based on the HYCOM ocean model and the ensemble Kalman filter data assimilation method using 100 dynamical members. A 23-year reanalysis has been completed for the period 1991–2013 and is the multi-year physical product in the Copernicus Marine Environment Monitoring Service. The ocean depth, H, used for the basal stress parametrization comes from the 1 arc-minute ETOPO1 global topography[4] (Amante and Eakins, 2009).

Our reference simulation starts on November 15th, 2006. The level of damage of the ice cover (see appendix A1) is initially set to zero where sea ice is present. Initial sea ice concentration and thickness are set from a combination of the TOPAZ4 reanalysis, and the OSISAF climate data record (Tonboe et al., 2016) and ICESAT[5] Kwok et al. (2009) datasets respectively.

2.2 Satellite observations

We use the Lagrangian displacement data produced by the RADARSAT Geophysical Processor System (RGPS) as described in Kwok et al. (1998). This dataset covers the Western Arctic for the period 1996–2008 and provides trajectories of sea ice "points" initially located

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[3]available at http://marine.copernicus.eu/services-portfolio/access-to-products/

[4]available at https://www.ngdc.noaa.gov/mgg/global/

[5]available at https://icdc.cen.uni-hamburg.de/1/daten/cryosphere/seaicethickness-satobs-arc.html

on a 10 km regular grid (http://rkwok.jpl.nasa.gov/radarsat/lagrangian.html). The positions of these points are updated when two successive SAR images are available. The time interval between two updates is typically 3 days. For the present analysis we use the data covering the winter period 2006-12-03 to 2007-04-30 from the reprocessed RGPS Lagrangian
5 displacement product, so-called RGPS Image Pair Product, introduced and used in Bouillon and Rampal (2015b) (section 2.2).

3 Methodologies for scaling analysis

Scaling analyses of sea ice deformation can be performed using two approaches: a so-called coarse-graining method as in e.g. Marsan et al. (2004) or buoys dispersion method
10 as in Rampal et al. (2008) (using pairs of buoys) or in Oikkonen et al. (2017) (using triplets of buoys). We use a similar method as Oikkonen et al. (2017), i.e. computing velocity gradients from the trajectories of triplets of points. The nominal resolution for a scaling analysis is defined as the square root of the surface area of the polygon considered. For example, the minimal spatial resolution that can be achieved with the RGPS dataset when using the
15 3-sided polygons obtained from a Delaunay triangulation is about 7.5 km. This also set the nominal spatial resolution of the analysis presented in this study.

Drifters in the model are seeded at the location of the RGPS grid points as of December 3, 2016. The RGPS grid for this initialization is undeformed and the points are regularly spaced by 10 km. The positions of the simulated drifters are updated at each model time step until
20 the end of the simulation or until the ice concentration drops to zero (through melting or opening of a lead). Both the RGPS and simulated trajectories are filtered for the presence of coasts, with a proximity threshold of 100 km. Only the trajectories spanning the same time periods in both the simulation and RGPS dataset are considered in the calculation of the deformation and their statistics. This selection lead to discarding about 1% only of the
25 total trajectory dataset, and does not affect the results of the analyses presented in this paper. However, we apply this selection in order to make our comparison between model and observations as much consistent and clean as possible.

Triplets of drifting points are defined as the result of Delaunay triangulation of the initial positions of the tracked RGPS points, which ensures that the associated polygons are independent, i.e., non-overlapping. The exact same triplets of points are considered in the model for the analysis, meaning that we follow the exact same set of triplets of trajectories
5 (or triangles) in the model and in the observations. The polygons after initiation are defined by the positions of their three nodes at any given time. We stress the fact that the simulated trajectories are not reinitialized every 3 days to match the RGPS positions; only the initial positions are identical between the RGPS and the model trajectories.

To perform a spatial scaling analysis of sea ice deformation, one needs to consider triplets
10 of points with different spacing, i.e. different sizes of polygons. In order to obtained sets of polygons of different surface areas, we perform successive Delaunay triangulation through the clouds of points defined by the initial positions of the RGPS points, using increasingly sub-sampled clouds of these points. Each set of contiguous polygons obtained using this process is associated to a spatial scale, L, defined as the mean of the square root of the
15 polygon surface areas obtained from the triangulation, i.e from 7.5 to 580 km in this study. We note that due to the finite size of the Arctic basin and the largest spatial scale of 580 km considered here, the number of triplets available for the statistical analyses decreases by a factor $(570/7.5)^2$ as the space scale increases from 7.5 to 580 km. To perform a temporal scaling analysis of sea ice deformation, one also need to consider the positions of triplets
20 of drifters separated by different times T. The number of available triplets for our analysis in the time domain therefore also decreases as the time scale considered increases due to the finite time covered by our simulation (about 5 months) which is constrained by the fact that we wish to limit our analysis to the winter period, i.e. from early December to mid-April.

For each available polygon, the total deformation rate is calculated as:

25 $$\dot{\varepsilon}_{tot} = \sqrt{\dot{\varepsilon}_{shear}^2 + \dot{\varepsilon}_{div}^2} \tag{7}$$

where $\dot{\varepsilon}_{shear}$ and $\dot{\varepsilon}_{div}$ are the two invariant, shear and divergence respectively, of the deformation rate. These invariant are estimated using a contour integral calculation as follows: The spatial derivatives of the components u and v of the velocity calculated at a given time

scale T are obtained by calculating the contour integrals as in Kwok et al. (2008) and Bouillon and Rampal (2015b) around the boundary of each polygon associated to a given space scale L:

$$u_x = \frac{1}{A} \oint u\,dy \tag{8}$$

$$u_y = -\frac{1}{A} \oint u\,dx \tag{9}$$

$$v_x = \frac{1}{A} \oint v\,dy \tag{10}$$

$$v_y = -\frac{1}{A} \oint v\,dx, \tag{11}$$

where A is the encompassed area of the polygon approximately equal to L^2. For example, u_x is approximated by:

$$u_x = \frac{1}{A} \sum_{i=1}^{n} \frac{1}{2}(u_{i+1} + u_i)(y_{i+1} - y_i), \tag{12}$$

where $n = 3$ and subscript $n + 1 = 1$. The shear rates $\dot{\varepsilon}_{shear}$ and divergence rates $\dot{\varepsilon}_{div}$ are then computed as:

$$\dot{\varepsilon}_{shear} = \sqrt{(u_x - v_y)^2 + (u_y + v_x)^2}, \tag{13}$$

$$\dot{\varepsilon}_{div} = u_x + v_y. \tag{14}$$

The distribution of total deformation rates is constructed from each given coupled space/time scale (L, T), and their first 3 moments are calculated as $\langle \dot{\varepsilon}_{tot}^q \rangle$ where $q = 1, 2, 3$ is the moment order.

Below we discuss some issues that are inherent to the data and our method and their impact in terms of the robustness of the statistics calculated here.

- **–** With time, the triangular elements can become too distorted, in which case their length scale, L, is poorly defined. Applying a test for distortion based on the smallest angle of the polygons and discarding the most distorted ones was found to affect the results in terms of the *slope* of the scaling, and the goodness of the fit of the power law fit of the scaling. Hence here we discard from the analysis the polygons having a minimum angle of 30 degrees or less.

- **–** The RGPS trajectories are not sampled at regular time intervals, contrary to the model, due to the irregular interval between two satellite orbits. The mean sampling is of about 3 days, and 90% of trajectories are sampled with a frequency between 2.5 and 3 days. Because sea ice deformation depends on the time scale (see results of section 4.2) one should make sure to use similar sampling times for the observations and the model when computing and comparing deformation rates estimates. To deal with this issue, we performed a sub-sampling of the RGPS trajectory dataset using a nearest-neighbour interpolation of the original positions at 3-day intervals, but only when the RGPS drifter's position is available within plus or minus 6 hours around the interpolation target time. The positions simulated by the model, that are outputted every 3 hours from midnight to midnight each day, are taken to match the sub-sampled RGPS time series obtained as described above.

- **–** The 3-days RGPS sampling additionally places a lower bound on the time scales one can explore when comparing the simulated and observed deformation rates. In the present analysis, we therefore restrict ourselves to time scales equal or greater than 3 days.

We find that the relative number of available polygons is what has the largest impact on the deformation statistics. Some facts therefore need to be kept in mind when performing a scaling analysis over a *finite* period of time. In the time domain, in particular, this entails that sea ice deformation is better sampled, i.e., more triplets are available, for the early than for the late part of the period and for short time scales T than for large time scales. In the

present case, the computed statistics are therefore more representative of early than late winter.

4 Results

Figure 1 shows the maps of the 3-days total, shear and absolute divergence deformation rates simulated by the model and estimated from the RGPS data at the same locations. Note that to obtain a better spatial coverage, these maps are showing all simulated or observed 3-days deformation rates for a period of 7 days centered on 4 February 2007. The probability density functions of the simulated and observed total, shear and absolute divergence deformation rates from the snapshots of Figure 1 are shown on Figure 2. All distributions exhibit a power-law tail, with almost identical slopes of about -3, similar to what e.g., Marsan et al. (2004) found in their study, and with a remarkable agreement between the model and the observations for each invariant of the deformation. From the statistical point of view, this implies that one needs to consider higher moments than the mean of the distributions to fully describe the statistics of the sea ice deformation process (Sornette, 2006). In the scaling analysis presented in the following sections, we thus systematically calculate the 3 first moments of the distributions of deformation rates.

4.1 Spatial scaling analysis

Figure 3 (left panel) shows the winter mean of the spatial scaling analysis for the observations and model calculated for a $T = 3$ days temporal scale. We found that both model and observations statistics follow power-laws. We use logarithmically spaced bins and applied an ordinary least square method to the binned data in log-log space to get reasonably accurate estimate of the power-law fits (Stern et al., 2018). The deformation rates are very well captured by the model across scales. However, the first and second moments of the distributions are slightly overestimated by the model compared to the observations, whatever the spatial scale considered. For example, at the nominal scale of 7.5 km, the first and second moments are overestimated by a factor of 2 compared to the observations. This

may be due to one or several of the following factors: (1) inaccuracies in the atmospheric forcing (2) our choice of mechanical parameters values (Weiss and Dansereau, 2017) and (3) the value of the atmospheric drag coefficient (e.g. Bouchat and Tremblay, 2017). It is especially important to note that the simulated deformation rate has not been tuned with respect to the MEB mechanical parameters in the present simulations. We consider such tuning to be out of the scope of this study, which focuses on the ability to reproduce the observed scaling (exponents of the power laws) and, in particular, their multi-fractal property (non-linearity of the structure function). The simulated and observed structure functions (i.e. the dependence of the scaling exponents to the moment order) $\beta(q)$ are shown in Figure 3 (right panel). The spatial scaling obtained for both the model and the RGPS are clearly multi-fractal, as their structure functions can be both approximated by a quadratic function as defined by equation (4) with coefficients $a = 0.11$ and 0.13, respectively. These values, corresponding to the curvature of the structure functions, are very close to those reported in previous studies ($a = 0.13$ - 0.14; Marsan et al., 2004; Rampal et al., 2016). It is important to note that the bars on this graph are estimated from the minimal and maximal local scaling exponent values, as in Bouillon and Rampal (2015a) and hence correspond to *upper-bound* estimates rather than to error bars. This good agreement is a relevant indication that the scaling in the simulated deformation fields is consistent with that observed between 7.5 and 580 km.

Using successive and contiguous *snapshots* throughout the winter, a time-series of the value of the spatial scaling exponent β obtained for the mean deformation rates ($q = 1$) is calculated, and plotted on Figure 4. It shows that the spatial scaling exponent varies between -0.1 and -0.34. These exponents are in good agreement with the 1-month running means of the scaling exponents calculated by Stern and Lindsay (2009) for the entire period covered by the RGPS dataset (1996-2008). The scaling exponent for the mean is about -0.2 on average over the whole winter period for the simulated and observed total deformation rates, which is also the value found by Marsan et al. (2004) for a snapshot of deformation rates calculated over a 3-days period centred on 6 November 1997. We note also that the

model reproduces well the observed variability of the scaling exponent throughout the whole period.

We further characterize the properties of the spatial scaling for both the model and observations by exploring its dependence on the temporal scale, T. We find that the estimated spatial scaling exponent, β, decreases with increasing T, although this behavior is only obvious for the moments of order 2 and 3 (Figures 5 and 6, left panels). This seems to correspond to the existence of space-time coupling of the scaling properties of sea ice deformation. This property was originally suggested by Rampal et al. (2008) from the result of their scaling analysis of buoy pairs dispersion, and was further explained in Marsan and Weiss (2010) as being a possible characteristic of brittle deformation at geophysical scales. To our knowledge, this is the first time such coupling is obtained from a sea ice model simulation ran at such relatively coarse spatial resolution. The origin of this coupling has been previously proposed to be linked to the complex correlation patterns related to chain triggering of ice-quakes (Marsan and Weiss, 2010). Further study is, however, needed to explore this hypothesis, which is out of the scope of this paper.

We also note a decrease of the multi-fractal character of the spatial scaling (i.e. the curvature of $\beta(q)$) when increasing the time scales from $T = 3$ to $T = 96$ days (Figures 5 and 6, right panels). For both the model and the observations, we observe the multi-fractality property is present for all scales considered in this study although a decrease of the degree of multi-fractality is observed as the scale increases. The curvature values are decreasing from 0.115 to 0.054 for the model and from 0.13 to 0.063 for the observations following a power-law (Figure 7). While the general behaviour of decreasing the degree of multi-fractality of the spatial scaling as the time scale increases is captured by the model, we note that the degree of multi-fractality of the deformation is systematically underestimated by the model compared to the observations. This could either be attributed to inaccurate position or lacking of extreme events in the atmospheric forcing, or to an inadequate or insufficiently tuned parameterization of the damage healing in the model. In any case, the reason for this discrepancy should be further explored but is out of scope of the present paper.

4.2 Temporal scaling analysis

The results of the temporal scaling analysis for $L = 7.5$ km is shown on Figure 8 (left panel). We see a robust and very similar power-law scaling for the two first moments ($q = 1, 2$) for both the model and observations between $T = 3$ days (i.e., the temporal resolution of
5   the observations) and $T = 96$ days. In previous studies based on drifting buoy trajectories whose positions are sampled at higher frequency, it has been suggested that the temporal scaling for the mean total deformation holds down to 1 hour (Hutchings et al., 2011). A recent study based on very high resolution ship radar measurements has demonstrated that it holds down even to 10 min (Oikkonen et al., 2017). Here, we obtain a perfect agreement
10 between the slope (about -0.3) of the temporal scaling for the mean deformation rates estimated by Oikkonen et al. (2017), and that estimated from the RGPS data and the present model simulations.

We note, however, that the third moment of the distributions are slightly underestimated by the model at all time scales. This means that the proportion of extreme deformation
15 events compared to lower ones is too small or that their values are too low in the simulation. This may come from the inaccuracy of the relatively coarse (30 km) atmospheric reanalysis we use to force our model and that is known to poorly resolve the most *extreme* low pressure systems, a common shortcoming of all the available global or regional atmosphere reanalysis to date. Another explanation could be the fact that we have not tuned
20 the MEB rheology parameters to reproduce the proportion of extreme deformation events versus the lower ones. In this rheology, the coupling between the damage and the mechanical behavior of sea ice is non-linear and it is therefore expected that varying parameter values can change the proportion of the simulated extreme events, i.e., the skewness of the distribution of deformation rates.

25 As in the spatial domain, the temporal scaling is found to be multi-fractal for the model and observations, and the match is remarkably good. The curvature values (i.e. the coefficient c in equation 5 are 0.67 for the model and 0.62 for the observations. This suggests that the multi-fractal character of the temporal scaling is stronger than the spatial scaling and

possibly a robust property of sea ice deformation, at least in the winter time, independent of the observed change in sea ice cover state and the associated shift of its dynamical regime during the period 1996-2006 (e.g., Rampal et al., 2009a, b). We note that the values of curvature of the structure functions obtained here cannot be directly compared to the one

5 reported in Weiss and Dansereau (2017) since in their paper the authors are plotting the normalized moments $\langle \dot{\varepsilon}_{tot}^q \rangle^{1/q}$ of the distribution versus the temporal scale instead of the actual moments $\langle \dot{\varepsilon}_{tot}^q \rangle$ as we do here.

We also investigate the dependence of the temporal scaling on the spatial scale of observation, L, for both the model and RGPS data (Figures 9 and 10, left panels). We find that

10 the scaling exponent, α, decreases with L. Similar to the spatial scaling analysis performed in Section 4.1, we find here the signature of a space-time coupling in the scaling properties of sea ice deformation. The multi-fractal character of the temporal scaling holds at all the spatial scales considered here ($L = 7.5$ to $L = 580$ km), and is similar in the model and observations (Figures 9 and 10, right panels). The curvature values are going from 0.67 down

15 to 0.37 for the model and from 0.63 to 0.35 for the observations following a power-law (Figure 11). The decrease in the degree of multi-fractality of the temporal scaling as the space scale increases as seen in the observations is remarkably well captured by the model.

5 Discussion

Our statistical analyses have shown that the neXtSIM model reproduces correctly the dis-

20 tribution of sea ice deformation rates, its scaling properties in both the space and time domains and its multi-fractal behavior. In particular, it is the first time that multi-fractality in the time domain is shown to be reproduced in a sea ice model.

The MEB rheology was developed with the aim of improving the representation of the physics of sea ice continuum models by including the ingredients hypothesized by Weiss

25 and Dansereau (2017) to possibly play an important role in the emergence of multi-fractal heterogeneity and intermittency of sea ice deformation. This hypothesis is based on the analysis of observational data that have highlighted the existence of multi-fractality of sea

ice deformation in space and time (Rampal et al., 2008; Bouillon and Rampal, 2015b; Weiss and Dansereau, 2017) and on a close and arguably sound analogy that can be made with other large scale solids sharing these properties such as the Earth crust (Weiss et al., 2009). According to Weiss and Dansereau (2017) the ingredients are: a *threshold mech-*
5 *anism* for brittle fracturing, some *disorder* that represents the natural heterogeneity of the material at the mesoscale, *long-range elastic interactions* within the ice cover that promote avalanches of fracturing events through a cascading mechanism, post-fracturing relaxation of elastic stresses through *viscous-like relaxation*, and a *slow restoring/healing mechanism* of the sea ice mechanical properties. We argue that the results obtained here are at least a
10 sound demonstration that a model including these ingredients can indeed reproduce complex aspects of sea ice deformation such as its multifractality.

We show here that the spatial scaling of sea ice deformation simulated in a realistic setup by neXtSIM holds down to the nominal resolution of the mesh, a result that is in agreement with previous analyses of the MEB model in idealized simulations (Dansereau et al., 2016)
15 and realistic ones (Rampal et al., 2016). It means that neXtSIM does not need to be run at higher spatial resolution in order to reproduce the observed scalings, as e.g. Hutter et al. (2018) do when running at about 1 km resolution in order to resolve sea ice deformation at scale of about 10 km. Localizing the deformation at the nominal model resolution also entails that related quantities, such as ridges, leads, and linear kinematic features are better
20 resolved, although this is not investigated directly here. It is also important to note that using a Lagrangian scheme with adaptive remeshing instead of, for instance, a Eulerian finite volume scheme, helps preserving such features, once formed, but plays no role in their formation.

We show also that this spatial localization and the multi-fractal character of the simulated
25 mean sea ice deformation is resolution-independent in the model (see figure 12). However, and despite the fact that the scaling remains multi-fractal when neXtSIM runs at coarser resolutions (e.g., 15 or 30 km), the level of multi-fractality is decreasing with decreasing resolution. Indeed, the second and third moments of deformation rates from the 15 and 30 km runs differ from the results obtained from the 7.5 km run (figure 12, right panel),

which suggests an underestimation of extreme deformation events at the smaller spatial scales with increasing model resolution. Nevertheless, the representation of multifractality at all resolutions implies that neXtSIM could be adequately used to explore a wider range of space-time scales than that covered by the currently available observations of the global Arctic. In particular, it could allow to "zoom in" and explore the statistical properties of sea ice deformation at the sub-satellite observations scales, which are of increasing interests for both regional to global climate modelling and operational forecasting. A model that could otherwise not represent the multi-fractal character of sea ice deformation and would only reproduce a mono-fractal scaling would greatly underestimate extreme deformation events and their impact on sea ice conditions at such scales like e.g., the presence or not of leads and ridges.

A model that allows reproducing sea ice deformation and its scaling properties down to its nominal resolution does not preclude the need for appropriate sub-grid scale parametrizations. On the contrary, we believe that physically sound parametrizations are indeed required and that the knowledge of the distribution of deformation rates at the the sub-grid scale made possible by neXtSIM could be highly valuable in terms of informing these parametrizations. An appropriate sub-grid scale parametrization should link the deformation simulated at the scale of the grid cell with the scale at which deformation really occurs within the ice cover, which is the size of individual leads and ridges.

We moreover argue that, as sea ice deformation is strongly tied to other model variables, such as drift, lead fraction and thickness distribution, a proper simulation of these variables is a necessary prerequisite to using models for investigating various coupled ocean–ice–atmosphere processes, and their impact on their immediate vicinity and on the polar climate system. For example, the accuracy of neXtSIM in reproducing the observed statistical properties of sea ice deformation as demonstrated in this paper is thought to go hand-in-hand with its capability in representing the observed properties of lead fraction. This is the subject of a parallel study that is in preparation.

6 Conclusions

In this study we have compared the deformation rates simulated by neXtSIM to those derived from RGPS observations on the basis of their distributions and shown how these distributions scale in time and space. The conclusions of our analysis are:

5   – The neXtSIM model reproduces well the first, second and third moments of the statistical distribution of observed sea ice deformation rates and how it scales in space and time. In particular, this is the first time the observed scaling invariance in the temporal domain (i.e. intermittency) of sea ice deformation is shown to be reproduced by a model on a realistic Pan-Arctic setup over such a large range of scales.

10   – Sea ice deformation rates calculated over a temporal scale of 3 days scale in space from the scale of the model (mesh resolution)/observations up to about 700 km in a multi-fractal manner.

  – Sea ice deformation rates calculated over a spatial scale of 7.5 km scale in time over the range 3 days–3 months in a multi-fractal manner.

15   – A space-time coupling in the scaling properties of sea ice deformation is shown to be reproduced by the model. This suggests that neXtSIM could be a proper tool to study the physical meaning and origin of this coupling, in the context of brittle deformation of geophysical solids.

  – The simulated mean sea ice deformation rates and their associated scaling invariance
20   characteristics are resolution-independent, i.e., when running the neXtSIM model at resolutions of 7.5, 15 or 30 km. The most extreme deformation events may be missed however if running at coarser resolutions, i.e. the second and third order moments may be underestimated compared to the high-resolution run.

  – As the mono versus multi-fractal character of the scaling of deformation rates is the
25   discriminating factor for the heterogeneity and intermittency of the deformation, we

suggest that a multi-fractal scaling analysis could be considered as a meaningful validation step before further analyzing sea ice model outputs that could be influenced by sea ice dynamics.

– The good agreement between the model and observations motivates the use of neXtSIM
5   as a tool to further investigate physical processes that are highly sensitive to sea ice deformation.

Appendix A: Model description

This section presents the dynamical and thermodynamical components of neXtSIM. The wave-in-ice module implemented by Williams et al. (2017) is not included here. Prognostic
10 sea ice variables are listed in Table 1 and all parameter values are listed in table 2.

A1 Dynamical core

The evolution equation for sea ice velocity comes from vertically integrating the horizontal sea ice momentum equation as follows:

$$\rho_i H \frac{D\boldsymbol{u}}{Dt} = \nabla \cdot (H\boldsymbol{\sigma}) + \boldsymbol{\tau}_a + \boldsymbol{\tau}_w + \boldsymbol{\tau}_b - \rho_i H (f\boldsymbol{k} \times \boldsymbol{u} + g\nabla\eta). \tag{A1}$$

15 The parameter ρ_i is the ice density, H is the mean ice thickness per unit grid cell area, $\boldsymbol{\sigma}$ is the sea ice internal stress tensor, $\boldsymbol{\tau}_a$, $\boldsymbol{\tau}_w$ and $\boldsymbol{\tau}_b$ are the surface wind, ocean and basal stresses, respectively, and are defined as in Rampal et al. (2016). The parameter f is the Coriolis frequency, $\boldsymbol{k}$ is the upward pointing unit vector, g is the acceleration due to gravity and η is the ocean surface elevation. In the region with only thin ice or with thick-ice
20 thickness lower than a given threshold (defining our ice edge), the momentum equation is replaced by a Laplacian equation so that the velocity linearly decreases from the ice edge to the nearest coast (see Samaké et al. (2017)). The additional ice pressure term introduced in Rampal et al. (2016) is not included here.

Following Dansereau et al. (2016), the evolution equation for the internal stress takes the form of the Maxwell constitutive law:

$$\frac{D\boldsymbol{\sigma}}{Dt} + \frac{\boldsymbol{\sigma}}{\lambda} = E\boldsymbol{K} : \dot{\boldsymbol{\varepsilon}}(\boldsymbol{u}) \tag{A2}$$

where λ is the relaxation time for the stress, E, is the elastic modulus and $\dot{\varepsilon}$, the strain rate tensor, is defined as

$$\dot{\boldsymbol{\varepsilon}}(\boldsymbol{u}) = \frac{1}{2}\Big(\nabla\boldsymbol{u} + (\nabla\boldsymbol{u})^T\Big). \tag{A3}$$

Plane stresses conditions are assumed and the stiffness tensor $\boldsymbol{K}$ reads

$$\begin{bmatrix} (\boldsymbol{K}:\boldsymbol{\varepsilon})_{11} \\ (\boldsymbol{K}:\boldsymbol{\varepsilon})_{22} \\ (\boldsymbol{K}:\boldsymbol{\varepsilon})_{12} \end{bmatrix} = \frac{1}{1-\nu^2} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & \nu & 0 \\ \nu & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & \dfrac{1-\nu}{2} \end{pmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} \varepsilon_{11} \\ \varepsilon_{22} \\ 2\varepsilon_{12} \end{bmatrix} \tag{A4}$$

where ν is Poisson's ratio.

As in Dansereau et al. (2016), both the elastic modulus, E, and the relaxation time are functions of the ice concentration, A, and the level of damage, d. The level of damage is a scalar, grid-scale variable that represents the density of fractures at the sub-grid scale. Its value is 0 for an undamaged and 1 for a "completely" damaged material, which we note is the opposite convention compared to Dansereau et al. (2016). The elastic modulus is a linear function of d:

$$E(A,d) = E_0(1-d)f(A), \tag{A5}$$

where E_0 is the undamaged elastic modulus and $f(A)$ introduces a dependence on the ice concentration via the following exponential function:

$$f(A) = e^{-c^*(1-A)}, \tag{A6}$$

where c^* is the ice compactness parameter introduced by Hibler (1979). As in Dansereau et al. (2016), the relaxation time is a power function of d:

$$\lambda(d) = \lambda_0(1-d)^{\alpha-1}, \tag{A7}$$

where λ_0 is its undamaged value and α is a constant exponent greater than 1. Here, we
5 use the values $\alpha = 5$ and $\lambda_0 = 10^7 s$ (115 days, as in the realistic Maxwell-EB simulations of Dansereau et al., 2017) to ensure that the relaxation of stresses is virtually zero over an undamaged ice cover but is significant when the ice is damaged.

The evolution of the damage is controlled by the location of the predicted stress state relative to the failure envelope, which is defined in terms of the principal stress components

$$10 \quad \sigma_1 = -\frac{\sigma_{11} + \sigma_{22}}{2} + \sqrt{\left(\frac{\sigma_{11} - \sigma_{22}}{2}\right)^2 + \sigma_{12}^2} \tag{A8}$$

$$\sigma_2 = -\frac{\sigma_{11} + \sigma_{22}}{2} - \sqrt{\left(\frac{\sigma_{11} - \sigma_{22}}{2}\right)^2 + \sigma_{12}^2}, \tag{A9}$$

with the convention that compressive stresses are positive.

Here, the envelope combines a Mohr-Coulomb failure criterion and maximum tensile and compressive stress criteria. These are given by

$$15 \quad \sigma_1 - q\sigma_2 \leq \sigma_c \quad \text{(Mohr-Coulomb criterion)}, \tag{A10}$$

$$-\frac{\sigma_1 + \sigma_2}{2} \leq \sigma_{T\max} \quad \text{(tensile stress criterion)}, \tag{A11}$$

$$\frac{\sigma_1 + \sigma_2}{2} \leq \sigma_{N\max} \quad \text{(compressive stress criterion)}, \tag{A12}$$

where $q = \left[\left(\mu^2+1\right)^{1/2} + \mu\right]^2$, $\sigma_c = \frac{2c}{\left[(\mu^2+1)^{1/2}-\mu\right]}$, μ is the internal friction coefficient, c is
the cohesion, $\sigma_{T\max}$ is the maximal tensile strength and $\sigma_{N\max}$ the maximum compres-
20 sive strength (see table 2). The cohesion, c, is scaled as a function of the model spatial resolution, as described in Bouillon and Rampal (2015a).

When one of the damage criteria is met, d is modified by multiplying $(1 - d)$ with Ψ, or

$$d \leftarrow 1 - \Psi(1 - d), \tag{A13}$$

where

$$\Psi = \begin{cases} \frac{\sigma_c}{\sigma_1 - q\sigma_2} & \text{if } \sigma_1 - q\sigma_2 > \sigma_c \\ \frac{2\sigma_{T\max}}{-\sigma_1 + \sigma_2} & \text{if } -\frac{\sigma_1 + \sigma_2}{2} > \sigma_{T\max} \\ \frac{2\sigma_{N\max}}{\sigma_1 + \sigma_2} & \text{if } \frac{\sigma_1 + \sigma_2}{2} > \sigma_{N\max}. \end{cases} \tag{A14}$$

Healing is included here to represent the counteracting effect of refreezing of water within leads on the level of damage of the ice cover. It is implemented via a constant term in the damage evolution equation:

$$\frac{Dd}{Dt} = \frac{(1 - d)(1 - \Psi)}{T_d} - \frac{1}{T_h}, \tag{A15}$$

where T_h is the characteristic time for healing and T_d, the characteristic time for damaging (Dansereau et al., 2016).

A2 Ice thickness redistribution and thermodynamics

`neXtSIM` includes a multi-category model inspired from Stern and Rothrock (1995), i.e. considering 3 categories: thick ice, thin ice and open water. In our implementation the thin ice is only newly formed ice, so ice will only be transferred from the thin-ice category to thick ice, but not in the reverse direction. In addition, we don't apply additional open water source terms, and nor do we use the formulation of Gray and Morland (1994) to keep the ice concentration less than 1. (We simply redistribute ice and snow volume if this occurs.) Thin ice is described by its concentration, A_t, and volume per unit area, H_t, and snow volume per unit area, $h_{s,t}$. Thick ice is described by the concentration, A, volume per unit area, H, and snow volume per unit area, h_s. We assume that the thin ice has no mechanical strength and simply follows the motion of the surrounding thick ice.

Note the total ice concentration and volume per unit area are $A + A_t$ and $H + H_t$, and the total snow volume per unit area is $h_s + h_{s,t}$.

Thin ice thickness is considered to be uniformly distributed with thickness $h_t = H_t/A_t$ required to be between $h_{min} = 5$ cm and $h_{max} = 27.5$ cm. The evolution equations for A, H, h_s, A_t, H_t and $h_{s,t}$ have the following form:

$$\frac{D\phi}{Dt} = -\phi\nabla \cdot \boldsymbol{u} + \Psi_\phi + S_\phi, \tag{A16}$$

where $\dfrac{D\phi}{Dt}$ is the material derivative that is defined for any scalar as

$$\frac{D\phi}{Dt} = \frac{\partial\phi}{\partial t} + (\boldsymbol{u} \cdot \nabla)\phi. \tag{A17}$$

Here $\nabla \cdot \boldsymbol{u}$ is the divergence of the horizontal velocity, Ψ_ϕ a sink/source term due to ridging, and S_ϕ a thermodynamical sink/source term. Volume conservation is imposed by setting $\Psi_H = -\Psi_{H_t}$ and $\Psi_{h_s} = -\Psi_{h_{s,t}}$ and an additional constraint is that $A_t + A \leq 1$.

The evolution of A, H, A_t and H_t is computed following three main steps (variables updated in each step are denoted with a prime):

1. Advection: The scheme solves the equation:

$$\frac{D\phi}{Dt} = -\phi\nabla \cdot \boldsymbol{u}, \tag{A18}$$

for each conserved scalar quantity (A, H, A_t, H_t, etc.). For this paper, we use the purely Lagrangian scheme presented in Rampal et al. (2016). After this step the concentration could be larger than 1.

2. Mechanical redistribution: The scheme imposes the limit $A_t + A \leq 1$ on the total ice area by following those steps:

(a) Compute the new open water concentration as:

$$A_0 = \max(0, 1 - A - A_t); \tag{A19}$$

a source term for the open water could be added here (as in Stern and Rothrock, 1995) to represent sub-grid-scale convergence/divergence.

5 (b) Compute the new thin ice concentration as:

$$A'_t = \max(0, \min(1, 1 - A - A_0)) \tag{A20}$$

(c) Compute the transfer of thin ice if $A'_t < A_t$ by setting:

$$H'_t = H_t \frac{A'_t}{A_t} \tag{A21}$$

$$h'_{s,t} = h_{s,t} \frac{A'_t}{A_t} \tag{A22}$$

10 $$H' = H + (H_t - H'_t) \tag{A23}$$

$$h'_s = h_s + (h_{s,t} - h'_{s,t}) \tag{A24}$$

$$\Delta A = \frac{A_t - A'_t}{\zeta}. \tag{A25}$$

Here, we have transferred ice and snow volume from thin to thick ice in a conservative manner, but we will not try to conserve ice area: ζ is an aspect ratio 15 parameter (tuned to 10) which causes ridging to preferentially increase ice thickness over ice area.

(d) Compute the new thick ice concentration as:

$$A' = \max(0, \min(1, 1 - A'_t - A_0 + \Delta A)) \tag{A26}$$

(e) Apply more ridging if $(A' + A'_t) > 1$ by setting $A' = 1 - A'_t$.

3. Growth/melt: The source/sink terms from the thermodynamics are computed by applying the zero-layer Semtner (1976) vertical thermodynamics to the new ice category and that of Winton (2000) for the thick ice, as if the thickness was uniform and equal to H/A for the thick ice and H_t/A_t for the thin ice. Freezing of open water is computed as in Rampal et al. (2016) such that heat loss from the ocean that would cause super cooling is redirected to ice formation. The newly formed ice is transferred to the thin ice category and is assumed to have a thickness equal to h_{min}. The transfer from the thin ice to the thick ice and the lateral melting of thin ice is computed by applying the bounding limit h_{max} — if $h_t > h_{max}$, then we update the variables as follows:

$$h_t' = h_{max}, \tag{A27}$$

$$A_t' = \frac{h_{max} - h_{min}}{h_t - h_{min}} A_t, \tag{A28}$$

$$H_t' = A_t' * h_t', \tag{A29}$$

$$h_{s,t}' = \frac{A_t'}{A_t} h_{s,t}, \tag{A30}$$

$$H' = H - (H_t' - H_t), \tag{A31}$$

$$A' = A - (A_t' - A_t), \tag{A32}$$

$$h_s' = h_s - (h_{s,t}' - h_{s,t}). \tag{A33}$$

The form of the reduction in thin ice concentration in (A28) is a little arbitrary, but we wanted to allow the possibility of the thin ice completely changing into thick ice at some point.

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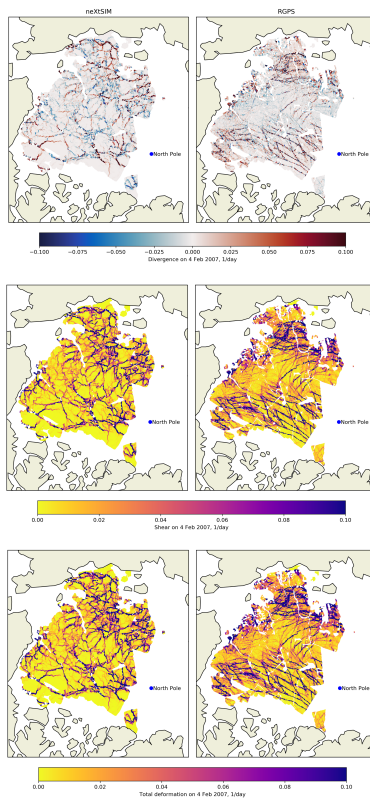
Figure 1. Divergence, shear and total sea ice deformation rates in per day (top to bottom), as simulated by the model (left column) and observed from satellite (right column). The deformation rates are calculated over a time scale of 3 days. In order to get a better spatial coverage, we show all the deformation rates calculated within the period of 7 days centred on 4 February 2007.
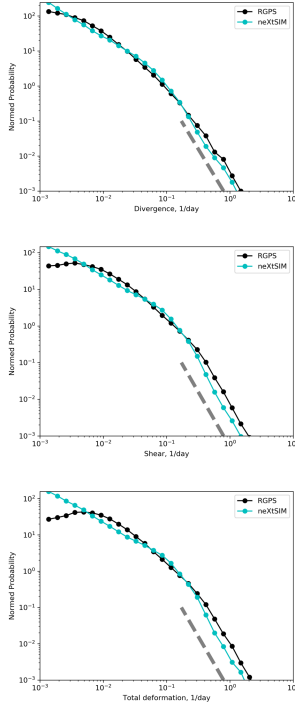
Figure 2. Probability density functions of the absolute divergence, shear and total deformation rates showed on the maps of figure 1 for the model (cyan) and the RGPS observations (black). The deformations are calculated over a time scale of 3 days, and a spatial scale of 7.5 km (mean of the squared root of triangle's surface areas and for which the deformations are calculated). Power law fits of the tails of the distributions for the model and the RGPS observations and for each invariant give similar exponents ranging from -2.9 and -3.2. The dashed line is shown for reference and corresponds to a power-law with an exponent equal to -3.
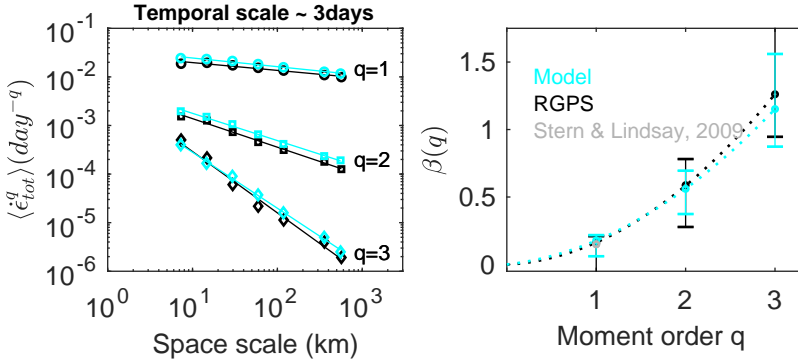
Figure 3. Spatial scaling analysis of the observed (black) and simulated (blue) total deformation rate calculated over a time scale of 3 days from the motion of the same triplets in the model and the RGPS dataset. Left panel: Moments $\langle \dot{\varepsilon}_{tot}^q \rangle$ of order $q = 1, 2$ and 3 of the distributions of the total deformation rate $\dot{\varepsilon}_{tot}$ calculated at a temporal scale of 3 days and space scales varying from 7.5 to 580 km. The solid lines indicate the associated power-law scaling $\langle \dot{\varepsilon}_{tot}^q \rangle \sim L^{-\beta(q)}$. Right panel: Corresponding structure functions $\beta(q)$ for both the model and observation, where β indicates the exponent of the power laws fits and q is the moment order. The bars indicate the deviation from the power law as they correspond to the minimum and maximum power-law exponents obtained for two successive spatial scales as in Bouillon and Rampal (2015a) and can be viewed as an estimation of the goodness of the fit.
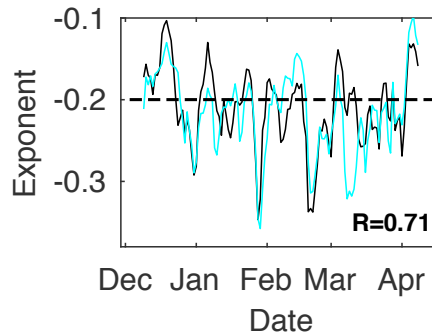
Figure 4. Time series of spatial scaling exponents for the mean total deformation (i.e. $q = 1$) calculated for individual snapshots and at a temporal scale of T = 3 days for the model (cyan) and the RGPS observations (black). The dashed line is shown only for reference and corresponding to the value of 0.2 reported in Marsan et al. (2004) for the 3-day deformation calculated over a period centered on 6 November 1997.
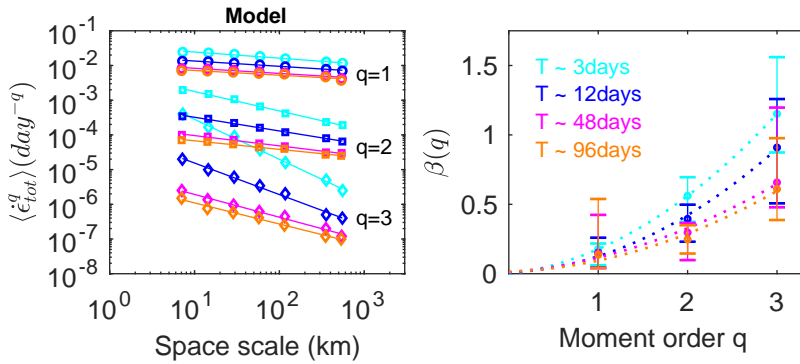
Figure 5. Same as Figure 3 but for the model at various temporal scales.
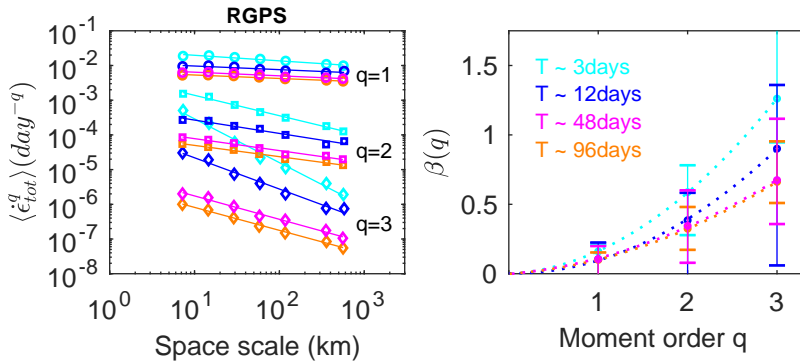
Figure 6. Same as Figure 3 but for the observations at various temporal scales.
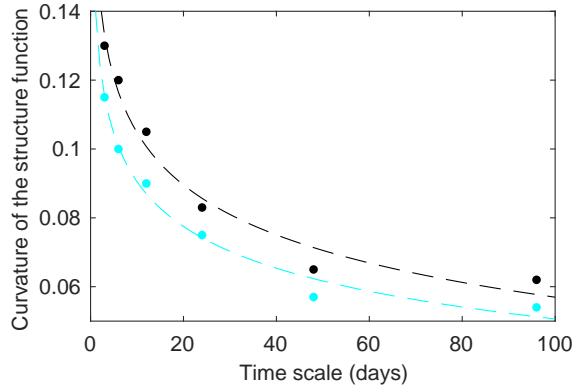
Figure 7. Curvature of the structure function as a function of the time scale T for the model (cyan dots) and the RGPS observations (black dots). The dashed lines are power-law fits (in the least-squared sense) through the data.
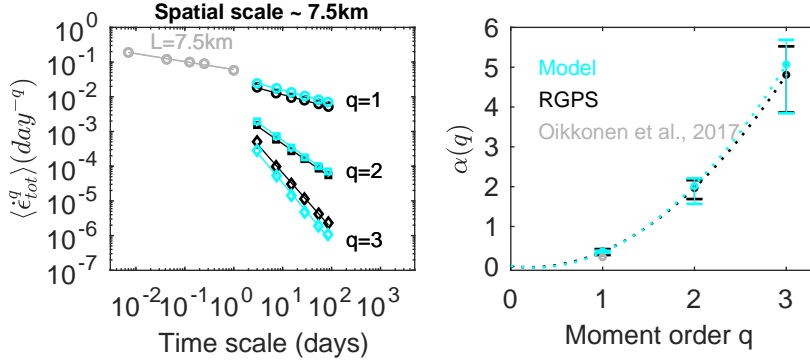
Figure 8. Temporal scaling analysis of the total deformation rate derived from the motion of the same triplets with initial surface area of 7.5 km for the Model (cyan) and the RGPS observations (black). Left panel: Moments $\langle \dot{\varepsilon}_{tot}^q \rangle$ of order $q = 1, 2$ and 3 of the distributions of the total deformation rate $\dot{\varepsilon}_{tot}$ calculated at a spatial scale of 7.5 km and time scales varying from 3 to 100 days. The solid lines indicate the associated power-law scaling $\langle \dot{\varepsilon}_{tot}^q \rangle \sim t^{-\alpha(q)}$. Grey dots correspond to the mean total deformation rates obtained by Oikkonen et al. (2017) at a same spatial scale of 7.5 km and for time scales ranging from 3 hours to 1 day. Right panel: Corresponding structure functions $\alpha(q)$ for both model and RGPS observations where α indicates the exponent of the power laws fits, and q is the moment order. The bars indicate the deviation from the power law as they correspond to the minimum and maximum power-law exponents obtained for two successive temporal scales and can be viewed as an estimation of the goodness of the fit.
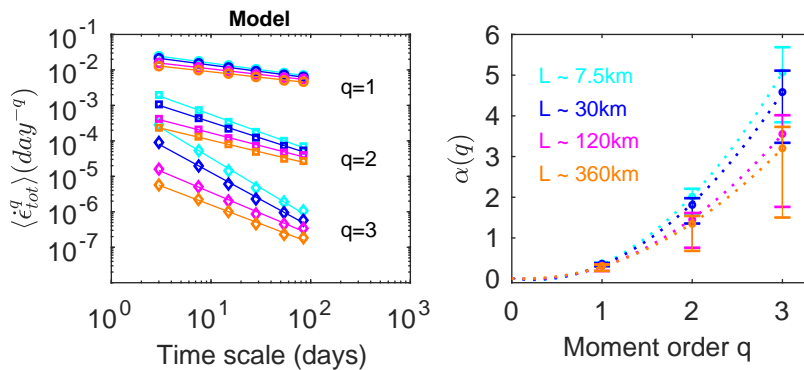
Figure 9. Same as Figure 8 but for the model at various spatial scales.
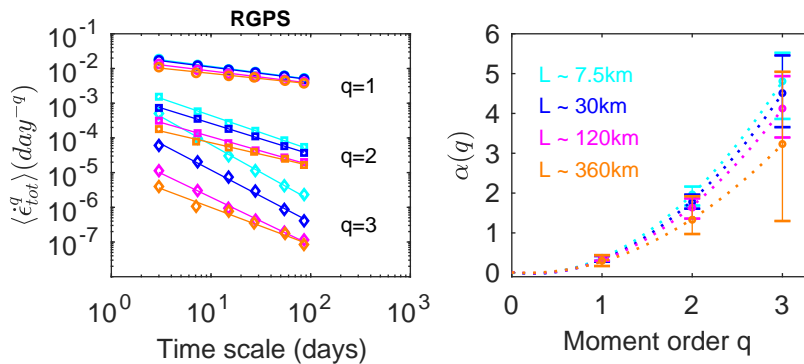
Figure 10. Same as Figure 8 but for the RGPS observations at various spatial scales.
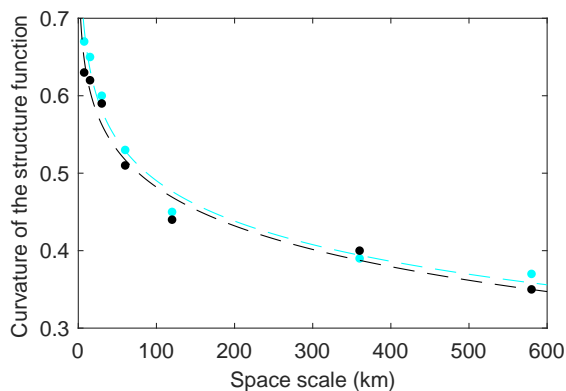
Figure 11. Curvature of the structure function as a function of the space scale L for the model (cyan dots) and the RGPS (black dots). The dashed lines are power-law fits (in the least-squared sense) to the data.
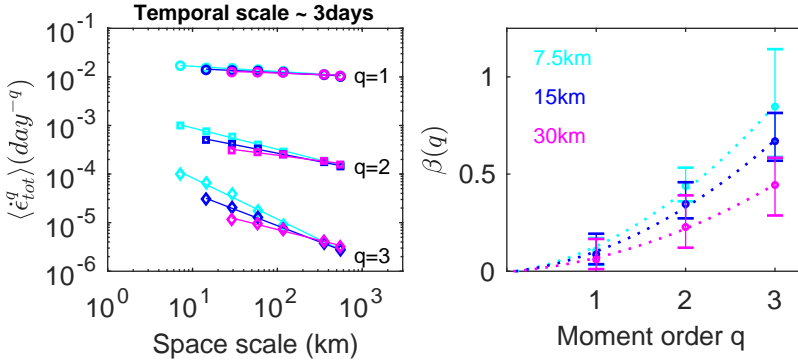
Figure 12. Spatial scaling analysis of the simulated deformation derived from the motion of triplets over a time scale of $T = 3$ days in 3 different model runs, at 7.5, 15 and 30 kilometers resolution respectively. Left panel: Moments $\langle \dot{\varepsilon}_{tot}^q \rangle$ of order $q = 1, 2$ and 3 of the distributions of the total deformation rate $\dot{\varepsilon}_{tot}$ calculated at a temporal scale of 3 days and for spatial scales varying from 7.5 to 580 kilometers. The solid lines indicate the associated power-law scaling $\langle \dot{\varepsilon}_{tot}^q \rangle \sim L^{-\beta(q)}$ as in figure 3. Right panel: Corresponding structure functions $\beta(q)$ where β indicates the exponent of the power-law fits, and q is the moment order. The bars indicate the deviation from the power law as they correspond to the minimum and maximum power-law exponents obtained for two successive spatial scales as in Bouillon and Rampal (2015a) and thus correspond to upper-bound estimates and can be viewed as an estimation of the goodness of the fit.

Table 1. List of variables used in neXtSIM.

Symbol	Name	Meaning	Unit
H	sea ice thickness	volume of ice per unit area	m
h_s	snow thickness	volume of snow per unit area	m
A	sea ice concentration	surface of ice per unit area	-
H_t	thin sea ice thickness	volume of ice per unit area	m
$h_{s,t}$	snow thickness on thin ice	volume of snow per unit area	m
A_t	thin sea ice concentration	surface of ice per unit area	-
d	sea ice damage	0=undamaged, 1=completely damaged ice	-
$\boldsymbol{u}$	sea ice velocity	horizontal sea ice velocity	m s^{-1}
$\boldsymbol{\sigma}$	sea ice internal stress	planar internal stress	N m^{-2}

Table 2. Parameters used in the model with their values for the simulation at 7.5 km resolution used for this study.

Symbol	Meaning	Value	Unit
ρ_a	air density	1.3	kg m^{-3}
c_a	air drag coefficient	4.9×10^{-3}	-
θ_a	air turning angle	0	degree
ρ_w	water density	1025	kg m^{-3}
c_w	water drag coefficient	5.5×10^{-3}	-
θ_w	water turning angle	25	degrees
ρ_i	ice density	917	kg m^{-3}
ν	Poisson coefficient	0.3	-
μ	internal friction coefficient	0.7	-
E_0	undamaged elastic modulus	50.0	MPa
Δx	mean distance between mesh nodes	10	km
Δt	time step	200	s
c	cohesion	25	kPa
$\sigma_{N\,\mathrm{min}}$	tensile strength	-21	kPa
$\sigma_{N\,\mathrm{max}}$	compressive strength	75	kPa
c^*	compactness parameter	20	-
α	damage exponent	5	-
λ_0	undamaged relaxation time	10^7	s
T_d	characteristic time for damaging	20	s