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Biogenic silica production and diatom dynamics in the Svalbard region during spring

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Abstract.
Diatoms are generally the dominant contributors to the Arctic Ocean spring bloom, which is a key event in regional food webs in terms of capacity for secondary production and organic matter export. Dissolved silicic acid is an obligate nutrient for diatoms and has been declining in the European Arctic. The lack of regional silicon cycling information precludes understanding the consequences of such changes for diatom productivity during the Arctic spring bloom. This study communicates the results from a cruise in the European Arctic around Svalbard reporting the first concurrent data on biogenic silica production and export, diatom cellular export, the degree of kinetic limitation by ambient silicic acid, and diatom contribution to primary production. Regional biogenic silica production rates were significantly lower than those achievable in the Southern Ocean and silicic acid concentration limited the biogenic silica production rate in 95% of samples. Compared to diatoms in the Atlantic subtropical gyre, regional diatoms are less adapted for silicic acid uptake at low substrate, and at some stations during the present study, silicon limitation may have been intense enough to limit diatom growth. Thus, silicic acid can play a critical role in diatom spring bloom dynamics. Diatom contribution to primary production was variable, ranging from <10% to ~100% depending on the bloom stage and phytoplankton composition. While there was agreement with previous studies regarding the rate of diatom cellular export, we observed significantly elevated biogenic silica export. Such a discrepancy can be resolved if a higher fraction of the diatom material exported during our study was modified by zooplankton grazers or originated from melting ice. This study provides the most-direct evidence to date suggesting the important coupling of the silicon and carbon cycles during the spring bloom in the European Arctic.

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1 Introduction

Diatoms and the flagellate *Phaeocystis* are the dominant contributors to the Arctic Ocean spring bloom, a cornerstone event supplying much of the annual net community production (Vaquer-Sunyer et al., 2013; Rat'kova and Wassmann, 2002; Wassmann et al., 1999) that fuels Arctic food webs (Degerlund and Eilertsen (2010) and references therein). Hydrographic and chemical changes in the Arctic water column are expected in the future, but whether these will alter diatoms' contribution to spring primary production and organic matter export remains uncertain. Some studies predict lack of ice cover will enhance the spring bloom due to increased light availability (Arrigo et al., 2008), while others predict lower productivity driven by increased stratification and reduced nutrient supply (Tremblay and Gagnon, 2009). Additionally, models predict that warming will lead to a shift from a diatom-dominated bloom to one increasingly dominated by flagellates and picoautotrophs, which has been observed in certain sectors of the Arctic (Li et al., 2009; Lasternas and Agustí, 2010). Because the spring diatom bloom is arguably the single most important productivity event for the Arctic Ocean ecosystem (Degerlund and Eilertsen, 2010; Holding et al., 2015; Vaquer-Sunyer et al., 2013), understanding how diatoms' ecological and biogeochemical importance changes in response to system-wide physical/chemical shifts is important to predict future food web alterations. Diatoms have an obligate requirement for silicon, therefore understanding of regional Si cycling can provide insights into the diatom activity. However, there is a current knowledge gap of regional silicon cycling, which precludes robust assessments of the spring bloom in future scenarios, e.g. Tréguer et al. (2018).

Diatom production is dependent on the availability of dissolved silicic acid ($Si(OH)_4$), which they use to build their shells of biogenic silica ($bSiO_2$). [$Si(OH)_4$] has been observed to be low (<5 µM) in the Norwegian Seas and declining over time (Rey, 2012). A more recent analysis demonstrated a decline in pre-bloom [$Si(OH)_4$] concentrations by 1–2 µM across the north Atlantic subpolar and polar regions over the last 25 years (Hátún et al., 2017); this is consistent with the general Arctic region being a net exporter of silicic acid (Torres-Valdés et al., 2013). This is in stark contrast to the 10–60 µM [$Si(OH)_4$] observed in the surface waters of the Southern Ocean and the marginal ice zone around Antarctica (Nelson and Gordon, 1982; Brzezinski et al., 2001), where [$Si(OH)_4$] is unlikely to limit the rate of diatom production or biomass yield. Additionally, the stoichiometry of $Si(OH)_4$ availability relative to nitrate (Si:N <1) in the source waters, which fuel the spring bloom in most of the north Atlantic and European polar seas, suggests that during a bloom cycle diatoms may experience Si limitation prior to N limitation, especially if diatoms consumed Si and N in near equal quantities as in other diatom bloom regions (Brzezinski et al., 1997; Brzezinski, 1985; Dugdale et al., 1995) and a 2 µM threshold [$Si(OH)_4$] defines where diatoms are outcompeted by flagellates (Egge and Aksnes, 1992).

Compared to the Southern Ocean, there is a paucity of field Si-cycling studies in the European Arctic. Reports of diatom silica production are only available from the subarctic northeast Atlantic near ~60° N, e.g. between Iceland and Scotland (Allen et al., 2005; Brown et al., 2003), Oslofjorden (Kristiansen et al., 2000), and limited data from Baffin Bay (Hoppe et al., 2018; Tremblay et al., 2002); these previous studies are in zones with higher $Si(OH)_4$ availability than in the European Arctic. Other studies have reported standing stocks of $bSiO_2$ and export in Oslofjorden or the European Arctic, e.g. Svalbard vicinity, Laptev Sea (Hodal et al., 2012; Heiskanen and Keck, 1996; Paasche and Ostergren, 1980; Lalande et al., 2016; Lalande et al., 2013), but none have concurrent measurements of $bSiO_2$ production. Indeed, in the last major review of the global marine silicon cycle, Tréguer and De La Rocha (2013) reported no studies with published $bSiO_2$ production data derived from field measurements from the Arctic.

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Currently, we lack a baseline understanding about diatom Si-cycling in the European Arctic and broader high-latitude north Atlantic region. And while models in the Barents Sea use Si as a possible limiting nutrient (Wassmann et al., 2006; Slagstad and Støle-Hansen, 1991), there are no field data to ground truth the modeled parameters governing diatom Si uptake. Thus, there is no contextual understanding to determine the consequences of the observed changes in regional [$Si(OH)_4$] since the 1990s and if these affect spring bloom dynamics. This study communicates the results from a cruise in the European Arctic around Svalbard reporting the first concurrent datasets on regional $bSiO_2$ production and export, diatom cellular export, and the degree of kinetic limitation by ambient [$Si(OH)_4$]. Additionally, coupling $bSiO_2$ production rates with contemporaneous primary production measurements provides an independent assessment for the diatom contribution to system primary production.

2 Methods

2.1 Region and Sampling

This study was conducted aboard the RV *Helmer Hanssen* between May 17–29, 2016 as part of the broader project, ARCEx–The Research Centre for ARCtic Petroleum Exploration (http://www.arcex.no/). The main goal of this cruise was to study the pelagic and benthic ecosystem during the Arctic spring bloom around Svalbard and in the northern Barents Sea at stations influenced by various water masses. The cruise started in the southwestern fjords influenced by relatively warm Atlantic water, then transited east of Svalbard toward more Arctic-influenced water (Fig. 1 blue arrow) before turning south towards stations near the Polar Front and more Atlantic-water station (Fig. 1 red arrows) located to the south of the Polar Front.

Vertical profiles with a CTD were conducted at all stations. Hydrocasts were conducted using a Seabird Electronics 911 plus CTD with an oxygen sensor, fluorometer, turbidity meter and PAR sensor (Biospherical/LI-CORR, SN 1060). The CTD was surrounded by a rosette with 12 five-liter Niskin bottles. At two stations, Edgeøya, and Hinlopen, only surface samples were collected (no vertical profiles with ancillary measurements, Fig. 1). Water was sampled from the rosette at depths within the upper 40 m (i.e. the extent of the photic layer); for any incubation described below, the approximate irradiance at the sample depth during collection was mimicked by placing incubation bottles into a bag made of neutral density screen. Incubation bags were placed in a deck board acrylic incubator cooled with continuously flowing surface seawater. At Hinlopen, a block of ice was collected by hand within ~10 m of the vessel and allowed to thaw in a shaded container for 24 hours at ambient air temperature. After thawing, the melted solution was homogenized and treated like a water sample for measurement of biomass and rates.

Four sediment trap arrays were deployed between 19 and 23 hours. Arrays in van Mijenfjorden and Hornsund were anchored to the bottom, whereas the other two arrays (Erik Erikssenstretet, Polar Front) were quasi-Lagrangian and drifted between 14–16 km during the deployment. During the Erik Erikssenstretet deployment, the array was anchored to an ice floe. Arrays included sediment trap cylinders (72 mm internal diameter, 1.8 L volume; KC Denmark) at 3–7 depths between 20 and 150–200 m, based on bathymetry. After recovery, trap contents were pooled and subsampled for $bSiO_2$ and phytoplankton taxonomy.

2.2 Standing stock measurements

A suite of macronutrients were analyzed at all stations except Hinlopen (just $Si(OH)_4$). Water was sampled directly from the rosette, filtered (0.7 µm pore size) and immediately frozen. In the laboratory, nutrients were analyzed using a Flow Solution IV analyzer (O.I. Analytical,

USA) and calibrated with reference seawater (Ocean Scientific International Ltd. UK). Detection limits for [NO_3 + NO_2] and [$Si(OH)_4$] were 0.02 and 0.07 (µM), respectively. Phosphate was analyzed, but N:P ratios for nutrients were, on average, 8 among all stations, suggesting that N was likely more important than P for primary production. These phosphate data are not discussed.

Samples for biogenic particulates and phytoplankton community composition were taken directly from the rosette and sediment traps. For $bSiO_2$ samples, 600 mL of seawater was collected from the rosette, filtered through a 1.2 µm polycarbonate filter (Millipore); for sediment trap material, less volume was necessary (e.g. 50–100 mL). Most $bSiO_2$ protocols use a 0.6 µm filter cutoff, e.g. Lalande et al. (2016), however, given the magnitude $bSiO_2$ quantified and the size range for regional diatoms we are confident that there was no meaningful systematic underestimate. After filtration, all samples were dried at 60° C and stored until laboratory analysis using an alkaline digestion in Teflon tubes (Krause et al., 2009). For Chl *a*, water-column and sediment samples were collected similarly, filtered on Whatman GF/F (0.7 µm pore size) and immediately frozen (-20 °C). In the laboratory, Chl *a* was extracted in 5 mL methanol in the dark at room temperature for 12 h. The solution was quantified using a Turner Design 10-AU fluorometer, calibrated with Chl *a* standard (Sigma C6144), before and after adding two drops of 5% HCl (Holm-Hansen and Riemann, 1978). Phytoplankton taxonomy and abundance samples were collected in 200 mL brown glass bottles from both the water column and sediment traps, immediately fixed with an aldehyde mixture of hexamethylenetetramine-buffered formaldehyde and glutaraldehyde at 0.1 and 1% final concentration, respectively, as suggested by Tsuji and Yanagita (1981) and stored cool (5°C) and dark. Samples were analyzed with an inverted epifluorescence microscope (Nikon TE300 and Ti-S, Japan), using the Utermöhl (1958) method, in a service laboratory for diatom taxonomy (>90 individual genera/species categories were identified) and abundance at the Institute of Oceanology Polish Academy of Science.

2.3 Rate measurements

Biogenic silica production was measured using the radioisotope tracer ^{32}Si. Approximately 150 or 300 mL samples, depending on the station biomass, were incubated with 260 Bq of high specific activity $^{32}Si(OH)_4$ (>20 kBq µmol Si^{-1}). After addition, samples were transported to the deck-board incubator and placed in neutral density screened bags for 24 hours. After incubation, samples were processed immediately by filtering bottle contents through a 25 mm, 1.2 µm polycarbonate filter (Millipore) —matching $bSiO_2$ filtrations. Each filter was then placed on a nylon planchette, covered with Mylar when completely dry, and secured using a nylon ring. Samples were aged into secular equilibrium between ^{32}Si and its daughter isotope, ^{32}P (~120 days). ^{32}Si activity was quantified on a GM Multicounter (Risø National Laboratory, Technical University of Denmark) as described in Krause et al. (2011). A biomass-specific rate (i.e. V_b) was determined by normalizing the gross rate (ρ) to the corresponding [$bSiO_2$] at the same depth of collection using a logistic-growth approach (Kristiansen et al., 2000; Krause et al., 2011). For $bSiO_2$ and ρ, values within a profile were integrated throughout the euphotic zone (i.e. surface to 1% I_0) using a trapezoidal scheme. A depth-weighted V_b was calculated within the euphotic zone by integrating V_b and dividing by the depth integration (Krause et al., 2013).

Two methods were used to assess whether ambient silicic acid ($Si(OH)_4$) limited diatom Si uptake. The ^{32}Si activity additions, incubation conditions, and sample processing are as described above. At four stations (Edgeøya, Polar Front, Hinlopen and Atlantic), eight 300-mL samples collected at a single depth within the euphotic zone and were manipulated to make an eight-point concentration gradient between ambient and +18.0 µM [$Si(OH)_4$]; the maximum concentration

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was assumed to saturate Si uptake. Si uptake has been shown to conform to a rectangular hyperbola described by the Michaelis-Menten equation:

$$V_b = \frac{V_{max}[Si(OH)_4]}{K_S+[Si(OH)_4]} \quad (1)$$

where V_{max} is the maximum specific uptake rate and K_S is half-saturation constant, i.e. concentration where $V_b = ½ V_{max}$. Data were fit to the Eq. 1 using a non-linear curve fit algorithm (SigmaPlot 12.3). The second type of experiment used only two points: ambient and +18.0 µM $[Si(OH)_4]$; four-depth profiles were done at three stations (Bellsund Hula, Hornsunddjupet, Erik Erikssenstretet). The ratio of Si uptake at +18.0 µM $[Si(OH)_4]$ to Si uptake at ambient $[Si(OH)_4]$ defines an enhancement (i.e. Enh) statistic. This two-point approach was conducted at all depths in the euphotic zone; Enh ratios >1.08 imply kinetic limitation beyond analytical error given the methodology (Krause et al., 2012).

Net primary productivity (PP) was quantified concurrently with biogenic silica production at six stations at the depth of approximately 50% of surface irradiance (Table 1). Carbon uptake rates were measured using a modification of the ^{14}C uptake method (Steemann Nielsen, 1952). Water samples were spiked with 0.2 µCi mL^{-1} of ^{14}C labelled sodium bicarbonate (Perkin Elmer, USA) and distributed in three clear and one dark plastic bottles (40 mL each). Subsequently, they were incubated for 24 h in the deck incubator with a 50% light reduction mesh. After incubation, samples were filtered onto 0.2 µm nitrocellulose filters. The filters were stored frozen (-20 °C) in scintillation vials with 10 ml EcoLume scintillation liquid (MP Biomedicals LLC, USA) until further processing. Once on land, the particulate ^{14}C was determined using a scintillation counter (TriCarb 2900 TR, Perkin Elmer, USA). The carbon uptake values in the dark were subtracted from the mean of the triplicate carbon uptake values measured in the light incubations. Using contemporaneous ρ measurements and PP measurements, the diatom contribution to PP is estimated as:

$$\text{Diatom \%PP} = 100 \times \frac{\rho \times (\text{Si:C})^{-1}}{\text{PP}} \quad (2)$$

where the Si:C ratio for diatoms can be used from culture values, e.g. 0.13 (Brzezinski, 1985).

Export rates were calculated using the standing stock measurements, length of deployment, and trap opening area. These approaches are common and detailed elsewhere (Wiedmann et al., 2014; Krause et al., 2009).

3 Results

3.1 Hydrography and Spatial patterns

The regional ecosystem around Svalbard is driven by ice dynamics (Sakshaug, 2004). One week prior to the cruise, a majority of the southern Svalbard archipelago had open water, which was anomalous compared to similar dates in previous years (e.g. 2014, 2015, ice data archived at http://polarview.met.no/). By the end of the cruise, Svalbard could have been entirely circled by the vessel, with only open drift ice in the northeastern region. While 2016 was among the lowest years for total Arctic sea ice, the ice extent in Svalbard and the Barents Sea is highly dynamic. Ice edges may be pushed southward into the Barents Sea proper by wind while areas to the north remain ice free, e.g. Wassmann et al. (1999) and references therein.

Spatial patterns in hydrography and nutrients were highly variable. In the southwestern stations (e.g. fjords and Atlantic-influenced water), the surface temperature ranged between 1–4 °C; similar temperature was observed in the Atlantic station south of the Polar Front (Fig. 1E). Northeastern domain stations were more influenced by Arctic water and the surface temperatures ranged between -2–1 °C (Fig. 1E). Surface nutrient concentrations, particularly $[NO_3+NO_2]$ and

[Si(OH)$_4$], showed a broad range. The highest surface [NO_3+NO_2] was observed in the southwestern fjords, 2–>8 µM, and the Atlantic station (~3 µM, Fig. 1A). The surface concentrations at the remaining stations were <0.5 µM or near detection limits (Fig. 1A). [Si(OH)$_4$] was lower than [NO_3+NO_2] (i.e. Si:N <1) among stations where [NO_3+NO_2] was > 0.1 µM. At high [NO_3+NO_2] stations, the [Si(OH)$_4$] ranged from 1.1–4.5 µM (Fig. 1B) but the range was lower among other stations (0.4–1.1 µM, Fig. 1B). bSiO_2 (proxy for diatom biomass, Fig. 1C) was typically similar to, or lower than, surface [Si(OH)$_4$]. The highest surface [bSiO_2] was observed in the southern stations (Atlantic-influenced waters), ~ 2–3 µmol Si L^{-1} (Fig. 1C). At most other stations the [bSiO_2] was <1 µmol Si L^{-1}. Among all stations/depths bSiO_2 varied by a factor of ~40 (does not include Hinlopen ice algae).

Primary productivity, measured at six stations at 5 m (approximately 50% of surface irradiance), varied over two orders of magnitude. The lowest rates were observed at the four stations having lowest surface [NO_3+NO_2] and ranged from 2–13 µg C L^{-1} d^{-1}; at these stations [Chl *a*] ranged from 2.0–4.8 µg L^{-1} (Table 1, Fig. 1D). The highest rates were measured at van Mijenfjorden and Bredjupet, 100 ±65 µg C L^{-1} d^{-1} and 27 ±1 µg C L^{-1} d^{-1}, respectively, and corresponded to high [NO_3+NO_2] and low [Chl *a*] 1.8 and 0.7 µg L^{-1}, respectively (Table 1, Fig. 1D).

3.2 Vertical profiles

As expected, most stations showed strong vertical gradients in nutrient concentrations. Profiles in the southwestern region of Svalbard (van Mijenfjorden, Bredjupet) had elevated [Si(OH)$_4$], with little vertical structure. Vertical [Si(OH)$_4$] profiles among other stations showed typical nutrient drawdown between the surface and ~20 m. At these stations, surface [Si(OH)$_4$] concentrations were typically <1.5 µM and subsurface values (to 20 m) ranged from 0.5–3.0 µM (Fig. 2A). [NO_3+NO_2] exceeded [Si(OH)$_4$] among all depths at five stations (van Mijenfjorden, Bredjupet, Hornsund, Atlantic; Fig. 2B), whereas in the remaining stations [NO_3+NO_2] exceeded [Si(OH)$_4$] (i.e. Si:N <1) at depths >5 m (Bellsund Hula), >20 m (Erik Erikssenstretet) and >27 m (Polar Front). For the latter three stations, [NO_3+NO_2] had a significant drawdown in surface waters, but then increased with depth without a similar degree of vertical enhancement in [Si(OH)$_4$] (Fig. 2).

[bSiO_2] was typically highest at or near the surface, with a maximum of ~2 µmol Si L^{-1} (Fig. 2C). At the Bellsund Hula and Erik Erikssenstretet stations, subsurface [bSiO_2] maxima were present (Fig. 2C; note–no surface data are available for van Mijenfjorden). Among non-profile stations, [bSiO_2] was within the range observed among vertical profiles except for the Hinlopen ice algae, where the melt water had exceptionally high [bSiO_2] (Fig. 2C). The surface-to-20-m integrated bSiO_2 (∫bSiO_2) spanned over an order of magnitude, with a low at Bredjupet (1.9 mmol Si m^{-2}) and a high at Hornsunddjupet (42.4 mmol Si m^{-2}, Table 1) despite their proximity (~50 km).

Diatom abundance and taxonomy data were sampled at fewer stations, but the vertical and spatial variability generally mirrored trends in [bSiO_2]. In the surface waters of van Mijenfjorden and Hornsund, diatom abundances ranged between $5x10^4$–$5x10^5$ cells L^{-1} in the upper 50 m (Fig. 3A). However, within the same vertical layer at the Erik Erikssenstretet and Polar Front (duplicate profiles) stations, diatom abundances were enhanced by up to two orders of magnitude ($4x10^4$–$4x10^7$ cells L^{-1}, Fig. 3A). When integrated to 40-m depth (∫Diatom), matching the shallowest sediment-trap depth among the three stations reported (Fig. 3E–H), diatom inventories also

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showed a two-order of magnitude variability as observed in $\int bSiO_2$. $\int$Diatom was lowest at van Mijenfjorden (7.67x10^9 cells m^{-2}) and highest at Polar Front station (527 x10^9 cells m^{-2}, Table 1).

Among the stations which had corresponding sediment trap deployments (van Mijenfjorden, Hornsund, Erik Erikssenstretet), the diatom-assemblage composition was similar despite differences in abundance. The van Mijenfjorden station was dominated by *Thalassiosira* (e.g. *T. antarctica*, *T. gravida*, *T. hyalina*, *T. nordenskioeldii*), *Fragilariopsis cylindrus*, and *Chaetoceros furcellatus* (Fig. 3B). *Chaetoceros* spp. was nearly absent from Erik Erikssenstretet (Fig. 3D) and of little importance at Hornsund (Fig. 3C). *Thalassiosira* species (same as van Mijenfjorden) cells also dominated Hornsund and Erik Erikssenstretet among most depths (Fig. 3C, D). However, at Hornsund, deeper depths were dominated by diatom groups less frequently observed ("Other diatom" category, Fig. 3), and with small contributions from *Fragilariopsis cylindrus* and *Navicula vanhoefenii*.

Diatom $bSiO_2$ productivity, ρ, mirrored trends in biomass. Among the profiles, rates generally varied from ρ <0.01 to 0.11 µmol Si L^{-1} d^{-1} (Fig. 2D). ρ was highest in the Atlantic station (Fig. 2D), which was expected given the higher $bSiO_2$ (Fig. 2C). However, the rates in the Hinlopen ice algae were like those quantified at Hornsunddjupet, ~ 0.1 µmol Si L^{-1} d^{-1}, despite the ice algae station having an order of magnitude more biomass. This suggests the Hinlopen ice algae were senescent or stressed and a sizable portion of the measured $bSiO_2$ was non-active or detrital. When integrated in the upper 20-m, $\int\rho$ ranged from 0.27 - 1.46 mmol Si m^{-2} d^{-1} (Table 1), which is a smaller proportional range than observed in $\int$Diatoms and $\int bSiO_2$. Overall, $bSiO_2$-normalized rates (V_b) were low among all stations and depths (<0.01 to 0.13 d^{-1}). The depth-weighted V_b, i.e. V_{AVE}, had a narrower range between 0.03–0.13 d^{-1}. Thus, doubling times for $bSiO_2$ in the upper 20 m ranged between 5–23 days.

The rate of diatom biogenic silica production was reduced by ambient $[Si(OH)_4]$ in 95% of the samples examined. Full kinetic experiments verified that Si uptake conformed to Michaelis-Menten kinetics (Fig. 4A; adjusted R^2 ranged 0.64–0.92 among experiments). The highest V_{max} was observed in the Atlantic station (0.36 ±0.02 d^{-1}), which also had the highest ambient $[Si(OH)_4]$ among the full kinetic experiments (1.4 µM). V_{max} observed at Edgeøya and the Polar Front were nearly identical (0.05 ±<0.01 d^{-1} for both) and lowest in the Hinlopen ice diatoms (0.02 ±<0.01 d^{-1}). K_S constants had a narrower range, with a low of 0.8 ±0.3 µM at the Polar Front and between 2.1–2.5 µM among the other three stations. Among these full-kinetic experiments, the Enh ratio ranged from 1.8–7.7 with the most intense $[Si(OH)_4]$ limitation of uptake observed in the Hinlopen ice diatoms. For profiles where two-point kinetic experiments were conducted, the same trends were observed (Fig. 4B). The Enh ratio was similar among depths at Bellsund Hula (1.5–2.2), Hornsunddjupet and Bredjupet (3.4–5.4 for latter two stations, Fig. 4B). At Erik Erikssenstretet, Enh ratios were more variable, ranging from 2.8–7.3 in the upper 10 m with no Enh effect (i.e. <1.08) observed at 20 m —this was the only sample and depth which showed no resolvable degree of kinetic limitation for Si uptake.

Rates of $bSiO_2$- and diatom export were variable. Among the three sediment trap regions, $bSiO_2$ export rates ranged from ~4–10 mmol Si m^{-2} d^{-1} (Fig. 2E). These rates are significant and represent up to 50% of the $\int bSiO_2$ in upper 20 m at van Mijenfjorden (Table 1). For diatom cells, a similar degree of variability was observed. Export at van Mijenfjorden ranged from 390–1500 x10^6 cells m^{-2} d^{-1}, similar ranges to Hornsund (520–2800 x10^6 cells m^{-2} d^{-1}) and Erik Erikssenstretet (510–860 x10^6 cells m^{-2} d^{-1}, Fig. 3E). The Atlantic station had significantly higher diatom export (800–2300 x10^6 cells m^{-2} d^{-1}) among all depths in the upper 120 m (Fig. 3E). The $bSiO_2$ and diatom cellular export were highly correlated ($r = 0.67$, $p<0.01$; Spearman's Rho Test). Among

all stations, *Fragilariopsis cylindrus* had the highest contribution to diatom export, and *Thalassiosira* species (e.g. *T. antarctica*, *T. gravida*, *T. hyalina*, *T. nordenskioeldii*) were also important (Fig. 3F-H). In Hornsund, *Navicula (N. vanhoefenii, N. sp.)* was an important group for export (Fig. 3G) but this was not observed elsewhere. Similarly, "Other diatom" groups were proportionally important at Erik Erikssenstretet (Fig. 3H), as were *Thalassiosira* resting spores at the Atlantic station (data not shown). Among all diatoms, the only groups which were numerically important in both the water column and the sediment traps were *Fragilariopsis cylindrus* and *Thalassiosira* species (Fig. 3B–D, F–H).

4 Discussion

4.1 Diatom Si cycling relative to other systems

To our knowledge, this is the first report of $bSiO_2$ production data of the natural diatom community in this sector of the Arctic. Other studies have reported ρ data in the subarctic Atlantic Ocean (Brown et al., 2003; Kristiansen et al., 2000; Allen et al., 2005) ~10–20° latitude south of our study region or in Baffin Bay (Hoppe et al., 2018; Tremblay et al., 2002). However, the Hoppe et al. (2018) study only includes ρ measured after a 24-hour manipulation experiment and only at one site and depth near the Clyde River just east of Nunavat (Canada), no data are reported for the ambient conditions, and the measurements from Tremblay et al. (2002) are based on net changes in standing stocks instead of gross $bSiO_2$ production. Banahan and Goering (1986) report the only ρ to date in the southeastern Bering Sea; however, Varela et al. (2013) recently reported that $[Si(OH)_4]$ in surface waters (>5 µM) are unlikely to be significantly limiting to diatoms in any sector of the Bering, Chukchi or Beaufort Sea regions. Around Svalbard, some previous studies have examined other Si-cycling components including variability in $bSiO_2$ in the water column (Hodal et al., 2012) and sediments (Hulth et al., 1996), $bSiO_2$ and diatom export (Lalande et al., 2016; Lalande et al., 2013), or trends in $[Si(OH)_4]$ (Anderson and Dryssen, 1981). The ρ measurements presented here have no straight forward study for comparison; therefore, we compare these to the previous high-latitude Atlantic data and to well-studied sectors of the Southern Ocean.

During our study, ∫ρ in the Svalbard vicinity was low. Working in the NE Atlantic between Iceland and Scotland, Brown et al. (2003) reported ∫ρ between 6–166 mmol Si m^{-2} d^{-1}. In the same region, under post-bloom conditions, Allen et al. (2005) reported 7 mmol Si m^{-2} d^{-1} for one profile. These rates are significantly higher than at out four profile stations (Table 1), and the degree of difference does not appear to be driven by differences in integration depth (compared to our study, Table 1). Given the higher $[Si(OH)_4]$ in the southern region of the Atlantic subpolar gyre (Hátún et al., 2017), the maximum achievable ∫ρ may vary with latitude. While our profile sampling was opportunistic, it appears we sampled some stations with significant diatom biomass (high $\int bSiO_2$), but the corresponding production rates (∫ρ) were low, with estimated doubling times on the order of 11–23 days. This suggests these high-biomass stations may have been near, or past, peak bloom conditions (Fig. 2A, B) and the seasonal timing is consistent with regional field and modeling studies inferring diatom bloom dynamics from Chl *a* trends, e.g. (Wassmann et al., 2010; Oziel et al., 2017). Kristiansen et al. (2000) reported ρ in Oslofjorden during the late winter (February–March), rates ranged from 0.03–2.0 µmol Si L^{-1} over nine sampling periods with corresponding V_b between <0.01–0.28 d^{-1}; however, this system has a higher $Si(OH)_4$ supply and surface concentrations at the start of the bloom period were >6 µM, approximately 50% higher than the highest surface concentrations observed during our study (Fig. 2A). Nearly all the initial $Si(OH)_4$ was eventually converted to $bSiO_2$ during the bloom (Kristiansen et al., 2001; Kristiansen et al.,

2000). The specific rates observed in our study fall within the lower values reported by Kristiansen et al. (2000), which may be explained by the reduced uptake from lower [$Si(OH)_4$] (e.g. Fig. 4).

The Southern Ocean is one of the most globally significant regions for production of $bSiO_2$. The surface [$Si(OH)_4$] and [NO_3+NO_2] are among the highest in the ocean and the source waters usually have >50% excess $Si(OH)_4$ relative to nitrate (Brzezinski et al., 2002). Thus, exceptional $Si(OH)_4$ drawdown relative to nitrate is required for diatom biomass yield to be limited by Si in this region. The mean $\int\rho$ in sectors of the Southern Ocean are variable. In the Weddell Sea, winter rates range between 2.0–3.2 mmol Si m^{-2} d^{-1} in the seasonal ice zone (Leynaert et al., 1993). Within the sub-Antarctic zone, rates averaged 1.1 and 4.8 mmol Si m^{-2} d^{-1} in the summer and spring, respectively (Fripiat et al., 2011). At the terminus of diatom blooms in the sub-Antarctic and polar frontal zone, rates can be lower, e.g. 0.1–0.3 mmol Si m^{-2} d^{-1} (Fripiat et al., 2011); such values are similar to the range observed during our study, especially since these Southern Ocean studies integrated $\int\rho$ deeper than 40 m (e.g. 50–100 m). Brzezinski et al. (2001) reported average $\int\rho$ ~25 mmol Si m^{-2} d^{-1} (integrated from surface to 80–120 m) during intense blooms in the seasonal ice zone which propagated south of the Antarctic polar front. But despite the massive diatom $bSiO_2$ accumulating in these blooms, V_{AVE} generally ranged between 0.05–0.15 d^{-1} (Brzezinski et al., 2001). Given the order-of-magnitude difference in [$Si(OH)_4$] and $\int\rho$ between the Arctic and Southern Ocean, the similar V_{AVE} in both regions may be more reflective of thermal effects on diatom growth rate, since Si uptake and diatom growth rates are tightly coupled, or a significant accumulation of detrital $bSiO_2$ (i.e. diatom fragments) in the Southern Ocean, where low temperatures reduce $bSiO_2$ remineralization rates (Bidle et al., 2002).

4.2 Potential for Silicon limitation of diatom productivity

Suboptimal silicon availability affects the rate of diatom $bSiO_2$ production and can limit their growth. A widely cited [$Si(OH)_4$] threshold, below which diatoms will be outcompeted by other phytoplankton, is ~2.0 µM; this metric was derived from a comparison of diatom abundance (relative to total microplankton) versus [$Si(OH)_4$] during mesocosm experiments in a Norwegian fjord system (Egge and Aksnes, 1992). Applying this metric globally has been criticized due to observation of diatom dominance among microplankton when [$Si(OH)_4$] <1 µM in systems ranging from fjords to the open-ocean (Krause et al., 2013; Hodal et al., 2012; Kristiansen et al., 2001) and also culture studies showing some diatom species can maintain high growth rates when [$Si(OH)_4$] <0.5 µM (reviewed by Kristiansen and Hoell (2002)). Stoichiometry of silicon availability relative to nitrate also help diagnose Si limitation; the most widely accepted diatom Si:N ratio is ~1 based on temperate and low-latitude clones (Brzezinski, 1985). There is a paucity of diatom culture studies examining stoichiometry in polar diatoms, but Si:N during spring blooms in Oslofjorden are close to Brzezinski's Si:N ratio (Kristiansen et al., 2001). For diatoms in Svalbard and the broader region of the subpolar and polar European Atlantic, both [$Si(OH)_4$] and its availability relative to N appear to be suboptimal for creating intense diatom blooms, such as those occurring in the Southern Ocean. Yet, the Arctic spring bloom is consistently dominated by diatoms or *Phaeocystis* (Degerlund and Eilertsen, 2010), which suggests some level of adaptation for diatoms to the low [$Si(OH)_4$] environment of the region.

Nutrient relationships support the potential for silicon to be a controlling factor of regional diatom productivity. When plotting [NO_3+NO_2] as a function of [$Si(OH)_4$] (Fig. 5A) a few trends emerge: 1) The slope of the linear regression relationship (2.5 ± 0.1 mol N (mol Si)$^{-1}$) denotes that NO_3+NO_2 is consumed at over twice the rate per unit $Si(OH)_4$. 2) Given that the source water [NO_3+NO_2] concentration is only ~twice that of [$Si(OH)_4$], a 2.5 drawdown ratio would predict

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NO_3+NO_2 to be depleted before $Si(OH)_4$. This indeed indicates that phytoplankton can deplete nitrogen to levels below detection while they appear unable to deplete $Si(OH)_4$ pools below 0.5 µM, which would indicate 0.5 µM is the ultimate $Si(OH)_4$ concentration required to support diatom growth. Nitrate and silicic acid drawdown within the upper 50 m during the spring season (1980–1984) was discussed by Rey et al. (1987) who suggested apparent nitrate limitation (1980, 1981) and silicic acid limitation (1983, 1984) are annually variable. The Reigstad et al. (2002) analysis of nitrate and silicic acid drawdown in the central Barents Sea shows similarities in that the diatom assemblage could only drawdown [$Si(OH)_4$] to ~1 µM (May 1998) and ~0.5 µM (July 1999). These authors suggest that physical effects on phytoplankton explain the interannual variability in the maximum [$Si(OH)_4$] drawdown, where diatoms dominate in shallow mixed waters opposed to *Phaeocystis pouchetii* dominating in deeper mixed waters.

None of these nitrate and silicic acid relationships capture the progressive dynamics of an active diatom bloom. Using the ARCEx data (Fig. 5A), if diatoms are limited by an absolute [$Si(OH)_4$] (e.g. 2 µM), then at this concentration there is still ample residual [NO_3+NO_2] (3.8 µM) which could be used by other phytoplankton that do not consume Si (Fig. 5A). Even if the diatom [$Si(OH)_4$] threshold is closer to 1 µM, this observation of excess [NO_3+NO_2] (1.4 µM) still holds. Diatoms have an *r*-selected ecological strategy and are typically the first phytoplankton group to bloom in this region under stratified shallow-mixed conditions (Reigstad et al., 2002). If they consumed N and Si in near equal amounts (i.e. Si:N ~1) without significant competition for N by other major phytoplankton groups, it is highly probable that Si would limit them first during a bloom. Clearly, interannual and local differences in mixing, which may favor *Phaeocystis pouchetii* over diatoms (Reigstad et al., 2002), can affect the assemblage and nutrient drawdown trajectory (e.g. see points with high [$Si(OH)_4$] and little measurable [NO_3+NO_2], Fig. 5A); therefore, diagnosing whether Si could limit diatom growth requires additional analyses.

When considering the European sector of the Arctic/sub-Arctic between 60°–80° N, there is compelling evidence that [$Si(OH)_4$] limits the rate of diatom $bSiO_2$ production. During ARCEx, the relationship between V_b and [$Si(OH)_4$] also supports that Si regulates diatom productivity to some degree. Our kinetic data demonstrate that in three of four experiments K_S was ~2.0 µM, but in the Polar Front the K_S was lower ~0.8 µM. These data are consistent with community kinetic experiments reported in Oslofjorden where K_S and V_{max} were between 1.7–11.5 µM and 0.16–0.64 d^{-1}, respectively, with the lowest V_{max} observed during the declining diatom bloom (Kristiansen et al., 2000). These authors concluded that silicon ultimately controlled diatom productivity during this bloom (Kristiansen et al., 2001). In the only other kinetic experiment reported in the northeast Atlantic, Allen et al. (2005) observed a linear response in V_b between ambient and 5 µM [$Si(OH)_4$], which suggests uptake did not show any degree of saturation at this concentration. These field-based K_S values are considerably higher than parameters used in Barents Sea models, e.g. 0.5 µM (Slagstad and Støle-Hansen, 1991), 0.05 µM (Wassmann et al., 2006) which reflect the high efficiency uptake seen in culture (Paasche, 1975). Fitting a regression to the $V_b\ V_{max}^{-1}$ as a function of [$Si(OH)_4$] (line shown in Fig. 5B) suggests that 2.3 µM is the best constrained half-saturation concentration (i.e. concentration where $V_b\ V_{max}^{-1} = 0.5$) for the regional assemblage; however, this is biased from the Hornsunddjupet assemblage (white symbols, Fig. 5B), and this aggregated half-saturation would increase to 2.8 µM if those data were not considered. Unlike diatoms in the north Atlantic Subtropical Gyre, e.g. Sargasso Sea (Krause et al., 2012), regional diatoms do not appear well-adapted for maintaining $V_b\ V_{max}^{-1} > 0.5$ at low [$Si(OH)_4$]. Instead, diatoms during the spring season appear to be best adapted for concentrations exceeding 2.3 µM, which suggests that as [$Si(OH)_4$] is depleted diatoms may slow growth (Fig. 5B).

To avoid growth limitation, diatoms can reduce their silicon per cell when [$Si(OH)_4$] is suboptimal. An accepted principal from culture work is that diatoms can alter their silicon per cell by a factor of four (Martin-Jézéquel et al., 2000). Thus, when uptake is reduced to <25% of V_{max}, diatoms must slow growth to take up enough Si to produce a new cell. Using the empirical half-saturation constant range (2.3–2.8 µM) calculated from Fig. 5B and using Eq. 1 to solve for the concentrations where $V_b\ V_{max}^{-1} \leq 0.25$ (V_{max} is a constant), suggests that when [$Si(OH)_4$] is below 0.3–0.8 µM, the degree of kinetic limitation could force diatoms to slow growth in response. Such a range could be biased low given the influence of the highly efficient Hornsunddjupet assemblage (which was associated with warmer Atlantic waters). But at these [$Si(OH)_4$] there would also be up to 0.8 µM [NO_3 + NO_2] remaining (Fig. 5A). Therefore, under shallow stratified conditions which favor diatoms over *Phaeocystis* (*sensu* Reigstad et al. (2002)), [$Si(OH)_4$] may regulate regional diatom productivity during spring consistent with similar results from southern-Norway fjords (Kristiansen et al., 2001). This provides the most direct assessment to date supporting the general idea that Si may limit regional diatom productivity (Rey, 2012; Rey et al., 1987; Reigstad et al., 2002).

4.3 Diatom contribution to primary production

Among the six sites with paired PP and ρ measurements, the bloom phase can be inferred from the magnitude of nutrient drawdown, [Chl *a*], PP, and pCO_2 (data not shown). Bredjupet appeared to be a pre-bloom station given the nutrients, while the van Mijenfjorden station also appeared to be in an early bloom phase. The Erik Erikssenstretet station represented a peak bloom condition, whereas assemblages at Hornsunddjupet and Edgeøya appeared to be post bloom and in a stage of decline. The Polar Front station represented the end or late-phase bloom condition; however, at this station *Phaeocystis* was abundant (data not shown), suggesting it may have dominated the bloom dynamics instead of diatoms.

The diatom contribution to PP was highly variable. Among the stations with high [NO_3 + NO_2] (van Mijenfjorden, Bredjupet) the diatom contribution to PP (e.g. Eq. 2) was low, 5–6%. At two stations, Hornsunddjupet and the Polar Front, the diatom contribution to PP increased to 48–57%. In the Edgeøya, and Erik Erikssenstretet stations, diatoms accounted for all PP, 130 and 340%, respectively. Such unrealistic value at Erik Erikssenstretet could imply a potential issue with the Si:C ratio (Eq. 2), specifically an increase in Si per cell and/or lower C per cell due to reduced growth rate associated with the peak/end of the bloom.

Clearly, diatoms can play a significant role in local productivity, but these data demonstrate a "bloom and bust" nature. At stations at or near peak bloom levels (e.g. Edgeøya, Erik Erikssenstretet), diatoms could account for nearly all primary production. However, they may also conduct an insignificant percentage of primary production prior to the onset of the bloom (e.g. van Mijenfjorden, Bredjupet). But even when physical conditions may favor *Phaeocystis* blooms, diatoms appear to be significant contributors to primary production (Polar Front station). In such a situation, N would be predicted to be the limiting nutrient as it will be consumed by both *Phaeocystis* and diatoms whereas Si will only be consumed by the latter.

In the European Arctic, shifts in summer-period phytoplankton communities away from diatom-dominated conditions have been observed in numerous studies. One of the dominant features has been the increasing abundances of Phaeocystis in ice-edge (Lasternas and Agustí, 2010) or under-ice blooms (Assmy et al., 2017). These changes have corresponded with larger-scale shifts in the export of diatoms to depth in the Fram Straight (Nöthig et al., 2015; Lalande et al., 2013; Bauerfeind et al., 2009). The timing of these shifts, e.g. mid-2000s, correspond with the

broader regional reduction in winter mixed-layer [$Si(OH)_4$] concurrent with the shift to negative gyre-index state in the latter half of the decade (Hátún et al., 2017). With a reduction in pre-bloom $Si(OH)_4$ supply, diatoms may run into limitation sooner and thus leave more residual nitrate for non-diatom phytoplankton. Degerlund and Eilertsen (2010) also demonstrate a dynamic temperature niche for individual diatom groups/species. Coello-Camba et al. (2015) showed that temperature induced a shift in the Arctic phytoplankton community, with diatoms declining as temperature increased and thereby favoring dominance of flagellates. Given the highly variable contribution of diatoms to primary productivity in this system in spring and the effects which carry over into summer, should climate change or natural physical oscillations affect diatoms in this system, resolving such a signal will be challenging. A similar conclusion about detecting a climate-change signal was made in the eastern Bering Sea by Lomas et al. (2012) given the natural variability in primary production.

4.4 Diatoms and export

The $bSiO_2$ export rates observed during ARCEx were significant relative to the standing stocks. At van Mijenfjorden, the rate of export in the upper 40 m represented 39% of the $\int bSiO_2$ standing stock (23.3 mmol Si m^{-2}) in the same vertical layer. This quantity was much higher than at Erik Erikssenstretet, where the 40-m export rate was <11% of the $\int bSiO_2$ in the upper water column (note: no samples were taken deeper than 20 m, thus, additional $bSiO_2$ between 20–40 m would lower the 11% estimate). Given that the van Mijenfjorden site was located within shallow fjord waters (bottom depth approximately 60 m), such a high proportion export relative to standing stock may suggest either lateral focusing processes (e.g. discussed by DeMaster (2002)) and/or resuspension of sediment $bSiO_2$ into the water and resettlement. The rate of $bSiO_2$ export was also at least a factor of four higher than $\int\rho$ in the upper 20 m. It is likely that some fraction of $\int\rho$ was missed due to lack of sampling between 20–40 m, but with a lack of light at these depths, it is unlikely systematic underestimates of ρ caused the disparity. Given the deeper water at the Erik Erikssenstretet and Atlantic stations, such high $bSiO_2$ export may be driven by previously high ρ and $bSiO_2$ standing stock which accumulated in the overlying waters or, given the dynamic circulation in the region, this signal may have been laterally advected to these station locations.

Relative to previous studies, the $bSiO_2$ export rates were also high. During May 2012 in Kongsfjorden, Lalande et al. (2016) reported $bSiO_2$ export rates between 0.2–1.3 mmol Si m^{-2} d^{-1} in the upper 100 m, a similar range was observed by Lalande et al. (2013) in the eastern Fram Strait using moored sediment traps (2002–2008) collecting at depths between 180–280 m. Lalande et al. (2013) concluded that, despite warm anomaly conditions, pulses of $bSiO_2$ export were positively correlated to the presence of ice in the overlying waters which stratifies the water and helps initiate a diatom bloom. However, if the light was insufficient to stimulate a bloom, Lalande et al. (2013) suggested much of the pulse of $bSiO_2$ exported to depth may have originated in the ice and sank during melting. Indeed, the low V_b (<0.01 d^{-1}) observed at the Hinlopen station (ice algae), despite the moderate ρ measured (0.12 µmol Si L^{-1} d^{-1}), suggests that most of the ice-associated $bSiO_2$ was detrital and not associated with living diatoms. Thus, the recent ice retreat observed prior to the ARCEx cruise was a potential source of such high $bSiO_2$ export to depth despite the considerably lower $\int\rho$ in the upper 20 m.

Among the groups examined, the most important diatom genera for standing stock and export were *Thalassiosira* and *Fragilariopsis*, suggesting these groups are important drivers of bulk $bSiO_2$ fluxes. Given the large-size and chain-forming life histories for the dominant species within each genus, it is likely that their dominance in the trap abundances helps explain the high

correlation (r = 0.67, p<0.01; Spearman's Rho Test) between $bSiO_2$ and diatom export. Given this degree of correlation, it would be expected that both $bSiO_2$ and diatom export would be similarly enhanced relative to previous studies; however, this was not observed. Diatom cellular export in Kongsfjorden (Lalande et al., 2016) were similar-to or a factor of three lower than rates quantified during ARCEx (Table 1, Fig. 3E), whereas $bSiO_2$ export during ARCEx was over an order of magnitude higher than $bSiO_2$ export in Kongsfjorden. One possible explanation for the higher degree of $bSiO_2$ export enhancement, relative to diatom cellular export, between studies is that more exported material during ARCEx was modified in the food web. For instance, in Erik Erikssenstretet gel traps confirm the presence of aggregates and mesozooplankton fecal pellets (Wiedmann et al. in prep), and in van Mijenfjorden detrital particles were most prominent on the gel traps opposed to clearly recognizable material (e.g. diatom valves). These observations suggest the potential for considerable modification of diatom organic matter prior to export (diatoms in fecal pellets, fragments associated with aggregates, etc.). This is consistent with previous observation in the Barents Sea showing high potential for copepod fecal pellets to be exported in the Polar Front and Arctic-influenced regions during spring (Wexels Riser et al., 2002). And supports the general ideas for the importance of diatom organic matter in fueling secondary production regionally during this season (Degerlund and Eilertsen (2010) and references therein).

4.5 Conclusion

This is the first regional data set with contemporaneous measurements of diatom $bSiO_2$ standing stock, production, export and assessment of kinetic limitation by $[Si(OH)_4]$ in the European Arctic. Among stations and depths there was widespread limitation of diatom $bSiO_2$ production rates by ambient $[Si(OH)_4]$ during spring-bloom conditions. The kinetic parameters for diatom Si uptake (e.g. K_S) quantified in our study are significantly higher than rates used in regional models and quantified in polar diatom cultures; therefore, these data will help future modeling efforts better simulate diatom/Si dynamics. Given the trajectories of Si and N consumption, diatom-dominated blooms (vs. *Phaeocystis*-dominated) could deplete $Si(OH)_4$ prior to nitrate; and at some stations, the degree of kinetic limitation by ambient $[Si(OH)_4]$ could have resulted in diatom growth being slowed. Diatom contribution to PP was highly variable, ranging from <10% to ~100% depending on the bloom stage; but even when *Phaeocystis* appeared to be favored, diatoms still had a significant (~50%) contribution to PP. While there was agreement with previous regional studies regarding the rate of diatom cellular export, we observed significantly elevated $bSiO_2$ export. Such a discrepancy can be resolved if a higher fraction of the diatom material exported during our study was modified by zooplankton grazers, relative to previous studies, or if much of this $bSiO_2$ was derived from melting ice and/or advection.

Data availability. All data are available upon request to the authors or are available through the UiT research data bank (https://dataverse.no/dataverse/uit).

Author contributions. JK, CMD, SA conceived/designed the study and conducted analysis. JK, CMD, IM, PA, MFM, IW, SA conducted the fieldwork. PW and SK conducted analysis. All co-authors contributed to the writing of the paper, led by JK.

Competing interests. The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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Table 1 – Station properties including surface temperature, nutrients and chlorophyll a (± standard deviation), 20-m biogenic silica stock ($\int bSiO_2$), production ($\int \rho$) and depth-weighted specific production (V_{AVE}), 40-m integrated diatom abundance ($\int$Diatom) and export of $bSiO_2$ and diatoms at 40 m. The disparity between the integration depths for $bSiO_2$ standing stock and diatom abundance reflects the lack of $bSiO_2$ samples to 40 m depth and that the latter are used to compare with diatom export (Discussion). Note: Hinlopen (ice) station not included. The Polar Front $\int$Diatom is the mean of two profiles.

Station Name	T (°C)	$[NO_3 + NO_2]$ (µM)	$[Si(OH)_4]$ (µM)	[Chl *a*] (µg L^{-1})	20-m $\int bSiO_2$ (mmol Si m^{-2})	20-m $\int \rho$ (mmol Si m^{-2} d^{-1})	20-m V_{AVE} (d^{-1})	40-m $\int$Diatom abundance (10^9 cells m^{-2})	40-m $bSiO_2$ export (mmol Si m^{-2} d^{-1})	40-m Diatom export (10^6 cells m^{-2} d^{-1})
‡van Mijenfjorden	-0.43	8.1	3.8	1.84 ±0.19	10.8	-	-	7.67	9.03	769
‡Bredjupet	4.72	9.4	4.5	0.72 ±0.03	1.9	0.27	0.13	-	-	-
Bellsund Hula	0.69	<0.1	0.5	2.66 ±0.05	15.3	0.49	0.06	-	-	-
Hornsund	-0.28	1.6	1.1	2.50 ±0.20	-	-	-	8.97	-	1180
‡Hornsunddjupet	-0.20	<0.1	0.4	2.43 ±0.17	42.2	1.46	0.03	-	-	-
‡Edgeøya	-0.70	0	0.7	1.99 ±0.03	-	-	-	-	-	-
‡Erik Erikssenstretet	-1.58	0.4	0.4	4.77 ±0.31	34.9	1.03	0.04	252	4.00	436
‡*Polar Front Station	2.19	<0.1	1.1	3.00 ±0.03	-	-	-	527	-	-
Atlantic	4.10	3.3	1.4	6.66 ±0.33	-	-	-	-	9.20	2380

†Surface value
*25 m depth
‡Denotes concurrent primary production and biogenic silica production measurements at one depth

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Figure Captions:

Figure 1: Surface properties during 2016 ARCEx cruise including A) Nitrate + Nitrite (µM), B) dissolved silicic acid (µM), C) biogenic silica (µmol Si L^{-1}), D) Chlorophyll *a* (µg L^{-1}) and E) Temperature (°C) overlaid on station map. Station names are denoted on the map and colored arrows generalize the flow of Atlantic-influenced (red) and Arctic-influenced (blue) waters.

Figure 2: Vertical profiles for A) dissolved silicic acid, B) Nitrate + Nitrite, C) biogenic silica standing stock, D) biogenic silica production rate, and E) biogenic silica export. Symbols are associated by station, and line connectors are used to denote profile data opposed to individual symbols noting samples at one depth.

Figure 3: Diatom abundance (A) and assemblage composition (B–D) in the water column, and diatom export (E) and assemblage composition (F–H) within sediment traps. Note – taxonomy information only shown for stations where both water-column and sediment-trap data were available (see text for species). Resting spores (e.g. *Chaetoceros*, *Thalassiosira*) were absent from the 40-m sediment traps; thus, proportional abundances for spore-producing taxa are entirely for vegetative cells. For panel A, there are replicate diatom abundance measurements (from separate hydrocasts) for the Polar Front station.

Figure 4: Assessment of Si uptake limitation by available silicic acid during ARCEx. A) 8-point kinetic experiments taken at four stations (legend next to panel B). Data were fit to a Michaelis-Menten hyperbola using SigmaPlot 12.3 software. B) Enh. ratio profiles (i.e. V_b in +18.0 µM $[Si(OH)_4]$ treatment relative to V_b in the ambient $[Si(OH)_4]$ treatment) at four stations.

Figure 5: Diagnosis of potential silicon limitation for diatom production during ARCEx. A) Nitrate + Nitrite drawdown as a function of dissolved silicic acid. B) The ratio of V_b at ambient $[Si(OH)_4]$ to V_{max} versus dissolved silicic acid. In both panels, linear regressions were done using a Model II reduced major axis method. For comparison, the same relationship for the Sargasso Sea in the North Atlantic subtropical gyre, as synthesized in Krause et al. (2012).

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Figure 1:

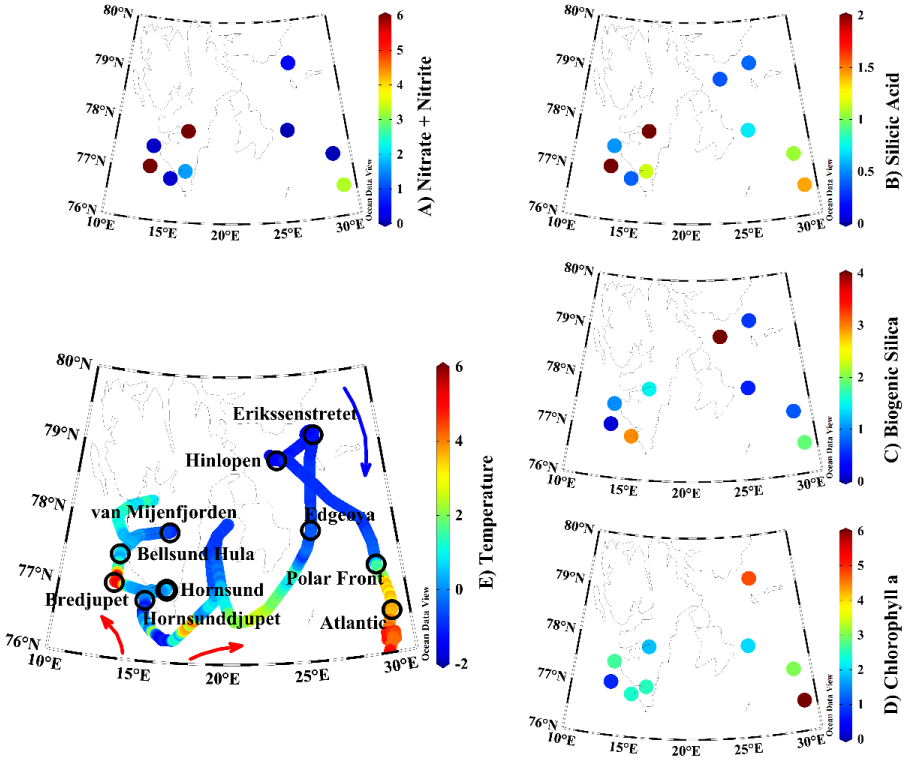

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Figure 2:

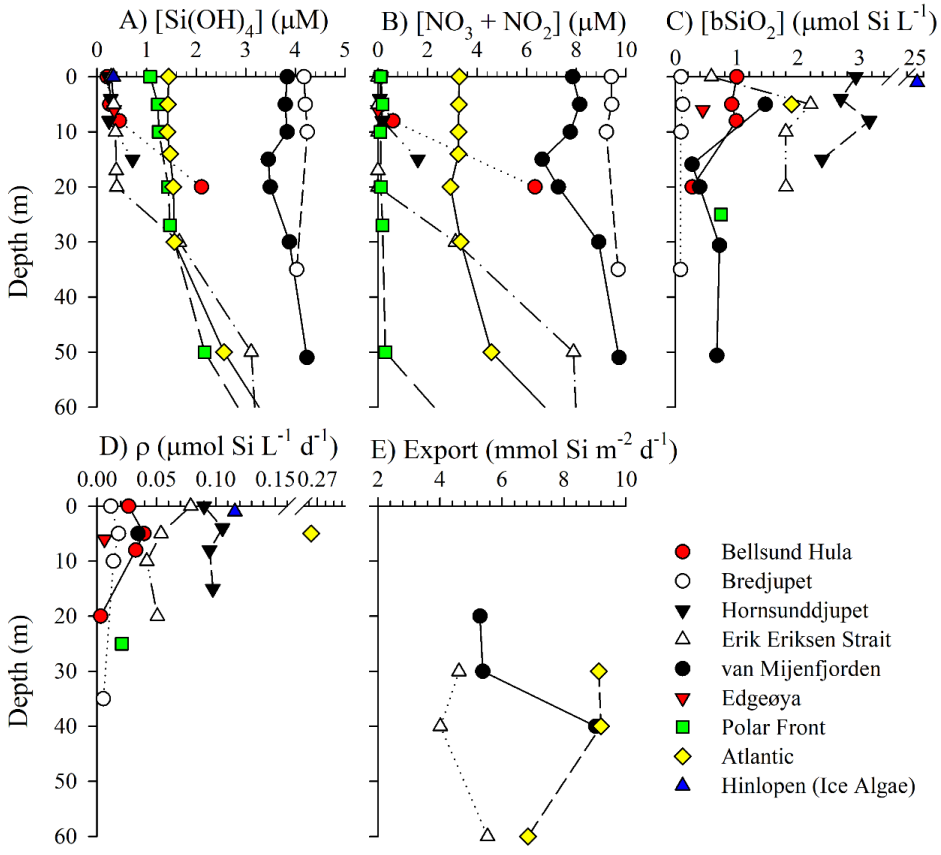

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Figure 3:

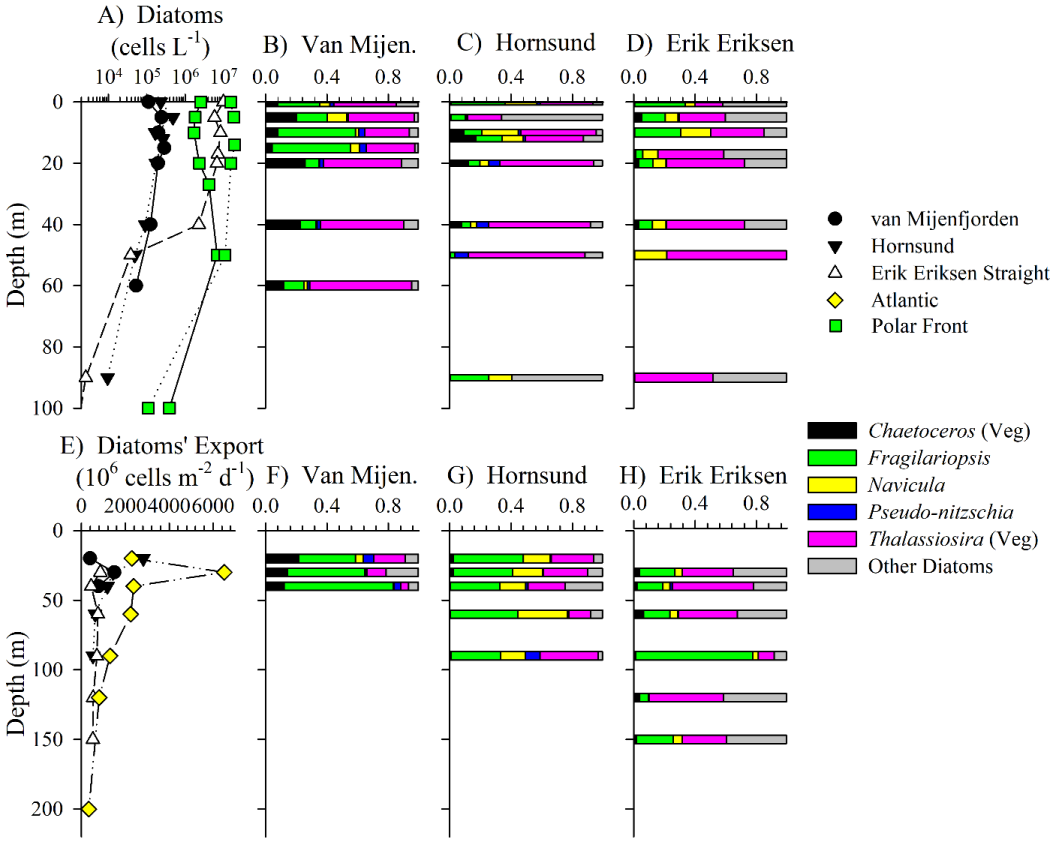

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Figure 4:

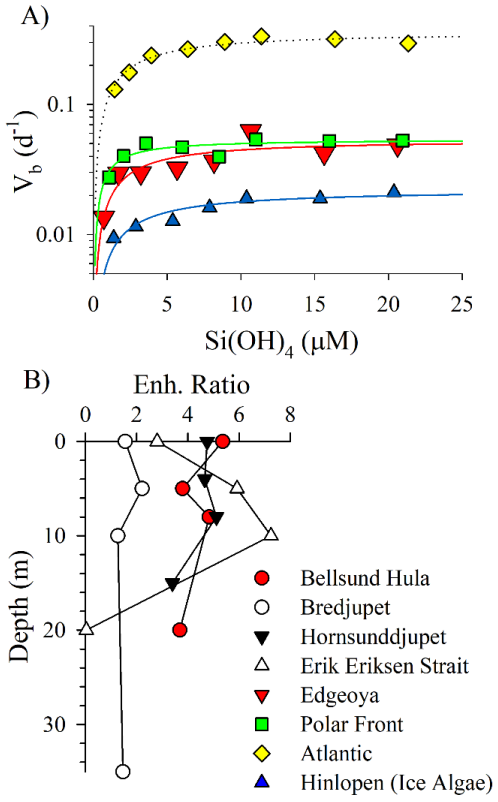

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Figure 5: