

# Constraints on the latitudinal profile of Jupiter's deep jets

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## Key Points:

- Jupiter's cloud-level wind profile extended to depth, matches in sign and amplitude both the measured odd and residual-even gravity harmonics.
- The majority of the signal comes from the wind profile between 25°S and 25°N, which must extend unaltered thousands of kilometers deep.
- The gravity signal also implies that from the cloud-tops downward the flow must be organized in a columnar structure and also decay radially.

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**Abstract**

The observed zonal winds at Jupiter’s cloud tops have been shown to be closely linked to the asymmetric part of the planet’s measured gravity field. However, other measurements suggest that in some latitudinal regions the flow below the clouds might be somewhat different from the observed cloud-level winds. Here we show, using both the symmetric and asymmetric parts of the measured gravity field, that the observed cloud-level wind profile between 25°S and 25°N must extend unaltered to depths of thousands of kilometers. Poleward, the midlatitude deep jets also contribute to the gravity signal, but might differ somewhat from the cloud-level winds. We analyze the likelihood of this difference and give bounds to its strength. We also find that to match the gravity measurements, the winds must project inward in the direction parallel to Jupiter’s spin axis, and that their decay inward should be in the radial direction.

**Plain Language Summary**

Observations of Jupiter’s cloud-tops reveal very strong atmospheric winds reaching 500 km/hr. Using very accurate measurements of the planet’s gravity field, provided by NASA’s Juno spacecraft, the cloud-level winds were found to extend thousands of kilometers into the interior of Jupiter, with a wind profile similar to that observed at the clouds-level. However, analysis of various measurements suggested that at some latitudinal regions the flow below the clouds might be different to some extent. Here we explore the constraints posed by the Juno gravity measurements on the latitudinal profile of the zonal flow in Jupiter below the cloud level. We find that in order to explain the detailed latitudinal structure of the wind-attributed gravity field, the cloud-level winds in the 50°S to 50°N range have to extend deep into the planet, approximately keeping their observed latitudinal profile. With that, we find that most of the wind-induced gravity signal comes from the 25°S to 25°N region, where the strongest jets reside, suggesting that in the midlatitudes the observed jets at the cloud level might be somewhat different at depth.

**1 Introduction**

The zonal (east-west) wind at Jupiter’s cloud level dominate the atmospheric circulation, and strongly relate to the observed cloud bands (Fletcher et al., 2020). The structure of the flow beneath the cloud level has been investigated by several of the instruments on board the Juno spacecraft by means of gravity, infrared and microwave measurements (Bolton et al., 2017). Particularly, the gravity measurements were used to infer that the winds extend down to roughly 3000 km, and that the main north-south asymmetry in the cloud-level wind extends to these great depths (Kaspi et al., 2018), resulting in the substantial values of the odd gravity harmonics  $J_3$ ,  $J_5$ ,  $J_7$ , and  $J_9$ . The excellent match between the sign and value of the predicted odd harmonics using the cloud-level wind (Kaspi, 2013) and the Juno gravity measurements (Iess et al., 2018), led to the inference that the wind profile at depth is similar to that at the cloud level (Kaspi et al., 2018, 2020). Here, we revisit in more detail the relation between the exact meridional profile of the zonal flow and the gravity measurements, and study how much of the cloud-level wind must be retained in order to match the gravity measurements.

Since the gravity measurements are sensitive to mass distribution, they are not very sensitive to the shallow levels (0.5-240 bar) probed by Juno’s microwave radiometer (MWR Janssen et al., 2017), as the density in this region is low compared to the deeper levels. Yet, the gravity measurements have substantial implications on the MWR region, since if the flow profile at depth (below the MWR region) resembles that at the cloud level it is likely that the flow profile within the MWR region is not very different. In such a case, where the flow is barotropic, this implies via thermal wind balance that latitudinal temperature gradients in the MWR region are small, which has important implica-

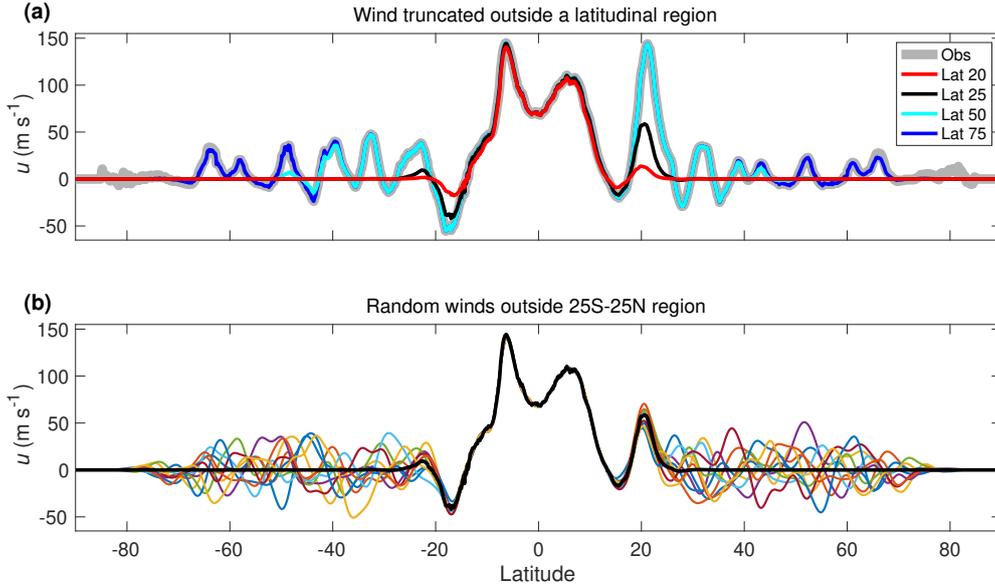
tion to the MWR analysis of water and ammonia distribution (Li et al., 2017; Ingersoll et al., 2017; C. Li et al., 2020). Thus, it is important to determine how strong the gravity constraint on the temperature distribution is, and what is its latitudinal dependence.

The determination of the zonal flow field at depth is based on the measurements of the odd gravity harmonics,  $J_3$ ,  $J_5$ ,  $J_7$ , and  $J_9$ , which are uniquely related to the flow field (Kaspi, 2013). Using only four numbers to determine a 2D (latitude and depth) field poses a uniqueness challenge, and solutions that are unrelated to the observed cloud-level wind can be found (Kong et al., 2018), although the origin of such internal flow structure, completely unrelated to the cloud-level winds, is not clear. In addition, these solutions require a flow of about  $1 \text{ m s}^{-1}$  at depth of 0.8 the radius of Jupiter ( $\sim 15,000 \text{ km}$ ), where the significant conductivity (Liu et al., 2008; Wicht et al., 2019) is expected to dampen such strong flows (Cao & Stevenson, 2017; Duer et al., 2019; Moore et al., 2019). Recently, Galanti and Kaspi (2021) showed that the interaction of the flow with the magnetic field in the semiconducting region can be used as an additional constraint on the structure of the flow below the cloud level. With some modification of the observed cloud-level wind, well within its uncertainty range (Tollefson et al., 2017), a solution can be found that explains the odd gravity harmonics and abides the magnetic field constraints.

All of the above mentioned studies assumed that if the internal flow is related to the observed surface winds, it will manifest its entire latitudinal profile. However, some evidence suggests that at some latitudinal regions the flow below the clouds might be different from the winds at the cloud level. The Galileo probe, entering the Jovian atmosphere around planetocentric latitude  $6.5^\circ\text{N}$  (Orton et al., 1998), measured winds that strengthened from  $80 \text{ ms}^{-1}$  at the cloud level to  $\sim 160 \text{ ms}^{-1}$  at a depth of 4 bars, from where it remains approximately constant until a depth of 20 bars where the probe stopped transmitting data (Atkinson et al., 1998). Such a baroclinic shear got further support in studies of equatorial hot spots (L. Li et al., 2006; Choi et al., 2013). Recently, Duer et al. (2020) showed that the MWR measurements of brightness temperature correlate to the zonal wind's latitudinal profile. They found that profiles differing to a limited extent from the cloud-level can still be consistent with both MWR and gravity. Emanating from the correlations between MWR and the zonal winds, Fletcher et al. (2021) suggested that the winds at some latitudes might strengthen from the cloud level to a depth of 4-8 bars, i.e. not far from where water is expected to be condensing, and only then begin to decay downward. Alternatively, based on stability considerations, it was suggested that while westward jets are not altered much with depth, the eastward jets might increase by 50-100% (Dowling, 1995; Dowling, 2020).

Furthermore, in the Kaspi et al. (2018) and Galanti and Kaspi (2021) studies, the observed cloud-level wind has been assumed to be projected into the planet interior along the direction parallel to the spin axis of Jupiter, based on theoretical arguments (Busse, 1970, 1976) and 3D simulations of the flow in a Jovian-like planet (e.g., Busse, 1994; Kaspi et al., 2009; Christensen, 2001; Heimpel et al., 2016). Theoretically this requires the flow to be nearly barotropic, which is not necessarily the case, particularly when considering the 3D nature of the planetary interior. Another assumption made is that the flow decays in the radial direction. This was based on the reasoning that any mechanism acting to decay the flow, such as the increasing conductivity (Cao & Stevenson, 2017), compressibility (Kaspi et al., 2009), or the existence of a stable layer (Debras & Chabrier, 2019; Christensen et al., 2020), will depend on pressure and temperature, which to first order are a function of depth. However, if the internal flow is organized in cylinders it might be the case that the mechanism acting to decay it strengthens also in the direction parallel to the spin axis.

Here we investigate what can be learned about the issues discussed above, based on the measured gravity field, considering both the symmetric and asymmetric components of the gravity field measurements. We study the ability to fit the gravity measurements with a cloud-level wind that is limited to a specific latitudinal range, thus iden-



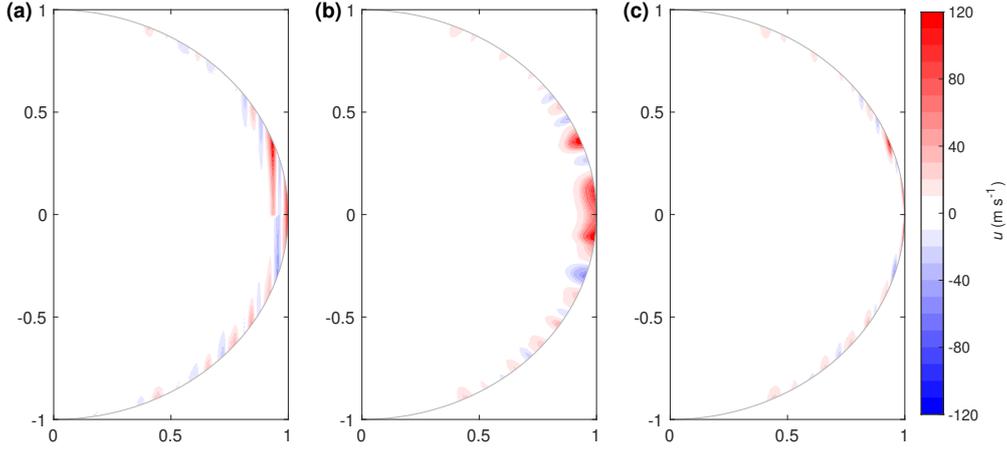
**Figure 1.** (a) The observed wind (Tollefson et al., 2017) (gray), and variant examples with the wind truncated poleward of the latitudes  $20^\circ$ ,  $25^\circ$ ,  $50^\circ$ , and  $75^\circ$ . (b) The case of wind truncated poleward of the  $25^\circ$  latitude (black), along with examples of random jets added in the truncated regions.

123 tifying the regions where the observed cloud-level wind is likely to extend deep, and the  
 124 regions where the interior flow might differ (section 3). We also examine whether a stronger  
 125 wind at the 4-8 bar level is compatible with the gravity measurements, and if the assump-  
 126 tions regarding the relation of the internal flow to the cloud level can be relaxed (sec-  
 127 tion 4). Finally, we examine the latitudinal dependence of the wind-induced gravity har-  
 128 monics when magnetohydrodynamics considerations are used as additional constraints  
 129 (section 5).

## 130 2 Defining the cloud-level wind and possible internal flow structures

131 We examine several aspects of the flow structure that might influence the ability  
 132 to explain the gravity measurements. First, stemming from the notion that at some lat-  
 133 itudinal regions the flow below the cloud level might differ from the observed, we set cases  
 134 in which the cloud-level wind is truncated at a specific latitude (Fig. 1a). The trunca-  
 135 tion is done by applying a shifted hemispherically symmetric hyperbolic tangent func-  
 136 tion with a transition width of  $5^\circ$ , to allow a smooth truncation of the wind from the  
 137 observed flow. The result is a wind profile that equatorward of the truncation latitude  
 138 is kept as in the cloud-top observations, and poleward decays quickly to zero. We ex-  
 139 amine 18 cases with truncation latitudes  $5^\circ, 10^\circ, 15^\circ, \dots, 90^\circ$ . Note that all of the cloud-  
 140 level wind setups used in this study are based on the analysis of the HST Jupiter im-  
 141 ages during Juno’s PJ3 (Tollefson et al., 2017)[, Figure 1a, gray line], and that in all fig-  
 142 ures and calculations we use the planetocentric latitude.

143 Next, we examine cases in which a different wind structure exists poleward of the  
 144 truncation latitude. As such, unknown wind structures could possibly replace the ob-  
 145 served cloud-level wind at shallow depths of around 5-10 bars (e.g., as can be inferred  
 146 from MWR, depending on how microwave brightness temperatures are interpreted, see  
 147 Fletcher et al., 2021). For the purpose of the gravity calculation we treat these wind pro-  
 148 files as if they replace the wind at the cloud level (the variation of the wind between 1

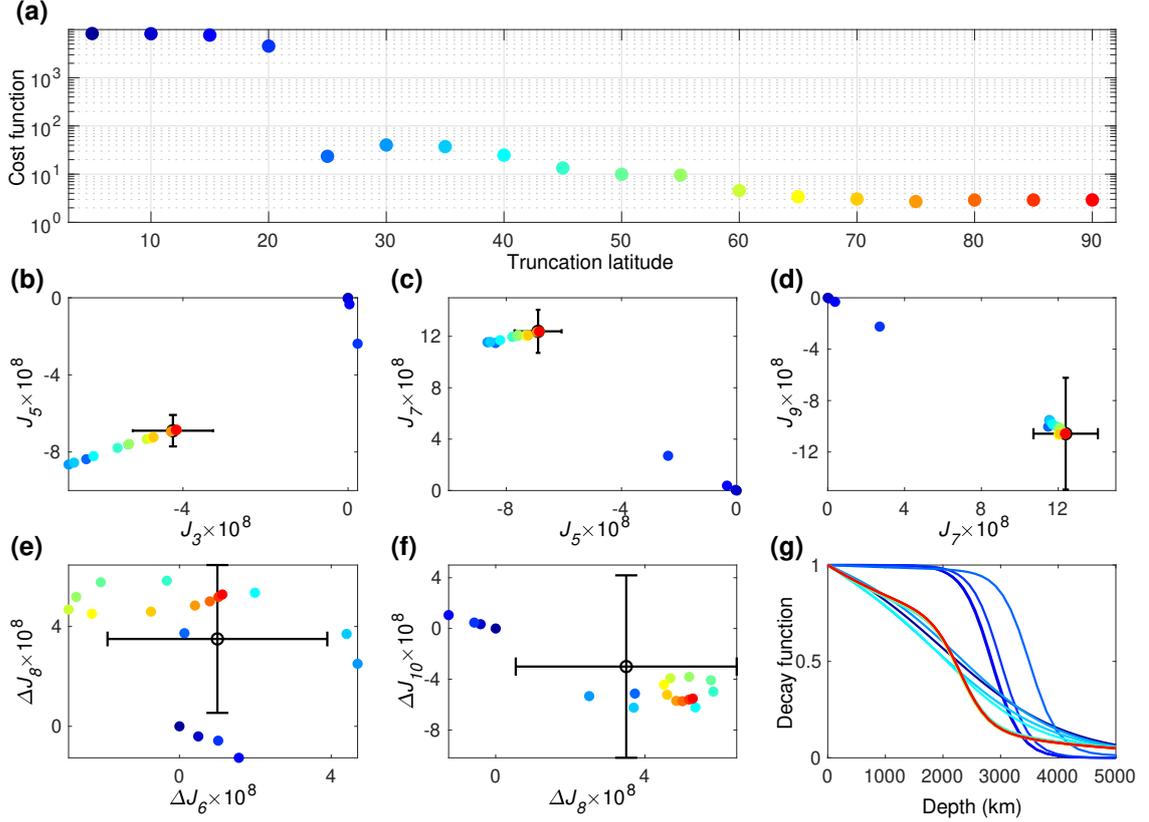


**Figure 2.** Options of cloud-level wind projection and decay profiles, shown for an example of a sharp decay at a 3000 km distance from the surface. (a) Projection in the direction parallel to the spin axis and decay in the radial direction. (b) Projection and decay in the radial direction. (c) Projection and decay in the direction parallel to the spin axis.

149 and 10 bars has negligible effect on the induced gravity field). The observed wind is trun-  
 150 cated poleward of  $25^{\circ}\text{S} - 25^{\circ}\text{N}$ , and replaced with 1000 random wind structures that  
 151 mimic the latitudinal scale and strength of the observed winds (Fig. 1b).

152 The cloud-level wind profile is first projected inward in the direction parallel to the  
 153 spin axis (Kaspi et al., 2010), and then made to decay radially assuming a combination  
 154 of functions (Fig. 2a), that allow a search for the optimal decay profile (Kaspi et al., 2018;  
 155 Galanti & Kaspi, 2021, see also supporting information - SI). In addition, we examine  
 156 two additional cases: a case in which the cloud-level wind is both projected and decays  
 157 in the radial direction (Fig. 2b), and a case in which the wind is both projected and de-  
 158 cays in the direction of the spin axis (Fig. 2c).

159 Given a zonal flow structure, thermal wind balance is used to calculate an anomalous  
 160 density structure associated with large-scale flow in fast rotating gas giants. The  
 161 density field is then integrated to give the 1-bar gravity field in terms of the zonal grav-  
 162 ity harmonics (Kaspi et al., 2010). Using an adjoint based optimization, a solution for  
 163 the flow structure is searched for, such that the model solution for the gravity field is best  
 164 fitted to the part of the measured gravity field that can be attributed to the wind (Galanti  
 165 & Kaspi, 2016). The odd gravity harmonics are attributed solely to the wind, therefore  
 166 we use the Juno measured values  $J_3 = (-4.24 \pm 0.91) \times 10^{-8}$ ,  $J_5 = (-6.89 \pm 0.81) \times$   
 167  $10^{-8}$ ,  $J_7 = (12.39 \pm 1.68) \times 10^{-8}$ , and  $J_9 = (-10.58 \pm 4.35) \times 10^{-8}$  (Iess et al., 2018).  
 168 The lowest even harmonics  $J_2$  and  $J_4$  are dominated by the planet’s density structure  
 169 and cannot be used in our analysis, but interior models can give a reasonable  
 170 estimate for the expected wind contribution for the higher even harmonics  $J_6$ ,  $J_8$ , and  
 171  $J_{10}$  (Guillot et al., 2018). Based on the Juno measurements and the range of interior model  
 172 solutions, the expected wind-induced even harmonics are estimated as  $\Delta J_6 = 1 \times 10^{-8} \pm$   
 173  $(0.9 + 2) \times 10^{-8}$ ,  $\Delta J_8 = 3.5 \times 10^{-8} \pm (2.46 + 0.5) \times 10^{-8}$ , and  $\Delta J_{10} = -3 \times 10^{-8} \pm (6.94 +$   
 174  $0.25) \times 10^{-8}$ . Note that the uncertainty associated with each even harmonic has con-  
 175 tributions from both the measurement and the range of interior model solutions (first  
 176 and second uncertainties, respectively). The large uncertainties in the estimated wind-  
 177 induced even harmonics suggest that our analysis is limited to their order of magnitude  
 178 and sign.



**Figure 3.** Latitude-dependent solutions as function of the truncation latitude. (a) The overall fit of the model solution to the measurements (cost function). Each case is assigned with a different color that is used in the following panels, ranging from latitude 5° (blue) to 90° (no truncation, red). (b-f) the solutions for the different gravity harmonics (colors), and the measurement (black). (g) the decay function associated with each solution.

179 Finally, in order to isolate the latitudinal dependence from the general ability to  
 180 fit the gravity harmonics, we first optimize the cloud-level wind so that the odd gravi-  
 181 ty harmonics are fitted perfectly (Galanti & Kaspi, 2021). The modified wind is very  
 182 similar to the observed (Fig. S1), well within the uncertainty of the cloud-level wind ob-  
 183 servation (Tollefson et al., 2017), therefore retaining all the observed latitudinal struc-  
 184 ture responsible for the wind-induced gravity harmonics.

### 185 3 The latitudinal sensitivity of the wind-induced gravity field

186 We begin by analyzing the effect of the cloud-level wind latitudinal truncation on  
 187 the ability to explain the gravity harmonics. For each wind setup, the internal flow struc-  
 188 ture is modified until the best fit to the 4 odd harmonics and the 3 even harmonics is  
 189 reached (Fig. 3). The cost-function (Fig. 3a), a measure for the overall difference between  
 190 the measurements and the model solution (see SI), reveals the contribution of each lati-  
 191 tudinal region to the solution. First, as expected, when the cloud-level wind is retained  
 192 at all latitudes, the solution for the odd harmonics is very close to the measurements (Fig. 3b-  
 193 d, red dots). Importantly, the same optimal flow structure explains very well the even  
 194 harmonics (Fig. 3e-f, red dots). This is additional evidence that the observed cloud-level  
 195 wind is dynamically related to the gravity field.

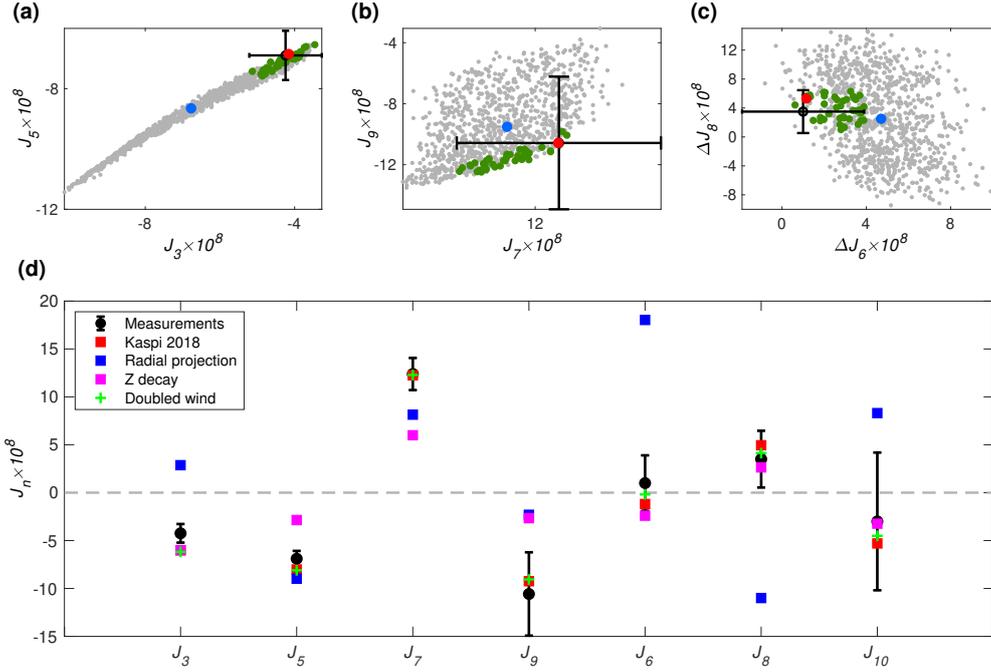
196 Examining the latitudinal dependence of the truncation, it is evident that truncat-  
 197 ing the observed cloud-level wind closer to the equator than 25°S–25°N prevents any  
 198 flow structure that could explain the gravity harmonics. It is most apparent in the odd  
 199 harmonics (Fig. 3b-d) where the optimal solutions (dark blue circles) are close to zero  
 200 and far from the measured values. It is also the case for  $\Delta J_8$ , but for  $\Delta J_6$  and  $\Delta J_{10}$  the  
 201 solutions are always inside the uncertainty: in  $\Delta J_6$  because the measured value is very  
 202 small, and in  $\Delta J_{10}$  because the uncertainty is very large. Considering the cloud-level wind  
 203 profile (Fig. 1a, black), it is not surprising that truncating the winds poleward of 25°S–  
 204 25°N makes the difference in the solution, as this is where the positive (negative) jet in  
 205 the northern (southern) hemisphere are found, and project strongly on the low order odd  
 206 harmonics. Note that even a 5° difference (Fig. 1a, red, truncation at 20°S–20°N) pre-  
 207 vents a physical solution from being reached. Once these opposing jets are included, the  
 208 flow structure contains enough asymmetry to explain very well  $J_7$  and  $J_9$  which have the  
 209 largest values of the odd harmonics.

210 However, with the 25°S–25°N truncation, the model solutions for  $J_3$  and  $J_5$  are  
 211 still outside the measured uncertainty. Only when the influence of the zonal winds through-  
 212 out the 50°S – 50°N range (Fig. 1a, cyan) is included, then the lower odd harmonics  
 213 can be explained with the cloud-level wind profile. The optimal decay function for each  
 214 case (Fig. 3g), emphasize the robustness of the solutions. When only the equatorial re-  
 215 gion is retained, the optimization is trying (with no success) to include as much mass  
 216 in the region where the cloud-level wind is projected inward. But once the winds at 25°S–  
 217 25°N are included, then the decay function of the wind settles on a similar profile, with  
 218 some small variations between the cases. Note that repeating these experiments with the  
 219 exact Tollefson et al. (2017) cloud-level wind profile, does not change substantially the  
 220 main results (Fig. S2), thus ensuring the robustness of the results.

221 The same methodology can be applied to a cloud-level wind that is truncated equa-  
 222 torward of a latitudinal region (Fig. S3). The analysis shows that a wind truncated equa-  
 223 torward of a latitude larger than 25°S–25°N does not allow a plausible solution to be  
 224 reached. Consistently with the above experiment, the deep jets at 25°S–25°N are nec-  
 225 essary to fit gravity harmonics. Specifically, there is a gradual deterioration of the so-  
 226 lution in the truncation region of 0° to 20°, which is related solely to the even harmon-  
 227 ics  $\Delta J_6$ ,  $\Delta J_8$ , and  $\Delta J_{10}$ . Once the wind is truncated inside 10°S–10°N the solution for  
 228  $\Delta J_6$  and  $\Delta J_8$  is outside the uncertainty range, and  $\Delta J_{10}$  moves further away from the  
 229 measurement. This is due to the strong eastward jets at 6°S and 6°N.

## 230 4 Variants of the flow structure

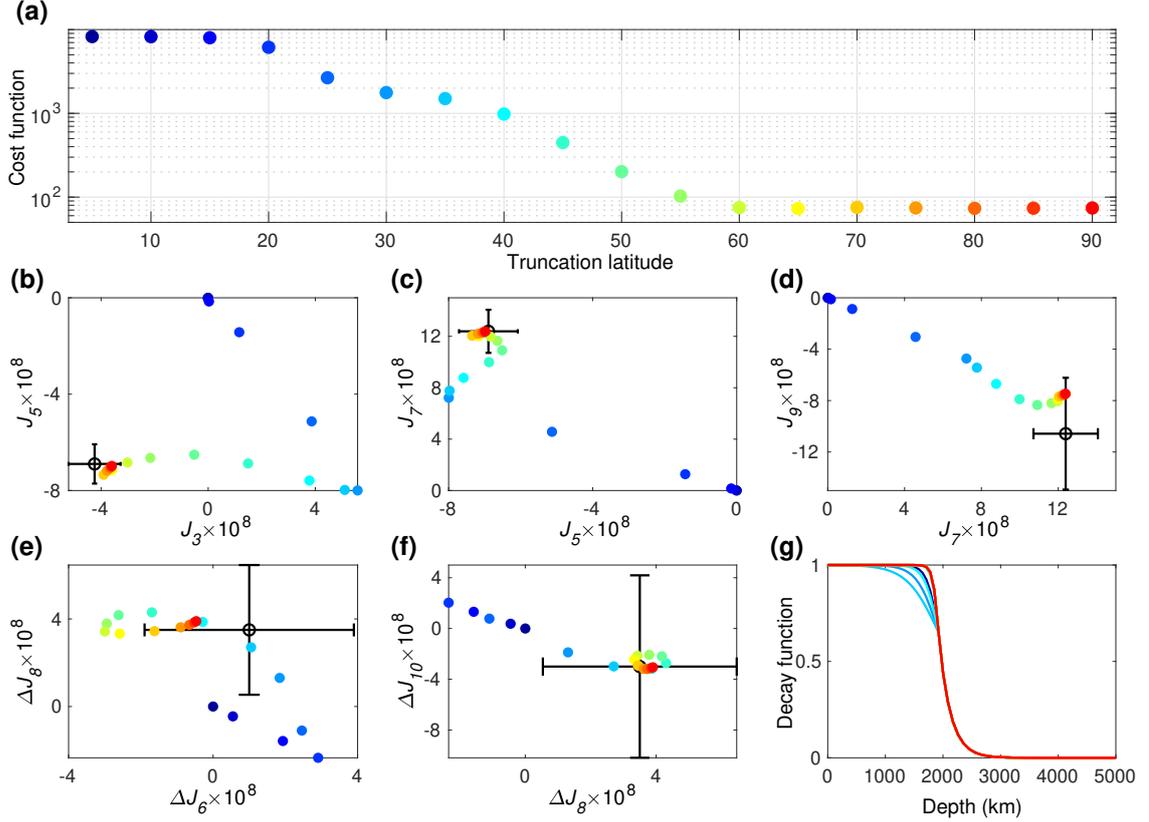
231 Next, we examine several variants to the wind setups. In section 3 we showed that  
 232 the jets between 25°S and 25°N are crucial for explaining the gravity harmonics, and there-  
 233 fore should not differ much below the cloud level. However, in the regions where the wind  
 234 is truncated it should be examined whether a flow below the cloud level that is completely  
 235 different might still allow matching the gravity harmonics. We therefore examine a case  
 236 where the cloud-level wind is truncated poleward of 25°S–25°N, and in the truncated  
 237 regions random jets are added to simulate different possible scenarios (Fig. 1b, see SI for  
 238 definition). The gravity harmonic solutions for 1000 different cases is shown in Fig. 4 (a-  
 239 c). The largest effect the random jets have is on  $J_3$  and  $J_5$ , with considerable effect also  
 240 on the other odds and even harmonics. About 4% of the cases provide a good match to  
 241 all the measurements (green), therefore it is statistically possible that some combination  
 242 of jets unseen at the cloud level at the mid-latitudes, with amplitude of up to  $\pm 40$  m s<sup>-1</sup>,  
 243 are responsible for part of the gravity signal. Doubling (halving) the random jets strength  
 244 results in only 1.1% (1.2%) of the solutions to fit the gravity measurement (SI, Fig. S7),  
 245 suggesting that if alternative jets exists in the mid-latitudes, their amplitude should be  
 246 around  $\pm 40$  m s<sup>-1</sup>. These results are consistent with Duer et al. (2020) who did a sim-



**Figure 4.** (a-c) Solutions with the cloud-level wind truncated poleward of  $25^\circ\text{S} - 25^\circ\text{N}$  and replaced with random jets there (Fig. 1b). Shown are the solutions for 1000 random cases (gray), and within those the solution which matches all the gravity harmonics (green). Also shown are the solution with no random winds (blue, corresponding to the  $25^\circ$  case in Fig. 3), the solution with no truncation of the winds (red, corresponding to the  $90^\circ$  case in Fig. 3) and the Juno measurements (black). (d) Solutions for cases with cloud-level wind projected in the radial direction (blue; Fig. 2b) and wind decayed in the direction parallel to the spin axis (magenta; Fig. 2c), and a doubled cloud-level wind (green). Also shown are the measurements (black), and the solution with the unaltered cloud-level wind (red; Kaspi et al., 2018).

247 ilar analysis, but taking the full cloud level winds and showed that solutions differing from  
 248 the cloud level are possible but statistically unlikely ( $\sim 1\%$ ).

249 Aside from modifications to the cloud-level wind, we also examine cases in which  
 250 the projection of the flow beneath the cloud level is modified. For simplicity, we exam-  
 251 ine these cases with the observed cloud-level wind spanning the full latitudinal range.  
 252 Projecting the wind radially and keeping the decay radial (Fig. 2b), we find that there  
 253 is no plausible solution for flow structure under these assumptions that would give a good  
 254 fit to the gravity measurements (Fig. 4d, blue). The best-fit model solution for all  $J_n$   
 255 is far from the measurements, well outside their uncertainty range, and does not even  
 256 match  $J_3$  in sign. Next, we consider a case in which the decay of the winds is in the di-  
 257 rection parallel to the spin axis (Fig. 2c). Here the optimal solution for the odd harmo-  
 258 nics is far from the measured values (Fig. 4d, magenta), while for the even harmonics the  
 259 solution is within the uncertainty range. However, in this case the winds needs to be very  
 260 deep, extending to  $\sim 5000$  km, where the interaction with the magnetic field is extremely  
 261 strong (Cao & Stevenson, 2017; Galanti et al., 2017; Galanti & Kaspi, 2021). Finally,  
 262 following the suggestion that the cloud-level wind might get stronger with depth before  
 263 they decay (e.g., Fletcher et al., 2021), we conduct an experiment in which we double  
 264 the cloud-level wind. Interestingly, a plausible solution can be achieved (Fig. 4d, green



**Figure 5.** Same as Fig. 3, but for a case where the flow profile in the semiconducting region is restricted to comply with secular variations consideration.

265 crosses), with a decay profile similar to the Kaspi et al. (2018) solution, but with the winds  
 266 decaying more baroclinically in the upper 2000 km, and then decaying slower (Fig. S6).

## 267 5 Adding magnetohydrodynamic constraints

268 In Jupiter, the increased conductivity with depth (e.g., French et al., 2012; Wicht  
 269 et al., 2019) suggests that the flow might be reduced to very small values in the semi-  
 270 conducting region (deeper than 2000 km, Cao & Stevenson, 2017). Using flow estimates  
 271 in the semiconducting region based on past magnetic secular variations (Moore et al.,  
 272 2019), Galanti and Kaspi (2021) gave a revised wind decay profile that can explain both  
 273 the gravity harmonics and the constraints posed by the secular variations. We follow this  
 274 approach, setting the flow strength in the semiconducting region (deeper than 2000 km,  
 275 see Galanti & Kaspi, 2021) to be a sharp exponential function (Fig. 5g, right part). Given  
 276 this inner profile of the decay function, the outer part of the decay function can be searched  
 277 for, together with the optimal cloud-level wind, that will result in the best fit to the odd  
 278 measured gravity harmonics. The optimal cloud-level wind (Fig. S1b) is very similar to  
 279 the observed wind, with deviations that are within the uncertainties.

280 Using the modified cloud-level wind, the shape of the decay function in the outer  
 281 neutral region is optimized to allow the best-fit to the odd and even gravity harmonics  
 282 (Fig. 5b-g). In addition to the odd harmonics, which are expected to fit the measure-  
 283 ments, the model also fits very well the even harmonics, despite the limited range of possible  
 284 decay profiles in the outer region (Fig. 5g). The latitudinal dependence reveals that

285 the range of 50°S – 50°N is needed in order to allow a good fit, especially for  $J_3$  and  
 286  $J_7$ . Similar to the case with gravity-only constraints, fitting the even harmonics, as well  
 287 as  $J_5$  and  $J_9$ , requires mostly the cloud-level wind inside the 25°S–25°N region. Thus,  
 288 even when including the strong magnetic constraint, the dominance of the 25°S–25°N  
 289 region remains robust.

## 290 Acknowledgments

291 Data is available through Iess et al. (2018), Guillot et al. (2018), and Galanti and Kaspi  
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