Comparison between Silicate Weathering and Physical Erosion Rates in Andean Basins of the Amazon River?

Jean-Sébastien Moquet, Jérôme Viers, Alain Crave, Elisa Armijos, Christelle Lagane, Waldo Lavado, Emilie Pépin, Rodrigo Pombosa, Luis Noriega, William Santini, et al.

To cite this version:

Jean-Sébastien Moquet, Jérôme Viers, Alain Crave, Elisa Armijos, Christelle Lagane, et al.. Comparison between Silicate Weathering and Physical Erosion Rates in Andean Basins of the Amazon River?.. Procedia Earth and Planetary Science, Elsevier, 2014, 10, pp.275-279. 10.1016/j.proeps.2014.08.061 . insu-01061116

HAL Id: insu-01061116

https://hal-insu.archives-ouvertes.fr/insu-01061116

Submitted on 26 Nov 2020

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L’archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire HAL, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d’enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

Distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution - NoDerivatives| 4.0 International License
Comparison between silicate weathering and physical erosion rates in Andean basins of the Amazon river

Jean-Sébastien Moquet\textsuperscript{a,b,*}, Jérôme Viers\textsuperscript{a}, Alain Crave\textsuperscript{c}, Elisa Armijos\textsuperscript{d}, Christelle Lagane\textsuperscript{e}, Waldo Lavado\textsuperscript{c}, Emilie Pépin\textsuperscript{a}, Rodrigo Pombosa\textsuperscript{f}, Luis Noriega\textsuperscript{g}, William Santini\textsuperscript{a,h}, Jean-Loup Guyot\textsuperscript{a,h}

\textsuperscript{a} GET/OMP, CNRS/IRD/Université Paul Sabatier, 14 avenue Edouard Belin, 31400 Toulouse, France
\textsuperscript{b} IGc/USP, Rua do lago, 562 - cidade universitaria São Paulo CEP : 05508-080 Sao Paulo, Brazil
\textsuperscript{c} Géosciences Rennes (UMR CNRS 6118)/OSUR, Université de Rennes1, Campus de Beaulieu, CS 74205, F-35042 Rennes Cedex, France
\textsuperscript{d} LAPA, Av. General Rodríguez Octávio Jordão Ramos, 3000, Campus Universitário, Bloco Arthur Reis, Coroado, Manaus, Brazil
\textsuperscript{e} SENAMHI, Casilla 11, I308, Lima 11, Peru
\textsuperscript{f} INAMHI Iñaquito N36-14 y Corea, Código 16-310, Quito, Ecuador
\textsuperscript{g} SENAMHI Calle Reyes Ortiz no. 41 2do Piso, La Paz, Bolivia
\textsuperscript{h} IRD, Casilla Postal 18-1209, Lima 18 – Peru

Abstract

From published data based on the HYBAM observatory database, we explore the relationship between silicate weathering rates and physical erosion rates over the Andean basins of the Amazon River.

No homogenous relationship between erosion rates and chemical weathering rate is observed over this area. Only the volcanic basins respond to the global relationship defined by Millot et al\textsuperscript{1}. For remaining areas, two hypotheses can explain the absence of coherence with this global empiric law: 1) The relationship between weathering and physical erosion rates need to be defined for each lithological class, and 2) For erosion rates higher than around 1000t.km\textsuperscript{2}.yr\textsuperscript{-1} the system is “weathering limited”.

© 2014 The Authors. Published by Elsevier B.V.

Keywords: silicate weathering; physical erosion; Andes; Amazon basin;

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +55 11 3091 3948.
E-mail address: jean-sebastien.moquet@ird.fr
1. Introduction

At the global scale and on geological time scales, mechanical erosion and chemical weathering budgets are linked \(^2\text{-}^6\). Together, these processes contribute to the degradation of the Earth’s critical zone and to the biogeochemical cycles of elements. The study of the relationships between silicate weathering and physical erosion in orogenic contexts allows for a better understanding of the role of mountains belt formation in these biogeochemical cycles and in particular in the long-term carbon cycle.

At the global scale a good correlation between chemical silicate weathering and physical erosion rates has been observed for large rivers \(^4\) and in both basaltic and granitic orogenic domains \(^1\text{-}^7\). The mechanism which relates these two processes depends on the depth of the weathering zone (e.g. the soil) and hence on the geomorphological regime \(^8\text{-}^10\). The thickness of the weathering zone depends on the balance between the downward propagation of the weathering front at depth and physical erosion processes at the surface. When chemical weathering at depth is the dominant process over erosion, the weathering budget can be limited by the accumulation of weathered material in deep soils, which limits the contact between primary minerals and water in soils \(^22\). This case is named erosion limited. By opposition, if the physical erosion processes are dominant, the limiting factor is kinetic because mechanical erosion allows for primary minerals to be present near the surface as the weathering rate is slower than the rate of solid matter exportation. In this case, the weathering rate depends on kinetic parameters \(^11\text{-}^13\).

We compare the mechanical erosion and silicate weathering rates of the Andean basins of the Amazon river determined from the large and unique hydrological, suspended sediments and geochemical database of the PHICAB and HYBAM programs. We used the published results of total suspended solid budgets \(^14\text{-}^16\) and silicate weathering budgets \(^17\) resulting from these observatories.

2. Material and method

The silicate weathering rate is measured here using TZ\(^+\text{sill}\) values (flux of cations released by silicate weathering) and erosion rates using TSS (flux of Total Suspended Solids) in order to compare the results with the global relationship between chemical weathering and TSS rates defined by Millot et al\(^7\). We explore here the annual TZ\(^+\text{sill}\), TSS and runoff determined over 13 gauging stations of the PHICAB and HYBAM observatories (www.ore-hybam.org) located at the outlet of Andean headwater basins of Amazon River (see calculation methods in the respective papers \(^14\text{-}^17\)) (Figure 1). These gauging stations record the export of around 86\% of the total Andean area of the Amazon basin (defined as altitude > 500 m.a.s.l).

![Fig. 1: Studied area and location of the gauging stations. Red triangles represent the active volcanoes of the Amazon basin.](image-url)
On the annual timescale, a south-north rainfall rate gradient is observed. This gradient is reflected in the range of annual runoff with values of 117 mm.yr\(^{-1}\) (Rio Grande at ABA) to near 3000 mm.yr\(^{-1}\) in the north (Upper Napo). This gradient is associated to a north-south seasonality gradient with values from 0.4, in the north, to 2.7, in the south (Seasonality Index = \(\sigma[Q_{\text{month}}]/Q_{\text{mean}}\) i.e. standard deviation of the monthly runoff distribution divided by annual average; Figure 2A).

The Andean silicate lithology follows a north-south gradient with volcanic rocks dominating in the northern basins (Napo and Pastaza basin), mixed lithology in the central part (volcanic rocks, plutonic and metamorphic rocks, and sedimentary rocks; Maranon and Ucayali basins) and recycled sedimentary rocks in the southern Andean basins (Beni and Mamore basins).

3. Results and discussion

Chemical weathering rates display a north-south gradient. For a given runoff value, volcanic areas are more active in term of chemical weathering than others areas, i.e. the TZ\(^{+}\)sil concentration released in rivers is higher in volcanic areas than other contexts (Figure 2B). This is consistent with the higher weatherability of volcanic glass\(^{18}\). For the others basins, it is not possible to distinguish the respective roles of lithology and runoff because the lowest chemical weathering rates are encountered for basins with both low runoff and recycled sedimentary lithology (i.e. the least weatherable lithology; Figure 2B).

![Figure 2](image-url)

Figure 2: Hydrological seasonality index as function of runoff (a) (HYBAM database), silicate weathering rates (TZ\(^{+}\)sil) as function of runoff (b), physical erosion rates (TSS) as function of seasonality index (c) and runoff (d). TSS uncertainties have not been estimated for volcanic basins.

Physical erosion rates display a south-north gradient with values higher than 1000 t.km\(^{-2}\).yr\(^{-1}\) in Upper Madeira basin and values lower than 700 t.km\(^{-2}\).yr\(^{-1}\) in most of the Upper Napo basins. Throughout the study of erosion rates of Andean basins draining to the Atlantic Ocean,\(^{19}\) showed that this gradient is mainly related to the hydro-climatological seasonality gradient (Figure 2A). Consequently, physical erosion rates decrease with increasing runoff over the studied area (Figure 2D).
Comparing the chemical weathering rate with the physical erosion rate over the studied area (Figure 3), it appears that volcanic basins (Upper Napo and Pastaza basins) respond to the global empirical law defined by Millot et al.\textsuperscript{1} based on basaltic and granitic basins over the world. The other basins do not follow this law. This observation can be explained by two hypotheses. First, it might be that a relationship between chemical weathering rate and physical erosion rate has to be defined for each lithological class (volcanic, mixed lithology, recycled sedimentary class). In this case, the regression values depend mainly on the lithology which dominates the chemical weathering rates of each class. Second, it could be argued that the relationship between chemical weathering rate and physical erosion rate crosses a threshold at high physical erosion rates. This case would correspond to the “weathering-limited” regime\textsuperscript{10}. In this case reaction kinetics are a limiting factor, i.e. weathering processes are too slow to compete with solid matter exportation. However, primary material weathering processes could occur mainly in the foreland and plain sedimentary areas as suggested by Bouchez et al.\textsuperscript{20} and Moquet et al.\textsuperscript{17} for the Amazon (see also Bouchez et al.\textsuperscript{21} in this issue). Note that these two hypotheses are not mutually exclusive.

4. Conclusion

This paper reports a synthesis of HYBAM observatory results over Andean basins. Physical erosion rates over this area have been shown previously to be mainly controlled by the hydro-climatological seasonality. Chemical weathering rates display a north-south gradient. The respective roles of lithology and runoff on this gradient cannot be determined yet. The relationship between chemical weathering and physical erosion rates is consistent with the global empiric law defined by Millot et al.\textsuperscript{1} only for volcanic basins.

Further studies need to be carried out to better constrain the parameters controlling the weathering and physical erosion in the Andean context. This could be provided throughout a higher spatial resolution of chemical weathering and physical erosion rates in along the Andean chain, especially in high extreme erosion and rainfall contexts.

Acknowledgment

This work was funded by the French Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD), the French Institut des Sciences de l’Univers (INSU) and the Observatoire Midi-Pyrénées (OMP) through the HYBAM Observatory (Hydrogeodynamics of the Amazon basin). We especially thank Pascal Fraizy, Philippe Vauchel, Francis Sondag, Nore Arevalo, the SENAMHI (Servicio Nacional de Meteorología e Hidrología — Lima Peru and La Paz Bolivia), the INAMHI (Instituto Nacional de Meteorología e Hidrología — Quito Ecuador), the UNALM (Universidad Nacional Agraria de La Molina, Lima — Peru) and the UMSA (Universidad Mayor de San Andres, La Paz — Bolivia), and all members of the Observatory for Environmental Research HYBAM, for providing hydrological and water chemistry data.

References

\textsuperscript{1} Millot R, Gaillardet J, Dupré B, Allègre CJ. The global control of silicate weathering rates and the coupling with physical erosion: new insights from rivers of the Canadian Shield. \textit{Earth Planet Sci Lett} 2002;\textbf{196}:83–98.
2 Goddéris Y, François LM. The Cenozoic evolution of the strontium and carbon cycles: relative importance of continental erosion and mantle exchanges. *Chem Geol* 1995;126:169–90.

3 Kump LR, Arthur MA. Global chemical erosion during the Cenozoic: weatherability balances the budget. *WF Ruddiman Ed Tecton Clim Change Plenum Press* N Y 1997;399–426.

4 Gaillardet J, Dupré B, Louvat P, Allègre CJ. Global silicate weathering and CO2 consumption rates deduced from the chemistry of large rivers. *Chem Geol* 1999;159:3–30.

5 Berner RA, Kothavala. GEOCARB III: a revised model of atmospheric CO2 over phanerozoic time. *Am J Sci* 2001;301:182–204.

6 Dupré B, Dessert C, Oliva P, Goddéris Y, Viers J, François L, et al. Rivers, chemical weathering and Earth’s climate. *Comptes Rendus Geosci* 2003;335:1141–60.

7 Riebe CS, Kirchner JW, Granger DE, Finkel RC. Strong tectonic and weak climatic control of long-term chemical weathering rates. *Geology* 2001;29:511–4.

8 Culling WEH. Analytical theory of erosion. *J Geol* 1960;68:336–44.

9 Carson MA, Kirkby MJ. Hillslope Form and Process., New York: 1972.

10 Stallard RF. River chemistry, geology, geomorphology, and soils in the Amazon and Orinoco Basins. *Chem Weather Ed JI Drever Reidel Publ Co* 1985:293–316.

11 West AJ, Galy A, Bickle M. Tectonic and climatic controls on silicate weathering. *Earth Planet Sci Lett* 2005;235:211–28.

12 Dixon JL, von Blanckenburg F. Soils as pacemakers and limiters of global silicate weathering. *Comptes Rendus Geosci* 2012;344:597–609.

13 Carretier S, Godderis Y, Delannoy T, Rouby D. Mean bedrock-to-saprolite conversion and erosion rates during mountain growth and decline. *Geomorphology* 2014;209:39–52.

14 Armijos E, Laraque A, Barba S, Bourrel L, Ceron C, Lagane C, et al. Suspended sediments and dissolved yields from the Andean basins of Ecuador. *Hydrol Process* 2013;58:1478–94.

15 Armijos E, Crave A, Vauchel P, Fraizy P, Santini W, Moquet JS, et al. Suspended sediment dynamic in the Amazon River of Peru. *J South Am Earth Sci* 2013;182:75–84.

16 Vauchel P, Santini W, Guyoit J-L, Moquet J-S, Martinez J-M, Fuertes O, et al. Suspended sediment load in the Madeira River Basin, from the Andes of Peru and Bolivia to the Amazon River in Brazil in prep.

17 Moquet J-S, Crave A, Viers J, Seyler P, Armijos E, Bourrel L, et al. Chemical weathering and atmospheric/soil CO2 uptake in the Andean and Foreland Amazon basins. *Chem Geol* 2011;827:1–26.

18 Gislason SR, Oelkers EH. Mechanism, rates, and consequences of basaltic glass dissolution: II. An experimental study of the dissolution rates of basaltic glass as a function of pH and temperature. *Geochem Cosmochim Acta* 2003;67:3817–32.

19 Pepin E, Guyot JL, Armijos E, Bazan H, Fraizy P, Moquet JS, et al. Climatic control on eastern Andean denudation rates (Central Cordillera from Ecuador to Bolivia). *J South Am Earth Sci* 2013;44:85–93

20 Bouchez J, Gaillardet J, Lupker M, Louvat P, France-Lanord C, Maurice L, et al. Floodplains of large rivers: Weathering reactors or simple silos? *Chem Geol* 2012;332-333:166–84.

21 Bouchez J, Gaillardet J, van Blankenburg F., Weathering intensity from the Andes to the Amazon mouth. *this issue*