



# Geochemistry of the dissolved loads during high-flow season of rivers in the southeastern coastal region of China: anthropogenic impact on chemical weathering and carbon sequestration

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**Abstract.** The southeastern coastal region is one of the most developed and populated areas in China. Meanwhile, it has been severely impacted by acid rain over many years. The chemical compositions and carbon isotope compositions of dissolved inorganic carbon ( $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{DIC}}$ ) in river water in the high-flow season were investigated to estimate the chemical weathering and associated atmospheric  $\text{CO}_2$  consumption rates as well as the acid-deposition disturbance. Mass balance calculations indicated that the dissolved loads of major rivers in the Southeast Coastal River Basin (SECRB) were contributed to by atmospheric (14.3 %, 6.6 %–23.4 %), anthropogenic (15.7 %, 0 %–41.1 %), silicate weathering (39.5 %, 17.8 %–74.0 %) and carbonate weathering inputs (30.6 %, 3.9 %–62.0 %). The silicate and carbonate chemical weathering rates for these river watersheds were 14.2–35.8 and 1.8–52.1  $\text{t km}^{-2} \text{a}^{-1}$ , respectively. The associated mean  $\text{CO}_2$  consumption rate by silicate weathering for the whole SECRB was  $191 \times 10^3 \text{ mol km}^{-2} \text{a}^{-1}$ . The chemical and  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{DIC}}$  evidence indicated that sulfuric and nitric acid (mainly from acid deposition) were significantly involved in the chemical weathering of rocks. There was an overestimation of  $\text{CO}_2$  consumption at  $0.19 \times 10^{12} \text{ g C a}^{-1}$  if sulfuric and nitric acid were ignored, which accounted for about 33.6 % of the total  $\text{CO}_2$  consumption by silicate weathering in the SECRB. This study quantitatively highlights the role of acid deposition in chemical weathering, suggesting that the anthropogenic impact should be seriously consid-

ered in estimations of chemical weathering and associated  $\text{CO}_2$  consumption.

## 1 Introduction

Chemical weathering of rocks is the key process that links geochemical cycling of solid earth to the atmosphere and ocean. It provides nutrients to terrestrial and marine ecosystems and regulates the level of atmospheric  $\text{CO}_2$ . As a net sink of atmospheric  $\text{CO}_2$  on geologic timescales, estimations of silicate chemical weathering rates and the controlling factors are important issues that are related to long-term global climate change (e.g., Raymo and Ruddiman, 1992; Négre et al., 1993; Berner and Caldeira, 1997; Gaillardet et al., 1999; Kump et al., 2000; Amiotte-Suchet et al., 2003; Oliva et al., 2003; Hartmann et al., 2009; Moon et al., 2014). As an important component in the Earth's critical zone (U.S. National Research Council Committee, 2001), rivers serve as integrators of various natural and anthropogenic processes and products in a basin, and as carriers, transporting the weathering products from the continent to the ocean. Therefore, the chemical compositions of river water are widely used to evaluate chemical weathering and associated  $\text{CO}_2$  consumption rates at catchment and/or continental scale and to examine their controlling factors (e.g., Edmond et al., 1995; Gisl-

son et al., 1996; Galy and France-Lanord, 1999; Huh, 2003; Millot et al., 2002, 2003; Oliva et al., 2003; West et al., 2005; Moon et al., 2007; Noh et al., 2009; Shin et al., 2011; Calmels et al., 2011; Li et al., 2014).

With the intensification of human activities, human perturbations to river basins have increased in frequency and magnitude (Raymond et al., 2008; Regnier et al., 2013; Li and Bush, 2015). It is important to understand how such perturbations function in the current weathering systems and to predict how they will affect the critical zone of the future (Brantley and Lebedeva, 2011). In addition to CO<sub>2</sub>, other sources of acidity (such as sulfuric, nitric and organic acids) can produce protons. These protons react with carbonate and silicate minerals, thus enhancing rock chemical weathering rates and flux compared with only considering protons deriving from CO<sub>2</sub> dissolution (Calmels et al., 2007; Xu and Liu, 2010). The effect of other sourced protons (especially H<sup>+</sup> induced by SO<sub>2</sub> and NO<sub>x</sub> coming from anthropogenic activities) on chemical weathering is documented to be an important mechanism modifying atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> consumption by rock weathering (Galy and France-Lanord, 1999; Semhi et al., 2000; Spence and Telmer, 2005; Xu and Liu, 2007; Perrin et al., 2008; Gandois et al., 2011). Anthropogenic emissions of SO<sub>2</sub> were projected to provide 3 to 5 times more H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub> to the continental surface than the pyrite oxidation (Lerman et al., 2007). Therefore, increasing acid precipitation due to intense human activity nowadays could make this mechanism more prominent.

The role that acid precipitation plays on chemical weathering and CO<sub>2</sub> consumption has been investigated in some river catchments (Amiotte-Suchet et al., 1995; Probst et al., 2000; Vries et al., 2003; Lerman et al., 2007; Xu and Liu, 2010). It has been documented that silicate rocks were more easily disturbed by acid precipitation during their weathering and soil-leaching processes because of their low buffering capacity (Reuss et al., 1987; Amiotte-Suchet et al., 1995). The disturbance could be intensive and cause a decrease in CO<sub>2</sub> consumption by weathering by about 73 % due to acid precipitation in the Strengbach catchment (Vosges Mountains, France), which is dominated by crystalline rocks (Amiotte-Suchet et al., 1995). This highlights the importance of exploring the anthropogenic impact on chemical weathering and CO<sub>2</sub> consumption under different backgrounds (e.g., lithology, climate, human activity intensity and basin scale) for better constraining and estimating the effect of acid precipitation on rock weathering. Asia, especially eastern Asia, is one of the world's major sulfur and nitrogen emission areas. However, the effect of acid precipitation on silicate weathering and associated CO<sub>2</sub> consumption has not been well evaluated in this area, especially lacks quantitative studies.

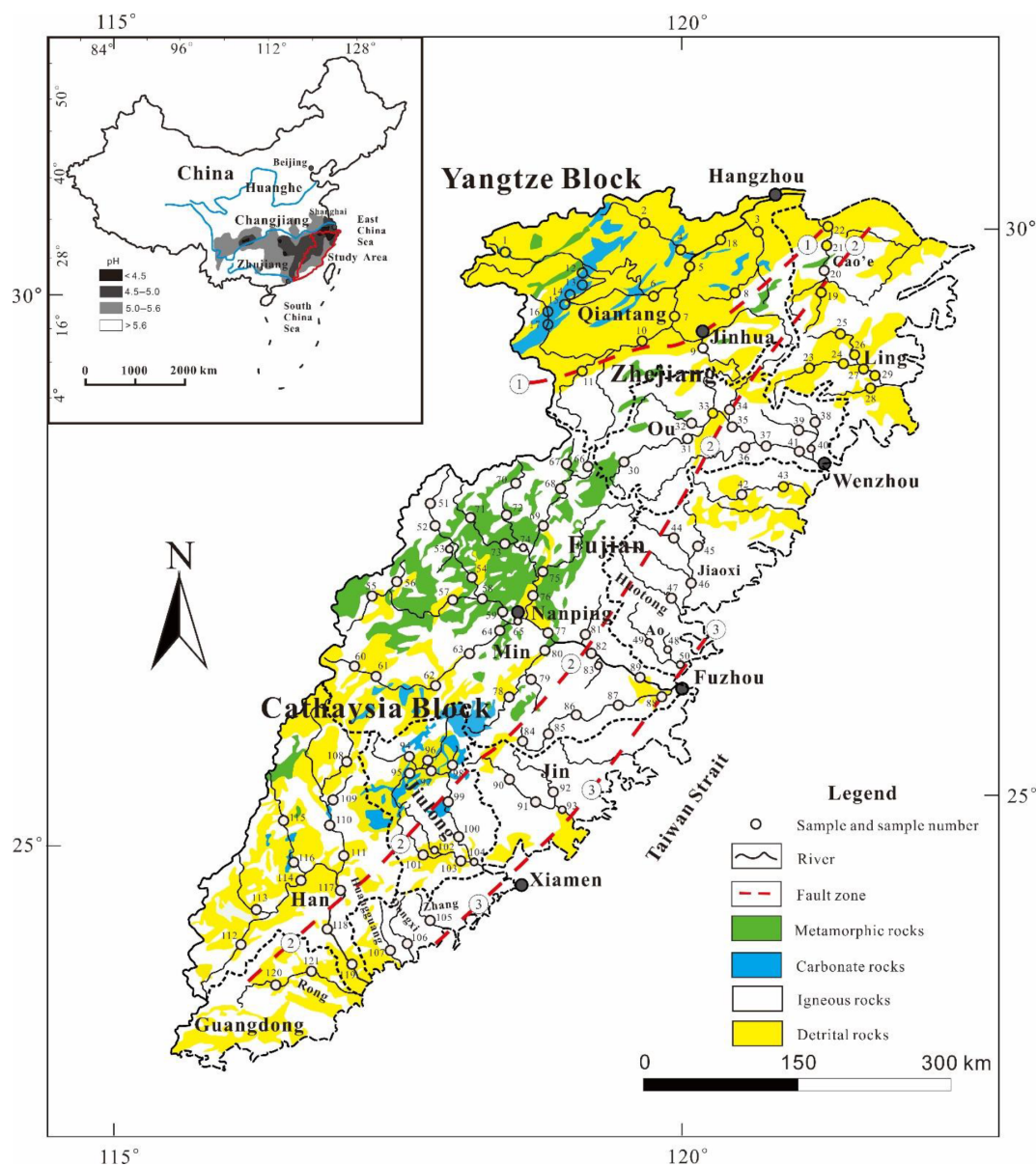
Acid precipitation affected about 30 % of the territory of China (Fig. 1), and the seriously polluted areas are mainly located in the east, south and center of China, where over 70 % of the cities were suffering from acid rain (M. Zhang et al., 2007; Ministry of Environmental Protection of China,

2009). The southeastern coastal region of China is one of the most developed and populated areas of this country, dominated by Mesozoic magmatic rocks (mainly granite and volcanic rocks) in lithology. Meanwhile, the southeast coastal area has become one of the three major acid-rain areas in China since the beginning of 1990s (Larssen and Carmichael, 2000). It is seriously impacted by acid rain, with a volume-weighted mean value of pH lower than 4.5 for many years (Wang et al., 2000; Larssen and Carmichael, 2000; Zhao, 2004; Han et al., 2006; Larssen et al., 2006; M. Zhang et al., 2007; Huang et al., 2008; Xu et al., 2011). Therefore, it is an ideal area for evaluating silicate weathering and the associated acid-rain effects. In previous work, we have recognized and discussed the importance of sulfuric acid on rock weathering and associated CO<sub>2</sub> consumption in the Qiantang river basin in this area (W. Liu et al., 2016). However, it is difficult to infer the anthropogenic impact on chemical weathering and CO<sub>2</sub> consumption in the whole southeastern coastal area from the case study of a single river basin, because of the variations on lithology, basin scale, runoff and anthropogenic condition in the large acid-deposition-affected area. In this study, the chemical and carbon isotope composition of river water in this area were first systematically investigated in order to (i) decipher the different sources of solutes and to quantify their contributions to the dissolved loads, (ii) calculate silicate weathering and associated CO<sub>2</sub> consumption rates, and (iii) evaluate the effects of acid deposition on rock weathering and CO<sub>2</sub> consumption flux in the whole of the SECRB.

## 2 Natural setting of study area

The southeastern coastal region of China, where the landscape is dominated by mountainous and hilly terrain, lacks the conditions for developing large rivers. The rivers in this region have dominantly small- and medium-sized drainage areas due to the topographic limitation. Only five rivers in this region have lengths over 200 km and drainage areas over 10 000 km<sup>2</sup>, and they are the Qiantangjiang (Qiantang) and the Oujiang (Ou) in Zhejiang province, the Minjiang (Min) and the Jiulongjiang (Jiulong) in Fujian province and the Hanjiang (Han) in Guangdong province, from north to south (Fig. 1). Rivers in this region generally flow eastward or southward and finally inject into the East China Sea or the South China Sea (Fig. 1), and they are collectively named Southeast Coastal Rivers (SECRs).

The Southeast Coastal River Basin (SECRB) is in the warm and humid subtropical oceanic monsoon climate. The mean annual temperature and precipitation are 17–21 °C and 1400–2000 mm, respectively. The precipitation mainly happens during May to September, and the lowest and highest temperatures often occur in January and July. This area is one of the most developed areas in China, with a population more than 190 million (mean density of ~ 470 individuals km<sup>-2</sup>),



**Figure 1.** Sketch map showing the lithology, sampling locations and sample number of the SECR drainage basin, and regional rainwater pH ranges are shown in the sketch map in the upper-left (modified from Zhou and Li, 2000; Shu et al., 2009; Xu et al., 2016, rainwater acidity distribution of China mainland is from State Environmental Protection Administration of China). (1) Shaoxing–Jiangshan fault zone, (2) Zhenghe–Dapu fault zone and (3) Changle–Nanao fault zone. The figure was created by CorelDraw software version 17.1.

but the population is mainly concentrated in the coastal urban areas. The vegetation coverage of these river basins is higher than 60 %, mainly subtropical evergreen-deciduous broadleaf forest and mostly distributed in mountainous areas. Cultivated land, industries and cities are mainly located in the plain areas and lower reaches of these rivers.

Geologically, three regional-scale fault zones are distributed across the SECRB region (Fig. 1). They are the sub-EW-trending Shaoxing–Jiangshan fault zone, the NE-trending Zhenghe–Dapu fault zone and the NE-trending Changle–Nanao fault zone (Shu et al., 2009). These fault

zones dominate the direction of the mountains ridgelines and drainages, as well as the formation of the basins and bay. The Zhenghe–Dapu fault zone is a boundary line of the Caledonian uplift belt and Hercynian–Indonesian depression zone. Mesozoic magmatic rocks are widespread in the southeastern coastal region with a total outcrop area at about 240 000 km<sup>2</sup>. Over 90 % of the Mesozoic magmatic rocks are granitoids (granites and rhyolites), with a minor amount of basalt (Zhou and Li, 2000; Zhou et al., 2006; Bai et al., 2014). These crust-derived granitic rocks are mainly formed in the Yanshanian stage and may have been related to multiple collision events

between Cathaysia and Yangtze blocks and the Pacific plate (Zhou and Li, 2000; Xu et al., 2016). Among the major river basins, the proportions of magmatic rocks outcrop are about 36 % in the Qiantang catchment, over 80 % in the Ou, the Jiaoxi and the Jin catchments and around 60 % in the Min, the Jiulong, the Han and the Rong catchments (Shi, 2014). The overlying Quaternary sediment in this area is composed of brown-yellow siltstones but is rarely developed. The oldest basement complex is composed of metamorphic rocks of greenschist and amphibolite facies. Sedimentary rocks are categorised into two types: one is mainly composed of red clastic rocks which cover more than 40 000 km<sup>2</sup> in the area and the other occurs as interlayers within volcanic formations, including varicolored mudstones and sandstones. They are mainly distributed on the west of Zhenghe–Dapu fault zone (FJBGMR, 1985; ZJBGMR, 1989; Shu et al., 2009).

### 3 Sampling and analytical method

A total of 121 water samples were collected from the major rivers and their tributaries in the SECRB in July of 2010 in the high-flow period (sample number and locations are shown in Fig. 1). For the river low-reach samples, the sampling sites were selected as far as possible from the tide-impacted area and the sampling was conducted during low-tide period (based on the daily tidal time, <http://ocean.cnss.com.cn/>, last access: 31 July 2010) on the sampling day. Besides, the salinity of the waters was checked by a salinometer (WS202, China) before sampling in the field. In addition, water chemistry data were double checked to make sure that the river samples were not contaminated by seawater. Water samples were collected in the middle channel of the rivers from bridges or ferries or directly from the center of some shallow streams. Temperature (T), pH and electrical conductivity (EC) were measured in the field with a portable EC/pH meter (YSI-6920, USA). All of the water samples for chemical analysis were filtered in field through a 0.22 µm Millipore membrane filter, and the first portion of the filtration was discarded to wash the membrane and filter. One portion of filtrate was stored directly in HDPE bottles for anion analysis and another was acidified to pH < 2 with 6 M double sub-boiling distilled HNO<sub>3</sub> for cation analysis. All containers were previously washed with high-purity HCl and rinsed with Milli-Q 18.2 MΩ water.

Alkalinity was determined by phenolphthalein and methyl orange end-point titration with dilute HCl within 12 h after sampling. The HCl consumption volumes for phenolphthalein and methyl orange end-point titration were used to calculate the HCO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup>. Cations (Na<sup>+</sup>, K<sup>+</sup>, Ca<sup>2+</sup> and Mg<sup>2+</sup>) were determined using an inductively coupled plasma atomic emission spectrometer (ICP-AES) (IRIS Intrepid II XSP, USA). Anions (Cl<sup>-</sup>, F<sup>-</sup>, NO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup> and SO<sub>4</sub><sup>2-</sup>) were analyzed by ionic chromatography (IC) (Dionex Corporation, USA). Dissolved silica was determined by spectrophotometry with

the molybdate blue method. Reagent and procedural blanks were measured parallel to the sample treatment, and the calibration curve was evaluated by quality control standards before, during and after the analyses of each batch of samples. Measurement reproducibility was determined by duplicated sample and standards, which showed ±3 % precision for the cations and ±5 % for the anions. Analyzing water chemistry was conducted in the hydrochemistry and environmental laboratory at the Institute of Geology and Geophysics, Chinese Academy of Sciences.

Samples for a carbon isotopic ratio (δ<sup>13</sup>C) of dissolved inorganic carbon (DIC) measurements were collected in 150 mL glass bottles with air-tight caps and preserved with HgCl<sub>2</sub> to prevent biological activity. The samples were refrigerated until analysis. For the δ<sup>13</sup>C measurements, the filtered samples were injected into glass bottles with phosphoric acid. The CO<sub>2</sub> was then extracted and cryogenically purified using a high vacuum line. δ<sup>13</sup>C isotopic ratios were analyzed on Finnigan MAT-252 stable isotope mass spectrometer at the State Key Laboratory of Environmental Geochemistry, Chinese Academy of Sciences. The results are expressed with reference to VPDB (Vienna Pee Dee Belemnite) as follows:

$$\delta^{13}\text{C} = \left[ \left( \frac{(^{13}\text{C}/^{12}\text{C})_{\text{sample}}}{(^{13}\text{C}/^{12}\text{C})_{\text{standard}}} \right) - 1 \right] \times 1000. \quad (1)$$

The δ<sup>13</sup>C measurement has a precision of 0.1 ‰. A number of duplicate samples were measured, and the results show that the differences were less than the range of measurement accuracy.

### 4 Results

The major parameter and ion concentrations of samples are given in Table 1. The pH values of water samples ranged from 6.50 to 8.24, with an average of 7.23. Total dissolved solids (TDSs) of water samples varied from 35.3 to 205 mg L<sup>-1</sup>, with an average of 75.2 mg L<sup>-1</sup>. Compared with the major rivers in China, the average TDS was significantly lower than the Changjiang (224 mg L<sup>-1</sup>, Chetelat et al., 2008), the Huanghe (557 mg L<sup>-1</sup>, Fan et al., 2014) and the Zhujiang (190 mg L<sup>-1</sup>, S. Zhang et al., 2007). However, the average TDS was comparable to the rivers draining silicate-rock-dominated areas, e.g., the upper Ganjiang in Ganzhou, south China (63 mg L<sup>-1</sup>, Ji and Jiang, 2012), the Amur in northern China (70 mg L<sup>-1</sup>, Moon et al., 2009), the Xishui in Hubei, central China (101 mg L<sup>-1</sup>, Wu et al., 2013) and North Han River in South Korea (75.5 mg L<sup>-1</sup>, Ryu et al., 2008). Among the major rivers in the SECRB, the Qiantang had the highest TDS value (averaging at 121 mg L<sup>-1</sup>), and the Ou had the lowest TDS value (averaging at 48.8 mg L<sup>-1</sup>).

Major ion compositions are shown in the cation and anion ternary diagrams (Fig. 2a and b). In comparison with rivers

Table 1. Chemical and carbon isotopic compositions of river water in the Southeast Coastal River Basin (SECRB) of China.

Rivers	Sample number	Date <sup>2</sup>	pH	T (°C)	EC (μs cm <sup>-1</sup> )	Na <sup>+</sup> (μM)	K <sup>+</sup> (μM)	Mg <sup>2+</sup> (μM)	Ca <sup>2+</sup> (μM)	F <sup>-</sup> (μM)	Cl <sup>-</sup> (μM)	NO <sub>3</sub> <sup>-</sup> (μM)	SO <sub>4</sub> <sup>2-</sup> (μM)	HCO <sub>3</sub> <sup>-</sup> (μM)	SiO <sub>2</sub> (μM)	TZ <sup>+</sup> (μEq)	TZ <sup>-</sup> (μEq)	NICB (%)	δ <sup>13</sup> C (‰)	TDS (mg L <sup>-1</sup> )
Qiantang <sup>1</sup>	1	07-08-10	7.42	28.78	190	347	197	106	473	12.0	303	62.6	147	1130	148	1703	1789	-5.0	-19.0	144
	2	07-09-10	7.60	23.84	146	87.5	204	80.9	496	11.7	75.2	124	121	907	156	1446	1348	6.7	-19.8	119
	3	07-09-10	7.37	27.83	308	555	233	208	698	41.8	312	223	437	1170	170	2601	2579	0.9	-17.8	204
	4	07-10-10	7.27	26.28	177	176	135	116	544	15.7	151	142	170	985	175	1632	1618	0.8	-19.3	135
	5	07-10-10	7.05	24.15	123	130	101	66.2	349	17.7	94.3	124	157	529	169	1061	1061	0.0	-18.7	91.2
	6	07-10-10	7.24	23.75	140	97.6	69.7	81.0	451	20.0	62.1	109	204	703	164	1231	1282	-4.2	-21.3	106.6
	7	07-11-10	7.40	23.23	107	92.5	70.5	68.3	327	14.9	74.9	104	147	486	156	954	960	-0.6	-21.0	82.2
	8	07-11-10	7.16	27.61	281	361	87.5	128	469	26.8	245	191	239	810	179	1642	1724	-5.0	-12.9	137.5
	9	07-11-10	7.02	26.48	140	275	120	60.7	319	36.2	199	150	180	437	236	1155	1146	0.8	-13.9	100.2
	10	07-12-10	7.05	24.24	99	205	114	58.3	285	14.6	191	114	132	305	278	1005	874	13.1	-20.9	85.4
	11	07-12-10	7.05	27.01	102	123	133	49.8	284	18.6	86.5	123	144	377	183	924	874	5.4	-19.2	79.4
	12	07-12-10	7.99	24.18	260	50.0	85.4	212	993	-	66.8	153	235	1822	172	2546	2512	1.4	-17.6	205.2
	13	07-12-10	7.86	24.59	231	43.5	88.4	189	859	-	55.1	97.6	169	1763	170	2228	2253	-1.1	-18.7	185.4
	14	07-12-10	7.69	22.66	131	44.1	81.0	113	458	-	19.1	95.2	107	920	143	1266	1248	1.4	-18.1	106.8
	15	07-12-10	7.65	24.48	106	61.1	98.3	87.9	335	-	37.2	68.3	112	663	164	1005	992	1.4	-18.6	87.3
	16	07-12-10	7.46	23.68	125	64.3	108	117	406	-	25.9	75.0	174	687	164	1218	1136	6.7	-20.0	98.8
	17	07-13-10	7.33	24.08	139	59.8	116	136	429	-29.6	80.4	209	752	162	1305	1281	1.9	-20.8	108.1	
	18	07-10-10	7.27	25.74	141	163	114	69.6	396	27.3	126	148	161	597	153	1209	1195	1.1	-21.0	101.0
Cao'e	19	07-16-10	7.17	22.27	108	212	86.3	69.4	183	5.1	151	148	114	384	216	803	912	-13.5	-21.2	79.1
	20	07-16-10	7.06	26.57	182	401	77.6	145	275	18.3	269	185	245	534	215	1318	1478	-12.2	-20.5	116.9
	21	07-16-10	7.14	27.26	171	333	91.3	164	362	18.1	224	194	207	658	225	1475	1490	-1.0	-20.9	123.3
	22	07-16-10	7.08	27.17	173	346	94.4	168	364	18.8	247	200	211	656	222	1506	1526	-1.3	-13.0	125.2
Ling	23	07-15-10	7.07	24.14	52	164	42.9	34.9	140	4.9	40.7	61.5	68.3	277	190	558	516	7.6	-12.8	52.1
	24	07-15-10	7.02	26.04	74	169	92.0	34.2	150	6.4	87.0	77.3	92.8	272	196	629	622	1.1	-20.8	59.5
	25	07-16-10	7.34	25.03	92	159	80.1	47.3	235	19.3	78.0	71.4	105	455	187	804	815	-1.4	-22.5	73.9
	26	07-16-10	7.40	26.75	113	216	77.8	57.1	249	20.2	133	90.0	115	494	196	905	946	-4.5	-12.7	82.8
	27	07-16-10	7.39	26	89	174	86.4	56.4	209	9.0	99.3	78.4	99.9	420	199	792	798	-0.8	-14.0	72.7
	28	07-15-10	6.79	22.33	75	159	82.7	44.1	143	-107	61.8	83.4	306	144	616	641	-4.1	-21.1	56.5	
	29	07-15-10	8.24	27.15	129	228	92.1	83.1	317	17.2	177	90.5	120	641	194	1120	1148	-2.5	-19.2	97.8
Ou	30	07-13-10	8.08	28.45	48	95.2	107	38.4	92.1	15.2	31.8	43.3	47.4	291	221	463	461	0.4	-21.7	50.6
	31	07-13-10	6.71	22.97	32	60.7	106	12.6	65.0	10.8	28.9	45.0	48.9	158	169	322	329	-2.2	-23.8	36.9
	32	07-13-10	7.18	27.59	73	107	127	36.2	175	4.3	57.1	111	92.0	283	210	655	634	3.2	-23.4	62.9
	33	07-13-10	6.94	24.2	44	76.9	112	20.0	99.1	10.9	27.9	63.1	58.6	249	184	427	457	-7.0	-22.5	47.5
	34	07-14-10	7.16	27.45	90	187	127	41.2	199.5	17.0	85.6	102	116	367	251	796	787	1.1	-22.4	76.5
	35	07-14-10	6.97	24.56	54	105	50.9	29.2	122	12.2	46.1	67.8	73.1	218	193	460	478	-4.1	-22.5	47.9
	36	07-14-10	6.82	21.12	31	76.4	133	12.7	74.5	7.7	20.7	36.8	49.1	192	162	383	348	9.3	-39.5	
	37	07-14-10	6.82	23.69	45	89.5	105	19.0	97.8	10.6	39.6	52.8	59.1	231	185	428	441	-3.0	-22.9	46.2
	38	07-15-10	6.92	24.69	37	100	89.3	21.1	49.7	1.7	36.9	45.5	52.7	153	202	331	341	-2.9	-38.9	
	39	07-15-10	6.90	23.86	35	92.2	92.0	19.8	61.4	1.9	43.9	47.9	55.5	139	193	347	342	1.4	-22.3	38.5
	40	07-15-10	7.09	25.56	47	117	112	25.7	83.4	8.0	52.4	63.1	57.4	232	193	447	462	-3.3	-22.5	48.1
41	07-14-10	6.97	24.25	53	102	107	27.6	119	13.4	43.5	59.4	73.2	277	183	502	526	-4.9	-13.7	52.3	
Feiyun	42	07-17-10	7.28	25.19	38	94.0	81.7	24.0	75.6	11.4	59.9	45.7	51.9	149	151	375	358	4.5	-37.2	
	43	07-17-10	7.08	25.61	46	101	79.9	33.9	93.4	4.6	66.2	55.1	52.8	223	151	435	450	-3.3	-23.7	43.5
Jiaoxi	44	07-17-10	7.52	26.92	47	116	81.5	25.2	92.0	4.1	73.3	80.3	25.0	226	151	432	430	0.5	-23.4	43.0
	45	07-17-10	7.45	27.46	61	152	90.2	34.2	119	-136	59.8	53.5	238	184	548	542	1.2	-23.1	51.8	
	46	07-18-10	6.90	27.66	53	127	88.1	33.4	94.4	7.0	123	93.1	30.4	209	177	471	486	-3.3	-14.4	47.4
Huotong	47	07-18-10	7.34	24	43	116	78.8	26.1	58.4	5.4	68.7	49.7	20.1	197	190	364	355	2.3	-22.8	39.6
Ao	48	07-19-10	7.24	31.44	124	294	121	102	209	24.3	204	73.6	52.0	717	370	1036	1100	-6.1	-19.4	105.4
	49	07-19-10	7.13	27.82	46	109	96.3	30.0	73.8	-72.0	51.3	22.5	234	236	413	402	2.6	-46.2		
	50	07-18-10	6.98	28.65	53	140	88.4	40.8	100	3.0	82.9	58.6	20.9	294	233	511	477	6.6	-22.3	52.2
Min	51	07-27-10	7.11	28.4	42	116	92.0	40.5	119	18.0	43.9	35.5	26.0	382	182	526	513	2.4	-19.4	52.7
	52	07-27-10	7.17	30	51	102	97.9	41.7	107	4.6	29.4	45.3	35.0	350	221	496	495	0.2	-53.3	
	53	07-27-10	7.08	29.4	99	214	92.7	46.4	126	18.4	50.1	39.8	118	327	154	651	654	-0.4	-20.8	74.0
	54	07-27-10	7.06	29.1	44	107	99.6	28.1	114	16.4	18.7	36.4	44.3	305	265	491	449	8.5	-17.6	53.6
	55	07-27-10	7.42	29.4	57	139	93.7	49.8	113	3.1	67.1	56.3	26.6	384	236	558	561	-0.5	-16.4	58.6
	56	07-27-10	7.12	27.8	51	103	91.0	50.8	106	4.7	82.8	35.1	63.5	249	225	507	494	2.5	-51.3	
	57	07-27-10	7.08	27.5	40	125	45.0	36.8	107	12.1	43.6	44.5	29.3	288	211	457	435	5.0	-21.1	47.4
	58	07-27-10	6.99	27.2	52	121	98.0	42.4	115	16.7	87.1	36.6	70.9	277	228	535	542	-1.4	-11.4	55.3
	59	07-27-10	6.87	29	59	154	91.4	59.4	124	16.5	77.8	36.7	88.3	272	222	612	563	8.0	-20.3	57.2
	60	07-27-10	7.31	27.1	78	109	92.1	59.1	181	21.2	123	37.5	78.4	355	202	682	672	1.4	-18.7	63.1
	61	07-27-10	7.22	27.8	37	122	83.3	52.8	142	17.4	111	37.3	80.4	288	221	596	597	-0.2	-22.3	58.1
	62	07-27-10	7.16	28.1	58	104	83.3	59.3	163	24.0	34.6	34.5	118	294	214	632	599	5.2	-13.4	59.5
	63	07-27-10	7.26	28.3	87	139	86.1	60.9	191	14.8	48.0	93.0	109	347	226	729	707	3.0	-21.4	68.6
	64	07-27-10	7.00	28.8	87	127	93.1	58.7	195	6.6	59.8	81.1	60.9	480	232	729	743	-2.0	-11.0	74.0
	65	07-28-10	6.97	27.9	37	163	82.1	52.2	140	20.2	53.1	60.0	106	306	221	630	632	-0.2	-61.9	
	66	07-13-10	7.07	27.96	59	91.9	110	40.0	127	24.8	62.0	79.3	62.3	249	228	535	515	3.8	-54.8	
	67	07-28-10	7.12	29.7	38	108	93.4	45.9	133	12.4	48.3	34.0</								

Table 1. Continued.

Rivers	Sample number	Date <sup>2</sup>	pH	T (°C)	EC (µs cm <sup>-1</sup> )	Na <sup>+</sup> (µM)	K <sup>+</sup> (µM)	Mg <sup>2+</sup> (µM)	Ca <sup>2+</sup> (µM)	F <sup>-</sup> (µM)	Cl <sup>-</sup> (µM)	NO <sub>3</sub> <sup>-</sup> (µM)	SO <sub>4</sub> <sup>2-</sup> (µM)	HCO <sub>3</sub> <sup>-</sup> (µM)	SiO <sub>2</sub> (µM)	TZ <sup>+</sup> (µEq)	TZ <sup>-</sup> (µEq)	NICB (%)	δ <sup>13</sup> C (‰)	TDS (mg L <sup>-1</sup> )
	73	07-27-10	7.01	28.7	47	84.9	95.4	56.7	106	12.7	51.8	49.2	57.2	315	211	506	531	-4.8	-53.8	
	74	07-27-10	6.85	28.7	50	93.6	85.9	52.4	107	14.1	62.8	57.5	57.0	252	217	498	487	2.2	-19.9	50.9
	75	07-27-10	7.11	29.7	69	117	85.2	73.4	159	7.6	63.7	75.2	47.4	418	230	666	652	2.2	-22.2	65.0
	76	07-28-10	6.93	28.9	59	112	88.0	61.8	122	6.0	57.4	89.3	42.0	349	224	568	580	-2.2	-22.0	58.8
	77	07-21-10	7.76	32.4	51.2	163	85.5	52.8	151	20.2	55.3	70.3	78.6	372	175	656	655	0.3	-12.5	61.8
	78	07-28-10	7.29	26.8	106	129	75.3	84.0	321	24.0	56.2	41.0	166	599	202	1013	1028	-1.4	-16.3	90.3
	79	07-21-10	7.09	26.96	56	112	87.6	37.1	129	4.5	51.5	44.9	61.9	327	276	531	547	-2.9	-22.2	59.1
	80	07-21-10	7.64	33.37	83	114	96.2	60.6	151	16.7	53.0	40.6	102	371	242	633	670	-5.8	-12.8	66.2
	81	07-21-10	7.83	31.27	65	131	102	52.7	141	16.1	45.3	49.7	91.8	324	239	620	603	2.8	-13.4	61.8
	82	07-21-10	6.84	28.35	66	132	101	52.5	141	5.8	63.8	54.1	91.6	304	243	621	606	2.5	-22.7	61.5
	83	07-21-10	7.42	30.7	98	217	113	59.2	210	18.4	98.7	63.5	84.7	496	320	868	827	4.6	-18.9	84.5
	84	07-27-10	7.26	26.3	46	104	102	29.7	121	3.6	55.2	51.9	55.5	294	193	507	512	-0.9	-21.6	51.9
	85	07-27-10	7.07	25.4	30	73.3	99.2	19.6	78.8	-22.9	40.0	49.2	203	170	369	365	1.3	-21.1	39.8	
	86	07-27-10	7.50	27.3	45	102	102	26.5	114	2.4	35.1	39.7	57.2	260	217	484	449	7.3	-15.7	49.6
	87	07-27-10	7.47	26.9	51	141	100	43.6	109	7.9	79.7	42.4	57.7	311	217	547	548	-0.3	-20.1	55.6
	88	07-19-10	7.99	31.74	63	167	96.5	33.5	115	8.0	105	35.5	38.1	331	218	561	548	2.3	-13.5	55.9
	89	07-21-10	6.77	28.19	65	132	93.6	56.0	145	15.6	60.6	78.8	75.4	333	243	627	624	0.5	-22.6	63.3
Jin	90	07-27-10	7.36	25.8	128	126	94.8	88.9	406	22.9	51.4	39.4	229	595	208	1211	1143	5.6	-20.7	100
	91	07-27-10	7.40	26.9	123	143	103	82.7	347	21.0	83.5	203	182	463	226	1105	1115	-0.9	-21.3	98.4
	92	07-27-10	7.00	27.4	88	170	98.8	56.8	205	7.2	137	117	106	327	205	793	792	0.1	-22.5	71.8
	93	07-27-10	7.32	28.7	73	201	116	87.1	318	20.0	93.5	41.5	189	508	267	1128	1020	9.6	-21.7	95.3
Jiulong	94	07-30-10	6.50	23.47	29	72.3	92.4	22.8	59.8	12.4	25.1	27.0	50.0	189	213	330	341	-3.4	-18.1	40.1
	95	07-30-10	7.06	29.35	120	136	96.9	106	339	5.1	67.7	66.3	249	469	202	1124	1100	2.1	-20.8	94.2
	96	07-30-10	7.45	27.6	104	79.5	97.5	106	363	14.4	70.7	50.0	99.9	729	184	1116	1049	6.0	-18.9	93.7
	97	07-31-10	7.36	26.59	139	140	100	142	432	15.5	79.6	78.3	274	573	196	1388	1278	8.0	-19.7	108.8
	98	07-31-10	7.72	26.18	88	77.6	96.2	69.0	313	19.9	39.7	34.6	63.8	731	251	938	933	0.5	-18.4	89.4
	99	07-30-10	7.43	26.96	119	200	93.8	100.2	298	19.9	122	80.5	225	387	202	1091	1040	4.7	-20.5	89.5
	100	07-28-10	7.41	26.66	112	173	97.9	94.4	286	46.1	118	152	201	364	207	1033	1036	-0.3	-20.9	92.2
	101	07-29-10	7.16	29.35	82	151	110	55.4	178	4.9	71.2	170	53.2	385	305	727	732	-0.7	-21.2	76.1
	102	07-29-10	7.10	28.9	100	222	98.3	49.4	249	3.6	126	157	52.7	532	303	917	920	-0.3	-21.7	90.0
	103	07-28-10	7.20	31.15	138	339	111	81.2	277	9.2	280	285	88.6	515	317	1165	1256	-7.8	-19.0	112
	104	07-28-10	7.16	27.09	101	261	95.8	81.7	235	40.3	173	80.1	174	291	136	990	892	9.9	-24.3	75.4
Zhang	105	07-28-10	8.08	30.6	93	195	96.1	61.1	167	16.8	157	193	55.2	281	288	748	741	0.9	-21.5	73.8
Dongxi	106	07-28-10	7.20	30.9	78	263	99.0	41.5	115	14.5	238	65.3	30.0	283	309	675	646	4.4	-20.8	66.7
Huangang	107	07-28-10	7.40	30.5	99	253	85.6	53.0	154	7.7	190	63.5	56.4	460	278	754	827	-9.6	-20.0	77.4
Han	108	07-31-10	7.31	27.1	68	136	61.5	45.2	195	16.1	37.7	45.3	93.7	345	218	678	615	9.2	-21.9	62.0
	109	07-30-10	7.38	26.94	88	116	103	63.6	265	6.4	53.4	72.2	84.9	584	244	876	879	-0.4	-20.4	83.7
	110	07-30-10	6.66	25.55	71	114	96.2	47.6	168	8.0	56.9	54.6	143	230	203	642	628	2.2	-17.9	59.7
	111	07-30-10	6.66	27.76	83	135	104	63.8	203	8.6	54.5	74.9	173	302	336	774	777	-0.4	-20.6	78.7
	112	07-30-10	7.31	30.81	56	168	74.0	39.1	118	13.5	62.9	44.4	81.4	237	245	556	507	8.8	-21.4	54.6
	113	07-31-10	7.28	28.73	98	137	99.3	85.6	270	9.2	88.8	59.1	118	565	233	948	949	-0.1	-19.7	86.6
	114	07-31-10	7.27	31.42	123	193	105	98.2	319	20.7	120	102	157	570	229	1132	1107	2.2	-19.7	98.2
	115	07-30-10	7.43	29.89	85	115	97.5	65.5	244	6.5	46.5	58.6	103	511	251	832	822	1.1	-20.8	79.3
	116	07-31-10	7.61	30.98	99	123	104	85.9	264	5.6	58.8	90.9	108	588	98	926	952	-2.9	-20.0	79.4
	117	07-31-10	7.31	29.96	93	151	103	78.1	250	15.4	68.0	99.1	173	379	233	909	891	1.9	-21.9	81.8
	118	07-31-10	7.35	28.4	2	233	84.2	101	323	12.8	84.0	101	203	460	229	1165	1051	9.8	-21.1	94.7
	119	07-31-10	7.67	30.38	93	136	87.8	73.6	231	16.4	64.6	94.4	184	382	226	834	909	-9.1	-20.8	80.5
Rong	120	07-30-10	7.57	31.83	68	193	79.1	50.3	146	16.4	192	84.0	31.5	344	309	664	683	-2.8	-20.3	65.8
	121	07-30-10	6.96	30.62	94	509	103	56.1	213	15.9	511	78.5	82.3	379	222	1150	1133	1.5	-20.0	94.4

TZ<sup>+</sup> is the total cationic charge, TZ<sup>-</sup> is the total anionic charge, NICB is the normalized inorganic charge balance and TDS is the total dissolved solid.

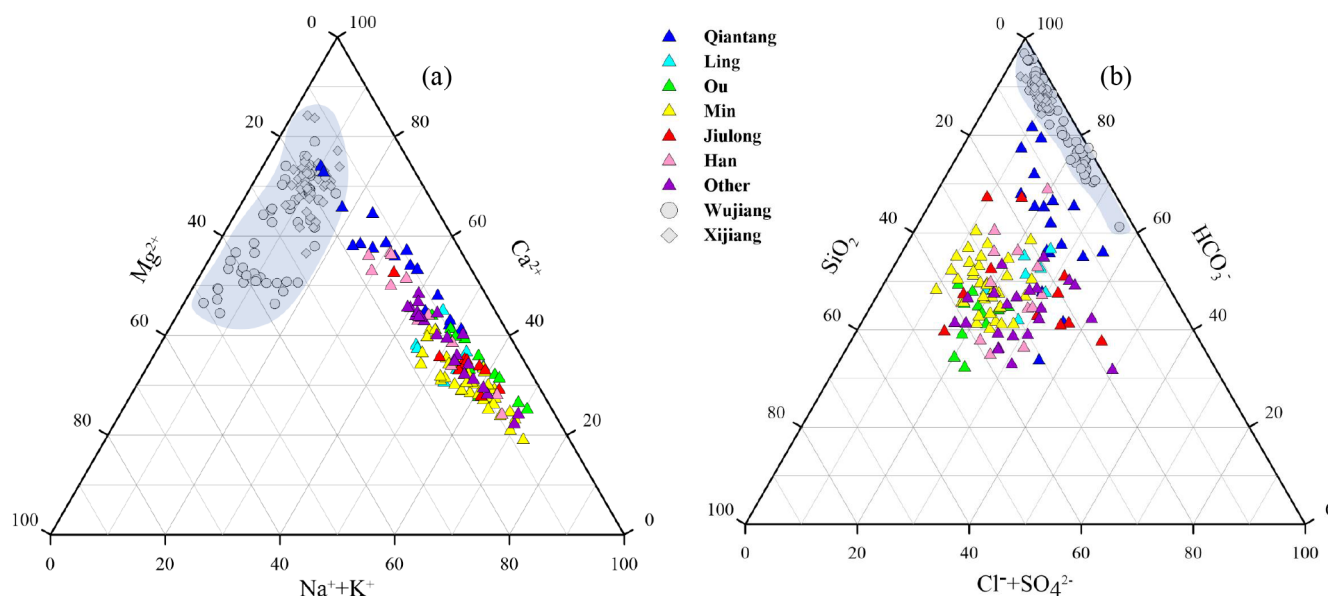
<sup>1</sup> Data on major ion compositions are from L. Liu et al. (2016). <sup>2</sup> Date format is mm/dd/yy.

(e.g., the Wujiang and Xijiang) draining carbonate-rock-dominated areas (Han and Liu, 2004; Xu and Liu, 2010), these rivers in the SECRB had distinctly higher proportions of Na<sup>+</sup>, K<sup>+</sup> and dissolved SiO<sub>2</sub>. As shown in the Fig. 2, most samples had high Na<sup>+</sup> and K<sup>+</sup> proportions, with an average of more than 50 % (in µmol L<sup>-1</sup>) of the total cations, except for samples from the Qiantang. The concentrations of Na<sup>+</sup> and K<sup>+</sup> ranged from 43.5 to 555 µmol L<sup>-1</sup> and 42.9 to 233 µmol L<sup>-1</sup>, with average values of 152 and 98 µmol L<sup>-1</sup>, respectively. The concentrations of dissolved SiO<sub>2</sub> ranged from 98.5 to 370 µmol L<sup>-1</sup>, with an average of 212 µmol L<sup>-1</sup>. Ca<sup>2+</sup> and Mg<sup>2+</sup> accounted for about 38 % and 11.6 % of the total cation concentrations. HCO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup> was the dominant anion, with concentrations ranging from 139 to 1822 µmol L<sup>-1</sup>.

On average, it comprised 60.6 % (36 %–84.6 %) of total anions on a molar unit basis, followed by SO<sub>4</sub><sup>2-</sup> (14.6 %), Cl<sup>-</sup> (13.1 %) and NO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup> (11.8 %). The major ionic compositions indicate that the water chemistry of these rivers in the SECRB is controlled by silicate weathering. Meanwhile, it is also influenced by carbonate weathering, especially for the Qiantang catchment.

The δ<sup>13</sup>C of dissolved inorganic carbon in the rivers of the SECRB are also given in Table 1. The δ<sup>13</sup>C of the water samples showed a wide range, from -11.0 ‰ to -24.3 ‰ (averaging at -19.4 ‰), and with a majority of samples falling into the range of -15 ‰ to -23 ‰. The values are comparable to rivers draining the Deccan Traps (Das et al., 2005).





**Figure 2.** Ternary diagrams showing (a) cations, (b) anions and dissolved  $\text{SiO}_2$  compositions of river water in the SECRB. Chemical compositions from case studies of rivers draining carbonate rocks (the Wujiang and the Xijiang) are also shown for comparison (data from Han and Liu, 2004; Xu and Liu 2007, 2010).

## 5 Discussion

The dissolved solids in river water are commonly from atmospheric and anthropogenic inputs and weathering of rocks within the drainage basin. It is necessary to quantify the contribution of different sources to the dissolved loads before deriving chemical weathering rates and associated  $\text{CO}_2$  consumption.

### 5.1 Atmospheric and anthropogenic inputs

To evaluate atmospheric inputs to river water, chloride is the most commonly used reference. Generally, water samples that have the lowest  $\text{Cl}^-$  concentrations are employed to correct the proportion of atmospheric inputs in a river system (Négrel et al., 1993; Gaillardet et al., 1997; Viers et al., 2001; Xu and Liu, 2007). In pristine areas, the concentration of  $\text{Cl}^-$  in river water is assumed to be entirely derived from the atmosphere, provided that the contribution of evaporites is negligible (e.g., Stallard and Edmond, 1981; Négrel et al., 1993). In the SECRB, the lowest  $\text{Cl}^-$  concentration was mainly found in the headwater of each river. According to the geologic setting, no salt-bearing rocks were found in these headwater areas (FJBGRM, 1985; ZJBGMR, 1989). In addition, these areas are mainly mountainous and sparsely populated. Therefore, we assumed that the lowest  $\text{Cl}^-$  concentration of samples from the headwater of each major river came entirely from the atmosphere.

The proportion of atmosphere-derived ions in river water can then be calculated by the element/ $\text{Cl}$  ratios of the rain. Chemical compositions of rain in the studied area have

been reported at different sites, including Hangzhou, Jinhua, Nanping, Fuzhou and Xiamen (Zhao, 2004; M. Zhang et al., 2007; Huang et al., 2008; Cheng et al., 2011; Xu et al., 2011) (Fig. 1). The volume-weighted mean concentration of ions and  $\text{Cl}$ -normalized molar ratios are compiled in Table 2. Based on this procedure, 6.6%–23.4% (averaging 14.3%) of total dissolved cations in the major rivers of the SECRB originated from rain. Among the anions,  $\text{SO}_4^{2-}$  and  $\text{NO}_3^-$  in the rivers are mainly from the atmospheric input, averaging 73.2% for  $\text{SO}_4^{2-}$  and 75.8% for  $\text{NO}_3^-$ , respectively.

As one of the most developed and populated areas in China, the chemistry of river water in the SECRB could be significantly impacted by anthropogenic inputs.  $\text{Cl}^-$ ,  $\text{NO}_3^-$  and  $\text{SO}_4^{2-}$  are commonly associated with anthropogenic sources and have been used as tracers of anthropogenic inputs in watershed. High concentrations of  $\text{Cl}^-$ ,  $\text{NO}_3^-$  and  $\text{SO}_4^{2-}$  can be found in the lower reaches of rivers in the SECRB, and there is an obvious increase after it had flowed through plains and cities. This tendency indicates that the river water chemistry is affected by anthropogenic inputs while passing through the catchments. After correcting for the atmospheric contribution to river water, the following assumption is needed to quantitatively estimate the contributions of anthropogenic inputs, which is that  $\text{Cl}^-$  originates from only atmospheric and anthropogenic inputs, and the excess of atmospheric  $\text{Cl}^-$  is regarded to present anthropogenic inputs and is balanced by  $\text{Na}^+$ .

**Table 2.** Chemical compositions of precipitation at different sites located within the studied area (in  $\mu\text{mol L}^{-1}$  and molar ratio).

Province	Location	pH	F <sup>-</sup>	Cl <sup>-</sup>	NO <sub>3</sub> <sup>-</sup>	SO <sub>4</sub> <sup>2-</sup>	NH <sub>4</sub> <sup>+</sup>	K <sup>+</sup>	Na <sup>+</sup>	Ca <sup>2+</sup>	Mg <sup>2+</sup>	NO <sub>3</sub> /Cl	SO <sub>4</sub> /Cl	K/Cl	Na/Cl	Ca/Cl	Mg/Cl	Reference
Zhejiang	Hangzhou	4.5	5.76	13.9	38.4	55	79.9	4.18	12.2	26	3.53	2.76	3.96	0.3	0.88	1.87	0.25	Xu et al. (2011)
	Jinhua	4.54	9.05	8.51	31.2	47.6	81.1	4.73	6.27	24	1.73	3.67	5.59	0.56	0.74	2.81	0.2	M. Zhang et al. (2007)
Fujian	Nanping	4.81	0.8	5.8	26.6	18.3	38	4.9	5.4	12.9	2.7	4.59	3.16	0.84	0.93	2.22	0.47	Cheng et al. (2011)
	Fuzhou		5.26	21.4	24.9	48.5	78.1	4.1	2.61	32.7	1.25	1.16	2.26	0.19	0.12	1.53	0.06	Zhao (2004)
	Xiamen	4.57	15.3	23.7	22.1	31.3	37.7	3.58	36.1	21.5	4.94	0.93	1.32	0.15	1.52	0.91	0.21	Zhao (2004)
Average												2.62	3.26	0.41	0.84	1.87	0.24	

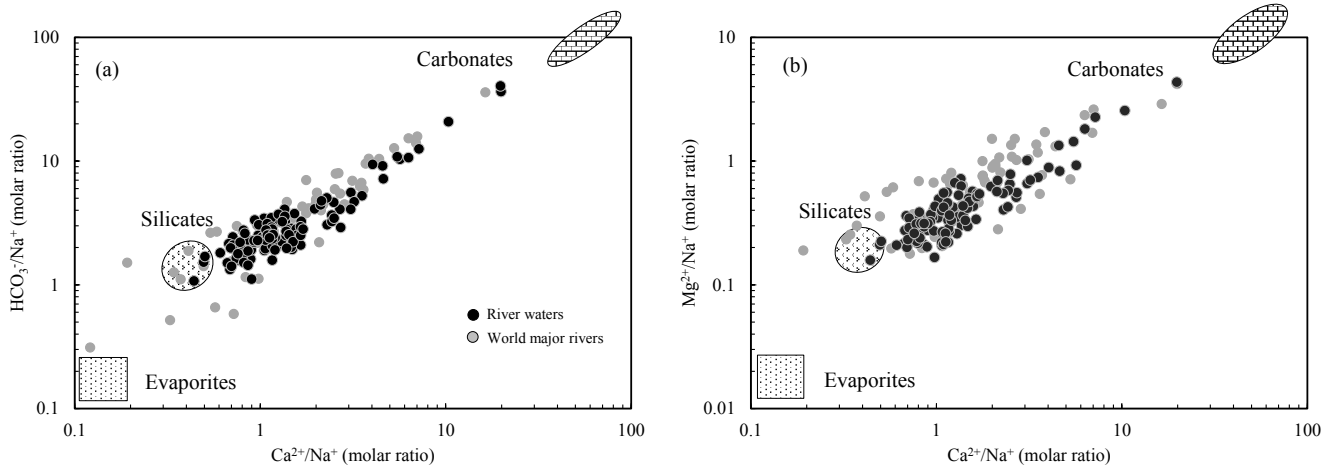
## 5.2 Chemical weathering inputs

Water samples were plotted with Na-normalized molar ratios (Fig. 3). The values of the world's major rivers (Gaillardet et al., 1999) are also shown in the figure. The best correlations between elemental ratios were observed for  $\text{Ca}^{2+}/\text{Na}^{+}$  vs.  $\text{Mg}^{2+}/\text{Na}^{+}$  ( $R^2 = 0.95$ ,  $n = 120$ ) and  $\text{Ca}^{2+}/\text{Na}^{+}$  vs.  $\text{HCO}_3^-/\text{Na}^{+}$  ( $R^2 = 0.98$ ,  $n = 120$ ). The samples cluster on a mixing line, mainly between silicate and carbonate end-members, closer to the silicate end-member and show little evaporite contribution. This corresponds with the rock type distributions in the SECRB. In addition, all water samples have equivalent ratios of  $(\text{Na}^{+} + \text{K}^{+})/\text{Cl}^{-}$  larger than one, indicating silicate weathering as the source of  $\text{Na}^{+}$  and  $\text{K}^{+}$  rather than dissolution of chloride evaporites.

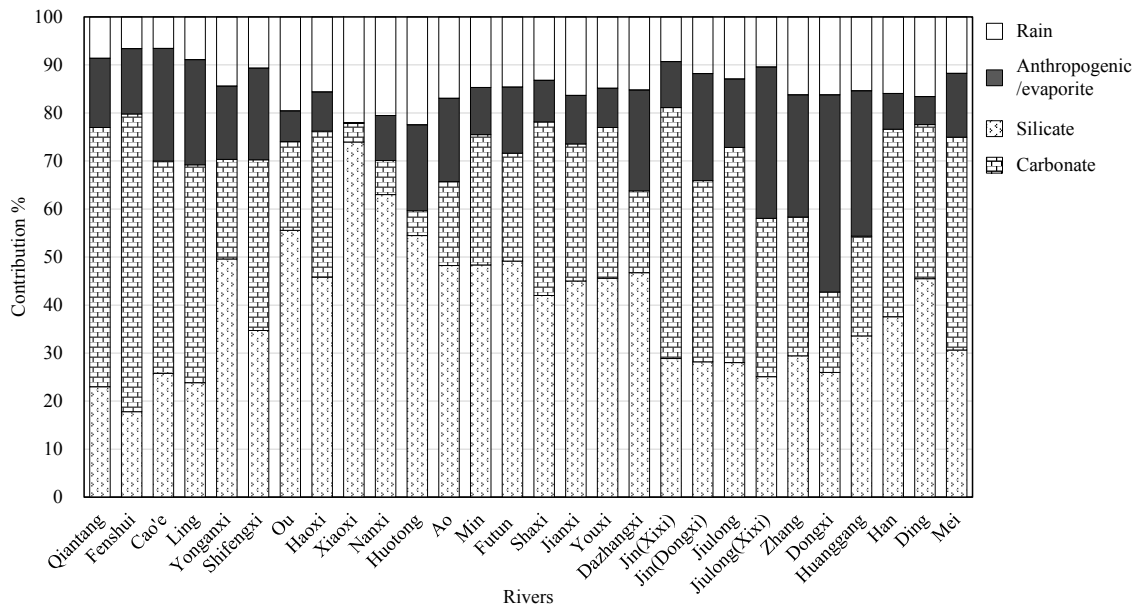
The geochemical characteristics of the silicate and carbonate end-members can be deduced from the correlations between elemental ratios and referred to literature data for catchments with well-constrained lithology. After correction for atmospheric inputs, the  $\text{Ca}^{2+}/\text{Na}^{+}$ ,  $\text{Mg}^{2+}/\text{Na}^{+}$  and  $\text{HCO}_3^-/\text{Na}^{+}$  of the river samples ranged from 0.31 to 30, 0.16 to 6.7 and 1.1 to 64.2, respectively. According to the geological setting (Fig. 1), there are some small rivers draining purely silicate areas in the SECR drainage basins. Based on the elemental ratios of these rivers, we assigned the silicate end-member for this study to  $\text{Ca}^{2+}/\text{Na}^{+} = 0.41 \pm 0.10$ ,  $\text{Mg}^{2+}/\text{Na}^{+} = 0.20 \pm 0.03$  and  $\text{HCO}_3^-/\text{Na}^{+} = 1.7 \pm 0.6$ . The ratio of  $(\text{Ca}^{2+} + \text{Mg}^{2+})/\text{Na}^{+}$  for the silicate end-member was  $0.61 \pm 0.13$ , which is close to the silicate end-member for the world's rivers ( $(\text{Ca}^{2+} + \text{Mg}^{2+})/\text{Na}^{+} = 0.59 \pm 0.17$ , Gaillardet et al., 1999). Moreover, previous research has documented the chemical composition of rivers, such as the Amur and the Songhuajiang in northern China, the Xishui in the lower reaches of the Changjiang, and major rivers in South Korea (Moon et al., 2009; Liu et al., 2013; Wu et al., 2013; Ryu et al., 2008; Shin et al., 2011). These river basins have similar lithological settings to the study area, so we could further validate the composition of the silicate end-member with their results.  $\text{Ca}^{2+}/\text{Na}^{+}$  and  $\text{Mg}^{2+}/\text{Na}^{+}$  ratios of silicate end-member were reported for the Amur (0.36 and 0.22), the Songhuajiang ( $0.44 \pm 0.23$  and 0.16), the Xishui ( $0.6 \pm 0.4$  and  $0.32 \pm 0.18$ ), the Han (0.55 and 0.21) and six major rivers in South Korea (0.48 and 0.20) in the studies above, well bracketing our estimation for the silicate end-member.

However, some samples show high concentrations of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ ,  $\text{Mg}^{2+}$  and  $\text{HCO}_3^-$ , indicating the contribution of carbonate weathering. The samples from the upper reaches (Sample 12 and 13) of the Qiantang fall close to the carbonate end-member documented for the world's major rivers (Gaillardet et al., 1999). In the present study, the  $\text{Ca}^{2+}/\text{Na}^{+}$  ratio of  $0.41 \pm 0.10$  and  $\text{Mg}^{2+}/\text{Na}^{+}$  ratio of  $0.20 \pm 0.03$  for the silicate end-member are used to calculate the contribution of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  and  $\text{Mg}^{2+}$  from silicate weathering. Finally, residual  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  and  $\text{Mg}^{2+}$  are attributed to carbonate weathering.





**Figure 3.** Mixing diagrams using Na-normalized molar ratios: (a)  $\text{HCO}_3^-/\text{Na}^+$  vs.  $\text{Ca}^{2+}/\text{Na}^+$  and (b)  $\text{Mg}^{2+}/\text{Na}^+$  vs.  $\text{Ca}^{2+}/\text{Na}^+$  for the SECRB. The samples mainly cluster on a mixing line between silicate and carbonate end-members. Data for the world’s major rivers are also plotted (data from Gaillardet et al., 1999).



**Figure 4.** Calculated contributions (in %) from the different reservoirs to the total cationic load for major rivers and their main tributaries in the SECRB. The cationic loads are the sum of  $\text{Na}^+$ ,  $\text{K}^+$ ,  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  and  $\text{Mg}^{2+}$  from different reservoirs.

**5.3 Chemical weathering rate in the SECRB**

Based on the above assumption, a forward model is employed to quantify the relative contribution of the different sources to the rivers of the SECRB in this study (e.g., Galy and France-Lanord, 1999; Moon et al., 2007; Xu and Liu, 2007, 2010; Liu et al., 2013). The calculated contributions of different reservoirs to the total cationic load for major rivers and their main tributaries in the SECRB are presented in Fig. 4. On average, the dissolved cationic loads of the rivers in the study area originate dominantly from sili-

cate weathering, which accounts for 39.5% (17.8%–74.0%) of the total cationic loads in molar unit. Carbonate weathering and anthropogenic inputs account for 30.6% (3.9%–62.0%) and 15.7% (0%–41.1%), respectively. Contributions from silicate weathering are high in the Ou (55.6%), the Huotong (54.5%), the Ao (48.3%) and the Min (48.3%) river catchments, which are dominated by granitic and volcanic bedrock. In contrast, a high contribution from carbonate weathering is observed in the Qiantang (54.0%), the Jin (52.2%) and the Jiuolong (44.8%) river catchments.

The results manifest the lithology control on river solutes of drainage basin.

The chemical weathering rate of rocks is estimated by the mass budget, basin area and annual discharge (data from Hydrological data of river basins in Zhejiang, Fujian province and Taiwan region, Annual Hydrological Report of 2010, P. R. China, Table 3), expressed in  $\text{t km}^{-2} \text{a}^{-1}$ . The silicate weathering rate (SWR) is calculated using major cationic concentrations from silicate weathering and assuming that all dissolved  $\text{SiO}_2$  is derived from silicate weathering (Xu and Liu, 2010), as in the equation below:

$$\text{SWR} = ([\text{Na}]_{\text{sil}} + [\text{K}]_{\text{sil}} + [\text{Ca}]_{\text{sil}} + [\text{Mg}]_{\text{sil}} + [\text{SiO}_2]_{\text{riv}}) \times \text{discharge/area.} \quad (2)$$

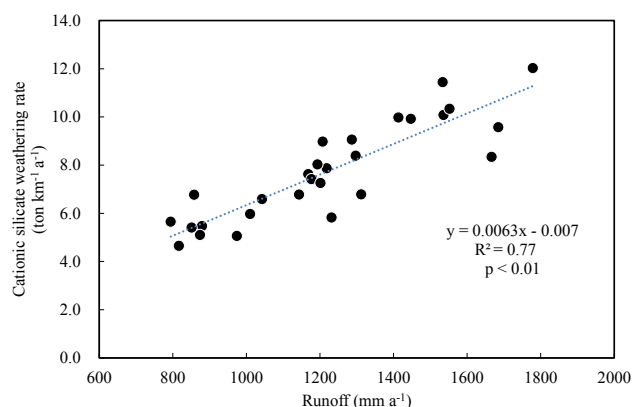
The assumption about Si could lead to an overestimation of the silicate weathering rate, as part of the silica may come from dissolution of biogenic materials rather than the weathering of silicate minerals (Millot et al., 2003; Shin et al., 2011). Thus, the cationic silicate weathering rates ( $\text{Cat}_{\text{sil}}$ ) were also calculated.

The carbonate weathering rate (CWR) is calculated based on the sum of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ ,  $\text{Mg}^{2+}$  and  $\text{HCO}_3^-$  from carbonate weathering, with half of the  $\text{HCO}_3^-$  coming from carbonate weathering and being derived from the atmosphere  $\text{CO}_2$ , as in the equation below:

$$\text{CWR} = ([\text{Ca}]_{\text{carb}} + [\text{Mg}]_{\text{carb}} + 1/2[\text{HCO}_3]_{\text{carb}}) \times \text{discharge/area.} \quad (3)$$

The chemical weathering rate and flux are calculated for major rivers and their main tributaries in the SECRB, and the results are shown in Table 3. Silicate and carbonate weathering fluxes of these rivers (SWF and CWF) range from  $0.02 \times 10^6$  to  $1.80 \times 10^6 \text{ t a}^{-1}$  and from  $0.004 \times 10^6$  to  $1.74 \times 10^6 \text{ t a}^{-1}$ , respectively. Out of the rivers, the Min has the highest silicate weathering flux, and the Qiantang has the highest carbonate weathering flux. On the whole SECRB scale,  $3.95 \times 10^6$  and  $4.09 \times 10^6 \text{ t a}^{-1}$  of dissolved solids originating from silicate and carbonate weathering, respectively, are transported into the East and South China seas by rivers in this region. Compared with the largest three river basins (the Changjiang, the Huanghe and the Xijiang) in China, the flux of silicate weathering calculated for the SECRB is lower than the Changjiang ( $9.5 \times 10^6 \text{ t a}^{-1}$ , Gaillardet et al., 1999) but higher than the Huanghe ( $1.52 \times 10^6 \text{ t a}^{-1}$ , Fan et al., 2014) and the Xijiang ( $2.62 \times 10^6 \text{ t a}^{-1}$ , Xu and Liu, 2010).

The silicate and carbonate chemical weathering rates for these river watersheds were 14.2–35.8 and 1.8–52.1  $\text{t km}^{-2} \text{a}^{-1}$ , respectively. The total rock weathering rate (TWR) for the whole SECRB is  $48.1 \text{ t km}^{-2} \text{a}^{-1}$ , higher than the world average ( $24 \text{ t km}^{-2} \text{a}^{-1}$ , Gaillardet et al., 1999). The cationic silicate weathering rates ( $\text{Cat}_{\text{sil}}$ ) range from 4.7 to  $12.0 \text{ t km}^{-2} \text{a}^{-1}$  for the river watersheds in the SECRB, averaging at  $7.8 \text{ t km}^{-2} \text{a}^{-1}$ . Furthermore, a good linear correlation ( $R^2 = 0.77$ ,  $n = 28$ ) is observed between the  $\text{Cat}_{\text{sil}}$



**Figure 5.** Plots of the cationic–silicate weathering rate ( $\text{Cat}_{\text{sil}}$ ) vs. runoff for the SECRB.

and runoff (Fig. 5), indicating that silicate weathering rates are controlled by runoff as documented in previous research (e.g., Bluth and Kump, 1994; Gaillardet et al., 1999; Millot et al., 2002; Oliva et al., 2003; Wu et al., 2013; Pepin et al., 2013).

#### 5.4 $\text{CO}_2$ consumption and the role of sulfuric acid

To calculate atmospheric  $\text{CO}_2$  consumption by silicate weathering (CSW) and by carbonate weathering (CCW), a charge-balanced state between rock chemical weathering-derived alkalinity and cations was assumed (Roy et al., 1999).

$$[\text{CO}_2]_{\text{CSW}} = \quad (4)$$

$$[\text{HCO}_3]_{\text{CSW}} = [\text{Na}]_{\text{sil}} + [\text{K}]_{\text{sil}} + 2[\text{Ca}]_{\text{sil}} + 2[\text{Mg}]_{\text{sil}}$$

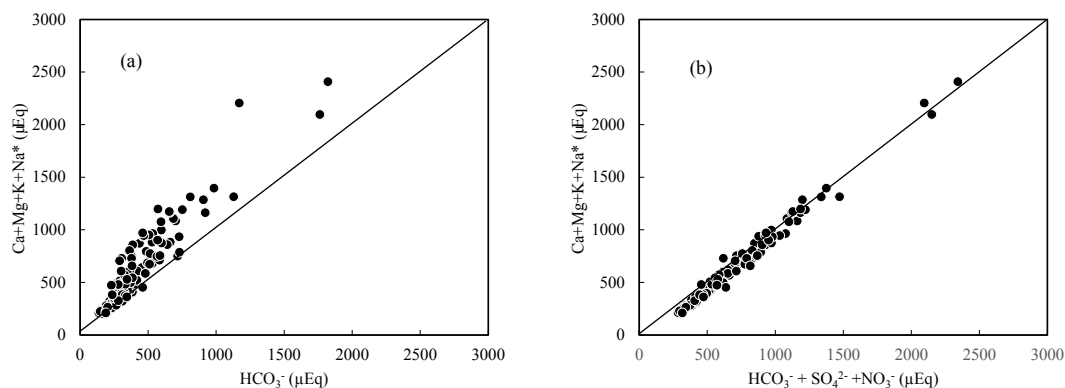
$$[\text{CO}_2]_{\text{CCW}} = [\text{HCO}_3]_{\text{CCW}} = [\text{Ca}]_{\text{carb}} + [\text{Mg}]_{\text{carb}} \quad (5)$$

The calculated  $\text{CO}_2$  consumption rates by chemical weathering for the rivers in SECRB are shown in Table 3.  $\text{CO}_2$  consumption rates by carbonate and silicate weathering are from 17.9 to  $530 \times 10^3 \text{ mol km}^{-2} \text{a}^{-1}$  (averaging at  $206 \times 10^3 \text{ mol km}^{-2} \text{a}^{-1}$ ) and from 167 to  $460 \times 10^3 \text{ mol km}^{-2} \text{a}^{-1}$  (averaging at  $281 \times 10^3 \text{ mol km}^{-2} \text{a}^{-1}$ ) for major river catchments in the SECRB. The  $\text{CO}_2$  consumption rates by silicate weathering in the SECRB are higher than that of major rivers in the world and China, such as the Amazon ( $174 \times 10^3 \text{ mol km}^{-2} \text{a}^{-1}$ , Mortatti and Probst, 2003), the Mississippi and the Mackenzie ( $66.8$  and  $34.1 \times 10^3 \text{ mol km}^{-2} \text{a}^{-1}$ , Gaillardet et al., 1999), the Changjiang ( $112 \times 10^3 \text{ mol km}^{-2} \text{a}^{-1}$ , Chetelat et al., 2008), the Huanghe ( $35 \times 10^3 \text{ mol km}^{-2} \text{a}^{-1}$ , Fan et al., 2014), the Xijiang ( $154 \times 10^3 \text{ mol km}^{-2} \text{a}^{-1}$ , Xu and Liu, 2010), the Longchuanjiang ( $173 \times 10^3 \text{ mol km}^{-2} \text{a}^{-1}$ , Li et al., 2011), the Mekong ( $191 \times 10^3 \text{ mol km}^{-2} \text{a}^{-1}$ , Li et al., 2014), three large rivers in eastern Tibet ( $103$ – $121 \times 10^3 \text{ mol km}^{-2} \text{a}^{-1}$ , Noh et al., 2009), the Hanjiang in central China ( $120 \times 10^3 \text{ mol km}^{-2} \text{a}^{-1}$ , Li et al., 2009) and the Sonhuajiang in northeastern China

**Table 3.** Contribution of each reservoir, fluxes, chemical weathering and associated CO<sub>2</sub> consumption rates for the major rivers and their main tributaries in the SECRB.

Major river	Tributaries	Location	Discharge (10 <sup>9</sup> m <sup>3</sup> a <sup>-1</sup> )	Area (10 <sup>3</sup> km <sup>2</sup> )	Runoff (mm a <sup>-1</sup> )	Contribution (%)			Fluxes (10 <sup>6</sup> t a <sup>-1</sup> )			Weathering rate (t km <sup>-2</sup> a <sup>-1</sup> )			CO <sub>2</sub> consumption rate (10 <sup>3</sup> mol km <sup>-2</sup> a <sup>-1</sup> )				
						Rain	Anth.	Sil.	Carb.	SWF	CWF	Cat <sub>sil</sub> <sup>a</sup>	SWR <sup>b</sup>	CWR <sup>b</sup>	TWR <sup>b</sup>	CSW <sup>c</sup>	CCW <sup>c</sup>	SSW <sup>d</sup>	SNSW <sup>e</sup>
Qiantang	Fuyang	Tonglu	43.81	38.32	1143	9	14	23	54	0.66	1.74	6.8	17.3	45.3	62.6	223	459	195	184
			2.726	3.100	879	7	14	18	62	0.05	0.16	5.5	14.7	52.1	66.8	167	530	152	146
Cao'e	Huashan	Linhai	2.610	3.043	858	7	23	26	44	0.06	0.11	6.8	18.2	35.4	53.5	269	369	240	229
			5.400	6.613	817	9	22	24	45	0.09	0.17	4.7	14.2	26.1	40.3	167	267	143	133
Ling	Baizhiao	Shaduan	3.184	2.475	1286	14	15	50	21	0.06	0.03	9.1	24.2	11.7	35.9	350	119	255	216
			1.731	1.482	1168	11	19	35	36	0.03	0.04	7.6	21.4	24.5	45.9	304	249	249	227
Ou	Hecheng	Huangdu	20.65	13.45	1536	20	6	56	18	0.36	0.13	10.1	26.9	9.9	36.9	360	101	228	174
			1.809	1.270	1447	16	8	46	30	0.04	0.02	9.9	27.9	19.0	46.9	336	192	246	210
Xiaoxi	Jupu	Yongjiashi	5.116	3.336	1534	23	0	74	4	0.09	0.01	11.4	26.4	1.8	28.2	391	18	202	125
			1.799	1.273	1413	21	9	63	7	0.03	0.00	10.0	26.3	3.3	29.6	360	34	200	135
Huotong	Yangzhong	Lianjiang	3.470	2.082	1667	22	18	54	5	0.06	0.00	8.3	27.3	2.1	29.4	305	24	129	59
			2.770	3.170	874	17	17	48	17	0.05	0.02	5.1	17.3	5.4	22.7	188	56	122	95
Ao	Zhuqi	Futun	84.59	54.50	1552	15	10	48	27	1.80	0.94	10.3	33.0	17.3	50.2	390	180	292	252
			22.53	12.67	1778	15	14	49	22	0.45	0.21	12.0	35.8	16.2	52.0	460	171	336	286
Min	Shaxian	Qitijie	12.87	9.922	1297	13	9	42	36	0.26	0.21	8.4	26.5	21.7	48.1	315	222	249	223
			24.91	14.79	1685	16	10	45	29	0.48	0.26	9.6	32.2	17.4	49.6	350	185	250	210
Youxi	Dazhangxi	Yongtai	5.237	4.450	1177	15	8	46	31	0.11	0.07	7.4	24.5	15.0	39.5	272	156	205	178
			4.205	4.034	1042	15	21	47	17	0.08	0.03	6.6	20.2	7.1	27.4	242	73	163	131
Jin	Xixi	Anxi	3.004	2.466	1218	9	10	29	52	0.06	0.10	7.9	24.4	42.2	66.6	284	430	247	232
			2.236	1.704	1312	12	22	28	38	0.04	0.04	6.8	22.9	25.6	48.5	226	263	178	158
Jiulong	Dongxi	Punan	10.20	8.49	1201	13	14	28	45	0.19	0.29	7.3	22.2	34.0	56.2	263	351	209	188
			4.080	3.420	1193	10	32	25	33	0.10	0.11	8.0	30.7	30.9	61.6	288	317	227	203
Zhang	Yunxiao	Zhao'an	1.011	1.038	974	16	25	29	29	0.02	0.01	5.1	21.9	14.1	36.0	174	146	114	90
			1.176	0.955	1231	16	41	26	17	0.03	0.01	5.8	28.7	10.2	38.9	187	107	93	55
Dongxi	Raoping	Chao'an	1.637	1.621	1010	15	30	34	21	0.04	0.02	6.0	22.8	11.1	33.9	227	115	145	112
			24.75	29.08	851	16	7	38	39	0.49	0.50	5.4	17.0	17.0	34.0	208	176	156	135
Huanggang	Xikou	Hengshan	11.14	9.228	1207	17	6	46	32	0.31	0.18	9.0	33.3	19.1	52.4	341	196	249	212
			10.29	12.95	794	12	13	31	44	0.21	0.32	5.7	16.6	24.5	41.1	212	252	173	157
Whole SECRB			207	167	1240				3.95	4.09	7.8	23.7	24.5	48.1	287	251	218	191	

Anth. noted for anthropogenic, Sil. for silicate, and Carb. for carbonate. <sup>a</sup> Cat<sub>sil</sub> are calculated based on the sum of cations from silicate weathering. <sup>b</sup> SWR, CWR and TWR represent silicate weathering rates (assuming all dissolved silica is derived from silicate weathering), carbonate weathering rates and total weathering rates, respectively. <sup>c</sup> CO<sub>2</sub> consumption rate with assumption that all the protons involved in the weathering reaction are provided by carbonic acid. <sup>d</sup> Estimated CO<sub>2</sub> consumption rate by silicate weathering when H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub> from acid precipitation was taken into account. <sup>e</sup> Estimated CO<sub>2</sub> consumption rate by silicate weathering when both H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub> and HNO<sub>3</sub> from acid precipitation were taken into account.



**Figure 6.** Plots of total cations derived from (a) carbonate and silicate weathering vs.  $\text{HCO}_3^-$  and (b)  $\text{HCO}_3^- + \text{SO}_4^{2-} + \text{NO}_3^-$  for river water in the SECRB.

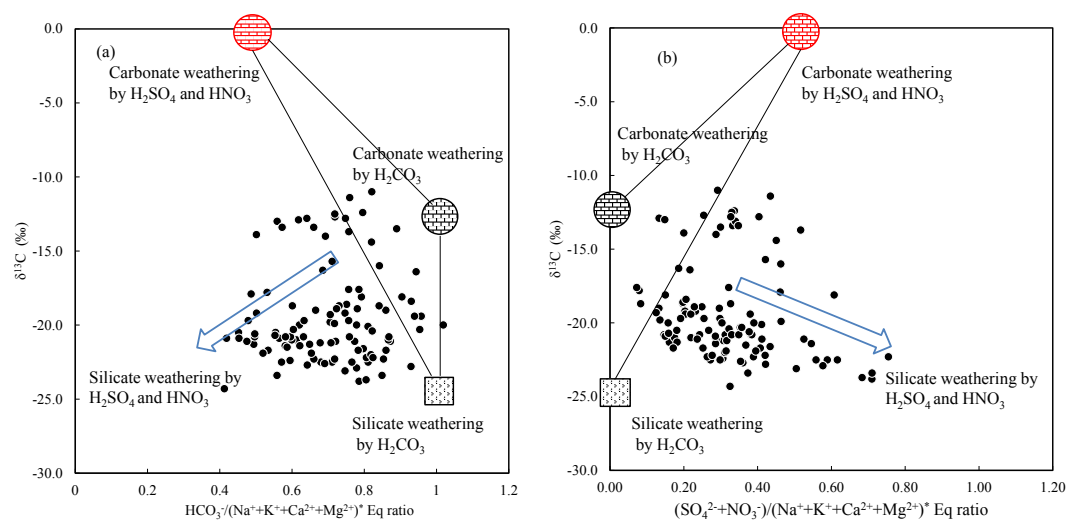
( $66.6 \times 10^3 \text{ mol km}^{-2} \text{ a}^{-1}$ , Liu et al., 2013). The high  $\text{CO}_2$  consumption rates by silicate weathering in the SECRB could be attributed to extensive distribution of silicate rocks, high runoff and favorable climatic conditions. The regional fluxes of  $\text{CO}_2$  consumption by silicate and carbonate weathering are about  $47.9 \times 10^9 \text{ mol a}^{-1}$  ( $0.57 \times 10^{12} \text{ g C a}^{-1}$ ) and  $41.9 \times 10^9 \text{ mol a}^{-1}$  ( $0.50 \times 10^{12} \text{ g C a}^{-1}$ ) in the whole SECRB.

However, in addition to  $\text{CO}_2$ , the anthropogenic-sourced proton (e.g.,  $\text{H}_2\text{SO}_4$  and  $\text{HNO}_3$ ) is well documented as significant proton providers in rock weathering processes (Galy and France-Lanord, 1999; Karim and Veizer, 2000; Yoshimura et al., 2001; Han and Liu, 2004; Spence and Telmer, 2005; Lerman and Wu, 2006; Xu and Liu, 2007, 2010; Perrin et al., 2008; Gandois et al., 2011). Sulfuric acid can be generated by natural oxidation of pyrite and anthropogenic emissions of  $\text{SO}_2$  from coal combustion and subsequently dissolve carbonate and silicate minerals. The riverine nitrate in a watershed can be derived from atmospheric deposition, synthetic fertilizers, microbial nitrification, sewage and manure, etc. (e.g., Kendall, 1998). Although it is difficult to determine the sources of nitrate in river water, we can at least simply assume that nitrate from acid deposition is one of the proton providers. The consumption of  $\text{CO}_2$  by rock weathering would be overestimated if  $\text{H}_2\text{SO}_4$ - and  $\text{HNO}_3$ -induced rock weathering was ignored (Spence and Telmer, 2005; Xu and Liu, 2010; Shin et al., 2011; Gandois et al., 2011). Thus, the role that anthropogenic-sourced protons play on chemical weathering is crucial for an accurate estimation of  $\text{CO}_2$  consumption by rock weathering.

Rapid economic growth and increased energy needs have resulted in severe air pollution problems in many areas of China, indicated by high levels of mineral acids (predominately sulfuric) observed in precipitation (Larssen and Carmichael, 2000; Pan et al., 2013; L. Liu et al., 2016). The national  $\text{SO}_2$  emissions in 2010 reached  $30.8 \text{ Tg a}^{-1}$  (Lu et al., 2011). Previous studies documented that fossil fuel combustion accounts for the most sulfur deposition ( $\sim 77\%$ ) in

China (L. Liu et al., 2016). The wet deposition rate of nitrogen is the highest over central and southern China, with mean values of 20.2, 18.2 and  $25.8 \text{ kg N ha}^{-1} \text{ a}^{-1}$  in Zhejiang, Fujian and Guangdong provinces, respectively (Lu and Tian, 2007). Current sulfur and nitrogen depositions in the southeastern coastal region are still among the highest in China (Fang et al., 2013; Cui et al., 2014; L. Liu et al., 2016).

The involvement of protons originating from  $\text{H}_2\text{SO}_4$  and  $\text{HNO}_3$  in the river water can be illustrated by the stoichiometry between cations and anions, shown in Fig. 6. In the rivers of the SECRB, the sum of the cations released by silicate and carbonate weathering could not be balanced by  $\text{HCO}_3^-$  only (Fig. 6a), but were almost balanced by the sum of  $\text{HCO}_3^-$ ,  $\text{SO}_4^{2-}$  and  $\text{NO}_3^-$  (Fig. 6b). This implies that  $\text{H}_2\text{CO}_3$ ,  $\text{H}_2\text{SO}_4$  and  $\text{HNO}_3$  are the potential erosion agents in chemical weathering in the SECRB. The  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  values of the water samples showed a wide range, from  $-11.0\%$  to  $-24.3\%$ , with an average of  $-19.4\%$ . The  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  from soil is dominated by the relative contribution from  $\text{C}_3$  and  $\text{C}_4$  plants (Das et al., 2005). The studied areas have subtropical temperatures and humidity, and thus  $\text{C}_3$  processes are dominant. The  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  of soil  $\text{CO}_2$  is derived primarily from  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  of organic material, which typically has a value between  $-24\%$  and  $-34\%$ , with an average of  $-28\%$  (Faure, 1986). According to previous studies, the average value for  $\text{C}_3$  trees and shrubs are from  $-24.4\%$  to  $-30.5\%$ , and most of them are lower than  $-28\%$  in southern China (Chen et al., 2005; Xiang, 2006; Dou et al., 2013). After accounting for the isotopic effect from the diffusion of  $\text{CO}_2$  from soil, the resulted  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  (from the terrestrial  $\text{C}_3$  plant process) should be  $\sim -25\%$  (Cerling et al., 1991). This mean DIC derived from silicate weathering by carbonic acid (100% from soil  $\text{CO}_2$ ) would yield a  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  value of  $-25\%$ . Carbonate rocks are generally derived from marine systems and typically have a  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  value close to zero (Das et al., 2005). Thus, the theoretical  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  value of DIC derived from carbonate weathering by carbonic acid (50% from soil  $\text{CO}_2$  and 50% from carbonate rocks) is  $-12.5\%$ . DIC derived from carbonate weathering by sulfuric acid are



**Figure 7.** (a)  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{DIC}}$  vs.  $\text{HCO}_3^-/(\text{Na}^+ + \text{K}^+ + \text{Ca}^{2+} + \text{Mg}^{2+})^*$  and (b)  $(\text{SO}_4^{2-} + \text{NO}_3^-)/(\text{Na}^+ + \text{K}^+ + \text{Ca}^{2+} + \text{Mg}^{2+})^*$  equivalent ratio in river water draining the SECRB (\* noted concentrations corrected for atmospheric and anthropogenic inputs). The plots show that most water deviates from the three end-member mixing areas (carbonate weathering by carbonic acid and sulfuric/nitric acid and silicate weathering by carbonic acid).

all from carbonate rocks; thus the  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  of the DIC would be 0‰. Based on the above discussion, sources of riverine DIC from different end-members in the SECRB were plotted in Fig. 7. Most water samples drift away from the three end-member mixing areas (carbonate and silicate weathering by carbonic acid and carbonate weathering by sulfuric acid) and towards silicate weathering by sulfuric and nitric acid area, clearly illustrating the effect of the anthropogenic-sourced protons (sulfuric and nitric acid) on silicate weathering in the SECRB.

Considering the  $\text{H}_2\text{SO}_4$  and  $\text{HNO}_3$  effects on chemical weathering,  $\text{CO}_2$  consumption by silicate weathering can be determined from the equation below (Moon et al., 2007; Ryu et al., 2008; Shin et al., 2011):

$$[\text{CO}_2]_{\text{SNSW}} = [\text{Na}]_{\text{sil}} + [\text{K}]_{\text{sil}} + 2[\text{Ca}]_{\text{sil}} + 2[\text{Mg}]_{\text{sil}} - \gamma \times [2\text{SO}_4 + \text{NO}_3]_{\text{atmos}}, \quad (6)$$

where  $\gamma$  is calculated by  $\text{cation}_{\text{sil}} / (\text{cation}_{\text{sil}} + \text{cation}_{\text{carb}})$ .

Based on the calculation in Sect. 5.1,  $\text{SO}_4^{2-}$  and  $\text{NO}_3^-$  in river water were mainly derived from atmospheric inputs. Assuming that  $\text{SO}_4^{2-}$  and  $\text{NO}_3^-$  in river water derived from atmospheric input (after correction for sea-salt contribution) are all from acid precipitation and considering  $\text{H}_2\text{SO}_4$  and  $\text{HNO}_3$  effects,  $\text{CO}_2$  consumption rates by silicate weathering (SNSW) are estimated between  $55 \times 10^3$  and  $286 \times 10^3 \text{ mol km}^{-2} \text{ a}^{-1}$  for major river watersheds in the SECRB. For the whole SECRB, the actual  $\text{CO}_2$  consumption rate by silicate is  $191 \times 10^3 \text{ mol km}^{-2} \text{ a}^{-1}$  when the effect of  $\text{H}_2\text{SO}_4$  and  $\text{HNO}_3$  is considered. The flux of  $\text{CO}_2$  consumption is overestimated by  $16.1 \times 10^9 \text{ mol a}^{-1}$  ( $0.19 \times 10^{12} \text{ g C a}^{-1}$ ) due to the involvement of  $\text{H}_2\text{SO}_4$  and  $\text{HNO}_3$  from acid precipitation, accounting for approximately

33.6 % of the total  $\text{CO}_2$  consumption flux by silicate weathering in the SECRB. It highlights the fact that the drawdown of atmospheric  $\text{CO}_2$  by silicate weathering can be significantly overestimated if acid deposition is ignored in long-term perspectives. The result quantitatively shows that anthropogenic activities can significantly affect rock weathering and associated atmospheric  $\text{CO}_2$  consumption. The quantification of this effect needs to be well evaluated in Asia and globally, taking into account current and future human activity.

It is noticeable that the chemical weathering and associated  $\text{CO}_2$  consumption rates for the study area were calculated by the river water geochemistry of high-flow season. As a subtropical monsoon climate area, the river water of the southeastern coastal rivers is mainly recharged by rain, and the amount of precipitation in the high-flow season accounts for more than 70 % of annual precipitation in the area. The processes in the low-flow season might be different to some extent. It is worth making further efforts to investigate the hydrological and temperature effects on weathering rate and flux, as well as evaluate the anthropogenic impact in different climate regimes and hydrology seasons.

## 6 Conclusions

River water in the southeastern coastal region of China is characterized by high proportions of  $\text{Na}^+$ ,  $\text{K}^+$  and dissolved  $\text{SiO}_2$ , indicating that the water chemistry of the rivers in the SECRB is mainly controlled by silicate weathering. The dissolved cationic loads of the rivers in the study area originate dominantly from silicate weathering, which accounts for 39.5 % (17.8 %–74.0 %) of the total cationic loads. Carbon-

ate weathering, atmospheric and anthropogenic inputs account for 30.6 %, 14.3 % and 15.7 %, respectively. Meanwhile, more than 70 % of  $\text{SO}_4^{2-}$  and  $\text{NO}_3^-$  in the river water is derived from atmospheric input. The chemical weathering rate of silicates and carbonates for the whole SECRB are estimated to be approximately 23.7 and 24.5  $\text{t km}^{-2} \text{a}^{-1}$ . About  $8.04 \times 10^6 \text{ t a}^{-1}$  of dissolved solids originating from rock weathering are transported into the East and South China seas by these rivers in the SECRB. With the assumption that all the protons involved in the weathering reaction are provided by carbonic acid, the  $\text{CO}_2$  consumption rates by silicate and carbonate weathering are 287 and  $251 \times 10^3 \text{ mol km}^{-2} \text{a}^{-1}$ , respectively. However, both water chemistry and carbon isotope data provide solid evidence that sulfuric and nitric acid from acid precipitation serve as significant agents during chemical weathering. Considering the effect of sulfuric and nitric acid, the  $\text{CO}_2$  consumption rate by silicate weathering for the SECRB is  $191 \times 10^3 \text{ mol km}^{-2} \text{a}^{-1}$ . Therefore, the  $\text{CO}_2$  consumption flux would be overestimated by  $16.1 \times 10^9 \text{ mol a}^{-1}$  ( $0.19 \times 10^{12} \text{ g C a}^{-1}$ ) in the SECRB if the effect of sulfuric and nitric acid is ignored. This work quantitatively illustrates that anthropogenic disturbance by acid precipitation has a profound impact on  $\text{CO}_2$  sequestration by rock weathering.

*Data availability.* The data in this study have been presented in the tables of the article and can also be requested from the corresponding author.

*Author contributions.* WL and ZX designed the study. WL, HS, TZ and CS carried out the study. WL, ZX, HS and TL contributed to data treatment and calculations. WL and ZX prepared the manuscript with contributions from all co-authors.

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

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