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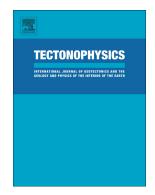
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Cenozoic intraplate tectonics in Central Patagonia: Record of main Andean phases in a weak upper plate

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Abstract

Contraction in intraplate areas is still poorly understood relative to similar deformation at plate margins. In order to contribute to its comprehension, we study the Patagonian broken foreland (PBF) in South America whose evolution remains controversial. Time constraints of tectonic events and structural characterization of this belt are limited. Also, major causes of strain location in this orogen far from the plate margin are enigmatic. To unravel tectonic events, we studied the Cenozoic sedimentary record of the central sector of the Patagonian broken foreland (San Bernardo fold and thrust belt, 44°30'S-46°S) and the Andes (Meseta de Chalia,46°S) following an approach involving growth-strata detection, U-Pb geochronology and structural modeling. Additionally, we elaborate a high resolution analysis of the effective elastic thickness (Te) to examine the relation between intraplate contraction location and zones of low lithospheric strength. The occurrence of Eocene growth-strata (~44-40 Ma) suggests that

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