

Compilation of a map of vertical crustal movements in Eastern Canada using spline polynomials

Azadeh Koohzare, Petr Vaníček, Marcelo Santos

Department of Geodesy and Geomatics Engineering, University of New Brunswick, P.O.Box 4400, Fredericton, NB, Canada. E3B 5A3 Tel: (506) 453 4698, Fax (506) 453 4943. E-mail: a.koohzare@unb.ca

Overview

In order to obtain representations of the recent Vertical Crustal Movements (VCM) in Eastern Canada, algebraical polynomial surfaces of different order were first computed from sea level data recorded by 17 reliable tide gauges and 2972 filtered relevelled segments of the first order Canadian levelling network in the region. The filtering of levelling data included the elimination of levelling segments that showed anomalously high local tilts along with elimination of those segments that were too short to contribute to the analysis. The resulted velocity surfaces were indicative of only the crude features of VCM because of the sparsity of data coverage. In order to get the details needed for the map to be physically meaningful, without increasing the degree of polynomials, we then decided to divide Eastern Canada into two zones: Maritimes zone and the southern part of St. Lawrence River zone. The border of these two zones is dictated by the actual data distribution and the preliminary knowledge of the geodynamics of the area (See figure 1). The vertical movement was then represented by a different polynomial surface in each zone. The polynomials were joined together at the interval knots along the border in such a way that a certain degree of smoothness (differentiability) of the resulting function was guaranteed. In this paper, we use polynomial spline function.

In general, if we divide the area of study into m zones and the degree of the polynomials is n , the resulting function is a polynomial spline function of degree n with m zones. A given spline polynomial in the m -th zone looks as follows:

$$V_m(x, y) = \sum_{i,j=0}^n c_{ij,m} (x - x_m)^i (y - y_m)^j \quad (1)$$

where V_m is the algebraic least squares velocity surface for zone m , fitted to the desired data located at (x, y) in an arbitrary selected local horizontal coordinate system and (x_m, y_m) is the knot located in the predefined border between two zones.

In this study, the polynomials have to satisfy the following conditions:

$$\text{i) } V_m(x_m, y_m) = V \quad (2.a)$$

$$\text{ii) } V_m(x_{m+1}, y_{m+1}) = V_{m+1}(x_{m+1}, y_{m+1}) \quad (2.b)$$

$$\text{iii) } V'_m(x_{m+1}, y_{m+1}) = V'_{m+1}(x_{m+1}, y_{m+1}) \quad (2.c)$$

$$\text{iv) } V''_m(x_{m+1}, y_{m+1}) = V''_{m+1}(x_{m+1}, y_{m+1}) \quad (2.d)$$

Conditions (2.a) make sure that the spline fits to the knot points. The second condition ensures that the spline is continuous everywhere in the region.

Conditions (2.c) and (2.d) ensure that the polynomial spline is continuous in slope and curvature respectively throughout the region spanned by the points. The appropriate degree of the velocity surface was determined by testing the predicted error (a posteriori standard deviation) and the capability of the surface to portray the main features.

Results

Several tests were made to determine the appropriate degree of the velocity surface to be computed. All degrees of the polynomials yielded the a posteriori variance factor equal to 8-8.5. The value $n=4$ was finally selected as the highest degree compatible with data distribution.

The map of vertical crustal movements in Eastern Canada produced by spline polynomials is shown in Figure 1.

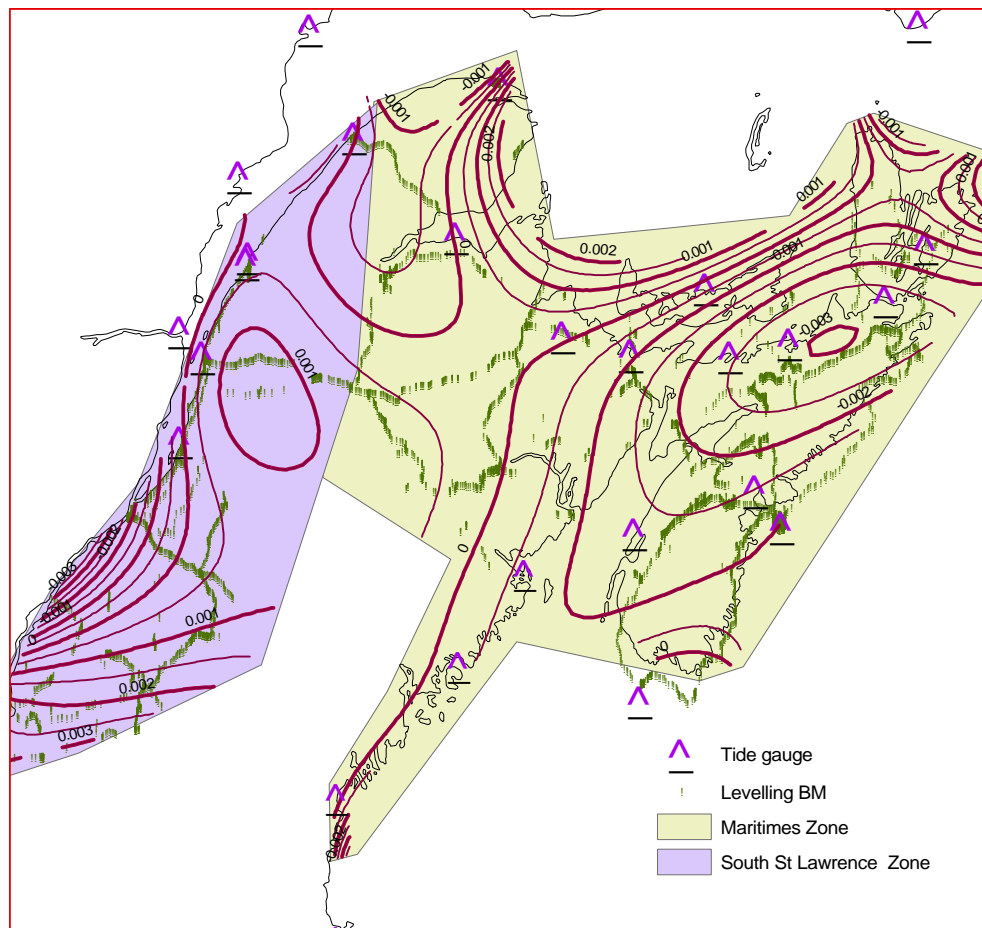


Fig. 1. Map of vertical crustal movements in Eastern Canada compiled using cubic spline polynomials. Contours are in m/year. Splines used for joining the VCM surfaces.

The solution is evidently much generalized. The map depicts clearly the zero line of the postglacial rebound. The zero line follows the St. Lawrence River (Figure 1). Present-day radial displacement predictions due to postglacial rebound over North America computed using VM2 Earth model and ICE-4G adopted ice history show a zero line very similar to ours along St. Lawrence River. (See Peltier et al 2004 for ICE-4G model predictions). The general Northwest Southeast trend of vertical crustal movements is consistent with the predictions of Glacial Isostatic Adjustment models.

With respect to the individual features on the map, the subsidence in Maritimes predominantly in Nova Scotia and eastern New Brunswick is due to postglacial rebound. This area lies immediately outward of the region that was covered by the Laurentide Ice Sheet at the last glacial maximum (see Peltier, 1994 for maps of surface ice cover from LGM to present). As the Laurentian ice started to decay, this area began to collapse. The map of VCM in this area reflects this phenomenon and is also compatible with the recent map of gravity changes (See Pagiatakis et al, 2003 for the map of gravity changes).

The pattern shown in the north eastern margin of the former Laurentide ice sheet (the border of which has been postulated to have been parallel to St. Lawrence River) is complicated due to the probable discontinuities of the crust in this zone. The map seems to justify the concentration of seismicity in Lower St. Lawrence Zone (See Lamontagne, 2003 for the definition of Lower St. Lawrence Seismic Zone), which opens new doors into the study of geodynamics of this complex area.

The earlier reported uplift of the northern New Brunswick and the subsidence of the South St. Lawrence River (Carrera et al. 1990) are here more sharply defined.

Conclusions

This study shows that spline polynomial surface can represent the available data in a unified map. The local pattern of the map gives more details of the south Lawrence River, compared to the previous maps. However, the computed value, 8.2, for the a posteriori variance factor indicates the probability of the existence of some shorter wavelength features that could not be modelled by a surface of such a low degree. Increasing the number of intervals (zones) in the area of computation, might be a solution for representing shorter wavelength features of VCM which would be the next step in our studies. Compilation of a unified map which satisfies all the observations and is consistent with most of the geological evidences requires further investigations.

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