Interaction of sinking slab debris with D"
beneath South America

Justin Yen-Ting Ko (1,2), Donald Helmberger (2), Zhongwen Zhan (2), Michael Gurnis (2), and Jennifer Jackson (2)
(1) National Taiwan University, Institute of Oceanography, Taiwan (justinko@ntu.edu.tw), (2) Seismological Laboratory, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, CA, USA

Understanding the origin of structures in the lower mantle and D" in particular is key to understanding how the Earth works as a global interconnected system. The role of subducted slabs involving the Circum-Pacific lower mantle high velocity belt proves particularly complicated with a mixture of phase-changes and up-welling zones. Here, we address such a complicated structure beneath South America by exploiting diffracted S-waveforms from a deep event beneath the South Sandwich Islands recorded by USArray. The upper mantle effects are removed by using a calibrated procedure provided by closer events. Our modeling results display a NS linear feature separating a fast slab and a prominent low-velocity lumpy strip, about 250km wide, and over 1,000km long. The pile-like structure in cross-section is 50km high with a 2.5% decrease at the top and 5% decrease at the CMB. This is overlaid by a normal PPV structure. Such features are quite compatible with a weak iron-oxide mixture bulldozed by a sinking slab as suggested in some recent tomographic models.