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# 1 Influence of particle properties on iron flocculation

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## 7 Abstract

8 In this study the importance of charge interactions during flocculation of Fe<sup>3+</sup> in the presence of  
9 particles and anions/cations at various pH values was investigated. SiO<sub>2,(s)</sub> and ZnO<sub>(s)</sub> were dosed as  
10 particles to promote charge interactions and/or serve as nucleus to accelerate floc formation. In the  
11 pH range 6-9, SiO<sub>2,(s)</sub> is negatively charged, while ZnO<sub>(s)</sub> carries a positive charge. Ca<sup>2+</sup> and HPO<sub>4</sub><sup>2-</sup>  
12 were selected to investigate charge interactions in the water phase.

13 A significant delay in floc growth due to charge repulsion between negatively charged iron species  
14 was observed at pH<sub>ini</sub> 9. For positively charged species at pH<sub>ini</sub> 6, a delay in floc growth was observed  
15 as well, but to a lesser degree. These effects could be neutralized by either dosing (positively  
16 charged) ZnO<sub>(s)</sub> or Ca<sup>2+</sup> at pH<sub>ini</sub> 9, or (negatively charged) SiO<sub>2,(s)</sub> at pH<sub>ini</sub> 6.

17 The addition of phosphate did not hinder floc growth at pH<sub>ini</sub> 6. While phosphate completely  
18 inhibited floc growth at pH<sub>ini</sub> 7-9 in the presence of negatively charged SiO<sub>2,(s)</sub>, the presence of  
19 positively charged ZnO<sub>(s)</sub> partly neutralized the detrimental influence of phosphate on floc growth.  
20 Similarly, dosing Ca<sup>2+</sup> partly neutralized the effect of phosphate.

21  
22 Keywords: iron flocculation; particles; charge interaction

## 24 1. Introduction

25  
26 Iron chemistry is an important aspect of water treatment, where it is either added to promote  
27 removal of organic matter, heavy metals and colloidal material, or where removal of iron itself is the  
28 main goal. In the pH range 6-8, which is typical for groundwater, iron is mainly present as Fe<sup>2+</sup> (Jolivet  
29 *et al.* 2004). When groundwater is aerated, Fe<sup>2+</sup> oxidizes to Fe<sup>3+</sup>, where the rate of oxidation  
30 increases for increasing pH values and stabilizes at a plateau rate at pH > 8 (Morgan & Lahav 2007).  
31 The oxidized Fe<sup>3+</sup> ion readily hydrolyses into Fe(OH)<sup>2+</sup>, Fe(OH)<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup>, Fe(OH)<sub>3,(aq)</sub> or Fe(OH)<sub>4</sub><sup>-</sup>, depending on  
32 the pH. When comparing Fe<sup>3+</sup> hydrolysis product speciation using hydrolysis constants from different  
33 authors, the trend seems to be that either (i) the positively charged Fe(OH)<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup> dominates at pH 7, the  
34 negatively charged Fe(OH)<sub>4</sub><sup>-</sup> dominates at pH 9, and pH 8 is a mixture of these, and of neutral Fe(OH)<sub>3</sub>  
35 (Liu & Millero 1999; Pham *et al.* 2006 ; Stefansson 2007), or (ii) the neutral Fe(OH)<sub>3</sub> dominates at  
36 each of these pH values (Flynn 1984; Millero & Pierrot 2007). When comparing the values for the  
37 hydrolysis constants (Supporting information S 1), it is notable that the values for Fe(OH)<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup> and  
38 Fe(OH)<sub>4</sub><sup>-</sup> are reasonably close, which would imply that their actual concentrations are similar for all  
39 authors. Whether the concentrations of Fe(OH)<sub>3,(aq)</sub> are in comparison high (references (Flynn 1984;  
40 Millero & Pierrot 2007)) or low (references (Liu & Millero 1999; Pham *et al.* 2006 ; Stefansson 2007))  
41 could essentially be related to the specific membrane pore size used by the authors to separate the  
42 “dissolved” iron fraction from the solid fraction.

43

44

1 The Fe<sup>3+</sup> hydrolysis products will form larger complexes by binding via ololation (Fe-OH-Fe) or oxolation  
2 (Fe-O-Fe) (Jolivet *et al.* 2004), forming nuclei and eventually growing into iron flocs. After fast  
3 hydrolysis of Fe<sup>3+</sup>, amorphous 2-line ferrihydrite is formed (Schwertmann & Cornell 1991).

4  
5 Addition of particles allows for more control of iron flocculation, as these particles may act as nucleus  
6 for floc growth (Hove *et al.* 2009). In practical applications, the purpose of adding particles is often to  
7 increase the density of the iron flocs, which sediment more rapidly and have lower water content,  
8 and/or to accelerate floc formation (Desjardins *et al.* 2002; Gan *et al.* 2005; Gottfried *et al.* 2008;  
9 Hove *et al.* 2009; Zhou *et al.* 2012) . In the synthesis of iron oxide nanoparticles, addition of particles  
10 (seed-mediated growth) allowed for production of more monodisperse particles (Huang *et al.* 2009).  
11 While the addition of particles has proven to be beneficial, there have been limited attempts to  
12 identify the responsible mechanisms. Our aim is to investigate the importance of charge interactions  
13 during flocculation of Fe<sup>3+</sup> in the presence of particles.

14  
15 Particles with a negative surface charge (SiO<sub>2</sub>; p*H*<sub>pzc</sub> 2-3) and positive surface charge (ZnO; p*H*<sub>pzc</sub> 9.2)  
16 were selected, in order to assess the importance of charge attraction or – repulsion for charged iron  
17 hydrolysis products at pH 6, 7, 8 and 9. Fe<sup>3+</sup> hydrolysis products should be mainly positively charged  
18 at pH 6, 7 ( Fe(OH)<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup> ), negatively charged at pH 9 (Fe(OH)<sub>4</sub><sup>-</sup> ), or a mixture of these, together with  
19 Fe(OH)<sub>3,(aq)</sub> could be present at pH 8. In addition, the influence of the bivalent cations (Ca<sup>2+</sup>) and  
20 anions (HPO<sub>4</sub><sup>2-</sup>) under these experimental conditions was assessed. The influence of HPO<sub>4</sub><sup>2-</sup> and Ca<sup>2+</sup>  
21 on iron flocculation at pH 7 has received considerable attention (Chattelier *et al.* 2004; Voegelin *et al.*  
22 2009; Kaegi *et al.* 2010; Voegelin *et al.* 2013; Senn *et al.* 2015). The research presented in this  
23 manuscript extends on this, by broadening the pH range beyond pH 7 and thereby gaining more  
24 variety in the charge of iron hydrolysis products, and by adding particle surface with either a positive  
25 or negative surface charge.

## 26 27 **2. Materials and methods**

### 28 29 2.1 Chemicals and stock solutions

30 ZnO (>99,0%), FeCl<sub>3</sub>·6H<sub>2</sub>O, CaCl<sub>2</sub>, NaHCO<sub>3</sub>, Na<sub>2</sub>HPO<sub>4</sub> were obtained from Sigma Aldrich (p.a. grade).  
31 The SiO<sub>2</sub> originated from Mol, Belgium, and was obtained from Sibelco as M32 size fraction (0.18-  
32 0.35 mm, D<sub>50</sub> 0.26 mm). It was ground for 60 seconds with a ring grinder (HSM100, Herzog) before  
33 use in the experiments. All stock solutions were prepared in demineralized (demi) water (Aquadem  
34 installation, Veolia, 0.09 μS/cm). The Fe<sup>3+</sup> solution was acidified to pH 2 to prevent flocculation. The  
35 stock solutions were dosed to obtain concentrations of 2 mg/l Fe, 150 mg/l HCO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup>, 40 mg/l Ca<sup>2+</sup> or 1  
36 mg/l HPO<sub>4</sub><sup>2-</sup>. HCO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup> was dosed to all solutions to serve as pH buffer. The pH was adjusted with HCl or  
37 NaOH to its required value.

### 38 39 2.2 Particle size distribution of SiO<sub>2</sub> and ZnO

40 The particle volume distribution of ZnO and ground SiO<sub>2</sub> were measured with a Mastersizer 2000  
41 (Malvern), coupled with a hydro 2000mu wet sample dispersion unit. This dispersion was obtained by  
42 mechanical mixing, no additional dispersants were added.

43 The particle volume distribution of SiO<sub>2</sub> and ZnO can be found in the supporting information (S 2)  
44 Particle counts and surface area were calculated from this data by assuming spherical particles. A  
45 fixed amount of particle surface of 0.15 m<sup>2</sup>/l was dosed for either SiO<sub>2</sub> or ZnO.

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### 2.3 Zeta potential

Zeta potential was measured with Zetacompact (CAD instruments), using 8.54 V/cm direct current, under the conditions (pH, conductivity) relevant in our experiments. These measurements confirmed the negative zeta potential of SiO<sub>2</sub> (supporting information S 3). ZnO, on the other hand, showed a positive zeta potential in MilliQ water, but a negative surface potential in the presence of HCO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup>, indicating that HCO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup> adsorption might have resulted in charge reversal (Degen & Kosec 1999; Sedlak & Janusz 2008).

### 2.4 Jar tests

Jar tests were executed on a JLT6 flocculation tester (Velp scientifica), using 1 L of solution in baffled 2 L jars. In all cases, mixing was at a constant 120 rpm, and experiments were carried out at room temperature (around 18 °C). pH values were adjusted to 6, 7, 8 or 9, and either 0.33 g/l SiO<sub>2</sub> or 0.35 g/l ZnO or no particles were dosed. ZnO powder dispersed poorly, and dispersion was aided by using a turrax mixer (T45N, IKA Werk) at 47,5% capacity for 5 seconds.

When SiO<sub>2</sub> or ZnO particles were added, a sample was taken before iron addition, and the particle size distribution was analysed with a particle counter (HIAC Royco model 9703, Pacific scientific), where the measuring principle is based on laser obscuration. Here, 5 ml of solution was scooped from the jar and diluted in 100 ml demineralized water. This dilution may have led to floc destabilisation due to the decrease in ionic strength. The mixing rate of the particle counter sample was set to approximate the mixing rate used in the jars, and the mixing duration was kept to a minimum in an attempt to minimize floc breakage or further flocculation during analysis. Abstractions of 10 ml were done twice and were analysed by the particle counter. The results of these consecutive analyses were close, with a standard deviation less than 1% for the total amount of particles and the calculated particle volume. This indicates that further particle breakage or flocculation during analysis was limited.

Every sample measurement was followed by a rinsing step with demineralized water. Samples were taken 1, 3, 15 and 30 minutes after iron dosage. At the same time intervals, 5 ml of solution was filtered over a 0.45 µm polyethersulphone syringe filter and the total Fe concentration of the filtrate was measured. This was done photometrically (Nova spectroquant, Merck), where iron is reduced to Fe<sup>2+</sup> in thioglycolate medium and forms red-violet complexes with triazide (Fe analysis kit 1.14761.0001, Merck). The 0.45 µm filter is used to arbitrarily differentiate “dissolved” from “solid” iron in this study. This is no absolute definition, since solid iron particles can be formed that are smaller than 0.45 µm.

When no particles were added, the formed iron flocs could not be readily detected by the particle counter, as the measured particle counts were much lower. In these experiments, samples were filtered over a series of syringe filters (0.2/0.45/0.8 µm (nylon); 10/20 µm (polypropylene), mdi membrane technologies) and the remaining iron concentration was determined after 1, 3, 15 and 30 minutes. The pH values were only initially corrected to pH 6, 7, 8 or 9 before iron dosing, and not adjusted afterwards. These values are referred to as “pH<sub>ini</sub>” in this manuscript. Typical pH variation during the experiments is shown in S 4.

### 1 3. Results and discussion

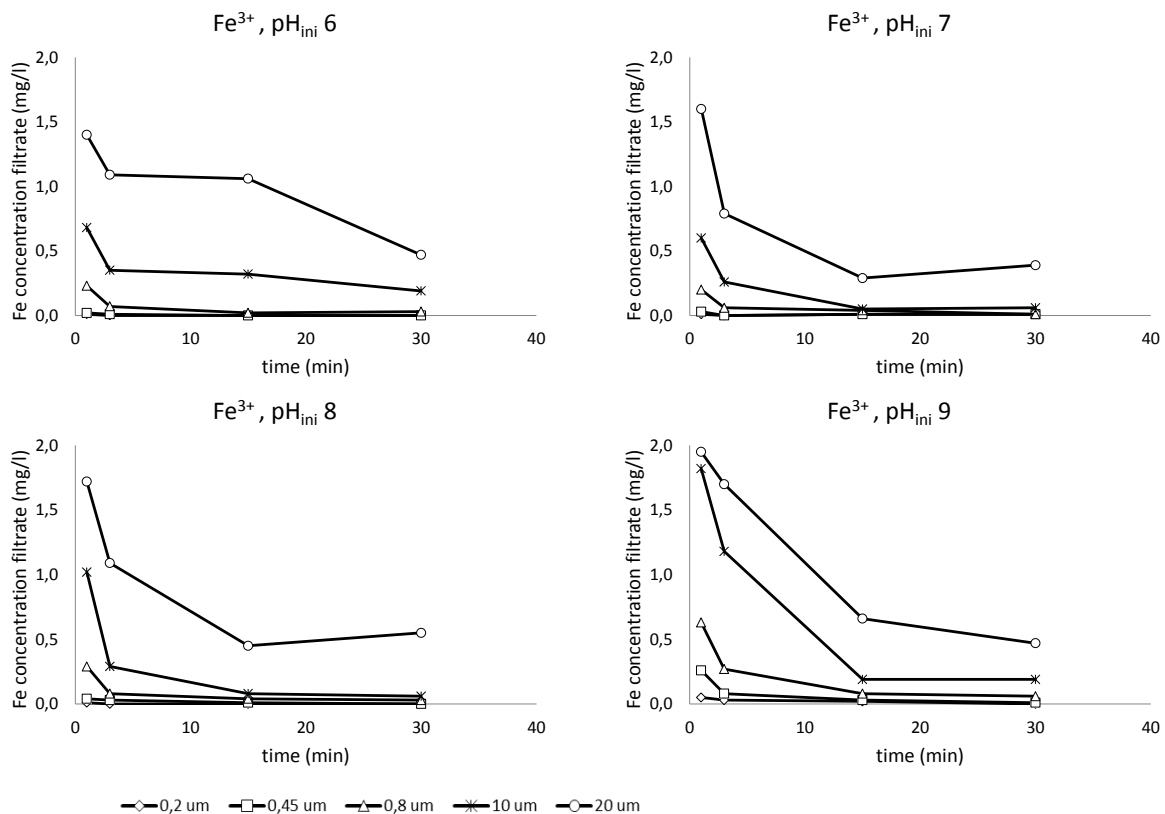
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#### 3 3.1 No addition of particles

4 The size of iron oxide flocs when no particles were added was indirectly determined by filtering the  
5 sample from the jar test over a series of syringe filters in the range of 0.2 – 20  $\mu\text{m}$ , and measuring the  
6 iron concentration in the filtrate. A decrease in iron concentrations in the filtrate indicates that iron  
7 flocs have grown to a diameter that is larger than the syringe pore size.

8 Floc growth after adding 2 mg/l  $\text{Fe}^{3+}$  is represented by the remaining iron concentration in the filtrate  
9 of a 0.2, 0.45, 0.8, 10 and 20  $\mu\text{m}$  filter in Figure 1. For the filters < 0.8  $\mu\text{m}$ , iron concentrations in the  
10 filtrate were below the detection limit after 3 minutes, except at  $\text{pH}_{\text{ini}}$  9.

11



12

13 Figure 1:  $\text{Fe}^{3+}$  removal after filtration with 0.2 – 20  $\mu\text{m}$  syringe filters at initial  $\text{pH}_{\text{ini}}$  6, 7, 8 and 9 in buffered demi water (150  
14 mg/l  $\text{HCO}_3^-$ ) at 120 rpm. Initial concentration 2 mg/l  $\text{Fe}^{3+}$ .

15

16 Charge attraction and rapid growth is expected around the point of net zero charge. Figure 1 shows  
17 rather similar  $\text{Fe}^{3+}$  concentrations for  $\text{pH}_{\text{ini}}$  7 and 8, which suggests that the point of net zero charge  
18 of the iron flocs could have been in-between  $\text{pH}_{\text{ini}}$  7 and 8. This is plausible, as the datasets of both  
19 Stefansson (2007) and Liu and Millero (1999) show their lowest iron oxide solubility at pH 7-7.5 at an  
20 ionic strength of 0.01 M, and Schwertmann and Cornell state that the net zero charge of iron oxides  
21 is typically within a broad pH range of 7-8 (Schwertmann & Cornell 1991).

22

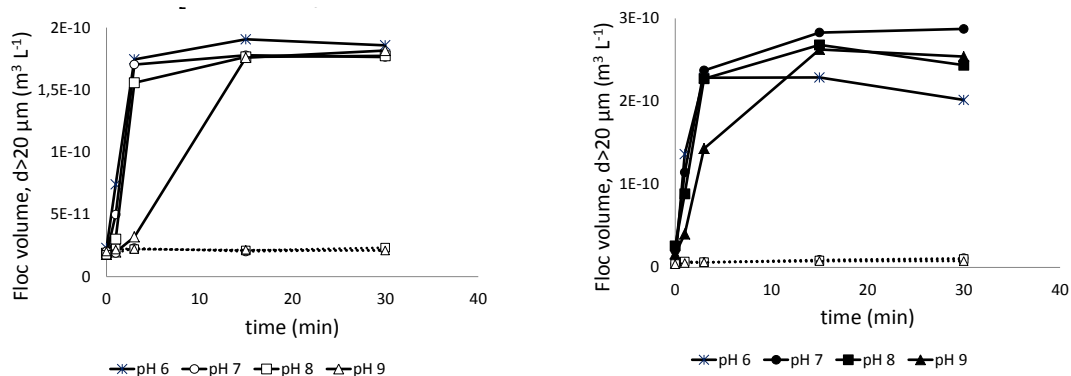
23 At both extremes of the pH range,  $\text{pH}_{\text{ini}}$  6 and 9, floc growth was delayed. At  $\text{pH}_{\text{ini}}$  9, the initial floc  
24 growth in 0-15 minutes was delayed, while at  $\text{pH}_{\text{ini}}$  6, the initial floc growth seems relatively  
25 comparable to  $\text{pH}_{\text{ini}}$  7 and 8, but was delayed after 3 minutes. Pham et al (2006) found asymmetry in  
26 ferric iron flocculation rates at pH 6 and 9 as well, and proposes different responsible mechanisms; at

1 pH 6, the rate of  $\text{H}_2\text{O}-\text{OH}^-$  exchange is mainly responsible for delayed floc growth, while charge  
 2 repulsion between negatively charged  $\text{Fe}(\text{OH})_4^-$  hydrolysis products delays floc growth at pH 9 (Pham  
 3 *et al.* 2006 ).

### 5 3.2 Addition of $\text{SiO}_2$ and ZnO particles

6 When particles were added, floc growth was followed by measuring the particle size distribution. To  
 7 compare the floc growth in the presence and absence of particles, the volume increase of flocs  $> 20$   
 8  $\mu\text{m}$  is presented. This can be compared with the removed Fe fraction by the  $20 \mu\text{m}$  syringe filter in  
 9 the experiments without particles (Figure 1 and Figure 2, inverse trend). In addition, the amount of  
 10 Fe that is removed after filtration over a  $0.45 \mu\text{m}$  syringe filter was determined. These results can be  
 11 found in the supporting information S 6-8 and typically match with the trends that are found with the  
 12 particle counter.

14 Floc growth after adding  $2 \text{ mg/l Fe}^{3+}$  and addition of  $\text{SiO}_2$  or ZnO at  $\text{pH}_{\text{ini}}$  6-9 is presented in Figure 2.  
 15 The results of baseline experiments, where particle agglomeration was followed without addition of  
 16 Fe are shown as a dotted line. While the same amount of Fe was used in all experiments, the volume  
 17 of flocs  $> 20 \mu\text{m}$  was considerably larger in the presence of ZnO as compared to  $\text{SiO}_2$ , which may  
 18 indicate that flocs with lower density were formed in the presence of ZnO.



21 Figure 2: Influence of pH on floc growth ( $d > 20 \mu\text{m}$ ) with  $0.15 \text{ m}^2/\text{l}$  of  $\text{SiO}_2$  (left), and ZnO (right). Buffered demi water ( $150$   
 22  $\text{mg/l HCO}_3^-$ ),  $120 \text{ RPM}$ ,  $2 \text{ mg/l Fe}^{3+}$ . Dotted lines: baseline experiments ( $\text{SiO}_2$  or ZnO without Fe dose)

24 For  $\text{pH}_{\text{ini}}$  6-8, the addition of  $\text{SiO}_2$  resulted in rapidly reaching a “plateau” value for the floc volume  
 25 within 3 minutes (Figure 2, left), which was faster than the trends observed when no particles were  
 26 dosed. The general trends observed for ZnO were more comparable with the case where no particles  
 27 were present, where “plateau” values were reached after about 15 minutes.

28 Expected charge interactions between particles and iron species are summarized in Table 1, based on  
 29 the premise of electrostatic attraction between unlike charges, and – repulsion between like charges.  
 30 Due to its negative surface charge,  $\text{SiO}_2$  should promote floc growth at  $\text{pH}_{\text{ini}}$  6, and delay it at  $\text{pH}_{\text{ini}}$  9,  
 31 while For ZnO, the opposite effect is expected. Charge attraction for  $\text{SiO}_2$  at  $\text{pH}_{\text{ini}}$  6, and ZnO at  $\text{pH}_{\text{ini}}$  9  
 32 seemed to indeed occur; for  $\text{SiO}_2$ , the highest floc volume was found at  $\text{pH}_{\text{ini}}$  6, while the experiments  
 33 where no particles were added indicate a delay in floc growth at this pH value. At  $\text{pH}_{\text{ini}}$  9, floc growth  
 34 was excellent for ZnO, with both rapid floc volume increase (Figure 2, right) and virtually complete Fe  
 35 removal after  $0.45 \mu\text{m}$  filtration at all time intervals (S 6). This would also indicate that the negatively  
 36 charged  $\text{Fe}(\text{OH})_4^-$  is able to interact with the (positively charged) ZnO surface, and is able to replace

1 the  $\text{HCO}_3^-$  which is suggested to be present at the ZnO surface, as discussed in paragraph 2.3 based  
 2 on zeta potential measurements.

3 Charge repulsion was less obvious. At  $\text{pH}_{\text{ini}}$  9, floc growth was clearly delayed at  $\text{SiO}_2$ , although the  
 4 effect of charge repulsion by the  $\text{SiO}_2$  surface cannot be separated from the charge repulsion  
 5 between negatively charged iron species in the water phase. For ZnO the lowest volume increase  
 6 after 15-30 minutes is found at  $\text{pH}_{\text{ini}}$  6. The initial floc growth at  $\text{pH}_{\text{ini}}$  6 during 1-3 minutes does not  
 7 seem to be delayed at all, but the resulting floc was fragile and was breaking up due to shear forces  
 8 created by mixing at 120 rpm.

9  
 10 Table 1: Overview charge interactions particle-Fe at pH 6, 7, 8, 9. Positive Fe or particle charge is represented by "+".  
 11 Negative Fe or particle charge is represented by "-".

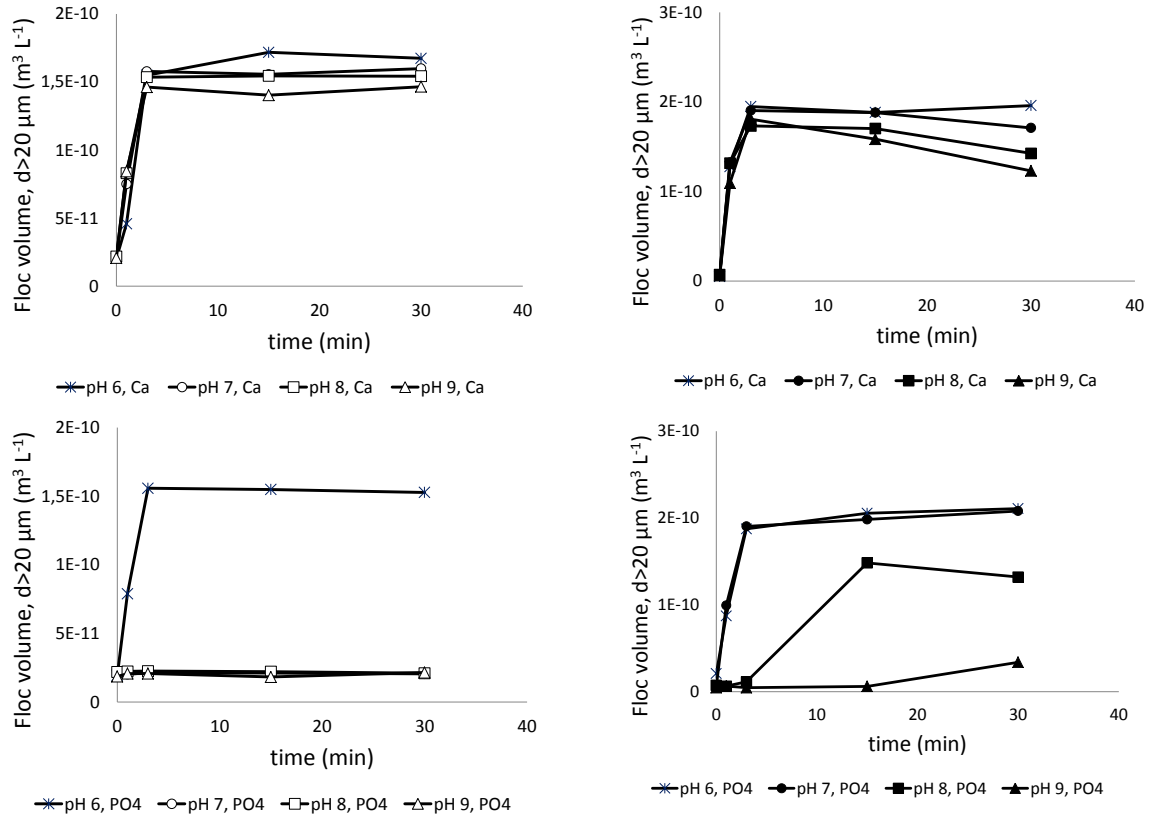
		$\text{SiO}_2$	ZnO
$\text{pH}_{\text{ini}}$ 6	Charge $\text{Fe}^{3+}$ species	+	+
	Particle charge	-	+
	Fe-Fe interaction	Repulsion Fe-Fe	Repulsion Fe-Fe
	Fe-particle interaction	Attraction Fe- $\text{SiO}_2$	Repulsion Fe-ZnO
$\text{pH}_{\text{ini}}$ 7 $\text{pH}_{\text{ini}}$ 8	Charge $\text{Fe}^{3+}$ species	+/-	+/-
	Particle charge	-	+
	Fe-Fe interaction	Attraction Fe-Fe	Attraction Fe-Fe
	Fe-particle interaction	Both attraction/repulsion	Both attraction/repulsion
$\text{pH}_{\text{ini}}$ 9	Charge $\text{Fe}^{3+}$ species	-	-
	Particle charge	-	+
	Fe-Fe interaction	Repulsion Fe-Fe	Repulsion Fe-Fe
	Fe-particle interaction	Repulsion Fe- $\text{SiO}_2$	Attraction Fe-ZnO

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1 **3.3 Addition of SiO<sub>2</sub>, ZnO - Influence of Ca<sup>2+</sup> and HPO<sub>4</sub><sup>2-</sup>**

2 The experimental results when Ca<sup>2+</sup> or HPO<sub>4</sub><sup>2-</sup> were dosed in the presence of ZnO and SiO<sub>2</sub> are shown  
 3 in Figure 3.

4  
 5



6 Figure 3: Influence of pH and HPO<sub>4</sub><sup>2-</sup> (lower graphs) or Ca<sup>2+</sup> (upper graphs) dosage on floc growth (d>20 μm) in the presence of  
 7 SiO<sub>2</sub> (left graphs) or ZnO (right graphs). Buffered demi water (150 mg/l HCO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup>), 40 mg/l Ca<sup>2+</sup>, 120 RPM, 2 mg/l Fe<sup>3+</sup>

8

9 Floc growth in the presence of Ca<sup>2+</sup> and SiO<sub>2</sub> was rapid at all initial pH values (Figure 3, left). The delay  
 10 which was observed at pH<sub>ini</sub> 9 in the absence of Ca<sup>2+</sup> (Figure 2) was neutralized, which may confirm  
 11 charge bridge formation of Ca<sup>2+</sup> between SiO<sub>2</sub> and Fe(OH)<sub>4</sub><sup>-</sup> and/or Fe(OH)<sub>4</sub><sup>-</sup> molecules in the water  
 12 phase. Alternatively or additionally, electrostatic repulsion can be lowered due to increased charge  
 13 shielding, since addition of CaCl<sub>2</sub> increases the ionic strength.

14

15 Addition of HPO<sub>4</sub><sup>2-</sup> completely stopped flocculation at pH<sub>ini</sub> 7-9, but did not affect flocculation at  
 16 pH<sub>ini</sub> 6. Based on expected charge interactions (Table 2), there are two factors that can explain why  
 17 flocculation was effective at pH<sub>ini</sub> 6 in the presence of HPO<sub>4</sub><sup>2-</sup>; (i) phosphate bridges two positively  
 18 charged Fe(OH)<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup> iron species in the water phase, and (ii) phosphate is mostly present in its  
 19 monovalent form, H<sub>2</sub>PO<sub>4</sub><sup>-</sup> at pH 6, rather than its divalent form, HPO<sub>4</sub><sup>2-</sup> at pH 7-9. Formation of  
 20 (strongly) negatively charged Fe-P species is less likely at pH<sub>ini</sub> 6.

21

22 For ZnO, Ca<sup>2+</sup> was expected to have no (charge-related) influence at pH<sub>ini</sub> 6 (table 2), and the floc  
 23 volume increase was indeed roughly similar to ZnO in the absence of Ca<sup>2+</sup>. At increasing pH values,  
 24 the floc volume after 30 minutes became gradually less (Figure 3, right). While Ca<sup>2+</sup> did not affect the  
 25 initial floc growth during 0-3 minutes, it did seem to affect the floc stability, creating flocs that were



1 more easily broken up by shear at higher pH values, as compared to when no  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  was present. This  
 2 difference was not observed for  $\text{SiO}_2$ , where the created flocs are stable. Since floc stability for ZnO in  
 3 the presence of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  decreases at higher pH values, and  $\text{Fe}(\text{OH})_4^-$  becomes increasingly more  
 4 dominant at higher pH values, it is possible that (charge) interaction between  $\text{Fe}(\text{OH})_4^-$  and  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$   
 5 reduces the interaction between  $\text{Fe}(\text{OH})_4^-$  and positively charged ZnO surface, leading to weaker floc  
 6 structures.

7  
 8 In contrast to  $\text{SiO}_2$ ,  $\text{HPO}_4^{2-}$  did not completely stop iron flocculation at  $\text{pH}_{\text{ini}} 7 - 9$ ; Fe removal after  
 9  $0.45 \mu\text{m}$  filtration was initially lower, but still  $>85\%$  Fe was removed after 3 minutes at these pH  
 10 values (S 8). This indicates that the presence of positively-charged ZnO surface can partly reverse the  
 11 detrimental influence of  $\text{HPO}_4^{2-}$  on iron flocculation. Similarly, addition of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  partly neutralized this  
 12 detrimental influence of  $\text{HPO}_4^{2-}$  as shown in S 9, which is in accordance with existing literature  
 13 (Voegelin *et al.* 2009; Kaegi *et al.* 2010; Senn *et al.* 2015).

14  
 15 Table 2: Overview charge interactions particle-Fe- $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  at pH 6, 9. Positive Fe or particle charge is represented by “+”.  
 16 Negative Fe or particle charge is represented by “-”.

		$\text{SiO}_2$	ZnO
$\text{pH}_{\text{ini}} 6$	Charge $\text{Fe}^{3+}$ species	+	+
	Particle charge	-	+
	Fe-particle interaction	Attraction Fe- $\text{SiO}_2$	Repulsion Fe-ZnO
	$\text{Ca}^{2+}$ competition and charge bridging	Competition with Fe (+) for $\text{SiO}_2$ surface	
	$\text{HPO}_4^{2-}$ competition and charge bridging	Fe-Fe bridging	Fe-Fe bridging Fe-ZnO bridging
$\text{pH}_{\text{ini}} 9$	Charge $\text{Fe}^{3+}$ species	-	-
	Particle charge	-	+
	Fe-particle interaction	Repulsion Fe- $\text{SiO}_2$	Attraction Fe-ZnO
	$\text{Ca}^{2+}$ competition and charge bridging	Fe-Fe bridging Fe- $\text{SiO}_2$ bridging	Fe-Fe bridging
	$\text{HPO}_4^{2-}$ competition and charge bridging		Competition with Fe (-) for ZnO surface

17  
 18 **4. Conclusions**

19 The aim of this research was to investigate the importance of charge interactions during flocculation  
 20 of  $\text{Fe}^{2+}$  and  $\text{Fe}^{3+}$  in the presence of particles, anions and cations at different pH values.

21  
 22 A significant delay in floc growth due to charge repulsion between negatively iron species was  
 23 observed at  $\text{pH}_{\text{ini}} 9$  when only  $\text{Fe}^{3+}$  was dosed. For positively charged species at  $\text{pH}_{\text{ini}} 6$ , a delay in floc  
 24 growth was observed as well, but to a lesser degree. These effects could be neutralized by either  
 25 dosing (positively charged)  $\text{ZnO}_{(s)}$  or  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  at  $\text{pH}_{\text{ini}} 9$ , or (negatively charged)  $\text{SiO}_{2,(s)}$  at  $\text{pH}_{\text{ini}} 6$ .  
 26 The addition of phosphate did not hinder floc growth at  $\text{pH}_{\text{ini}} 6$ . While phosphate completely  
 27 inhibited floc growth at  $\text{pH}_{\text{ini}} 7-9$  in the presence of negatively charged  $\text{SiO}_{2,(s)}$ , the presence of  
 28 positively charged  $\text{ZnO}_{(s)}$  partly neutralized the detrimental influence of phosphate on floc growth.  
 29 Similarly, dosing  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  partly neutralized the effect of phosphate.

30  
 31 **Acknowledgements**

32 The authors greatly appreciate the financial support by STW. This study was carried out within the  
 33 framework of STW project 13343.

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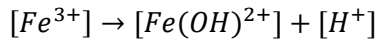
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1 Influence of particle addition on iron flocculation

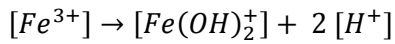
2 Supporting information

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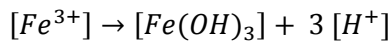
4 S 1: Hydrolysis constants for Fe<sup>3+</sup>



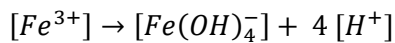
$$\beta_1 = \frac{[Fe(OH)^{2+}] \cdot [H^+]}{[Fe^{3+}]}$$



$$\beta_2 = \frac{[Fe(OH)_2^+] \cdot [H^+]^2}{[Fe^{3+}]}$$



$$\beta_3 = \frac{[Fe(OH)_3] \cdot [H^+]^3}{[Fe^{3+}]}$$



$$\beta_4 = \frac{[Fe(OH)_4^-] \cdot [H^+]^4}{[Fe^{3+}]}$$

5

Log β <sub>1</sub>	Log β <sub>2</sub>	Log β <sub>3</sub>	Log β <sub>4</sub>	Reference
-2.1	-6.3	-14.3	-22.3	Liu e.a. 1999
-2.19	-5.8	-14.3	-21.7	Stefansson 2007
-2.13	-6.1	-14.3	-22.2	Pham e.a. 2006
-2.18	-6.9	-13.0	-22.3	Millero, Pierrot 2007
-2.25	-6.0	-12.1	-22.1	Flynn 1984*

6 \*Hydrolysis constants obtained by curve-fitting the original data

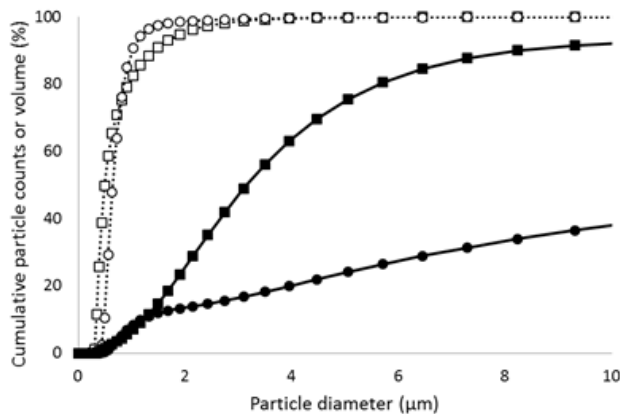
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9 S 2 : Cumulative volume distribution SiO<sub>2</sub>, ZnO

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---□--- ZnO (counts) ---○--- SiO2 (counts) —■— ZnO (volume) —●— SiO2 (Volume)

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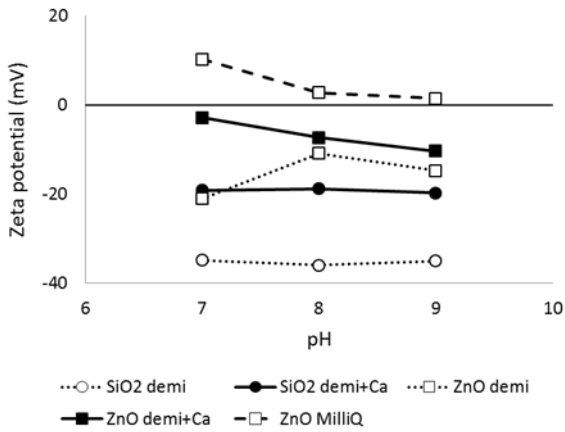
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1 S 3 : Zeta potential of SiO<sub>2</sub> and ZnO in buffered demi water with/without Ca<sup>2+</sup>

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7 S 4 : pH variation during jar test experiments

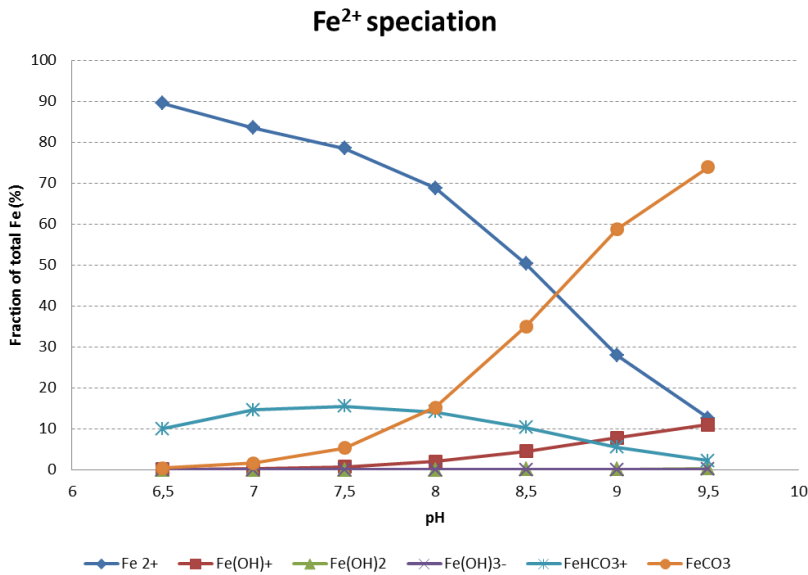
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Time (min)	Fe <sup>2+</sup>			Fe <sup>3+</sup>			
	pH	pH	pH	pH	pH	pH	pH
0	7,06	8,07	9,05	6,04	7,05	8,05	9,02
0,5	6,88	7,58	8,62	5,91	6,93	7,50	8,47
30	7,31	7,98	8,56	6,48	7,36	7,82	8,32

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11 S 5: Calculated Fe<sup>2+</sup> speciation (PHREEQCi, version 3.3.8-11728, wateq4f database)

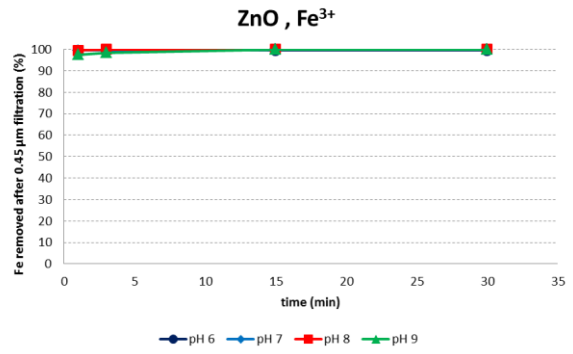
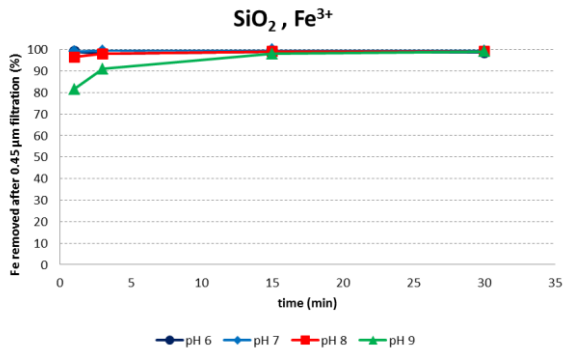


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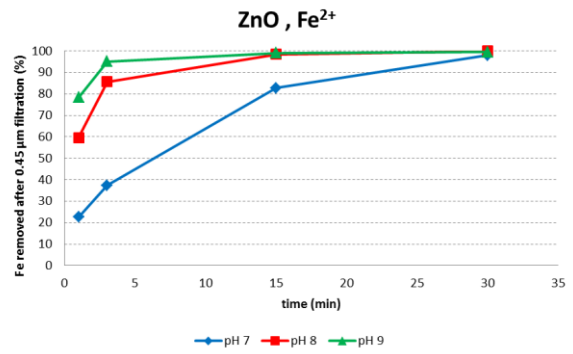
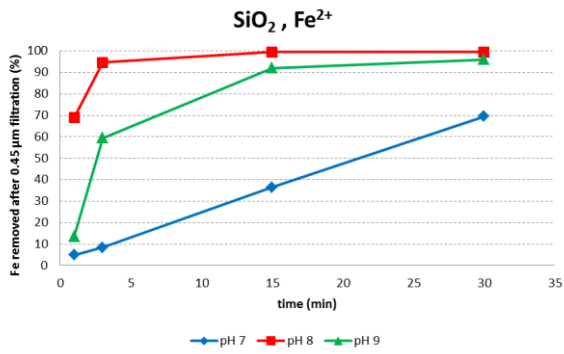
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Parameter	value	
pe	-3,4	(Eh: -0,2 V)
T	25 °C	
Fe	0,035 mmol/l	(2 mg/l)
C	2,46 mmol/l	(150 mg/l HCO <sub>3</sub> <sup>-</sup> )

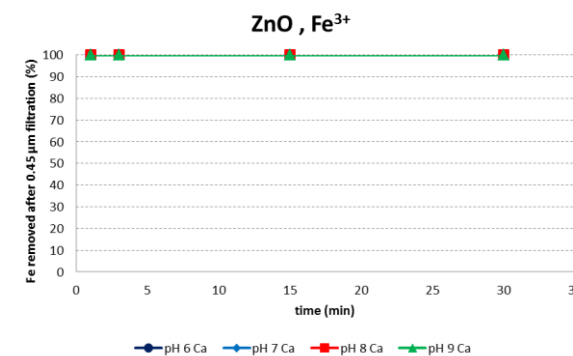
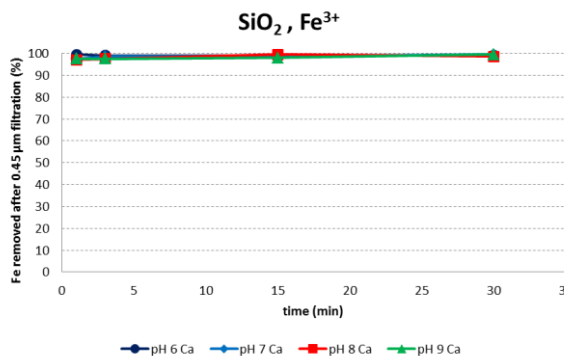
- 1 S 6: Fe<sup>3+</sup> removed after filtration over 0,45 µm PES filter.
- 2 SiO<sub>2</sub> or ZnO dosed, 2 mg/l Fe<sup>3+</sup>, pH 6/7/8/9, buffered demi water (150 mg/l HCO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup>), 120 rpm
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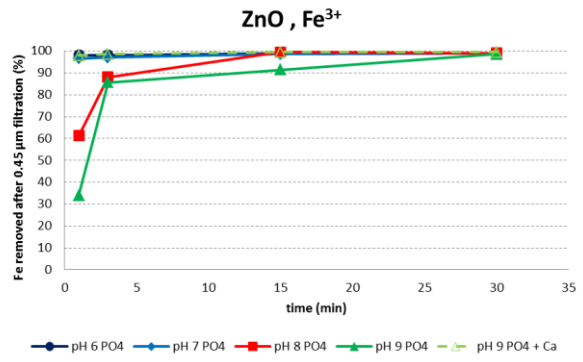
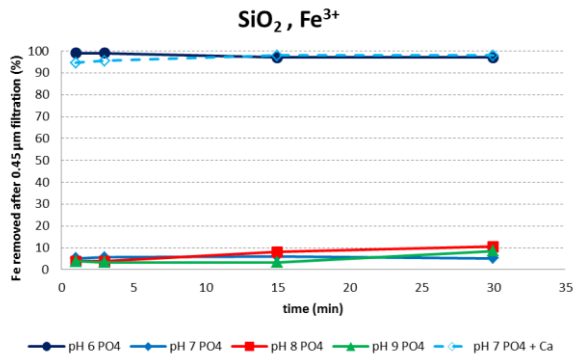
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- 6 S 7: Fe<sup>2+</sup> removed after filtration over 0,45 µm PES filter.
- 7 SiO<sub>2</sub> or ZnO dosed, 2 mg/l Fe<sup>2+</sup>, pH 7/8/9, buffered demi water (150 mg/l HCO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup>), 120 rpm
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- 12 S 8: Fe<sup>3+</sup> removed after filtration over 0,45 µm PES filter.
- 13 SiO<sub>2</sub> or ZnO dosed, 2 mg/l Fe<sup>3+</sup>, pH 6/7/8/9, buffered demi water (150 mg/l HCO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup>), 120 rpm
- 14 with 1 mg/l HPO<sub>4</sub><sup>2-</sup> and/or 40 mg/l Ca<sup>2+</sup>
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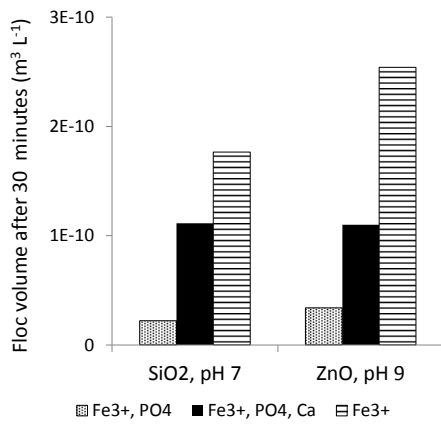


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S 9: influence of simultaneous dosage of HPO<sub>4</sub><sup>2-</sup> and Ca<sup>2+</sup>



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