

FraMCoS XII

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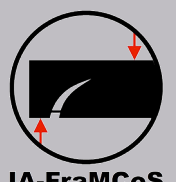


12th International Conference on Fracture Mechanics for Concrete and Concrete Structures

Dedicated to the Legacy of Prof. Kaspar Willam

E-Book | Full Papers

Editors: Bernhard Pichler, Christian Hellmich, Philipp Preinstorfer



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Editors:

Bernhard Pichler, Christian Hellmich, Philipp Preinstorfer

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Table of Contents

Plenary lectures

[PL1] Z. P. Bažant, H. Xu, A. T. Nguyen, Y. Zhao: Sprain energy and gap test consequences for damage localization and fracture mechanics	1
[PL2] G. Pijaudier-Cabot, J. Khoury, G. Cusatis: Lattice and continuum damage modeling for fracture of concrete	8
[PL3] L. De Lorenzis: Phase-field modeling, X-ray tomography and in-situ testing of fracture in concrete	20
[PL4] H. Ren, X. Zhuang, T. Rabczuk: Introduction of dual-horizon peridynamics and nonlocal operator method	21
[PL5] R. Nielsen, P. Newell: Fracture investigation in heterogeneous porous materials across scales	28
[PL6] S. Velayudhan, A. R. Srinivasa, P. Thamburaja, J. Reddy: Modeling of fracture in brittle and quasi-brittle materials using graph-based finite element approach	36

MS01: Next-generation reinforced concrete: brittle behaviour and fracture mechanics assessment

[MS01-1:1] A. Carpinteri: High-performance reinforced concrete structures: brittleness size-scale effects	46
[MS01-1:2] F. Accornero, D. Xie, B. Kumar, A. Carpinteri: Ductile-to-brittle transition in high-performance prestressed concrete beams: new standards for a safe and effective design	50
[MS01-1:3] F. Accornero, D. Xie, A. Carpinteri: Ductile-to-brittle transition in GFRP-bar reinforced concrete: bar-roughness effect on pseudo-plastic rotation capacity	55
[MS01-2:1] Á. De La Rosa Velasco, G. Ruiz López, J. Ruiz Carmona: Fracture mechanics-based model for the flexural behavior of steel fiber-reinforced concrete with longitudinal reinforcement	61
[MS01-2:2] N. Ueda, Y. Nakamichi: Influence of tensile softening properties on shear behavior of R/FRC beams	71
[MS01-2:3] B. Kumar, C. Wang, Y. Liu, S. Zhou, Q. Ou, J. Liu, Y. Yu, F. Accornero, A. Carpinteri: Scale effects investigation on the mechanical behaviour of steel-fibre and steel-bar (hybrid) reinforced concrete beams	77
[MS01-2:4] L. Qing, R. Mu, M. Li, M. Bi, X. Wang: Preparation and fracture properties of different types of aligned steel fiber reinforced concrete	82
[MS01-2:5] -. Himanshu, B. Pal, A. Ramaswamy: Load deformation response of concrete having alternate reinforcement forms	88
[MS01-2:6] N. Basumatary, K. Kirupakaran: Stiffness degradation and fracture behaviour of textile reinforced concrete under quasi-static cyclic loading	100
[MS01-3:1] Y. Yu, H. Chen, F. Accornero, A. Carpinteri: Implementation of the Cohesive Crack Model with the Finite Particle Method for failure analysis of reinforced concrete beams	106
[MS01-3:2] H. Chen, Y. Yu, C. Li, F. Accornero, A. Carpinteri: Numerical simulations of the transition from flexural cracking to shear to flexural crushing failures in pre-notched reinforced concrete beams	112
[MS01-3:3] Z. Jiang, Z. Zhu: Fractal patterns for failure modes of ultra-high performance concrete	119

MS02: Fatigue behavior of concrete and fiber reinforced concrete

[MS02-1:1] Á. Mena-Alonso, M. Á. Vicente, D. C. González, J. Mínguez: Impact of fiber distribution on fatigue life variability in high-performance fiber-reinforced concrete	123
[MS02-1:2] M. Á. Vicente, A. Mena-Alonso, D. C. González, J. Mínguez: A new approach to concrete fatigue S-N curves considering load application rate	131
[MS02-1:3] P. Miarka, J. D. Rios, S. Seitzl, V. Bílek, H. Cifuentés: Fatigue damage assessment of concrete using wide-range experimental data	139
[MS02-1:4] J. D. Ruiz-Martínez, J. D. Ríos, E. M. Pérez Soriano, H. Cifuentes, C. Leiva: Enhancing matrix-fiber bond and mechanical performance with high-performance plasticizers	144

[MS02-2:1] R. Diaz Flores, C. Hellmich, B. Pichler: Nonlinear creep of concrete: the driving role of viscoelasticity and cracking-induced damage	151
[MS02-2:2] J. H. Sørensen, H. Stang: Experimental investigation of the fatigue behavior of 3D printed steel fiber reinforced concrete	161
[MS02-2:3] Y. Wang, J. Vorel, C. Carloni, J. Belis, R. Wan-Wendner: Numerical study of bond behavior in single-lap shear test at meso-scale	167
[MS02-2:4] M. Aguilar, M. Vořechovský, A. Baktheer, R. Chudoba: Structural compressive fatigue simulated via lattice discrete and microplane models	176
[MS02-2:5] R. Chudoba, M. Vorechovsky, M. Aguilar, A. Baktheer: Modeling of temperature- and rate-dependent fatigue behavior of concrete capturing the thermo-viscoplastic effects on material degradation	188
[MS02-3:1] Z. Dong, J. Zhou, J. Zhao: Effect of stress level on high cycle fatigue behavior of high strength strain hardening cementitious composite (HS-SHCC) in compression	199
[MS02-3:2] M. Markert, H. Schiewe, H. Becks, R. Chudoba, M. Classen: Impact of concrete moisture on the fatigue resistance of high-performance concrete under various load types	209
[MS02-3:3] M. A. Dar, K. M. Pervaiz Fathima: Corrosion fatigue in reinforced concrete beams: accounting for the synergistic effects of corrosion and cyclic loading	218
[MS02-3:4] W. Kerkeni, A. Baktheer, M. Aguilar, H. Becks, M. Classen, R. Chudoba: On the correlation between the stable rate of deformation growth and the fatigue life in concrete	226

MS03: Monitoring of fracture in heterogeneous media

[MS03-1:1] G. Lacidogna, B. Chiaia, G. Piana, E. Silva Cezar, F. Vecchio: Multilevel detection of damage and repair in healable polymer-matrix composites	238
[MS03-1:2] T. Bouillard, A. Turatsinze, J.-P. Balayssac, A. Toumi, O. Helson: Monitoring of crack propagation in fiber reinforced concretes: comparison of non-destructive techniques	245
[MS03-1:3] N. Kanel, B. Baten, N. Garg: Role of aggregate packing in enhancing concrete fracture response: insights from in-situ high-speed imaging	257
[MS03-1:4] C. Kuang, N. Bin Jamal M, A. Michel: Advanced microstructural analysis of cement-based materials: integrating x-ray computed tomography and deep learning for enhanced crack growth understanding	268
[MS03-2:1] E. Korda, N. Ospitia, D. G. Aggells: Acoustic emission for monitoring of fracture in cementitious sandwich panels and fresh concrete	275
[MS03-2:2] M. Adil Ahmed, S. Dutta: Determination of fracture process zone in hybrid fiber reinforced ultra-high performance concrete using acoustic emission entropy	280
[MS03-2:3] R. Ramanathan, K. Kirupakaran: Fracture assessment of small and large-scale steel fibre reinforced concrete specimens using acoustic emission and digital image correlation techniques	291
[MS03-2:4] A. Mandal, J. M. Chandra Kishen: Fractal micro-cracking features in concrete under fatigue and monotonic loading	298
[MS03-2:5] K. Naukhez, R Vidya Sagar, J. M. Chandra Kishen: Precursors for detecting impending fracture in cementitious composites using natural time analysis of acoustic emission	309
[MS03-3:1] A. Doitrand, C. Sarr, S. Chataigner, L. Gaillet, N. Godin: Voids detection in bonded metal/composite or concrete/composite assemblies using acousto-ultrasonic method: contribution of simulation	319
[MS03-3:2] S. B. Ghodke, S. R. Chowdhury, B. Singh: Characterising flexural behaviour of coarse aggregate-based 3D printed concrete beams using acoustic emission technique	326
[MS03-3:3] R. L. Riyar, S. Bhowmik: Insights into the fracture mechanism of concrete with polypropylene fiber through acoustic emission technique	337
[MS03-4:1] A. R. Carlson, E. N. Landis: Advances in 3D image processing to evaluate damage and fracture of high-performance concrete	346
[MS03-4:2] G. Ewald, Y. Malecot: To measure cracks in reinforced concrete beam without prior detection, application to diffuse cracking evaluation	356
[MS03-4:3] R. Johannes, N. Godin, L. Gaillet: Improvement of the acousto-ultrasonic method using model anchor bases with controlled defects	364
[MS03-4:4] N. Gupta, R. Vidya Sagar, J. M. Chandra Kishen: Damage due to microcracking in cementitious composites using AE frequency characteristics	371

MS04: Phase field approach to fracture: from materials to structures

[MS04:1] M. Jirásek, M. Šmejkal, E. Korec: Direct calibration of phase-field models for cohesive fracture and transport	379
[MS04:2] A. Najmeddine, R. Moini: Role of the weak interface on toughening in layered brittle materials: a coupled phase field-cohesive zone model approach to fracture	385
[MS04:3] V. Prakash, A. K. Behera, M. M. Rahaman, D. Roy: A phase field damage model for micropolar continuum undergoing finite rotation: application to concrete	397
[MS04:4] M. D. Barahona, C. Barris, L. Carreras: Finite Element modelling of cracking behaviour of reinforced concrete tensile members using a combined phase field and cohesive zone modelling approach	403
[MS04:5] A. Surendran, J. M. Chandra Kishen: Modeling toughening mechanisms in concrete using multiscale phase field approach	415

MS05: Application of advanced computational models to challenging engineering problems

[MS05-1:1] S. Abrari Vajari, M. Neuner, C. Linder: An elastoplastic phase field model for fracture in concrete based on a generalized continuum formulation	422
[MS05-1:2] O. A. Oropeza Navarro, J. Platen, A. Chihadeh, M. Kaliske: Modeling concrete at high-loading rates: insights from the Material Point Method	432
[MS05-1:3] F. Suárez, J. C. Gálvez: On the numerical modelling of punching shear in flat reinforced concrete slabs by means of the finite element method	438
[MS05-2:1] D. Eum, S.-Y. Kim, T.-S. Han: Fluid-solid coupled crack propagation simulation of concrete microstructure	448
[MS05-2:2] P. Hofer, L. Wimmer, M. Neuner, R. Hofmann, G. Hofstetter: Numerical simulation of flexible rockfall barrier post foundations subjected to impact	453
[MS05-2:3] R. Pina-Torres, D. Zhao, M. Kaliske: Accelerating fatigue induced crack propagation modeling in concrete using a time homogenization approach	464
[MS05-2:4] J. Barros, W. Nicácio, A. Ventura-Gouveia, F. P. Figueiredo: Numerical simulation of BubbleDec type reinforced concrete slabs subjected to punching loading conditions	471
[MS05-2:5] T. Shao, J. Luo, K. Nagai: Application of 3D-RBSM integrated with machine learning to estimate RC corrosion distribution from surface cracks	483
[MS05-2:6] M. Gupta, S. Bhowmik: Effect of notch size and orientation on the fracture of concrete interface: an MD simulation study	492
[MS05-3:1] L. Parente, D. Addessi, B. Izzuddin, E. Spacone: Objectivity issues in numerical modeling of cracking in RC beams based on enhanced section kinematics	501
[MS05-3:2] M. Le Noir de Carlan, L. Jason, L. Davenne: Deterministic behavior of an anchoring plate and sensitivity study	508
[MS05-3:3] J. Holder, H. Lakhani, J. Hofmann: Influence of the compressive fracture energy on the predicted breakout failure of fasteners	516
[MS05-3:4] J. Mašek, P. Miarka: Mesoscale FEM model of concrete	524

MS06: Small scale testing of mechanical and time-dependent behavior of cementitious materials

[MS06-1:1] J. Nemecek, J. Nemeckova, J. Nemecek: Linearity and assessment of micro-scale creep in C-S-H via nanoindentation	533
[MS06-1:2] M. Li, Y.-C. Wu, X. Wang: Fracture behavior of additively manufactured cementitious materials	541
[MS06-1:3] Z. Meng, B. Šavija: Characterizing microstructural damage in cementitious composites reinforced with 3D-printed auxetic lattices using X-ray computed tomography	547
[MS06-1:4] F. Teng, J. Ye, J. Yu, Y. Weng: Multi-material printing to simultaneously enhance interlayer and flexural performance in 3D concrete printing	553
[MS06-2:1] A. Alhede, J. Dijkstra, K. Lundgren: X-ray and neutron imaging for steel corrosion in concrete: addressing challenges and revealing opportunities	561

[MS06-2:2] M. Liang, Y. Gan, E. Schlangen, B. Šavija: Use of convolutional neural networks for predicting the short-term creep modulus of cement paste	570
[MS06-2:3] S. Qin, N. Liu, J. Qiu: Effect of fiber alignment on the mechanical and electrical properties of carbon fiber reinforced cementitious composites	578
[MS06-2:4] J. Yao, W. Dong, W. Yuan: Monitoring crack propagation at the rock-concrete interface under different strain rates using digital image correlation technology	586
[MS06-3:1] F. Li, F. Kleiner, C. Rößler, L. Göbel, E. Linß: Micromechanical characterization of the interfacial transition zone in recycled brick concrete by means of combined nanoindentation and SEM	592
[MS06-3:2] H. Q. Yuan, Z. Ge, H. Z. Zhang: A method for measuring inter-particle Hamaker constants in mineral materials using atomic force microscopy	600
[MS06-3:3] C. Hellmich, P. Dohnalik, L. Zelaya-Lainez, B. Pichler, G. Richard: Microstructure-property relations in the mechanics of dental cement paste of type “Biodentine”	606

MS07: Environmentally induced microstructural evolution and mechanical deterioration/enhancement of concrete

[MS07-1:1] D. Kumar, G. Lei, E.-H. Yang: Self-healing in reactive magnesia cement-based composites under different water-to-binder ratios	611
[MS07-1:2] R. N. R. Daguio, J. Qiu: Factors affecting the interfacial healing between a fiber and cement	620
[MS07-1:3] S. He, M. Lukovic, E. Schlangen: Self-healing strain-hardening concrete cover	628
[MS07-1:4] T. Hagiwara, T. Suzuki: Non-destructive detection of hollow-particle-mixed filler put into concrete cracks using infrared thermography and heat flux simulation	636
[MS07-1:5] Y. Ju, Y. Huang, T. Liu, Y. Li: Enhancing carbonation curing of Wollastonite-Portland cementitious blends through 3D-printed vascular networks	647
[MS07-2:1] S. Liu, K. Zhao, S. Zhang, C.-S. Poon: Enhancement of cement mortar hydration by carbonation activator induced by organic additives	657
[MS07-2:2] P. R. Quiatchon, J. Qiu: Exploring carbonation-induced volume changes and their relationship to microstructure development in reactive magnesia cement	663
[MS07-2:3] X. Shi, M. Wu: Cement degradation in CO ₂ -saturated water and the impact of liquid to solid ratio: an experimental and thermodynamic modelling study	670
[MS07-2:4] E. W. Benson, R. Ranade, P. Okumus, N. Elhami-Khorasani, O. Francis, R. Paci-Green: Saltwater flooding-induced corrosion and lateral strength of reinforced concrete structures	680
[MS07-2:5] A. Viana Neves, V. Nogueira Lima, F. de Andrade Silva: Effects of brine and CO ₂ exposure on the mechanical and chemical properties of class G cement in oil well applications	691
[MS07-3:1] B. Wu, W. Tianyu, J. Qiu: Comparison of bond strength to aggregate between reactive magnesia cement (RMC) and portland cement (PC)	703
[MS07-3:2] C. Paglia, A. Moscatelli, C. D'Erme: The microstructural response of recycled concrete after high temperature exposition and rapid cooling	712
[MS07-3:3] R. Wu, S. Zhang, C. S. Poon: Amine-modified biochar saturated with CO ₂ as internal carbonation curing activator for enhancing mechanical property of cement paste	718

MS08: Advances in forward and inverse damage simulation of complex materials and structures

[MS08-1:1] K. Daadouch, V. Gudžulić, G. Meschke: A mesh adaptation algorithm to reduce mesh bias in 2D and 3D crack propagation analysis using cohesive zone models	723
[MS08-1:2] G. Jaiswal, R. Sharma: Greyscale marker for the modeling of the fracture process of cement mortar considering heterogeneity of the microstructure	734
[MS08-1:3] E. Gultekin, K. Agathos: Accelerated fracture simulations for the identification of fracture parameters	739
[MS08-1:4] G. Pissas, S. P. Triantafyllou: Phase field fracture in fibre reinforced composites using embedded and virtual elements	751
[MS08-2:1] J. Zhang, P. Liu, H. Fan, Z. Li: Multi-scale damage analysis for concrete using the Scaled Boundary Finite Element Method with High-Performance-Computing	763
[MS08-2:2] M. Delage, D. Scantamburlo, G. Jacot-Descombes, S. Commend: Wood constitutive law implementation and parameter calibration using Bayesian inversion for finite-element modelling	768

[MS08-2:3] G. Litainas, S. Triantafyllou, A. Egger, E. Chatzi: Non-intrusive stochastic SBFEM for the uncertainty quantification of Stress Intensity Factors	775
[MS08-2:4] I. Chrysikou, S. Triantafyllou: Phase field fracture over quadrees using the Virtual Element Method	787

MS09: Concrete and concrete structures in fire

[MS09-1:1] K. Mróz, M. Olbrycht-Kmak, I. Hager: Carbonate aggregate in concrete exposed to high temperatures	798
[MS09-1:2] M. Ozawa, T. Koyama, Y. Kuwabara, R. Okura, T. Fukui: Fire spalling behaviour of heat-resistant repair materials under ring restrained condition	803
[MS09-1:3] H. Lakhani, J. Hofmann: On the suitability of Eurocode 2 stress-strain model with implicit transient state strain for predicting fracture at elevated temperature	811
[MS09-1:4] P. Mazón, A. Enfedaque, A. Picazo, M. G. Alberti, J. C. Galvez: Analysis of temperature-induced degradation in the fracture behavior of polyolefin fiber-reinforced self-compacting concrete	818
[MS09-1:5] M. Rottmann, C. Kandekar, W. E. Weber: An approach for a novel multiscale partitioned framework for predicting collapse of buildings under fire loads	827
[MS09-2:1] S. Dal Pont, G. Sciumé, M. H. Moreira: From curing to fire accident: a novel, comprehensive model for concrete's fire resistance	835
[MS09-2:2] J. Mounier, G. Sciumé, J.-C. Mindeguia: Constitution of an extensive experimental database for the challenge of spalling modelling	846
[MS09-2:3] A. Muhammed, H. Carre, C. La Borderie, P. Pimienta: Influence of polypropylene fibers on thermal-induced permeability changes in concrete	857
[MS09-2:4] T. Koyama, M. Ozawa, M. Kanematsu: Analysis of dehydration in high-performance concrete at high temperature using neutron radiography	864
[MS09-2:5] R. Yarmohammadian, R. Felicetti: From crack initiation to instability at high temperature: a two-stage mechanism for fire-induced spalling in concrete	872

MS10: Discrete modeling of mechanical and coupled processes in quasi-brittle materials

[MS10-1:1] J. Elias, G. Cusatis: Asymptotic homogenization of discrete models with rotational degrees of freedom	878
[MS10-1:2] M. Krzaczek, M. Nitka, J. Tejchman: Effects of aggregate fragmentation, free water and strain rate on fracture in compressive concrete with a coupled DEM-CFD approach	884
[MS10-1:3] V. Gudžulić, G. Meschke: Computational analysis of size effect and failure modes in reinforced concrete beams	895
[MS10-1:4] J. Raisinger, Q. Zhang, J. E. Bolander, J. Eliáš: Exploring induced heterogeneity in elastic discrete mechanical models	907
[MS10-1:5] G. Cusatis, H. Yin, M. Troemner, W. Li, E. Lale, L. Yang, L. Shen, M. Alnaggar, G. Di Luzio: Two-way coupled multiphysics simulation of lattice discrete particle model	914
[MS10-2:1] Z. P. Bažant, H. T. Nguyen, Y. Zhao: Steady-state subcritical fracture growth of parallel natural cracks in shale governed by osmotic gradient and fluid diffusion	925
[MS10-2:2] G. Di Luzio, L. Feng, G. Cusatis, K. Yu, E. Lale, X. Chen: Hydro-thermal-mechanical coupling properties and mesoscale simulation of concrete-rock composites	931
[MS10-2:3] M. Krzaczek, J. Tejchman: A novel DEM-based coupled 3D thermo-hydro-mechanical mesoscopic model for cracked porous materials	941
[MS10-2:4] E. Lale, K. Yu, M. Troemner, M. Pathirage, G. Pijaudier-Cabot, J. Khoury, I. Koutromanos, J. Elias, M. Stredulova, T. Xue, M. Alnaggar, G. Di Luzio, G. Cusatis: Comparison of Lattice Discrete Particle Model (LDPM) implementations: lessons learned and future work	953
[MS10-2:5] O. Najjar, T. Heitz, C. Oliver-Leblond, J.-L. Tailhan, G. Rastiello, F. Ragueneau: A step toward flow simulation through cracks in beam-particle models	962
[MS10-2:6] Q. Zhang, A. Fascetti, J. E. Bolander: Computationally efficient, discrete mechanical models of grid-reinforced cement-based composites	969
[MS10-3:1] L. Shen, Q. Ren, G. Di Luzio, G. Cusatis: Mesoscale mechanical discrete model for cementitious composites with microfibers	977
[MS10-3:2] B. Ayhan, E. M. Irizarry, E. Lale, K. Yu, M. Troemner, G. Cusatis: Numerical simulation of 3D printed ultra high-performance concrete using the lattice discrete particle model	984
[MS10-3:3] J. Khoury, G. Pijaudier-Cabot, G. Cusatis: Calibrating a damage model from lattice discrete results	992

[MS10-3:4] R. J. M. Bol, Y. Xu, M. Lukovic, B. Šavija: Does printing direction influence the bond between 3D printed polymeric reinforcement and cementitious matrix?	1003
--	------

MS11: Coupling transport and cracking in concrete under harsh environments

[MS11:1] V. Vishwakarma, S. Ray: Behaviour of reinforced cement concrete under coupled corrosion fatigue	1015
[MS11:2] S. Y. Alam, A. Soive, A. Loukili: Coupled reactive transport and poromechanics modelling of external sulfate attack in cementitious materials	1023
[MS11:3] L. Braysh, C. Pelissou, F. Perales, A. Socié: Coupled transport-chemo-mechanical simulation of cement/aggregate samples affected by DEF at the aggregate scale. Effects of pre-cracked interface and comparison with experimental data	1032
[MS11:4] M. Choinska Colombel, D. Jozwiak-Niedzwiedzka, W. Kubissa: Gas transport behaviors of concrete designed for shielding nuclear structures	1039
[MS11:5] K. Iwama, K. Maekawa: Poromechanical approach for prediction of fire-induced fracture and moisture transport of structural concrete	1047
[MS11:6] G. Wildermann, A. Schultheiß, R. A. Patel, F. Dehn: Probabilistic service life prediction of chloride induced corrosion under sustained mechanical loading using multiphysical modeling	1058

MS13: Advances in the design and assessment of materials and structures for performance, safety, durability, and sustainability

[MS13-1:1] A. DeKeyser, E. Verstrynge, R. Wan-Wendner, W. Botte, R. Caspee: Computational and analytical modelling of carbonation-induced spalling of the concrete cover	1070
[MS13-1:2] L. Li, E. Chen: Effects of corrosion on tension stiffening and cracking behaviour of reinforced Engineered Cementitious Composite and concrete	1080
[MS13-1:3] H. Al Elani, D. Bouhjiti, L. Jason, B. Richard: Comprehensive uncertainty quantification of damage-based modeling of cracking in reinforced concrete structures	1091
[MS13-1:4] M. Słowik, D. Novák, D. Lehký, I. Skrzypczak: Model uncertainties of concrete cracking resistance models based on probabilistic simulations	1103
[MS13-1:5] A. Strauss, B. Täubling-Fruleux, M. Soliman, M. Tamimi, X. Ruan, L. Zhu, T. Zimmermann: Quality control & numerical nonlinear material modelling for the load-bearing capacity of slender reinforced concrete columns - comparison of safety formats	1111
[MS13-2:1] M. Pierre, S. Ghabezloo, P. Dangla, R. Mesnil, M. Vandamme, J.-F. Caron: Multiphysics modelling for 3D concrete printing: from printability to hardened properties	1123
[MS13-2:2] M. Kunieda, S. To, T. Kato, A. Miyajima: Failure behavior of RC beams by means of 3D concrete printing	1132
[MS13-2:3] M. Yang, W. Dong, W. Yuan, B. Zhang: On FPZ for mixed mode I-II fracture in concrete after sustained loading using DIC technique	1138
[MS13-2:4] M H Prashanth, J. M. Chandra Kishen: Damage evolution and fracture behavior of under-reinforced concrete beams using acoustic emission technique	1148
[MS13-3:1] S. Schmid, M. Königsberger, B. Pichler: Early-age strength development of cement pastes made of CEM I, limestone, and calcined clay: the governing role of OPC hydration	1160
[MS13-3:2] A. Strauss, B. Täubling-Fruleux, D. Novák, L. Novák, D. Lehky: Non-linear digital twin-based performance and service life assessment	1167
[MS13-3:3] D. Novák, L. Novák, D. Lehky, A. Strauss, B. Taubling-Fruleux: Reliability assessment of historical reinforced concrete bridge piers based on nonlinear fracture mechanics modelling and safety formats	1176
[MS13-3:4] T. Qu, B. Zeng, C. Wu, L. Huang, J. Wu: Crack patterns and bond effects in the progressive collapse of local prestressed concrete substructures	1185

MS15: Engineered/Strain-Hardening Cementitious Composites (ECC/SHCC)

[MS15-1:1] B. Song, N. Ueda: Experimental study on crack distribution of RC members with reinforcing bars coated with fiber reinforced cementitious composites	1193
[MS15-1:2] E. Gurbuz, S. Erdem: Mechanical behaviour and 3D fracture morphology of sustainable engineered cementitious composites modified with boron nitride nanoparticles	1203

[MS15-1:3] F. R. de Souza, J. J. B. d. C. Nunes, V. N. Lima, F. d. A. Silva: On the impact performance and crack behavior of steel-fiber reinforced concrete beams with SHCC and UHPC strengthening layers	1211
[MS15-1:4] Y. He, S. He, E. Schlangen: Testing and modelling of fibre-matrix interface by microcube splitting	1222
[MS15-2:1] C. Wu, Y. Su, M. Xu, C. Jin: Experimental study on the contribution of fibers on the punching shear capacity of plain ECC slabs	1227
[MS15-2:2] J. Yu, F. Hu: Self-healing properties of seawater sea-sand strain-hardening cementitious composites (SHCC)	1235
[MS15-2:3] K. Wang, J. Zhou, J. Zhao: Mechanical properties of low-carbon Engineered Cementitious Composites with limestone and calcined clay under uniaxial cyclic compression	1242

MS17: Durability mechanics of concrete at the various scales of observation. A tribute to the memory of Prof. K. Willam

[MS17-1:1] E. Korec, M. Jirásek, H. S. Wong, E. Martínez-Pañeda: The effect of corrosion rate on corrosion-induced cracking in reinforced concrete	1254
[MS17-1:2] D. Froio, R. Ferrari, E. Rizzi: Constitutive response and consistency of Lee-Fenves Concrete Damage-Plasticity model under non-proportional loadings	1263
[MS17-1:3] J. Cervenka, M. Ahmad, J. Rymes, L. Jendele: Efficient macro-scale models for reinforcement corrosion modeling in reinforced concrete structures	1274
[MS17-1:4] I. Rhee: Benchmark analysis of fracture simulation for steel fiber reinforced concrete slab subjected to punching shear	1282
[MS17-2:1] I. Aldellaa, P. Grassl: Effect of water-cement ratio and current density on accelerated corrosion-induced cracking	1287
[MS17-2:2] L. Jason: Multiscale simulation of the thermomechanical behavior of containment buildings of nuclear power plants	1297
[MS17-2:3] H. E. Joo, X. Ji, Y. Takahashi: Effect of crack patterns induced by different accelerated temperature on mechanical behavior of ASR-damaged concrete	1304
[MS17-2:4] C. Biscaro, C. M. López, G. Xotta, D. Garolera, I. Carol: Meso-level HPC analysis of concrete specimens subject to external sulfate attack, and computational aspects	1311
[MS17-2:5] Y. Takahashi, H. E. Joo, X. Ji: Residual mechanical performance of concrete under various expansion deterioration states based on crack morphology and substance	1322

MS18: Recent advances in fracture modeling of concretes and structures

[MS18-1:1] J.-L. Le, J. Vievering: A mechanism-based random field projection for stochastic analysis of concrete structures and other quasibrittle structures	1334
[MS18-1:2] U. M M A. Sai Gopal, V. Prakash, D. Roy, A. Ramaswamy: A novel continuum damage model for quasi-brittle materials: application to concrete	1341
[MS18-1:3] A. Dummer, M. Neuner, G. Hofstetter: Comparison of conventional and localizing gradient enhancements for concrete damage-plasticity models	1348
[MS18-1:4] G. Appa Rao, B. Ashiq Hussain: Efficiency of corner reinforcement detailing near small openings in RC deep beams	1357
[MS18-1:5] J. Kovar, J. Cervenka, D. Lehky, D. Novak, V. Cervenka: FE modelling of crack width in reinforced concrete beams supported by artificial neural network surrogate models	1365
[MS18-2:1] A. Attias, F.-J. Ulm: Fluctuation-based damage mechanics: a statistical approach to fracture in concrete	1373
[MS18-2:2] M. Szczecina, A. Winnicki: Numerical recreation of gap test	1383
[MS18-2:3] M. Petrangeli, D. Addessi, N. Kostense, J. Rots: Interface modelling in nonlinear finite element analysis of prestressed girder with a continuous cast-in-situ deck slab	1388
[MS18-2:4] G. Jaiswal, R. Sharma: Modeling of the fracture propagation in heterogeneous material based on reconstructed microstructure	1397
[MS18-2:5] B. Kondys, J. Bobiński: Novel 2.5D layered model to simulate discrete crack growth in concrete specimens	1403
[MS18-3:1] I. Marzec, J. Bobiński: Performance of novel 3D approach with explicit definition of fibres-concrete interaction in predicting the FRC/FRHPC response	1411

[MS18-3:2] P. Pirmoradi, A. S. J. Suiker, P. Poorsolhjouy: Multi-scale modeling of fiber-reinforced concrete structures	1420
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TT-B: Experimental methods

[TT-B:1] Y. R., K. Anand, J. M. Chandra Kishen: Direct tension test on large concrete specimen: monotonic versus fatigue loading	1432
[TT-B:2] M. Weiß, I. Curoşu: Transformation of singular joint deformations into multiple cracks in carbon reinforced concrete pavements	1442
[TT-B:3] K. Shibano, M. Mukai, T. Suzuki: Influence of crack orientation on propagation behavior of concrete by acoustic emission in compression test	1451
[TT-B:4] Z. Abbas, K. M. Pervaiz Fathima: A fracture failure criterion for concrete-concrete interface under mixed mode loading condition	1459

TT-C: Computational modeling

[TT-C1:1] N. W. Kostense, Y. Yang, M. A. Hendriks, J. G. Rots: Smeared cracking and discrete crack dilatancy applied to tension-shear model problems	1465
[TT-C1:2] Y. Li, X. Ruan, H. A. Mang, B. L. Pichler: Comparative analysis of 2D and 3D mesoscopic simulations of an accelerated rebar corrosion test	1479
[TT-C1:3] J. Planas, B. Sanz, J. M Sancho: Numerical analysis of size-effect in UHPFRC beams in pure bending with focus on transition from single to multiple cracking	1491
[TT-C1:4] M. Rabotovao, T. Miki: Fracture mechanism and interface behavior of prestressed segmental UFC beams with a circular cross section under bending	1503
[TT-C1:5] Y. Sun, Y. Jia, J.-P. Carlier, T. Rougelot: Impact of aggregate shape on drying shrinkage cracking in concrete: a three-dimensional hydro-mechanical peridynamic model	1514
[TT-C2:1] B. Sanz, J. Planas, J. M. Sancho: Numerical study of Brazilian tests of UHPFRC by using elements with embedded cohesive crack and cohesive joint elements	1521
[TT-C2:2] S. Dhakal, J. Hartikainen, R. Kouhia, T. Saksala, J. Vilppo, K. Calonijs, A. Fedoroff, K. Kolari: Tensorial continuum damage model for concrete	1531
[TT-C2:3] M. Gimenès, A. F. Villa Dos Santos, E. A. Rodrigues, T. N. Bittencourt, L. A. G. Bitencourt Jr., O. L. Manzoli: Advancements in modeling compressive fracture in concrete using condensed high aspect ratio interface elements	1539
[TT-C2:4] Y. H. Gedik, N. D. Tung: Numerical investigation of the shear behavior of reinforced concrete beams with low shear reinforcement under different boundary and loading conditions	1548
[TT-C2:5] M. I. Mohnavi, G A. Rao: Blast loading effect of explosive weight distribution on RC columns	1558

TT-E: Novel cementitious and/or other quasi-brittle materials

[TT-E:1] H. J. Bezemer, S. Mustafa, M. Lukovic: Time-dependent tensile behavior of slag-based alkali activated concrete	1569
[TT-E:2] K. S. Kompella, M. Levi, L. Ferrara: Identifying interlayer fracture properties in 3D printed concrete specimens via multidirectional flexural tests	1579
[TT-E:3] A. Z. Gierth, M. Elies, S. Helmich, N. Noel, T. Mielke, D. C. Lupascu: Influence of additives on the fracture mechanical properties of reactivated cement paste	1587
[TT-E:4] S. S. Thakur, K. M. Pervaiz Fathima: Statistical modeling of fatigue crack growth in geopolymer concrete beams	1594

TT-F: Structural concrete applications

[TT-F:1] K. Watanabe, R. Suzuki, Y. Nakata: Evaluation of column-beam joints and optimization of reinforcing bars of RC viaducts by FEM	1602
[TT-F:2] A Rajprabhu, G Appa Rao: Strut efficiency on shear strength, and ductility of RC deep beams with large rectangular openings in shear span	1610
[TT-F:3] T. Suzuki, K. Shibano, T. Hagiwara, N. Alver: Non-destructive detection of surface damage in hollow gravity type concrete dam by using passive infrared thermography data with deep learning method	1618
[TT-F:4] E. Mohamed, T. Miki: Fracture propagation of concrete and ultra-high-performance concrete (UHPC) interface affected by repaired layer thickness	1627

TT-G: Fatigue & dynamic loading

[TT-G:1] D. A. Cendón, F. Gálvez, G. Ruiz, X. Zhang: Influence of fiber reinforcement on the blast resistance and fracture behavior of high-strength concrete slabs	1637
[TT-G:2] A. Měrková, P. Kheml, P. Hála, R. Sovják, L. Leicht, P. Máca, B. Beckmann: Influence of protective layers on the resistance of concrete structures under blast and impact loading	1643
[TT-G:3] V. W. Masih, G. Ruiz López, H. Cifuentes, C. Leiva: Tensile fatigue endurance in UHPC reinforced with steel and carbon fibers using advanced monitoring techniques	1655
[TT-G:4] S. Shirin K., S. A., S. K., K. M Simon, B. Raj J: A linearized toughness model for fiber reinforced concrete using multiscale approach	1661
[TT-G:5] V. Chander Sharma, K. Pervaiz Fathima: Prediction of fatigue crack growth in rock-concrete interface	1668

ON THE NUMERICAL MODELLING OF PUNCHING SHEAR IN FLAT REINFORCED CONCRETE SLABS BY MEANS OF THE FINITE ELEMENT METHOD

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Abstract. The slab-column connection is a critical point in the design of a structure, mainly buildings, since a high concentration of shear stresses can lead to punching, which is a localised failure mode that can take place in a brittle manner and with no previous warning. Currently, structural standards provide recommendations and general expressions to help design these structural connections, where the Critical Shear Crack Theory (CSCT), proposed by Muttoni, stands out. This approach considers the shear strength as dependent on the crack width developing in the shear-critical region and uses a control perimeter (b_0) that delimits the cracking region. Many efforts have been devoted to understanding the failure mechanisms involved in punching and to propose tools, such as CSCT, for a safe and efficient design; nevertheless, there is still no consensus on the mechanics governing this phenomenon. The present contribution uses the finite element method and takes advantage of material models based on continuum damage mechanics to reproduce punching failure in reinforced concrete slabs. This approach is not new and has been employed in the past, but with limitations and some issues still not completely solved. The aim of this work is to analyse different possible modelling techniques in order to obtain a numerical model that reproduces this phenomenon with accuracy. A major advantage of using a finite element model in this case is that the main fracture mechanisms involved in the failure process, which are varied and complex, can be identified. Bidimensional and tridimensional models are discussed, and the possibility of taking into account the slip between concrete and the reinforcement bars, which turns out to be a key mechanism in the evolution of punching failure, is analysed.

1 INTRODUCTION

The slab-column connection in reinforced concrete structures is a critical point in structural design, especially in buildings, due to the high concentration of shear stresses that can lead to punching failure. This type of failure, characterized as a localized and brittle mecha-

nism, occurs without prior warning and poses a considerable risk of partial structural collapse. The complexity of this phenomenon has driven various studies aimed at understanding and predicting the conditions under which punching failure occurs. From the experimental point of view the seminal work by Kinnunen and Nyman-

der can be highlighted [1]. In their experimental campaign, the fracture behaviour of slab-column connections with different reinforcement strategies was analysed, which helped to understand the role of the radial or concentric reinforcements, as well as to identify some failure mechanisms in the punching process. The work by Kinnunen and Nylander was later extended by Hallgren [2], where the punching problem using high strength concrete was analysed.

Together with the experimental work, some tools have been proposed to cope with the analysis and design of these structural connections. Among the most relevant approaches in this field is the Critical Shear Crack Theory (CSCT) proposed by Muttoni [3], which suggests that the shear capacity depends on the width of cracks developing in the shear-critical region. This theory uses a control perimeter (b_0) that defines the region where cracks are expected to develop, providing a valuable reference framework for slab-column connection design. Some other authors have approached punching failure by using analytical expressions [3–5], which may be convenient to provide structural engineers with easy to use tools that have been adopted by the standards [6, 7].

Despite theoretical and experimental advancements, there is still no consensus on the exact mechanisms governing punching. Some interesting works have used the finite element method to reproduce punching failure. For example, the works by Menétrey [8, 9] and Hallgren [2, 10] have contributed to understanding the phenomenon, though with limitations and aspects still unresolved.

In this context, the present work uses the finite element method (FEM) and material models based on continuum damage mechanics to reproduce punching failure in reinforced concrete slabs. Although this approach has been explored previously [9–11], challenges in its implementation persist, particularly regarding the modelling of the interaction between concrete and reinforcement bars, a key mechanism in the evolution of punching failure. This con-

tribution analyses and compares different modelling techniques to develop a numerical model that accurately reproduces this phenomenon, thus facilitating the identification of the primary fracture mechanisms involved in the failure process.

2 EXPERIMENTAL BENCHMARK

2.1 Results by Kinnunen and Nylander

The experimental work carried out in [1] analyses punching failures using circular slabs with axial symmetry and includes a wide variety of specimens: with different column diameters, reinforcement ratios and reinforcement strategies (radial reinforcement, concentric reinforcement and orthogonal reinforcement). In this work the results have been obtained using specimen IA15a as reference. This slab has a diameter of 1840 mm, is supported on a 150mm diameter column; both, the column height and the slab thickness are equal to 150 mm. The reinforcement ratio is 0.8%.

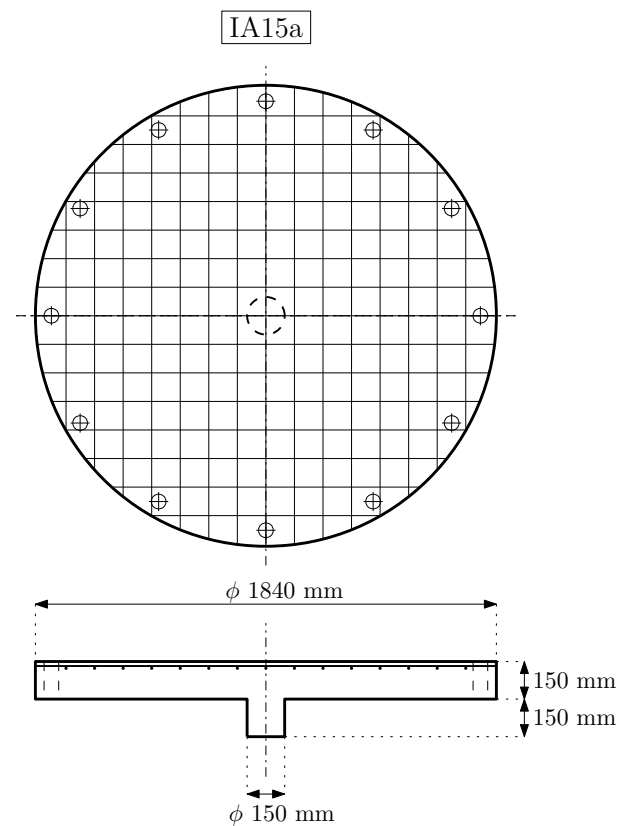


Figure 1: Main dimensions and reinforcement of IA15a specimens (plan and elevation views) [1]

The reinforcement is orthogonal and composed by 15 reinforcement bars in each of both perpendicular directions, all placed at the top of the slab. The main dimensions of the slab, as well as the reinforcement arrangements can be observed in Figure 1.

2.2 Experimental setup

Figure 2 shows a scheme of the experimental setup, which is numerically reproduced in this work. The load is applied by a hydraulic jack from below the specimen and the slab perimeter is retained by twelve tie rods and twelve spreader beams.

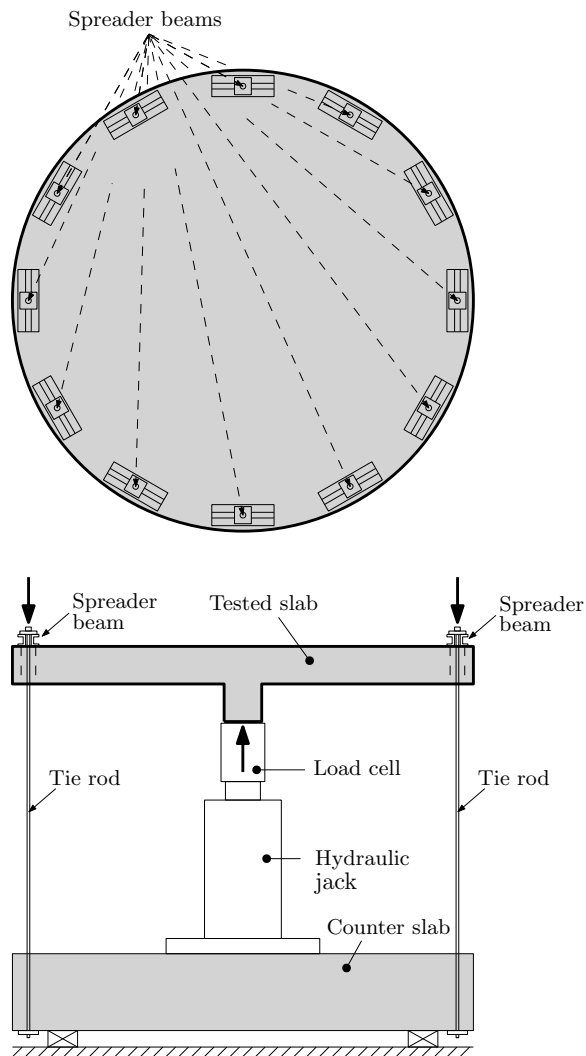


Figure 2: Experimental setup used in [1] (plan and elevation views)

The spreader beams help to distribute the

perimeter load as uniformly as possible and the tie rods transmit the load to a counter slab placed at the bottom of the hydraulic jack.

3 NUMERICAL MODEL

To study the punching problem using the finite element method (FEM), three models have been prepared, all of them with the same boundary conditions, the same mesh and considering different possible contacts between the steel reinforcement and concrete. In this section, the characteristics of each of the three models are detailed. Regarding the mesh size, an initial analysis on the mesh was conducted and the mesh used here was deemed appropriate for the purpose of the study. The reference works [2,8] employed coarser meshes and, in the context of what is analysed here, the influence of this aspect should not affect the main conclusions, provided that the same mesh is used for comparison.

In the following subsections, after the boundary conditions of the model are described, the material models used for each region of the slab are briefly presented and the characteristics of each of the three models are described.

3.1 Boundary conditions

The punching problem is modelled taking advantage of the axial symmetry and only one-sixtyfourth of the slab (a portion of 5.625 degrees around the symmetry axis). To reproduce the axial symmetry, the nodes at the bottom of the column are restricted in the vertical direction (z axis), the nodes at the symmetry axis are restricted in the radial direction (x axis) and the nodes at both radial planes are restricted in their perpendicular direction (see Figure 3).

3.2 Isotropic damage model for concrete

Fracture of concrete is reproduced using an isotropic damage formulation implemented in the open-source software OOFEM [12], a short description is provided here, although the complete description of the model can be found in the manuals of the software.

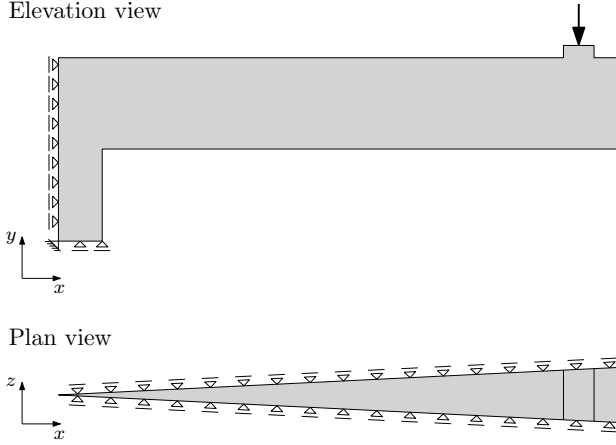


Figure 3: Boundary conditions of the FEM model.

Damage is numerically accounted for by means of the damage parameter ω , which ranges from 0 (no damage) to 1 (fully damaged) and reduces the material strength through the stiffness tensor by Eq. (1):

$$\mathbf{D} = (1 - \omega) \mathbf{D}_e \quad (1)$$

where $\mathbf{D}_e$ stands for the elastic stiffness tensor.

Damage is obtained using an equivalent strain value, in this study the following expression, based on the Rankine criterion, is applied:

$$\varepsilon_{eq} = \frac{1}{E} \sqrt{\sum_{I=1}^3 \langle \bar{\sigma}_I \rangle^2} \quad (2)$$

where $\bar{\sigma}_I$ represents the I^{th} principal stress and $\langle \cdot \rangle$ represents the Macauley brackets, thus only accounting for the positive principal stresses.

Damage evolution is defined by a stress-strain diagram that, in this case, has been described as exponential through Eq. (3).

$$\sigma = f_t \exp \left(-\frac{w}{w_f} \right) \quad (3)$$

where f_t stands for the concrete tensile strength, w is the crack opening at which σ is evaluated, and w_f is a parameter with the dimension of length (crack opening), that controls the shape of the exponential diagram (see Fig. 4). In fact, $w_f = G_f/f_t$, where G_f is the mode I fracture energy.

The model is formulated considering the crack band approach, so that w represents the crack opening that is equal to the inelastic strain ε_c , due to cracking, multiplied by the effective thickness h of the crack band. The value of h is estimated by projecting the finite element onto the direction of the maximum principal strain at the onset of damage, as suggested by Oliver [13].

Since the inelastic strain ε_c can be obtained as the difference between the total strain ε and the elastic strain σ/E :

$$\varepsilon_c = \varepsilon - \frac{\sigma}{E} = \varepsilon - (1 - \omega)\varepsilon = \omega\varepsilon$$

Therefore, $w = h\varepsilon_c = h\omega\varepsilon$ and (3) can be rewritten as:

$$(1 - \omega)E\varepsilon = f_t \exp \left(-\frac{h\omega\varepsilon}{w_f} \right)$$

which allows solving the value of damage ω for a specific value of strain ε .

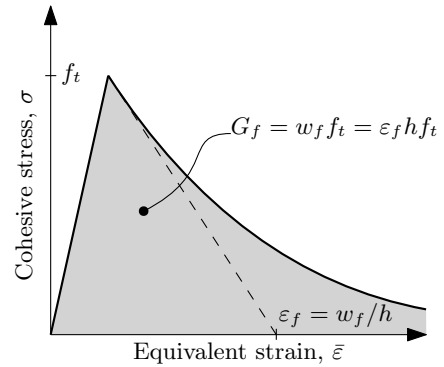


Figure 4: Exponential $\sigma - \bar{\varepsilon}$ diagram used to reproduce concrete fracture.

3.3 Perfectly plastic material for steel

In this work a simplified model for steel, usually adopted by the standards, is used. This model is elastic-plastic and its behaviour can be observed in Figure 5. The material behaves elastically up to a stress limit value f_y , which remains unchanged for greater strain values.

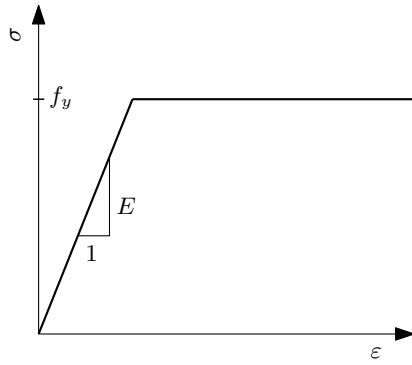


Figure 5: Elastic-plastic $\sigma - \varepsilon$ diagram used to reproduce steel behaviour.

3.4 Versions of the numerical model

Three versions of the finite element model have been used in order to analyse three strategies for modelling the punching failure problem. Schemes of models A, B and C can be observed in Figure 6; these models are described below.

3.4.1 Model A

In Model A, three materials are considered, with Material 1 corresponding to concrete and defined with the isotropic damage model described in Section 3.2, Material 2 corresponding to the region where the load is applied, defined as elastic and with the same elastic modulus as concrete, and Material 3 corresponding to steel and defined as perfectly plastic as described in Section 3.3. In this model no additional consideration is done regarding the concrete-steel contact, thus no debonding or slip between both materials are allowed. The characteristics of each material can be consulted in Table 1.

3.4.2 Model B

This model considers a perfect contact between concrete and steel with no bonding, therefore, steel bar can deform following the displacement of concrete but no tangential stresses appear between concrete and steel. To do this, steel is defined as additional elements that are overlapped with concrete. Those finite elements of concrete that overlap the position of

the steel reinforcement are duplicated, forming a new set of elements that are defined as steel. The nodes of the elements of steel are *hanging nodes* that follow the position of the nodes of concrete only in the y direction, but moving freely in x and z .

To ensure the symmetry condition and the reinforcement anchorage at the perimeter of the slab, nodes at both ends of the reinforcement bar follow the concrete nodes they are related to in all directions, x , y and z .

Materials 1, 2 and 3 are defined exactly as in Model A.

3.4.3 Model C

This model is similar to Model B, thus steel is modelled as overlapping elements that, using *hanging nodes*, follow the displacement of the concrete elements to which they are related in the y direction, but not in the x and z directions, with the exception made in the extremes of the reinforcement bar, where steel nodes follow concrete nodes in all directions.

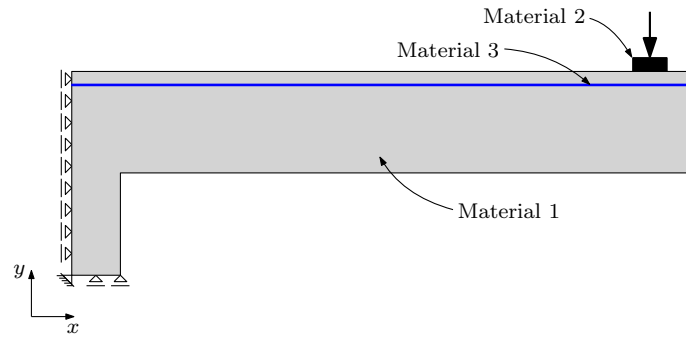
Unlike Model B, in this case the bonding between concrete and steel is taken into account. To do this, truss elements are defined along the concrete-steel contact, connecting each node in concrete with its corresponding hanging node of the steel bar; Figure 6c shows a scheme of this model, where the truss elements are represented as red springs.

In this work, these truss elements are defined with a cross section of 0.25 mm^2 and their material is defined as an isotropic damage model, described in Section 3.2, with the material characteristics shown in Table 1, where it is identified as Material 4.

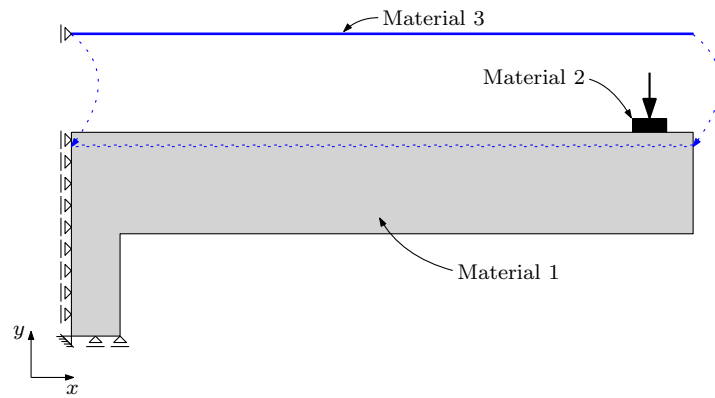
Table 1: Material characteristics used in the FEM models

	E (MPa)	ν	f_t (MPa)	G_f (N/m)	f_y (MPa)
Material 1	25000	0.2	3	160	-
Material 2	25000	0.2	-	-	-
Material 3	210000	0.3	-	-	450
Material 4	25000	0.2	3	2000	-

a)



b)



c)

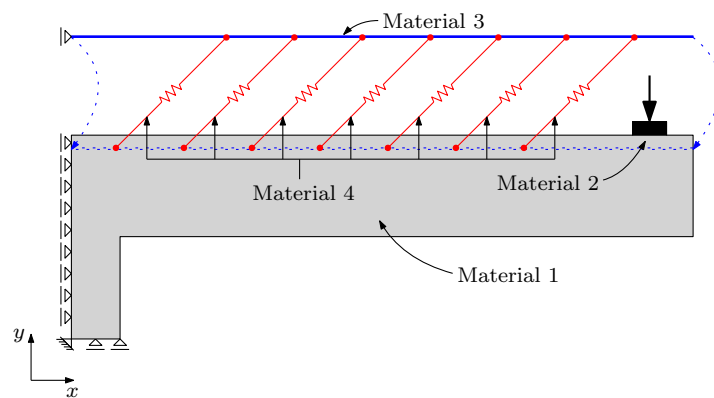


Figure 6: Schemes of the FEM model, a) Model A, b) Model B, c) Model C.

These elements and their material characteristics (Material 4) have not been specifically calibrated, as the aim here is to assess the influence of their inclusion on the overall behavior of the model. The calibration of these aspects is left for future work.

This definition of the steel-concrete interface assumes a progressive debonding process between both materials and serves to understand how it affects the punching problem and the fracture mechanisms involved.

4 RESULTS

Figure 7 shows the load-displacement diagrams obtained with each of the three models described before.

It is worth noting that Model A, which does not consider the possible debonding between concrete and steel, shows a much more brittle behaviour than Models B and C, which allow relative displacement between both materials.

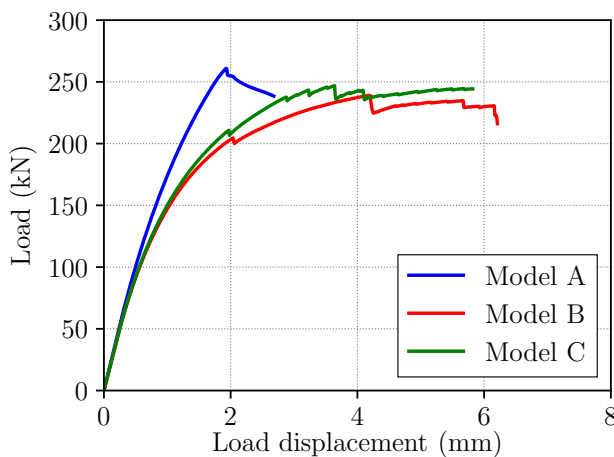


Figure 7: Load-displacement diagrams obtained with each of the models analysed.

Model A also presents a steeper initial branch, while models B and C show a more ductile and slightly more gradual load increase at the beginning of the load application.

Model B, which reproduces the extreme case where no tangential stresses are transmitted between concrete and steel, shows the most ductile behaviour of all three models and the least steep diagram. Regarding Model C, which

represents an intermediate situation between Models A and B, since debonding between concrete and steel is allowed but certain tangential stresses are transmitted in the process, clearly presents an intermediate response between Models A and B.

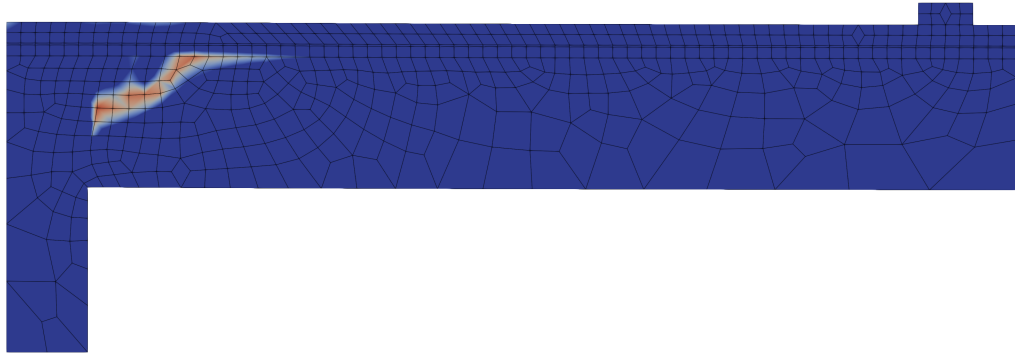
Figure 8 shows map of damage in each of the models just before failure occurs. Note that these figures only show damage in the range of 0.95-1.00, with 1.00 corresponding to completely damaged material, in order to easily identified regions where damage is completely developed.

Damage in Model A develops in a completely different way compared with Models B and C. In Model A damage leads to early failure due to the fact that, since no slip is allowed between concrete and steel, small values of strain induces high damage in concrete while steel barely works and is not able to redistribute damage along the slab, thus leading to a very localised failure. This behaviour agrees with the works by Menétrey [8] and Hallgren [2]; an example of this is shown in Figure 9. In his work, Menétrey attributes this difference to the fact that this model is axisymmetric, which does not correctly represents the orthogonal geometry of the reinforcement.

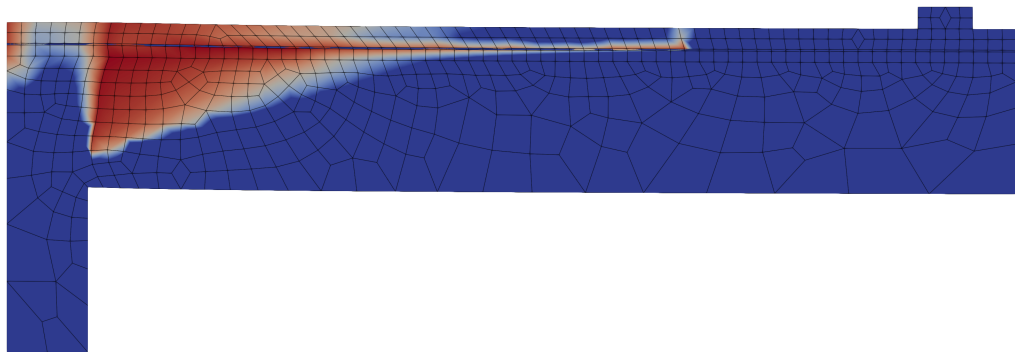
Looking now at Model B, which represents the extreme case where debonding between concrete and steel is considered and no tangential stresses are transmitted between both materials, first cracking occurrence in concrete does not lead to failure, since the steel reinforcement is able to bear the tensile stresses induced by concrete cracking. In further stages of the loading process, damage extends further along the slab following the radial reinforcement position.

Finally, Model C, which represents a somehow more realistic case where the interface between concrete and steel can be damaged leading to debonding, shows a similar map of damage if compared with Model B, although interesting differences can be observed. On one hand, fracture progresses along the reinforcement alignment, although it is more limited than

Model A



Model B



Model C

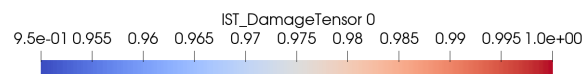
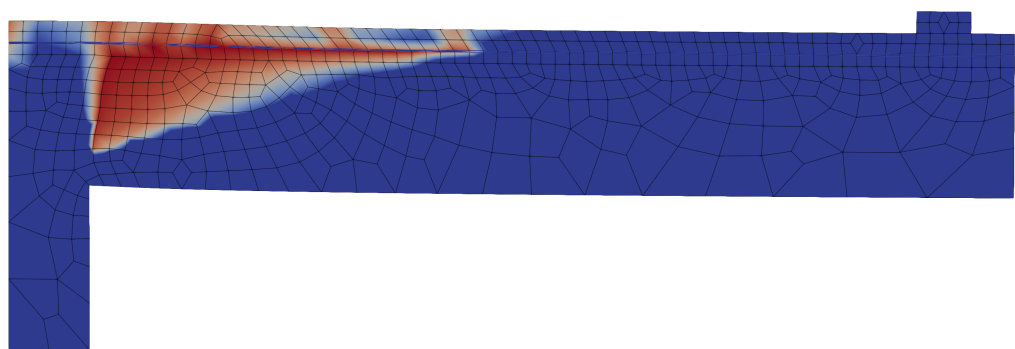


Figure 8: Color map of damage just before failure in each of the three analysed models.

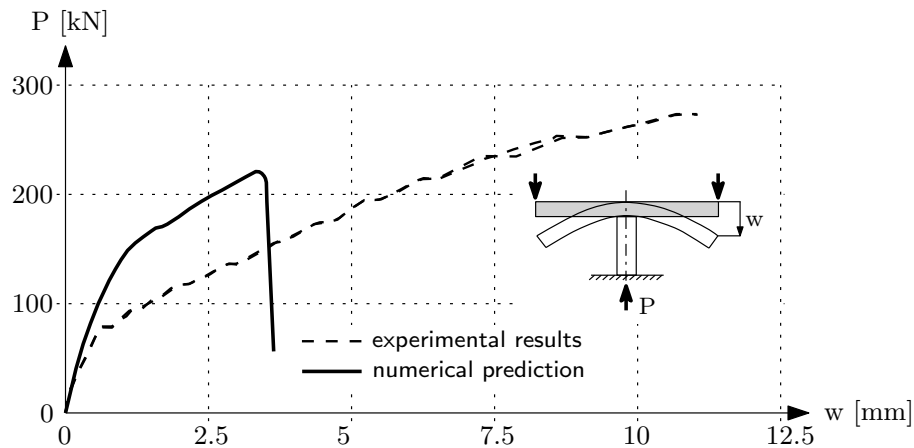


Figure 9: Comparison of the load-displacement diagrams obtained numerically and experimentally in a punching test in the work by Men  tre (extracted from [8]).

in the case of Model B. On another hand, failure process induces localized cracking on the top of the slab (five consecutive cracks can be observed in the figure), which are produced from the centre of the slab radially outwards.

The load-displacement diagrams in Figure 7 suggest that the stiffer behaviour of Model A in comparison with Models B and C is related to a more realistic representation of the concrete-steel interface.

5 CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE WORK

- This work analyses punching failure using the finite element method and three approaches in the design of the model are utilised, highlighting the role of the steel-concrete interface in the failure mechanisms.
- When no debonding and slip is allowed between concrete and steel (Model A), failure occurs locally and at early stages of the test, with the response of the specimen being stiffer and more brittle than that observed experimentally.
- If the contact between concrete and steel allows slipping between both materials (Models B and C), failure extends to a wider region of the specimen, with a less stiff response in terms of the load-displacement diagram and presents a more ductile behaviour.

- The fracture parameters of the concrete-steel interface modify the overall ductility of the slab and modify the cracking pattern, inducing additional cracks on the surface of the slab.
- Future work may investigate on the influence of the fracture parameters of the interface to understand how to numerically reproduce its behaviour for a correct modelling of the problem.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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