

# Locking-free shells with structure-preserving finite elements

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Michael Neunteufel (TU Wien)

Jay Gopalakrishnan (Portland State University)

Joachim Schöberl (TU Wien)

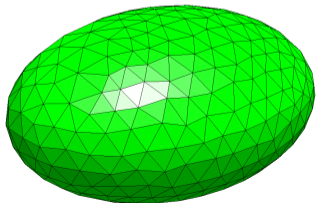
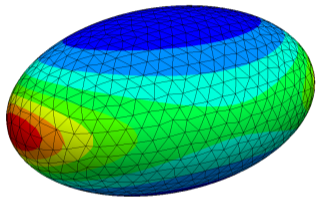


**FWF** Austrian  
Science Fund

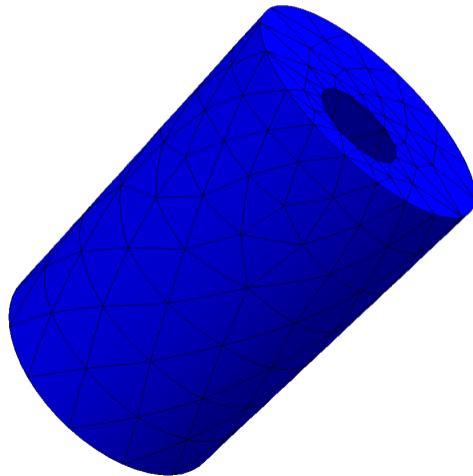
Project J 4824-N

SciCADE 2026, Edinburgh, July 3rd, 2026

Approximate extrinsic curvature of non-smooth surfaces

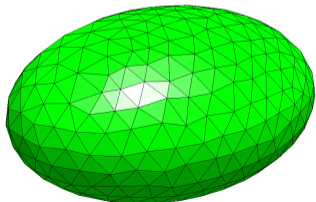
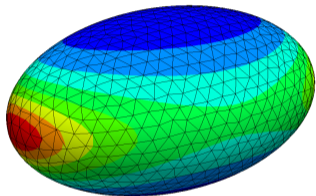


Application to shells



Approximate extrinsic curvature of non-smooth surfaces

Application to shells







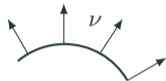
Curvature approximation

Shells

Numerics & Applications

## Curvature approximation

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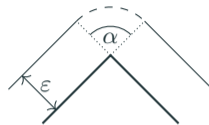
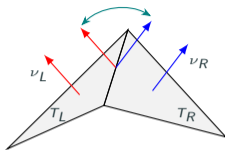
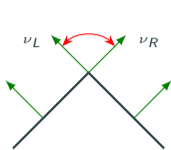
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- Weingarten tensor  $\nabla \nu$ ,  $\nu$  normal vector, well-defined for  $C^1$  surfaces
- Consider piecewise affine surface
- Normal vector  $\nu$  is piecewise constant and jumps




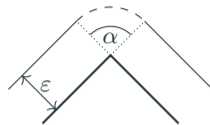
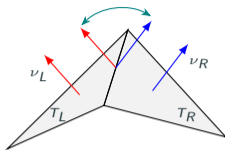
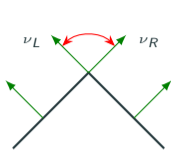
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- Dihedral angle formula (from Steiner's offset formula):  $\sum_{E \in \mathcal{E}} \alpha_E |E|$

 STEINER: Über parallele Flächen, *Preuss. Akad. Wiss.* (1840)


 GRINSPUN, GINGOLD, REISMAN, ZORIN Computing discrete shape operators on general meshes, *Computer Graphics Forum* (2006)



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How to define a generalized Weingarten tensor object? Combine FEM & DDG!

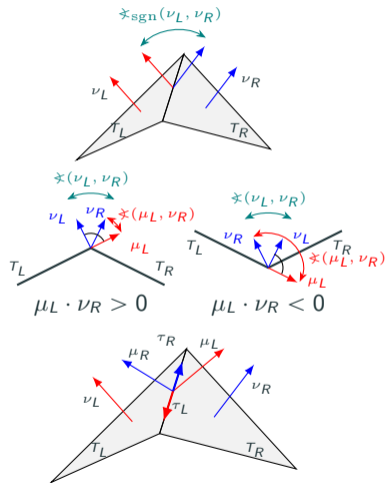
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- Sobolev perspective:  $\nu \notin H^1$ , but  $\nu \in L^2$
- $\nabla \nu \notin L^2$ , it is a distribution (or measure)
- Define distributional Weingarten tensor ( $\Psi_{\mu\mu} = (\Psi\mu) \cdot \mu$ )

$$\widetilde{\nabla} \nu(\Psi) = \sum_{T \in \mathcal{T}} \int_T \nabla \nu : \Psi \, dx + \sum_{E \in \mathcal{E}} \int_E \mathfrak{X}_{\text{sgn}(\nu_L, \nu_R)} \Psi_{\mu\mu} \, ds$$

- Signed dihedral angle  $\mathfrak{X}_{\text{sgn}(\nu_L, \nu_R)} = \text{sgn}(\nu_L \cdot \mu_R) \mathfrak{X}(\nu_L, \nu_R)$

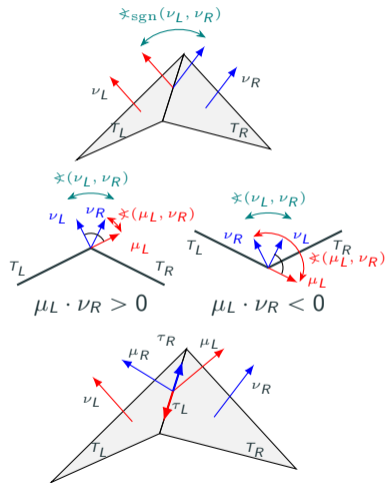


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- Test function space (Hellan–Herrmann–Johnson space):

$$\Sigma = \{ \sigma \in L^2(\mathcal{T}, \mathbb{R}_{\text{sym}}^{3 \times 3}) : (\sigma \nu)|_T = 0, (\sigma_{\mu\mu})|_{T_L} = (\sigma_{\mu\mu})|_{T_R} \}$$



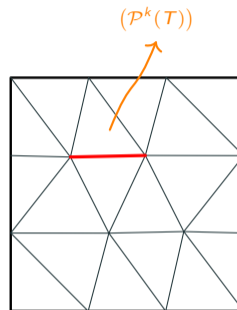
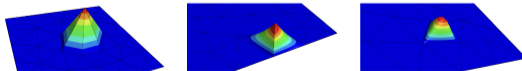
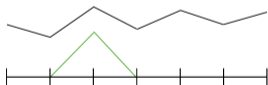
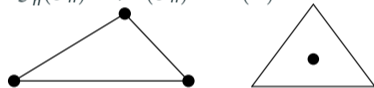
## Scalar-valued spaces

$$H^1(\Omega) = \{u \in L^2(\Omega) \mid \nabla u \in [L^2(\Omega)]^d\},$$

$$\text{Lag}_h^k(\mathcal{T}_h) = \mathcal{P}^k(\mathcal{T}_h) \cap C(\Omega) \subset H^1(\Omega),$$

$$L^2(\Omega) = \{u : \Omega \rightarrow \mathbb{R} \mid u^2 \text{ integrable}\},$$

$$\mathcal{DG}_h^k(\mathcal{T}_h) = \mathcal{P}^k(\mathcal{T}_h) \subset L^2(\Omega)$$



**Examples:** Density, pressure, temperature  
**Finite elements:** Lagrange ( $H^1$ , continuous),  
 discontinuous Galerkin ( $L^2$ , discontinuous)

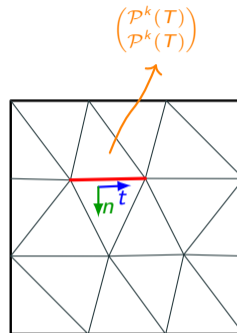
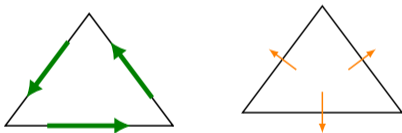
## Vector-valued spaces

$$H(\text{curl}, \Omega) = \{\sigma \in [L^2(\Omega)]^d \mid \text{curl } \sigma \in [L^2(\Omega)]^{2d-3}\},$$

$$\mathcal{N}_{ll,h}^k = \{\sigma \in [\mathcal{P}^k(\mathcal{T}_h)]^d \mid \llbracket \sigma_t \rrbracket_F = 0\} \subset H(\text{curl}, \Omega),$$

$$H(\text{div}, \Omega) = \{\sigma \in [L^2(\Omega)]^d \mid \text{div } \sigma \in L^2(\Omega)\},$$

$$\text{BDM}_h^k = \{\sigma \in [\mathcal{P}^k(\mathcal{T}_h)]^d \mid \llbracket \sigma_n \rrbracket_F = 0\} \subset H(\text{div}, \Omega)$$



**Examples:** Deformation, velocity, momentum  
**Finite elements:** Nédélec ( $H(\text{curl})$ , **tangential**),  
 Raviart–Thomas/BDM ( $H(\text{div})$ , **normal**)

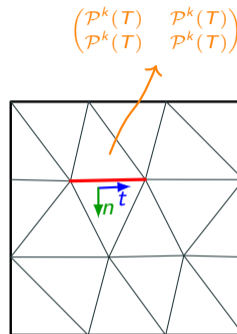
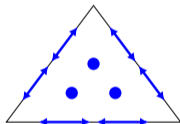
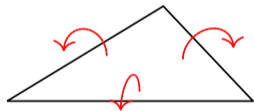
## Tensor-valued spaces

$$H(\text{divdiv}, \Omega) = \{\sigma \in [L^2(\Omega)]_{\text{sym}}^{d \times d} \mid \text{div div } \sigma \in H^{-1}(\Omega)\},$$

$$M_h^k(\mathcal{T}_h) = \{\sigma \in [\mathcal{P}^k(\mathcal{T}_h)]_{\text{sym}}^{d \times d} \mid \llbracket n^T \sigma n \rrbracket_F = 0\},$$

$$H(\text{curl curl}, \Omega) = \{\sigma \in [L^2(\Omega)]_{\text{sym}}^{d \times d} \mid \text{curl curl } \sigma \in H^{-1}(\Omega)\},$$

$$\text{Reg}_h^k(\mathcal{T}_h) = \{\sigma \in [\mathcal{P}^k(\mathcal{T}_h)]_{\text{sym}}^{d \times d} \mid \llbracket t^T \sigma t \rrbracket_F = 0\}$$



**Examples:** Strain, stress, metric

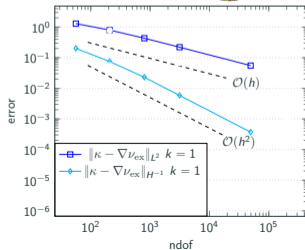
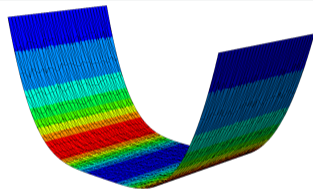
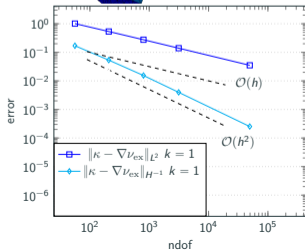
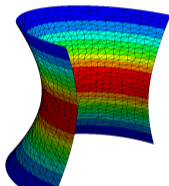
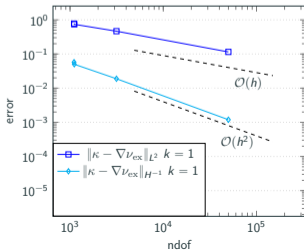
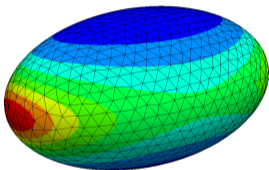
**Finite elements:** Regge ( $H(\text{curl curl})$ ,  $tt$ ),

Hellan–Herrmann–Johnson ( $H(\text{divdiv})$ ,  $nn$ )

## Lifting of distributional Weingarten tensor

Find  $\kappa \in \Sigma_h^{k-1}$  for  $\mathcal{T}$  with curving order  $k$  such that for all  $\sigma \in \Sigma_h^{k-1}$

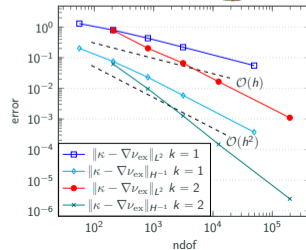
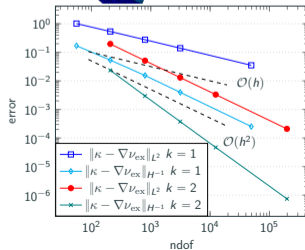
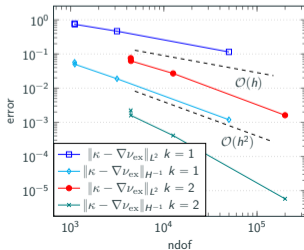
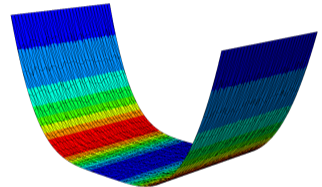
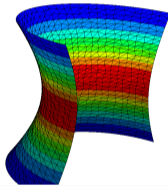
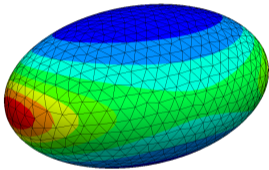
$$\int_{\mathcal{T}} \kappa : \sigma \, dx = \widetilde{\nabla} \nu(\sigma).$$



## Lifting of distributional Weingarten tensor

Find  $\kappa \in \Sigma_h^{k-1}$  for  $\mathcal{T}$  with curving order  $k$  such that for all  $\sigma \in \Sigma_h^{k-1}$

$$\int_{\mathcal{T}} \kappa : \sigma \, dx = \widetilde{\nabla} \nu(\sigma).$$



1.  $\widetilde{\nabla\nu}(\sigma) - \int_S \nabla\nu : \sigma \, dx = \int_0^1 \frac{d}{dt} \widetilde{\nabla\nu}(\sigma) \, dt$  with  $\Phi(t) = \bar{\Phi}_h + t(\Phi_h - \bar{\Phi}_h)$
2.  $\frac{d}{dt} \widetilde{\nabla\nu}(\sigma) = a(\Phi; \sigma, \dot{\Phi}(t)) + b(\Phi; \sigma, \dot{\Phi}(t))$  sum of the bilinear forms  $a$  and  $b$
3. Estimate  $a(\Phi(t); \sigma, \dot{\Phi}(t))$  and  $b(\Phi(t); \sigma, \dot{\Phi}(t))$   $\|\mathfrak{X}_{\text{sgn}}(\nu_L, \nu_R)\|_{W^{1,\infty}} \leq h \|\bar{\Phi}_h\|_{W^{\min\{k,2\},\infty}}$

## Theorem (Gopalakrishnan, N.)

Let  $(\Phi_h)_{h>0} \in \text{Lag}_h^k$  be a family of embeddings such that  $\|\Phi_h - \bar{\Phi}_h\|_{W^{1,\infty}} \rightarrow 0$ . Then there holds

$$\|\widetilde{\nabla\nu} - \nabla\bar{\nu}\|_{H^{-1}} \leq C(1 + \max_{\hat{T} \in \hat{\mathcal{T}}} h_{\hat{T}}^{-1} \|\Phi_h - \bar{\Phi}_h\|_{W^{\min\{k,2\},\infty}(\hat{T})}) \|\Phi_h - \bar{\Phi}_h\|_{H^1} \leq C h^k.$$



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Dihedral angle  $\chi_{\text{sgn}}(\nu_L, \nu_R)$  always converges in  $H^{-1}$ !



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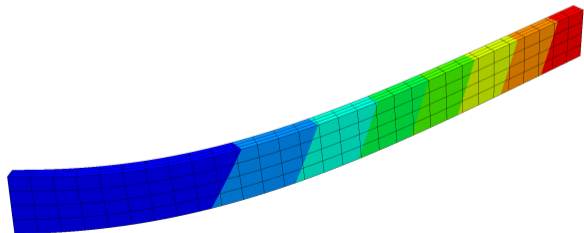
Let  $(\Phi_h)_{h>0} \in \text{Lag}_h^k$  be a family of embeddings such that  $\Phi_h = \mathcal{I}_h^{\text{Lag}^k} \bar{\Phi}_h$  for  $k \geq 1$ . Let  $\kappa \in \Sigma_h^{k-1}$  be the lifted Weingarten tensor. Then  $\|\kappa - \nabla\bar{\nu}\|_{H^{-1}} \leq C h^{k+1}$ .

# Shells

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Deformation

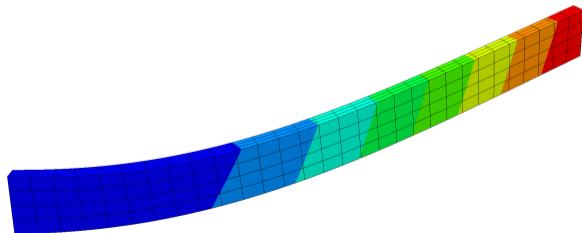
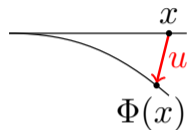
$$\Phi : \Omega \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^3$$



Deformation  
Displacement

$$\Phi : \Omega \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^3$$

$$u := \Phi - id$$



Deformation

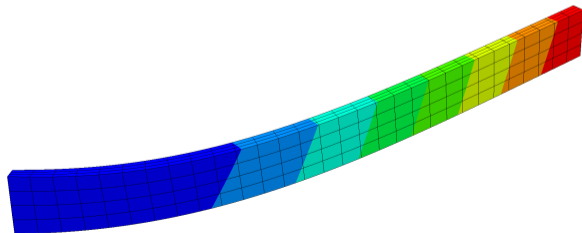
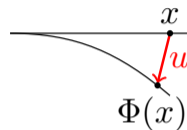
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Displacement

$$u := \Phi - id$$

Deformation gradient

$$\mathbf{F} := \nabla \Phi$$



Deformation

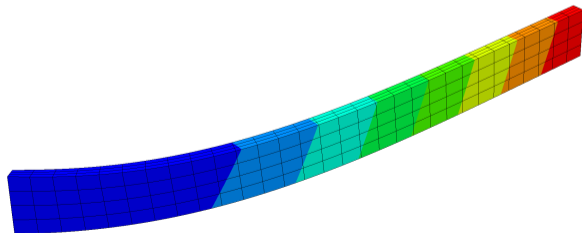
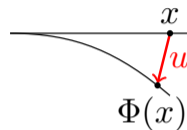
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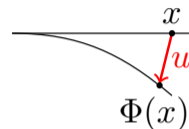
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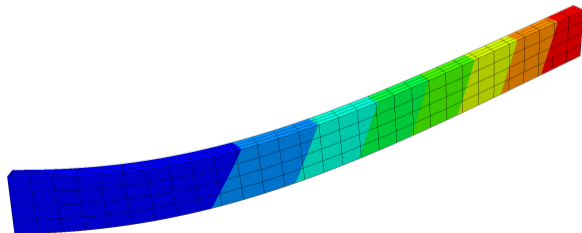
$$\mathbf{F} := \mathbf{I} + \nabla u$$

Cauchy-Green strain tensor

$$\mathbf{C} := \mathbf{F}^T \mathbf{F} = \mathbf{I} + \nabla u + \nabla u^T + \nabla u^T \nabla u$$



$$\Delta x^T \Delta x = \Delta X^T \mathbf{C} \Delta X$$



Deformation

$$\Phi : \Omega \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^3$$

Displacement

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Deformation gradient

$$\mathbf{F} := \mathbf{I} + \nabla u$$

Cauchy-Green strain tensor

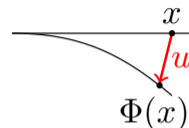
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Green strain tensor

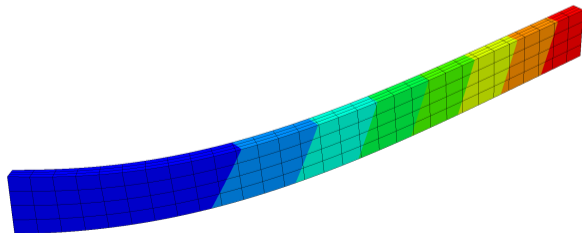
$$\mathbf{E} := \frac{1}{2}(\mathbf{C} - \mathbf{I}) = \frac{1}{2}(\nabla u + \nabla u^T + \nabla u^T \nabla u)$$

Linearized strain

$$\varepsilon := \text{sym}(\nabla u) = \frac{1}{2}(\nabla u + \nabla u^T)$$



$$\Delta x^T \Delta x = \Delta X^T \mathbf{C} \Delta X$$



Deformation

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$$u := \Phi - id$$

Deformation gradient

$$\mathbf{F} := \mathbf{I} + \nabla u$$

Cauchy-Green strain tensor

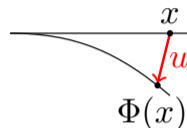
$$\mathbf{C} := \mathbf{F}^T \mathbf{F} = \mathbf{I} + \nabla u + \nabla u^T + \nabla u^T \nabla u$$

Green strain tensor

$$\mathbf{E} := \frac{1}{2}(\mathbf{C} - \mathbf{I}) = \frac{1}{2}(\nabla u + \nabla u^T + \nabla u^T \nabla u)$$

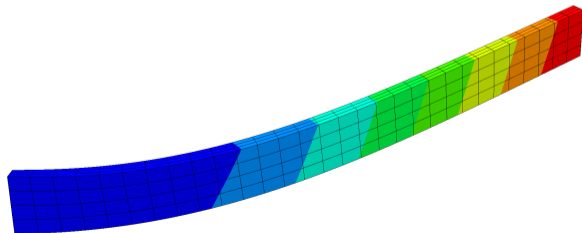
Linearized strain

$$\varepsilon := \text{sym}(\nabla u) = \frac{1}{2}(\nabla u + \nabla u^T)$$



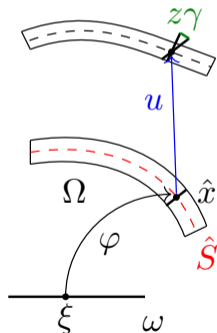
## Elasticity

$$\mathcal{W}(u) = \frac{1}{2} \|\mathbf{E}\|_{\mathbf{M}}^2 - \langle f, u \rangle \rightarrow \min!_{u \in V}$$

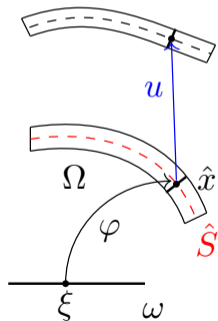




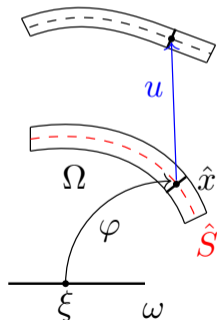
- Reduce 3D elasticity to 2D shell model



- Reduce 3D elasticity to 2D shell model
- $\Omega = \{\varphi(\xi) + z\hat{\nu}(\xi) : \xi \in \omega, z \in [-\frac{t}{2}, \frac{t}{2}]\}$
- $\Phi(\hat{x} + z\hat{\nu}(\xi)) = \underbrace{\phi(\hat{x})}_{=\hat{x}+u(\hat{x})} + z \underbrace{(\nu + \gamma)}_{=\tilde{\nu} \circ \phi} \circ \phi(\hat{x})$
- **Reissner-Mindlin/Naghdi shell**



- Reduce 3D elasticity to 2D shell model
- $\Omega = \{\varphi(\xi) + z\hat{\nu}(\xi) : \xi \in \omega, z \in [-\frac{t}{2}, \frac{t}{2}]\}$
- $\Phi(\hat{x} + z\hat{\nu}(\xi)) = \underbrace{\phi(\hat{x})}_{=\hat{x}+u(\hat{x})} + z\nu \circ \phi(\hat{x})$
- Kirchhoff–Love/Koiter shell



- Reduce 3D elasticity to 2D shell model

- $\Omega = \{\varphi(\xi) + z\hat{\nu}(\xi) : \xi \in \omega, z \in [-\frac{t}{2}, \frac{t}{2}]\}$

- $\Phi(\hat{x} + z\hat{\nu}(\xi)) = \underbrace{\phi(\hat{x})}_{=\hat{x}+u(\hat{x})} + z\nu \circ \phi(\hat{x})$

- Kirchhoff–Love/Koiter shell

- Insert  $\Phi$  in 3D elasticity and integrate over thickness, neglect higher order terms  $\mathcal{O}(t^4)$  (asymptotical analysis)

$$\mathcal{W}(u) = \frac{t}{2} \|\mathbf{E}(u)\|_{\mathbb{M}}^2 + \frac{t^3}{24} \|\mathbf{F}^T \nabla(\nu \circ \phi) - \nabla \hat{\nu}\|_{\mathbb{M}}^2$$

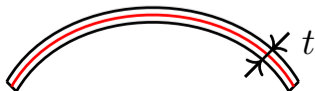
$u$  ... displacement of mid-surface

$t$  ... thickness

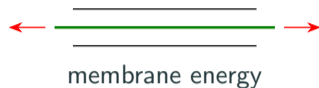
$\mathbb{M}$  ... material tensor

$$\mathbf{F} = \nabla u + \mathbf{P} = \nabla \phi, \quad \mathbf{P} = \mathbf{I} - \hat{\nu} \otimes \hat{\nu}$$

$$\mathbf{E} = \frac{1}{2}(\mathbf{F}^T \mathbf{F} - \mathbf{P}) = \frac{1}{2}(\nabla u^T \nabla u + \nabla u^T \mathbf{P} + \mathbf{P} \nabla u)$$



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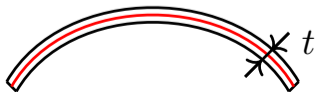
$u$  ... displacement of mid-surface

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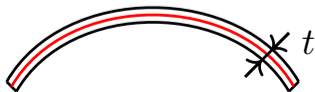
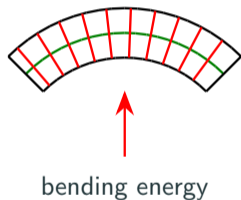
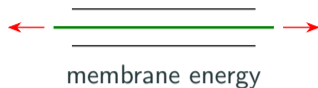
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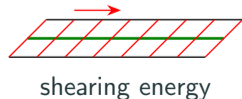
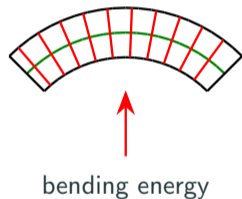
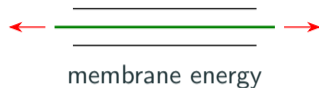
$$\mathcal{W}(u, \gamma) = \frac{t}{2} \|\mathbf{E}(u)\|_{\mathbb{M}}^2 + \frac{t^3}{24} \|\text{sym}(\mathbf{F}^T \nabla(\tilde{\nu} \circ \phi)) - \nabla \hat{\nu}\|_{\mathbb{M}}^2 + \frac{t\kappa G}{2} \|\mathbf{F}^T \tilde{\nu} \circ \phi\|^2$$

$\gamma$  ... shearing

$\tilde{\nu} = \frac{\nu + \gamma}{\|\nu + \gamma\|}$  ... director

$G$  ... shearing modulus

$\kappa = 5/6$  ... shear correction factor




Lifted shape operator: 
$$\int_{\mathcal{T}} \boldsymbol{\kappa} : \boldsymbol{\Psi} \, dx = \widetilde{\nabla} \nu(\boldsymbol{\Psi}) := \sum_{T \in \mathcal{T}} \int_T \nabla \nu : \boldsymbol{\Psi} \, dx + \sum_{E \in \mathcal{E}^{\circ}} \int_E \chi_{\text{sgn}}(\nu_L, \nu_R) \boldsymbol{\Psi}_{\mu\mu} \, ds$$

- Lifted curvature difference  $\boldsymbol{\kappa}^{\text{diff}}$  via three-field formulation

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{L}(u, \boldsymbol{\kappa}^{\text{diff}}, \boldsymbol{\sigma}) &= \frac{t}{2} \|\mathbf{E}(u)\|_{\mathcal{M}}^2 + \frac{t^3}{12} \|\boldsymbol{\kappa}^{\text{diff}}\|_{\mathcal{M}}^2 - \langle f, u \rangle \\ &\quad + \sum_{T \in \mathcal{T}} \int_T (\boldsymbol{\kappa}^{\text{diff}} - (\mathbf{F}^T \nabla(\nu \circ \phi) - \nabla \hat{\nu})) : \boldsymbol{\sigma} \, dx \\ &\quad - \sum_{E \in \mathcal{E}^{\circ}} \int_E (\chi_{\text{sgn}}(\nu_L, \nu_R) - \chi_{\text{sgn}}(\hat{\nu}_L, \hat{\nu}_R)) \boldsymbol{\sigma}_{\hat{\mu}\hat{\mu}} \, ds \end{aligned}$$

- Lagrange parameter  $\boldsymbol{\sigma} \in \Sigma_h^k$  **moment tensor**
- Eliminate  $\boldsymbol{\kappa}^{\text{diff}}$  → two-field formulation in  $(u, \boldsymbol{\sigma})$

 N., SCHÖBERL: The Hellan–Herrmann–Johnson and TDNNS methods for linear and nonlinear shells, *Comput. Struct.* (2024)

 N., SCHÖBERL: The Hellan–Herrmann–Johnson method for nonlinear shells, *Comput. Struct.* 225 (2019).

## Shell problem

Find  $u \in [V_h^k]^3$  and  $\sigma \in M_h^{k-1}$  for  $(H_\nu := \sum_i (\nabla^2 u_i) \nu_i)$

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{L}(u, \sigma) = & \frac{t}{2} \|\mathbf{E}(u)\|_{\mathbb{M}}^2 - \frac{6}{t^3} \|\sigma\|_{\mathbb{M}^{-1}}^2 - \langle f, u \rangle \\ & + \sum_{T \in \mathcal{T}_h} \int_T \sigma : (H_\nu + (1 - \hat{\nu} \cdot \nu) \nabla \hat{\nu}) \, dx \\ & + \sum_{E \in \mathcal{E}_h} \int_E (\chi_{\text{sgn}(\nu_L, \nu_R)} - \chi_{\text{sgn}(\hat{\nu}_L, \hat{\nu}_R)}) \sigma_{\hat{\mu}\hat{\mu}} \, ds \end{aligned}$$

 N., SCHÖBERL: The Hellan–Herrmann–Johnson method for nonlinear shells, *Comput. Struct.* (2019).

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Use hybridization to eliminate  $\sigma \rightarrow$  recover minimization problem

 N., SCHÖBERL: The Hellan–Herrmann–Johnson method for nonlinear shells, *Comput. Struct.* (2019).

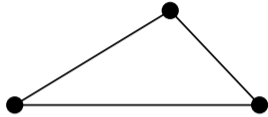
## Shell problem

Find  $u \in [V_h^k]^3$ ,  $\sigma \in M_h^{\text{dc}, k-1}$ , and  $\alpha \in \Gamma_h^{k-1}$  for

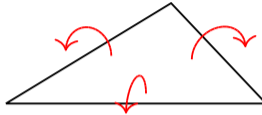
$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{L}(u, \sigma, \alpha) = & \frac{t}{2} \|\mathbf{E}(u)\|_{\mathbb{M}}^2 - \frac{6}{t^3} \|\sigma\|_{\mathbb{M}^{-1}}^2 - \langle f, u \rangle \\ & + \sum_{T \in \mathcal{T}_h} \int_T \sigma : (\mathbf{H}_\nu + (1 - \hat{\nu} \cdot \nu) \nabla \hat{\nu}) \, dx \\ & + \sum_{E \in \mathcal{E}_h} \int_E (\chi_{\text{sgn}(\nu_L, \nu_R)} - \chi_{\text{sgn}(\hat{\nu}_L, \hat{\nu}_R)}) \{ \{ \sigma_{\hat{\mu}\hat{\mu}} \} \} + \llbracket \sigma_{\hat{\mu}\hat{\mu}} \rrbracket \alpha_{\hat{\mu}} \, ds \end{aligned}$$

$$\{ \{ \sigma_{\hat{\mu}\hat{\mu}} \} \} = \frac{1}{2} ((\sigma_{\hat{\mu}\hat{\mu}})|_{T_L} + (\sigma_{\hat{\mu}\hat{\mu}})|_{T_R}), \quad \llbracket \sigma_{\hat{\mu}\hat{\mu}} \rrbracket = (\sigma_{\hat{\mu}\hat{\mu}})|_{T_L} - (\sigma_{\hat{\mu}\hat{\mu}})|_{T_R}$$

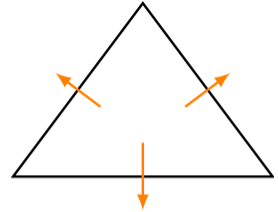
 N., SCHÖBERL: The Hellan–Herrmann–Johnson method for nonlinear shells, *Comput. Struct.* (2019).



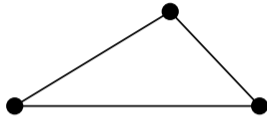
Displacement  $u$



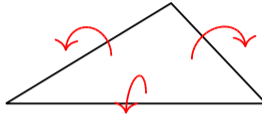
Moment  $\sigma$



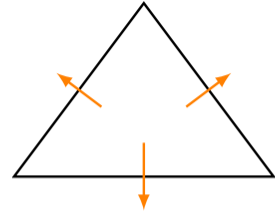
Hybridization



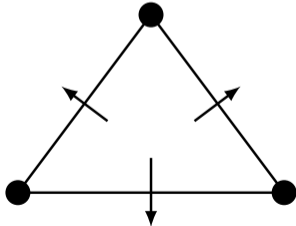
Displacement  $u$



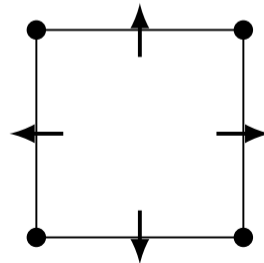
Moment  $\sigma$



Hybridization

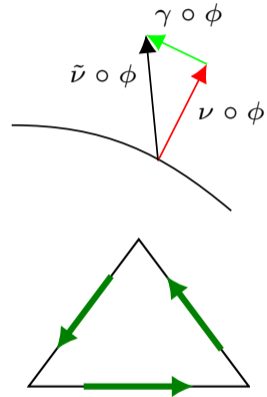


Morley



Quadrilateral (hybridized)

- Use hierarchical shell model
- Additional shearing dofs  $\gamma$  in  $H(\text{curl})$
- $\tilde{\nu} \circ \phi = \frac{\nu \circ \phi + \gamma \circ \phi}{\|\nu \circ \phi + \gamma \circ \phi\|}$
- Free of shear locking



$$H(\text{curl}) := \{u \in [L^2(\Omega)]^d \mid \text{curl } u \in [L^2(\Omega)]^{2d-3}\}$$

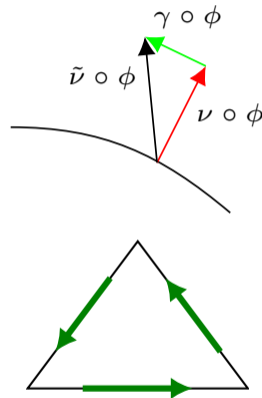
$$\mathcal{N}_{||}^k := \{u \in [\mathcal{P}^k(\mathcal{T}_h)]^d \mid u_t \text{ is continuous over elements}\}$$

 ECHTER, R. AND OESTERLE, B. AND BISCHOFF, M.: A hierarchic family of isogeometric shell finite elements, *Comput. Methods Appl. Mech. Engrg.* (2013).

- Use hierarchical shell model
- Additional shearing dofs  $\gamma$  in  $H(\text{curl})$
- $\tilde{\nu} \circ \phi = \nu \circ \phi + \gamma \circ \phi = \frac{1}{j} \text{cof}(\mathbf{F}) \hat{\nu} + (\mathbf{F}^\dagger)^\top \hat{\gamma}$
- Free of shear locking

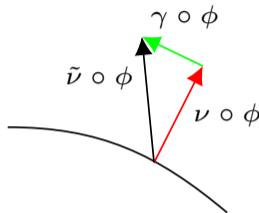
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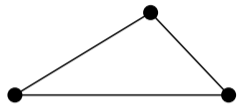


 ECHTER, R. AND OESTERLE, B. AND BISCHOFF, M.: A hierarchic family of isogeometric shell finite elements, *Comput. Methods Appl. Mech. Engrg.* (2013).

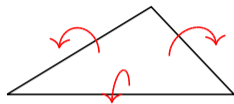
- Use hierarchical shell model
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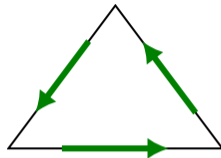
$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{L}(u, \sigma, \hat{\gamma}) &= \frac{t}{2} \|\mathbf{E}(u)\|_{\mathbb{M}}^2 + \frac{t\kappa G}{2} \|\hat{\gamma}\|^2 - \frac{6}{t^3} \|\sigma\|_{\mathbb{M}^{-1}}^2 \\ &+ \sum_{T \in \mathcal{T}_h} \int_T (\mathbf{H}_{\tilde{\nu}} + (1 - \tilde{\nu} \cdot \hat{\nu}) \nabla \hat{\nu} - \nabla \hat{\gamma}) : \sigma \, dx \\ &- \sum_{E \in \mathcal{E}_h} \int_E (\chi_{\text{sgn}}(\nu_L, \nu_R) - \chi_{\text{sgn}}(\hat{\nu}_L, \hat{\nu}_R) - \llbracket \hat{\gamma}_{\hat{\mu}} \rrbracket) \sigma_{\hat{\mu}\hat{\mu}} \, ds \end{aligned}$$



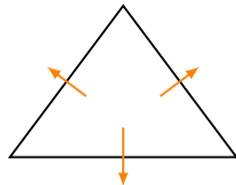
displacement  $u$



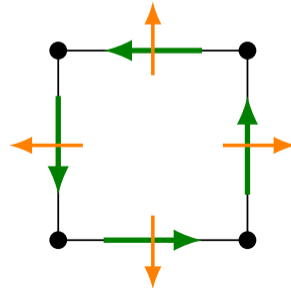
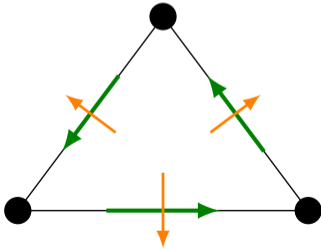
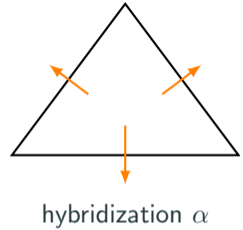
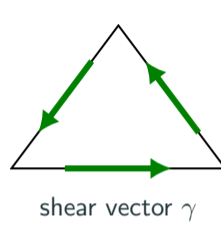
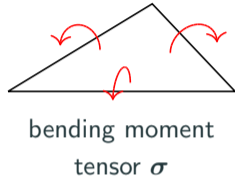
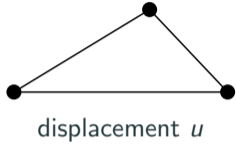
bending moment  
tensor  $\sigma$



shear vector  $\gamma$



hybridization  $\alpha$



$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{lin}}^{\text{shell}}(u, \sigma) = \frac{t}{2} \|\text{sym}(\nabla^{\text{cov}} u)\|_{\mathbb{M}}^2 - \frac{6}{t^3} \|\sigma\|_{\mathbb{M}^{-1}}^2 + \sum_{T \in \mathcal{T}_h} \left( \int_T \mathbf{H}_{\hat{\nu}} : \sigma \, dx - \int_{\partial T} (\nabla u^\top \hat{\nu})_{\hat{\mu}} \sigma_{\hat{\mu}\hat{\mu}} \, ds \right)$$

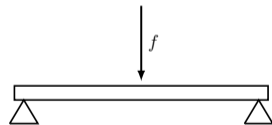
$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{lin}}^{\text{plate}}(w, \sigma) = -\frac{6}{t^3} \|\sigma\|_{\mathbb{M}^{-1}}^2 + \sum_{T \in \mathcal{T}_h} \left( \int_T \nabla^2 w : \sigma \, dx - \int_{\partial T} \frac{\partial w}{\partial \hat{\mu}} \sigma_{\hat{\mu}\hat{\mu}} \, ds \right)$$

$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{lin}}^{\text{shell}}(u, \sigma) = \frac{t}{2} \|\text{sym}(\nabla^{\text{cov}} u)\|_{\mathbb{M}}^2 - \frac{6}{t^3} \|\sigma\|_{\mathbb{M}^{-1}}^2 + \sum_{T \in \mathcal{T}_h} \left( \int_T \mathbf{H}_{\hat{\nu}} : \sigma \, dx - \int_{\partial T} (\nabla u^\top \hat{\nu})_{\hat{\mu}} \sigma_{\hat{\mu}\hat{\mu}} \, ds \right)$$

$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{lin}}^{\text{plate}}(w, \sigma) = -\frac{6}{t^3} \|\sigma\|_{\mathbb{M}^{-1}}^2 + \sum_{T \in \mathcal{T}_h} \left( \int_T \nabla^2 w : \sigma \, dx - \int_{\partial T} \frac{\partial w}{\partial \hat{\mu}} \sigma_{\hat{\mu}\hat{\mu}} \, ds \right)$$


Biharmonic plate equation:

$$\text{divdiv}(\mathbb{M} \nabla^2 w) = f \Leftrightarrow \begin{cases} \sigma = \mathbb{M} \nabla^2 w, \\ \text{divdiv} \sigma = f, \end{cases}$$



 M. COMODI: The Hellan-Herrmann-Johnson method: some new error estimates and postprocessing, *Math. Comp.* (1989)

$$\begin{aligned}
 \mathcal{L}_{\text{lin}}^{\text{shell}}(u, \sigma, \hat{\gamma}) &= \frac{t}{2} \|\text{sym}(\nabla^{\text{cov}} u)\|_{\mathbb{M}}^2 + \frac{t\kappa G}{2} \|\hat{\gamma}\|^2 - \frac{6}{t^3} \|\sigma\|_{\mathbb{M}^{-1}}^2 \\
 &\quad + \sum_{T \in \mathcal{T}_h} \left( \int_T (\mathbf{H}_{\hat{\nu}} - \nabla \hat{\gamma}) : \sigma \, dx - \int_{\partial T} ((\nabla u^{\top} \hat{\nu})_{\hat{\mu}} - \hat{\gamma}_{\hat{\mu}}) \sigma_{\hat{\mu}\hat{\mu}} \, ds \right) \\
 \mathcal{L}_{\text{lin}}^{\text{plate}}(w, \sigma, \hat{\gamma}) &= \frac{t\kappa G}{2} \|\hat{\gamma}\|^2 - \frac{6}{t^3} \|\sigma\|_{\mathbb{M}^{-1}}^2 \\
 &\quad + \sum_{T \in \mathcal{T}_h} \left( \int_T (\nabla^2 w - \nabla \hat{\gamma}) : \sigma \, dx - \int_{\partial T} \left( \frac{\partial w}{\partial \hat{\mu}} - \hat{\gamma}_{\hat{\mu}} \right) \sigma_{\hat{\mu}\hat{\mu}} \, ds \right)
 \end{aligned}$$

 A. PECHSTEIN AND J. SCHÖBERL: The TDNNS method for Reissner-Mindlin plates, *J. Numer. Math.* (2017)

$$\mathcal{W}(u) = t E_{\text{mem}}(u) + t^3 E_{\text{bend}}(u) - f \cdot u, \quad f = t^3 \tilde{f}$$

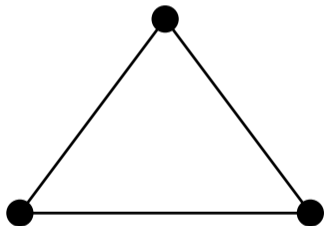
$$\mathcal{W}(u) = t^{-2} E_{\text{mem}}(u) + E_{\text{bend}}(u) - \tilde{f} \cdot u, \quad f = t^3 \tilde{f}$$

Enforces  $E_{\text{mem}}(u) = 0$  in the limit  $t \rightarrow 0$

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$$E_{\text{mem}}(u) = 0 \quad \Rightarrow \quad E_{\text{mem}}(u_h) = 0$$

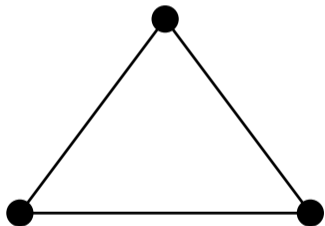


$$\text{Lag}_h^k(\mathcal{T}_h) = \mathcal{P}^k(\mathcal{T}_h) \cap C(\Omega) \subset H^1(\Omega)$$

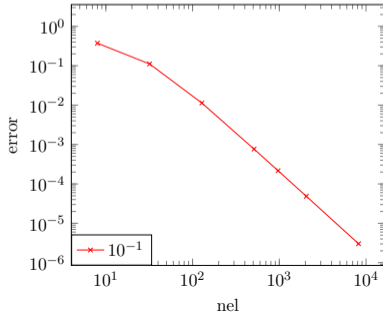
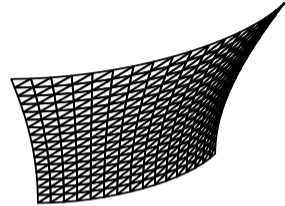
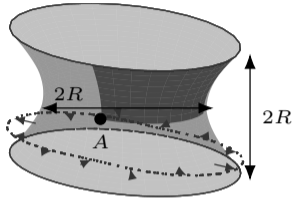
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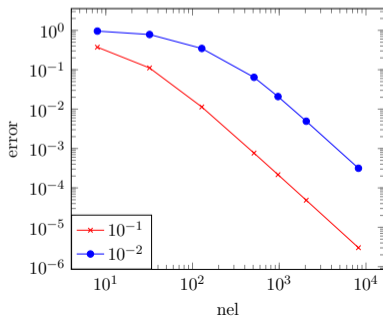
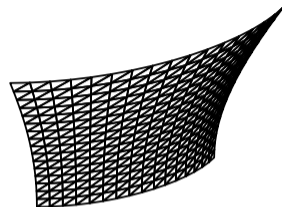
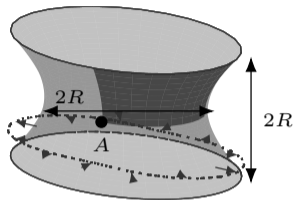
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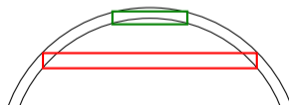


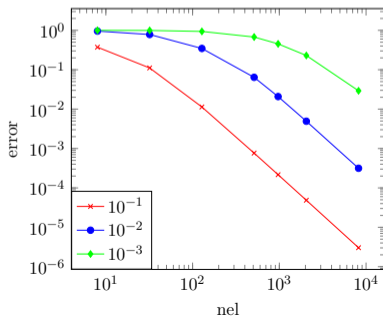
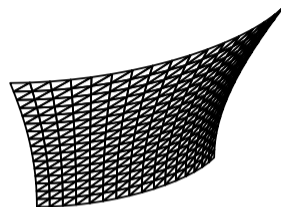
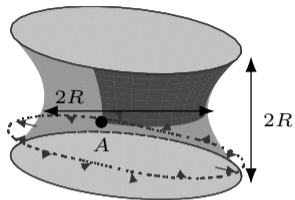
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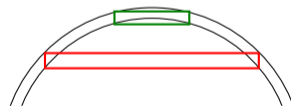


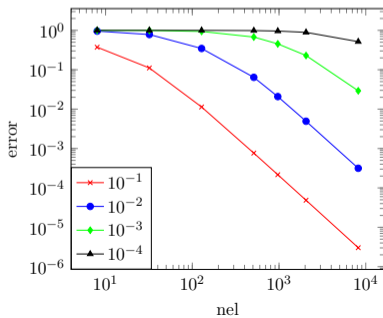
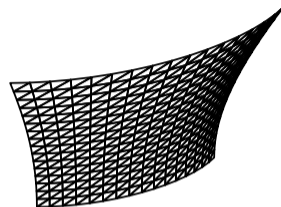
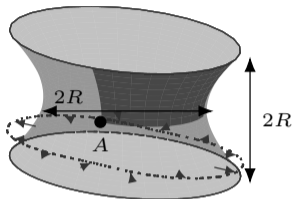
- Pre-asymptotic regime



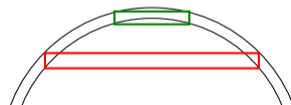


- Pre-asymptotic regime



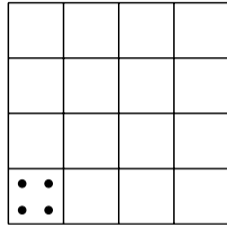


- Pre-asymptotic regime



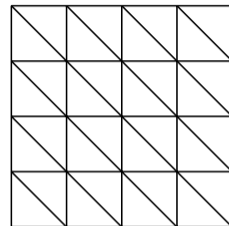
$$\frac{1}{t^2} \| \mathbf{E}(u_h) \|_{\mathbb{M}}^2$$

$$\frac{1}{t^2} \|\Pi_{L^2}^k \mathbf{E}(u_h)\|_{\mathbb{M}}^2$$

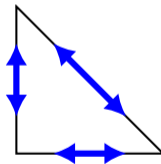



- Reduced integration for quadrilateral meshes

$$\frac{1}{t^2} \|\mathcal{I}_R^k \mathbf{E}(u_h)\|_{\mathbb{M}}^2$$

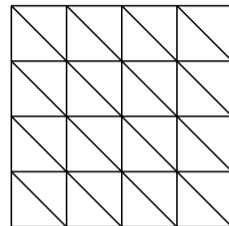


- Reduced integration for quadrilateral meshes
- Regge interpolant for triangles
- Connection to MITC shell elements

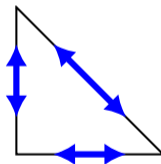



 N., SCHÖBERL: Avoiding membrane locking with Regge interpolation, *Comput. Methods Appl. Mech. Engrg* 373 (2021).

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{L}(u, \kappa^{\text{diff}}, \sigma) &= \frac{t}{2} \|\mathcal{I}_R^k \mathbf{E}(u)\|_{\mathcal{M}}^2 + \frac{t^3}{12} \|\kappa^{\text{diff}}\|_{\mathcal{M}}^2 - \langle f, u \rangle \\ &+ \sum_{T \in \mathcal{T}} \int_T (\kappa^{\text{diff}} - (\mathbf{F}^T \nabla(\nu \circ \phi) - \nabla \hat{\nu})) : \sigma \, dx \\ &- \sum_{E \in \mathcal{E}} \int_E (\check{\chi}_{\text{sgn}}(\nu_L, \nu_R) - \check{\chi}_{\text{sgn}}(\hat{\nu}_L, \hat{\nu}_R)) \sigma_{\hat{\mu}\hat{\mu}} \, ds \end{aligned}$$



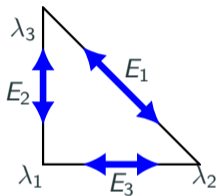
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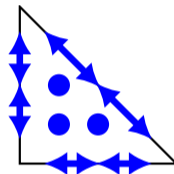
 N., SCHÖBERL: Avoiding membrane locking with Regge interpolation, *Comput. Methods Appl. Mech. Engrg* 373 (2021).

$$H(\text{curl curl}) := \{\sigma \in [L^2(\Omega)]_{\text{sym}}^{2 \times 2} \mid \text{curl curl } \sigma \in H^{-1}(\Omega)\}$$




$$\text{Reg}_h^k := \{\varepsilon \in [\mathcal{P}^k(\mathcal{T}_h)]_{\text{sym}}^{d \times d} \mid [[t^\top \varepsilon t]]_E = 0 \text{ for all edges } E\}$$



$$\varphi_{E_i} = \nabla \lambda_j \odot \nabla \lambda_k, \quad t_j^\top \varphi_{E_i} t_j = c_i \delta_{ij},$$

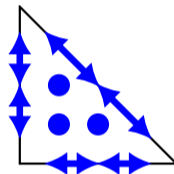
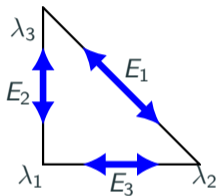


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-  CHRISTIANSEN: On the linearization of Regge calculus, *Numerische Mathematik* 119, 4 (2011).
-  LI: Regge Finite Elements with Applications in Solid Mechanics and Relativity, *PhD thesis, University of Minnesota* (2018).
-  N.: Mixed Finite Element Methods For Nonlinear Continuum Mechanics And Shells, *PhD thesis, TU Wien* (2021).

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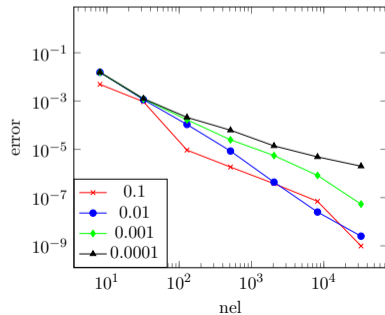
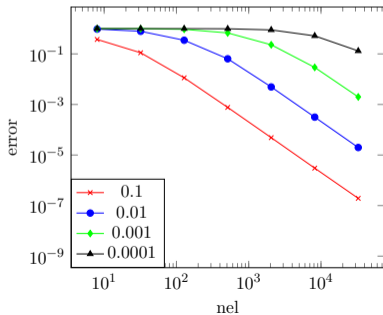
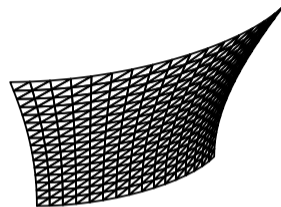
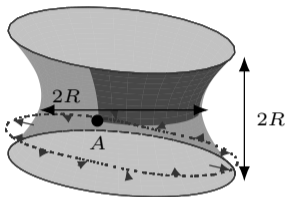
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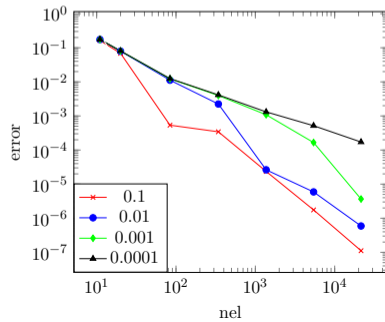
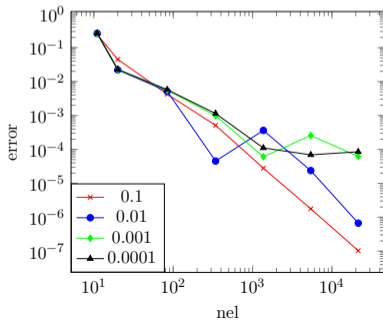
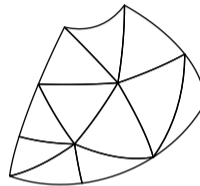
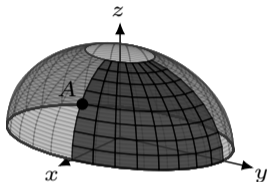
$$\varphi_{T_i} = \lambda_i \nabla \lambda_j \odot \nabla \lambda_k$$

$$\mathcal{I}_{\mathcal{R}}^k : C^0(\Omega) \rightarrow \text{Reg}_h^k \quad \text{canonical interpolant}$$

$$\int_E (g - \mathcal{I}_{\mathcal{R}}^k g)_{tt} q \, dl = 0 \text{ for all } q \in \mathcal{P}^k(E)$$

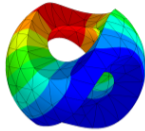
$$\int_T (g - \mathcal{I}_{\mathcal{R}}^k g) : Q \, dx = 0 \text{ for all } Q \in \mathcal{P}^{k-1}(T, \mathbb{R}_{\text{sym}}^{2 \times 2})$$





# Numerics & Applications

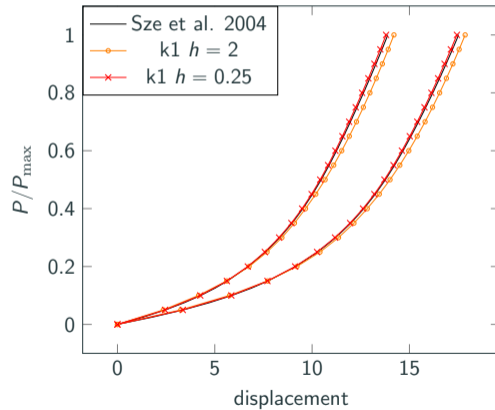
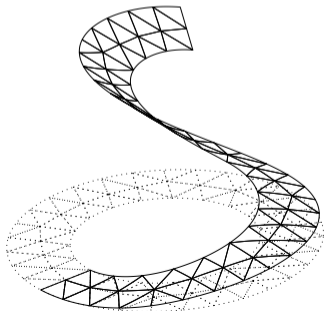
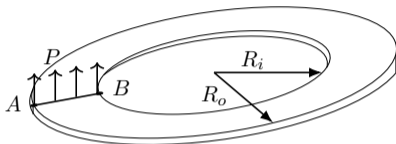
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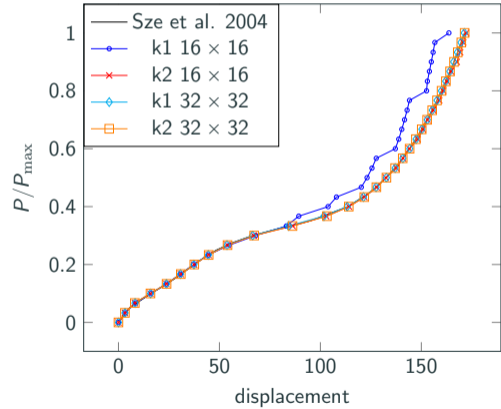
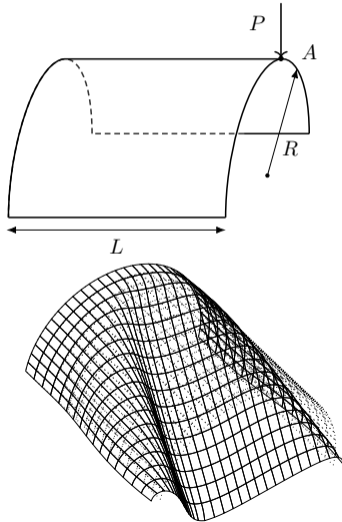


NGSolve

# Example (cantilever bending)

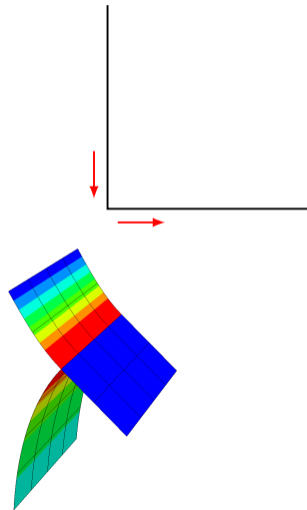
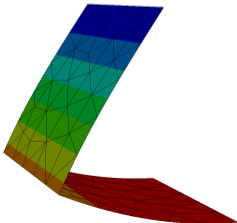
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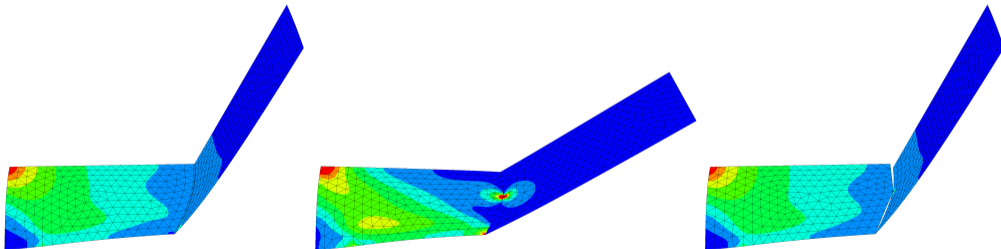
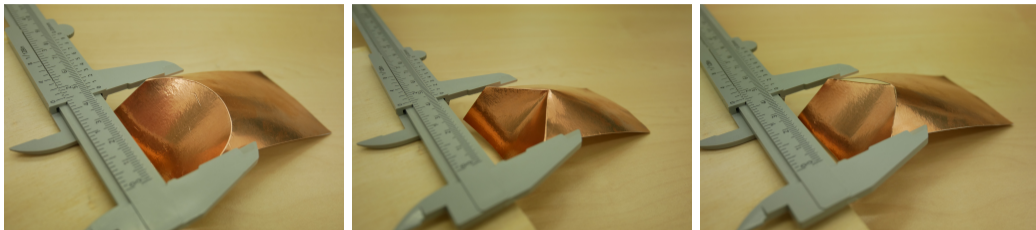





- Normal-normal continuous moment  $\sigma$
- Preserve kinks
- Variation of  $\mathcal{L}(u, \sigma)$  in direction  $\delta\sigma$

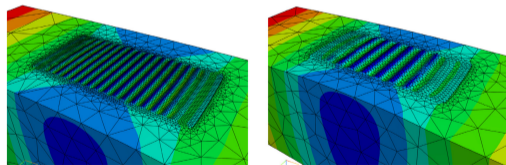
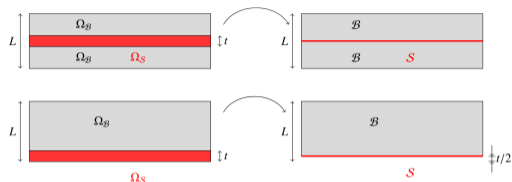
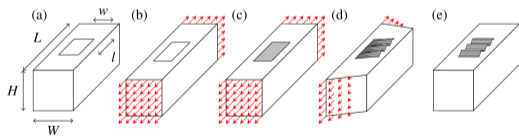
$$\int_E (\mathfrak{X}_{\text{sgn}}(\nu_L, \nu_R) - \mathfrak{X}_{\text{sgn}}(\hat{\nu}_L, \hat{\nu}_R)) \delta\sigma_{\hat{\mu}\hat{\mu}} ds \stackrel{!}{=} 0$$
$$\Rightarrow \mathfrak{X}_{\text{sgn}}(\nu_L, \nu_R) - \mathfrak{X}_{\text{sgn}}(\hat{\nu}_L, \hat{\nu}_R) = 0$$






 BARTELS, BONITO, HORNING, N., Babuška's paradox in a nonlinear bending-folding model, *Interfaces Free Bound.* (2026).

- Composite materials, blood vessels, etc.
- Lagrange elements for elasticity and shell displacement → easy to couple










 PECHSTEIN, N., Direct coupling of continuum and shell elements in large deformation problems, *Comput. Methods Appl. Mech. Engrg.* (2025)

- DDG + FEM: Generalized shape operator (Weingarten tensor)
- Bending energy for shell model
- Regge elements for membrane locking
- Applications (coupling, origami)
  
- Reissner–Mindlin/Naghdi shell
- Linear and nonlinear shell models

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**Thank You for Your attention!**

-  GOPALAKRISHNAN, N.: Analysis of generalized shape operator on surfaces (*in preparation*)
-  BARTELS, BONITO, HORNING, N., Babuška's paradox in a nonlinear bending-folding model, *Interfaces Free Bound.* (2026).
-  PECHSTEIN, N., Direct coupling of continuum and shell elements in large deformation problems, *Comput. Methods Appl. Mech. Engrg.* (2025)
-  N., SCHÖBERL: The Hellan–Herrmann–Johnson and TDNNS methods for linear and nonlinear shells, *Comput. Struct.* (2024)
-  N., SCHÖBERL: Avoiding membrane locking with Regge interpolation, *Comput. Methods Appl. Mech. Engrg* (2021).
-  N.: Mixed Finite Element Methods for Nonlinear Continuum Mechanics and Shells, *PhD thesis* (2021).
-  N., SCHÖBERL: The Hellan–Herrmann–Johnson method for nonlinear shells, *Comput. Struct.* (2019).