

Using ALE-VMS to compute aerodynamic derivatives of bridge sections

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Abstract

Aeroelastic analysis is a major task in the design of long-span bridges, and recent developments in computer power and technology have made Computational Fluid Dynamics (CFD) an important supplement to wind tunnel experiments. In this paper, we employ the Finite Element Method (FEM) with an effective mesh-moving algorithm to simulate the forced-vibration experiments of bridge sectional models. We have augmented the formulation with weakly-enforced essential boundary conditions, and a numerical example illustrates how weak enforcement of the no-slip boundary condition gives a very accurate representation of the aeroelastic forces in the case of relatively coarse boundary layer mesh resolution. To demonstrate the accuracy of the method for industrial applications, the complete aerodynamic derivatives for lateral, vertical and pitching degrees-of-freedom are

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computed for two bridge deck sectional models and compared with experimental wind-tunnel results. Although some discrepancies are seen in the high range of reduced velocities, the proposed numerical framework generally reproduces the experiments with good accuracy and proves to be a beneficial tool in simulation of bluff body aerodynamics for bridge design.

Keywords: Bridge aerodynamics, Aeroelasticity, Finite Element Method, Aerodynamic derivatives, ALE-VMS

1. Introduction

Although the Finite Volume Method (FVM) is the most widely-used and thoroughly validated method in Computational Fluid Dynamics (CFD), the Finite Element Method (FEM) has seen huge development in efficient and accurate modeling for CFD and Fluid–Structure Interaction (FSI) problems in the recent decades. An important advantage with FEM is its natural ability to handle deforming spatial domains, making it suitable for multi-physics simulations such as FSI. Moreover, the continuous field variables makes handling of derived quantities very convenient.

The core technology used in this work is the Arbitrary Lagrangian–Eulerian Variational Multiscale (ALE-VMS) formulation of the Navier–Stokes equations for incompressible flows [1–6] with weak enforcement of essential boundary conditions (BCs) [7–12]. The former may be viewed as an extension of the residual-based variational multiscale (RBVMS) method for turbulence modeling [13–15] to moving domains using the ALE technique [16], while the latter acts as a near-wall model and relaxes the boundary-layer resolution requirements for engineering applications without significant loss of solution accuracy. VMS methods, in

context of both ALE and space–time (ST) techniques, have been successfully applied to a wide range of engineering problems [4, 5, 11, 12, 17–53], including computation of aerodynamic derivatives in 2D [54].

To guarantee good mesh quality near the bridge surface during forced-vibration simulations, the Solid-Extension Mesh Moving Technique (SEMMT) was adopted [55–60]. In this approach, structured layers of elements generated around the solid object move together with solid object, undergoing a rigid-body motion, and thus preserving the original mesh quality. With this computational framework we compute the aerodynamic derivatives from 3D numerical simulations of the forced-vibration experiments and compare with corresponding wind tunnel experiments for two carefully chosen sections: A rectangular prism with aspect ratio 10, and a 1:50 scale model of the Hardanger bridge [61]. The rectangular prism, characterized by strongly detached flows at the leading edge, represents the classical example in bluff body aerodynamics and its flutter characteristics have been studied numerically using FVM and various turbulence models in, e.g., [62–64]. The Hardanger Bridge, with a more streamlined shape, represents the new generation of long-span suspension bridges with highly optimized aerodynamic design. A fully coupled free-vibration Fluid-Object Interaction (FOI) simulation of the same bridge was carried out in [65]. Numerous forced-vibration experiments of similar generic bridge sections have been performed numerically in, e.g., [66–69] including 2D FEM in [54, 70].

The simulations carried out in this paper have been designed to reproduce the experimental setup as closely as possible, and since the wind tunnel tests presented herein are performed specifically for this work, we are to a much greater extent able to compare and evaluate the results down to each time series. A description

of our forced-vibration experimental setup are given in [71].

We consider an extruded slice of the bridge deck, which is treated as a rigid object. Because the deck motion is prescribed in forced-vibration, this type of problem gives a one-way dependence between the fluid mesh and fluid mechanics problem. In the fluid mesh problem the boundary layer elements, which constitute a significant portion of the nodal degrees-of-freedom, are treated as rigid. This results in a computationally efficient solution of the fluid mesh problem while keeping the mesh distortion at a minimum.

The governing equations are presented in Sec. 2 and the discrete ALE-VMS formulation with weakly-enforced BCs is presented in Sec. 3. Sec. 4 presents aeroelastic forces in the context of bridge engineering and in Sec. 5 the analysis setup is presented. Numerical results are given in Sec. 6, and conclusions are drawn in Sec. 7.

2. Governing equations for fluid mechanics in moving domains

In this section we present the Navier-Stokes equations for incompressible flows in an ALE description. Let $\hat{\Omega} \in \mathbb{R}^{n_{sd}}$, $n_{sd} = 2, 3$, represent the reference fluid mechanics domain with coordinates $\hat{\mathbf{x}}$ and boundary $\hat{\Gamma}$, and let $\Omega_t \in \mathbb{R}^{n_{sd}}$, $n_{sd} = 2, 3$, represent the current-configuration fluid mechanics domain with coordinates \mathbf{x} and boundary Γ_t . The ALE mapping is given by the time-dependent displacements of the fluid domain, $\hat{\mathbf{y}}(\hat{\mathbf{x}}, t)$:

$$\mathbf{x}(t) = \hat{\mathbf{x}} + \hat{\mathbf{y}}(\hat{\mathbf{x}}, t). \quad (1)$$

See Fig. 1. We let \mathcal{S}_u and \mathcal{S}_p denote the appropriate sets of infinite-dimensional trial functions for the fluid velocity \mathbf{u} and pressure p , respectively, and we de-

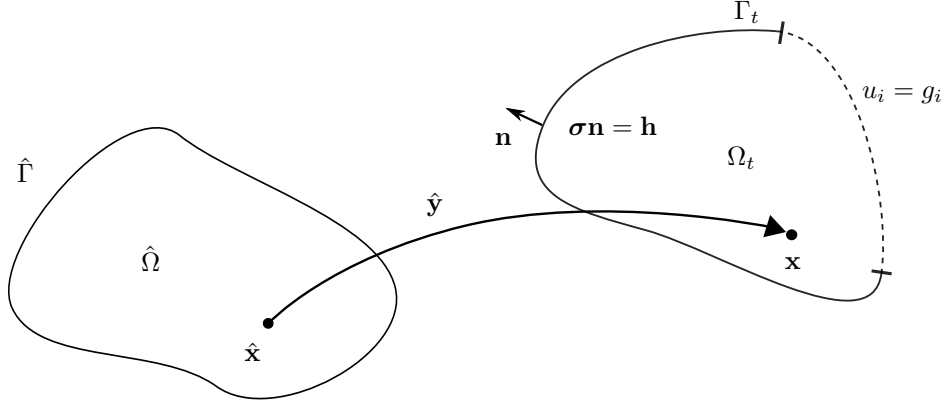


Figure 1: Fluid domain and its boundary with outward normal vector \mathbf{n} in the reference and current configuration.

find their corresponding test functions \mathcal{V}_u and \mathcal{V}_p . The trial functions satisfy the essential boundary conditions $u_i = g_i$ on the $(\Gamma_t)_{g_i}$ part of Γ_t .

The variational formulation of the fluid mechanics problem is stated in terms of the semi-linear and linear forms B and F , respectively, as follows. Find $\mathbf{u} \in \mathcal{S}_u$ and $p \in \mathcal{S}_p$, such that $\forall \mathbf{w} \in \mathcal{V}_u$ and $q \in \mathcal{V}_p$:

$$B(\{\mathbf{w}, q\}, \{\mathbf{u}, p\}; \hat{\mathbf{u}}) - F(\{\mathbf{w}, q\}) = 0, \quad (2)$$

where

$$\begin{aligned} B(\{\mathbf{w}, q\}, \{\mathbf{u}, p\}; \hat{\mathbf{u}}) = & \int_{\Omega_t} \mathbf{w} \cdot \rho \left(\left. \frac{\partial \mathbf{u}}{\partial t} \right|_{\hat{\mathbf{x}}} + (\mathbf{u} - \hat{\mathbf{u}}) \cdot \nabla \mathbf{u} \right) d\Omega \\ & + \int_{\Omega_t} \boldsymbol{\varepsilon}(\mathbf{w}) : \boldsymbol{\sigma}(\mathbf{u}, p) d\Omega + \int_{\Omega_t} q \nabla \cdot \mathbf{u} d\Omega, \end{aligned} \quad (3)$$

and

$$F(\{\mathbf{w}, q\}) = \int_{\Omega_t} \mathbf{w} \cdot \rho \mathbf{f} d\Omega + \int_{(\Gamma_t)_h} \mathbf{w} \cdot \mathbf{h} d\Gamma. \quad (4)$$

Here, ρ is the density, \mathbf{f} the body forces, \mathbf{h} the prescribed surface tractions on the $(\Gamma_t)_h$ part of Γ_t and $\hat{\mathbf{u}} = \frac{\partial \hat{\mathbf{y}}}{\partial t} \Big|_{\hat{x}}$ is the fluid domain velocity. The Cauchy stress tensor $\boldsymbol{\sigma}$ is defined as:

$$\boldsymbol{\sigma}(\mathbf{u}, p) = -p\mathbf{I} + 2\mu\boldsymbol{\varepsilon}(\mathbf{u}), \quad (5)$$

where \mathbf{I} is the identity tensor, μ the dynamic viscosity and $\boldsymbol{\varepsilon}(\mathbf{u})$ the symmetric strain-rate tensor of \mathbf{u} , given by:

$$\boldsymbol{\varepsilon}(\mathbf{u}) = \frac{1}{2} (\nabla \mathbf{u} + \nabla \mathbf{u}^T). \quad (6)$$

3. Discrete ALE-VMS formulation with weakly-enforced BCs

In the following we present the ALE-VMS formulation with weakly-enforced boundary conditions and the mesh-moving strategy for forced-vibration analyses. At the discrete level the fluid domain is partitioned into n_{el} finite element subdomains Ω_t^e , and the boundary Γ_t is decomposed into n_{eb} surface elements denoted Γ_t^b . We define the finite-dimensional functional spaces for velocity, pressure and fluid mesh displacement respectively as \mathcal{S}_u^h , \mathcal{S}_p^h and \mathcal{S}_m^h , and their corresponding test functions as \mathcal{V}_u^h , \mathcal{V}_p^h and \mathcal{V}_m^h . Superscript h indicates that its attribute is finite-dimensional.

The ALE-VMS formulation augmented with weakly-enforced BCs is then given: Find $\mathbf{u}^h \in \mathcal{S}_u^h$, $p^h \in \mathcal{S}_p^h$ and $\hat{\mathbf{y}}^h \in \mathcal{S}_m^h$, such that $\forall \mathbf{w}^h \in \mathcal{V}_u^h$, $q^h \in \mathcal{V}_p^h$ and $\mathbf{w}_m^h \in \mathcal{V}_m^h$:

$$\begin{aligned}
& B^{VMS} (\{\mathbf{w}^h, q^h\}, \{\mathbf{u}^h, p^h\}; \hat{\mathbf{u}}^h) \\
& + B^{WBC} (\{\mathbf{w}^h, q^h\}, \{\mathbf{u}^h, p^h\}; \hat{\mathbf{u}}^h) \\
& - F^{VMS} (\{\mathbf{w}^h, q^h\}) \\
& + B^{MSH} (\{\mathbf{w}_m^h\}, \hat{\mathbf{y}}^h(t)) = 0,
\end{aligned} \tag{7}$$

where

$$\begin{aligned}
B^{VMS} (\{\mathbf{w}^h, q^h\}, \{\mathbf{u}^h, p^h\}; \hat{\mathbf{u}}^h) = & \\
& \int_{\Omega_t} \mathbf{w}^h \cdot \rho \left(\frac{\partial \mathbf{u}^h}{\partial t} \Big|_{\hat{\mathbf{x}}} + (\mathbf{u}^h - \hat{\mathbf{u}}^h) \cdot \nabla \mathbf{u}^h \right) d\Omega \\
& + \int_{\Omega_t} \boldsymbol{\varepsilon}(\mathbf{w}^h) : \boldsymbol{\sigma}(\mathbf{u}^h, p^h) d\Omega + \int_{\Omega_t} q^h \nabla \cdot \mathbf{u}^h d\Omega \\
& + \sum_{e=1}^{n_{el}} \int_{\Omega_t^e} \tau_{\text{SUPS}} \left((\mathbf{u}^h - \hat{\mathbf{u}}^h) \cdot \nabla \mathbf{w}^h + \frac{\nabla q^h}{\rho} \right) \cdot \\
& \quad \mathbf{r}_M (\mathbf{u}^h, p^h) d\Omega \\
& + \sum_{e=1}^{n_{el}} \int_{\Omega_t^e} \rho \nu_{\text{LSIC}} \nabla \cdot \mathbf{w}^h \mathbf{r}_C (\mathbf{u}^h) d\Omega \\
& - \sum_{e=1}^{n_{el}} \int_{\Omega_t^e} \tau_{\text{SUPS}} \mathbf{w}^h \cdot (\mathbf{r}_M (\mathbf{u}^h, p^h) \cdot \nabla \mathbf{u}^h) d\Omega \\
& - \sum_{e=1}^{n_{el}} \int_{\Omega_t^e} \frac{\nabla \mathbf{w}^h}{\rho} : (\tau_{\text{SUPS}} \mathbf{r}_M (\mathbf{u}^h, p^h)) \otimes \\
& \quad (\tau_{\text{SUPS}} \mathbf{r}_M (\mathbf{u}^h, p^h)) d\Omega,
\end{aligned} \tag{8}$$

$$F^{VMS} (\{\mathbf{w}^h, q^h\}) = \int_{\Omega_t} \mathbf{w}^h \cdot \rho \mathbf{f}^h d\Omega + \int_{(\Gamma_t)_h} \mathbf{w}^h \cdot \mathbf{h}^h d\Gamma, \tag{9}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
B^{WBC} (\{\mathbf{w}^h, q^h\}, \{\mathbf{u}^h, p^h\}; \hat{\mathbf{u}}^h) = & \\
& - \sum_{b=1}^{n_{eb}} \int_{\Gamma_t^b \cap (\Gamma_t)_g} \mathbf{w}^h \cdot \boldsymbol{\sigma}(\mathbf{u}^h, p^h) \mathbf{n} \, d\Gamma \\
& - \sum_{b=1}^{n_{eb}} \int_{\Gamma_t^b \cap (\Gamma_t)_g} (2\mu \boldsymbol{\varepsilon}(\mathbf{w}^h) \mathbf{n} + q^h \mathbf{n}) \cdot (\mathbf{u}^h - \mathbf{g}^h) \, d\Gamma \\
& - \sum_{b=1}^{n_{eb}} \int_{\Gamma_t^b \cap (\Gamma_t)_g^-} \mathbf{w}^h \cdot \rho ((\mathbf{u}^h - \hat{\mathbf{u}}^h) \cdot \mathbf{n}) (\mathbf{u}^h - \mathbf{g}^h) \, d\Gamma \\
& + \sum_{b=1}^{n_{eb}} \int_{\Gamma_t^b \cap (\Gamma_t)_g} \tau_{\text{TAN}}^B (\mathbf{w}^h - (\mathbf{w}^h \cdot \mathbf{n}) \mathbf{n}) \cdot \\
& \quad ((\mathbf{u}^h - \mathbf{g}^h) ((\mathbf{u}^h - \mathbf{g}^h) \cdot \mathbf{n}) \mathbf{n}) \, d\Gamma \\
& + \sum_{b=1}^{n_{eb}} \int_{\Gamma_t^b \cap (\Gamma_t)_g} \tau_{\text{NOR}}^B (\mathbf{w}^h \cdot \mathbf{n}) ((\mathbf{u}^h - \mathbf{g}^h) \cdot \mathbf{n}) \, d\Gamma. \tag{10}
\end{aligned}$$

and

$$\begin{aligned}
B^{MSH} (\{\mathbf{w}_m^h\}, \hat{\mathbf{y}}^h(t)) = & \\
& \int_{\Omega_{\tilde{t}}} \boldsymbol{\varepsilon}(\mathbf{w}_m^h) : \mathbf{D}^h \boldsymbol{\varepsilon} (\hat{\mathbf{y}}^h(t) - \hat{\mathbf{y}}^h(\tilde{t})) \, d\Omega. \tag{11}
\end{aligned}$$

Eq. (8) introduces the stabilization parameters τ_{SUPS} and ν_{LSIC} . These have been designed to provide good stability and optimal convergence of the discrete formulation through extensive studies [7–9, 11, 13, 14, 17, 19, 25, 41, 53, 72–83]. In this work we use the definitions given in [80]. In Eq. (10) τ_{TAN} and τ_{NOR} are boundary penalty parameters for the tangential and normal directions, respectively, as defined in [9], and $(\Gamma_t)_g^-$ is defined as the inflow part of $(\Gamma_t)_g$:

$$(\Gamma_t)_g^- = \left\{ \mathbf{x} \mid (\mathbf{u}^h - \hat{\mathbf{u}}^h) \cdot \mathbf{n} < 0, \forall \mathbf{x} \in (\Gamma_t)_g \right\}. \tag{12}$$

\mathbf{r}_M and r_C are residuals of the linear-momentum and continuity differential equa-

tions, respectively, given by:

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{r}_M(\mathbf{u}^h, p^h) = & \rho \left(\frac{\partial \mathbf{u}^h}{\partial t} \Big|_{\hat{x}} + (\mathbf{u}^h - \hat{\mathbf{u}}^h) \cdot \nabla \mathbf{u}^h - \mathbf{f}^h \right) \\ & - \nabla \cdot \boldsymbol{\sigma}(\mathbf{u}^h, p^h), \end{aligned} \quad (13)$$

$$\mathbf{r}_C(\mathbf{u}^h, p^h) = \nabla \cdot \mathbf{u}^h. \quad (14)$$

The fluid mesh part of the problem, Eq. (11), is the linear-elastic equation with the elastic tensor \mathbf{D}^h defined on a “nearby configuration” $\Omega_{\tilde{t}}$ at time $\tilde{t} < t$. In practice, \tilde{t} is taken at the previous time step. For mesh deformation we adopted Jacobian-based stiffening [55–57].

The fluid mesh displacements $\hat{\mathbf{y}}^h$ and velocities $\hat{\mathbf{u}}^h$ are prescribed on all boundaries. For a boundary, such as the bridge deck, that undergoes forced-vibration we have employed the boundary conditions as follows. Let $\hat{\mathbf{x}}_I^h$ and $\hat{\mathbf{x}}_{0,I}^h$ denote the reference coordinates of the fluid-object interface and its centroid, respectively. For an arbitrary rigid-body displacement $\hat{\mathbf{y}}_{0,I}^h(t)$ and rotation $\theta(t)$ of the centroid, the displacement of the interface $\hat{\mathbf{y}}_I^h(t)$ is taken as:

$$\hat{\mathbf{y}}_I^h(t) = (\mathbf{R}(\theta(t)) - \mathbf{I}) (\hat{\mathbf{x}}_I^h - \hat{\mathbf{x}}_{0,I}^h) + \hat{\mathbf{y}}_{0,I}^h(t) \quad (15)$$

where $\mathbf{R}(\theta(t))$ is the rotation tensor. The fluid-object interface velocity $\hat{\mathbf{u}}_I^h$ is obtained by the time derivative of $\hat{\mathbf{y}}_I^h$.

We use the Generalized- α method (see [80, 84, 85]) for time integration of the ALE-VMS equations. Within each time step we perform a single mesh solve followed by predictor-multicorrector Newton–Raphson iterations for the fluid mechanics problem.

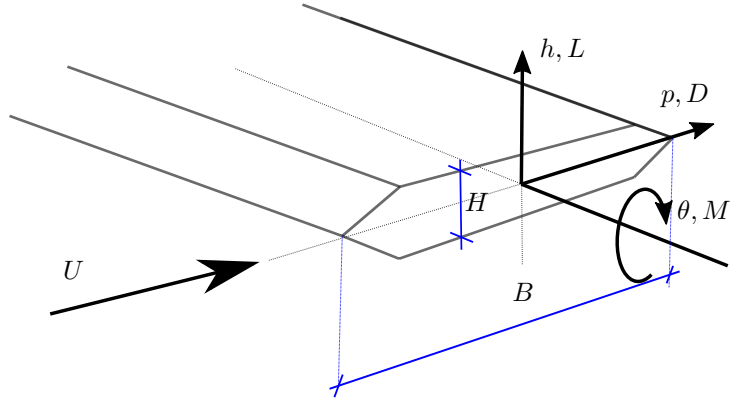


Figure 2: Aerodynamic forces on a bridge section.

4. Aeroelastic forces

With reference to quasi-steady theory [86] and the strip method [87], the aeroelastic forces on a line-like bluff body with width B and height H are given by the instantaneous drag, lift and pitching moment per unit length, denoted $D(t)$, $L(t)$ and $M(t)$, respectively. These are commonly given in terms of their dimensionless load coefficients, $C_D(t)$, $C_L(t)$ and $C_M(t)$, defined as:

$$C_D(t) = \frac{D(t)}{\frac{1}{2}\rho U^2 H}, \quad C_L(t) = \frac{L(t)}{\frac{1}{2}\rho U^2 B}, \quad C_M(t) = \frac{M(t)}{\frac{1}{2}\rho U^2 B^2}, \quad (16)$$

following the notation and conventions in Fig. 2. Fig. 2 also defines the three degrees-of-freedom p , h and θ with respect to the bridge deck centroid which defines the bridge deck motion. U is the mean wind velocity.

Following Theodorsen's theory [88], Scanlan and coworkers proposed an empirical expression for the motion-induced contribution to the aerodynamic forces [89], where the self-excited drag, lift and pitching moment, $D_{se}(t)$, $L_{se}(t)$ and

$M_{se}(t)$, respectively, are given as:

$$D_{se} = \frac{1}{2}\rho U^2 BK \left[P_1^* \frac{\dot{p}}{U} + P_5^* \frac{\dot{h}}{U} + P_2^* \frac{B\dot{\theta}}{U} + KP_4^* \frac{p}{B} + KP_6^* \frac{h}{B} + KP_3^* \theta \right], \quad (17)$$

$$L_{se} = \frac{1}{2}\rho U^2 BK \left[H_5^* \frac{\dot{p}}{U} + H_1^* \frac{\dot{h}}{U} + H_2^* \frac{B\dot{\theta}}{U} + KH_6^* \frac{p}{B} + KH_4^* \frac{h}{B} + KH_3^* \theta \right], \quad (18)$$

$$M_{se} = \frac{1}{2}\rho U^2 B^2 K \left[A_5^* \frac{\dot{p}}{U} + A_1^* \frac{\dot{h}}{U} + A_2^* \frac{B\dot{\theta}}{U} + KA_6^* \frac{p}{B} + KA_4^* \frac{h}{B} + KA_3^* \theta \right], \quad (19)$$

where P_i^* , H_i^* and A_i^* , $i = \{1..6\}$ are the so-called aerodynamic derivatives [89–91]. These shape-dependent parameters may be regarded as transfer functions between body motion and self-excited forces, and are commonly expressed in conjunction with the reduced frequency, defined as $K = B\omega/U$, or the reduced velocity, $V_{red} = K^{-1}$, where ω is the angular frequency of the structural motion. These aerodynamic derivatives are essential to assess the dynamic performance and predict the critical wind speed of a dynamic system. Analogue to Eq. (16) it is convenient to express the self-excited forces in terms of normalized load coefficients, defined as:

$$C_{D,se} = \frac{D_{se}(t)}{\frac{1}{2}\rho U^2 H}, \quad C_{L,se} = \frac{L_{se}(t)}{\frac{1}{2}\rho U^2 B}, \quad C_{M,se} = \frac{M_{se}(t)}{\frac{1}{2}\rho U^2 B^2}. \quad (20)$$

As an alternative to the free-vibration wind tunnel experiment [92], the forced-vibration experiment [93] has proven to be an efficient and repeatable method to obtain the flutter characteristics of bridge sections [94, 95]. In this experiment the sectional model is driven in a user-defined motion by a vibration excitation system. The forces are simultaneously measured by force-transducers. A detailed

description of the experimental setup is given in [71]. All experiments should however be considered with some uncertainty, as it has been pointed out in [96] that laboratory environment or operational conditions might have a non-negligible effect on the aeroelastic forces.

5. Analysis setup

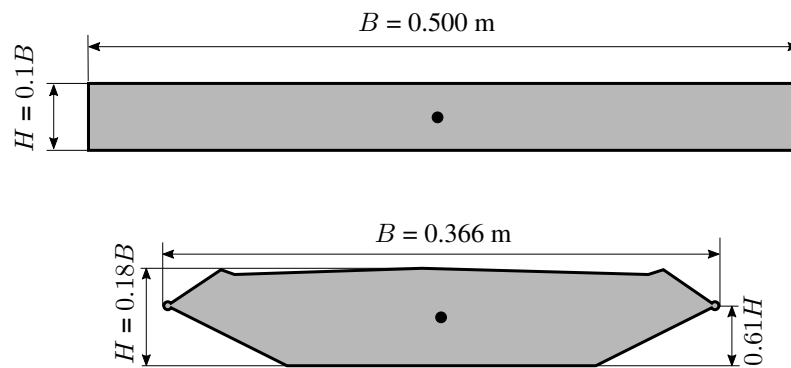


Figure 3: Cross sections considered. BH10: rectangular prism with aspect ratio $B/H = 10$ (above) and HAD3: 1:50 scaled model of the Hardanger bridge section (below).

The two sections shown in Fig. 3 are considered. The rectangular prism with aspect ratio $B/H = 10$, referred to as BH10, represents the classical example in the study of bluff body aerodynamics, and with its characteristic detached flows at the leading edge it is also often considered as a representative of many types of bridge sections. The other section is a 1:50 scale of the Hardanger bridge [61], referred to as HAD3. In this work we consider the "clean deck", without details as pavement and guide vanes. This model represents a new generation of suspension bridges with highly optimized aerodynamic design. Although this cross section is more streamlined, it still exhibit bluff body-like flow characteristics due to the high Reynold's numbers.

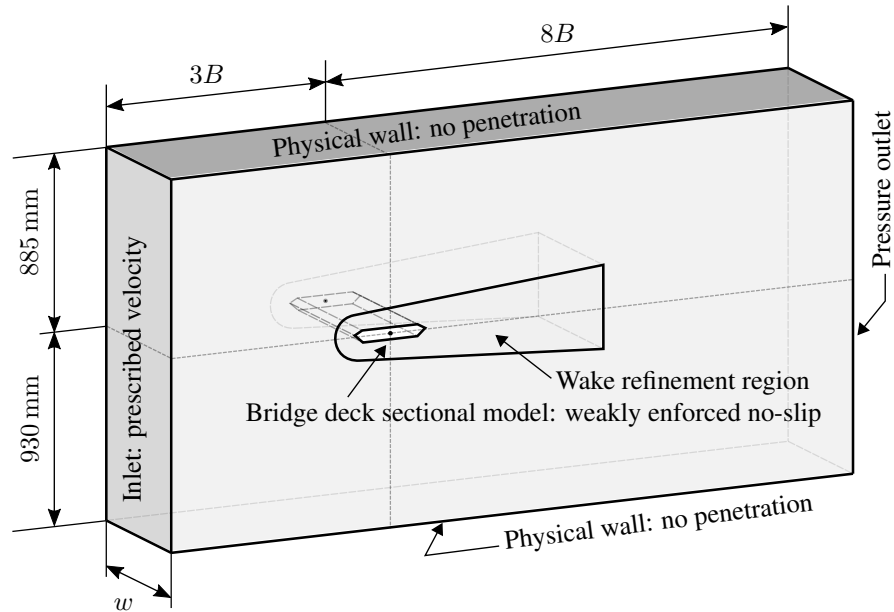
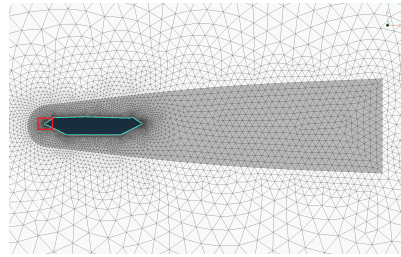


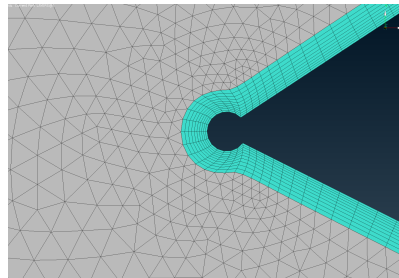
Figure 4: Outline of the computational domain showing dimensions and adopted boundary conditions.

The computational domain is taken as a box that represents a slice of the wind tunnel. The inflow and outflow surfaces are placed approximately $3B$ and $8B$ from the bridge deck centroid, respectively. For the upper and lower boundaries of the domain we have used the physical dimensions of the wind tunnel with a total height of 1815 mm and the deck centroid placed 930 mm above the floor, as shown in Fig. 4. The physical width of the wind tunnel, i.e. the length of the sectional model, is 2730 mm. The computational width is, however, reduced to 500 mm. In the parameter study in Sec. 6 this proves sufficiently wide to capture the three-dimensional flow structures, which were shown to have a non-negligible effect on the aerodynamic forces in [66] and [97].

For the fluid mechanics boundary conditions, smooth flow with wind velocity U is prescribed on the inflow surface. The walls, including the transverse bound-



(a) Wake refinement region.



(b) Boundary layer elements.

Figure 5: Close-up view of the fluid mechanics mesh near the bridge deck.

aries, are constrained with no penetration, and on the bridge deck the weakly-enforced no-slip boundary condition is employed. The outflow surface is traction-free.

An interior surface enclosing the bridge deck, shown in Fig. 5a, defines a wake refinement region which is used to perform local mesh refinement and employ mesh moving boundary conditions. The wake refinement region is constrained by Eq. (15) to follow the vertical and horizontal motions of the bridge deck and rotate with half the magnitude. With this setup, mesh distortion is kept at a minimum while keeping the region of the refined mesh at the wake, even for relatively large rotations.

For discretization all surfaces are meshed with unstructured linear triangles. Prismatic elements extruded from the bridge deck surface define the boundary

layers, as shown in Fig. 5b. In this work the number of boundary layers is set to 10. For the fluid mesh problem these elements are treated rigidly, which besides eliminating mesh distortion near the bridge deck also reduce the fluid mesh problem significantly, as the boundary layers typically constitute nearly half of the nodes in the computational model. The remaining volumes are meshed with linear tetrahedrons.

With a total grid size of 8.3×10^5 and 1.1×10^6 nodes for BH10 and HAD3, respectively, an effective computation relies on a parallel implementation. The computations in this work make use of the Message Passing Interface (MPI) libraries adopted from [98] and [99].

The air density, ρ , is set to 1.225 kg/m^3 and the dynamic viscosity, μ , is set equal to $1.7894 \times 10^{-5} \text{ kg/ms}$. The computational time stepping has been set to approximately $1 \times 10^{-3} B/U$, giving a maximum Courant number below 2.5 at the smallest boundary layer elements.

The forced-vibration experiment is relatively easy to investigate numerically, as no momentum equations need to be solved for the structure and the fluid mechanics and the fluid mesh blocks can be solved separately. With the sectional model restricted to the three degree-of-freedom p , h and θ , with reference to Fig. 2, its motion can be described in the 2D ph -plane. With the strip method we also consider the bridge deck as a rigid body.

Following the wind tunnel experiments [71] we excite the sectional models in a single harmonic motion with amplitudes of 15 mm for p and h , and 2° for θ . For each motion we have studied wind velocities of $U = 4$ and 8 m/s and vibration frequencies of $f_j = 1.1, 0.8$ and 0.5 Hz , $j = \{p, h, \theta\}$, rendering reduced velocities, V_{red} between 1.2 and 7.0 and Reynolds numbers in the range of $1.0 - 2.0 \times 10^5$

for HAD3 and $1.4 - 2.7 \times 10^5$ for BH10. As a verification, some analyses are performed for other combinations of U and f giving the same V_{red} .

The self-excited forces are taken as the total aerodynamic forces detrended over the last whole number of displacement cycles. The aerodynamic derivatives are then identified by least squares fitting of Eqs. (17) – (19), as described in [71].

6. Results

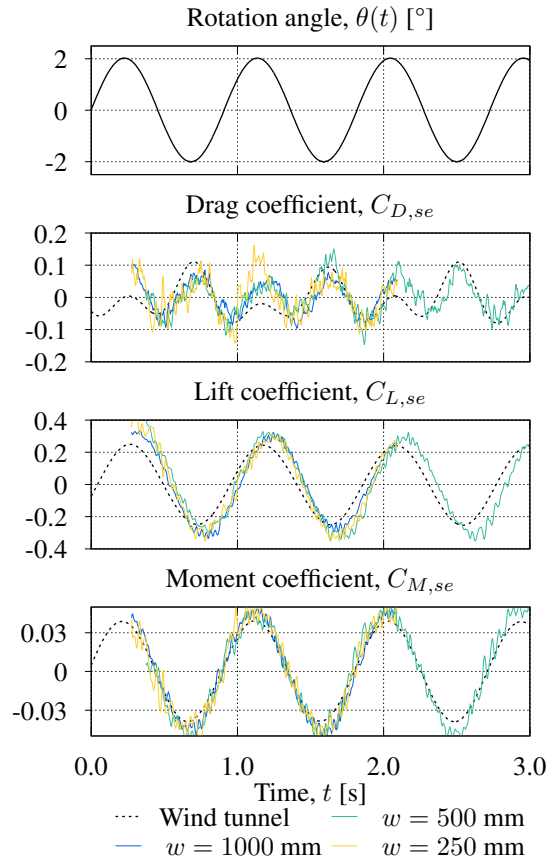


Figure 6: The effect of domain width on the self-excited force coefficients for BH10. $Re = 2.7 \times 10^5$, $V_{red} = 4.3$ ($U = 8$ m/s and $f_\theta = 1.1$ Hz).

In this section we present the numerical results. The aeroelastic forces are

mainly given in terms of the normalized load coefficients (Eqs. (16) and (20)), or in terms of the aerodynamic derivatives. All comparisons between simulations and experiments are conducted with the self-excited forces due to inaccurate calibration of the absolute forces, which cancels out when the in-wind measurements are subtracted from the corresponding still-air measurements. To the experimental data, a numerical Butterworth filter [100] with low-pass frequency of 3 Hz is applied to remove electrical noise and forces originating from vibration of the sectional models. This issue is closely discussed in [71]. For the simulations, however, where no such disturbances occur, we prefer to represent time series either without any numerical filters or with both the filtered and the unfiltered forces.

A parameter study of the domain width is presented in Fig. 6. From the insignificant difference between the self-excited forces for domain widths in the range of 250 to 1000 mm, it is evident that the three-dimensional effects are sufficiently captured for the present study. As a consequence of the decreasing correlation between the force fluctuations in the transverse direction, these become less evident with the increasing domain width. This effect is most clearly seen in drag comparing $w = 250$ mm and $w = 500$ mm. Throughout the rest of this work, the domain width is set to $w = 500$ mm.

To ensure that the self-excited forces from the numerical analyses can be regarded as a stationary process we start sampling them at a time period of approximately $t = 5.5B/U$ after the deck is set to motion. At this time the effects of the initial condition is no longer present in the case of non-moving decks and the forces pose stable behavior, as seen in Fig. 7. We have assumed that the same initialization time applies to the forced-vibration case. Note that for all analyses

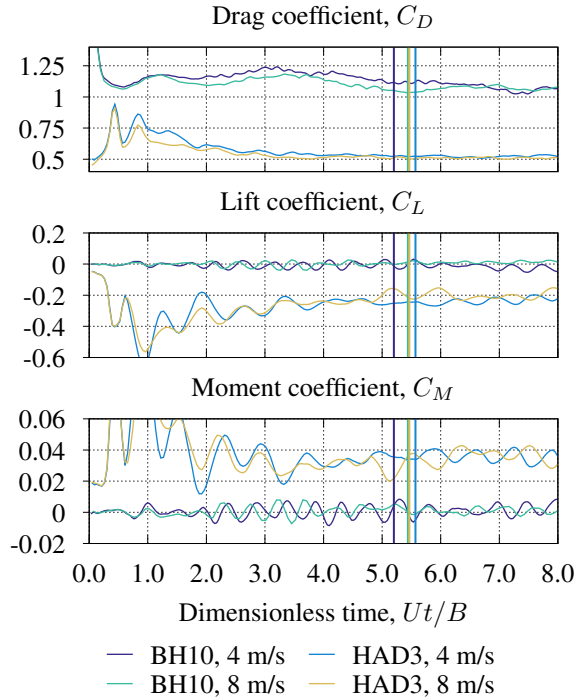


Figure 7: Development of total forces on BH10 and HAD3 with various wind speeds for a stationary simulation. The initial conditions, i.e. at $t = 0$, the flow is uniform in the entire domain.

the simulation is run for 1 s before the deck is set in motion. The aerodynamic derivatives are computed from two cycles, which in [101] has proven to be a good compromise between accuracy and computational efficiency.

We do not present any full convergence study herein. However, in Fig. 8 the self-excited forces for a selected forced-vibration analysis (BH10 with $U = 8$ m/s and $f_\theta = 1.1$ Hz) are compared using half the time step ($\Delta t/2$), and doubled mesh density also using half the time step (Δt , Refined). The latter yield a Courant number approximately equal to the original analysis. The results are indistinguishable and suggest that the numerical solution has converged.

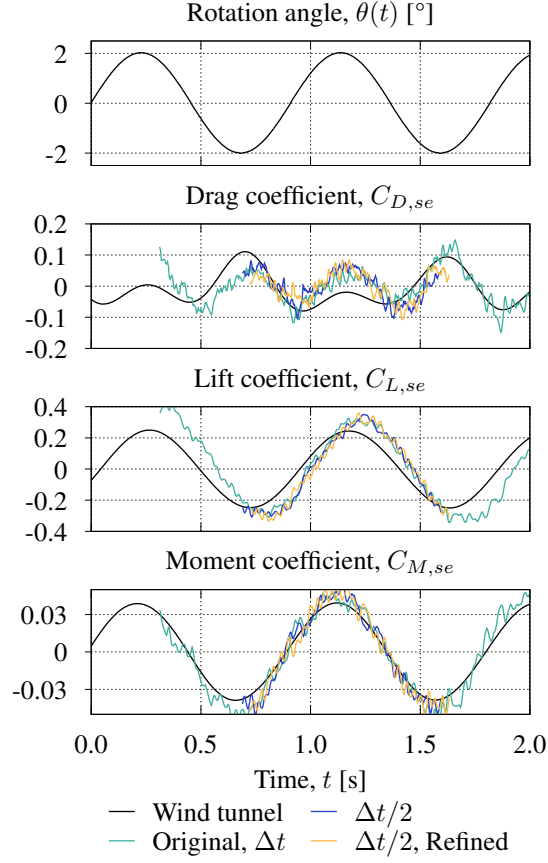


Figure 8: Convergence with respect to computational time stepping and mesh refinement of self-excited forces for the BH10 section with $V_{red} = 2.3$ ($U = 8$ m/s and $f_{\theta} = 1.1$ Hz).

6.1. The role of weakly-enforced essential boundary conditions

To demonstrate the ability of the ALE-VMS method with weakly-enforced BCs to deal with relatively coarse boundary meshes on bluff body aerodynamics we have employed both the classical strongly-enforced, and the weakly-enforced no-slip boundary conditions on a forced-vibration simulation of the HAD3 section. For this study we take the original mesh setup described in Sec. 5 as the reference analysis and compare with a relatively coarse mesh without the prismatic boundary layer elements. On this mesh the number of nodes is reduced by

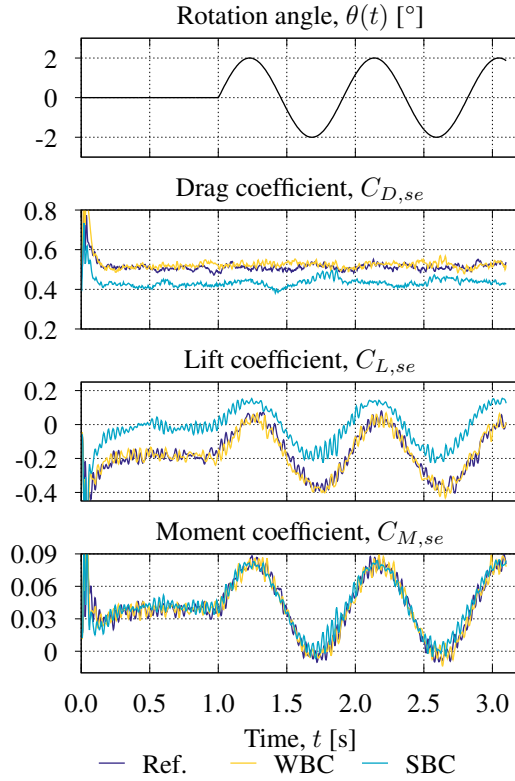


Figure 9: Load coefficients HAD3 at $Re = 2 \times 10^5$ with $U = 8$ m/s, $f_\theta = 1.1$ Hz and $w = 500$ mm obtained with weakly- and strongly-enforced BCs (WBC and SBC, respectively) for a coarse mesh. Reference solution represents a fine mesh with strongly-enforced BCs.

85 % to 150×10^3 nodes.

Fig. 9 shows the total load coefficients for drag, lift and pitching moment for the pitching mode with $V_{red} = 3.2$ ($f_\theta = 1.1$ Hz and $U = 8$ m/s) and unsurprisingly, the weak BCs outperform the strong in terms of accuracy. While the strong BCs underestimate the magnitudes of both drag and lift for such coarse discretizations, the weakly-enforced BCs captures the reference solution with very good accuracy.

The strong BCs forms artificially thick boundary layers retarding the flow and

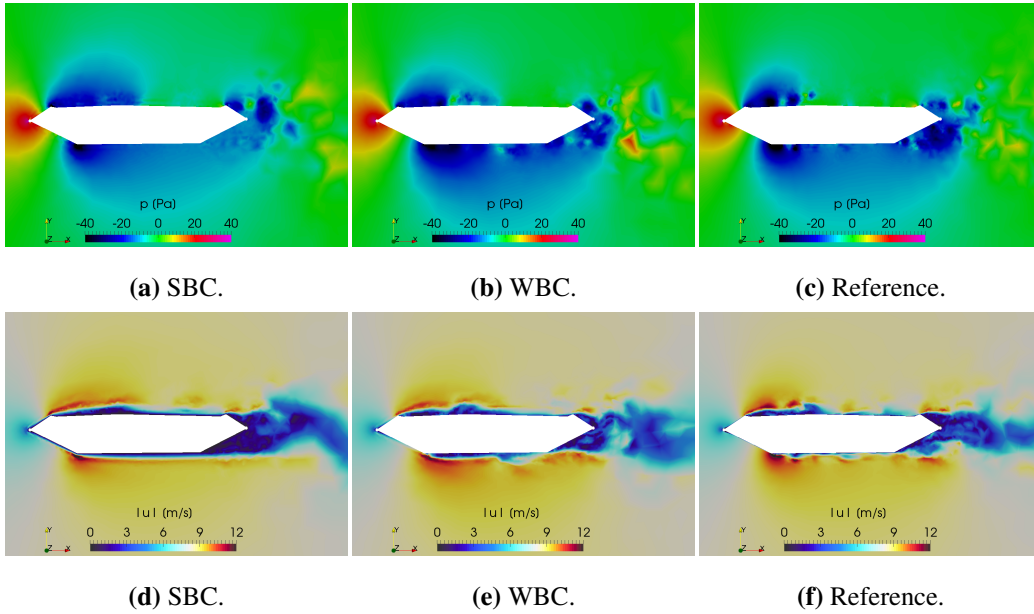


Figure 10: Pressure (top) and air speed contours (bottom) for HAD3 at $t = 2.40$ s for the $u = 8$ m/s and $f = 1.1$ Hz forced vibration simulation. (a) and (d): Strongly-enforced BCs (SBC), (b) and (e): Weakly-enforced BCs (WBC), (c) and (f): Reference analysis.

makes it behave more viscous. The weak BCs, however, let instead the flow slip on the surface without forming undesirably thick boundary layers. In this way the pressure distribution, which dominates the aerodynamic forces, as well as the turbulent structures, becomes more realistic. This is clearly seen in Fig. 10 where pressure and air speed contours for a snapshot at $t = 2.40$ s are shown for the two methods.

Remark 1. It should be remarked that although we see a significant difference using weak and strong BCs for bluff bodies, earlier work [23] has found that for streamlined bodies like airfoils where the flows are fully attached, the gain using weakly-enforced BCs might be even larger.

Remark 2. The mesh used in this study is artificially coarse and for the model-scale geometrically clean sections studied in this work, the difference between weakly- and strongly-enforced BCs becomes less significant. The example does however show the supremacy of the weakly-enforced BCs for cases where sufficient boundary layer resolution is unaffordable, e.g. for complex geometries with pavements, spoilers, etc. and full-scale simulations with extremely high Reynold's numbers.

6.2. Flutter derivatives for BH10

For the BH10 section, the numerically computed aerodynamic derivatives governing the self-excited drag, lift and pitching moment are shown in Figs. 11, 12 and 13, respectively. The same plots also show the experimental results, for which the dashed lines represent their least-square fitted 3rd order polynomial curve. For the drag-related aerodynamic derivatives P_i^* the numerical results we get a nice representation of the harmonic component related to lateral motion p , i.e. P_4^* and P_1^* , which is the most important flutter derivative concerning drag. For the pitching motion the experiments reveal a very non-physical behavior for P_3^* . For this symmetrical cross section subjected to a pitching motion we would expect a symmetrical response with double frequency in drag. The experimental P_3^* do however contain a distinct harmonic component. This error typically arise from calibration of zero angle-of-attack. In the simulations the drag response is symmetric with respect to positive and negative angle-of-attack, giving P_2^* and P_3^* equal to zero. This is clearly seen in the time series in Fig. 14, showing the self-excited forces for $U = 8$ m/s and $f_\theta = 0.5$ Hz.

For the H^* - type aerodynamic derivatives we observe fair agreement between experiments and simulations for low values of V_{red} . However, for lower frequen-

cies the deviations increase, especially for H_4^* and H_2^* indicating a difference in phase of the self-excited forces between simulations and experiments. Moreover, the simulations consequently render higher force magnitudes for both the vertical and the pitching motion towards the stationary limit. Earlier work on the same section have made the same observations, see e.g. [62, 63].

Regarding the pitching moment and their A^* -type aerodynamic derivatives the experiments are reproduced with better accuracy although the observations made for lift are also seen here, however less prominent. The time series used to compute the aerodynamic derivatives related to pitching- and vertical motion for $V_{red} = 5.1$ are respectively shown in Figs. 14 and 15.

Remark 3. One should keep in mind that because the self-excited drag is vanishingly small, both compared to the lifting force and forces arising from structural vibration of the sectional model, it is very difficult to separate from the total measured forces. As lift and pitching moment dominate the self-excited forces, the lateral forces and motions are in fact often disregarded in flutter analyses. This may however lead to underestimation of the critical flutter wind speed, as pointed out in [102].

6.3. Flutter derivatives for HAD3

As for BH10, the aerodynamic derivatives for the HAD3 section are presented in Figs. 16, 17 and 18 for self-excited drag, lift and pitching moment, respectively. For this section there is generally very good agreement between simulations and experiments, and particularly for those that have been pointed out as the most important in flutter analysis [102]; A_1^* , A_2^* , A_3^* and H_1^* . Higher magnitudes of the lift and the pitching moment are also seen for this section, however less distinct

than for BH10. We also observe that excellent agreement is obtained for the phase angles, i.e. the ratio between aerodynamic derivatives related to the structural motion and its time derivative. This is clearly illustrated in the time series in Fig. 19, showing the self-excited forces for $U = 8$ m/s and $f_\theta = 0.5$ Hz.

The self-excited drag is mainly governed by the lateral velocity through P_1^* and is in good agreement with the experiments. The experimental drag forces are however, as pointed out in Sec. 6.2, due to their small magnitude associated with a lot of uncertainty.

An interesting observation in the simulations is the action of the lateral motion on the pitching moment, i.e. A_6^* . To some extent the same effect is seen for the lifting force in terms of H_5^* and H_6^* for experiments and simulations, however, the experiments do not capture this effect for the pitching moment. Fig. 20, showing the self-excited forces for $U = 8$ m/s and $f_p = 0.8$ Hz, supports this observation.

7. Conclusions

In this paper a methodology to perform the forced-vibration experiment using ALE-VMS techniques augmented with weak enforcement of the essential boundary conditions has been presented. The problem is solved very effectively in a blockwise fashion with a mesh-moving algorithm that reduces the fluid mesh problem significantly.

It has been shown that in the case of coarsely discretized boundary layers, the weakly-enforced BCs outperform the classical no-slip. Instead of forming artificially thick boundary layers and flow retardation, the flow is allowed to slip on the surface and represent the pressure field and turbulent patterns more accurate. Although an artificially coarse mesh was used to illustrate this, the example clearly

show the ability of the formulation to accurately represent the aerodynamic forces in cases where optimal mesh resolution is impossible.

Using the forced-vibration method, complete aerodynamic derivatives for lateral, vertical and pitching degrees-of-freedom have been computed for two bridge deck sectional models numerically. Wind tunnel experiments of the same sections have been performed and used for comparison. The setup of the numerical simulations was chosen to match the experiments as closely as possible in order to compare not only the aerodynamic derivatives, but also the time series from which they are computed. The BH10 show fair agreement between simulations and experiments. However, clear discrepancies appear in the region of high reduced velocities and especially H_4^* and H_2^* manifest that the structural velocity is of different importance in the experiments and the simulations. For the HAD3 section the numerically obtained aerodynamic derivatives closely match the experimental, even for high V_{red} . However, although less distinct than for BH10, also this section render higher self-excited forces in the simulations, especially for the pitching moment.

Because of its computational effectiveness and user-friendly problem definition, we believe the proposed method represents a beneficial tool in aeroelastic analysis of bridges. However, open questions remain regarding the discrepancies in aerodynamic derivatives for high reduced velocities, especially prominent for the rectangular prism, which encourage further investigations.

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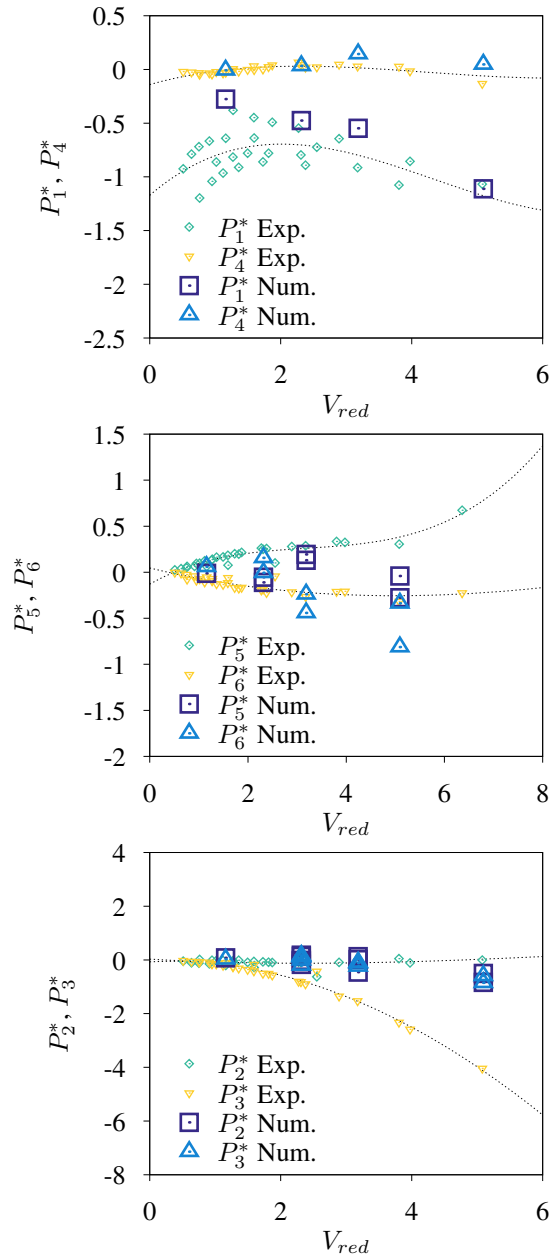


Figure 11: BH10 aerodynamic derivatives governing self-excited drag.

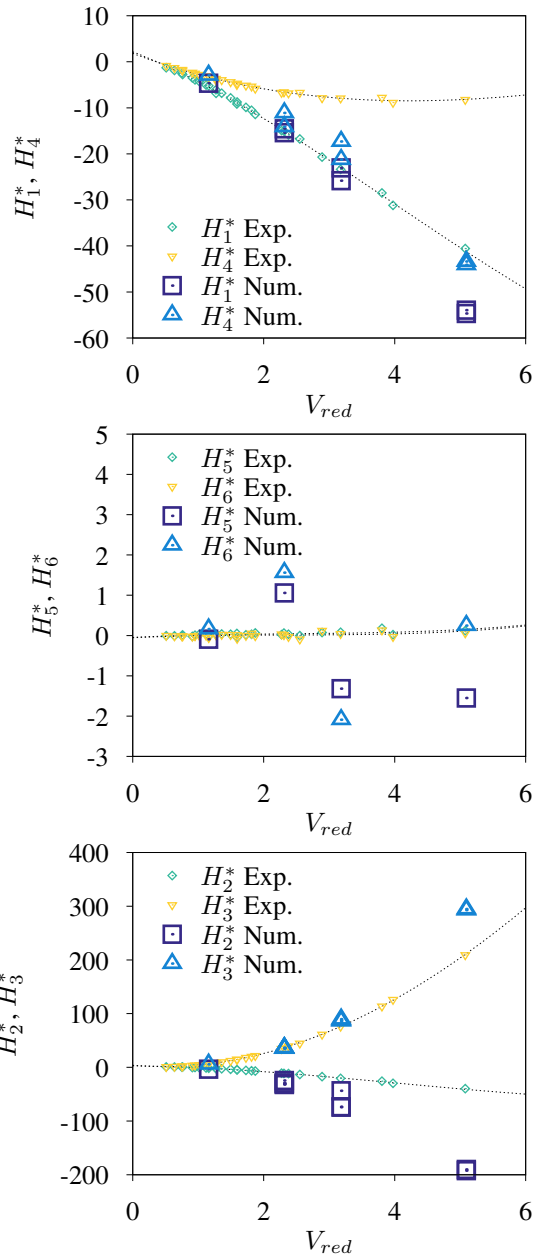


Figure 12: BH10 aerodynamic derivatives governing self-excited lift.

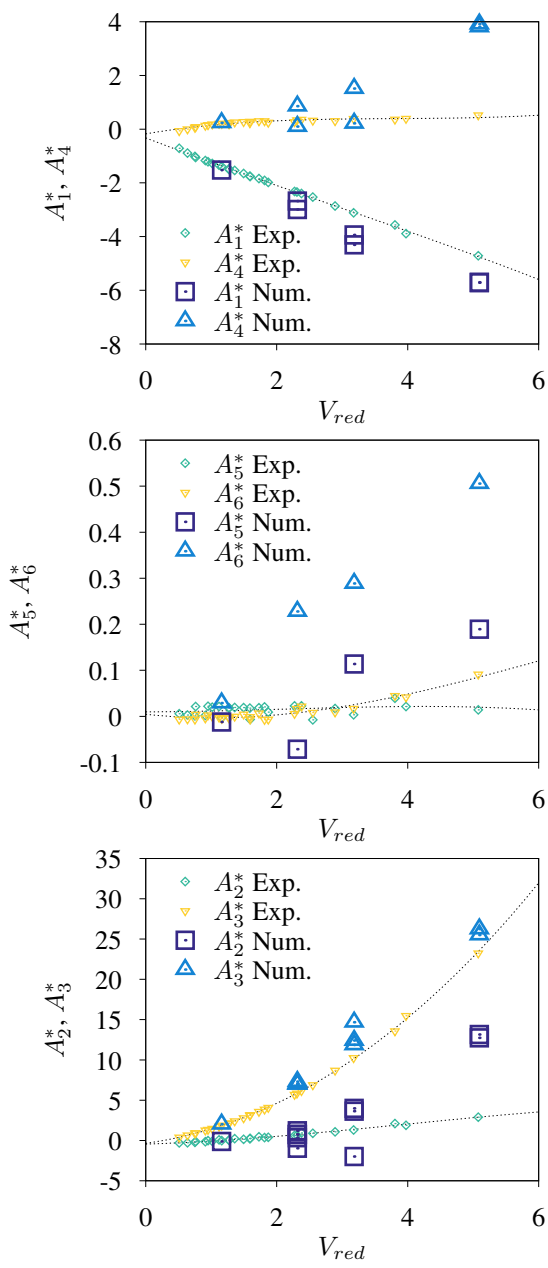


Figure 13: BH10 aerodynamic derivatives governing self-excited pitching moment.

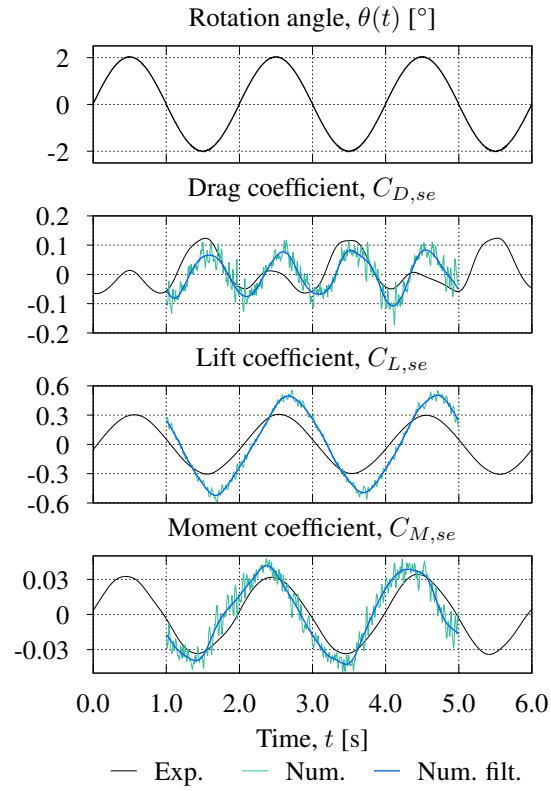


Figure 14: Filtered and unfiltered self-excited force coefficients for the BH10 section (Num. and Num. filt., respectively) for $V_{red} = U/B\omega = 5.1$ ($U = 8$ m/s and $f_\theta = 0.5$ Hz, $Re = 2.7 \times 10^5$) compared with the corresponding wind tunnel time series (Exp.).

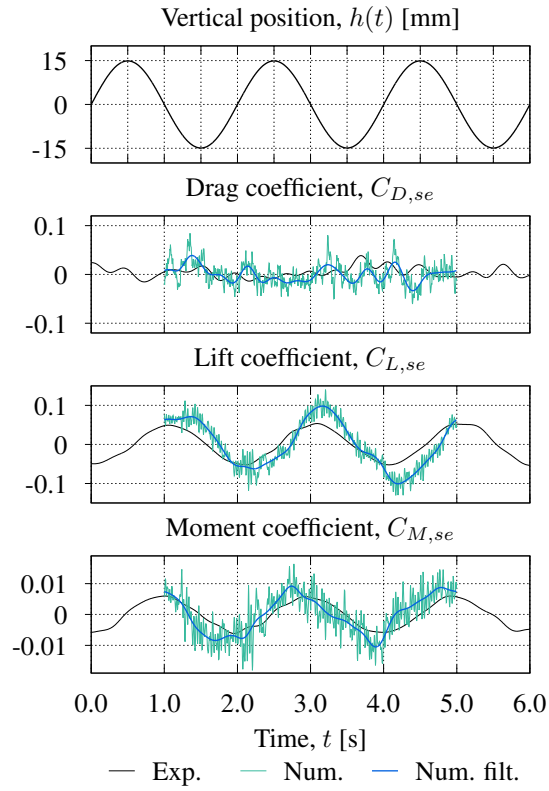


Figure 15: Filtered and unfiltered self-excited force coefficients for the BH10 section (Num. and Num. filt., respectively) for $V_{red} = 5.1$ ($U = 8$ m/s and $f_h = 0.5$ Hz, $Re = 2.7 \times 10^5$) compared with the corresponding wind tunnel time series (Exp.).

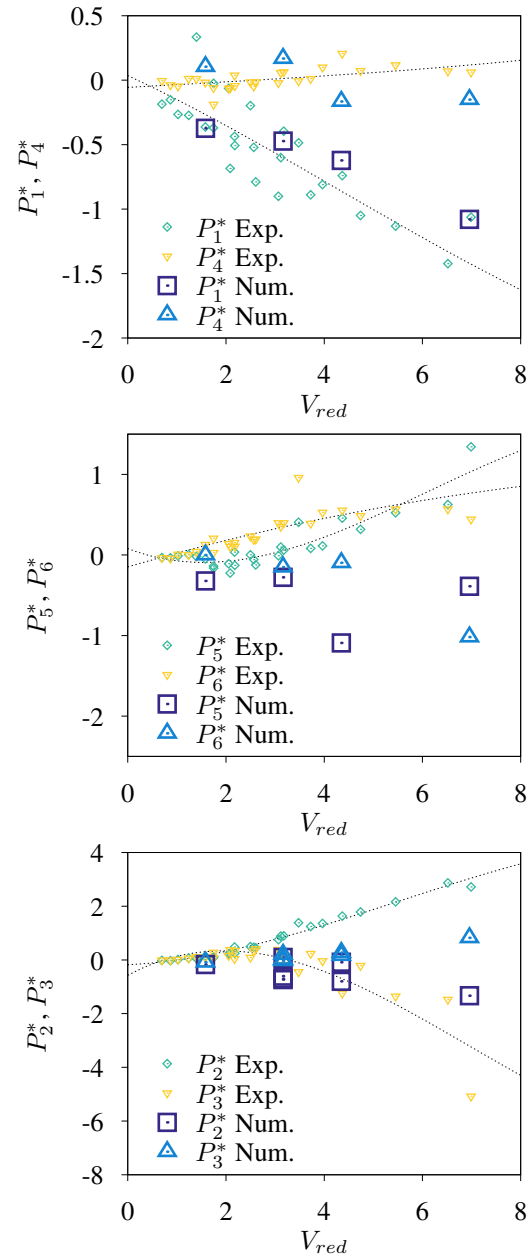


Figure 16: HAD3 aerodynamic derivatives governing self-excited drag.

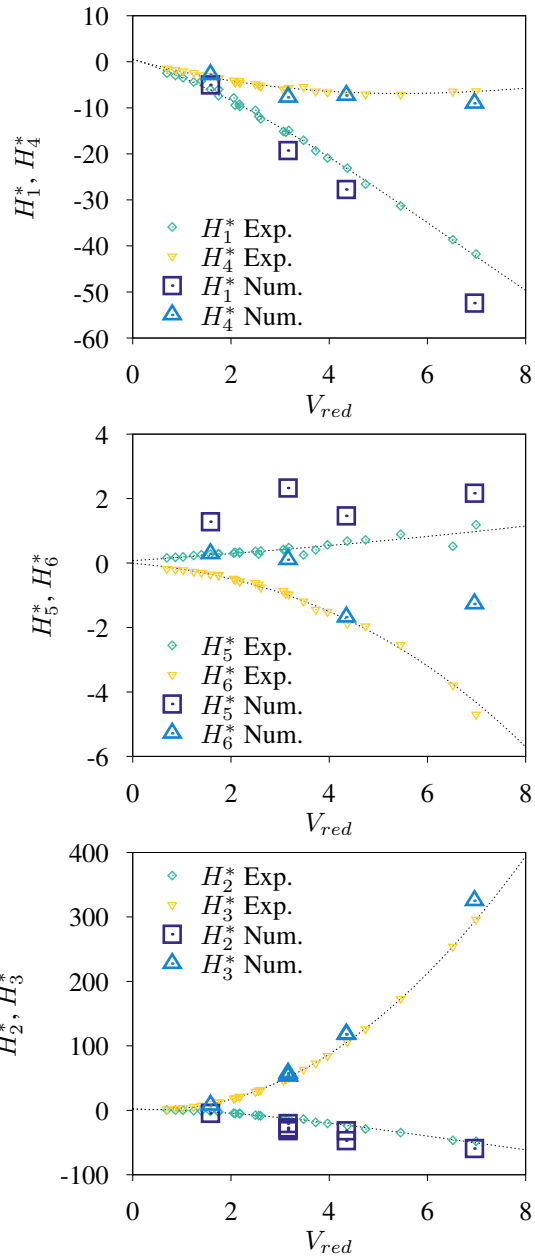


Figure 17: HAD3 aerodynamic derivatives governing self-excited lift.

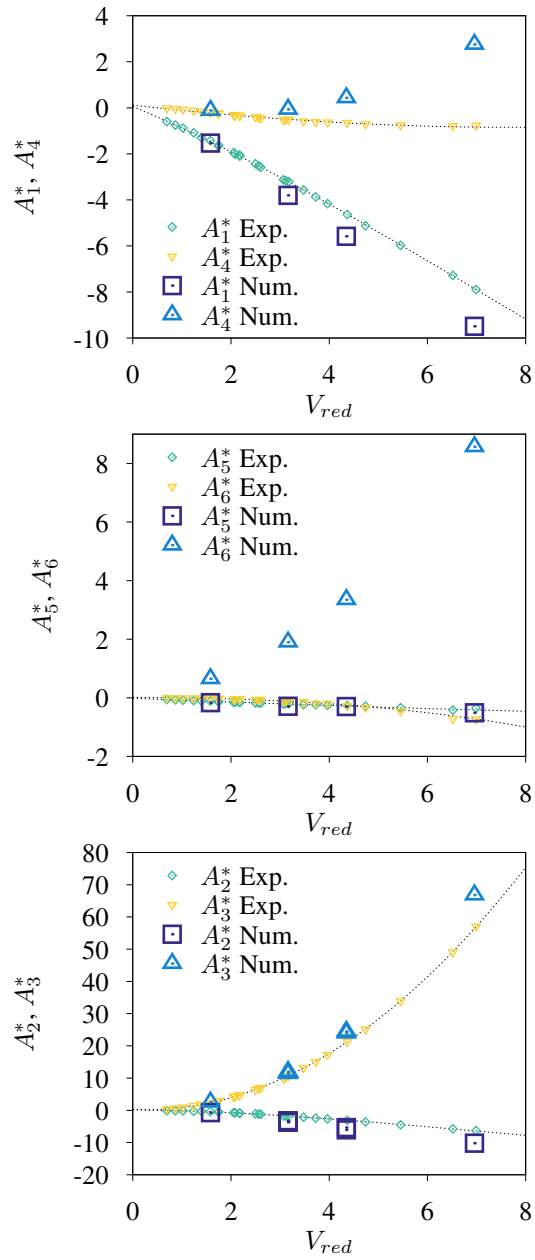


Figure 18: HAD3 aerodynamic derivatives governing self-excited pitching moment.

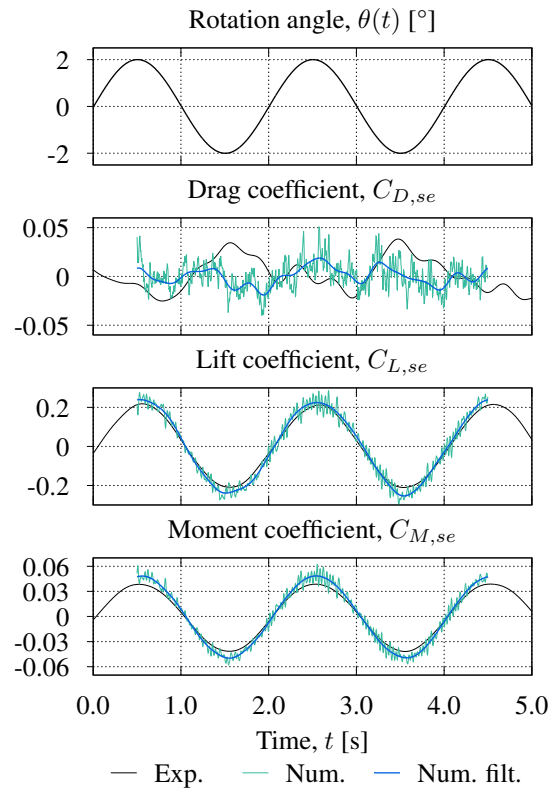


Figure 19: Filtered and unfiltered self-excited force coefficients for the HAD3 section (Num. and Num. filt., respectively) for $V_{red} = 7.0$ ($U = 8$ m/s and $f_{\theta} = 0.5$ Hz, $Re = 2.0 \times 10^5$) compared with the corresponding wind tunnel time series (Exp.).

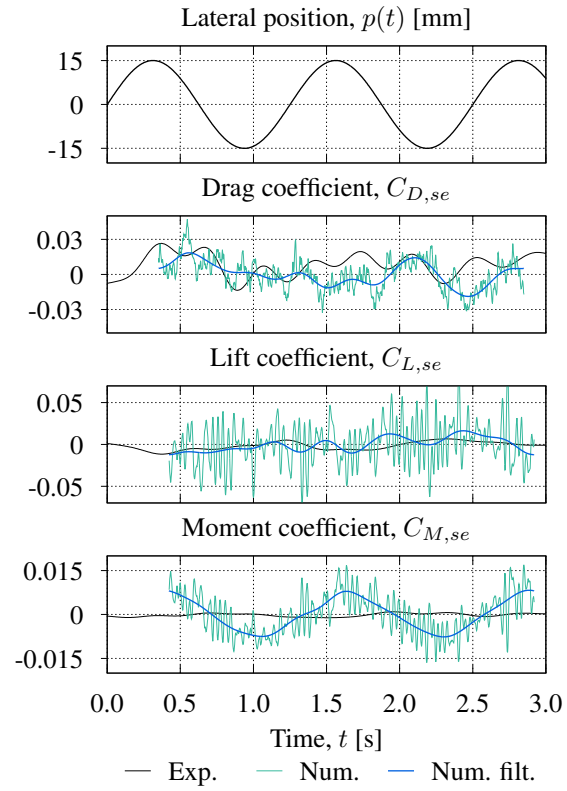


Figure 20: Filtered and unfiltered self-excited force coefficients for the HAD3 section (Num. and Num. filt., respectively) for $V_{red} = 4.3$ ($U = 8$ m/s and $f_p = 0.8$ Hz, $Re = 2.0 \times 10^5$) compared with the corresponding wind tunnel time series (Exp.).

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