

On the origin of computational model sensitivity, error, and uncertainty in threaded fasteners

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Abstract

Modeling the mechanical response of components requires simplifications and idealizations that affect the fidelity of the results and introduce errors. Some errors correspond to the limited knowledge of intrinsic physical attributes while others are introduced by the modeling framework and mathematical approximations. This paper studies the dependence of the force-displacement response of threaded fasteners on modeling attributes such as geometry, material, and friction resistance using finite element simulations. A systematic comparison of $1D$, $2.5D$ or $3D$ computational models demonstrates the influence of model properties and the limitations of the methodologies. Finally, the paper discusses the sources of model inputs and model form errors for threaded fasteners.

Keywords: Threaded fasteners, Error quantification, Finite elements, Friction.

1. Introduction

Modeling the mechanical response of threaded fasteners often assumes simple $1D$ smooth geometry [1, 2] without considering the complex phenomena that take place in between threads. Similarly, reliability analyses of assemblies with multiple mechanical components usually rely on reduced order models that do not convey detailed geometric attributes, material properties, or frictional

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7 effects. Instead, modeling large assemblies depends on equivalent constitutive
8 behaviors of connectors (e.g., [3, 4]), which many times are assumed to be linear
9 and reversible [5]. This modeling approach can introduce large errors that are
10 unacceptable in the analysis of high consequence applications. Since the com-
11 putational burden rapidly increases with increasing component size, there is a
12 need not only to ascertain more accurate physics-based reduced order models,
13 but also to quantify the model form error and the sources of variability [5].

14 Prior research on threaded fasteners investigated torsional tightening (or
15 loosening) [6, 7], stress and strain distributions [8, 9], and fatigue life [10, 11], to
16 mention a few of the most common aspects [12]. Nevertheless, few studies have
17 focused on understanding and predicting the equivalent constitutive response of
18 threaded fasteners. Furthermore, many of the existing studies employ simplified
19 geometries (e.g., $2D$), linear elastic materials, and frictionless surfaces. Because
20 most efforts focus on specific components, the conclusions from these publica-
21 tions cannot be generalized confidently to other scenarios. Therefore, there is a
22 need to understand and generalize the relative impact of modeling assumptions
23 and parameter errors on the force-displacement response of threaded fasteners.

24 A confident prediction of the mechanical response of threaded fastener needs
25 to ascertain multiple sources of model uncertainty and sensitivity. Following the
26 framework originated in the risk assessment community [13, 14], uncertainty (ei-
27 ther epistemic or aleatory) in computational models may originate in numerical
28 approximations, model inputs, and model form. Thus, this work investigates
29 model input and form uncertainties in threaded fasteners by performing finite
30 element simulations with various input parameters and model simplifications.
31 We emphasize that we seek to understand the mechanisms that control the me-
32 chanical response of fasteners rather than reproducing certain experiments with
33 simulations.

34 **2. Sources of variability and error in modeling fasteners**

35 The mechanical response of fasteners is determined by complex phenomena
36 arising from the interaction of many physical bodies. To systematically study
37 the fidelity of threaded fasteners models, we propose a taxonomy for the major
38 sources of sensitivity, error, and uncertainty that affect the force-displacement
39 response (Figure 1):

40
41 *Geometry:* Threaded fasteners are geometrically complex components with
42 no axis of symmetry, which implies that only 3D models can yield exact results.
43 Nevertheless, 2D simulations are still used to study threads (for example Ref.
44 [15]). In addition, threads are manufactured with a wide range of quality, from
45 inexpensive fasteners for disposable devices up to ultra-precise components for
46 aerospace applications. As a result, geometrical attributes have a large variabil-
47 ity among manufacturers, production batches, and applications; these may be
48 mitigated with a statistical characterization of geometrical attributes.

49
50 *Material:* Manufacturing procedures have a notable effect on fastener ma-
51 terial properties. Rolled threads present strong microstructural gradients [16]
52 and texture while cut threads have discontinuous fibers with lower local strength
53 [17, 18]. Even the manufacturing speed changes the microstructure and influ-
54 ences the mechanical response [16]. Thus, the identification of fasteners with
55 their chemical composition or alloy grade conveys a large error that neglects
56 residual stresses, microstructures, and defects. Multi-scale material models can
57 mitigate these errors by explicitly incorporating sources of mesoscale variabil-
58 ity [19, 20]. However, these strategies are computationally expensive, require a
59 plethora of small-scale characterization, and represent a host of their own re-
60 search challenges.

61
62 *Mechanics:* The mechanical response of fasteners is intimately related to
63 the frictional interactions between the threads. These interactions are usually

64 captured with Coulomb friction models and a range of friction coefficients be-
 65 tween 0 and 0.5 [21, 22]. Similarly, temperature changes or gradients, residual
 66 strains from installation, and loading direction also affect the response of fas-
 67 teners. The coupling of these effects is an open problem and usually requires
 68 multi-scale and multi-physics approaches that are computationally and experi-
 69 mentally time-consuming.

70
 71 *Methodology:* In addition to the intrinsic uncertainty of one particular fas-
 72 tener, computational models introduce acknowledged errors such as numerical
 73 rounding and spatial discretization errors, or unacknowledged errors such as
 74 coding mistakes. Recent efforts [23] have focused on identifying phases that
 75 introduce uncertainty and estimating the numerical error, but these sources of
 76 error are not the focus of this work.

77 Other sources of uncertainty may include loading history and environment
 78 assisted degradation (corrosion, radiation, etc) [24]. Although these aspects
 79 are beyond the scope of this work, as-produced and as-installed fasteners may
 80 degrade and alter their geometrical, material and mechanical attributes during
 81 the life of the component.

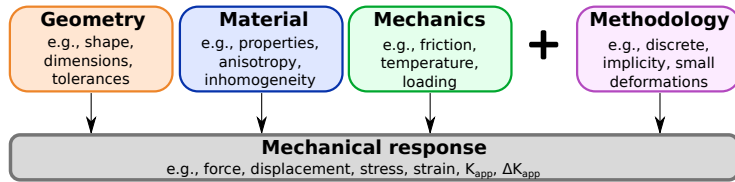


Figure 1: Most significant sources of sensitivity, error, and uncertainty in modeling the mechanical response of threaded fasteners.

82 A final comment pertains to the impact of the sources of sensitivity, er-
 83 ror, and uncertainty on different quantities of interest, which are applica-
 84 tion-specific. In the case of threaded fasteners, the focus may be on the prediction
 85 the force-displacement response, torque-tension relation, the fracture and fa-
 86 tigue integrity, or the degradation during service, to mention a few. Since mod-
 87 eling uncertainty may affect these quantities in different manners or degree, the

88 propagation of errors should be carefully considered for each application.

89 This paper investigates the force-displacement response and stress and strain
90 fields of threaded fasteners using $1D$, $2.5D$ or $3D$ finite element models with
91 different geometrical attributes (sections 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3). These assessments
92 also include sensitivity analysis of friction coefficients and material properties
93 (elastic or elasto-plastic). Next, the effects of torsional installation strains are
94 analyzed in section 4.4 and a comparison among models and experiments is
95 presented in section 4.5. Finally, section 5 compares model inputs and model
96 form errors, and discusses the results from various approaches.

97 **3. Modeling approaches**

98 This research investigates the relationships among a limited set of properties
99 and models for $\#0-40UNF$ bolts [1] in Figure 2. In what follows the nomencla-
100 ture of Figure 2 is used: a bolt consists of a head where load/torque is applied,
101 a shank that connects the head with the threads, which engage with a substrate
102 or a nut to form a stiff connector. Threads are characterized by number and
103 pitch (e.g., $1/4-20$ has a basic major diameter of 6.35mm and 20 threads per
104 25.4mm).

105 Regarding geometric variability, simulations employ $1D$ smooth models,
106 $2.5D$ threaded models, and fully $3D$ threaded models, as shown in Figure 3.
107 Here, $1D$ model refers to 3-dimensional smooth specimens with squared cross
108 section and $2.5D$ model refers to 3-dimensional symmetric threaded models with
109 one element into the thickness. In addition, $2.5D$ asymmetric models consider
110 threads that are displaced by half the pitch at each side of the substrate and dif-
111 ferent substrate lengths (Figure 4). As previously shown by several researchers
112 [25, 26, 27], the first five threads carry 90% of the load; thus, all cases include
113 between four to five threads in contact between the bolt and the substrate.

114 The geometric characteristics of threads introduces difficulties in meshing
115 $3D$ models with hexahedral elements, which are generally more accurate than
116 tetrahedral finite elements. Therefore, $3D$ meshes are conformed by sections of

117 hexahedral and tetrahedral elements, with tied contact to make a continuous
 118 mesh (see Figure 3c). Hexahedral elements constitute most of the thread, where
 119 the highest stress and strain gradients occurs, while tetrahedral elements are
 120 employed for transitions with free surfaces and the inner core of the bolt.

121 Finite element simulations are conducted using the Sierra Finite Element
 122 software [28] with an implicit quasi-static solver. All meshes maintain similar
 123 element refinement to limit mesh size dependence, which does not strongly affect
 124 the force-displacement response [27]. Although a minor mesh dependence (about
 125 10%) may exist on the peak stress and strain at the thread roots [8], this work
 126 assumes that the numeral uncertainty is negligible and focuses on the remaining
 127 sources of uncertainties. Certainly, the study by Rafatpanah [29] suggests that
 128 our mesh refinement is enough to yield mesh convergence of the shank stress.

129 The loading of the fastener consists of quasistatic normal displacement of the
 130 nodes on the top cross section of the bolt (displacement control). Torsional pre-
 131 strain are only considered in 3D models in section 4.4. The lateral and bottom
 132 boundaries of the substrate are constrained from displacing in any direction
 133 (see Figure 3). In 2.5D models, nodes are constrained from displacing in the
 134 out of plane direction (plane strain). Furthermore, friction is introduced by
 135 defining single contact between the bolt and the substrate, using an augmented
 136 Lagrange enforcement, which applies equal and opposite forces and iterates to
 137 achieve zero interpenetration [28].

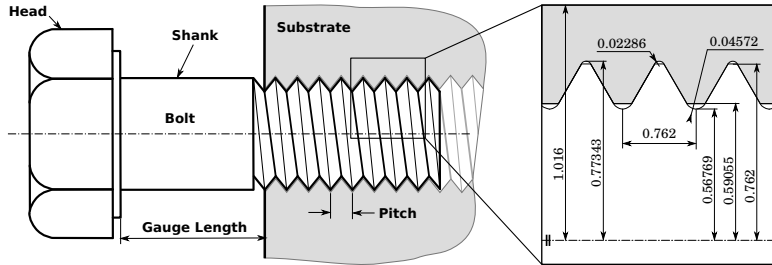


Figure 2: Nomenclature and geometrical details of the #0-40UNF bolt considered in simulations. Units in IS.

138 Models consider bolts made of A286 stainless steel while the substrate corre-

Table 1: Material properties for bolts (A286) and substrates (SS304L).

	A286	SS304L
Elastic modulus	200GPa	193GPa
Poisson ratio	0.28	0.28
Yield stress	827MPa	225 MPa
Hardening modulus	1100MPa	538MPa

139 sponded to 304L stainless steel, which are common in applications. Simulations
 140 employ two material models: isotropic linear elasticity or rate-independent lin-
 141 ear hardening elasto-plasticity [30, 31]. Nominal material properties presented
 142 in Table 1 were adapted from [32]. Frictional effects are taken into account
 143 assuming Coulomb friction and various friction coefficients: $\mu = 0, 0.15, 0.3,$
 144 and 0.45 (typical of threaded connections [33]).

145 To compare actual forces rather than stresses, each simulation computes the
 146 total force on the nodes of the shank cross section (the top cross section of the
 147 bolt). Such a force is regularized by the ratio of the shank cross section in *3D*
 148 model bolt and the shank cross section of the model considered, i.e.,

$$\text{Regularized force} = \text{Force} \frac{\text{Bolt cross-section in 3D models}}{\text{Bolt cross-section in current model}}. \quad (1)$$

149 Equation 1 is equivalent to computing the stress on the cross section of the bolt
 150 for the current model multiplied by the area of the bolt of interest. Similarly,
 151 the displacement applied to the top cross section of the bolt is regularized by the
 152 ratio of the total applied displacement in the *3D* model (in number of pitches)
 153 and the gauge length in the *3D* models (estimated as twice the thread pitch),
 154 i.e.,

$$\text{Regularized displacement} = \text{Applied displacement} \frac{\text{Displacement in 3D models}}{\text{Gauge length}}. \quad (2)$$

155 Thus, the regularized displacement represents the number of pitches that the
 156 head of the bolt has displaced.

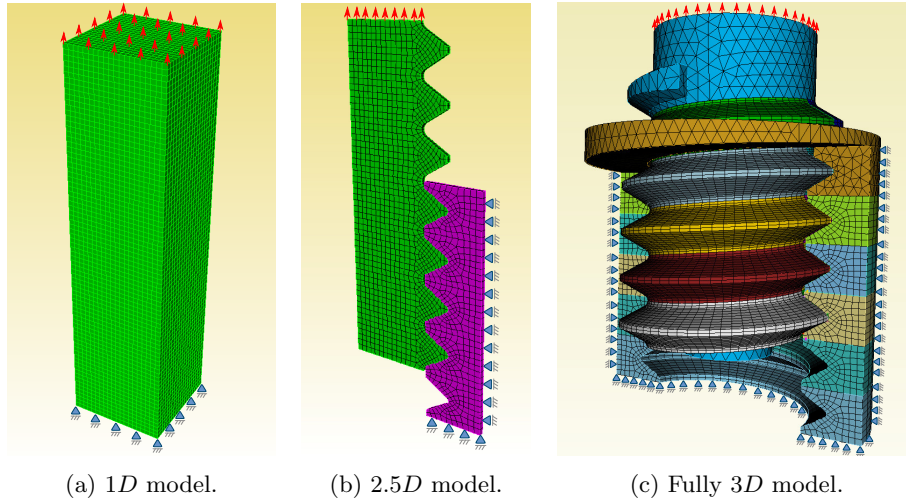


Figure 3: Examples of different finite element models.

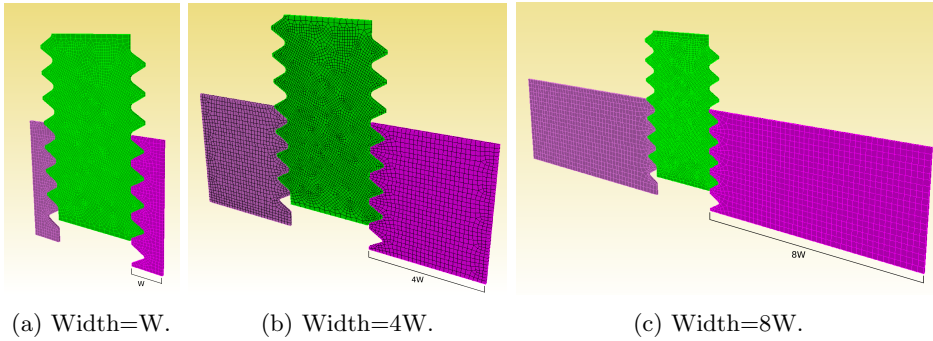


Figure 4: 2.5D asymmetric models with different substrate lengths. Note the thread asymmetry.

157 4. Modeling results

158 4.1. Force-displacement from 2.5D asymmetric models

159 Figure 5 presents the regularized force-displacement response of threaded
 160 fasteners computed with 2.5D models for linear elastic (Left) and elasto-plastic
 161 (Right) materials; note the large difference on regularized force scales. Simulations
 162 consider multiple substrate lengths (referred to as W , $4W$ and $8W$) and
 163 friction coefficients $\mu = 0, 0.15, 0.3$, and 0.45 . The roughness of the curves
 164 corresponds to local instabilities that occur due to localized unloading.

165 For both material models, a higher friction coefficient limits the slip in
 166 threads and induces higher forces. Furthermore, larger substrates result in a
 167 lower compliance, and the responses for substrate lengths 4W and 8W show
 168 only minor differences, which suggests that these lengths may be enough to
 169 approximate a semi infinite substrate.

170 Although threads have complex geometrical features, linear elastic fasteners
 171 show an almost linear response (also found in Ref. [34]). This linearity suggests
 172 that geometrical attributes have a minor contribution to the force-displacement
 173 nonlinearity while material properties dominate the mechanical response. In-
 174 deed, the details of the thread geometry may not significantly affect the macro-
 175 scopic response [35], especially for extended plastic deformation.

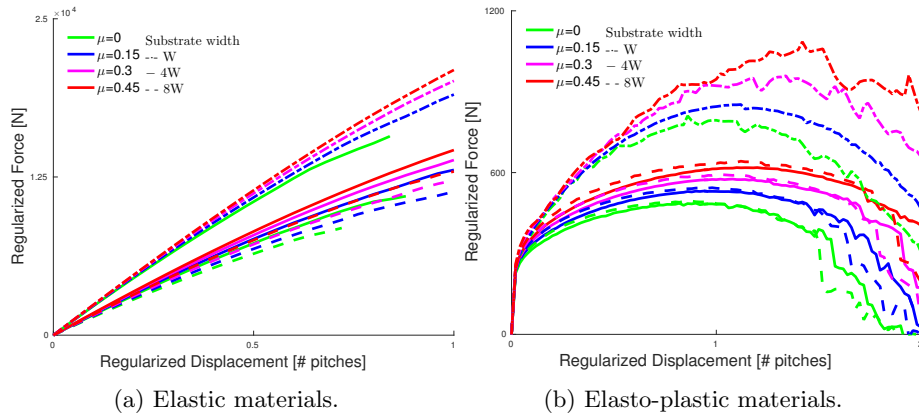


Figure 5: Regularized force-displacement for 2.5D models for elastic (Left) and elasto-plastic (Right) materials, different substrate lengths (W, 4W and 8W), and friction coefficients ($\mu = 0, 0.15, 0.3, \text{ and } 0.45$).

176 4.2. Force-displacement from 2.5D and 3D models

177 Figure 6 compares regularized force-displacement from 2.5D with 3D models
 178 using elastic (Left) and elasto-plastic (Right) materials and identical substrate
 179 lengths (W). Linear elastic materials result in an almost linear response with
 180 a different compliance for each model. Elasto-plastic models not only present
 181 a different compliance before yielding, but also yield at different load levels.

182 Indeed, $2.5D$ and $3D$ models seem to yield at two distinctly different force
 183 levels despite the regularization.

184 The response of $1D$ smooth specimen (Figure 3 a) is also presented in Figure
 185 6 in black dotted lines. Contrary to strain calculations, the total displacement
 186 depends on the actual dimensions of the specimen. To regularize this magnitude
 187 for $1D$ models, we consider a gauge length of 40% of the total specimen length,
 188 which is chosen to match the elastic compliance of full $3D$ models shown in
 189 Figure 6a; the same regularization was employed for elasto-plastic models in
 190 Figure 6b.

191 The results show that $1D$ models can reproduce the axial force-displacement
 192 behavior of $3D$ models as long as they are scaled with an appropriate gauge
 193 length. Friction has a secondary effect on the response (also found by Ref.
 194 [36]), and their effects are smeared out by the gauge length. More importantly,
 195 a gauge length calibrated to match the elastic compliance results in adequate
 196 predictions for elasto-plastic models.

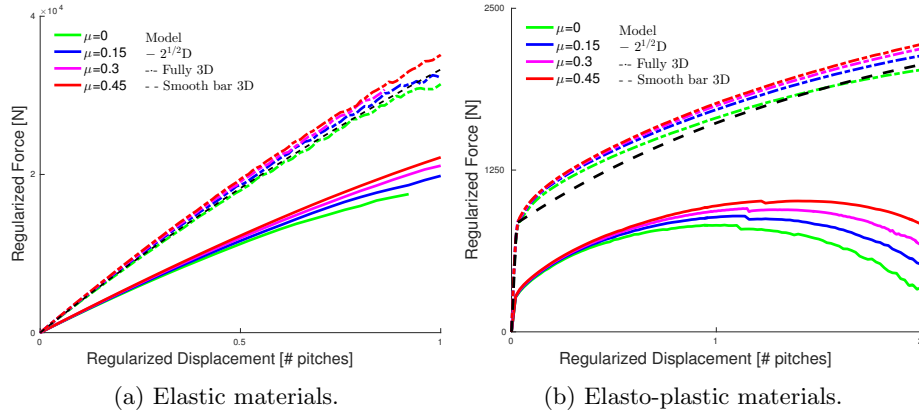


Figure 6: Regularized force-displacement for $2.5D$ and $3D$ models for multiple friction coefficients. The results for $1D$ models (black dotted lines) are regularized to match the elastic compliance.

197 To investigate the discrepancy among $2.5D$ and $3D$ models, we simulated
 198 $2.5D$ models with a 220% and 440% increase in substrate thickness (note the
 199 out of plane dimension in Figure 7) and $3D$ wedge models (Figure 8). A 220%
 200 increase yields similar substrate cross sections between $2.5D$ and wedge models;

201 a 440% increase yields twice the cross-sections. In both cases, the displacement
 202 of the nodes normal to the sides of the models are restricted (these sides are not
 203 parallel in the case of wedges).

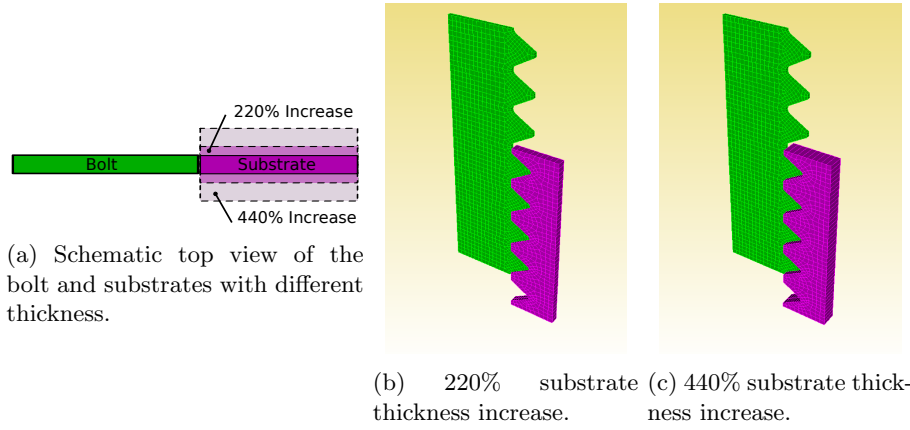


Figure 7: 2.5D models with different substrate thicknesses along the out of plane direction. (a) Top view comparison of substrate thickness. An increase in thickness results in equivalent (220%) substrate cross sections between 2.5D and wedge models or twice the cross sections (440%).

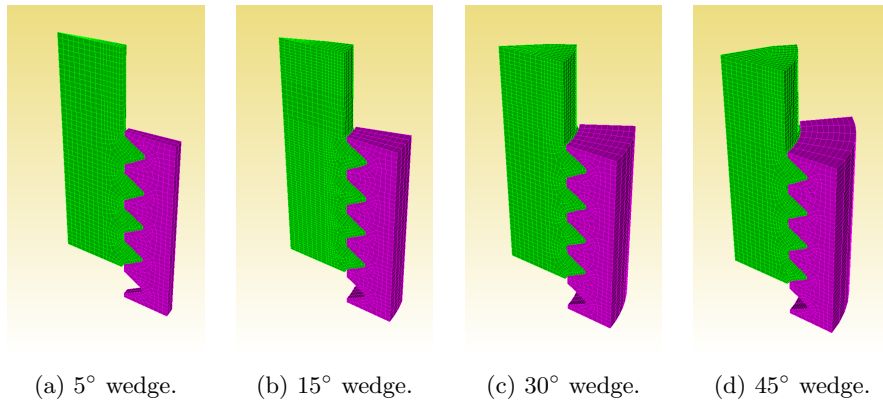


Figure 8: 3D wedge models with different sweep angles. Compare the cross-sections from wedges to 2.5D models in Figure 7.

204 Figure 9 presents the regularized force-displacement from models with differ-
 205 ent substrate thicknesses and wedge angles. An increase in substrate thickness
 206 increases both the stiffness and yield force. The wedge sweep angle does not
 207 affect the yield force, but small wedge angles impose a higher constraint that

208 results in higher peak forces; these effects tend to saturate for wedges larger
209 that 30° .

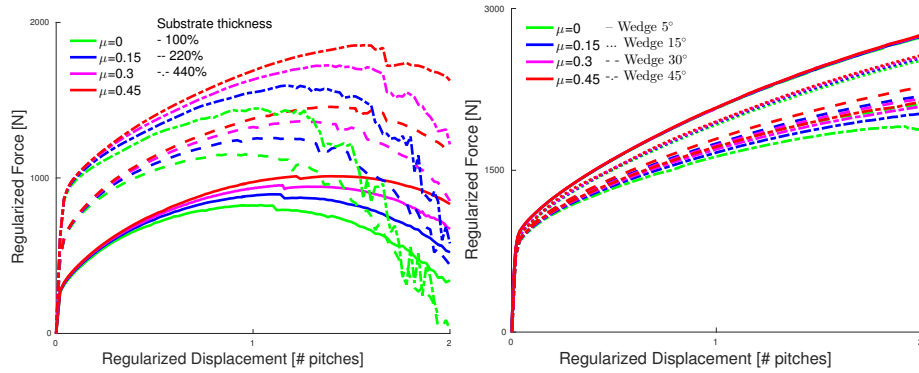
210 A major difference between $2.5D$ and $3D$ elasto-plastic models corresponds
211 to the post-yield behavior. Wedge and full $3D$ models result in monotonic
212 increase of the regularized force, but $2.5D$ models present a peak force (see
213 Figure 6, for instance). Such a difference is, arguably, due to an intrinsic $3D$
214 effect of gradients in plastic deformation. Upon an increment in load, plastic
215 deformation expands in the substrate and increases the deformation away from
216 the thread. As the elastic/plastic boundary moves out from the thread, the
217 change in the volume of resisting material along this boundary is different for
218 $2.5D$ and $3D$ models.

219 Certainly, $2.5D$ models induce larger plastic deformation than $3D$ models
220 due to their constant thickness in the out of plane direction. On the contrary, $3D$
221 models increase the resisting thickness away from the thread (i.e., the perimeter
222 increases proportionally to the radius). Furthermore, thread cross sections do
223 not remain planar upon loading in $3D$ models. A miscalculation of the resisting
224 volume would also be corrected by employing $2D$ axisymmetric models, which
225 seem to agree with $3D$ models [37]. A good agreement is expected given the
226 low influence of the geometrical details (e.g., the helix, the transition between
227 shank and thread) on the force-displacement response in our simulations.

228 4.3. Stress and strain field in $2.5D$ and $3D$ models

229 Figure 10 presents the equivalent plastic strain (E_{pps}) from $2.5D$ and $3D$
230 models with $\mu = 0.3$ at 30% and 70% of the maximum applied displacement.
231 Significant differences are evident: $2.5D$ models show much higher strains within
232 the substrate than $3D$ models. Secondly, the shank presents much higher deforma-
233 tion in $3D$ models. Both aspects are in agreement with a higher constraint
234 imposed by the substrate in $3D$ models.

235 Similarly, Figure 11 presents the von Mises stress from $2.5D$ and $3D$ models
236 at 30% and 70% of the maximum applied displacement (same as in Figure 10).
237 The von Mises fields between $2.5D$ and $3D$ models are different, the latter



(a) Response of 2.5D models with multiple substrate thicknesses. (b) Response of 3D wedge models with multiple angles.

Figure 9: Effects of the out-of-plane dimension on regularized force-displacement.

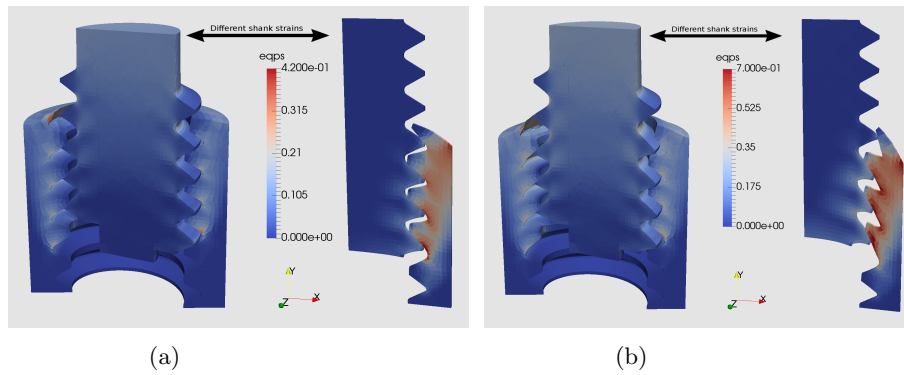


Figure 10: Equivalent plastic strain fields for 2.5D and 3D models at 30% (Left) and 70% (Right) of the maximum applied displacement.

238 showing a much higher stress at the shank. The differences affect the expected
 239 failure mechanism of the fasteners: 3D models suggest that fasteners would
 240 fail due to plastic collapse of the shank while 2.5D models indicate that failure
 241 would occur due to the shear failure of the thread. Furthermore, the bottom
 242 thread is the most deformed in 2.5D models while the top threads are the most
 243 deformed in 3D models. Experiments for A286 bolts have shown that failure
 244 often occurs due to plastic collapse of the first engaged thread [38, 39, 40], as
 245 expected from the results of 3D models but not from 2.5D models.

246 A second consideration regards to the strain and stress fields in 2.5D models

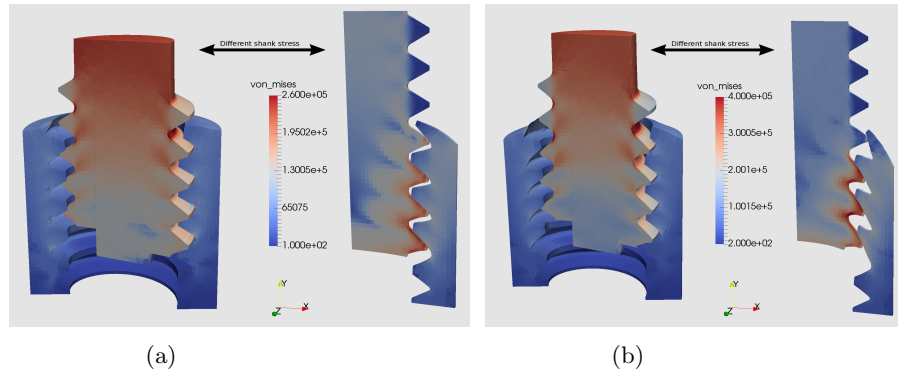


Figure 11: von Misses stress fields for 2.5D and 3D models at 30% (Left) and 70% (Right) of the maximum applied displacement.

247 with larger substrates. If the thickness of the substrate controls the constraint
 248 on the bolt, then the stress and strain fields of wider substrates should resemble
 249 more closely those from 3D models. Figure 12 presents the E_{qps} (Left) and von
 250 Misses stress (Right) fields for 2.5D models with two different substrate widths
 251 at 30% of the maximum applied displacement. The comparison of Figure 12
 252 (Left) with Figure 10 (Left) shows lower plastic deformation on the substrate
 253 and higher plastic strains on the shank with increasing substrate width, which
 254 indeed resembles 3D models. Regarding the von Misses stress field, Figure 12
 255 (Right) depicts higher stresses on the shaft than Figure 11 (left). Furthermore,
 256 thicker substrates induce higher stresses and strains on the top threads, which
 257 is similar to 3D models.

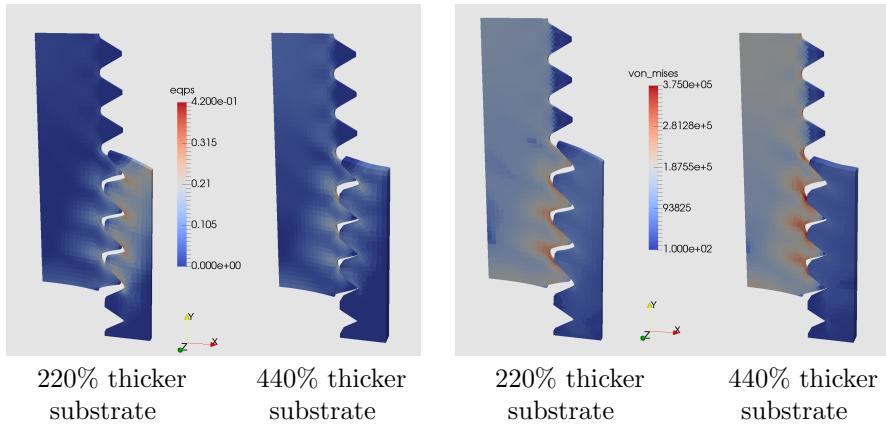


Figure 12: Equivalent plastic strain (Left) and von Mises stress (Right) fields for 220% and 440% thicker substrates at 30% of the maximum applied displacement.

258 4.4. Torsional prestrains in 3D models

259 Another distinctive capability of 3D models is the consideration of torsional
 260 pre-strains from the installation of fasteners. Some efforts have focused on
 261 quantifying the correlation between installation torque and pre-load (e.g. [22,
 262 7]), but not on the impact on the force-displacement evolution. To assess such
 263 effects, additional 3D simulations consider an initial rotation applied to the
 264 bolt. In this case, the top cross section of the bolt is initially constrained from
 265 displacing along the Y axis, which builds up stresses upon rotation.

266 Figure 13a presents the regularized force-displacement from 3D models with
 267 15° bolt rotation and multiple friction coefficients. Similarly, Figure 13b presents
 268 the results for $\mu = 0.3$ and multiple rotation angles. The most significant effect
 269 of the torsion prior to pulling the bolt is an increase up to about 20% in the
 270 apparent yield level and a change in the apparent elastic stiffness. These effects
 271 are in agreement with the positive correlation between friction coefficient and
 272 torque-induced tension, [22].

273 In addition, Figure 14 presents the $Eqps$ and von Mises stress for 30° ro-
 274 tation, $\mu = 0.3$ at 70% of the maximum applied displacement. Compared to
 275 Figures 10b and 11b, the stress and strains fields are equivalent with modest
 276 changes in the peak values (below 10%).

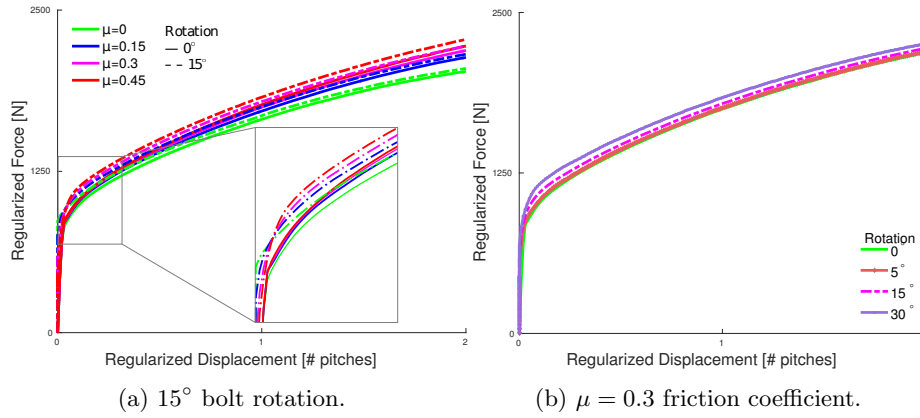


Figure 13: Effect of torsional pre-strains in 3D models after rotating the bolt in regularized force-displacement. Pull-out simulations without rotation (0°) are also presented.

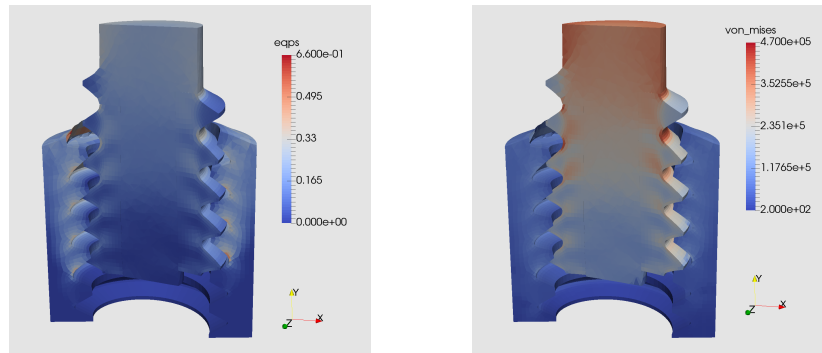


Figure 14: Equivalent plastic strain (Left) and von Mises stress (Right) for 3D models with 30° bolt rotation and $\mu = 0.3$ friction coefficient at 70% of the maximum applied displacement.

277 4.5. Comparison with experiments

278 To further understand the limitations of models, predictions from 3D models
 279 are compared to pull-out experiments for different bolts with A286 denomina-
 280 tion. We consider four experimental pull-out tests:

- 281 • Exp-1 and Exp-2 from Ref. [41], which employed two A286 #8-32, 5/8in
 282 bolts using gauge lengths of 0.25in and 0.15in, respectively.
- 283 • Exp-3 from Ref. [42], which employed an A286 #10-32, 5/8in bolt with
 284 a gauge length of 0.2in.

- Exp-4 from Ref. [39], which employed an *A286 1/4-28, 2in* bolt with a 1.5in shank.

All experiments were performed under quasistatic loading without torsional pre-strains. The substrates were different among experiments but they all have a higher yield stress than A286 (e.g., 4140 steel); thus, we will assume an elastic substrate in simulations. Since the authors were not involved in performing these experiments, the modeling results in prior sections are blind and independent.

Current experimental methodologies carry such small errors in measuring forces and displacements (typically $\ll 10\%$) that their impact on pull-out measurements can be neglected. However, models carry epistemic uncertainty (i.e., lack of knowledge) in the characterization of the real testing configuration. For example, the real gauge length up to the first engaged thread (see Figure 2), installation residual stresses/strains, bolt alignment, etc. Given the limited and systematic effect of friction coefficients on 3D models (see Figure 6 for instance), we argue that discrepancies among models and experiments are not controlled by friction, but dominated by testing conditions (rate, temperature), bolt dimensions, and material properties.

For comparison with experiments, a new set of 3D simulations was developed with an elastic substrate and no torsional pre-strain; results are presented in Figure 15a. Similarly to the methodology employed in Equation 1, forces were regularized by the ratio between model and test bolt cross sections. The regularization of the displacement is achieved by dividing by the gauge length (Exp-1, Exp-2, Exp-3) or the shank length(Exp-4), as shown by Equation 2. In simulations, the gauge length is twice the pitch length, which corresponds to the shank length in 3D models.

Figure 15a shows that the elastic compliance has a relatively wide range among experiments. The gauge length employed in the regularization of the displacement is partially responsible for this effect. A careful consideration of the resisting bolt length will likely improve the agreement, but such information is not available and is a source of error. In spite of these differences, models

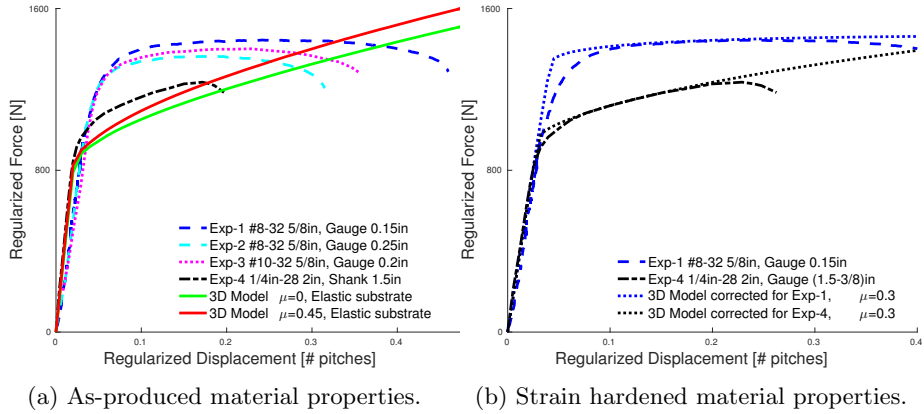


Figure 15: Regularized force-displacement for 3D models and experiments. Left

315 approximately match the experimental elastic response with a regularization
 316 roughly estimated from experiments.

317 Exp-4 [39] presents a 30% lower regularized force at onset of plastic defor-
 318 mation (i.e., inelastic yield) than Exp-1, Exp-2 [41], Exp-3 [42]. Such a differ-
 319 ence decreases with increasing displacement, and all the experiments present
 320 regularized peak forces within 15%. Furthermore, Exp-4 presents significantly
 321 more hardening than the other experiments, which are almost elastic-perfectly
 322 plastic. These differences suggest that the bolts from Exp-1, Exp-2, and Exp-
 323 3 have undergone additional work hardening during manufacturing, typical of
 324 small bolt size. The regularized yield force from models is slightly below that
 325 in the experiments from Exp-4 [39], while the degree of hardening is approx-
 326 imately equivalent and depends on the friction coefficient. Since the material
 327 properties for the models corresponds to as-rolled A286 steel, these differences
 328 are attributed to the microstructural changes and work hardening during the
 329 manufacturing process.

330 These arguments suggest that the lack of consideration of prior work hard-
 331 ening in the material properties controls the differences in force levels in Figure
 332 15a. Therefore, an increase in the yield level and a decrease in hardening modu-
 333 lus (Table 2) would improve the matching to experiments. Similarly, the elastic
 334 compliance is controlled by the regularization length and differences in compli-

Table 2: Material properties and regularization length corrected for matching experiments. Substrates are considered elastic with a modulus of 200GPa.

	A286 Corrected for Exp-1	A286 Corrected for Exp-4
Elastic modulus	200GPa	193GPa
Poisson ratio	0.28	0.28
Yield stress	1310MPa	944MPa
Hardening modulus	269MPa	795MPa
Gauge length	1.55 pitch	1.55 pitch

ance between Exp-1 and Exp-4 may be attributed to an effective reduction in the gauge length due to 3/8in testing puck employed in Exp-4 [39, 40].

Figure 15b presents a new set of simulations with friction coefficient $\mu = 0.3$, gauge length of 1.55 pitches and material properties as presented in Table 2. Furthermore, the gauge length of Exp-4 is reduced by 3/8in to account for the testing puck. These results show good agreement among models and experiments, and suggest that material variability in 3D models can partially compensate for some uncertainty in friction coefficients, but not for geometrical changes in the gauge length or damage degradation.

The progressive reduction of the regularized force before failure is caused by the localization of plastic deformation and stable crack growth in the shank and first thread. Since these damage mechanisms are not explicitly considered, simulations result in monotonic force-displacement curves. Indeed, adjustments to the material properties to match the yield and hardening in experiments would not likely change such trends. Moreover, the non-monotonic behavior in 2.5D models is caused by the shear of the thread, which is not the failure mechanism found in experiments.

5. Discussion

Model form and model input errors coexist and they cannot always be distinguished or quantified. Thus, this section overviews the coupling of error sources.

Figures 5, 6, and 9 showed that various 2.5D simulations cannot reproduce the response of elasto-plastic 3D models, which are in better agreement with ex-

358 periments. Thus, model form errors in elasto-plastic $2.5D$ simulations dominate
359 over model inputs such as friction coefficients, material properties, or geometric
360 details. This behavior is attributed to an intrinsic miscalculation of the resist-
361 ing volumes that controls the mechanical response, at least for bolts that fail
362 due to plastic collapse of the shank or first thread rather than the shearing of
363 the thread. Furthermore, this interpretation explains that $3D$ wedge or $2D$ ax-
364 isymmetric models may provide reliable predictions even when some geometrical
365 attributes are simplified.

366 Furthermore, simple $1D$ models can be *regularized* to reproduce $3D$ models
367 closely (e.g., Figure 6), which supports standardized methodologies. In this case,
368 model form error is small enough to be mitigated by modifying model inputs.
369 Such a calibration (e.g., Equation 2) may be performed with elastic models that
370 require low-computational effort, and later employed for elasto-plastic models.

371 Figures 5 and 6 demonstrate that elastic materials result in an almost lin-
372 ear behavior of the regularized force-displacement and suggest that geometric
373 nonlinearities (e.g., the lack of cylindrical symmetry) induce a weak nonlinear
374 response. On the contrary, elasto-plastic material properties impose a dominant
375 nonlinear response. Hence, model input uncertainty is dominated by material
376 properties, which control the force-displacement nonlinearity, and the gauge
377 length, which controls the force-displacement elastic compliance.

378 Figures 6 and 9 indicate that friction effects and boundary conditions have a
379 secondary but noticeable effect on the force-displacement response. This agrees
380 with the minor impact of friction on load distribution found in Ref. [27]. More
381 importantly, the effects of friction propagate consistently among various model
382 inputs and forms, which yields confidence in extrapolating friction effects among
383 different fasteners. In addition, torsional pre-strains affect the elastic compliance
384 and the yield level (e.g., Figure 13), while the influence seems to be reduced upon
385 further loading. These results suggest that uncertainty in torsional pre-strains
386 may be mitigated by modifying model inputs.

387 Finally, Figure 15 shows that $3D$ models can reproduce the response of fas-
388 teners in experiments provided that the resisting length of the bolt is regularized

389 and that the material properties convey the manufacturing-induced microstruc-
390 ture. The error of these model inputs dominate over model form errors up to
391 the maximum load. Upon softening after the peak force, model form increases
392 due to the lack of consideration of plastic strain localization and stable crack
393 growth. These aspects would require models that consider damage progression
394 and self localization [43].

395 **6. Conclusions**

396 This work studied sources of computational modeling sensitivity, error, and
397 uncertainty in the force-displacement response of threaded fasteners. The re-
398 sults showed that 2.5D finite element models have an intrinsic limitation for
399 representing the force-displacement response of threaded fasteners that fail due
400 to plastic collapse. Indeed, simpler 1D smooth specimens can be scaled to match
401 more closely the results from 3D models and experiments up to the peak load
402 with the appropriate model inputs.

403 In 3D models, material properties and the gauge length affect the most
404 the nonlinear response and elastic compliance of fasteners, respectively. The
405 influence of friction propagates consistently among various model forms and
406 inputs. Furthermore, by comparing computational models and experiments we
407 argued that manufacturing processes introduce ranges of properties within the
408 fasteners that affect mostly the yield force and hardening modulus. Future work
409 will seek to model the effect of microstructural variability and material property
410 gradients on fastener response.

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