

# ENERGY DISSIPATING PRE-CAST COUPLING BEAMS

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## Introduction

The good performance of structural systems either of shear walls only or in combination of shear walls led the designers to the use of shear wall systems. The failures in shear wall systems under seismic excitations usually concentrate on the coupling beams; and on the shear walls at the further deformation steps. (1, 2)

Investigations on the reinforced concrete beam reinforcement detailing revealed that conventional beam detailing results in poor performance in case of coupling beams. Experimental work on the behavior of coupled shear wall systems led to the development of diagonal beam reinforcement for the coupling beams. At present, detailing with diagonal reinforcement has been widely practiced in many earthquake codes including the most recent Turkish Earthquake Code (3)

Experimental and analytical studies on the coupling beams reported in the literature generally concentrate on the ductile design and detailing of these beams

The behavior of ductile steel coupling beams used instead of reinforced concrete coupling beams was also investigated by several researchers (4, 5). It has been reported that (5), properly designed and detailed steel coupling beams can exhibit excellent ductility and energy absorption. The prefabrication of the steel coupling beams provides improved quality control in addition to the advantages such as elimination of considerable amount of site work and simplified formwork. The steel coupling beams reported in the literature have two connection types to the reinforced concrete shear walls. In the first type (5), the steel beams were cast with the walls, having an embedded portion in the shear walls. In the second type (4), the steel beams were fit to their location after the concrete walls were cast, and the connections of the coupling beams to the shear walls were semi-rigid, designed by using either bolted or welded connections. The cast-in-place steel coupling beams were reported to be designed to remain elastic in flexure while undergoing significant web shear yielding to maximize the ductility and the energy absorption. For the case of on-site semi rigid connection of the steel coupling beams and the shear walls, the designers were also aimed at the shear yielding of the connection in order to dissipate maximum amount of energy. The semi-rigid connections of steel beams (4) were reported to be beneficial over the cast-in place ones, since they were replaceable if they yield under high seismic excitations.

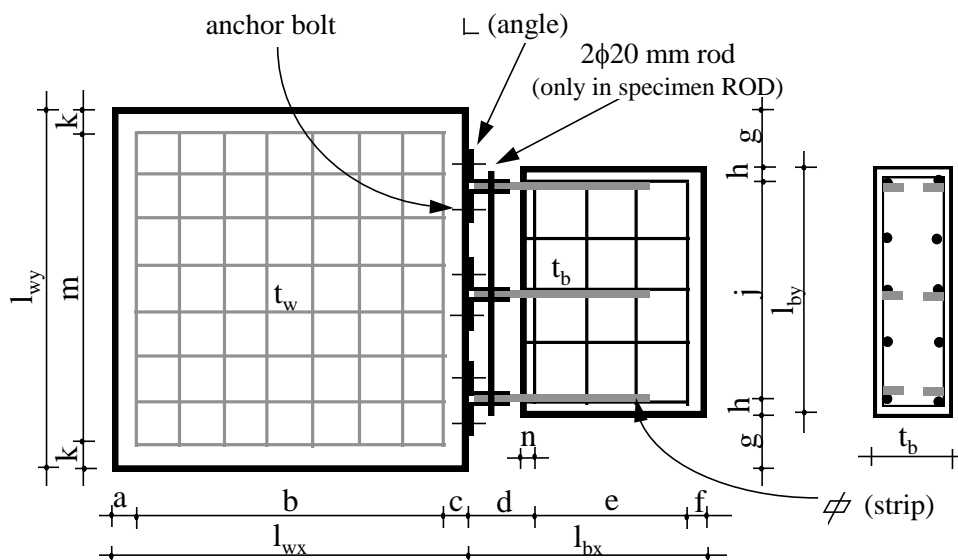
## Specimen Design and Testing Procedure

The idea of using “energy dissipating pre-cast reinforced concrete coupling beams” stemmed from the advantage of the semi-rigid connections of the steel coupling beams in energy absorption and the ease of construction of pre-cast concrete. Besides, the energy dissipated through cracking of concrete in addition to the energy dissipated at the connections was considered to be an added advantage.

The investigations on the beam-to-column connections in pre-cast concrete structural systems reveals that the initial stiffness of the connection mainly depends on the connection geometry and the tolerances made for the lack of fit etc. at the site. Beyond the limit of the gap, the connection behavior is governed by the material strength, i.e. the crushing and shear strength of concrete and the tensile strength of the reinforcement used at the connection. As in the case of cast-in-place connections, the ductility of the semi-rigid pre-cast connection is mainly a function of the ductility of the reinforcement (6).

The four reinforced concrete shear-wall-to-coupling-beam sub-assemblies tested in this research project were designed to be approximately as full size specimens. In the experimental investigation, the main variable was the type of the connection between the shear wall and the coupling beam.

Two types of pre-cast connections were used, namely WELD and ROD (Figure 1). In the specimen WELD, the steel strips protruding from the pre-cast reinforced concrete coupling beam were sandwiched between the two steel angles fixed to the shear wall and welded to each other. In the specimen ROD, however, the strips and the angles were connected via two 20 mm diameter steel rod passing through the pre-drilled holes on the strips and on the angles. The gap (about 105mm) between the coupling beam and the pre-cast shear wall was filled with High Strength Concrete (HSC) grout ( $f'_c=65-70$  MPa). On the other hand concrete compressive strength values of the shear walls and the coupling beams were around  $f'_c=25$  MPa, which was in Normal Strength Concrete (NSC) range.



**FIGURE 1** - Dimensions and Reinforcement Detail of Specimens WELD and ROD

Two cast-in-place specimens, namely MONO1 and MONO2 were also tested for comparison purposes. Specimen MONO1 was a pilot test in order to check the capacity and functioning of the loading and measuring systems, thus specimen MONO2 was used for further comparisons. The geometric and the material dimensions of all the specimens tested are given in (Table 1). The yield strength of  $\phi 10$  (10mm in diameter) and  $\phi 14$  rebars are 507MPa and 471MPa respectively.

**TABLE 1 - Dimensions of Specimens (with reference to FIGURE 1)**

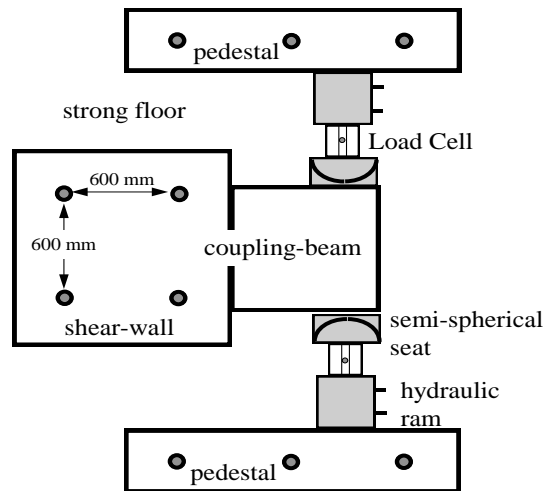
	MONO1	MONO2	WELD	ROD
$t_w$	200	200	200	200
$t_b$	200	160	160	160
$l_{wx}$	1070	1200	1200	1200
$l_{wy}$	1060	1200	1200	1200
$l_{bx}$	675	600	600	600
$l_{by}$	752	500	500	500
a	60	35	35	35
b	8 $\phi 14@940$	10 $\phi 14@1130$	10 $\phi 14@1130$	10 $\phi 14@1130$
c	70	35	35	35
d	50	105	105	105
e	5 $\phi 10@595$	4 $\phi 10@465$	4 $\phi 10@465$	4 $\phi 10@465$
f	30	30	30	30
g	154	350	350	350
h	30	30	30	30
j	6 $\phi 10@692$	5 $\phi 10@440$	5 $\phi 10@440$	5 $\phi 10@440$
k	40	35	35	35
m	8 $\phi 14@980$	10 $\phi 14@1130$	10 $\phi 14@1130$	10 $\phi 14@1130$
n	-	-	5	5
angle	-	-	L80*80*10	L80*80*10
strip	-	-	2*3* $\square 25$ *10	2*3* $\square 50$ *10
Anchor Bolts : M16, St37, $L_{\text{anchorage}}=160$ mm, 2 bolts on each angle				
Connecting Rod: $\phi 20$ , St37				

The four shear-wall coupling beam subassemblies (MONO1, MONO2, WELD, ROD) were tested under increasing reversed cyclic loading. Loads were applied in an incremental manner until failure. A displacement based loading regime was applied after the yield point. The loading setup and the specimens were positioned in the horizontal plane as shown in Figure 2. The shear wall was firmly fixed to the strong floor by means of four threaded steel rods. The loading was performed by using two 600 kN capacity manually driven hydraulic rams. The specimens were instrumented by electronic sensors such as a Load Cell and several LVDT's.

## Experimental Results

The reversed cyclic tip point load versus measured net tip deflection graphs of monolithic and pre-cast specimens are given in Figure 3. The loading steps in specimens MONO1 and MONO2 was a predetermined percentage of the calculated failure load, where the calculated failure load was the minimum of the shear and the flexural capacities of the coupling beam. On the other hand, the loading step for specimens WELD and ROD until

the experimental yield load was 20kN in either direction. A displacement controlled loading regime was applied in all of the specimens after the yield point.

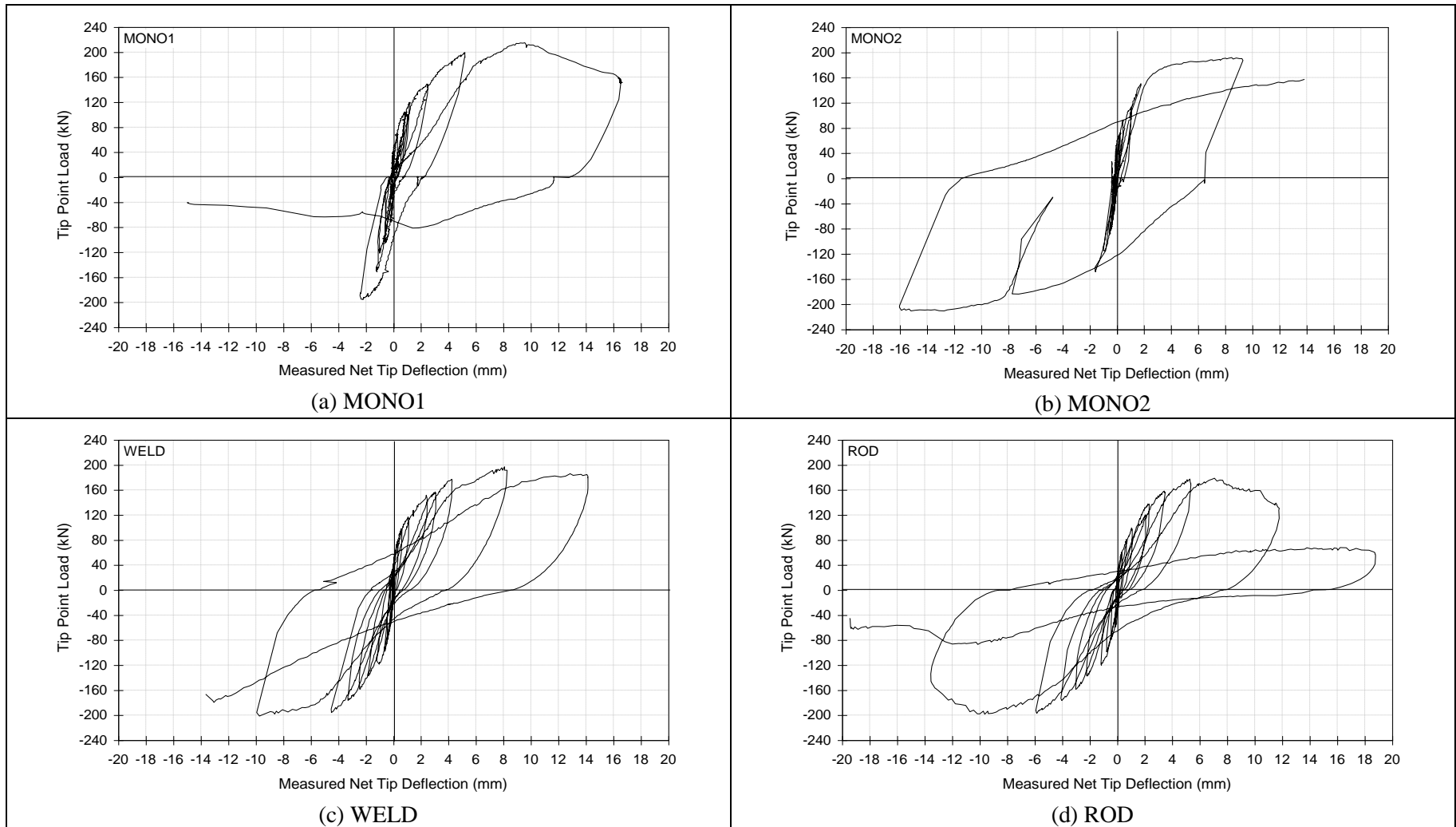


**FIGURE 2 - The Loading Setup of the Specimens**

Specimen MONO1 failed in a brittle manner. The load capacity of the section dropped down suddenly with increasing deflections. The reversed load capacity of this specimen in the last cycle was nearly 40% of the experimental yield load capacity observed in the previous cycle (Figure 3-a). Specimen MONO2 failed in a relatively ductile manner. The load capacity of the specimen in the next reversed loading right after yielding was approximately equal to the section capacity at the time of first yielding. The proceeding load cycle in the direction of the first yield was about 80% of the yield capacity (Figure 3-b). Pinching is not observed in the hysteretic curves of the monolithic specimens. The cracks were concentrated on the beam and along the joint line at the time of failure. Cracking on the shear wall was not observed on either monolithic specimen.

The load deflection behavior of specimen WELD, shows a ductile type of failure (Figure 3-c). Specimen could carry loads approximately equal to the experimental yield load until nearly two times the yield deformation. The drop of load in the next cycle after yielding was in the range of 10%. The cracks at failure were concentrated both in the coupling beam beyond the HSC region, and along the joint line. Different from that of the monolithic specimens, cracking was also observed in the shear-wall. Compared to the monolithic specimens, pinching type of deformation was observed in the load deflection curve.

The failure behavior of specimen ROD was relatively sudden. The failure occurred when the width of cracks on the shear wall suddenly started to increase. The line of cracks on the shear wall in specimen ROD was following the line of tips of anchor bolts in the shear wall. The specimen failed suddenly, and the proceeding load capacity in the direction of the first yield load was approximately 35% of the yield load. The pinching type of deformation was also observed in specimens ROD (Figure 3-d). The cracks in the prefabricated sub-assemblies spread into the shear-walls.



**Figure 3 - Reversed Cyclic Load - Measured Net Tip Deflection Graph of Specimens**

## Behavior of Test Specimens

In specimen MONO2, all cracking was confined to the coupling beam, since the beam is uniform and the anchorage length of the beam reinforcement is long enough to prevent a premature slip deformation. The flexural capacity of the shear wall is very high in comparison to that of the coupling beam. In specimen WELD, the flexural capacity of the NSC coupling beam is above the flexural capacity of the HSC wet joint. In this specimen, the first yield load capacity of the anchor bolts were above the yield load capacity of the wet joint but below the yield load capacity of the coupling beam. Therefore, the failure was confined in the joint region. The failure cracks in specimen ROD were confined to the region on the shear wall connecting the HSC wet joint to the shear wall. The section capacity at the HSC wet joint was well above the first yield load of the anchor bolts. Yielding of the anchor bolts caused a rapid deterioration of bond strength resulting in slip outs of the bolts and concentration of cracks in the shear wall.

The reversed cyclic tip point load versus measured net tip deflection plots are given in Figure 3. Although, only the reversed cyclic load-deflection curve is enough to comment on the suitability of the connection for ductile seismic design, the reversed cyclic load versus, the tip deflection due to slip at the joint, the tip deflection due to shear deformation at the joint and the tip deflection due to rotation at the joint plots of all specimens were also investigated in order to identify the main mode of energy dissipation. Accordingly, in all the specimens, least energy was dissipated in the flexural rotation mode. In this mode, the prefabricated specimens dissipated more energy compared to the monolithic specimens. Monolithic specimens dissipated more energy in shear deformation mode compared to their joint slip mode. On the other hand, the energy dissipated due to shear deformation at the joint was higher in comparison with the monolithic specimens. When all the deformation modes namely; slip, shear, and flexural rotation deformations considered, all the specimens dissipated least energy in flexural rotation mode and in every mode, the energy dissipated by the prefabricated specimens was higher in comparison to the monolithic ones.

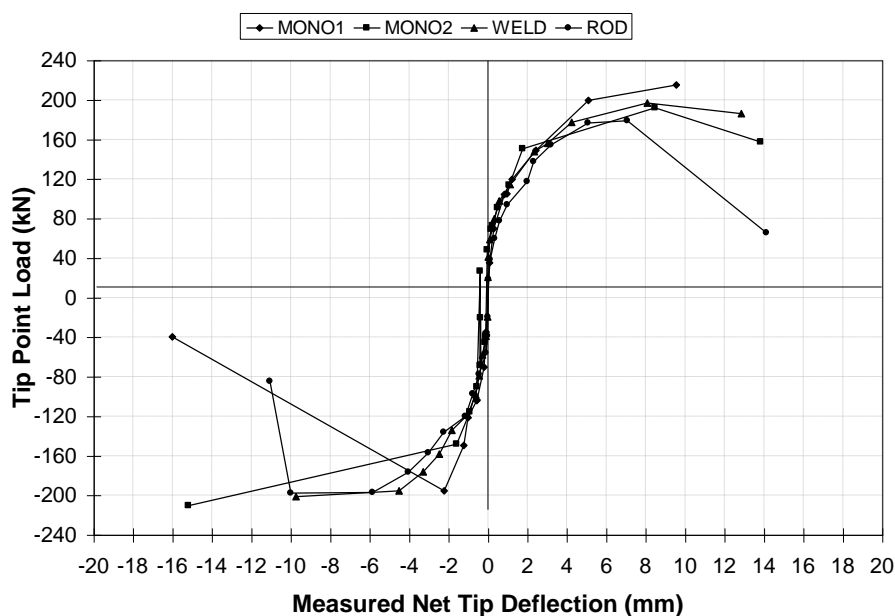


FIGURE 4 - Comparison of Envelope Curves

The load versus measured net tip deflection curves given in Figure 3, clearly show the differences between the behavior of monolithic and prefabricated specimens. The stiffness degradation in the monolithic specimen is slight; on the other hand, the stiffness degradation of the prefabricated specimens is noticeable. However, from the comparison of the envelope curves given in Figure 4, it can be concluded that the behavior of the prefabricated specimens in terms of energy dissipation and ductility is comparable to the monolithic specimens.

### **Conclusive Remarks**

From the limited number of experimental and analytical investigations performed on the reversed cyclic behavior of the monolithic and prefabricated energy dissipating coupling beams, the following conclusions can be stated:

- 1- The main energy dissipation mode in monolithic specimens is the shear deformation mode.
- 2- Stiffness degradation and pinching effects are more pronounced in the prefabricated specimens.
- 3- Pre-cast specimens could carry the yield load well beyond the yield displacement.
- 4- The behavior of the prefabricated specimens in terms of energy dissipation and ductility is comparable to the monolithic specimens.
- 5- The failure zone and crack concentration regions can easily be identified from the comparison of the flexural yield capacity of the coupling beam, connection region and the anchor bolts.
- 6- In the prefabricated specimens, the failure of the steel strips connecting the coupling beam to the shear wall results in concentration of the cracks in the connection region, whereas the failure originating from the yielding hence slip-out of the anchor bolts causes cracking and failure in the shear wall.

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**10<sup>th</sup> INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON  
SOIL DYNAMICS AND EARTHQUAKE ENGINEERING**

***SDEE'2001***

Drexel University  
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Edited by

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89





# Table of Contents

p.

## Plenary Session

### Seismic response of a soil deposit and its interaction with piles

*Ishihara, K. & Cubrinovski, M.*

ii

### State of the art in liquefaction

*Finn, W.D.L.*

iii

### Some cornerstones of dynamic soil-structure interaction

*Wolf, J.P. & Song, C.*

iv

### Probabilistic seismic hazard analysis in the Eastern United States: Uncertainty in seismic source characterization

*Abrahamson, N.A.*

v

### Borehole array data: Open windows into site response

*Archuleta, R. & Steidl, J.H.*

vi

### Performance of highway bridges in 1999 Kocaeli and Duzce (Turkey) earthquakes

*Erdik, M., Yilmaz, C. & Uckan, E.*

vii

## Invited Presentations

viii

### Hagia Sofia: A possible reconstruction of the first dome

*Cakmak, A.S.*

ix

### Development of site specific design ground motions in Western and Eastern North America

*Silva, W. & Costantino, C.J.*

x

### Site effects and engineering practice

*Pitilakis, K.D.*

xi

### Footings under dynamic loads: Analysis and design issues with emphasis on bridge foundations

*Mylonakis, G. & Gazetas, G.*

xii

### A simplified approach for dynamic response analysis of pile foundations

*Nogami, T.*

xiii

### Identification and analysis of dynamic response of soil systems using earthquake records and experimental data

*Zeghal, M.*

xiv

**Centrifuge-based evaluation of pile foundation response to lateral spreading***Abdoun, T., Dobry, R. & O'Rourke, T.D.*

1

**Assessment and mitigation of seismic hazard in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia***Ajif, O.H., Merghelani, & T.A., Al-Kanawi, F.J.*

2

**Field evidence of potential earthquakes hazards at the site of an embankment dam constructed across a major, active plate boundary fault***Al-Homoud, A.S.*

3

**A reliability based expert system for assessment of seismic stability and induced displacement of earth slopes***Al-Homoud, A.S. & Tahtamoni, W.W.*

4

**Rockfill dam behavior under weak and strong motion excitation: an integrated approach***Anastasiadis, A., Papazachos, C., Klimis, N., Margaris, B., Papaioannou, Ch., Theodulidis, N., Dimitriu, P. & Fikos, I.*

5

**Verification of precarious rock methodology using shake table tests of rocks and rock models***Anooshehpour, R. & Brune, J.N.*

6

**Intensity re-estimation of the 1918 Srimangal earthquake, Bangladesh***Ansary, M. A. & Sabri, S.A.*

7

**3D simulation of wave propagation by FDM with an irregular grid - combination of discontinuous grid and nonuniform-spacing grid***Aoi, S. & Fujiwara, H.*

8

**Seismic analysis of Fatih Sultan Mehmet suspension bridge***Apaydin, N. & Erdik, M.*

9

**Mitigation of lateral ground displacements of liquefied soils by underground barriers***Arango, I.*

10

**An equivalent linear algorithm with frequency - and pressure - dependent moduli and damping for the seismic analysis of deep sites***Assimaki, D. & Kausel, E.*

11

**Quantitative seismic modeling of the Kandalaksha region (the eastern part of the Baltic Shield)***Assinovskaya, B.*

12

**Seismic hazard potential of the Marmara sea***Atakan, K., Ojeda, A., Erdik, M. & Barka, A.*

13

**Analytical and experimental analysis of RC beams strengthened with FRP plates***Atmaca, S. & Karakoc, C.*

14

**Dynamic response of foundation on layered soil systems***Baidya, D.K. & Mandal, A.*

15

<b>Local site effects on building damage in Adapazari during the 17 August Izmit, Turkey earthquake</b> <i>Bakir, B.S., Sucuoglu, H., &amp; Yilmaz, T.</i>	16
<b>Local seismic hazard and site-city interaction</b> <i>Bard, P.-Y., Gueguen, P., Semblat J.-P. &amp; Chavez-Garcia, F.</i>	17
<b>Evaluation of liquefaction potential using neural-networks and CPT results</b> <i>Baziar, M.H. &amp; Nilipour, N.</i>	18
<b>Effect of silt content in sand on CPT results in calibration chambers</b> <i>Baziar, M.H. &amp; Ziaie-Moayed, R.</i>	19
<b>A study on the dynamic behavior of tube and outrigger-brace buildings on different soils</b> <i>Behnamfar, F. &amp; Mohajeri, A.H.</i>	20
<b>The effect of hammer energy on driven pile response</b> <i>Benamar, A. &amp; Alem, A.</i>	21
<b>On wave propagation in a random elastic layer overlying an elastic half space</b> <i>Bhattacharyya, R.K.</i>	22
<b>Cyclic degradation effects on seismic response of clay slopes</b> <i>Biondi, G., Cascone, E. &amp; Maugeri, M.</i>	23
<b>Lateral spreading failure of sandy slopes</b> <i>Biondi, G., Cascone, E. &amp; Maugeri, M.</i>	24
<b>Nonlinear site response analysis by modeling P-SV nonlinear wave propagation in 2-D heterogenous media</b> <i>Bonilla, L.F., Liu, P.C. &amp; Archuleta, R.J.</i>	25
<b>Liquefaction strength of fly ash reinforced with randomly distributed fibers</b> <i>Boominathan, A. &amp; Hari, S.</i>	26
<b>Some observations of geotechnical aspects of the February 28, 2001, Nisqually earthquake in Olympia, and South Seattle, Washington</b> <i>Bray, J.D., Sancio, R.B., Kammerer, A.M., Merry, S., Rodriguez-Marek, A., Khazai, B., Chang, S., Bastani, A., Collins, B., Hausler, E., Dreger, D., Perkins, W.J. &amp; Nykamp, M.</i>	27
<b>Effectiveness of vertical drains in mitigation of liquefaction</b> <i>Brennan, A.J. &amp; Madabhushi, S.P.G.</i>	28
<b>Cone penetration testing before, during, and after liquefaction</b> <i>Camp, W.M. III &amp; Mayne, P.W.</i>	29
<b>Seismic hazard model for loss estimation and risk management in Taiwan</b> <i>Campbell, K.W., Thenhaus, P.C., Barnhard, T.P. &amp; Hampson, D.B.</i>	30

<b>The contribution of the built environment to the "free-field" earthquake motion in Mexico City</b> <i>Cardenas, M. &amp; Chavez-Garcia, F.J.</i>	31
<b>Non-linear effects in dynamic soil foundation interaction</b> <i>Carrubba, P., Massimino, M.R. &amp; Maugeri, M.</i>	32
<b>Development of an electrically-driven automatic downhole seismic source</b> <i>Casey, T.J. &amp; Mayne, P.W.</i>	33
<b>Soil response analysis for some monumental buildings during the 13/12/1990 earthquake</b> <i>Castelli, F., Cavallaro, A., Grasso, S. &amp; Maugeri, M.</i>	34
<b>Deductions using aftershocks of the August 17, 1999 Izmit (Turkey) earthquake at South Izmit Bay</b> <i>Celebi, M. &amp; Sekiguchi, H.</i>	35
<b>Determination of design spectral response acceleration for the seismic zones near active faults in Taiwan</b> <i>Chai, J.F., Teng, T.-J., Chien, W.-Y. &amp; Loh, C.-H.</i>	36
<b>On the determination of Green's tensor for a granular elastic medium with application to wave propagation in the random medium</b> <i>Chattopadhyay, G. &amp; Bhattacharyya, R.K.</i>	37
<b>Mode acceleration approach for generation of floor spectra including soil-structure interaction</b> <i>Chaudhuri, S.R. &amp; Gupta, V.K.</i>	38
<b>Site effects in Parkway basin. Comparison between observations and 3D modeling</b> <i>Chavez-Garcia, F.J. &amp; Stephenson, W.R.</i>	39
<b>Seismic response of natural gas pipeline systems in the Ji-Ji earthquake</b> <i>Chen, W.W. &amp; Shih, B.-J.</i>	40
<b>Seismic response of frames with infill panels: The effect of a new technique</b> <i>Chesi, C. &amp; Parisi, M.A.</i>	41
<b>Can we reconcile probabilistic and deterministic seismic hazard assessments</b> <i>Christian, J.T.</i>	42
<b>Finite element analysis of saturated, strain softening geotechnical problems</b> <i>Cividini, A.</i>	43
<b>Analysis of wharf and embankment behavior during the Loma Prieta earthquake</b> <i>Dawson, E., Salah-Mars, S., Arulnathan, R., Roth, W., Lobedan, F. &amp; Ogunfunmi, K.</i>	44
<b>Earthquake-induced deformation of a waterfront slope</b> <i>Egan, J., Wang, Z. &amp; Scheibel, L.</i>	45
<b>Strong ground motion in 1999 Kocaeli and Duzce (Turkey) earthquakes</b> <i>Erdik, M., Durukal, E., Alpay-Biro, Y. &amp; Ozbey, C.</i>	46

<b>Numerical simulation of liquefaction at soil-structure interfaces</b> <i>Evgin, E.</i>	47
<b>Piles in liquefiable soils: Seismic analysis and design issues</b> <i>Finn, W.D.L., Thavaraj, T. &amp; Fujita, N.</i>	48
<b>Earthquake deformation analysis for seismic remediation of Wickiup Dam, Oregon</b> <i>France, J.W., Adams, T.E., Bliss, M. &amp; Barraclough, M.</i>	49
<b>A fast solution method for 3-D elastic wave scattering by many cracks</b> <i>Fujiwara, H., Yutaka, N. &amp; Ando, T.</i>	50
<b>Dynamic characteristics and horizontal strengths of a conventional thatched wooden houses with 4 rooms, partitioned only by sliding doors</b> <i>Fukumoto, K.</i>	51
<b>Continuous investigation of amplification of sedimentary layers and estimation of their structures in Shiga Prefecture, Japan</b> <i>Fukumoto, K.</i>	52
<b>Influence of the ground profile on the reduction of earthquake motion at the filled man-made islands in the Kobe harbor during the 1995 Hyogoken Nambu earthquake</b> <i>Fukusumi, T., Kusakabe, K. &amp; Ozaki, H.</i>	53
<b>Influence of colloidal silica grout on liquefaction potential and cyclic undrained behavior of loose sand</b> <i>Gallagher, P.M. &amp; Mitchell, J.K.</i>	54
<b>Seismic waves generated by oscillating buildings: analysis of a snap-back experiment</b> <i>Gallipoli, M., Mucciarelli, M., Ponzo, F. &amp; Dolce, M.</i>	55
<b>Stability of HVSR ratio from earthquakes and microtremors</b> <i>Gallipoli, M.R., Mucciarelli, M., Arcieri, M. &amp; Lapenna, E.</i>	56
<b>Structural vulnerability in Chilpancingo, Guerrero, Mexico</b> <i>Garcia, H.J., Bernal, A.G., Mendez, E.A. &amp; Garcia, A.G.</i>	57
<b>Identification of pile head impedance from experimental data</b> <i>Ghanem, R., Malek, S. &amp; Tazoh, T.</i>	58
<b>Seismic response of concrete-face rockfill dams, design and analysis</b> <i>Ghanooni Mahabadi, S. &amp; Mahinroosta, R.</i>	59
<b>Segmental cross-spectrum as a new technique in site identification by spectral ratio analysis of earthquake motions</b> <i>Ghayamghamian, M.R. &amp; Motosaka, M.</i>	60
<b>An investigation on seismic demands and design criteria for pre-cast concrete industrial structures during the 1999 Turkish earthquakes</b> <i>Gokalp, G. &amp; Kilic, S.A.</i>	61

<b>Dynamic response analysis of the soil layers of Mexico City</b> <i>Gomez-Bernal, A. &amp; Saragoni, R.</i>	62
<b>Recent data recorded at borehole arrays instrumented by the California Strong Motion Instrumentation program</b> <i>Graizer, V., Shakal, A. &amp; Hipley, P.</i>	63
<b>A comparison and critical review of alternative simplified liquefaction evaluation procedures</b> <i>Green, R.A. &amp; Mitchell, J.K.</i>	64
<b>Development of rule-based expert system using fuzzy logic with application to seismic risk evaluation</b> <i>Gupta, A., Agrawal, D.P. &amp; Gupta, R.</i>	65
<b>Analysis of in situ seismic data in boreholes by NIOM method</b> <i>Haddadi, H.R. &amp; Kawakami, H.</i>	66
<b>Fundamental period and mode shape of layered soil profiles</b> <i>Hadjian, A.</i>	67
<b>Applications of wavelet analysis to the investigation of the dynamic behaviour of geotechnical structures</b> <i>Haigh, S.K., Teymur, B., Madabhushi, S.P.G. &amp; Newland, D.E.</i>	68
<b>Nonlinear seismic response of a foundation on layered soil</b> <i>Halabian, A.M. &amp; El Naggar, M.H.</i>	69
<b>Seismic strengthening of reinforced concrete bridge pier with FRP composites</b> <i>Hamidifar, H., Hosseini, A. &amp; Ghouzloo, U.H.</i>	70
<b>Seismic hazard in Takamatsu Japan from fault trenching and palaeo-liquefaction studies</b> <i>Hasegawa, S. &amp; Finn, W.D.L.</i>	71
<b>Site characterization in the New Madrid seismic zone using advanced surface wave methods</b> <i>Hebeler, G.L., Orozco, M.C. &amp; Rix, G.J.</i>	72
<b>Results from impulse shear tests conducted in saturated loose silty sands</b> <i>Henke, W. &amp; Henke, R.</i>	73
<b>Seismic analysis of buried and aboveground pipelines considering both multi-support excitation and wave propagation</b> <i>Hosseini, M. &amp; Rabiei-Far, H.</i>	74
<b>Foundation Design Considerations for a pile supported critical facility</b> <i>Houston, T.W., Costantino, C.J., Hossain, Q. &amp; Stone, N.E.</i>	75
<b>Surface and downhole shear wave seismic methods for thick soil site investigations</b> <i>Hunter, J.A., Benjumea, B., Harris, J.B., Miller, R.D., Pullan, S.E., Burns, R.A. &amp; Good, R.L.</i>	76

<b>The role of fines in the liquefaction of a volcanic soil 'Shirasu'</b> <i>Hyodo, M., Yoshimoto, N. &amp; Nakata, Y.</i>	77
<b>The seismic vulnerability ratings of Bishkek's apartment buildings</b> <i>Imanbekov, S. &amp; Nogai, R.</i>	78
<b>A study on behavior of pile in a liquefied ground during earthquake</b> <i>Ishikawa, T., Sato, M. &amp; Sato, H.</i>	79
<b>Dynamic full scale test of Marun Embankment Dam in Iran</b> <i>Jafari, M.K. &amp; Davoodi, M.</i>	80
<b>Vs-SPT correlation using different methods of Vs measurement, case study: Tehran south microzonation project</b> <i>Jafari, M.K. &amp; Razmkhah, A.</i>	81
<b>A study on the classification of site effects and its application to the seismic hazard and microzonation</b> <i>Jean, W-Y. &amp; Loh, C-H.</i>	82
<b>Assessment of seismic resistance of masonry structures including boundary conditions</b> <i>Juhasova, E., Hurak, M. &amp; Zembaty, Z.</i>	83
<b>The effect of reinforced soil on seismic response of infilled frames</b> <i>Juhasova, E., Juhas, M. &amp; Crewe, A.</i>	84
<b>Dynamic properties of natural soils from Cyprus</b> <i>Kallioglou, P., Tika, Th., Petrides, G., Sturaitis, E. &amp; Pitilakis, K.</i>	85
<b>Seismic response analysis of laterally inhomogeneous ground with emphasis on strains</b> <i>Kamiyama, M. &amp; Satoh, T.</i>	86
<b>Deformations in medium-dense and dense sands under bi-directional shear loading</b> <i>Kammerer, A.M., Wu, J., Riemer, M., Pestana, J. &amp; Seed, R.</i>	87
<b>Response prediction of building structure for great event using ground motion model</b> <i>Kawano, M., Asano, K., Dohi, H. &amp; Matsuda, S.</i>	88
<b>Soil structure interaction and the stability of spent fuel casks in seismic regions</b> <i>Khan, A.Z.</i>	89
<b>Earthquake input energy and response spectral parameters</b> <i>Khashaee, P. &amp; Mohraz, B.</i>	90
<b>Influence of plasticity on the seismic behavior of tunnels</b> <i>Khoshnoudian, F. &amp; Shahrour, I.</i>	91
<b>A practical hybrid method of time-domain analysis for non-linear soil-structure interaction problem</b> <i>Kim, J.M., Choi, J.S. &amp; Lee, J.S.</i>	92

<b>Seismic analysis of base-isolated liquid storage tanks using BE-FE-BE coupling technique</b> <i>Kim, M.K., Lim, Y.M., Cho, S.Y. &amp; Cho, K.H.</i>	93
<b>Seismic response analysis of soil-pile interaction system using FE-BE coupling method</b> <i>Kim, M.K., Lim, Y.M., Kim, M.K. &amp; Rhee, J.W.</i>	94
<b>Effect of bearing damages upon seismic behaviors of a multi-span simply supported bridge</b> <i>Kim, S.-H., Mha, H.-S., Lee, S.-W. &amp; Cho, B.-C.</i>	95
<b>Hybrid vibration experiments with a bridge foundation system model</b> <i>Kobayashi, H. &amp; Tamura, K.</i>	96
<b>Bedrock structure in Adapazari, Turkey and its geophysical implications - A possible cause of severe damage by the 1999 Kocaeli earthquake</b> <i>Komazawa, M., Morikawa, H., Nakamura, K., Akamatsu, J., Nishimura, K., Sawada, S., Erken, A., Arman, H. &amp; Onalp, A.</i>	97
<b>Dynamic failure numeric simulations of model concrete-faced rockfill dam</b> <i>Kong, X &amp; Liu, J.</i>	98
<b>The spatial auto-correlation method for estimation of underground structure using microtremors</b> <i>Konno, K.</i>	99
<b>Assessment of liquefaction susceptibility of Adapazari City after 17 August 1999 Kocaeli earthquake</b> <i>Kutanis, M. &amp; Arman, H.</i>	100
<b>Research of the stressed-deformed condition thick cylindrical buried shells interacting with the ground</b> <i>Kuzmin, M.</i>	101
<b>Computation of response spectra from mining tremors using neural networks</b> <i>Kuzniar, K., Maciag, E. &amp; Waszczyszyn, Z.</i>	102
<b>Application of multi-station methods to surface wave testing</b> <i>Lai, C.G., Rix, G.J., Foti, S. &amp; Roma, V.</i>	103
<b>Modeling of seismic wave propagation with optimally varying mesh size</b> <i>Laurenzano, G. &amp; Priolo, E.</i>	104
<b>Seismic Microzonation Map of Taipei Basin in Chi-Chi Earthquake</b> <i>Lee, S.H. &amp; Wu, C-M.</i>	105
<b>Monitoring of geomaterial stress state time dependencies on a basis of the surface infra-red emission measurements</b> <i>Levin, B.W., Morozov, A.A., Motovilov, E.A. &amp; Sheinin, V.I.</i>	106
<b>Rotational components of earthquake motions obtained from surface wave</b> <i>Li, H.-N., Sun, L. &amp; Wang, S.</i>	107



<b>Nonlinear elastic modeling of reinforced soils under cyclic loading</b> <i>Li, J.</i>	108
<b>Analysis of an ultrahigh-rise SRC building by 3-D nonlinear model</b> <i>Li, K., Kubo, T., Xu, Y. &amp; Gong, S.</i>	109
<b>A stochastic approach to site-response component in seismic ground motion coherency model</b> <i>Liao, S. &amp; Li, J.</i>	110
<b>A numerical model for dynamic soil liquefaction analysis</b> <i>Liyanaathirana, D.S. &amp; Poulos, H.G.</i>	111
<b>Wharf and embankment strengthening program- Port of Oakland</b> <i>Lobedan, F. &amp; LaBasco, T.</i>	112
<b>Free field traffic induced vibrations: in situ measurements and numerical predictions</b> <i>Lombaert, G. &amp; Degrande, G.</i>	113
<b>Shaking table model test on dynamic soil-structure interaction system</b> <i>Lu, X., Chen, Y., Chen, B. &amp; Li, P.</i>	114
<b>Seismic hazard assessment and engineering application in Italy</b> <i>Lucantoni, A., Sabetta, F. &amp; Bramerini, F.</i>	115
<b>Simulation of fire loss following earthquakes</b> <i>Luihardt, H.H., Nasri, V. &amp; Lum, K.S.K.</i>	116
<b>Empirical mode decomposition of the 1994 Northridge earthquake and its interpretation for seismic source mechanism</b> <i>Ma, S. &amp; Zhang, R.R.</i>	117
<b>Effects of plasticity of soil on nonlinear dynamic analysis of pile groups</b> <i>Maheshwari, B.K., Truman, K.Z. &amp; Gould, P.L.</i>	118
<b>Complex site effects in EUROSEISTEST and potential applications in seismic norms</b> <i>Makra, K., Raptakis, D. &amp; Pitilakis, K.</i>	119
<b>The role of the reactivated alpine structures to the distribution of damages and rockfalls at Parnis Mt. During the Athens (Greece) earthquake (Sep. 7, 1999, Ms=5.9)</b> <i>Mariolakos, I. &amp; Fountoulis, I.</i>	120
<b>Evaluation of liquefaction potential of railway embankments</b> <i>Martin, J.R. II, Pando, M.A. &amp; Olgun, C.G.</i>	121
<b>Centrifuge modeling of the seismic behavior of a slope in liquefiable soil</b> <i>Martinez-Ramirez, G., Taboada-Urtuzuastegui, V., Abdoun, T. &amp; Dobry, R.</i>	122

<b>Validation of numerical and theoretical rocking stiffness of a shallow foundation by means of shaking-table tests</b>	123
<i>Massimino, M.R., Maugeri, M. &amp; Novita, D.</i>	
<b>Study of seismodynamical processes in loess soils</b>	124
<i>Mavlyanova, N.</i>	
<b>CPT site characterization for seismic hazards in Mid-America</b>	125
<i>Mayne, P.W., Liao, T., Zavala, G. &amp; McGillivray, A.</i>	
<b>Seismic evaluation of reinforced concrete piers in typical Pennsylvania bridges</b>	126
<i>Memari, A.M., Harris, H.G. &amp; Hamid, A.A.</i>	
<b>Impact bearing capacity of building foundation</b>	127
<i>Men, F.L. , Sun, G.M. &amp; Cui, J.</i>	
<b>Lifelines earthquake vulnerability assessment: a systemic approach</b>	128
<i>Menoni, S., Pergalani, F., Petrini, V., Boni, M.P. &amp; Mandelli, M.</i>	
<b>Comparing shear-wave velocity profiles inverted from multi-channel surface wave with borehole measurements</b>	129
<i>Miller, R.D. , Xia, J., Park, C.B., Hunter, J.A., Harris, J.B. &amp; Ivanov, J.</i>	
<b>Dynamic soil-structure interaction. A comparison of theoretical and finite element methods</b>	130
<i>Mills-Bria, B. &amp; Lam, I.P.</i>	
<b>Statics and dynamics of ground structures</b>	131
<i>Mirsaidov, M.M., Matkarimov, P.D. &amp; Rumi, D.F.</i>	
<b>Nonlinear behavior of saturated sandy soil evaluated by shaking table test using large shear vessel</b>	132
<i>Miwa, S. and Mizuno, H.</i>	
<b>Spatial variation of peak ground acceleration using records of strong motion arrays</b>	133
<i>Mogi, H. &amp; Kawakami, H.</i>	
<b>Experimental study on earthquake induced deformation of earth structures</b>	134
<i>Mohajeri, M. &amp; Towhata, I.</i>	
<b>The use of geosynthetic in mitigating pipeline flotation during soil liquefaction</b>	135
<i>Mohri, Y., Kawabata, T. &amp; Ling, H.</i>	
<b>Earthquake evaluation of the San Juan City's Historical Hospital 'Dr. Guillermo Rawson', Argentina</b>	136
<i>Monguilner, C.A., Aladro, S.B. &amp; Castro, M.E.</i>	
<b>Comparison of the potential damages of the earthquakes of San Juan and Mendoza - Argentina</b>	137
<i>Monguilner, C.A., Ponti, N.A. &amp; Pavoni, S.</i>	
<b>Measurement of acceleration during vibratory compaction of unsaturated soil</b>	138
<i>Mooney, M.A., Bouton, C. &amp; Pan, J.</i>	

<b>Analytical representation of phase characteristics for source time function modeled by stochastic impulse train</b>	
<i>Morikawa, H., Sawada, S., Toki, K. &amp; Kawasaki, K.</i>	139
<b>Wavelet-based generation of spectrum compatible time histories</b>	
<i>Mukherjee, S. &amp; Gupta, V.K.</i>	140
<b>Land use decisions in Pennsylvania: Where seismic hazard joins other geophysical hazards</b>	
<i>Mulhern, M.</i>	141
<b>Effect of fines content on steady-state line of mixed layered samples of a sand</b>	
<i>Naeini, S.A. &amp; Baziar, M.H.</i>	142
<b>Non-linear shear stiffness of sand layer observed through volcanic earthquake swarm</b>	
<i>Nakamura, M., Suzumura, J.-I., Hanada, K. &amp; Yamada, M.</i>	143
<b>Non-stationary response of structures excited by random seismic processes with time variable frequency content</b>	
<i>Naprstek, J. &amp; Fischer, C.</i>	144
<b>Liquefaction Damage Estimation for Large Scale Portfolio Loss Analysis in San Francisco Bay Area</b>	
<i>Nasri, V., Luithardt, H.H. &amp; Lum, K.S.K.</i>	145
<b>GIS-based seismic hazard and risk analysis</b>	
<i>Nikolaou, S. &amp; Gaus, M.</i>	146
<b>Torsion shear tests on rate-dependent behavior of liquefied sand</b>	
<i>Nishimura, S., Honda, T. &amp; Towhata, I.</i>	147
<b>Impedance functions in simple form for embedded foundations</b>	
<i>Nogami, T. &amp; Chen, H.S.</i>	148
<b>Seismic hazard assessment in the Catalan coastal ranges, Spain, using paleoseismological constrains</b>	
<i>Ojeda, A., Atakan, K., Jimenez, M.J., Garcia-Fernandez, M., Masana, E. &amp; Santanach, P.</i>	149
<b>The new accelerograph network for Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia, and implications for microzonation</b>	
<i>Ojeda, A., Martinez, S., Bermudez, M.L. &amp; Atakan, K.</i>	150
<b>Influence of damping on dynamic site response analyses</b>	
<i>Olgun, C.G., Green, R.A., Martin, J.R. II &amp; Gutierrez, M.S.</i>	151
<b>Investigation and evaluation of liquefaction-induced ground deformations at Izmit Bay during the 1999 Kocaeli (Izmit), Turkey earthquake</b>	
<i>Onder Cetin, K., Seed, R.B. &amp; Youd, T.L.</i>	152
<b>Wall-type drain method using recycled concrete crushed stones as liquefaction countermeasure for underground structures</b>	
<i>Orense, R., Morimoto, I., Yamamoto, Y., Yumiyama, T., Yamamoto, H. &amp; Sugawara, K.</i>	153

<b>Analytical method of lateral spreading using time-dependent Lagrange FEM and proposal of simple formula for estimating permanent displacement</b>	154
<i>Ozaki, R. &amp; Takada, S.</i>	
<b>Energy dissipating pre-cast coupling beams</b>	155
<i>Ozden, S., Yuzugullu, O. &amp; Meydanli, H.</i>	
<b>Analysis of liquefaction-induced deformation for damaged dikes in the 1993 Hokkaido Nansei-oki earthquake</b>	156
<i>Ozutsumi, O., Sugiyama, W., Sawada, S., Takeshima, Y. &amp; Iai, S.</i>	
<b>Seismic behaviour and retrofitting of joints in traditional timber roof structures</b>	157
<i>Parisi, M.A. &amp; Piazza, M.</i>	
<b>Characterization of geotechnical sites by multichannel analysis of surface waves (MASW) method</b>	158
<i>Park, C.B., Miller, R.D., Xia, J. &amp; Ivanov, J.</i>	
<b>Study of time-dependent nonlinear soil behavior in the 1995 Hyogo-ken Nanbu earthquake using borehole array records at Port Island, SGK and TKS sites</b>	159
<i>Pavlenko, O. &amp; Irikura, K.</i>	
<b>Nonlinear system identification technique applied to study of the soil response at Port Island, SGK, and TKS sites in the 1995 Hyogo-ken Nanbu earthquake</b>	160
<i>Pavlenko, O. &amp; Irikura, K.</i>	
<b>The effects of local soil conditions and liquefaction on the damage patterns observed in Adapazari-Central District after the 17th August, 199 Izmit-Turkey earthquake</b>	161
<i>Pekcan, O., Onder Cetin, K. &amp; Sadik Bakir, B.</i>	
<b>A global approach for dealing with spatial variability, site effects, soil structure interaction and nonlinearity in R/C bridges: A. Verification study</b>	162
<i>Pitilakis, K., Sextos, A. &amp; Kappos, A.</i>	
<b>H/V ratios of seismic noise in the Catania area (Sicily, Italy)</b>	163
<i>Priolo, E. &amp; Laurenzano, G.</i>	
<b>Understanding the threshold shear strain in soil dynamics</b>	164
<i>Rahhal, M.E. &amp; Lefebvre, G.</i>	
<b>Seismic hazard for the City of Tashkent, Uzbekistan</b>	165
<i>Rashidov, T. &amp; Kuzmina, Y.</i>	
<b>Inventory and seismic vulnerability assessment of residential buildings in Tashkent, Uzbekistan</b>	166
<i>Rashidov, T., Abdullaev, E., Ismailova, G., Badriyev, B., Akhmedov, M. &amp; Kuzmina, Y.</i>	
<b>The use of various calculation methods for the lifeline systems vulnerability assessment in the city of Tashkent, Uzbekistan</b>	167
<i>Rashidov, T., Kuzmina, Y., Rashidov, I. &amp; Yusupov, A.</i>	

<b>Effect of soil layer depth variability on statistically developed site specific surface response spectra at layered sites</b>	
<i>Rieck, P.J. &amp; Houston, T.W.</i>	168
<b>Site response to near-fault ground motions</b>	
<i>Rodriguez-Marek, A., Bray, J.D. &amp; Pestana, J.M.</i>	169
<b>Preliminary observations of the geotechnical aspects of the June 23, 2001 Southern Peru earthquake</b>	
<i>Rodriguez-Marek, A., Repetto, P., Wartman, J. &amp; Zegarra-Pellanne, J.</i>	170
<b>The effect of the Mississippi embayment on response spectra</b>	
<i>Romero, S., Rix, G.J. &amp; Silva, W.J.</i>	171
<b>Seismic hazard assessment in the state of Kuwait</b>	
<i>Sadek, A.W.</i>	172
<b>Detection of nonlinear site amplification</b>	
<i>Safak, E.</i>	173
<b>Inelastic quasistatic analysis to simulate dynamic behaviors of multi-degree-of-freedom system</b>	
<i>Saitoh, M.</i>	174
<b>Modeling dynamic soil properties for uncemented and lightly cemented granular soils</b>	
<i>Salvati, L.A. &amp; Pestana, J.M.</i>	175
<b>A case study on the seismic performance of shallow foundations in Adapazari, Turkey</b>	
<i>Sancio, R.B., Bray, J.D., Stewart, J.P., Youd, T.L., Christensen, C., Durgunoglu, H.T., Onalp, A., Karadayilar, T. &amp; Seed, R.B.</i>	176
<b>Dynamic behavior of reinforced concrete pile foundation on sand deposits using centrifuge modeling</b>	
<i>Sato, M., Hotta, H. &amp; Okamoto, S.</i>	177
<b>Analysis of phase characteristics of path effects on seismic ground motion based on ray theory</b>	
<i>Sawada, S., Morikawa, H. &amp; Kataoka, K.</i>	178
<b>Analysis of liquefaction induced deformation for damaged dikes in the 1995 Hyogoken-Nambu earthquake</b>	
<i>Sawada, S., Takeshima, Y., Ozutsumi, O., Sugiyama, W. &amp; Iai, S.</i>	179
<b>Array technique to investigate seismic wavefield: application to the Annot experiment</b>	
<i>Schissle, E., Cansi, Y. &amp; Gaffet, S.</i>	180
<b>Fundamental frequencies of alluvial basins: estimation by various modal methods</b>	
<i>Semblat, J.F., Chabert, R., Paolucci, R. &amp; Duval, A.M.</i>	181
<b>Seismic site effects for shallow and deep alluvial basins: in-depth motion and focusing effect</b>	
<i>Semblat, J.F., Dangla, P., Kham, M. &amp; Duval, A.M.</i>	182

<b>A global approach for dealing with spatial variability, site effects, soil-structure-interaction and nonlinearity in R/C bridges: B. Parametric study</b>	183
<i>Sextos, A., Pitilakis, K. &amp; Kappos, A.</i>	
<b>Seismic response of water pipeline systems in the Ji-Ji earthquake</b>	184
<i>Shi, B.-J. &amp; Chen, W.W.</i>	
<b>921 Ji-Ji earthquake: Lifeline performance and post-earthquake response</b>	185
<i>Shiah, G-C.</i>	
<b>A modified slip-lock pinching model for the earthquake performance of water main sections near the reverse fault</b>	186
<i>Shiah, G-C.</i>	
<b>Analytical Study of shaking table tests on effect of steel sheet pile walls for embankments: Analysis by "FLIP"</b>	187
<i>Shimazu, T., Sato, S., Ikeda, T., Ozutsumi, O. &amp; Iai, S.</i>	
<b>A new simple approach to substantially increase the seismic stability of reinforced soil structures</b>	188
<i>Shinoda, M., Uchimura, T., Tatsuoka, F., Tateyama, M. &amp; Natsuki, T.</i>	
<b>Mechanism of liquefaction of sandy ground during a great earthquake</b>	189
<i>Shioi, Y. &amp; Hashizume, Y.</i>	
<b>Estimation of local site effects by a generalized inversion scheme using observed records of "Small-Titan"</b>	190
<i>Shoji, Y. &amp; Kamiyama, M.</i>	
<b>Evaluation of rupture directivity effects on peak ground motion using stochastic Green's function method</b>	191
<i>Si, H.J. &amp; Midorikawa, S.</i>	
<b>Characteristics of strong ground motion during the 1999 Chi-Chi earthquake (Taiwan) and large aftershocks: comparison with the previously established models</b>	192
<i>Sokolov, V.Yu., Loh, C.-H. &amp; Wen, K.-L.</i>	
<b>Study of site response characteristics in the Taipei basin (northern Taiwan) during earthquakes of various magnitudes and location</b>	193
<i>Sokolov, V.Yu., Loh, C.-H. &amp; Wen, K.-L.</i>	
<b>Seismic base isolation of low rise structures: frictional sliding type</b>	194
<i>Souissi, M., Siller, T. &amp; Charlie, W.</i>	
<b>Pore pressure observations from the 1999 M7.1 Hector Mine earthquake on the liquefaction array at the Garner Valley Engineering Seismology test site</b>	195
<i>Steidl, J.H., Archuleta, R.J. &amp; Bonilla, L.F.</i>	
<b>Ground motion evaluation procedures for performance based design</b>	196
<i>Stewart, J.P., Abrahamson, N.A., Bray, J.D., Chiou, B., Graves, R.W. &amp; Somerville, P.G.</i>	

<b>Behavior of suction caissons for taut leg mooring systems under dynamic loads</b> <i>Sukumaran, B. &amp; McCarron, W.</i>	197
<b>The law of deformation and structural destruction of soils under dynamic action</b> <i>Sultanov, K.S., &amp; Khusanov, B.E.</i>	198
<b>The approach of P-waves polarization analysis in transversely isotropic medium to estimate cracks alignment under the Toba region</b> <i>Suryo Santoso, B., Nelly, F.R., Winardhi, S. &amp; Puspito, N.T.</i>	199
<b>Effect of variations of dynamic soil parameters of surface layers on S-wave ground motions</b> <i>Suzuki, S. &amp; Asano, K.</i>	200
<b>Microzonation in Chi-Chi village based on interpolation of strong ground motion records and questionnaire intensity</b> <i>Takada, S. &amp; Kuwata, Y.</i>	201
<b>A new proposal for simplified design of buried steel pipes crossing active faults</b> <i>Takada, S., Hassani, N. &amp; Fukuda, K.</i>	202
<b>Scenario faults and micro-zonation in Tehran City</b> <i>Takada, S., Hassani, N. &amp; Rasti, R.</i>	203
<b>Analysis of liquefaction induced residual deformation for caisson type quay wall</b> <i>Takeshima, Y., Sawada, S.-I., Yamamoto, A. &amp; Yashima, A.</i>	204
<b>Seismic soil-structure interaction of underground structures considering soil liquefaction</b> <i>Tamari, Y., Takahashi, M. &amp; Towhata, I.</i>	205
<b>New attenuation relation of peak ground motion and acceleration response spectrum</b> <i>Tamura, K., Nakao, Y. &amp; Matsumoto, S.</i>	206
<b>Damage to reclamation land embankment caused by past earthquakes</b> <i>Tani, S.</i>	207
<b>Parametric study of slope safety subjected to dynamic earthquake loads considering the stochastic spatial variability of soil properties</b> <i>Tantalla, J., Prevost, J.-H. &amp; Deodatis, G.</i>	208
<b>Dynamics of spatial-temporal processes in the peri-contour zone rocks</b> <i>Tatarinov, V.N &amp; Tatarinova, T.A.</i>	209
<b>A new pile-head device for decreasing construction costs and increasing the seismic performance of pile foundations</b>  <i>Tazoh, T., Ohtsuki, A., Aoki, T., Mano, H., Isoda, K., Iwamoto, T., Arakawa, N., Ishihara, T. &amp; Ookawa, M.</i>	210
<b>Usage of miniature CPT in dynamic centrifuge modelling to evaluate liquefaction resistance</b> <i>Teymur, B. &amp; Madabhushi, S.P.G.</i>	211

<b>Liquefaction in silty soils - screening and remediation issues</b> <i>Thevanayagam, S. &amp; Martin, G.R.</i>	212
<b>Pipeline failure probability assessment with respect to landslides</b> <i>Timashev, S.A. &amp; Yerigina, A.V.</i>	213
<b>Structure-soil-structure interaction based on dynamic experiment of adjacent low and medium-rise ordinary buildings</b> <i>Tobita, J. &amp; Fukuwa, N.</i>	214
<b>Site specific hazard of some towns/cities in Uganda</b> <i>Tugume, F.A.</i>	215
<b>Some results of analysis of the seismological, geophysical and geological data, necessary for assessment and mitigation of seismic risk in Bishkek, Krgyz Republic</b> <i>Turdukulov, A.T., Muraliev, A.M. &amp; Kamchybekov, M.P.</i>	216
<b>A simplified lumped parameter model for non-linear soil structure interaction analyses of structures</b> <i>Uckan, E., Fahjan, Y. &amp; Erdik, M.</i>	217
<b>Seismic Evaluation and Remediation of Webber Dam</b> <i>Uddin, N.</i>	218
<b>Response of Cedar Hills Nursery Strong Motion Site During the Northridge Earthquake</b> <i>Vahdani, S. &amp; Wikstrom, S.</i>	219
<b>Static and dynamic stability and soil liquefaction analyses of the San Roque dam</b> <i>Vahdani, S., Povone, M., Benson, S., Osmun, D., Ehasz, J., &amp; Wartman, J.</i>	220
<b>Dynamic characteristics of a base isolated building from ambient vibration measurements and low level earthquake shaking</b> <i>Ventura, C.E., Finn, W.D.L. &amp; Fujita, N.</i>	221
<b>Seismic evaluation of existing nuclear facility using ambient vibration test to characterize dynamic behavior of the structure and microtremor measurements to characterize the soil: a case study</b> <i>Volant, P. &amp; Orbovic, N.</i>	222
<b>Effects of random soil properties on site amplification of seismic waves</b> <i>Wang, S. &amp; Hao, H.</i>	223
<b>Use of an inclined plane to evaluate the Newmark sliding block procedure</b> <i>Wartman, J., Bray, J.D. &amp; Seed, R.B.</i>	224
<b>Site effect on vulnerability of 21-story-buildings in Hong Kong under near and far field earthquakes</b> <i>Wen, Z.P., Hu, Y.X. &amp; Chau, K.T.</i>	225
<b>Development of preliminary seismic design parameters for the potential nuclear waste repository at Yucca Mountain, Nevada</b> <i>Wong, I., Silva, W., Thomas, P., Stepp, J.C., Quittmeyer, R., Lee, R. &amp; Sullivan, T.</i>	226



<b>3D near-surface soil response of earthquake engineering interest from H/V ambient noise ratios</b> <i>Woolery, E.W. &amp; Street, R.</i>	227
<b>Earthquake motion simulation for Mid-America cities</b> <i>Wu, C.L. &amp; Wen, Y.K.</i>	228
<b>Inversion of phase velocities of surface waves with higher modes</b> <i>Xia, J., Miller, R.D. &amp; Park, C.B.</i>	229
<b>Soil amplification and its relationship with damage properties at 27 June 1998 Adana-Ceyhan earthquake</b> <i>Yalcinkaya, E. &amp; Alptekin, O.</i>	230
<b>A seismic hazard map for the Great Tehran Area, Iran</b> <i>Zare, M.</i>	231
<b>Post-processing of downhole shear wave measurements by cross-correlation</b> <i>Zavala, G.J. &amp; Mayne, P.W.</i>	232
<b>Local identification analyses of the dynamic response of soil systems</b> <i>Zeghal, M. &amp; Oskay, C.</i>	233
<b>Spatial variation of seismic motion induced by propagation of body waves</b> <i>Zendagui, D. &amp; Berrah, M.K.</i>	234
<b>Stochastic description of seismic random fields from recorded data</b> <i>Zerva, A. &amp; Zervas, K.</i>	235
<b>Near source strong ground motion synthetics and wave propagation analysis in an irregular site for the 1999 Chi-Chi earthquake</b> <i>Zulfikar, A.C., Shimabuku, J. &amp; Takemiya, H.</i>	236
<b>Author Index</b>	237