

## CLASSICAL PLATE THEORY \*

We use the following kinematical hypothesis:

$$\begin{aligned} u &= u_s - z \frac{\partial w}{\partial x}, \\ v &= v_s - z \frac{\partial w}{\partial y}, \\ w &\equiv w(x, y), \end{aligned}$$

using which we obtain from the strain-displacement relationships, the following:

$$\begin{aligned} \varepsilon_{xx} &= \frac{\partial u}{\partial x} = \frac{\partial u_s}{\partial x} - z \frac{\partial^2 w}{\partial x^2}, \\ \varepsilon_{yy} &= \frac{\partial v}{\partial y} = \frac{\partial v_s}{\partial y} - z \frac{\partial^2 w}{\partial y^2}, \\ \varepsilon_{zz} &= \frac{\partial w}{\partial z} = 0, \\ \varepsilon_{xy} &= \frac{1}{2} \left( \frac{\partial u}{\partial y} + \frac{\partial v}{\partial x} \right) = \frac{1}{2} \left( \frac{\partial u_s}{\partial y} + \frac{\partial v_s}{\partial x} \right) - z \frac{\partial^2 w}{\partial x \partial y}, \\ \varepsilon_{yz} &= \frac{1}{2} \left( \frac{\partial v}{\partial z} + \frac{\partial w}{\partial y} \right) = \frac{1}{2} \left( -\frac{\partial w}{\partial y} + \frac{\partial w}{\partial y} \right) = 0, \\ \varepsilon_{zx} &= \frac{1}{2} \left( \frac{\partial w}{\partial x} + \frac{\partial u}{\partial z} \right) = \frac{1}{2} \left( -\frac{\partial w}{\partial x} + \frac{\partial w}{\partial x} \right) = 0. \end{aligned}$$

Since  $\varepsilon_{yz}$  and  $\varepsilon_{zx}$  are zero, from Hooke's law, it follows that  $\sigma_{yz}$  and  $\sigma_{zx}$  are also zero. Additionally, since  $\varepsilon_{zz} = 0$ , so  $\sigma_{zz} = \nu(\sigma_{xx} + \sigma_{yy})$ . Now,  $\sigma_{xx}$  and  $\sigma_{yy}$  are not zero, therefore  $\sigma_{zz}$  is not zero. However, we forcibly assume plane stress conditions and take  $\sigma_{zz} = 0$ .

Using  $\sigma_{zz} = 0$  in the following relations from Hooke's law:

$$\begin{aligned} \varepsilon_{xx} &= \frac{1}{E} \left[ \sigma_{xx} - \nu (\sigma_{yy} + \sigma_{zz}) \right], \\ \varepsilon_{yy} &= \frac{1}{E} \left[ \sigma_{yy} - \nu (\sigma_{xx} + \sigma_{zz}) \right], \end{aligned}$$

we have

$$\begin{aligned} \sigma_{xx} &= \frac{E}{1 - \nu^2} (\varepsilon_{xx} + \nu \varepsilon_{yy}), \\ \sigma_{yy} &= \frac{E}{1 - \nu^2} (\varepsilon_{yy} + \nu \varepsilon_{xx}). \end{aligned}$$

Considering the virtual work equation:

$$\int_V \sigma_{ij} \delta \varepsilon_{ij} dV = \int_A t_i \delta u_i dA,$$

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we have from the left hand side

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{LHS} &= \int_V \sigma_{ij} \delta \varepsilon_{ij} \, dV \\
 &= \int_V (\sigma_{xx} \delta \varepsilon_{xx} + \sigma_{yy} \delta \varepsilon_{yy} + 2\sigma_{xy} \delta \varepsilon_{xy}) \, dv \\
 &= \int_A \int_{-h/2}^{h/2} \left[ \sigma_{xx} \left( \frac{\partial \delta u_s}{\partial x} - z \frac{\partial^2 \delta w}{\partial x^2} \right) + \sigma_{yy} \left( \frac{\partial \delta v_s}{\partial y} - z \frac{\partial^2 \delta w}{\partial y^2} \right) + 2\sigma_{xy} \frac{1}{2} \left( \frac{\partial \delta u_s}{\partial y} + \frac{\partial \delta v_s}{\partial x} - 2z \frac{\partial^2 \delta w}{\partial x \partial y} \right) \right] dz dA \\
 &= \int_A \int_{-h/2}^{h/2} \left[ \sigma_{xx} \frac{\partial \delta u_s}{\partial x} + \sigma_{yy} \frac{\partial \delta v_s}{\partial y} + \sigma_{xy} \left( \frac{\partial \delta u_s}{\partial y} + \frac{\partial \delta v_s}{\partial x} \right) \right] dz dA \\
 &\quad - \int_A \int_{-h/2}^{h/2} \sigma_{xx} z \frac{\partial^2 \delta w}{\partial x^2} \, dz dA - \int_A \int_{-h/2}^{h/2} \sigma_{yy} z \frac{\partial^2 \delta w}{\partial y^2} \, dz dA - 2 \int_A \int_{-h/2}^{h/2} \sigma_{xy} z \frac{\partial^2 \delta w}{\partial x \partial y} \, dz dA
 \end{aligned}$$

We note in the last step that stretching and bending are completely decoupled. Considering only bending and using the following definitions

$$M_x = \int_{-h/2}^{h/2} \sigma_{xx} z \, dz, \quad M_y = \int_{-h/2}^{h/2} \sigma_{yy} z \, dz, \quad M_{xy} = \int_{-h/2}^{h/2} \sigma_{xy} z \, dz,$$

we obtain the following:

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{LHS}_{\text{bending}} &= - \int_A M_x \frac{\partial^2 \delta w}{\partial x^2} \, dA - \int_A M_y \frac{\partial^2 \delta w}{\partial y^2} \, dA - 2 \int_A M_{xy} \frac{\partial^2 \delta w}{\partial x \partial y} \, dA \\
 \text{or, } -\text{LHS}_{\text{bending}} &= \int_A \left[ \frac{\partial}{\partial x} \left( M_x \frac{\partial \delta w}{\partial x} \right) + \frac{\partial}{\partial y} \left( M_y \frac{\partial \delta w}{\partial y} \right) \right] dA + \int_A \left[ \frac{\partial}{\partial x} \left( M_{xy} \frac{\partial \delta w}{\partial y} \right) + \frac{\partial}{\partial y} \left( M_{xy} \frac{\partial \delta w}{\partial x} \right) \right] dA \\
 &\quad - \int_A \frac{\partial M_x}{\partial x} \frac{\partial \delta w}{\partial x} dA - \int_A \frac{\partial M_y}{\partial y} \frac{\partial \delta w}{\partial y} dA - \int_A \frac{\partial M_{xy}}{\partial x} \frac{\partial \delta w}{\partial y} dA - \int_A \frac{\partial M_{xy}}{\partial y} \frac{\partial \delta w}{\partial x} dA \\
 &= \oint \left[ \left( M_x \frac{\partial \delta w}{\partial x} \right) n_x + \left( M_y \frac{\partial \delta w}{\partial y} \right) n_y \right] ds + \oint \left[ \left( M_{xy} \frac{\partial \delta w}{\partial y} \right) n_x + \left( M_{xy} \frac{\partial \delta w}{\partial x} \right) n_y \right] ds \\
 &\quad - \int_A \left[ \underbrace{\frac{\partial}{\partial x} \left( \frac{\partial M_x}{\partial x} \delta w \right)}_{\textcircled{1}} - \frac{\partial^2 M_x}{\partial x^2} \delta w \right] dA - \int_A \left[ \underbrace{\frac{\partial}{\partial y} \left( \frac{\partial M_y}{\partial y} \delta w \right)}_{\textcircled{2}} - \frac{\partial^2 M_y}{\partial y^2} \delta w \right] dA \\
 &\quad - \int_A \left[ \underbrace{\frac{\partial}{\partial y} \left( \frac{\partial M_{xy}}{\partial x} \delta w \right)}_{\textcircled{3}} - \frac{\partial^2 M_{xy}}{\partial y \partial x} \delta w \right] dA - \int_A \left[ \underbrace{\frac{\partial}{\partial x} \left( \frac{\partial M_{xy}}{\partial y} \delta w \right)}_{\textcircled{4}} - \frac{\partial^2 M_{xy}}{\partial x \partial y} \delta w \right] dA
 \end{aligned} \tag{1}$$

Considering the terms ① with ② and ③ with ④, and using Green's theorem, we obtain (after transposing the negative sign from the left hand side)

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{LHS}_{\text{bending}} = & - \oint \left[ \left( M_x \frac{\partial \delta w}{\partial x} \right) n_x + \left( M_y \frac{\partial \delta w}{\partial y} \right) n_y \right] ds - \oint \left[ \left( M_{xy} \frac{\partial \delta w}{\partial y} \right) n_x + \left( M_{xy} \frac{\partial \delta w}{\partial x} \right) n_y \right] ds \\
 & + \oint \left[ \left( \frac{\partial M_x}{\partial x} \delta w \right) n_x + \left( \frac{\partial M_y}{\partial y} \delta w \right) n_y \right] ds + \oint \left[ \left( \frac{\partial M_{xy}}{\partial x} \delta w \right) n_y + \left( \frac{\partial M_{xy}}{\partial y} \delta w \right) n_x \right] ds \\
 & - \int_A \left[ \left( \frac{\partial^2 M_x}{\partial x^2} + \frac{\partial^2 M_y}{\partial y^2} + 2 \frac{\partial^2 M_{xy}}{\partial x \partial y} \right) \delta w \right] dA \quad (2)
 \end{aligned}$$

We note that the terms on the right hand side can be classified as boundary integral terms (those within  $\oint$ ) and domain integral terms (those within  $\int_A$ ). The domain integral terms expressed in terms of  $M_x$ ,  $M_y$ , and  $M_{xy}$  can be rewritten in terms of the displacement component  $w$ ; thus

$$\begin{aligned}
 M_x &= \int_{-h/2}^{h/2} \sigma_{xx} z \, dz \\
 &= \int_{-h/2}^{h/2} \frac{E}{1-\nu^2} (\epsilon_{xx} + \nu \epsilon_{yy}) z \, dz \\
 &= \frac{E}{1-\nu^2} \int_{-h/2}^{h/2} \left( \frac{\partial u_s}{\partial x} - z \frac{\partial^2 w}{\partial x^2} + \nu \frac{\partial v_s}{\partial y} - \nu z \frac{\partial^2 w}{\partial y^2} \right) z \, dz \\
 &= -\frac{E}{1-\nu^2} \left( \frac{\partial^2 w}{\partial x^2} + \nu \frac{\partial^2 w}{\partial y^2} \right) \int_{-h/2}^{h/2} z^2 \, dz \\
 &= -\frac{Eh^3}{12(1-\nu^2)} \left( \frac{\partial^2 w}{\partial x^2} + \nu \frac{\partial^2 w}{\partial y^2} \right)
 \end{aligned}$$

Setting  $D = \frac{Eh^3}{12(1-\nu^2)}$  (it is referred to as the bending rigidity), and proceeding similarly as above for  $M_y$  and  $M_{xy}$ , we have

$$M_x = -D \left( \frac{\partial^2 w}{\partial y^2} + \nu \frac{\partial^2 w}{\partial x^2} \right), \quad (3a)$$

$$M_y = -D \left( \frac{\partial^2 w}{\partial y^2} + \nu \frac{\partial^2 w}{\partial x^2} \right), \quad (3b)$$

$$M_{xy} = -D(1-\nu) \frac{\partial^2 w}{\partial x \partial y} \quad (3c)$$

Using these expressions of  $M_x$ ,  $M_y$ , and  $M_{xy}$ , we have

$$\begin{aligned}
 & \frac{\partial^2 M_x}{\partial x^2} + \frac{\partial^2 M_y}{\partial y^2} + 2 \frac{\partial^2 M_{xy}}{\partial x \partial y} \\
 &= -D \left( \frac{\partial^4 w}{\partial x^4} + \nu \frac{\partial^4 w}{\partial x^2 \partial y^2} + \frac{\partial^4 w}{\partial y^4} + \nu \frac{\partial^4 w}{\partial y^2 \partial x^2} + 2(1-\nu) \frac{\partial^4 w}{\partial x^2 \partial y^2} \right) \\
 &= -D \left( \frac{\partial^4 w}{\partial x^4} + \frac{\partial^4 w}{\partial y^4} + 2 \frac{\partial^4 w}{\partial x^2 \partial y^2} \right) \\
 &= -D \nabla^4 w
 \end{aligned}$$

Therefore, we have the following

$$\begin{aligned} \text{LHS}_{\text{bending}} = & - \oint \left[ \left( M_x \frac{\partial \delta w}{\partial x} \right) n_x + \left( M_y \frac{\partial \delta w}{\partial y} \right) n_y \right] ds - \oint \left[ \left( M_{xy} \frac{\partial \delta w}{\partial y} \right) n_x + \left( M_{xy} \frac{\partial \delta w}{\partial x} \right) n_y \right] ds \\ & + \oint \left[ \left( \frac{\partial M_x}{\partial x} \delta w \right) n_x + \left( \frac{\partial M_y}{\partial y} \delta w \right) n_y \right] ds + \oint \left[ \left( \frac{\partial M_{xy}}{\partial y} \delta w \right) n_x + \left( \frac{\partial M_{xy}}{\partial x} \delta w \right) n_y \right] ds \\ & + \int_A D \nabla^4 w dA \end{aligned} \quad (4)$$

Now, going back to the right hand side of the virtual work equation and considering the contribution due only to bending we have

$$\text{RHS}_{\text{bending}} = \int_A t_i \delta u_i dA = \int_A q \delta w dA.$$

Bringing together the left hand and right hand sides, we thus have

$$\text{LHS}_{\text{bending}} = \text{RHS}_{\text{bending}},$$

from which we obtain the following:

$$\begin{aligned} \int_A (D \nabla^4 w - q) \delta w dA - \oint \left[ M_x \frac{\partial \delta w}{\partial x} n_x + M_y \frac{\partial \delta w}{\partial y} n_y \right] ds - \oint \left[ M_{xy} \frac{\partial \delta w}{\partial y} n_x + M_{xy} \frac{\partial \delta w}{\partial x} n_y \right] ds \\ + \oint \left[ \underbrace{\frac{\partial M_x}{\partial x} \delta w n_x}_{\textcircled{1}} + \underbrace{\frac{\partial M_y}{\partial y} \delta w n_y}_{\textcircled{3}} \right] ds + \oint \left[ \underbrace{\frac{\partial M_{xy}}{\partial y} \delta w n_x}_{\textcircled{2}} + \underbrace{\frac{\partial M_{xy}}{\partial x} \delta w n_y}_{\textcircled{4}} \right] ds = 0 \end{aligned} \quad (5)$$

Now, consider the  $x$ -component of the mechanical equilibrium equations, and integrate as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \int_{-h/2}^{h/2} \left[ \frac{\partial \sigma_{xx}}{\partial x} z + \frac{\partial \sigma_{xy}}{\partial y} z + \frac{\partial \sigma_{xz}}{\partial z} z \right] dz = 0 \\ \text{or, } \frac{\partial M_x}{\partial x} + \frac{\partial M_{xy}}{\partial y} + [z \sigma_{xz}]_{-h/2}^{h/2} - \int_{-h/2}^{h/2} \sigma_{xz} dz = 0 \\ \text{or, } \frac{\partial M_x}{\partial x} + \frac{\partial M_{xy}}{\partial y} = Q_x \quad (\text{using } \sigma_{xz} = 0 \text{ and } Q_x = \int_{-h/2}^{h/2} \sigma_{xz} dz) \end{aligned}$$

Similarly, we have

$$\frac{\partial M_{xy}}{\partial x} + \frac{\partial M_y}{\partial y} = Q_y,$$

where  $Q_y = \int_{-h/2}^{h/2} \sigma_{yz} dz$ .

Going back to Eq. (5) and considering the terms ① together with ②, and ③ together with ④, we obtain

$$\int_A (D\nabla^4 w - q) \delta w dA - \oint \left[ M_x \frac{\partial \delta w}{\partial x} n_x + M_y \frac{\partial \delta w}{\partial y} n_y \right] ds - \oint \left[ M_{xy} \frac{\partial \delta w}{\partial y} n_x + M_{xy} \frac{\partial \delta w}{\partial x} n_y \right] ds + \oint Q_x \delta w n_x ds + \oint Q_y \delta w n_y ds = 0. \quad (6)$$

Now we want to convert the preceding equation from the  $(x, y)$  coordinate system to the  $(s, n)$  coordinate system where  $s$  is the coordinate along the periphery of the plate and  $n$  is the coordinate perpendicular to it. Towards that end, we first establish the relationship between  $\frac{\partial}{\partial s}, \frac{\partial}{\partial n}$  and  $\frac{\partial}{\partial x}, \frac{\partial}{\partial y}$ .

For any point on the periphery given by  $\mathbf{r} = x\hat{\mathbf{i}} + y\hat{\mathbf{j}}$ , the unit normal is  $\hat{\mathbf{e}}_n = n_x\hat{\mathbf{i}} + n_y\hat{\mathbf{j}} \equiv \frac{dy}{ds}\hat{\mathbf{i}} - \frac{dx}{ds}\hat{\mathbf{j}}$ . Then for an elemental line segment at  $\mathbf{r}$  we have,

$$ds \hat{\mathbf{e}}_s = dx\hat{\mathbf{i}} + dy\hat{\mathbf{j}},$$

$$\text{or, } \hat{\mathbf{e}}_s = \frac{dx}{ds}\hat{\mathbf{i}} + \frac{dy}{ds}\hat{\mathbf{j}} \equiv -n_y\hat{\mathbf{i}} + n_x\hat{\mathbf{j}}.$$

Consider the gradient of any arbitrary scalar  $\phi$  first in the  $(x, y)$  coordinate system and next in the  $(s, n)$  coordinate system. Thus we have

$$\nabla\phi = \frac{\partial\phi}{\partial x}\hat{\mathbf{i}} + \frac{\partial\phi}{\partial y}\hat{\mathbf{j}},$$

and

$$\begin{aligned} \nabla\phi &= \frac{\partial\phi}{\partial s}\hat{\mathbf{e}}_s + \frac{\partial\phi}{\partial n}\hat{\mathbf{e}}_n, \\ &= \frac{\partial\phi}{\partial s}(-n_y\hat{\mathbf{i}} + n_x\hat{\mathbf{j}}) + \frac{\partial\phi}{\partial n}(n_x\hat{\mathbf{i}} + n_y\hat{\mathbf{j}}), \\ &= \left( -\frac{\partial\phi}{\partial s}n_y + \frac{\partial\phi}{\partial n}n_x \right)\hat{\mathbf{i}} + \left( \frac{\partial\phi}{\partial s}n_x + \frac{\partial\phi}{\partial n}n_y \right)\hat{\mathbf{j}} \end{aligned}$$

Comparing the two expressions of  $\nabla\phi$ , we obtain

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{\partial}{\partial x} &= -n_y \frac{\partial}{\partial s} + n_x \frac{\partial}{\partial n}, \\ \frac{\partial}{\partial y} &= n_x \frac{\partial}{\partial s} + n_y \frac{\partial}{\partial n}. \end{aligned}$$

Then from Eq. (6), we obtain

$$\begin{aligned}
 & \int_A (D\nabla^4 w - q) \delta w dA - \oint \left[ M_x \left( -n_y \frac{\partial \delta w}{\partial s} + n_x \frac{\partial \delta w}{\partial n} \right) dy - M_y \left( n_x \frac{\partial \delta w}{\partial s} + n_y \frac{\partial \delta w}{\partial n} \right) dx \right] \\
 & - \oint \left[ M_{xy} \left( n_x \frac{\partial \delta w}{\partial s} + n_y \frac{\partial \delta w}{\partial n} \right) dy - M_{xy} \left( -n_y \frac{\partial \delta w}{\partial s} + n_x \frac{\partial \delta w}{\partial n} \right) dx \right] \\
 & + \oint Q_x \delta w dy - \oint Q_y \delta w dx = 0, \\
 \text{or, } & \int_A (D\nabla^4 w - q) \delta w dA - \oint M_x \left( -n_y \frac{\partial \delta w}{\partial s} + n_x \frac{\partial \delta w}{\partial n} \right) n_x ds + M_y \left( n_x \frac{\partial \delta w}{\partial s} + n_y \frac{\partial \delta w}{\partial n} \right) (-n_y) ds \\
 & - \oint M_{xy} \left( n_x \frac{\partial \delta w}{\partial s} + n_y \frac{\partial \delta w}{\partial n} \right) n_x ds + M_{xy} \left( -n_y \frac{\partial \delta w}{\partial s} + n_x \frac{\partial \delta w}{\partial n} \right) (-n_y) ds \\
 & + \oint Q_x \delta w n_x ds - \oint Q_y \delta w (-n_y) ds = 0, \\
 \text{or, } & \int_A (D\nabla^4 w - q) \delta w dA + \oint (M_x n_y n_x - M_y n_x n_y - M_{xy} n_x^2 + M_{xy} n_y^2) \frac{\partial \delta w}{\partial s} ds \\
 & + \oint (-M_x n_x^2 - M_y n_y^2 - 2M_{xy} n_x n_y) \frac{\partial \delta w}{\partial n} ds \\
 & + \oint (Q_x n_x + Q_y n_y) \delta w ds = 0. \tag{7}
 \end{aligned}$$

From stress-transformation we have

$$\sigma_{nn} = n_x^2 \sigma_{xx} + 2n_x n_y \sigma_{xy} + n_y^2 \sigma_{yy}, \tag{8a}$$

$$\sigma_{ns} = n_x n_y (\sigma_{yy} - \sigma_{xx}) + (n_x^2 - n_y^2) \sigma_{xy}, \tag{8b}$$

from which we obtain

$$M_n = n_x^2 M_x + 2n_x n_y M_{xy} + n_y^2 M_y, \tag{9a}$$

$$M_{ns} = n_x n_y (M_y - M_x) + (n_x^2 - n_y^2) M_{xy}. \tag{9b}$$

Using Eqns (9a) and (9b) in Eq. (7), we obtain

$$\int_A (D\nabla^4 w - q) \delta w dA - \oint M_{ns} \frac{\partial \delta w}{\partial s} ds - \oint M_n \frac{\partial \delta w}{\partial n} ds + \oint Q_n \delta w ds = 0. \tag{10}$$

Now,  $\oint M_{ns} \frac{\partial \delta w}{\partial s} ds = [M_{ns} \delta w]_1^2 - \oint \frac{\partial M_{ns}}{\partial s} \delta w ds$ . For a closed contour,  $[M_{ns} \delta w]_1^2 = 0$ ; therefore

$$\begin{aligned}
 & \int_A (D\nabla^4 w - q) \delta w dA + \oint \frac{\partial M_{ns}}{\partial s} \delta w ds - \oint M_n \frac{\partial \delta w}{\partial n} ds + \oint Q_n \delta w ds = 0, \\
 \text{or, } & \int_A (D\nabla^4 w - q) \delta w dA + \oint \left( \frac{\partial M_{ns}}{\partial s} + Q_n \right) \delta w ds - \oint M_n \frac{\partial \delta w}{\partial n} ds = 0. \tag{11}
 \end{aligned}$$

So, the governing equation is

$$D\nabla^4 w = q, \tag{12}$$

and the boundary conditions are given by

$$\text{Either } \frac{\partial M_{ns}}{\partial s} + Q_n = 0 \quad \text{or, } w \text{ is specified,} \quad (13a)$$

$$\text{Either } M_n = 0 \quad \text{or, } \frac{\partial w}{\partial n} \text{ is specified.} \quad (13b)$$