

STRUCTURAL CONNECTIVITY OF TWO-DIMENSIONAL ASSEMBLIES

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The Research Thesis was submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
Degree of Master of Science of Engineering

Supervised by Prof. W. P. S. Dias



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June, 2020

DECLARATION

I declare that this is my own work and this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a Degree or Diploma in any other University or institute of higher learning and to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where the acknowledgement is made in the text.

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ABSTRACT

STRUCTURAL CONNECTIVITY OF TWO-DIMENSIONAL ASSEMBLIES

The characterization of structures based only on their geometrical configuration and independent of loading is a novel approach for evaluating and designing structures to be robust against accidental damage. The concept of ‘structural connectivity’ is introduced to assess the connectivity of the structure at multiple hierarchical levels. An adaptation of the Bristol approach is tentatively suggested as providing the most appropriate measure for structural connectivity. Three other measures, conventional connectivity indices in Graph theory, Newman’s approach based on Network theory and Route structure analysis (originally developed to analyse road networks) are used to compare the results obtained from the Bristol approach. Three trusses of the same outer shape but differing in geometric configuration were analysed using all four methods to find the best connected truss. The configurations analysed are Fractal, Warren and Fan-type trusses. Axial rigidity of the chord members were increased to check its effects on structural connectivity. The different measures gave different results for the same structure, though there is some degree of consistency. Graph theory and Unweighted Newman’s approach suggest that the Fractal truss has the most well-connected configuration, whereas the Bristol approach favours the Fan-Type type truss. Weighted Newman analysis and Route structure analysis indicate that Warren truss to be the most wellformed configuration. All three methods indicate that truss ends and central regions of chord members are the least connected areas. All weighted analysis methods show that increasing the chord member stiffness benefits structural connectivity of all truss forms. Separately, a frame (4 bays x 5 floors) with different column elements removed was also analysed, in order to determine the column removal that would result in the least degree of frame connectivity. Though different methods indicated different column removals to cause the highest loss in structural connectivity, all methods agree that the middle column removals causes higher loss in connectivity than side column removal in the corresponding floor. An idealised “A-Level” road network in Sri Lanka was analysed as proof that concept of structural connectivity can be applied to assemblies other than structures.

Key Words:

structural connectivity, hierarchical clustering, disproportional collapse, network connectivity, road network

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my family, friends and my research supervisor, without whom this research would not be.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	i
ABSTRACT	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS	v
LIST OF FIGURES	viii
LIST OF TABLES	xi
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xii
1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Introduction to research	1
1.2 Need for the study.	2
1.3 Scope	3
1.4 Objectives	3
1.5 Structure of the thesis	4
1.6 Introduction to structural connectivity	5
1.7 The Structure	6
2 Graph Theory	10
2.1 Introduction to Graph theory	10
2.2 Terms in Graph theory	10
2.3 Graph connectivity measures	14
2.4 Weighted Analysis	17
2.5 Results	19
2.5.1 Truss forms	19
2.5.2 Unweighted Analysis	21
2.5.3 Weighted Analysis	23
2.6 Discussion	25
3 Bristol Approach	27
3.1 Introduction	27
3.2 Basic Concepts	27
3.2.1 Introduction to the concepts	27
3.2.2 Wellformedness	28
3.2.3 Joint Stiffness (q_j)	29
3.3 Clustering	34
3.3.1 Introduction	34
3.3.2 Clustering criteria	35
3.3.3 Clustering Example	35

3.4	Relative Separateness -----	39
3.5	Material Cost of Increase Wellformedness -----	40
3.6	Results -----	41
3.7	Discussion -----	45
4	Newman's Method -----	47
4.1	Introduction -----	47
4.2	Network Theory -----	47
4.2.1	Introduction to Network theory -----	47
4.2.2	The Network paradigm -----	47
4.2.3	The network connections -----	47
4.2.4	Network Robustness and Resilience -----	49
4.3	Newman's unweighted analysis -----	50
4.4	Relative betweenness -----	54
4.5	Newman's weighted analysis -----	55
4.6	Modifications to Newman's method -----	58
4.7	Results -----	59
4.7.1	Unweighted Analysis Results -----	59
4.7.2	Weighted Analysis Results -----	60
4.8	Discussion -----	63
5	Route Structure Analysis (RSA) -----	65
5.1	Introduction -----	65
5.2	Road network representation- Routes & Joints -----	65
5.3	Route structure properties -----	66
5.4	Results -----	69
5.5	Discussion -----	74
6	Analysis of Frame -----	76
6.1	Introduction -----	76
6.2	Methodology -----	78
6.2.1	Bristol approach -----	78
6.2.2	Newman's method -----	86
6.2.3	Route structure analysis -----	87
6.3	Results -----	88
6.3.1	Results-Bristol approach -----	88
6.3.2	Results of Newman's method -----	91
6.3.3	Results of RSA -----	97
6.4	Discussion -----	102
7	Analysis of Road Network -----	104
7.1	Introduction -----	104

7.2	The network idealisation-----	104
7.3	The analysis method-----	107
7.3.1	Introduction-----	107
7.3.2	Weighted geodesic paths -----	107
7.3.3	The route structure-----	112
7.4	Results -----	113
7.5	Discussion-----	117
8	Summarizing Discussion-----	119
8.1	Introduction -----	119
8.2	Analysis methods and selected structures-----	119
8.3	Trusses -----	120
8.4	Frame-----	125
8.5	Road Network -----	126
8.6	Key Indices-----	126
9	Conclusions -----	128
	REFERENCES -----	130
	APPENDIX A: MATLAB Code-----	I

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1 Relationship between types of vulnerability (Yu,1997).....	2
Figure 1.2 Decomposition of the term Structural Connectivity	6
Figure 1.3 General Footprint of the truss	7
Figure 1.4 T1-Fractal Truss.....	7
Figure 1.5 T2- Warren Truss.....	8
Figure 1.6 T3-Fan-Type Truss	8
Figure 1.7 Frame object	9
Figure 2.1 Example for simple adjacency matrix.....	11
Figure 2.2 Example for multi-graph.....	11
Figure 2.3 Graph connectivity through removed elements	12
Figure 2.4 Graph of three connected components.....	13
Figure 2.5 Example for Strength of Graph.....	14
Figure 2.6 Example for Graph Toughness	15
Figure 2.7 Example for weighted graph.....	18
Figure 2.8 MATLAB representation of trusses	20
Figure 2.9 Results of unweighted closeness centrality analysis	21
Figure 2.10 Results of unweighted betweenness centrality analysis	22
Figure 2.11 Results of weighted closeness centrality analysis for AE=1	23
Figure 2.12 Results of weighted closeness centrality analysis for chord AE=2.....	24
Figure 3.1 Triangles differing in side angle with same height	29
Figure 3.2 Coordinate system for the member	29
Figure 3.3 Displacement vectors for the joint i	30
Figure 3.4 Force vectors for joint i.....	30
Figure 3.5 Joint Stiffness.....	36
Figure 3.6 Wellformedness of the Structural Rings	36
Figure 3.7 Structural Clustering Stage I- Step 1.....	36
Figure 3.8 Structural Clustering Stage I- Step 2.....	37
Figure 3.9 Structural Clustering Stage I- Step 3.1.....	37
Figure 3.10 Structural Clustering Stage I- Step 3.2.....	37
Figure 3.11 Structural Clustering Stage I- Step 4.1.....	38
Figure 3.12 Structural Clustering Stage I- Step 4.2.....	38
Figure 3.13 Structural Clustering Stage I- Step 5.....	38
Figure 3.14 Structural Clustering Stage II- Step 1	39
Figure 3.15 Structural Clustering Stage II- Step 2.1	39
Figure 3.16 Structural Clustering Stage II- Step 2.2	39
Figure 3.17 Penultimate Cluster of T1 for Case 1.....	41
Figure 3.18 Penultimate Cluster of T2 for Case 1.....	41
Figure 3.19 Penultimate Cluster of T3 for Case 1.....	41
Figure 3.20 Penultimate Cluster of T1 for Case 2.....	42
Figure 3.21 Penultimate Cluster of T2 for Case 2.....	42
Figure 3.22 Penultimate Cluster of T3 for Case 2.....	42
Figure 3.23 Penultimate Cluster of T1 for Case 3.....	43
Figure 3.24 Penultimate Cluster of T2 for Case 3.....	43
Figure 3.25 Penultimate Cluster of T3 for Case 3.....	43
Figure 3.26 Change in Wellformedness vs Material Quantity (Absolute)	44
Figure 3.27 Change in Wellformedness vs Material Quantity (%)	45
Figure 4.1 Typical network topologies.....	48
Figure 4.2 Selected Network.....	51
Figure 4.3 Shortest Paths from node 1	51
Figure 4.4 Shortest distance from node 1 to other nodes	52

Figure 4.5 Betweenness score for edges taking node 1 as source	53
Figure 4.6 Resultant Edge betweenness taking node 1 as source	53
Figure 4.7 Final edge betweenness.....	54
Figure 4.8 Steps in the analysis	55
Figure 4.9 A weighted network.....	56
Figure 4.10 Breakdown of network during the weighted analysis	57
Figure 4.11 Results of the unweighted analysis	60
Figure 4.12 Weighted analysis results- AE=1 (Case 1).....	61
Figure 4.13 Weighted analysis results- AE=2 (Case 2).....	62
Figure 4.14 Weighted analysis results- AE=4 (Case 3).....	63
Figure 5.1 Conventional and RSA representation of road network.....	65
Figure 5.2 Depth of a route structure	67
Figure 5.3 Routes of truss T1	69
Figure 5.4 Routes of truss T2	71
Figure 5.5 Routes of truss T3	73
Figure 6.1 Selected frame.....	76
Figure 6.2 Failure scenarios considered in frame.....	78
Figure 6.3 Simple frame joint	80
Figure 6.4 Formation of structural rings	81
Figure 6.5 Structural clustering stage 1- Step 1	82
Figure 6.6 Structural clustering stage 1- Step 2	82
Figure 6.7 Structural clustering stage 1- Step 3a.....	82
Figure 6.8 Structural clustering stage 1- Step 3b	83
Figure 6.9 Structural clustering stage 1- Step 4	83
Figure 6.10 Structural clustering stage 1- Step 5	83
Figure 6.11 Structural clustering stage 1- Step 6a.....	84
Figure 6.12 Structural clustering stage 1- Step 6b	84
Figure 6.13 Structural clustering stage 1- Step 7	84
Figure 6.14 Structural clustering stage 1- Step 8	85
Figure 6.15 Structural clustering stage 1- Step 9	85
Figure 6.16 Structural clustering stage 2- Step 10	85
Figure 6.17 Structural clustering stage 2- Step 11	86
Figure 6.18 Sample network	87
Figure 6.19 Penultimate cluster of intact frame	88
Figure 6.20 Penultimate cluster of case GSR.....	89
Figure 6.21 Penultimate cluster of case GMR.....	89
Figure 6.22 Penultimate cluster of case MSR	89
Figure 6.23 Penultimate cluster of case MMR.....	90
Figure 6.24 Penultimate cluster of case TSR	90
Figure 6.25 Penultimate cluster of case TMR.....	90
Figure 6.26 Generation 01-Intact frame	91
Figure 6.27 Generation 01-Case GSR.....	92
Figure 6.28 Generation 01-Case GMR.....	92
Figure 6.29 Generation 01-Case MSR	92
Figure 6.30 Generation 01-Case MMR.....	93
Figure 6.31 Generation 01-Case TSR	93
Figure 6.32 Generation 01-Case TMR	93
Figure 6.33 Generation 01-Intact frame	94
Figure 6.34 Generation 01-Case GSR.....	94
Figure 6.35 Generation 01-Case GMR.....	95
Figure 6.36 Generation 01-Case MSR	95
Figure 6.37 Generation 01-Case MMR.....	95
Figure 6.38 Generation 01-Case TSR	96

Figure 6.39 Generation 01-Case TMR	96
Figure 6.40 Identified routes in intact frame	97
Figure 6.41 Identified routes in case GSR	97
Figure 6.42 Identified routes in case GMR	98
Figure 6.43 Identified routes in case MSR	99
Figure 6.44 Identified routes in case MMR	99
Figure 6.45 Identified routes in case TSR	100
Figure 6.46 Identified routes in case TMR	101
Figure 7.1 National Road Network (RDA-2017)	105
Figure 7.2 A-Level main roads and expressways	105
Figure 7.3 Idealised network	106
Figure 7.4 Selected weighted network	108
Figure 7.5 Shortest distance to all nodes from the source node	109
Figure 7.6 Weight flags of the nodes	110
Figure 7.7 Edge betweenness considering node 1 as the source node	111
Figure 7.8 Generation 00 (Intact network)	114
Figure 7.9 Generation 01 (Penultimate cluster)	114
Figure 7.10 Generation 02	115
Figure 7.11 Generation 03	115
Figure 7.12 Generation 19	116
Figure 7.13 Relative connectivity and relative depth of road network	117
Figure 8.1 Results of Case 1	121
Figure 8.2 Results of Case 2	122
Figure 8.3 Results of Case 3	123

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1 Summary of Analysis	9
Table 2.1 Comparison of terminology	10
Table 2.2 Summary of results	25
Table 2.3 Selecting truss configuration	25
Table 3.1 Comparison of Terms.....	27
Table 3.2 Wellformedness calculation for equilateral triangle.....	32
Table 3.3 Wellformedness calculation for isosceles triangle (45 ⁰ side angle)	33
Table 3.4 Wellformedness calculation for isosceles triangle (30 ⁰ side angle)	33
Table 3.5 Wellformedness of different triangles with changing side angles	34
Table 3.6 Summary of Results	43
Table 3.7 Summary of Material cost.....	44
Table 4.1 Relative betweenness values	55
Table 4.2 Edge betweenness of weighted analysis.....	56
Table 4.3 Relative betweenness of weighted analysis.....	58
Table 4.4 Summary of relative edge betweenness of Generation 01	63
Table 5.1 Route structure properties of Figure 5.1	67
Table 5.2 Relative properties of routes and network.....	68
Table 5.3 Properties of T1 truss	69
Table 5.4 Relative properties of T1 routes	70
Table 5.5 Properties of T2 truss	71
Table 5.6 Relative properties of T2 routes	72
Table 5.7 Properties of T3 truss	73
Table 5.8 Relative properties of T3 routes	74
Table 5.9 Summary of results	74
Table 6.1 Summary of Wellformedness and separateness	91
Table 6.2 Summary of unweighted analysis results	94
Table 6.3 Route properties- Frame intact.....	97
Table 6.4 Route properties- Case GSR	98
Table 6.5 Route properties- Case GMR	98
Table 6.6 Route properties- Case MSR.....	99
Table 6.7 Route properties- Case MMR	100
Table 6.8 Route properties- Case TSR.....	100
Table 6.9 Route properties- Case TMR.....	101
Table 6.10 Summary of Relative connectivity and relative depth.....	101
Table 7.1 Route properties for intact network.....	112
Table 7.2 Relative connectivity and relative depth of road network	116
Table 8.1 Summary of truss analysis results (shading indicates better connectivity)	124
Table 8.2 Summary of frame analysis results (shading indicates poorer connectivity)	125
Table 8.3 Key indices in this research.....	127

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Description
GMR	Ground floor- Middle column removal
GSR	Ground floor- Side column removal
JS	Joint stiffness
MMR	Middle floor- Middle column removal
MSR	Middle floor- Side column removal
RSA	Route Structure Analysis
TMR	Top floor- Middle column removal
TSR	Top floor- Side column removal
WF	Wellformedness