



SEISMIC CHARACTERIZATION OF STEEL BUILDINGS SUBJECTED TO MEGATHRUST EARTHQUAKES

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Abstract

While most of the current research on the seismic performance of Steel Special Resisting Frames (SSRFs) focuses on seismic hazard due to shallow crustal earthquakes, research on the response of SSRFs subjected to megathrust earthquakes is generally neglected. This study describes a research effort aimed at shedding needed light on the behavior of Steel Special Moment Frames (SSMFs) at locations where the seismic hazard is due mainly to subduction-type earthquakes, such as Chile, Japan or the Pacific Northwest of the U.S. Recent studies have shown that accurate estimations of seismic demands require a vector-valued ground motion intensity measure (IM) to characterize the seismic hazard. Hence, the vector-valued IM considered in this study is comprised of the spectral acceleration at the fundamental period of the structure ($S_a(T_1)$), the shape of the ground motion spectrum in the vicinity of $S_a(T_1)$ (SaRatio), and the ground motion significant duration (D_{S5-95}). A set of 40 SSMFs designed per the latest US seismic design regulations is considered. The number of stories ranges from 2 to 20. Further, two sets of records (two horizontal components per record) are considered: 22 records due to shallow crustal earthquakes (based on the FEMA P695 Far-Field record set) and 22 records due to megathrust subduction earthquakes. The latter were selected in accordance with the FEMA P695 selection criteria. 2D models (as suggested by ATC-72) of the archetypes are subjected to Incremental Dynamics Analysis. Using a hazard-consistent framework for seismic demand assessment, the collapse capacities of the archetypes under both shallow crustal and megathrust subduction earthquakes are characterized, and significant differences are found. The results of this study are relevant because the calibration of current seismic design codes aims at providing system- and component-level force and displacement limit states consistent with a uniform probability of collapse equal to 1% in 50 years. Such uniformity is not possible unless the calibration process accounts for the location-dependent correct type of hazard source.

Keywords: megathrust earthquakes; steel special moment frames; collapse capacity



1. Introduction

Earthquake Engineering has evolved dramatically during the last decades, from the application of qualitative, life-protection prescriptive codes towards the assessment of the expected performance of structures through quantitative probabilistic approaches. Along with this evolution, several aspects related to modeling techniques, such as, among others, numerical methods and ground motion selection, have been shown to be essential to achieve accurate assessments of the seismic structural response. Particularly relevant is the ground motion selection process since the need to select ground motions representative of specific seismic hazard scenarios has been highlighted in several studies (e.g., [1], [2]). Therefore, the characteristics of the selected ground motions should be consistent with those expected at the site under study, and such characteristics might depend heavily on soil conditions, basin effects, source environments, etc. For instance, in ground motions caused by large (i.e., $7.5 < M_w < 9.5$) subduction earthquakes (from now on referred to as *megathrust* earthquakes), characteristics such as strong motion duration, frequency content and permanent ground displacement have been shown to be quite different from those in ground motions caused by crustal (or ‘small rupture’) interface earthquakes. Further, a recent study [3] remarks that spectral shape (i.e., frequency content) and strong motion duration are two key characteristics that lead to smaller collapse capacity of concrete buildings subjected to subduction earthquakes. The relevance of spectral shape to building probability of collapse has been highlighted in different studies (e.g., [4], [5]), and the significant duration (D_s) [6] of long-duration ground motions has been recently found to correlate well with building collapse capacity [7]. Yet there is a lack of research conducted explicitly to understand and quantify the effect of such parameters on the expected behavior of structures subjected to megathrust earthquakes. The relatively small amount of research found in the literature was conducted considering mainly concrete buildings ([3], [8]), but apparently the specific case of steel structures subjected to megathrust earthquakes has not been considered in previous studies.

Furthermore, the uniform-hazard seismic maps in U.S. design codes have been recently converted into uniform-risk maps (ASCE/SEI 7-10 [9]). These new maps were calibrated through the convolution of hazard curves with generic building collapse fragility curves, and are intended to lead to structures having a uniform probability of collapse equal to 1% in 50 years. The collapse fragility curves used in the calibration process, however, were obtained considering ground motions caused mainly (almost exclusively) by crustal earthquakes. Therefore, there is a question about the actual probability of collapse of structures at locations where the hazard is due to megathrust earthquakes, either totally (e.g., Anchorage, Alaska, or Eugene, Oregon) or partially (e.g., Seattle, Washington, or Portland Oregon). At some of these locations, the design spectral accelerations are essentially equal to those at locations where the hazard is due to crustal earthquakes (e.g., California), which means that identical buildings are code-compliant at both megathrust-controlled and crustal-controlled locations. However, the actual probability of collapse is likely to be different (potentially very different) because of the differences in ground motion characteristics described in the former paragraph.

The objective of the study reported in this paper is to provide insight into the collapse capacity of Steel Special Moment Frames (SSMFs) subjected to megathrust earthquakes. The seismic response of a set of 40 SSMFs building models is analyzed by performing Incremental Dynamic Analysis (IDA). Each building model is subjected to two sets of ground motions. The first ground motion set includes megathrust records only, whereas the second set includes mainly shallow crustal records.

This study includes a hazard-consistent analysis and a comparative collapse risk evaluation for SSMF building models in various seismic regimes. The latter was conducted considering hazard-consistent fragility curves of 5 building models, and is intended to: a) provide insight into possible adjustments to the uniform risk U.S. approach; and b) explore the consequences of adopting the U.S. seismic design regulations for steel structures (which, as mentioned before, were developed considering mainly shallow crustal earthquakes) in countries that are subjected primarily (or exclusively) to megathrust earthquakes. Typical examples of the latter are countries located along the South American Pacific coast (e.g., Chile), where the seismic hazard is



due mainly to megathrust earthquakes caused by the Nazca plate subducting beneath the South American plate.

2. Archetypes Design

To evaluate the response of SSMFs subjected to megathrust earthquakes, 2-, 3-, 6-, 13- and 20-story buildings are designed per ASCE/SEI 7-16 [10] and ANSI/AISC 341-16 [11]. Following the criteria of FEMA P-695 [12], several configurations are analyzed, resulting in a relatively large database of 40 2D frames. All plan configurations are illustrated in Fig. 1, which shows the plan view of each of the 2 seismic force-resisting configurations considered in this study. Two seismic design categories (SDC) are considered: D_{max} ($S_s = 1.50g$, $S_1 = 0.75g$) and SD_{max} ($S_s = 1.50g$, $S_1 = 0.75g$). SDC D_{max} is indicated in FEMA P695 [12] and is a typical SDC at several places in the Western U.S. (regardless of their tectonic conditions). SDC SD_{max} is defined in such a way that the design seismic loads are similar to those indicated in seismic design codes of countries subjected mainly to megathrust earthquakes (e.g., Chile [13]).

Seismic demands are calculated by performing Response Spectrum Analysis (RSA). The design process is carried out under the following assumptions: i) office building occupancy; ii) Site Class C; iii) 3.5 m story height at all stories; iv) no lateral strength contribution of the gravity system; v) RBS connections; vi) exposed base column connections at the 2- and 3-story buildings, and deeply embedded base column connections at the 6-, 13- and 20-story buildings. Exposed and embedded base plate connections were designed according to [14] and [15], respectively.

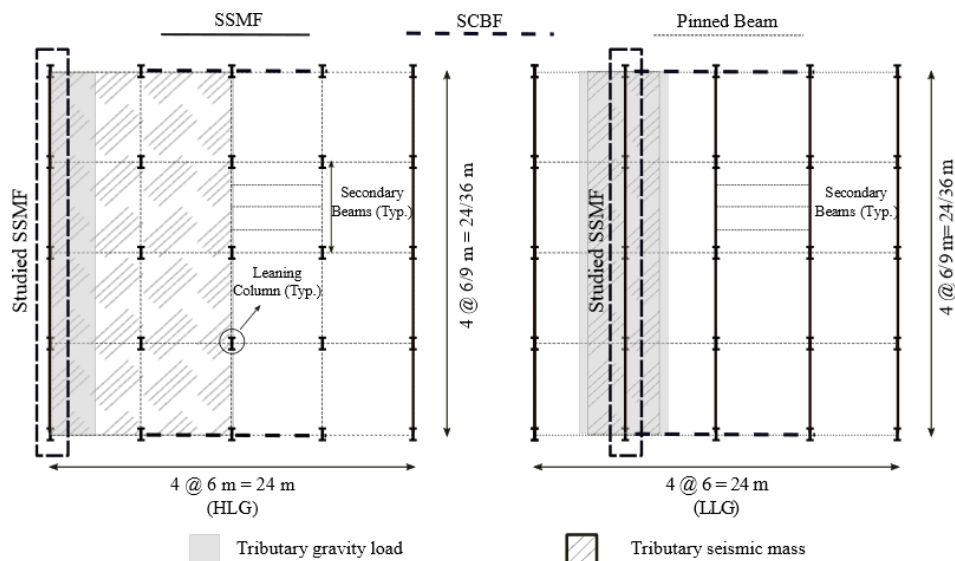


Fig. 1 – Plan view of HLG and LLG archetypes

3. Ground Motion Database

The ground motion selection criteria adopted in this study follow the guidelines of Appendix A of FEMA P695 [12], therefore only very strong ground motions are selected. A primary set, denoted Megathrust (MT) record set, includes 22 records (44 horizontal components) selected from large magnitude interface events (i.e., megathrust events). The MT set includes ground motions from 11 events recorded between 1985 and 2016 (2 records per event). The range of magnitudes is $7.6 \leq M_w \leq 9.0$, and the mean magnitude is $M_w = 8.1$. A second set, denoted Non-Megathrust (NMT) record set, is compiled for comparison purposes. This record set is based on the Far Field (FF) record set of FEMA P695 [13]. A few records of the FF set were replaced to make the set more appropriate for the purposes of this study. The



NMT set includes ground motions from 15 events recorded between 1971 and 2010. The range of magnitudes is $6.5 \leq M_w \leq 7.5$, and the mean magnitude is $M_w = 7.0$.

Table 1 shows the minimum/maximum values and the mean (μ) value of peak ground acceleration (PGA), peak ground velocity (PGV), closest distance to rupture (R_{rup}), average shear-wave velocity for the upper 30 meters (V_{s30}), significant duration (D_{S5-95}) (interval over which the 5% and 95% of the ground acceleration integral is accumulated) and Arias intensity (I_A) [16] of both record sets. The ratio of the mean values is presented as well.

While amplitude parameters such as PGA and PGV have relatively similar values in both record sets, other parameters such as ground motion duration (i.e., D_{S5-95}) and intensity (i.e., I_A) have quite different values. MT mean values of significant duration D_{S5-95} and Arias intensity I_A are roughly 3 and 4 times larger than NMT mean values, respectively. These differences can be appreciated in Fig. 2.a, which shows I_A and D_{S5-95} values of all records of both sets. For the sake of completeness, the statistics of D_{S5-95} (median values, 25% and 75% percentiles and outliers) are illustrated in Fig. 2.b. The similarity between amplitude parameters is further illustrated in Fig. 2.c, which shows the median spectra of $S_a(T_1)$ (another amplitude parameter). Fig. 2.c, however, also indicates that ordinates of the MT spectrum are larger than those of the NMT spectrum at short periods and smaller at long periods, which in turn indicates differences in frequency content. More evidence is provided in Fig. 2.d, which shows median values of spectral shape parameter SaRatio [5]. Since the spectral shape is strongly related to frequency content, differences in values of SaRatio are also indicative of differences in frequency content.

Differences in strong motion duration and frequency content due to different tectonic regimes are consistent with findings reported in prior works. For instance, it has been shown that ground motions caused by subduction earthquakes (particularly by megathrust earthquakes) have longer durations than those caused by crustal earthquakes, mainly due to larger magnitudes and larger source-to-site distances [17]. Differences in frequency content have been observed in comparisons between crustal and subduction ground motion prediction equations [3].

4. Nonlinear Simulation Models

All building models are 2D models developed in OpenSees version 2.5.0 [18]. P-Delta effects are modeled by a leaning column and by a stiffness transformation that accounts for nonlinear kinematics at large displacements. Tributary gravity loads on the leaning column are consistent with a seismic weight equal to $1.0 D + 0.25 L$, where D and L are the dead and live design loads, respectively.

Each beam is modeled with 3 elastic elements and 2 inelastic rotational springs (i.e., concentrated plasticity model). The properties of the backbone moment-rotation curve are based on the modeling parameters of ATC 72 [19] and [20], updated and adjusted after [21]. Each column is modeled with 1 elastic element and 2 inelastic rotational springs. The properties of the backbone curve are based on the recent modeling parameters proposed in [22]. Consistent with the findings of [23] on the modeling of axial/flexural interaction, the backbone moment-rotation curve was computed considering an axial force equal to that due only to gravity load. Cyclic deterioration rules of rotational springs in columns and beams follow the modified Ibarra-Medina-Krawinkler deterioration model [20]. Deterioration rate was assumed constant, and the recommendations of [22] to model cyclic deterioration were accounted for.

Shear panel behavior is modeled as indicated in [24] but with a 1% strain hardening, as recommended in more recent studies [23]. Linear elastic rotational springs are incorporated into the models to account for base plate flexibility. Rotational stiffness of exposed and deeply embedded base column connections are defined in accordance with what is presented in [25] and [26], respectively. Fig. 3 shows a generic scheme of the structural models considered in this study.

Damping was modeled as Rayleigh damping. Elements with artificially large stiffness are not included in the stiffness-proportional term of the damping matrix. Further, damping is assigned only to elastic



elements [27]. The model proposed in [28] for MCE level analysis is considered. The Rayleigh proportional constants are calculated considering periods equal to $1.3 T_1$ and $0.3 T_1$, where T_1 is the first mode period.

Table 1 – Ground motion record set parameters

Record set.		PGA (g)	PGV (cm/s)	R_{rup} (km)	V_{s30} (m/s)	D_{S5-95} (s)	I_A (cm/s)
MT	μ	0.53	37.5	80.6	412	39.9	837
	min.	0.20	18.6	16.0	200	20.1	128
	max.	1.34	84.6	221.8	846	100.6	2885
NMT	μ	0.41	39.2	17.3	352	12.9	221
	min.	0.15	14.9	11.2	192	4.2	45
	max.	0.82	65.9	29.0	724	30.6	759
Ratio	μ_{MT} / μ_{NMT}	1.29	0.96	4.70	1.17	3.09	3.78

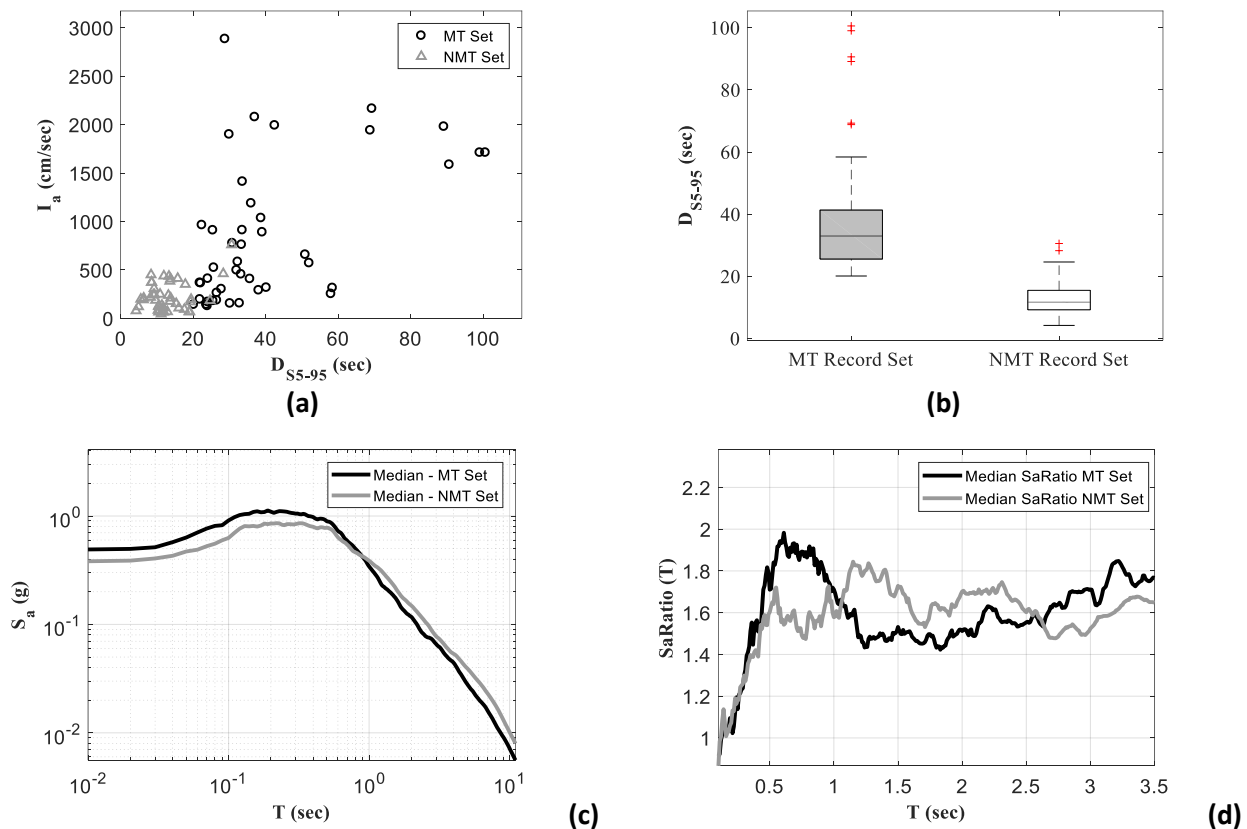


Fig. 2 – Ground motion characteristics: (a) Arias intensity (I_A) vs Significant duration (D_{S5-95}); (b) Statistics of D_{S5-95} ; (c) Median Response Spectra; (d) Spectral Shape (SaRatio computed over the period range $0.2 T_1 - 3.0 T_1$).

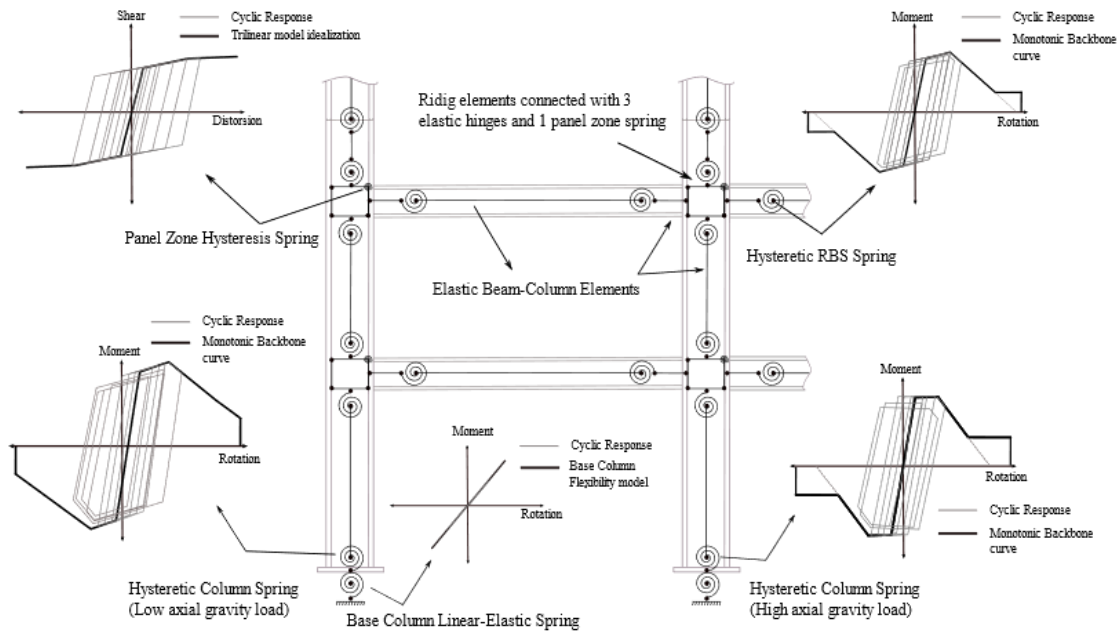


Fig. 3 – Schematic representation of the building models

5. Building Collapse Assessment

Incremental dynamics analysis (IDA) [29] is adopted to assess collapse capacity. Hence each building model is subjected to 88 ground acceleration histories (i.e., MT and NMT record sets), and each of which is incrementally scaled until collapse. During each time history analysis, the peak interstory drift ratio overall stories (PSDR) is monitored. Structural collapse due to lateral dynamic instability is assumed when either PSDR increases rapidly without bound or $PSDR > 0.1$, whichever occurs first. The IM is the spectral acceleration at the fundamental structural period, $S_a(T_1)$. Particularly relevant is the spectral acceleration at collapse, denoted here $S_a(T_1)_{col}$. Since the seismic hazard is typically quantified in terms of $S_a(T_1)$, the selected IM might also be conveniently used later in collapse risk assessment. Fig. 4a illustrates IDA results for a 13-story building. Fig. 4b shows the ratio of median collapse capacities of all building models.

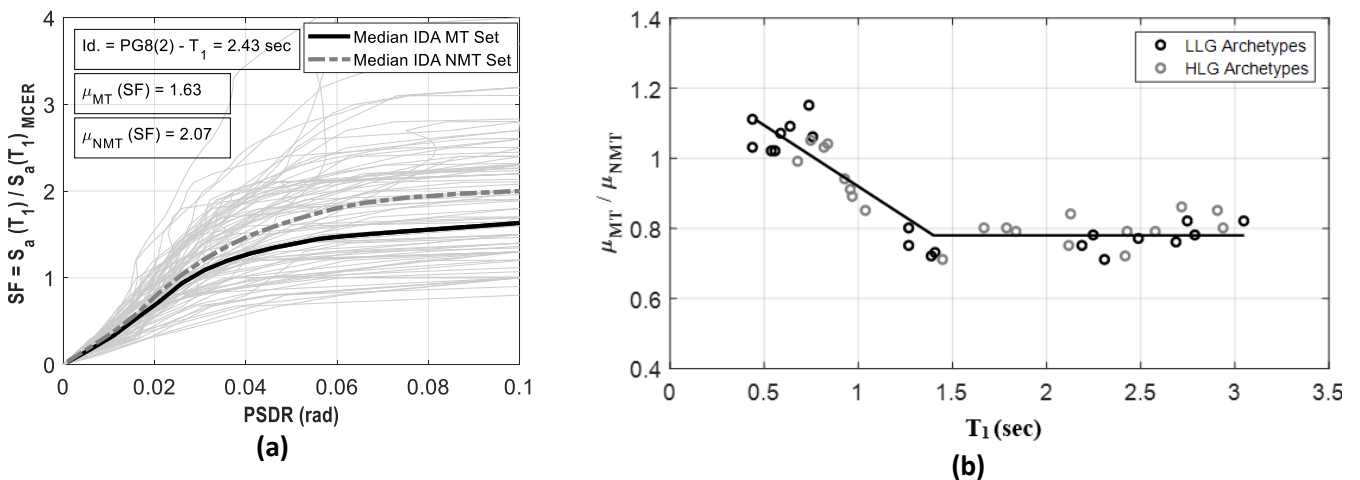


Fig. 3 – (a) IDA example results for a 13 Story Building (results are normalized by the MCE_R level). (b) MT / NMT median collapse capacity ratios (computed from IDA)



6. Hazard Consistent Analysis

Based on the generalized conditional intensity measure (GCIM) presented in [30], [7] proposed different criteria to incorporate D_S into the hazard-consistent analysis. In the IDA-based hazard-consistent analysis conducted in this study, a simplified framework to estimate the median collapse capacity is adopted.

The two main elements of a hazard-consistent analysis are demand and capacity. On the capacity side, median collapse capacities are computed with the multivariate linear model expressed by Eq. (1), the parameters of which (i.e., c_o , c_{dur} , and c_{ss}) are obtained by regression techniques so that Eq. (1) provides the best fit to the median collapse intensities $S_a(T_1)_{col}$ obtained from the IDA. Due to consideration of a megathrust seismic environment, two (rather than just one) predictors are considered: significant duration and spectral shape. In Eq. (1) c_{ss} and c_{dur} quantify the contributions of spectral shape and duration, respectively, and ε is the error which is assumed independent of the predictors and normally distributed with zero mean.

$$\ln S_a(T_1)_{col} = c_o + c_{dur} \ln D_{S5-95} + c_{ss} \ln SaRatio + \varepsilon \quad (1)$$

The selected predictors are D_{S5-95} and SaRatio (Eq (1)). The former has been recently validated as an effective duration metric [8] and the latter is a recently proposed spectral shape parameter well correlated with collapse. Following the recommendations of [5] SaRatio was computed over the period range $0.2 T_1 - 3.0 T_1$. While c_{ss} values follow similar, but not identical, trends for both seismic environments, values of c_{dur} present opposite trends, as shown in Fig. 5. This finding validates one of the motivations of this study, which is to highlight the need to properly account for the specific seismic source of interest. NMT hazard-consistent analysis considers adjustments in spectral shape only, not in duration because weak correlation and small determination coefficients were obtained during the fitting process.

Following the GCIM framework, a primary ground motion IM level is defined. In the context of this study, the primary IM is $S_a(T_1)$ for the reasons previously indicated. Conditioned to this primary IM, a set of two additional ground motion IMs, SaRatio and D_{S5-95} , are computed based on the assumption that IMs are well-represented by a lognormal distribution and considering that correlation coefficients between the IMs are available.

The simplified estimation of the hazard-consistent median collapse capacity begins with the definition of a realistic scenario (i.e., hazard level) and an initial value $S_a(T_1)_o$ of the primary IM (i.e., an initial value of the median collapse capacity). Using a set of proper GMPEs for spectral acceleration and significant duration, the secondary IMs $SaRatio|\ln S_a(T_1)_o$ and $D_{S5-95}|\ln S_a(T_1)_o$ conditioned to the occurrence of the primary IM are computed, where $SaRatio|\ln S_a(T_1)_o$ is computed from the conditional mean spectrum (CMS) [31]. $SaRatio|\ln S_a(T_1)_o$ and $D_{S5-95}|\ln S_a(T_1)_o$ are then substituted into Eq. (1) and a first estimation of the corrected hazard-consistent median collapse capacity $\mu_{S_a(T_1)_{col}} = S_a(T_1)_1$ is calculated. This value is then used to recalculate the secondary IMs, and the procedure is repeated until $S_a(T_1)_i \approx S_a(T_1)_{i+1}$, i.e., until convergence is reached within a suitable tolerance (here taken as 0.05g).

Eugene and Anchorage are selected as locations of megathrust hazard scenarios, and San Francisco is selected as a benchmark location of a large crustal hazard scenario. All scenarios are conditioned on a 2% probability of exceedance in 50 years based on USGS Unified Hazard Tool deaggregation models [32]. Values of causal parameters (i.e., magnitude and distance) were set equal to those most relevant to spectral accelerations in the 1.0 sec – 2.0 sec range. While the crustal scenario is representative of several far field scenarios in different places of the US west coast, megathrust scenarios are also similar to those in other countries subjected to megathrust earthquakes (e.g., Chile, Japan, etc.).

The recent GMPE defined in [33] is used to compute the megathrust spectra, and the well-known GMPE of [34] is used for crustal earthquakes. The corresponding median spectral accelerations are shown in Fig. 6a, along with the values of the causal parameters. Significant duration in subduction megathrust earthquakes is computed with the duration GMPE presented in [35]. For crustal earthquakes, the duration GMPE presented in [36] is used. Fig. 6b shows the D_{S5-95} distribution for the scenarios considered in this



study. The IM correlations presented in [37] are considered to correlate ε -values of spectral ordinates with significant duration. A comparison between the median of the hazard-consistent median collapse capacities of the whole archetype is presented in Fig. 7 for the three scenarios.

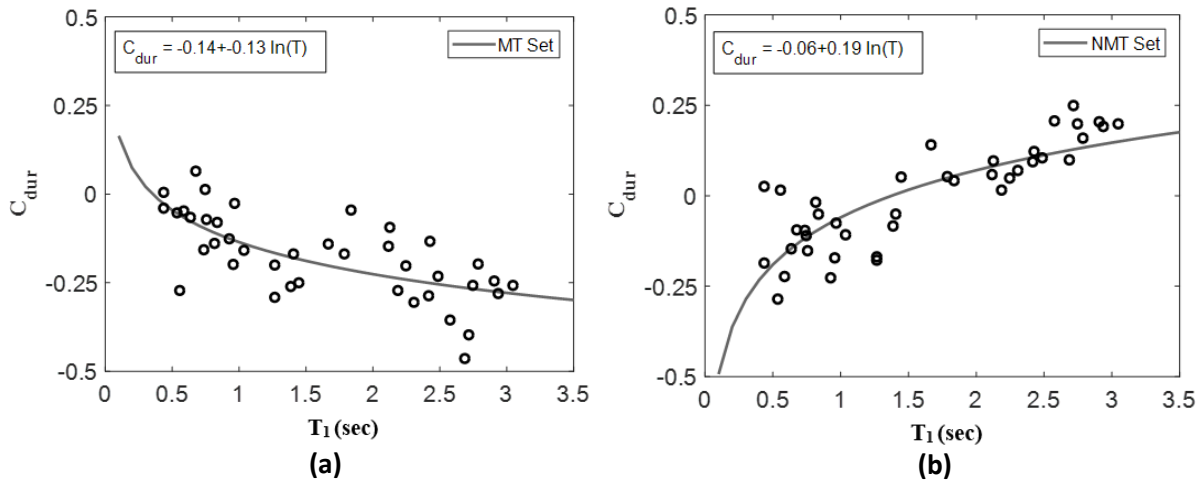


Fig. 4 – (a) and (b) Complete archetype database values c_{dur} over first mode period for the MT and NMT record sets respectively

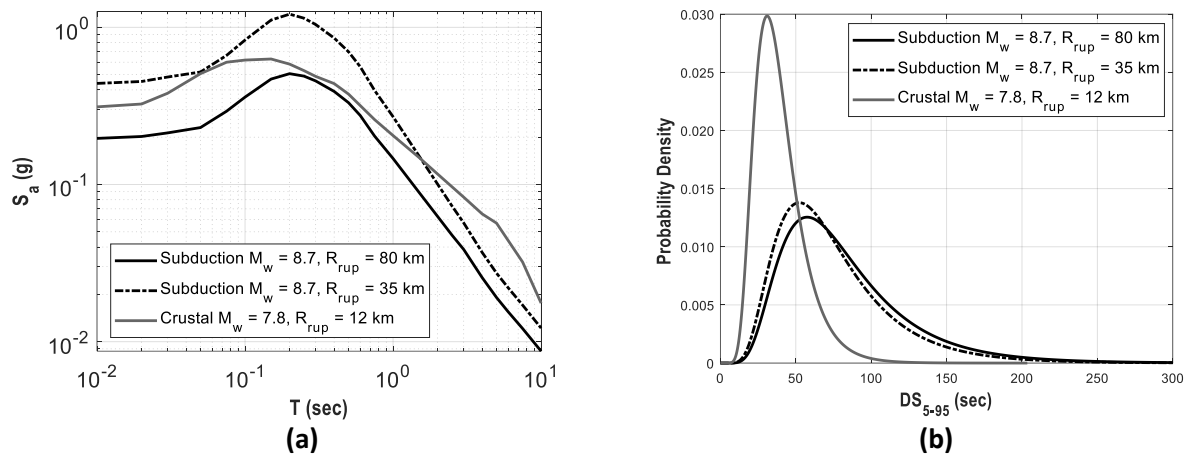


Fig. 5 – (a) Median response spectra and (b) DS_{5-95} distributions from ground motion prediction equations for crustal and megathrust scenarios ($V_{s30} = 760$ m/sec).

Table 4 shows the mean annual frequency of collapse ($\lambda_{collapse}$) and probability of collapse in 50 years ($P_{collapse}$) of 5 building models at two locations (San Francisco and Anchorage). $\lambda_{collapse}$ is computed through the convolution of the hazard curve with the correspondent building collapse fragility curve defined by the hazard-consistent median collapse capacity. The uncertainty factor due to the record-to-record variability was computed from the IDA curves following the FEMA P695 [12] procedure. Test data and modeling quality were assumed as ‘B-Good,’ and design requirements were assumed as ‘A-Superior.’ $P_{collapse}$ is computed for each building assuming a Poisson distribution. At the megathrust environment (Anchorage) the hazard-consistent fragility curves are computed with and without inclusion of the duration predictor.

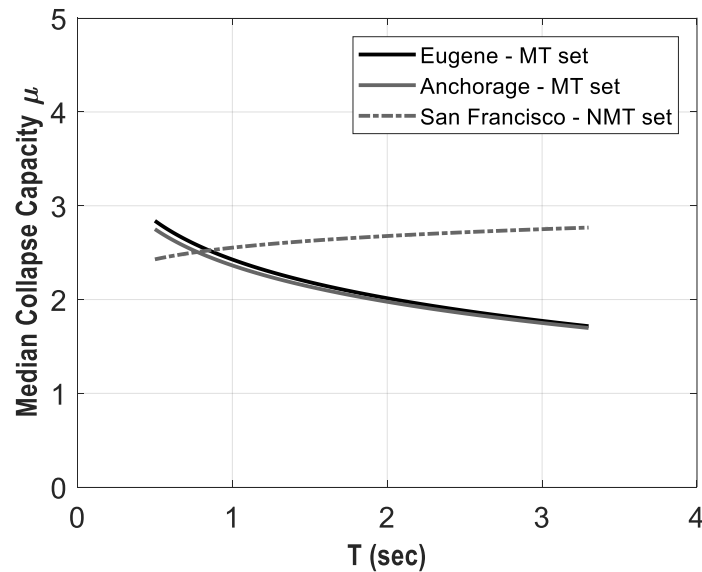


Fig. 6 – Comparison between median hazard-consistent collapse capacities

Table 4 – Mean annual frequency of collapse ($\lambda_{collapse}$) and the probability of collapse in 50 years ($P_{collapse}$) of 5 buildings. Percentages between brackets were calculated with respect to the San Francisco values.

ID	Stories	San Francisco		Anchorage (considering duration)		Anchorage (duration not considered)	
		$\lambda_{collapse}$	$P_{collapse}$	$\lambda_{collapse}$	$P_{collapse}$	$\lambda_{collapse}$	$P_{collapse}$
1	2	18.9×10^{-5}	0.9%	20.2×10^{-5}	1.0% (+7%)	17.3×10^{-5}	0.9% (+8%)
2	3	4.12×10^{-5}	0.2%	4.81×10^{-5}	0.2% (+17%)	3.73×10^{-5}	0.2% (+10%)
3	6	10.2×10^{-5}	0.5%	25.3×10^{-5}	1.3% (+147%)	18.8×10^{-5}	0.9% (+84%)
4	13	5.74×10^{-5}	0.3%	13.5×10^{-5}	0.7% (+135%)	10.3×10^{-5}	0.5% (+79%)
5	20	4.42×10^{-5}	0.2%	17.2×10^{-5}	0.9% (+288%)	10.2×10^{-5}	0.5% (+130%)

7. Summary

This paper presents a study intended to characterize the seismic behavior of Steel Special Moment Frames (SSMFs) buildings subjected to megathrust earthquakes. Results show that the median collapse capacity of mid- and high-rise SSMFs buildings subjected to megathrust ground motions is, on average, roughly 25% smaller than that of the same buildings subjected to shallow crustal ground motions. Further, it was also found that the probability of collapse in 50 years at a location prone to megathrust earthquakes (Anchorage) is, on average, 2 times larger than that at a location prone to crustal earthquakes (San Francisco) even though *design* seismic forces at very similar at both locations. Given that the U.S. risk-targeted seismic design maps aim for a uniform risk level at all US locations, a 25% reduction to the current ‘crustal’ 1.0 sec period generic fragility function of SSMFs is recommended when calibrating the maps at places subjected to megathrust earthquakes (e.g., Pacific Northwest). Overall, it was found that current design requirements (which were established considering mainly shallow crustal earthquakes) lead to different-from-intended risk levels when applied at locations prone to megathrust earthquakes. Further research on the latter type of ground motions is then needed to properly achieve the intended levels of seismic risk.



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