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# Effect of Residual Stress on Divergence Instability of Rectangular Microplate Subjected to Nonlinear Electrostatic Pressure

<sup>1</sup>Ghader Rezazadeh, <sup>2</sup>Yashar Alizadeh, <sup>3</sup>Hadi Yagubizade

1,3 Mech. Eng. Dept. Urmia University, Urmia, Iran, Tel.: +98-914-145-1407,

<sup>2</sup> Mech. Eng. Dept. Arak Azad University, Arak, Iran E-mail: g.rezazadeh@mail.urmia.ac.ir

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**Abstract:** In this paper, the effect of residual stress on divergence instability of a rectangular microplate subjected to a nonlinear electrostatic pressure for different geometrical properties has been presented. After deriving the governing equation and using of Step-by-Step Linearization Method (SSLM), the governing nonlinear equation has been linearized. By applying the finite difference method (FDM) to a rectangular mesh, the linearized equation has been discretized. The results show, residual stresses have considerable effects on Pull-in phenomena. Tensile residual stresses increase pull-in voltage and compressive decrease it. The effect of different geometrical properties on divergence instability has also been studied. *Copyright* © 2007 IFSA.

**Keywords:** MEMS, Microplate, Residual stress, Divergence Instability, SSLM

#### 1. Introduction

Due to the rapid innovation of micro- and nanoelectromechanical systems (MEMS/NEMS) technologies over the last few decades, a variety of innovative micro and nano-scale machines and sensors have been developed. MEMS/NEMS devices have therefore become key components of many systems, such as accelerometers [1], micropumps [2, 3], pressure sensors [4], chemical sensors [5], transducers [6] and etc. For this reason further advances in MEMS and NEMS design are very important and require more and deeper investigation and understanding of basic phenomena at the micro- and nanoscale devices. Electrically actuated microplates are the main component in micropumps, micromirrors, microphones, and many microsensors [7-10]. These devices have

applications in a variety of fields including biotechnology, chemical and mining industries and etc [11]. An electrically actuated microplate forms one side of a variable capacity air-gap capacitor, as shown in Fig. 1. An electrostatic field is created by applying a potential difference between the microplate and a fixed electrode. As the electrostatic force deforms the microplate, the electrostatic force itself changes with the plate deflection, resulting in coupling of the electrical and mechanical forces. The applied electrostatic load has an upper limit beyond which the mechanical restoring force of the microplate can no longer resist the electrostatic force, thereby leading to the collapse of the structure. This structural instability phenomenon is a divergence instability and in MEMS is known as 'pull-in', and the critical voltage associated with it is called the 'pull-in voltage'. The mathematical analysis of these systems started in the late 1960s with the pioneering work of H. C. Nathanson and his coworkers [12] who constructed and analyzed a mass-spring model of electrostatic actuation, and offered the first theoretical explanation of pull-in instability. At roughly the same time, G. I. Taylor [13] studied the electrostatic deflection of two oppositely charged soap films, and he predicted that when the applied voltage was increased beyond a certain critical voltage, the two soap films would touch together. While Taylor was interested in the electrostatic deflection of soap films, the smallaspect ratio model introduced in his work is the basis of many modern studies of electrostatic deflections in MEMS and NEMS. Since Nathanson and Taylor's seminal work, numerous investigators have analyzed and developed mathematical models of electrostatic actuation in attempts to understand further and control pull-in instability [14-15]. Considering the fabrication sequence of MEM actuators, the residual stress is very important and inevitable to the device. Residual stress due to the mismatch of both thermal expansion coefficient and crystal lattice period between substrate and thin film is unavoidable in surface micromachining techniques, so that accurate and reliable data of residual stress is crucial to the proper design of the MEMS devices concerned with the techniques [16]. Therefore the residual stress is an attractive research topic in the development of the microsystems technology. Effect of Residual stress has been researched on fixed-fixed micro-beams by many researches but this effect on rectangular microplate has not been researched enough. In this paper has been investigated of pull-in phenomenon considering residual stress effect on a rectangular micro-plate subjected to nonlinear electrostatic pressure. The mechanical behavior of an isotropic thin rectangular flexible micro plate under non uniform electrostatic pressure has been modeled as a thin Kirchhoff plate theory. The deflection and the pull-in phenomenon of the plate using SSLM and applying FDM have been investigated. The obtained results show that the residual stress affect on pull-in parameters considerably. The different geometrical properties such as size of the plate, initial gap and plate thickness effect on pull-in voltage have also been investigated.

#### 2. Model Description and Mathematical Modeling

As it is shown in the Fig. 1, a device with a pair of parallel rectangular plates is considered. The upper part of this device consists of a rectangular plate with thickness t, length a, width b and isotropic with Young's modulus E and with Poisson's ratio v. that is clamped along its boundaries and the lower part that is entitled ground plate, attached to a rigid substrate. When the voltage is applied between these plates, the flexible plate is deflected toward the ground plate. For plates, t/a and t/b are usually small enough to neglect the shear deformation. So, the longitudinal displacements of the plate may be written as:

$$u(x,y) = -z \frac{\partial w(x,y)}{\partial x}, \tag{1}$$

$$v(x,y) = -z \frac{\partial w(x,y)}{\partial y}, \qquad (2)$$

where w(x, y) and u(x, y) and v(x, y) are displacements in the transverse z-direction and longitudinal x and y directions, receptively.

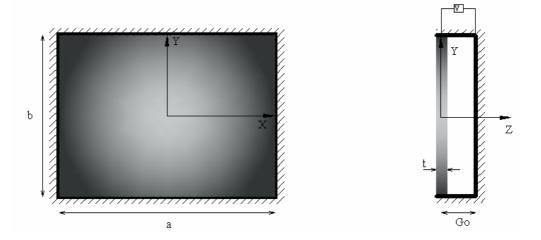


Fig. 1. Schematic view of the device.

The amplitude of the strains  $\varepsilon_x$  and  $\varepsilon_y$ , stresses  $\sigma_x$  and  $\sigma_y$  in the plate in terms of w are given [17]:

$$\varepsilon_x = -z \frac{\partial^2 w(x, y)}{\partial x^2}, \ \varepsilon_y = -z \frac{\partial^2 w(x, y)}{\partial y^2},$$
 (3)

Residual stress due to the mismatch of both thermal expansion coefficient and crystal lattice period between substrate and thin film is unavoidable in surface micromachining techniques. Therefore, the total amplitude of the stresses in the thin plate considering residual stress can be written as:

$$\sigma_{x} = -\frac{Ez}{(1-\upsilon^{2})} \left( \frac{\partial^{2} w(x,y)}{\partial x^{2}} + \upsilon \frac{\partial^{2} w(x,y)}{\partial y^{2}} \right) + \sigma_{rx}, \tag{4}$$

$$\sigma_{y} = -\frac{Ez}{(1-\upsilon^{2})} \left( \frac{\partial^{2} w(x,y)}{\partial y^{2}} + \upsilon \frac{\partial^{2} w(x,y)}{\partial x^{2}} \right) + \sigma_{ry}, \tag{5}$$

where  $\sigma_{rx}$ ,  $\sigma_{ry}$  are the residual stresses (positive for tensile stresses and negative for compressive stresses). Hence, inherent tension and compression per unit width of deformed plate:

$$\int_{-t/2}^{t/2} \left( -\frac{Ez}{(1-\upsilon^2)} \left( \frac{\partial^2 w(x,y)}{\partial x^2} + \upsilon \frac{\partial^2 w(x,y)}{\partial y^2} \right) + \sigma_{rx} \right) dz = \sigma_{rx} t = T_{rx}, \tag{6}$$

$$\int_{-t/2}^{t/2} \left( -\frac{Ez}{(1-\upsilon^2)} \left( \frac{\partial^2 w(x,y)}{\partial y^2} + \upsilon \frac{\partial^2 w(x,y)}{\partial x^2} \right) + \sigma_{ry} \right) dz = \sigma_{ry} t = T_{ry}, \tag{7}$$

The governing equation for the rectangular Microplate subjected to nonlinear electrostatic pressure considering residual stresses effect can be expressed as:

$$D\nabla^4 w - T_{rx} \frac{\partial^2 w}{\partial x^2} - T_{ry} \frac{\partial^2 w}{\partial y^2} = q(x, y), \qquad (8)$$

where

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$$\nabla^4 w = \frac{\partial^4 w}{\partial x^4} + 2 \frac{\partial^4 w}{\partial x^2 \partial y^2} + \frac{\partial^4 w}{\partial y^4},$$

and D is flexural rigidity and equal:

$$D = \frac{Et^3}{12(1-v^2)},\tag{9}$$

The electrostatic pressure is derived from a parallel-plate approximation respect to an applied voltage. The electrostatic pressure applied per unit area of the plate can be written as:

$$q(x,y) = \frac{\varepsilon_0 V^2}{2(G_0 - w)^2},$$
(10)

where V is the applied voltage between the movable and the ground plates on the fixed substrate,  $G_0$  is the initial gap between the movable/fixed plates and  $\varepsilon_0$  is the permittivity of air. The boundary conditions for the rectangular plate clamped at all edges are:

$$w(-a/2, y) = w(a/2, y) = 0,$$
  

$$w(x, -b/2) = w(x, b/2) = 0,$$
(11a)

$$\frac{\partial w(-a/2, y)}{\partial x} = \frac{\partial w(a/2, y)}{\partial x} = 0,$$

$$\frac{\partial w(x, -b/2)}{\partial y} = \frac{\partial w(x, b/2)}{\partial y} = 0,$$
(11b)

#### 3. Numerical Solution

Due to the nonlinearity of the derived equation, the solution is complicated and time consuming, so in order to solve it, it is tried to linearize it. Because of considerable value of w respect to initial gap especially when the applied voltage increases, the linearizing respect to w, may causes to appear some considerable errors, therefore, to minimize the value of errors, the method of step-by-step increasing the applied voltage is proposed and the governing equation was linearized at the each step [14].

For using of SSLM, it is supposed that the  $w^k$  is the displacement of the plate due to the applied voltage  $V^k$ . Therefore, by increasing the applied voltage to a new value, the displacement can be written as:

$$w^{k+1} \to w^k + \psi(x, y), \tag{12}$$

when

$$V^{k+1} \to V^k + \delta V , \qquad (13)$$

Therefore, Eq. 8 can be written as follow:

$$D\nabla^{4} w^{k+1} - T_{rx} \frac{\partial^{2} w^{k+1}}{\partial x^{2}} - T_{ry} \frac{\partial^{2} w^{k+1}}{\partial y^{2}} = \frac{\varepsilon_{0} (V^{k+1})^{2}}{2(G_{0} - w^{k+1})^{2}},$$
(14)

Substituting, Eq.s 12 and 13 into Eq. 14, we have:

$$D\nabla^{4}\psi - T_{rx}\frac{\partial^{2}\psi}{\partial x^{2}} - T_{ry}\frac{\partial^{2}\psi}{\partial y^{2}} = \frac{\varepsilon_{0}(V^{k+1})^{2}}{2(G_{0} - (w^{k} + \psi))^{2}} - \frac{\varepsilon_{0}(V^{k})^{2}}{2(G_{0} - w^{k})^{2}},$$
(15)

By considering small value of  $\delta V$ , it is expected that the  $\psi$  would be small enough, hence using of calculus of variation theory and Taylor's series expansion about  $w^k$ , and applying the truncation to first order of it for suitable value of  $\delta V$ , it is possible to obtain desired accuracy. Hence, the linear coupled electrostatic forces can be written as:

$$\frac{\varepsilon_0(V^{k+1})^2}{2(G_0 - (w^k + \psi))^2} = \frac{\varepsilon_0(V^{k+1})^2}{2(G_0 - w^k)^2} + \frac{\varepsilon_0(V^{k+1})^2}{(G_0 - w^k)^3} \psi,$$
(16)

Substituting the Eq. 16 into Eq. 15, the following equation to calculate the  $\psi$  can be expressed as:

$$D\nabla^{4}\psi - T_{rx}\frac{\partial^{2}\psi}{\partial x^{2}} - T_{ry}\frac{\partial^{2}\psi}{\partial y^{2}} - \frac{\varepsilon_{0}(V^{k+1})^{2}}{(G_{0} - w^{k})^{3}}\psi = \frac{\varepsilon_{0}}{2(G_{0} - w^{k})^{2}}((V^{k+1})^{2} - (V^{k})^{2}), \tag{17}$$

Implying any numerical method and imposing the boundary conditions, the Eq. 19 may be discretized. Using central finite difference formula for a rectangular mesh with constant subdivisions  $\Delta x$  and  $\Delta y$  characteristics the foregoing equation was descritized and by solving obtained linear system of algebraic equations, the  $\psi$  can be calculated at a given applied voltage.

#### 3. Numerical Results and Discussion

Geometrical and material properties used in this article listed in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Geometrical and material properties of micro-plate.

Symbol	Parameter	Value/Unit
Е	Young's modulus	169 GPa
$\mathcal{E}_0$	Dielectric of air	8.8541878×10 <sup>-12</sup>
υ	Poisson ratio	0.06
t	Diaphragm thickness	$10\mu$ m
$G_0$	Initial gap	1 <i>μ</i> m

Best size of steps and grid points for SSLM and FDM are calculated first with some sample step sizes with fixed number of grid points that listed in Tables 2 and 3, respectively. In all tables and figures the microplate's length and width are equal, that a=L and b=L.

With attention to the Tables 2 and 3, the accepted results can be obtained for 0.1 (v) step size of applying voltage with  $21 \times 21$  grid points.

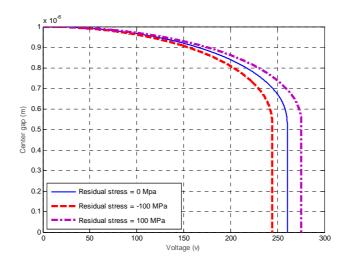
**Table 2.** The obtained pull-in voltage (Vp) with  $31 \times 31$  grid points for different step size for applying voltage.

	Residual Stress (Mpa)	Step size for applying Voltage (v)				
		3	1	0.5	0.1	0.05
L=300 μm	0	264.0	262.0	261.0	260.4	260.4
	-50	255.0	254.0	253.0	252.5	252.5
	50	270.0	269.0	268.5	268.0	268.0
L=200 μ m	0	588.0	587.0	586.5	585.7	585.7
	-50	582.0	579.0	578.5	577.9	577.9
	50	597.0	595.0	594.0	593.4	593.4

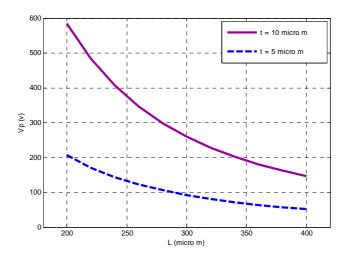
**Table 3.** The obtained pull-in voltage (Vp) with 0.1 (v) step size for applying voltage for different number of grid points for FDM.

	Residual Stress	Number of grid points for FDM			
	(Mpa)	11×11	15×15	21×21	31×31
L=300	0	259.5	260.0	260.4	260.4
$\mu$ m					
	-50	251.4	252.0	252.5	252.5
	50	267.5	267.8	268.0	268.0
L=200	0	583.8	584.8	585.7	585.7
$\mu$ m					
	-50	575.6	576.9	577.9	577.9
	50	591.7	592.6	593.4	593.4

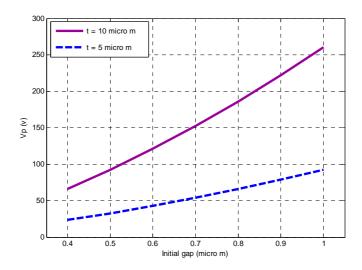
Results show that when the applied voltage reaches the specific value, the microplate is pulled into the fixed electrode suddenly and in fact, divergence instability or Pull-in phenomena occur. Fig. 2. shows that residual stress has considerable effect on Pull-in phenomena. Tensile residual stresses increase pull-in voltage and compressive decrease it. Effects of different dimensions of the plate and initial gaps on pull-in voltage with neglecting and considering residual stress are shown in the Figs. 3, 4, 5 and 6.



**Fig. 2.** Center gap versus applied voltage for different residual stresses (L = 300  $\mu$  m, t=10  $\mu$  m).



**Fig. 3.** Pull-in voltage versus L for different t (  $\sigma_{rx} = \sigma_{ry} = 0$  ).



**Fig. 4.** Pull-in voltage versus initial gap for different thicknesses (L = 300  $\mu$  m,  $\sigma_{rx} = \sigma_{ry} = 0$ ).

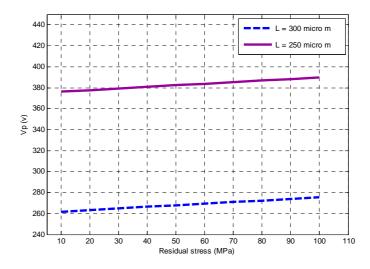
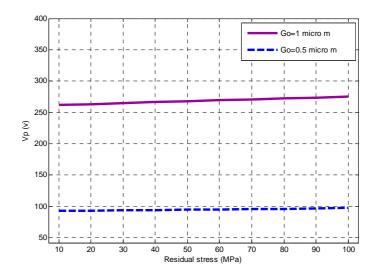


Fig. 5. Pull-in voltage versus tensile residual stress for different plate sizes.



**Fig.6.** Pull-in voltage versus tensile residual stress for different initial gaps (L =  $300 \mu$  m).

#### 5. Conclusions

Correct modeling of a microplate with electrostatic actuation is an important step in design of MEMS/NEMS devices. The governing equation considering residual stress terms on a rectangular microplate was modeled. The nonlinear governing equation was linearized using SSLM successively and was showed that by using this method can be achieved results with desired accuracy. The results showed that the tensile residual stresses stiffen microplates but conversely the compressive residual stresses soften them, so residual stresses have considerable effects on divergence instability. The obtained results can be used as design tools to improve performance of MEMS/NEMS devises that consist of microplate in future designs.

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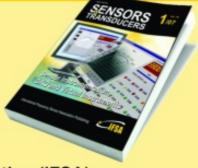
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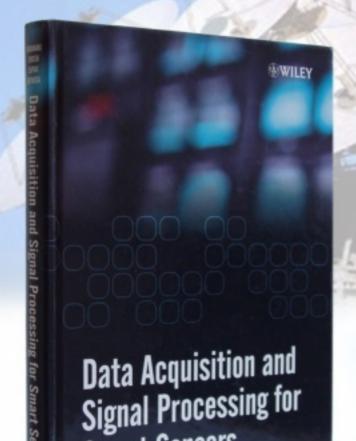
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