Welding Process Simulation and Fatigue Assessment of Railhead Repairs

Svetskommissionens forskningsseminarium

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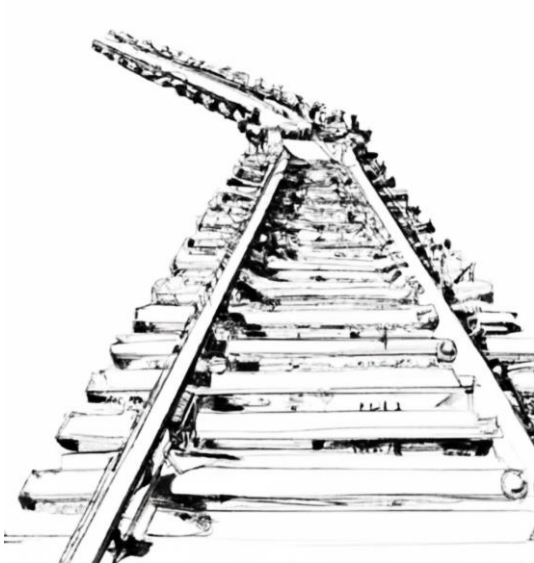
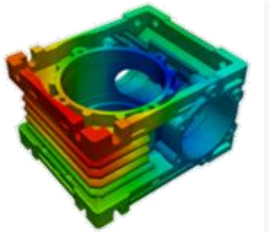
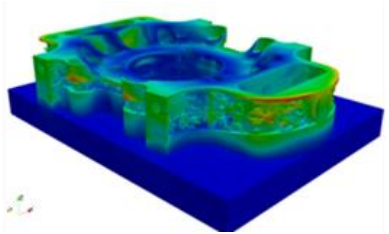
Department of Industrial and Materials Science
CHARMEC (Chalmers Railway Mechanics)
Chalmers University of Technology

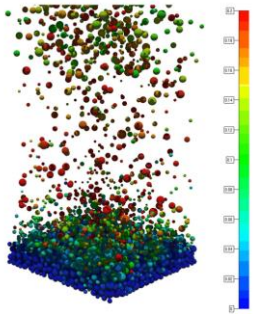


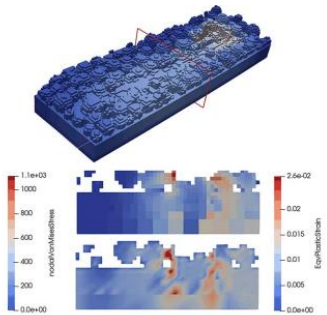
Research on joining at Chalmers

- **Department of Industrial and Materials Science**
  - Division of Material and Computational Mechanics
  - Division of Product Development
  - Division of Engineering Materials
  - Division of Materials and Manufacturing (Centre for Additive Manufacture – Metal = CAM^2)
- **Department of Architecture and Civil Engineering**
  - Division of Structural Engineering
- **Department of Physics**
  - Division of Microstructure Physics







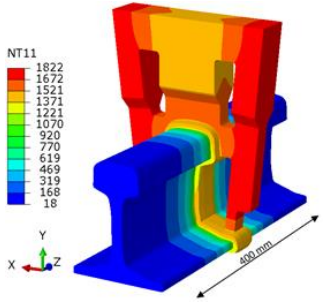


Research on joining at Material and Computational Mechanics

Rail welding

CHARMEC (Chalmers Railway Mechanics)

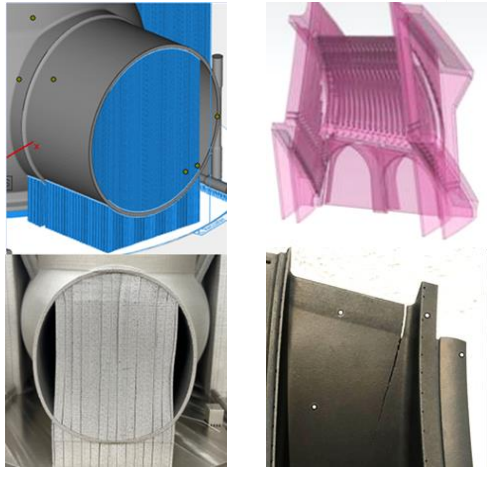
- Flash butt welding
- Thermite welding
- Orbital friction welding
- Repair welding (arc welding)

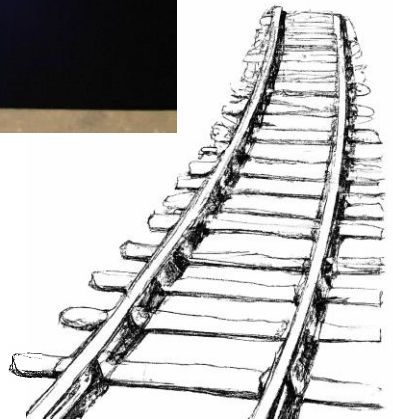


Powder Bed Fusion – Laser Beam (PBF-LB)

in collaboration with RISE

- High fidelity mesoscale submodel generating local inherent strains
- Macro scale (part model), distributed inherent strain

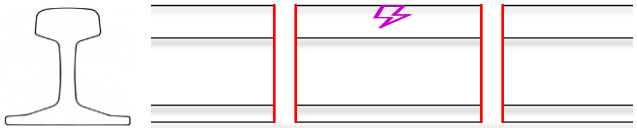




[1] https://mp.nl/en/solution/sound-measurements-board-train-detecting-rail-defects, [2] https://www.raildamage.com/

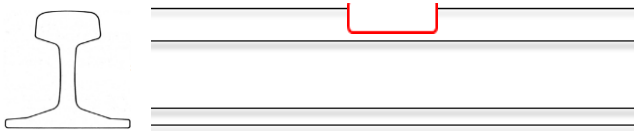
Background and motivation

Rail section repair - Thermite welding



- Remove entire damaged rail section
- Large heat input
- Slower cooling, pearlite formation, tensile stresses in web

Rail head repair – MIG/MMA welding



- Remove only railhead damage (or switches)
- Small, local heat input, several weld passes
- Rapid cooling, risk for martensite formation
- Complex microstructure evolution
- Effects of phases and phase transformations

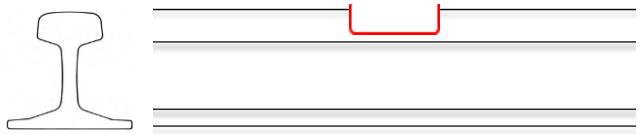
[1] modernrailways.com/article/faster-rail-welding, [2] thermit-welding.com/wp-content/uploads/2016, [3] pandrol.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/, [4] starkon.nl/project/sts-crane-trolley-rail-eld-repair/

Background and motivation

Research goal:
Improve using mechanical performance numerical simulations

Rail Material R260
Fully Prearlitic (high carbon ~0.75%)
20-60% of all rail defects in weld regions

Rail head repair – MIG/MMA welding



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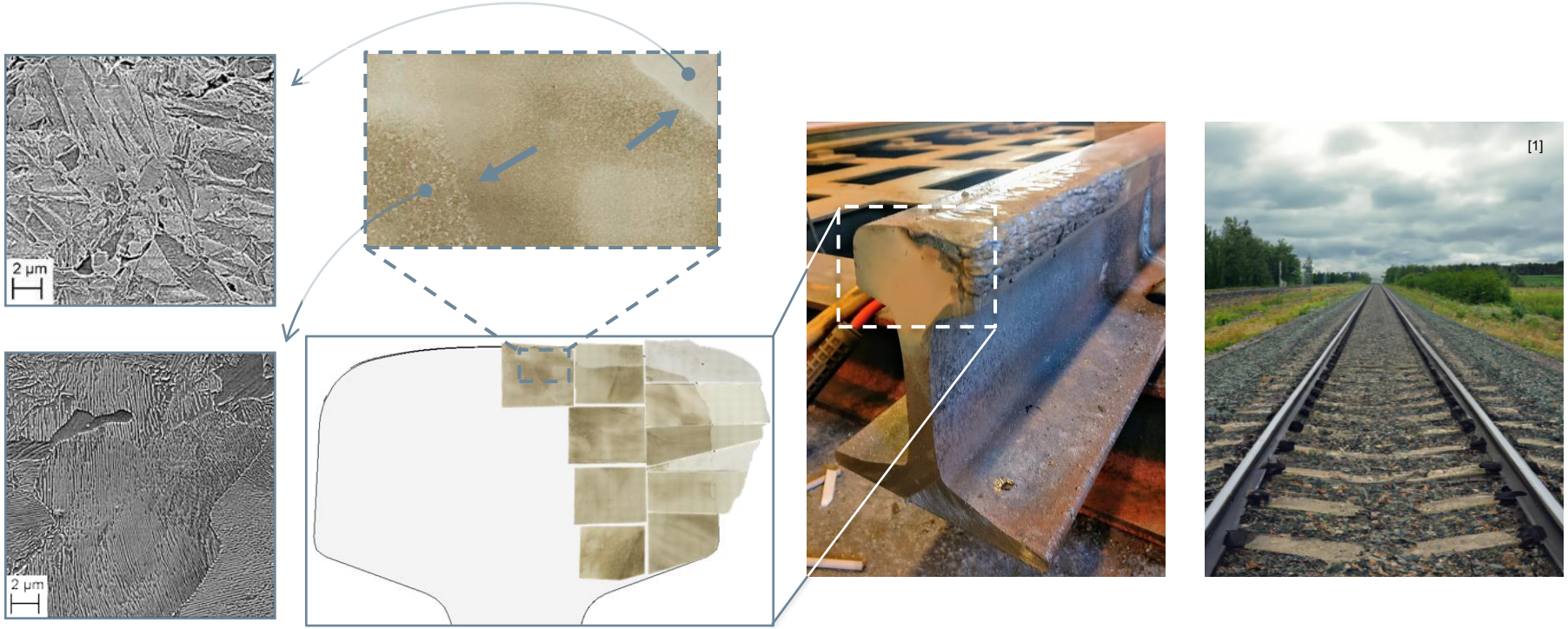
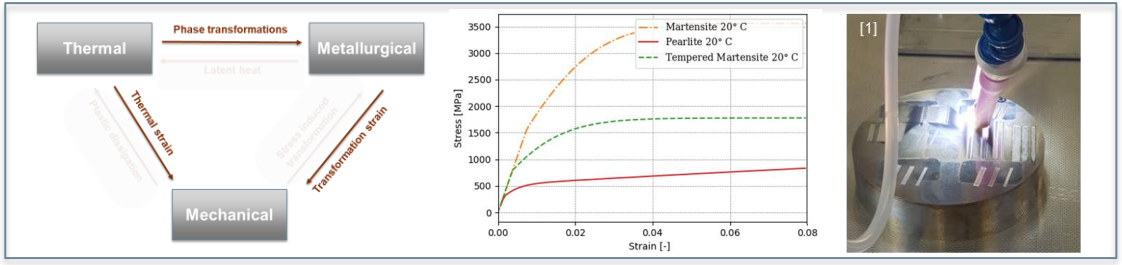
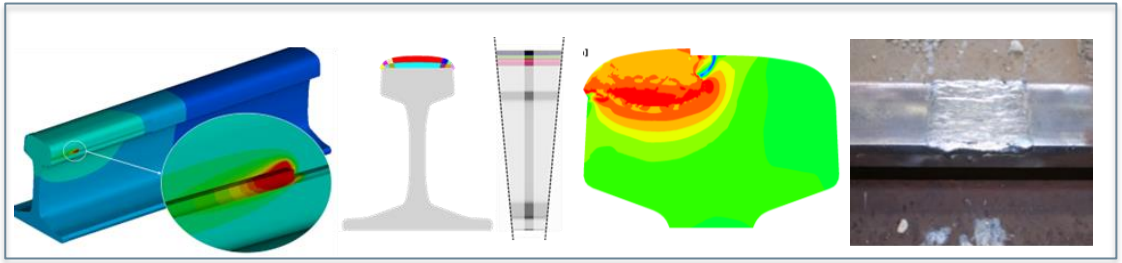
Research Overview

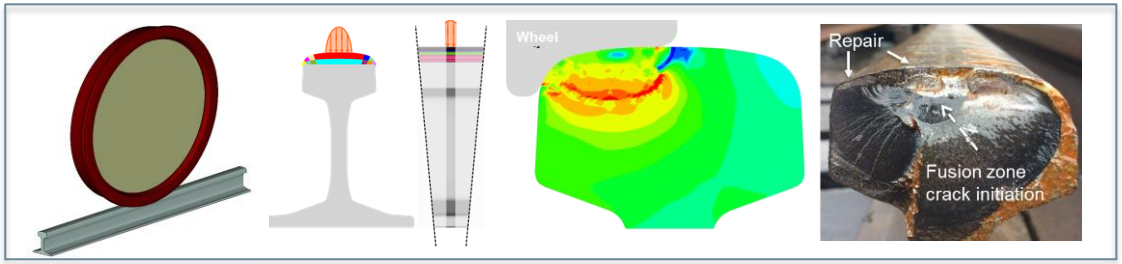


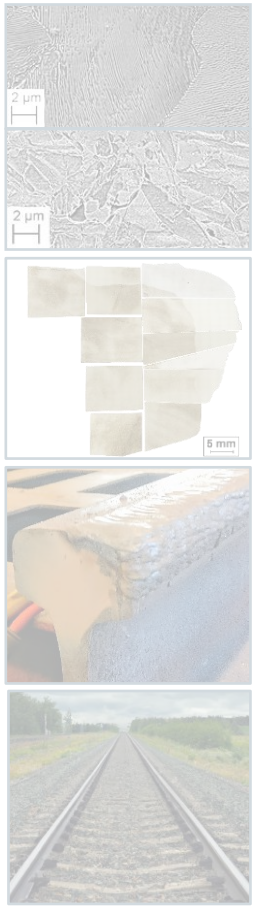
[1] Dall·E2 generated rail image

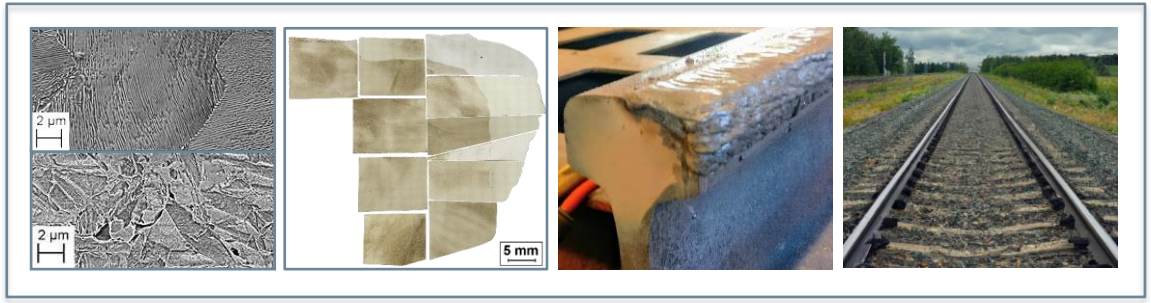
Rail repair welding simulation methodology

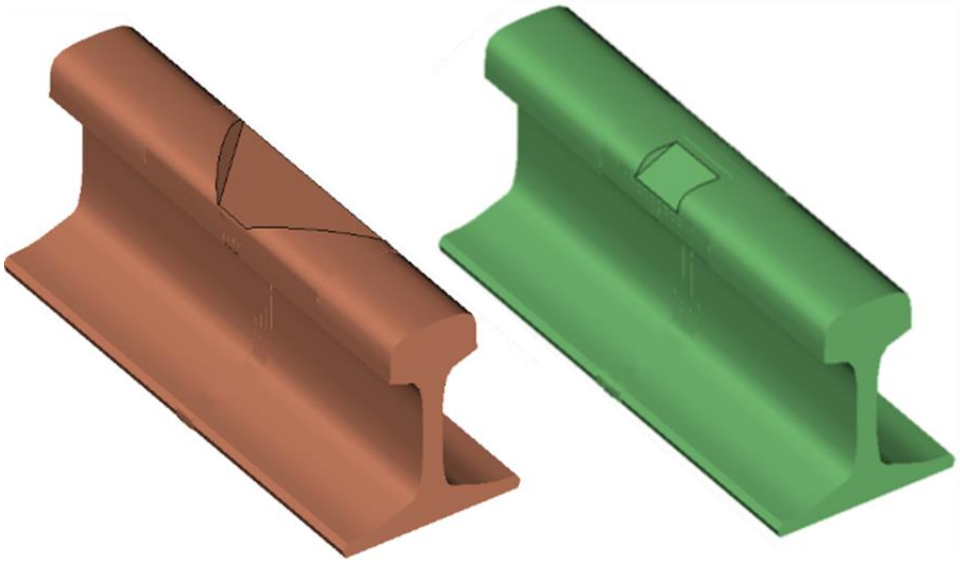




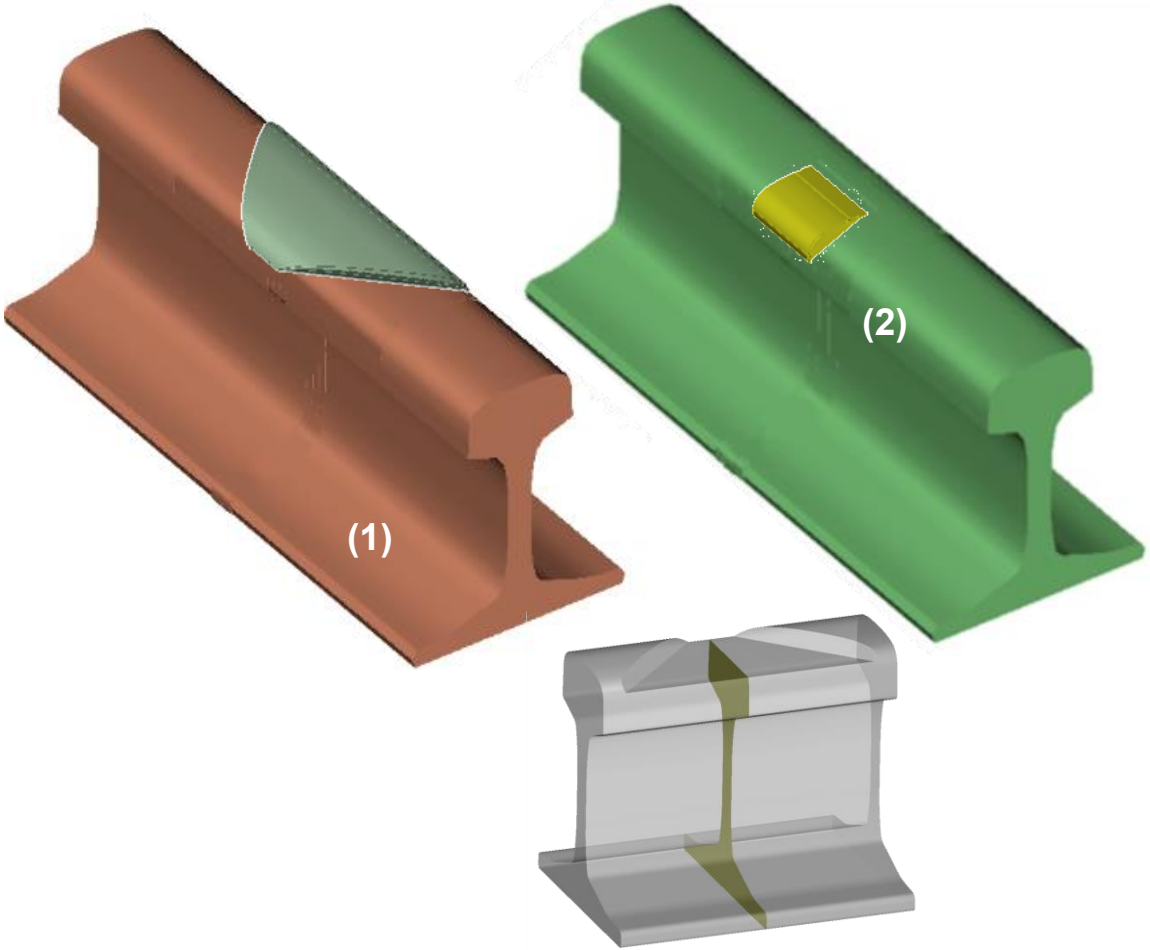





2 µm
2 µm
5 mm



Railhead repair welding



Railhead repair welding procedure::

- 350°C preheat (and reheat)
- Manual Metal Arc Welding
- Filler material: Weartrode 30

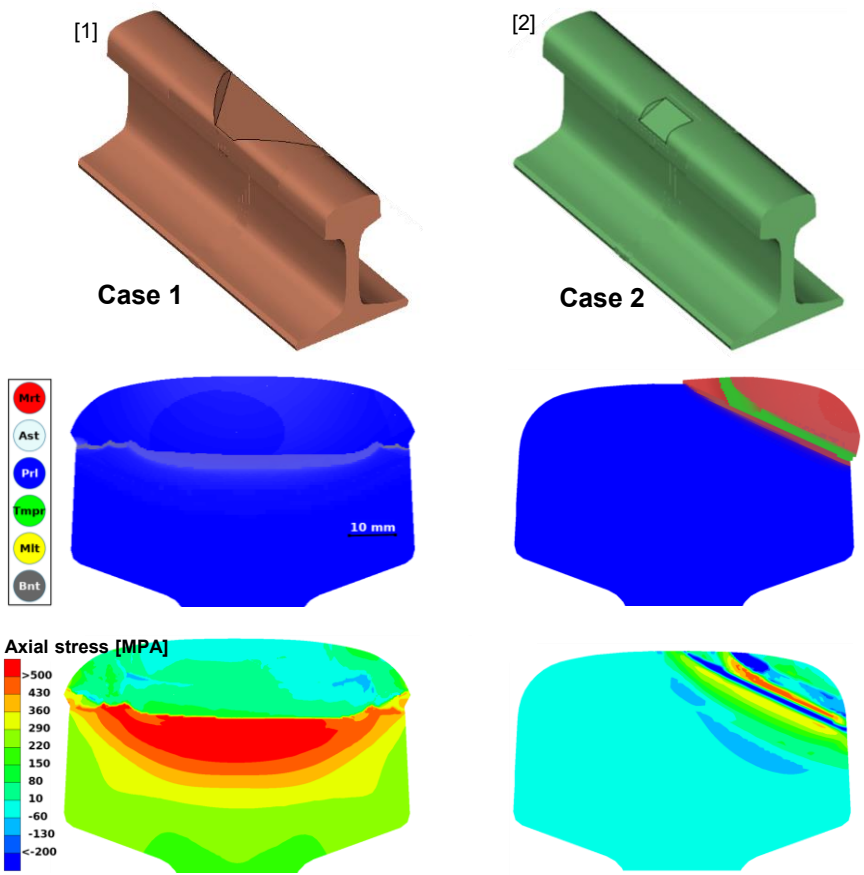
Case 1

- Following Swedish regulations
- 10 mm deep cut-out
- 45° chamfered cutouts
- Longitudinal support ridge weld passes
- Zig-zag weld passes between ridges

Case 2

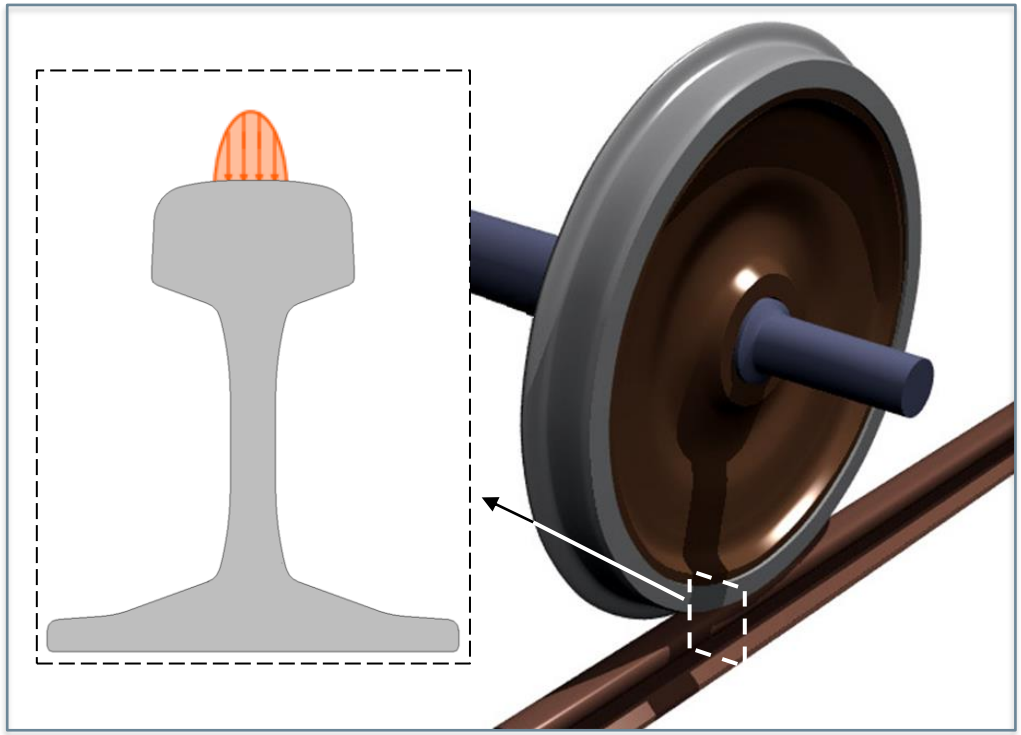
- Typical faulty repair procedure
- Rail corner cut-out
- 10 mm deep cut-out (at max point)
- 50 mm long cut-out
- 25° slope

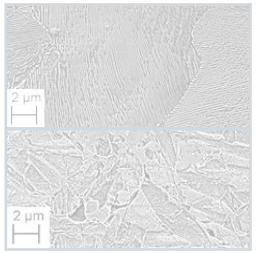
Simulation results: Case 1 & 2



- Geometry significantly effects:
  Heat input
  Residual stress state
  Material phases
  Mechanical performance
- Smaller repairs:
  → Less heat input
  → Rapid cooling
  → Unfavorable microstructure
  → Impaired performance
- Case 1 (Trapezoid shape):
  Large heat input with smooth ramp up and ramp down
  → Improved performance

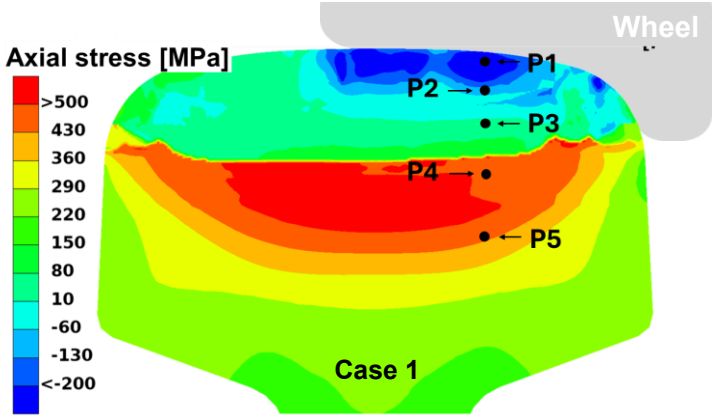
[1] Andersson, *et al*. Simulation-based assessment of railhead repair welding process parameters. Weld World 69, 177–197 (2025)
[2] Andersson & Josefson, Simulation-based failure analysis of faulty and regulatory railhead repair welding procedures, Engineering Failure Analysis, Volume 182 (2025)

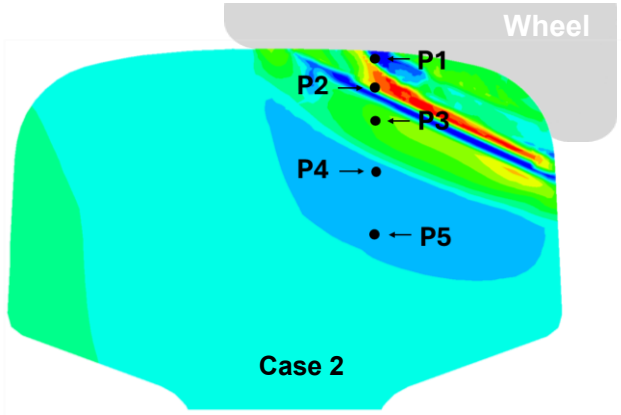


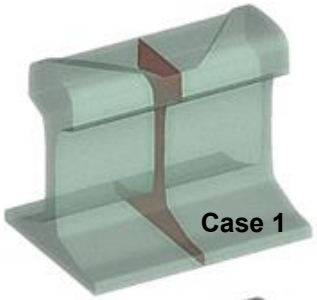

2 µm
2 µm

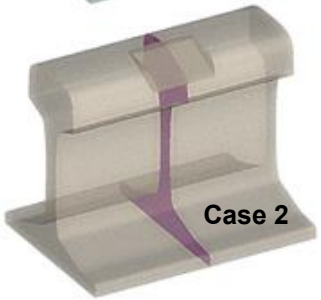

5 mm

Repair welding and over-rolling simulation









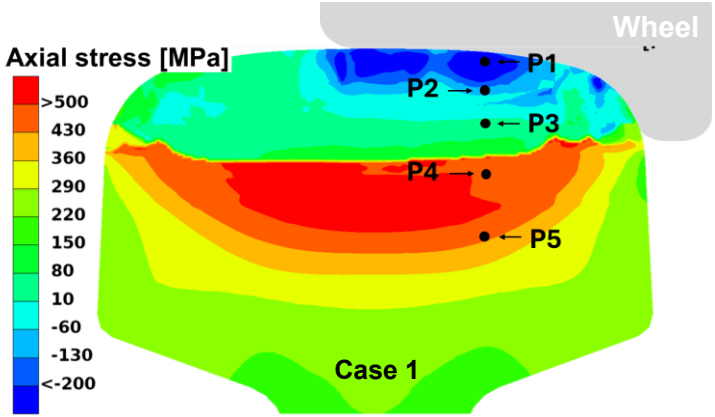
Post repair weld operational condition fatigue evaluation

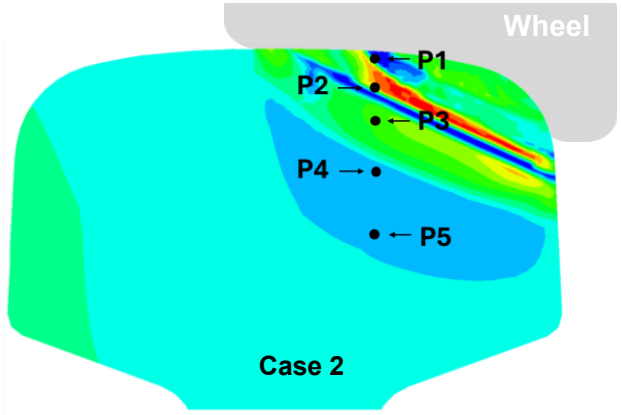
- Load 20 trains on Swedish western main line
- Load repeated 4 times: **2000 over-rollings**
- Residual stress weld + over-rollings
- Fatigue evaluation (crack initiation) using Dang Van method

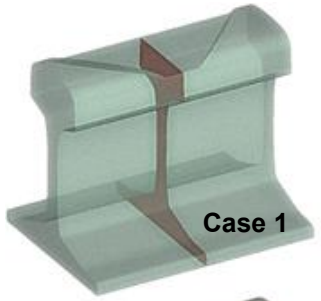
$$\sigma_{eq,DV}(t) = \tau_{Tr,a}(t) + \langle c_{DV}\sigma_h(t)\rangle < \tau_{e,i}$$

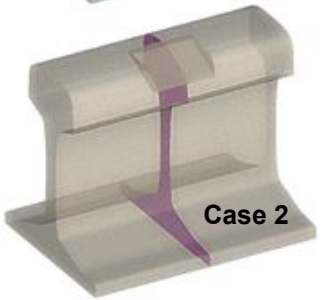
[1] Andersson & Josefson, Simulation-based failure analysis of faulty and regulatory railhead repair welding procedures, Engineering Failure Analysis, Volume 182 (2025)

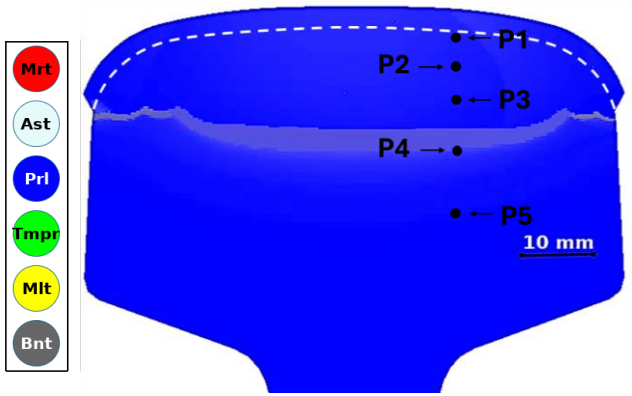
Repair welding and over-rolling simulation

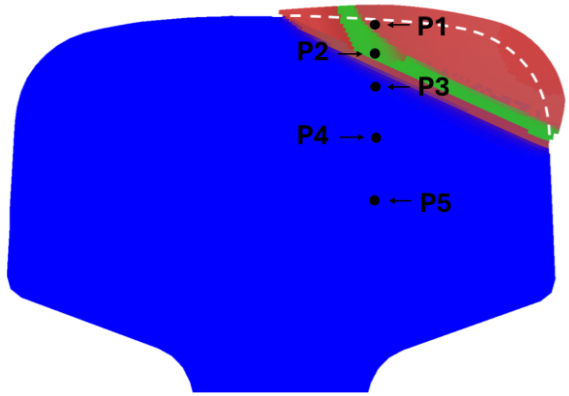












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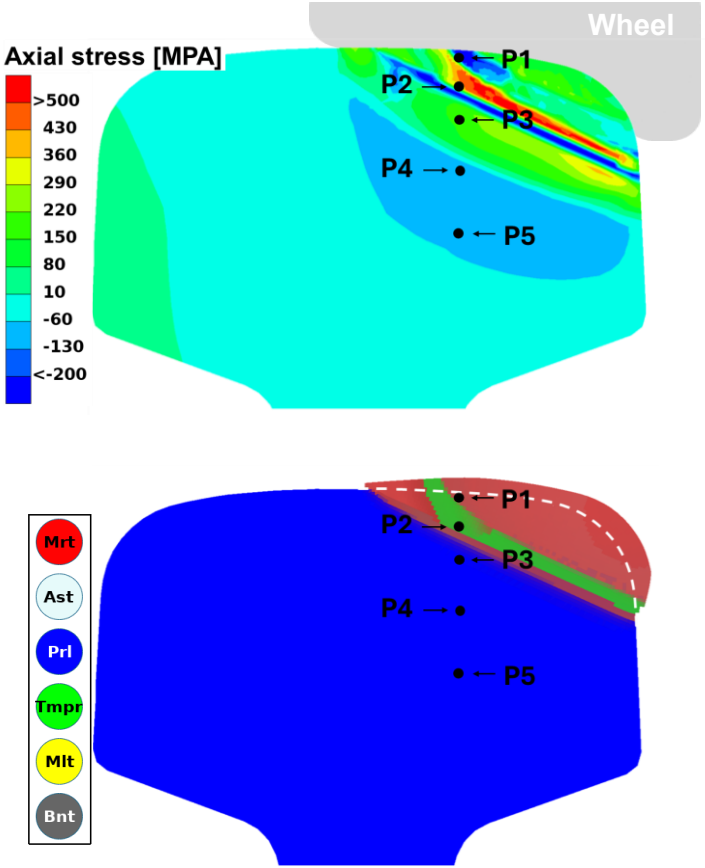
Repair welding and over-rolling simulation



Dang Van fatigue stress

$$\sigma_{\mathrm{DV}}(t) = \tau_{\mathrm{Tr,a}}(t) + \langle c_{\mathrm{DV},i}\, \sigma_{\mathrm{h}}(t) \rangle \geq \tau_{\mathrm{e},i}$$

Shear stress fatigue limit and hydrostatic stress parameter

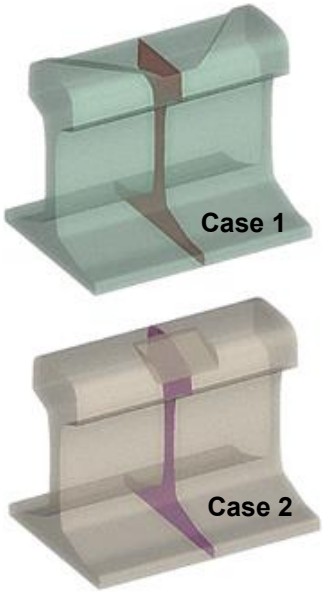
$$\tau_{\mathrm{e,i}} = \frac{H_{V,i}}{H_{V,\mathrm{p}}} \tau_{\mathrm{e,p}}$$

$$c_{\mathrm{DV},i} = 3\left(\frac{\tau_{\mathrm{e},i}}{\sigma_{\mathrm{ew},i}} - \frac{1}{2}\right)$$

Alternating bending shear stress (Murakami [2])

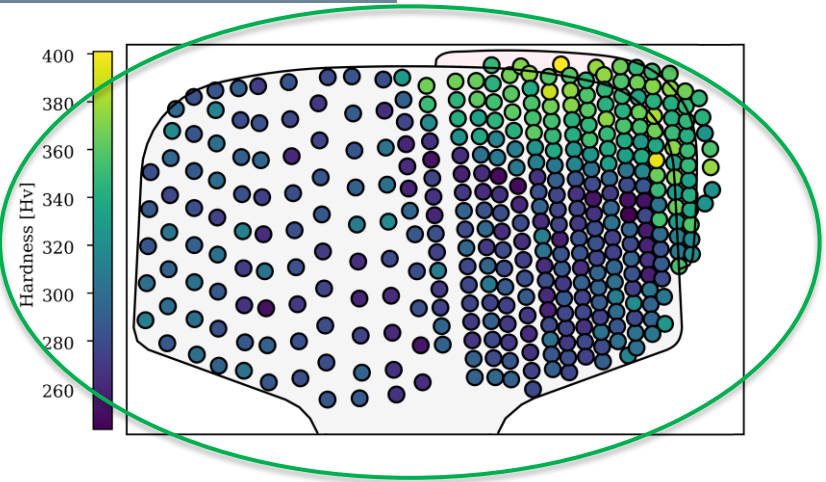
$$\sigma_{\mathrm{ew},i} = \frac{1.56(H_{V,i} + 120)}{(\sqrt{area})^{1/6}}$$

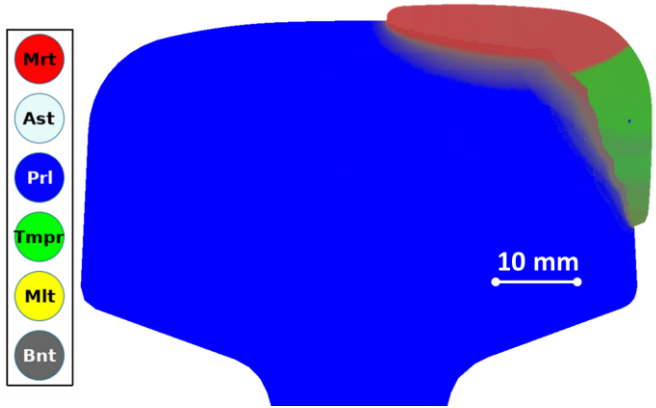
$\sqrt{area}$ inherent subsurface material defect [3]

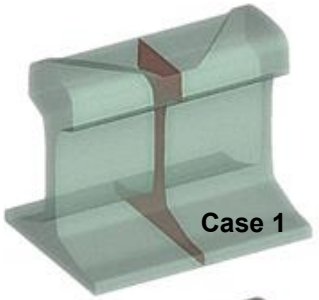


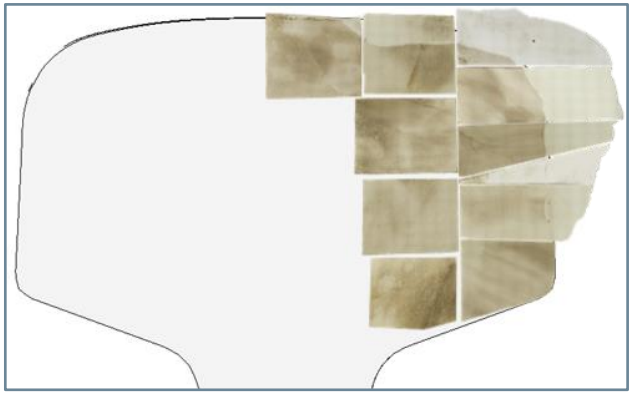
[1] Andersson & Josefson, Simulation-based failure analysis of faulty and regulatory railhead repair welding procedures, Engineering Failure Analysis, Volume 182 (2025)
[2] Y. Murakami, M. Endo, Effects of defects, inclusions and inhomogeneities on fatigue strength Int. J. Fatigue, 16 (3) (1994), pp. 163-182
[3] D. Franklin, A. Lundstjälk, LIVAR – Livslängsoptimering av räler: Tech. Rep., Swerim, Stockholm, Sweden (2021)

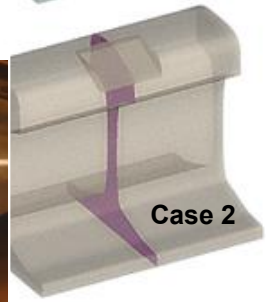
Repair welding and over-rolling simulation











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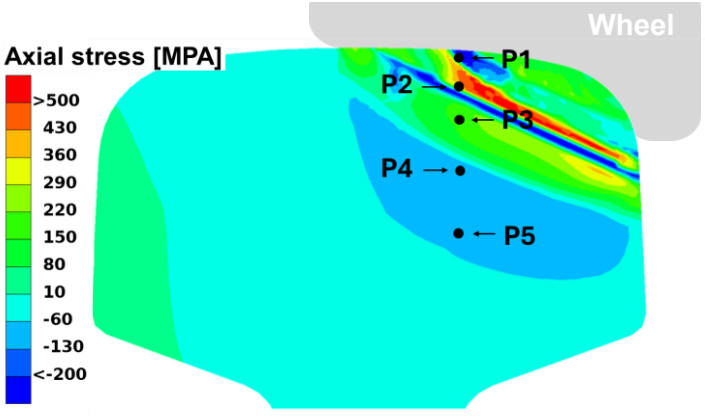

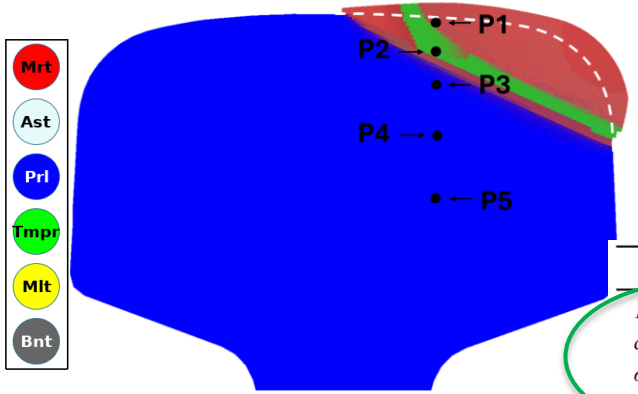

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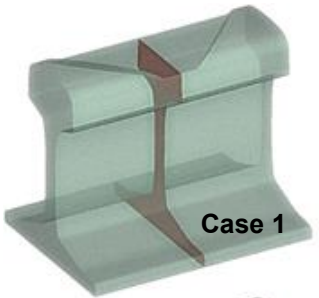

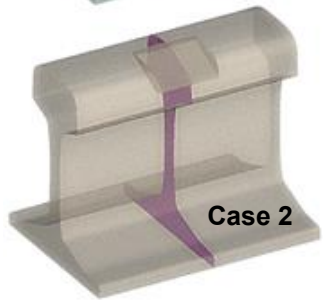

	Pearlite	Martensite	Bainite	Tempered
H_V [kgf/mm^2]	275	520	420	340
c_{DV} [–]	0.33	0.64	0.55	0.44
σ_{ew} [MPa]	275	446	376	320
τ_{e} [MPa]	168	318	257	208

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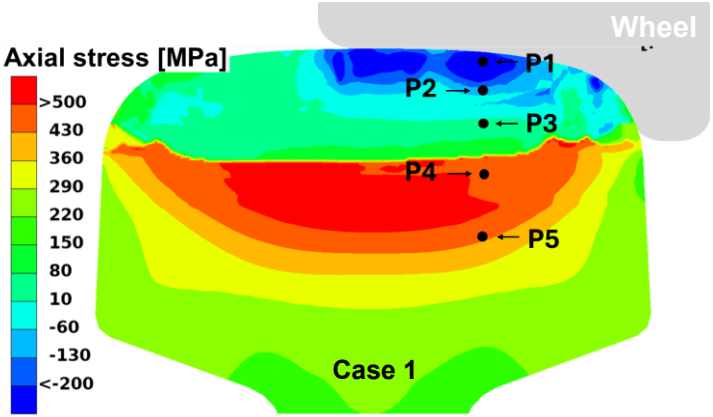
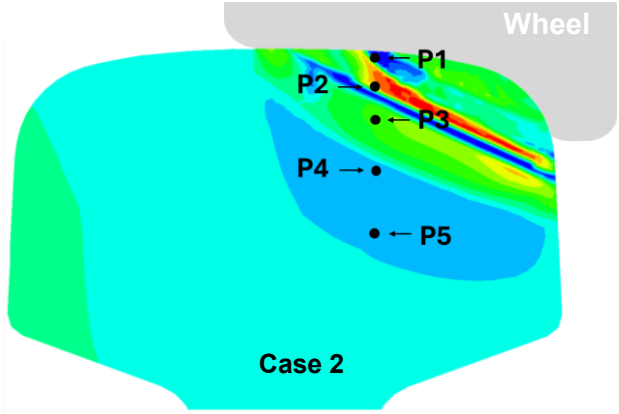
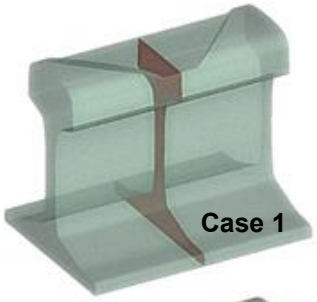
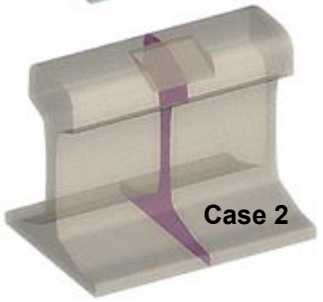
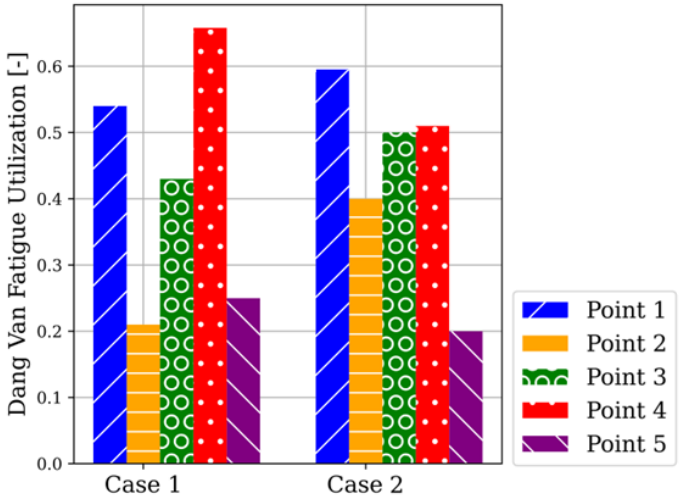
Repair welding and over-rolling simulation











Post repair weld operational condition fatigue evaluation

- Load 20 trains on Swedish western main line
- Load repeated 4 times: **2000 over-rollings**
- Residual stress weld + over-rollings
- Fatigue evaluation (crack initiation) using Dang Van method

$$\sigma_{eq,DV}(t) = \tau_{Tr,a}(t) + \langle c_{DV}\sigma_h(t)\rangle < \tau_{e,i}$$

- Critical point at fusion zone
- Better mechanical performance for Case 1

[1] Andersson & Josefson, Simulation-based failure analysis of faulty and regulatory railhead repair welding procedures, Engineering Failure Analysis, Volume 182 (2025)

Thank you for listening!

Simulation-based Failure Analysis of Faulty and Regulatory Railhead Repair Welding Procedures

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