

Branko Damjanac

Principal Engineer

Expertise Rock Mechanics, Hydro-Mechanical Coupling, Hydraulic Fracturing, Dynamics in Geotechnical Engineering, Tool-Rock Interaction

Education Ph.D. (Civil Engineering), 1996
M.S.C.E. (Civil Engineering), 1992
University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota, United States
B.S.C.E. (Civil Engineering), 1984
Belgrade University, Belgrade, Serbia

Professional Affiliations Member: ARMA (American Rock Mechanics Association)

Keynote Lectures *Recent Advances in Numerical Simulation of Hydraulic Fracture 1024, Rzeszov, Poland*

Professional Experience

2000 – Present *Itasca Consulting Group, Inc., Minneapolis, Minnesota*
Principal Engineer
1996 – Present *Geotechnical Engineer*
1991– 1996 *University of Minnesota, Department of Civil Engineering*
Research Assistant/Post-Doctoral Associate
1991 – 1993 *Itasca Consulting Group, Inc., Minneapolis, Minnesota*
Staff Engineer
1984 – 1991 *Energoprojekt Consulting Company, Belgrade, Yugoslavia*
Consulting Engineer

Project Experience

Design and Analysis of Geological Radioactive Waste Disposal: From 1991 until 2008, involved in different aspects of the U.S. program for geological disposal of high-level radioactive waste at Yucca Mountain, Nevada. Starting in 2001, manager of Itasca's long-term project with Bechtel-SAIC Company, U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) contactor for Yucca Mountain Project. Among other issues, the project involved: (a) stability analyses of the emplacement drifts and non-emplacement excavations at the Yucca Mountain site for different loading conditions, including in-situ stresses, thermally induced stresses, seismic ground shaking, and time-dependent strength degradation; and (b) investigations of the mechanics of dike propagation and the interaction between the dike and the emplacement drifts in case of volcanic intrusion into the repository.

Investigated the long-term stability of the emplacement caverns and the shafts for the proposed low- and intermediate-level nuclear waste repository at the Bruce site, Ontario, Canada. The work was done for the Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) of Canada. Stability of the drifts and shafts and evolution of the excavation damage zone (EDZ) were investigated for the loading conditions expected for the period of one million years, including in-situ stresses, time-dependent strength degradation, low-probability seismic ground motions and loading of glacial ice sheet. The completed geomechanical modeling study is a part of the

geosynthesis work program aimed to demonstrate that the proposed layout and geometry satisfy stability and safety requirements.

Investigated long-term stability of different design concepts for high-level nuclear waste deep geological repository (DRG) in Canada. Two geological settings were analyzed: crystalline and sedimentary rocks. Stability of placement rooms and damage in the surrounding rock mass were analyzed for period of 1,000,000 years considering expected loading conditions and perturbations including: in-situ stresses, temperature changes due to heat released by stored waste, time-dependent strength degradation, glacial loading, gas pressure and seismic loading.

Hydraulic Fracturing in Naturally Fractured Reservoirs: Developed methodologies for the simulation of hydraulic fracturing in naturally fractured reservoirs using distinct element (*3DEC* and *UDEC*), particle flow codes (*PFC2D*) and lattice codes (*XSite*). Participated in a number of projects in which the methodologies were used to investigate the effect of different in-situ field conditions and operational parameters on hydraulic fracturing and the interaction between the hydraulic fracture and pre-existing fracture network. The studies were conducted for some of the largest oil and gas (e.g., Shell, BP and Conoco-Phillips) and mining (e.g., Rio Tinto) companies.

Enhanced Geothermal Systems (EGS): For U.S. DOE, managed the numerical study of feasibility of EGS. Fully coupled thermo-hydro-mechanical models (*UDEC* in 2D and *3DEC* in 3D) were used to determine the favorable in-situ conditions (e.g., fracture network characteristics, in-situ stress state and rock mass mechanical and hydraulic properties) and the optimum operational parameters (e.g., injection rate and fluid viscosity) for the EGS.

Starting in 2019, led the group that conducted modeling of reservoir stimulation at Utah FORGE, a dedicated underground field laboratory sponsored by U.S. DOE for developing, testing, and accelerating breakthroughs in EGS technologies.

Numerical Modeling of Underground Nuclear Explosions: Acted as a consultant to International Geological Commission established by French government to investigate effects of underground nuclear testing on the structural stability of atolls of Mururoa and Fangataufa, French Polynesia. Responsible for numerical simulations related to deformation and stability of rock mass including.

Rock Mechanics Applied to Underground Mine Design: Involved in the investigation of mechanism of large-scale panel collapses at room-and-pillar trona mines in Green River, Wyoming. Developed a methodology that can be used to provide guidelines for safe mine design (i.e., panel spans, extraction ratio, pillar widths) accounting for interaction between pillars and overburden. Investigated using three-dimensional models of the mechanisms of movement of large blocks formed by faults at Kidd Creek Mine (Falconbridge, Timmins, Canada) and its consequences on mine operation. Analyzed mine-scale convergence rate due to salt creep at Sifto Mine (Goderich, Canada). Involved in the design of an optimal mining methodology at De Beers' Snap Lake operation.

Rock Mechanics Applied to Stability of Open Pit Mines: As a consultant and researcher, participated in Large Open Pit (LOP) project, a research project funded by the consortium of some of the largest mining companies with an objective to resolve number of critical issues for large open pits. For LOP, managed development and validation of a new code for stability analysis of LOP walls.

Code Development: Managed the development of the implementation of Synthetic Rock Mass (SRM) in the lattice method for simulation of slope stability in fractured rock masses (Slope Model) and hydraulic

fracturing in naturally fractured reservoirs (*XSite*). Involved in the development of different Itasca codes including a fully coupled 3D model of fluid flow through the joints in deformable media (*3DEC*), a new algorithm (fast flow) for simulating hydro-mechanical coupling in porous media (*FLAC*), and mixed discretization in *3DEC*; continuum and micro-mechanical constitutive models (*FLAC*, *PFC*).

Tool-Rock Interaction: Theoretical and numerical analyses of rock cutting; determination of cut-ability criterion as a function of the material properties of the rock, geometry of the tool and cutting disposition; determination of ductile to brittle transition; prediction of force required to induce fracturing of the rock during tool indentation (University of Minnesota, Department of Civil Engineering).

Underground Storage of Hydrocarbons: U.S. DOE review of new technology for the underground storage of gas under large pressure into lined rock caverns (LRC). New technology promises to provide additional flexibility in meeting seasonal fluctuations in energy demands. Complex three-dimensional structure-rock interactions were investigated to determine the most unfavorable conditions for the operation of the structure. Design and consulting related to aqua-type underground oil-storage facilities: analytical and numerical analysis of the stability of caverns; design of primary and permanent support of underground excavations; simulation of the influence of underground storage systems on regional groundwater conditions during construction and operation. (Energoprojekt).

Design of Dams: Consultant to the project manager for the stability of slopes and underground excavations during construction at the Bekhme Dam, Iraq; development and programming of analytical and numerical procedures (finite-element method) used in analysis of stability and design of support of slopes and underground excavations in rock (Energoprojekt).