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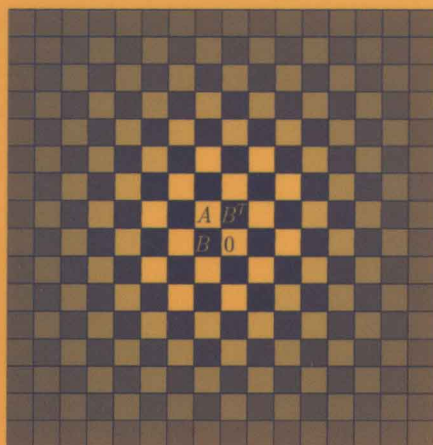
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Mixed Finite Elements, Compatibility Conditions, and Applications

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Daniele Boffi · Franco Brezzi
Leszek F. Demkowicz · Ricardo G. Durán
Richard S. Falk · Michel Fortin

Mixed Finite Elements, Compatibility Conditions, and Applications

Lectures given at the
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Editors:

Daniele Boffi
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Preface

This volume is a collection of the notes of the C.I.M.E. course “Mixed finite elements, compatibility conditions, and applications” held in Cetraro (CS), Italy, from June 26 to July 1, 2006.

Since the early 1970s, mixed finite elements have been the object of wide and deep study by the mathematical and engineering communities. The fundamental role of mixed methods for many application fields has been recognized worldwide and their use has been introduced in several commercial codes. An important feature of mixed finite elements is the interplay between theory and application: on the one hand, many schemes used for real life simulations have been cast in a rigorous framework, and on the other, the theoretical analysis makes it possible to design new schemes or to improve existing ones, based on their mathematical properties. Indeed, due to the compatibility conditions required by the discretization spaces to provide stable schemes, simple minded approximations generally do not work and the design of suitable stabilizations gives rise to challenging mathematical problems.

The course had two main goals. The first one was to review the rigorous setting of mixed finite elements and to revisit it after more than 30 years of practice; this resulted in developing a detailed a priori and a posteriori analysis. The second one was to show some examples of possible applications of the method.

We are confident this book will serve as a basic reference for people exploring the field of mixed finite elements. This “Lecture Notes” cover the theory of mixed finite elements and applications to Stokes problem, elasticity, and electromagnetism.

Ricardo G. Durán had the responsibility of reviewing the general theory. He started with the description of the mixed approximation of second-order elliptic problems (a priori and a posteriori estimates) and then extended the theory to general mixed problems, thus leading to the famous inf-sup conditions.

The second course on Stokes problem has been given by Daniele Boffi, Franco Brezzi, and Michel Fortin. From the basic application of the inf-sup theory to the linear Stokes system, stable Stokes finite elements have been analyzed, and general stabilization techniques have been described. Finally, some results on visco-elasticity have been presented.

Richard S. Falk has dealt with the mixed finite element approximation of the elasticity problem and, more particularly, of the Reissner–Mindlin plate problem. The corresponding notes are split into two parts: in the first one, recent results linking the de Rham complex to finite element schemes have been reviewed; in the second, classical Reissner–Mindlin plate elements have been presented, together with some discussion on quadrilateral meshes.

Leszek Demkowicz has given a general introduction to the exact sequence (de Rham complex) topic, which turns out to be a fundamental tool for the construction and analysis of mixed finite elements, and for the approximation of problems arising from electromagnetism. The results presented here use special characterization of traces for vector-valued functions in Sobolev spaces.

We thank all the lecturers and, in particular, Franco Brezzi, who laid the foundation for the analysis of mixed finite elements, for his active participation in this C.I.M.E. course.

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Contents

Preface	V
 Mixed Finite Element Methods	
<i>Ricardo G. Durán</i>	1
1 Introduction	1
2 Preliminary Results	2
3 Mixed Approximation of Second Order Elliptic Problems	8
4 A Posteriori Error Estimates	25
5 The General Abstract Setting	34
References	42
 Finite Elements for the Stokes Problem	
<i>Daniele Boffi, Franco Brezzi, and Michel Fortin</i>	45
1 Introduction	45
2 The Stokes Problem as a Mixed Problem	46
2.1 Mixed Formulation	46
3 Some Basic Examples	50
4 Standard Techniques for Checking the Inf–Sup Condition	56
4.1 Fortin’s Trick	56
4.2 Projection onto Constants	57
4.3 Verfürth’s Trick	58
4.4 Space and Domain Decomposition Techniques	60
4.5 Macroelement Technique	61
4.6 Making Use of the Internal Degrees of Freedom	63
5 Spurious Pressure Modes	66
6 Two-Dimensional Stable Elements	69
6.1 The MINI Element	69
6.2 The Crouzeix–Raviart Element	70
6.3 $P_1^{NC} - P_0$ Approximation	71
6.4 $Q_k - P_{k-1}$ Elements	72

7	Three-Dimensional Elements	73
7.1	The MINI Element	73
7.2	The Crouseix–Raviart Element	74
7.3	$P_1^{NC} - P_0$ Approximation	74
7.4	$Q_k - P_{k-1}$ Elements	75
8	$P_k - P_{k-1}$ Schemes and Generalized Hood–Taylor Elements	75
8.1	$P_k - P_{k-1}$ Elements	75
8.2	Generalized Hood–Taylor Elements	76
9	Nearly Incompressible Elasticity, Reduced Integration Methods and Relation with Penalty Methods	85
9.1	Variational Formulations and Admissible Discretizations	85
9.2	Reduced Integration Methods	86
9.3	Effects of Inexact Integration	88
10	Divergence-Free Basis, Discrete Stream Functions	92
11	Other Mixed and Hybrid Methods for Incompressible Flows	96
	References	97

Polynomial Exact Sequences and Projection-Based Interpolation with Application to Maxwell Equations

	<i>Leszek Demkowicz</i>	101
1	Introduction	101
2	Exact Polynomial Sequences	102
2.1	One-Dimensional Sequences	102
2.2	Two-Dimensional Sequences	105
3	Commuting Projections and Projection-Based Interpolation Operators in One Space Dimension	115
3.1	Commuting Projections: Projection Error Estimates	115
3.2	Commuting Interpolation Operators: Interpolation Error Estimates	117
3.3	Localization Argument	125
4	Commuting Projections and Projection-Based Interpolation Operators in Two Space Dimensions	128
4.1	Definitions and Commutativity	128
4.2	Polynomial Preserving Extension Operators	131
4.3	Right-Inverse of the Curl Operator: Discrete Friedrichs Inequality	132
4.4	Projection Error Estimates	135
4.5	Interpolation Error Estimates	137
4.6	Localization Argument	139
5	Commuting Projections and Projection-Based Interpolation Operators in Three Space Dimensions	141
5.1	Definitions and Commutativity	141
5.2	Polynomial Preserving Extension Operators	145
5.3	Polynomial Preserving, Right-Inverses of Grad, Curl, and Div Operators: Discrete Friedrichs Inequalities	145
5.4	Projection and Interpolation Error Estimates	149