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Xenon Sloshing in Microgravity

Meng Technical Exam



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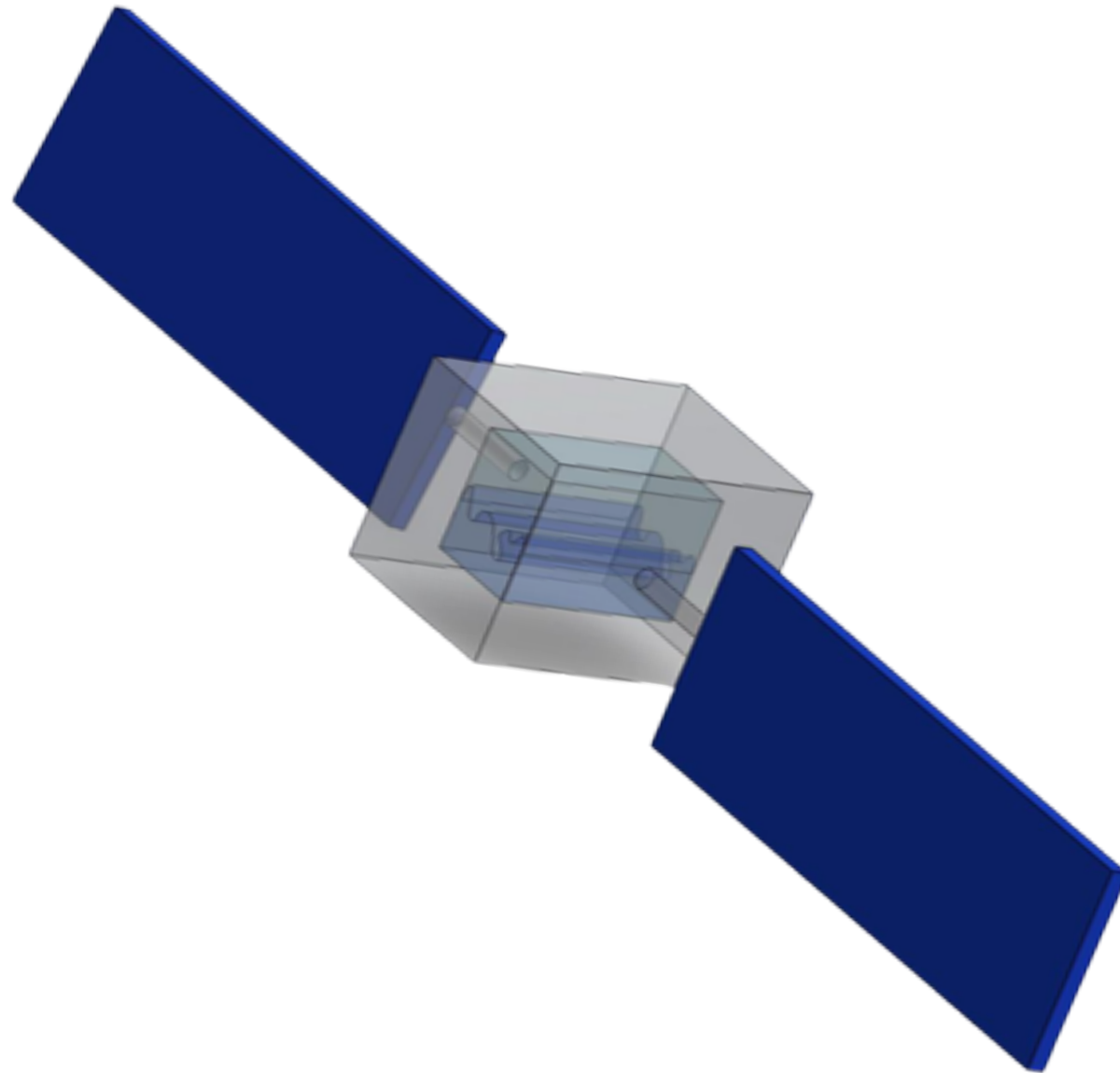
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Introduction & Problem Statement



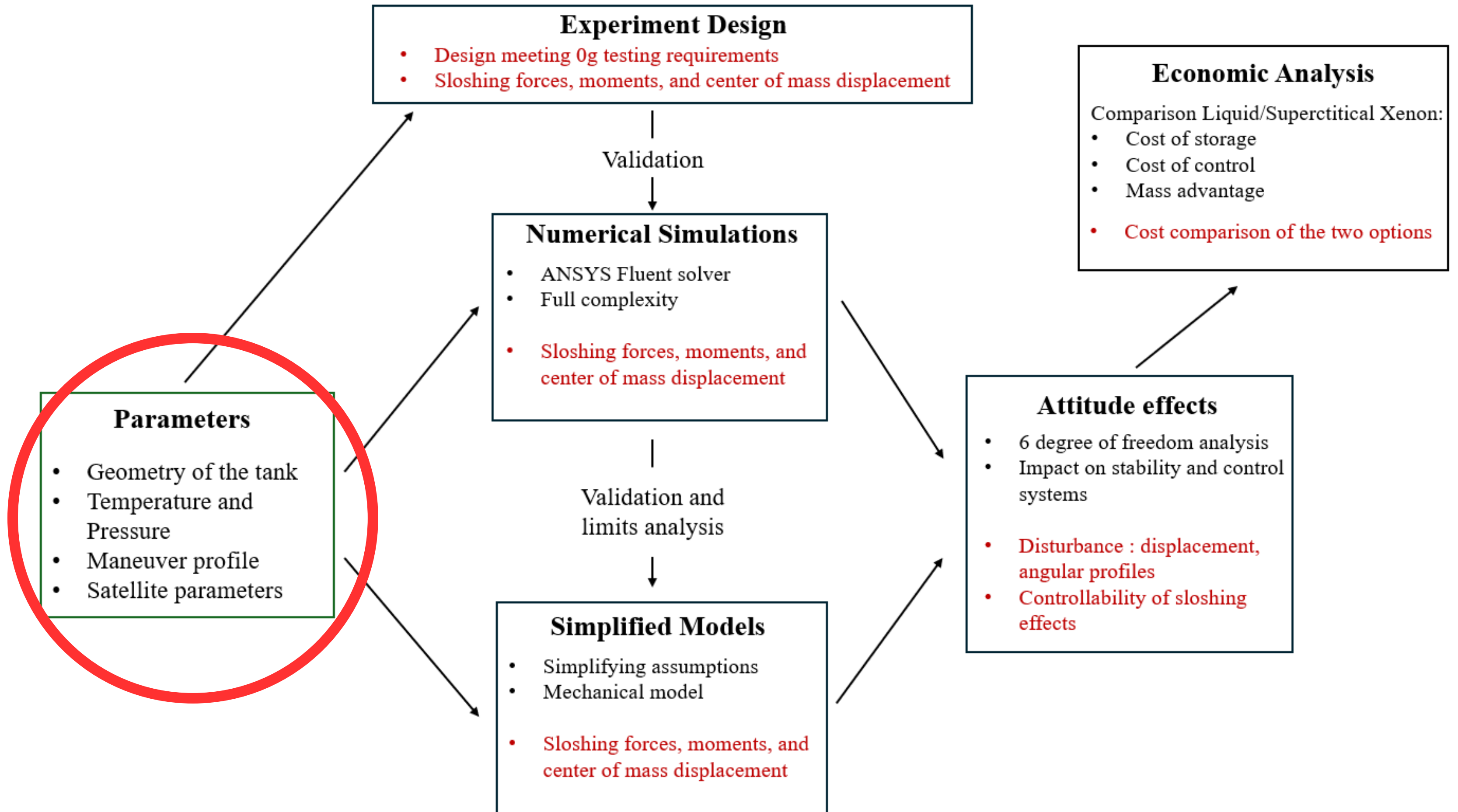
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Determine the feasibility of liquid xenon storage in microgravity by:

- **Quantifying slosh-induced forces and moments caused by sloshing**
- **Analyzing their impact on satellite dynamics and trajectory control**

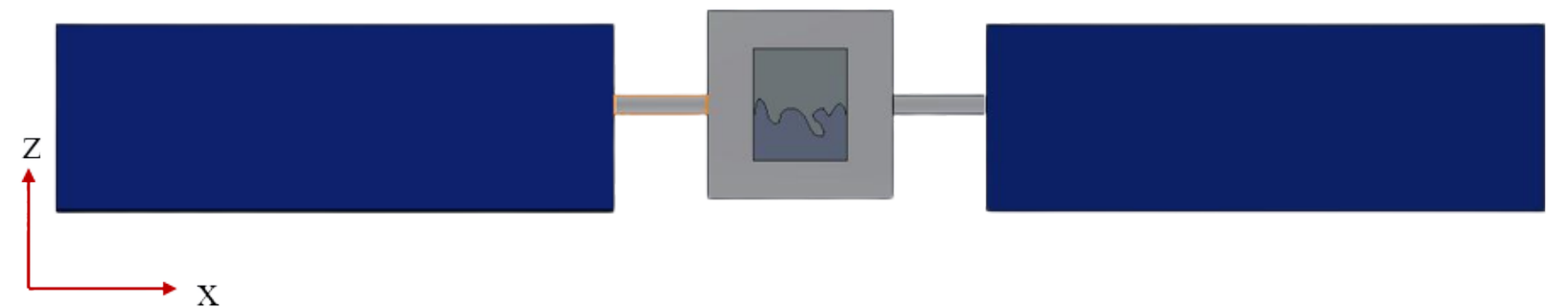
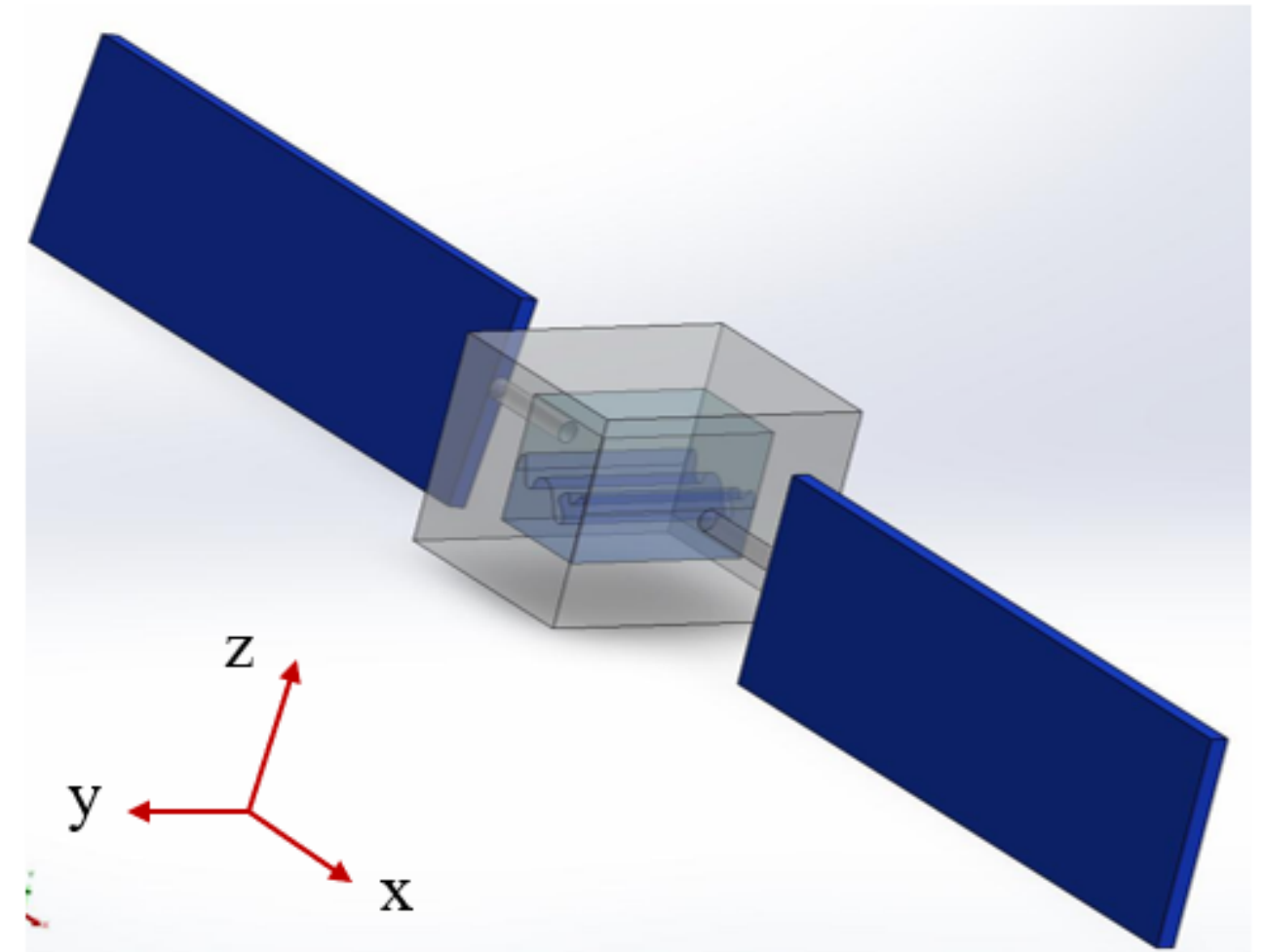


Parameters and Hypotheses

Satellite Properties:

- ARROW150 from Airbus US Space
- LEO range : 500 to 1500km (Earth Observation/ satellite constellation)
- 1m x 1m x 1.3m
- Total mass : 205 kg
- Estimated Inertia Properties

$$I = \begin{bmatrix} 36.25 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 29.7478 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 44.8639 \end{bmatrix} \text{ kg} \cdot \text{m}^2$$

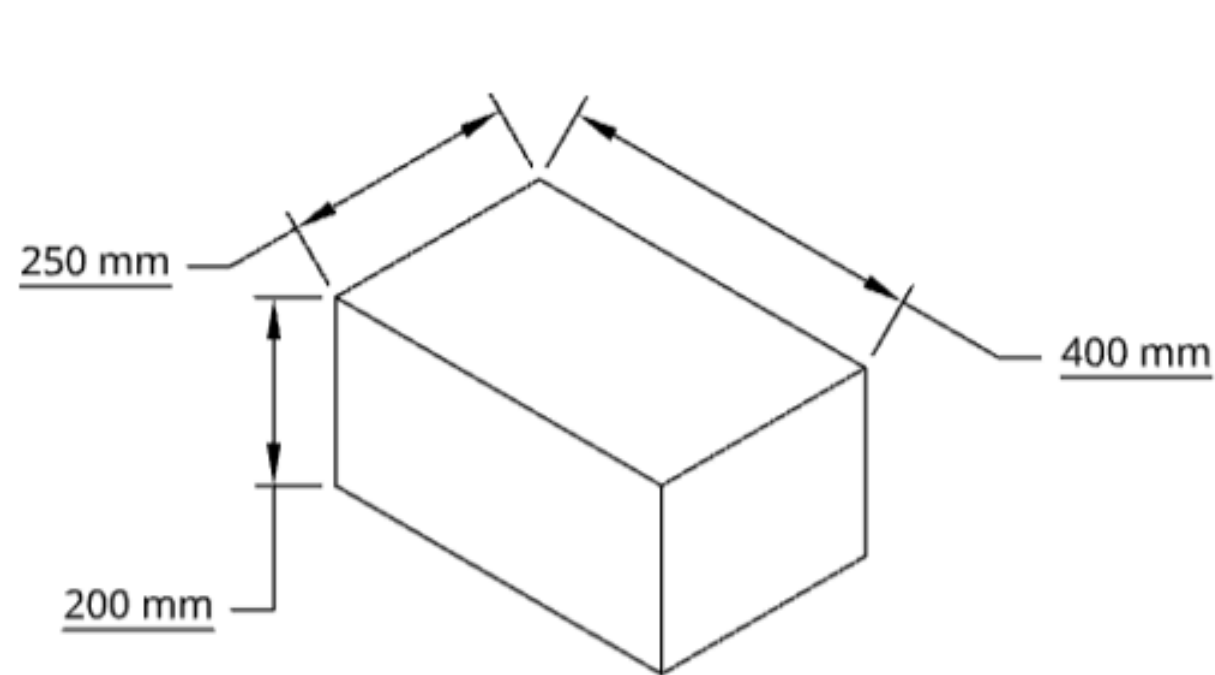


Important for Attitude Analysis later on

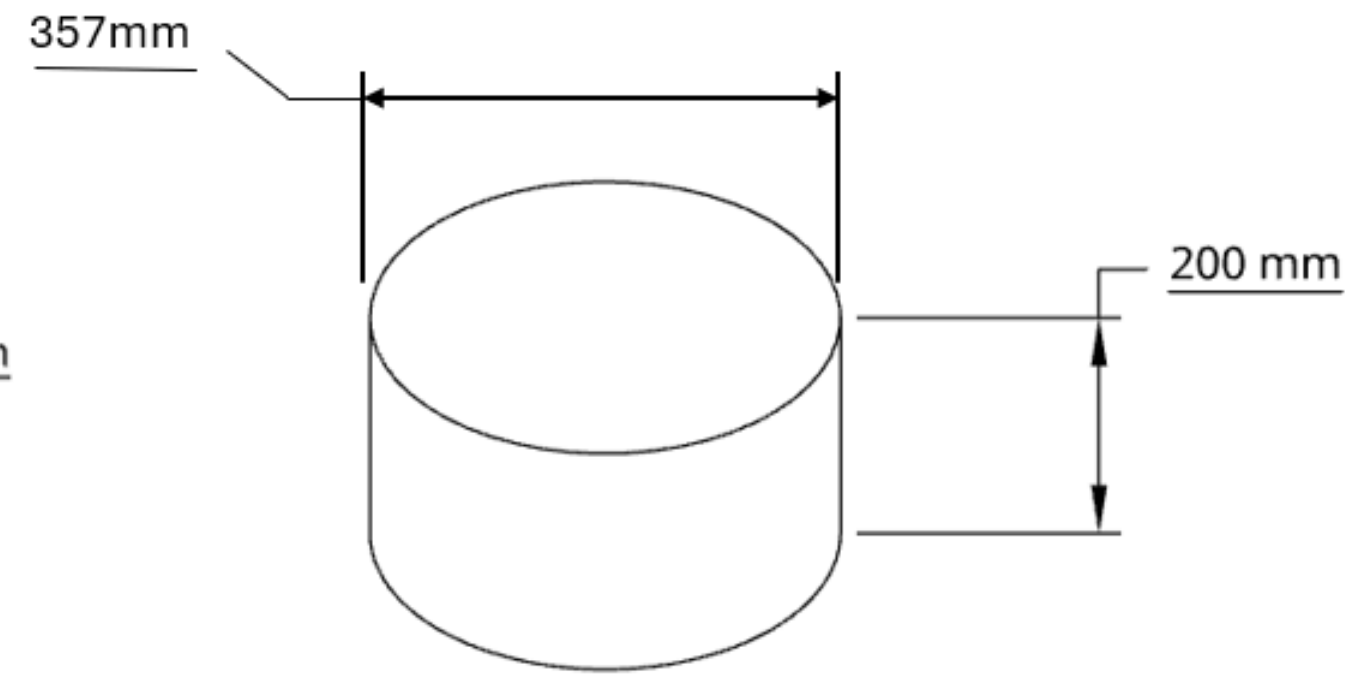
Tank Geometry.

- Impacts sloshing exact behaviour
- Most commonly spherical or cylindrical (ellipsoidal caps)

To simplify things (modelling) two geometries selected :



Rectangular configuration, $V = 20L$



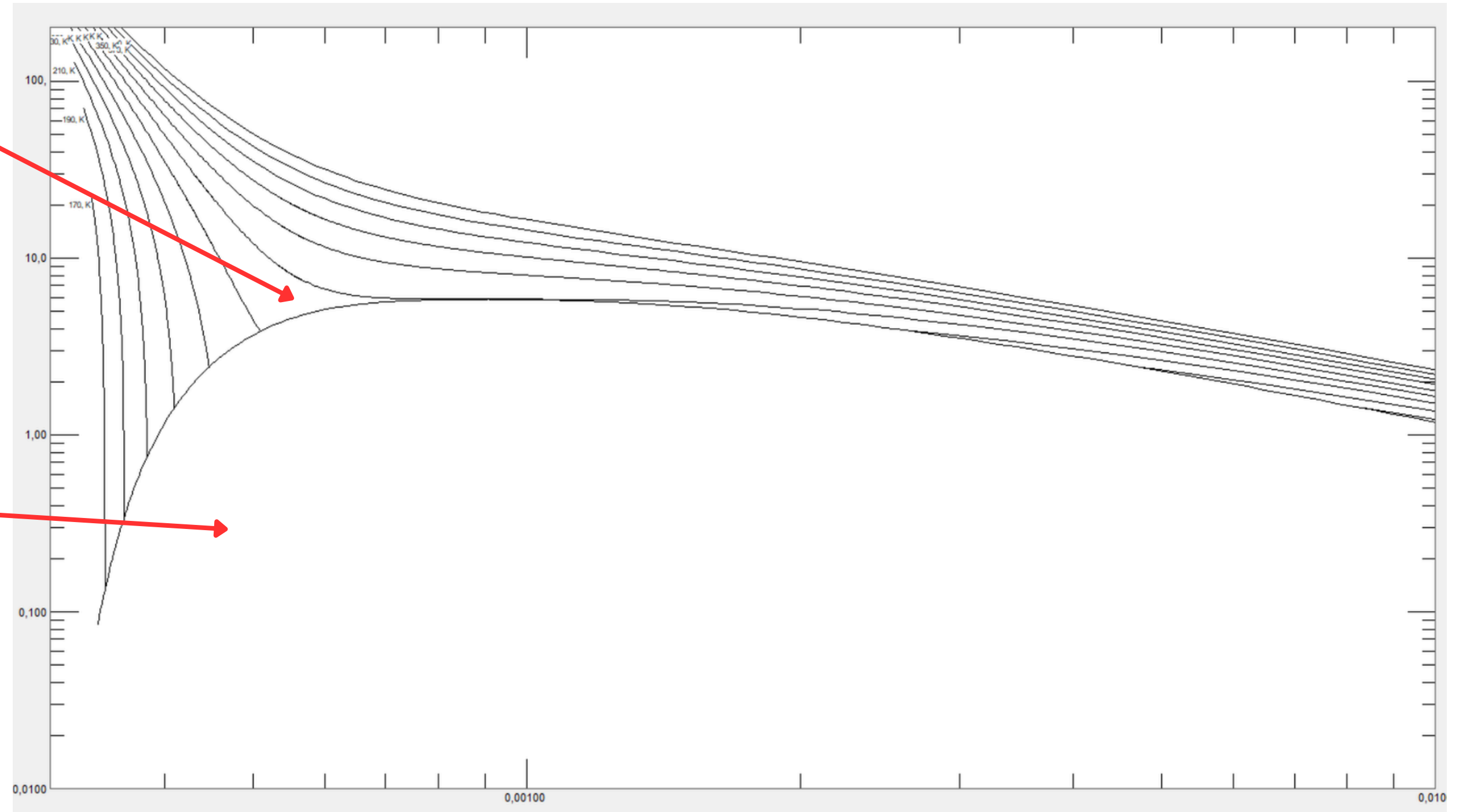
Cylindrical configuration $V = 20L$

State of the Xenon

Pressure-Volume diagram for Xenon (NIST)

Critical Point : $T_c=289.8\text{K}$

**Goal : Operate
somewhere here**



State of the Xenon

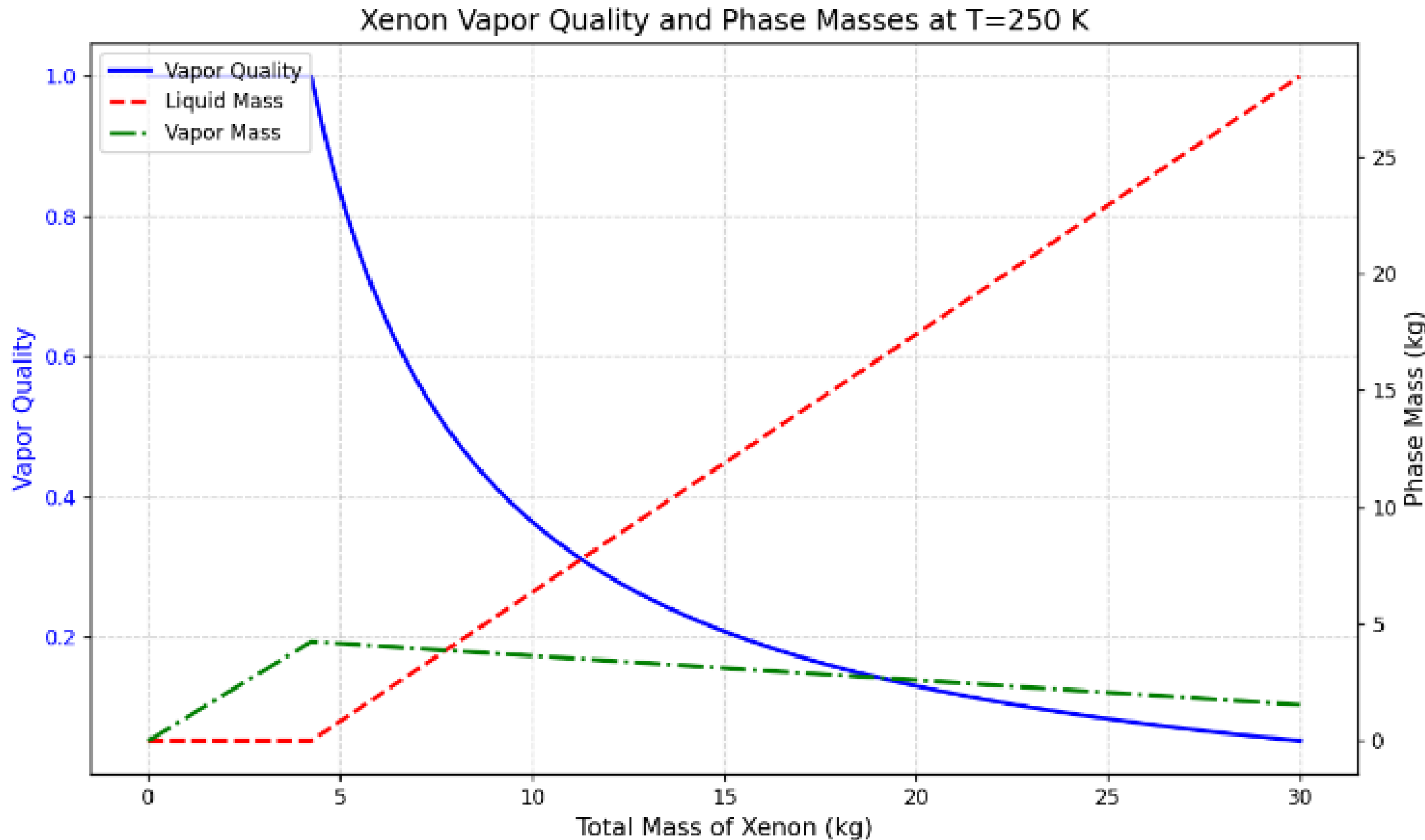
Two parameters need to be defined : **Xenon mass** and **Temperature**

$$v = \frac{V_{tank}}{m_{Xe}}$$

$$x = \frac{v - v_l}{v_v - v_l}$$

Parameters chosen for a half fill

$$T = 270K \quad m_{Xe} = 23.38kg$$



$$Fill\% = \frac{V_l}{V_{tank}} = 0.5$$

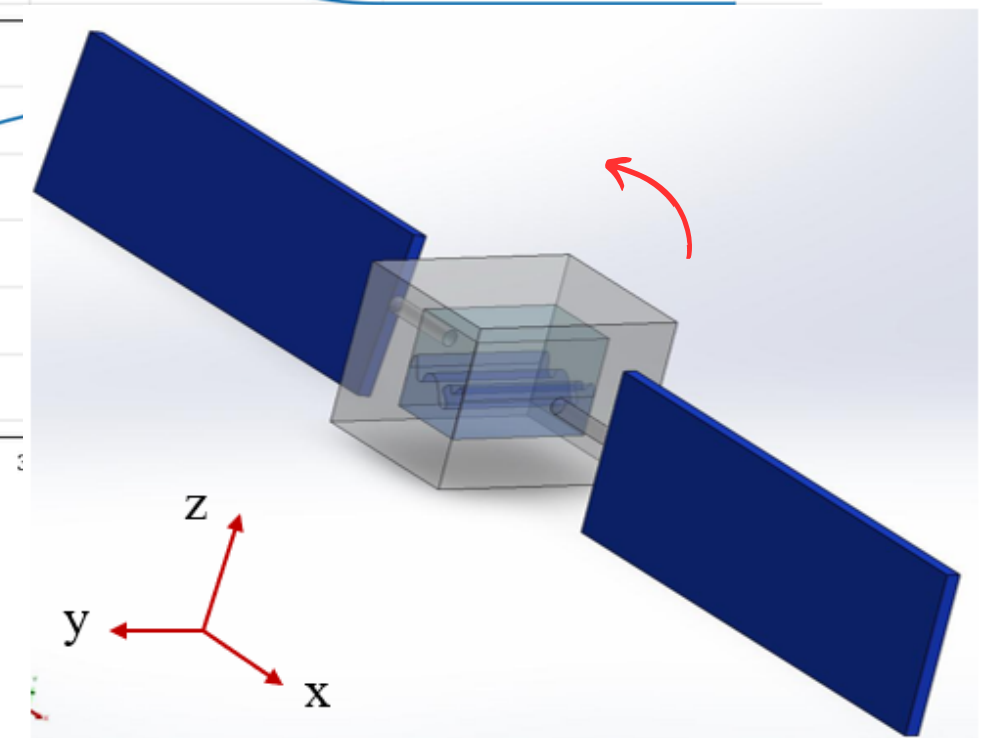
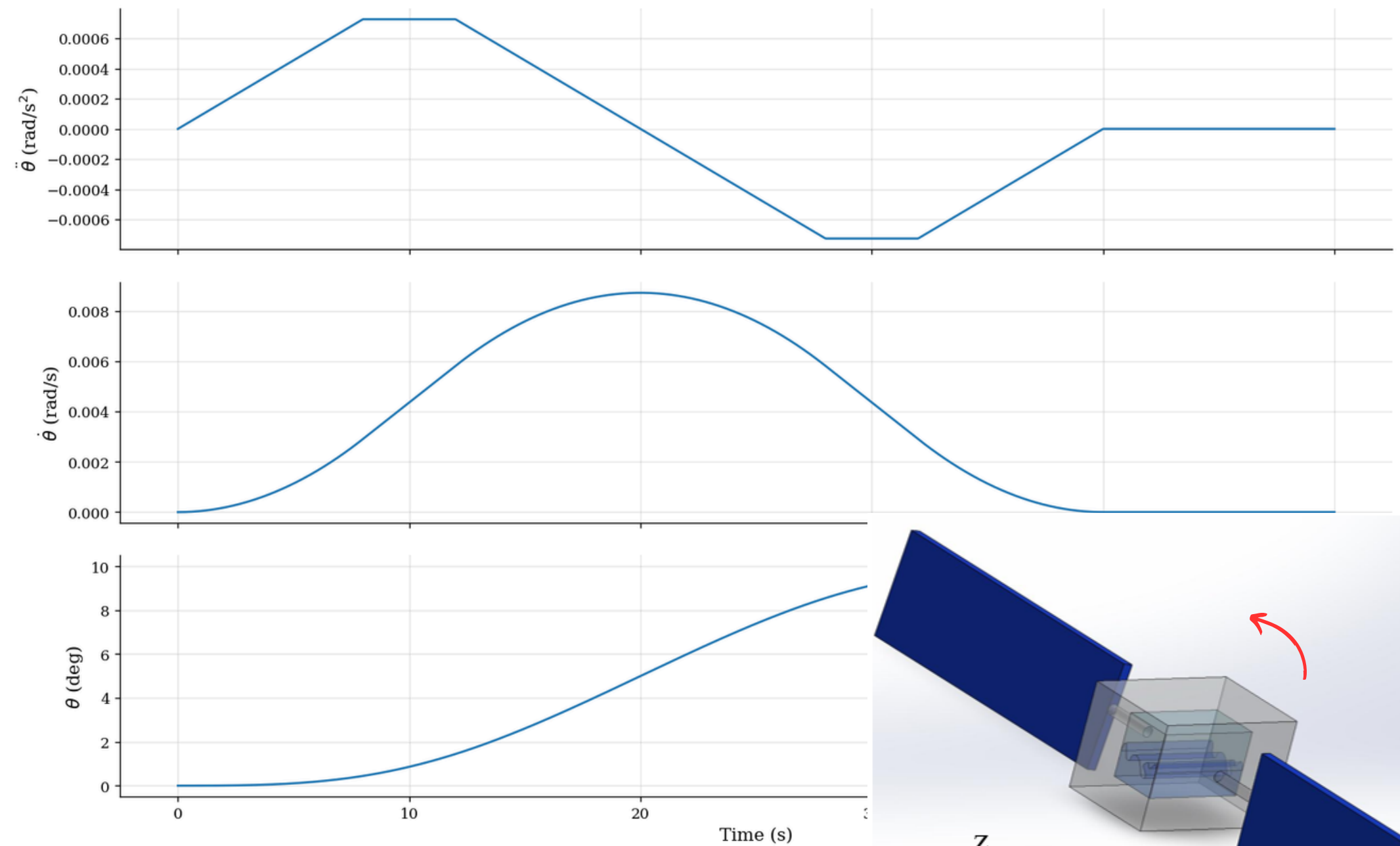
Property	Symbol	Value
Liquid density	ρ_l	1962.2 kg m ⁻³
Vapor density	ρ_v	376.6 kg m ⁻³
Surface tension	σ	1.8e-3 N m ⁻¹
Liquid viscosity	μ_l	108e-6 Pa s
Vapor viscosity	μ_v	25e-6 Pa s

Maneuvers considered

- Conditions Sloshing
- Needs to be **realistic** and **possible to simulate** (not too long)

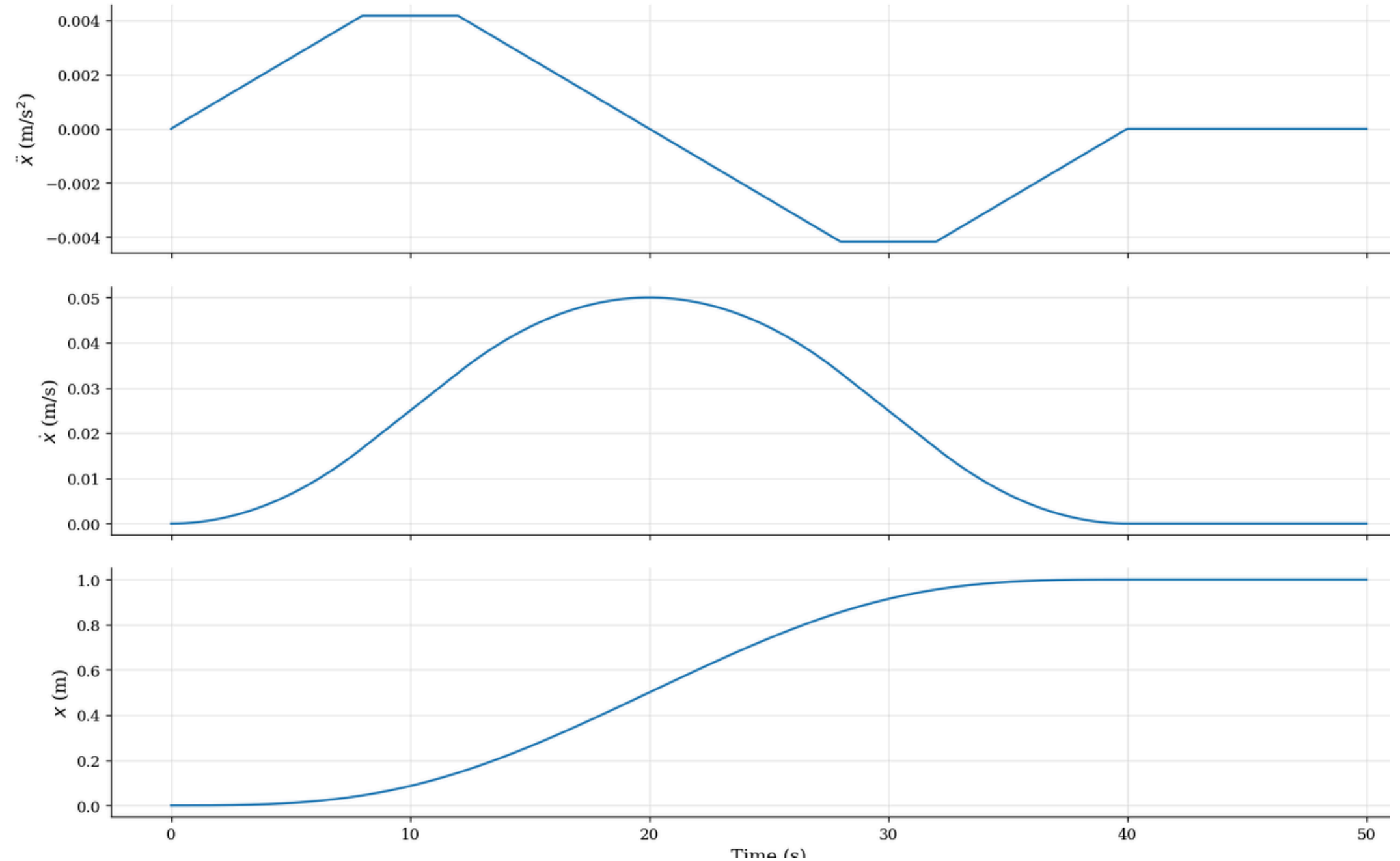
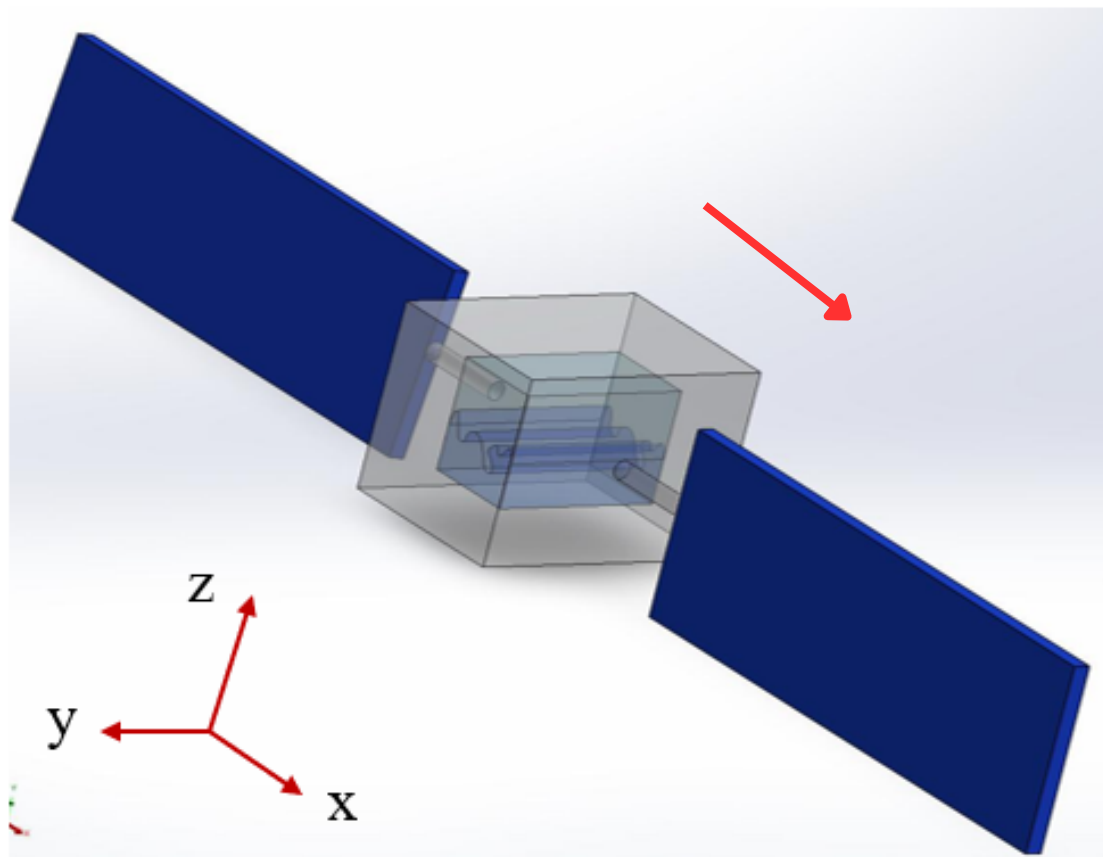
Reorientation Maneuver

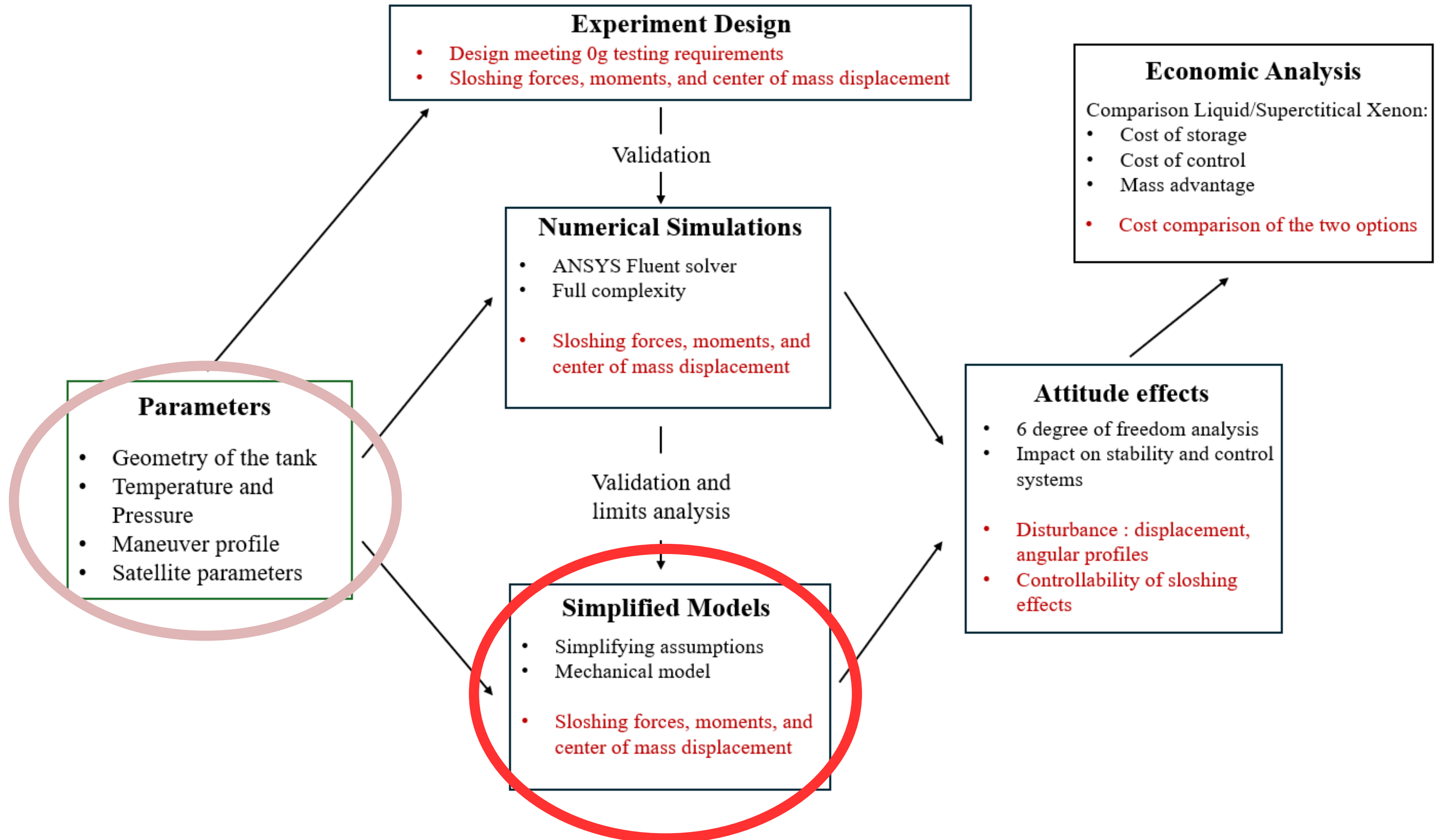
- Typical purpose: Pointing at a specific area of earth
- **Dynamic similarity** with real maneuvers (non dimensional numbers conserved)
- Rotation of 10° along the y axis



Translation Maneuver

- Typical purpose: Position hold / formation orbit
- **Dynamic similarity** with real maneuvers (non dimensional numbers conserved)
- Translation of 1m along the x axis





Modelling Sloshing in Microgravity

Forces at play : **inertia**, **viscous**, **gravitational**, and **capillary**.

Can we neglect any ?

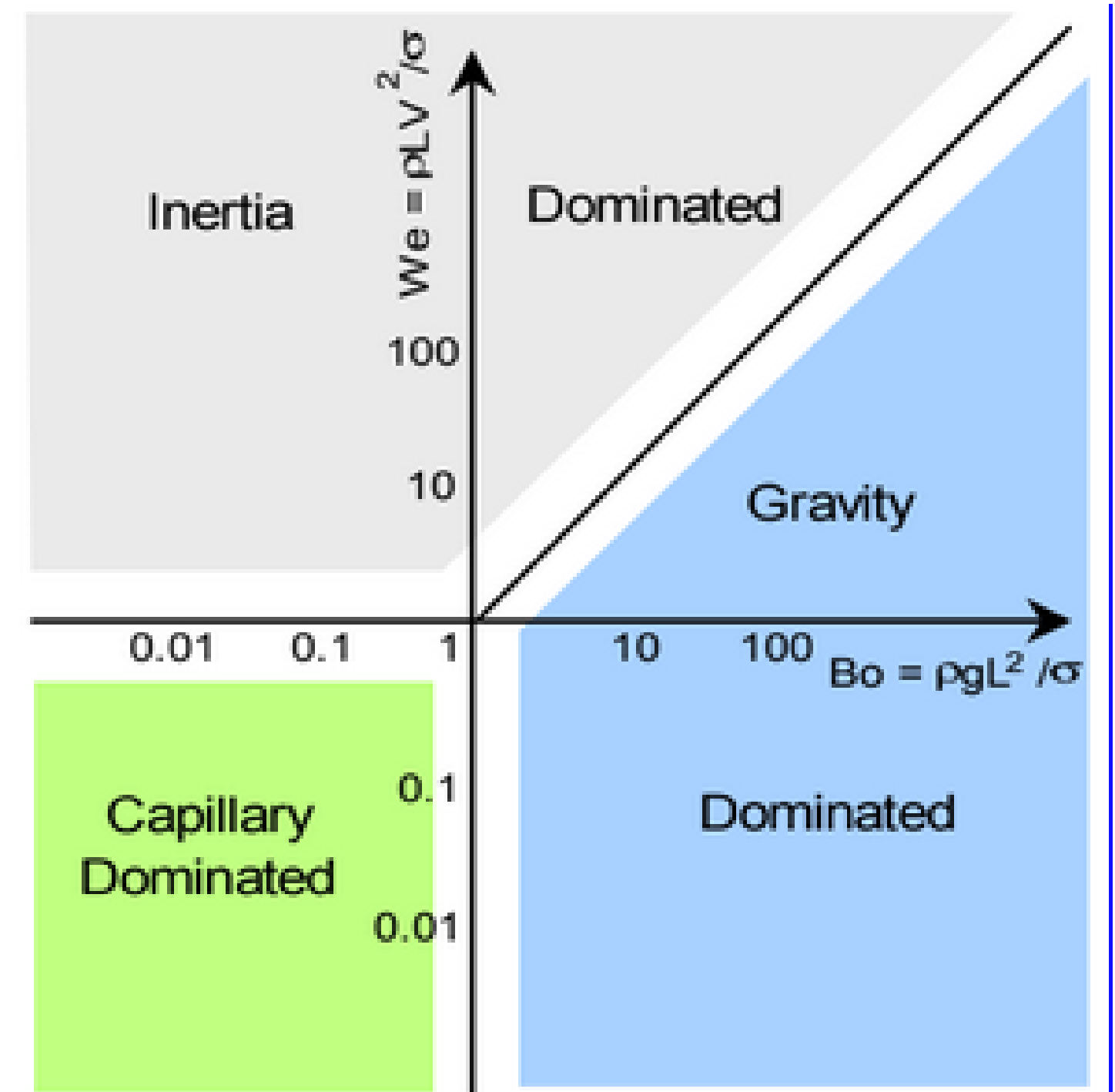
$$We = \frac{\rho v^2 L}{\sigma}$$

← inertial
← capillary

$$Bo = \frac{\rho g L^2}{\sigma}$$

← gravitational
← capillary

Dimensionless Number	Reorientation Maneuver		Translation Maneuver	
	During burn	After burn	During burn	After burn
Weber number (<i>We</i>)	0.6	0.6	544.9	544.9
Bond number (<i>Bo</i>)	6.3	0	181.6	0
Regime	Gravity-dominated	Capillary-dominated	Inertia dominated	Inertia dominated



Linear Sloshing

Establishing the fundamental equations of linear sloshing

Hypothesis to simplify the problem:

- Displacements small enough to linearize equations around equilibrium interface
- Flat equilibrium interface (contact angle of 90 degrees)
- Inviscid and incompressible flow
- Irrotational flow → velocity potential ϕ

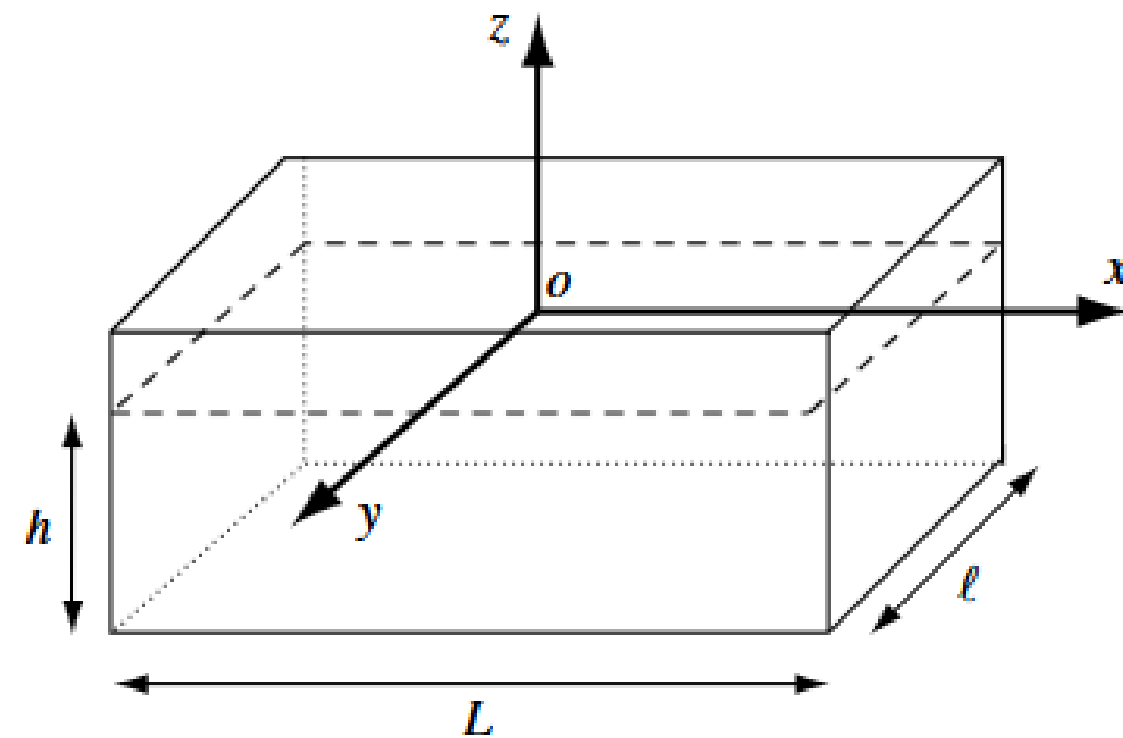
Boundary conditions

$$\frac{\partial \phi}{\partial n} = \mathbf{V}_{wall} \cdot \mathbf{n}$$

$$\frac{\partial \eta}{\partial t} = \frac{\partial \phi}{\partial z} \quad \text{at } z = 0$$

$$\frac{\partial \phi}{\partial t} + g\eta - \frac{\sigma}{\rho} \nabla^2 \eta = 0 \quad \text{at } z = 0$$

Linearized Bernoulli equation



Laplace equation $\nabla^2 \phi = 0$

$$\phi(x, z, t) = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} q_n(t) \frac{\cosh k_n(z+h)}{\cosh k_n h} \cos(k_n x)$$

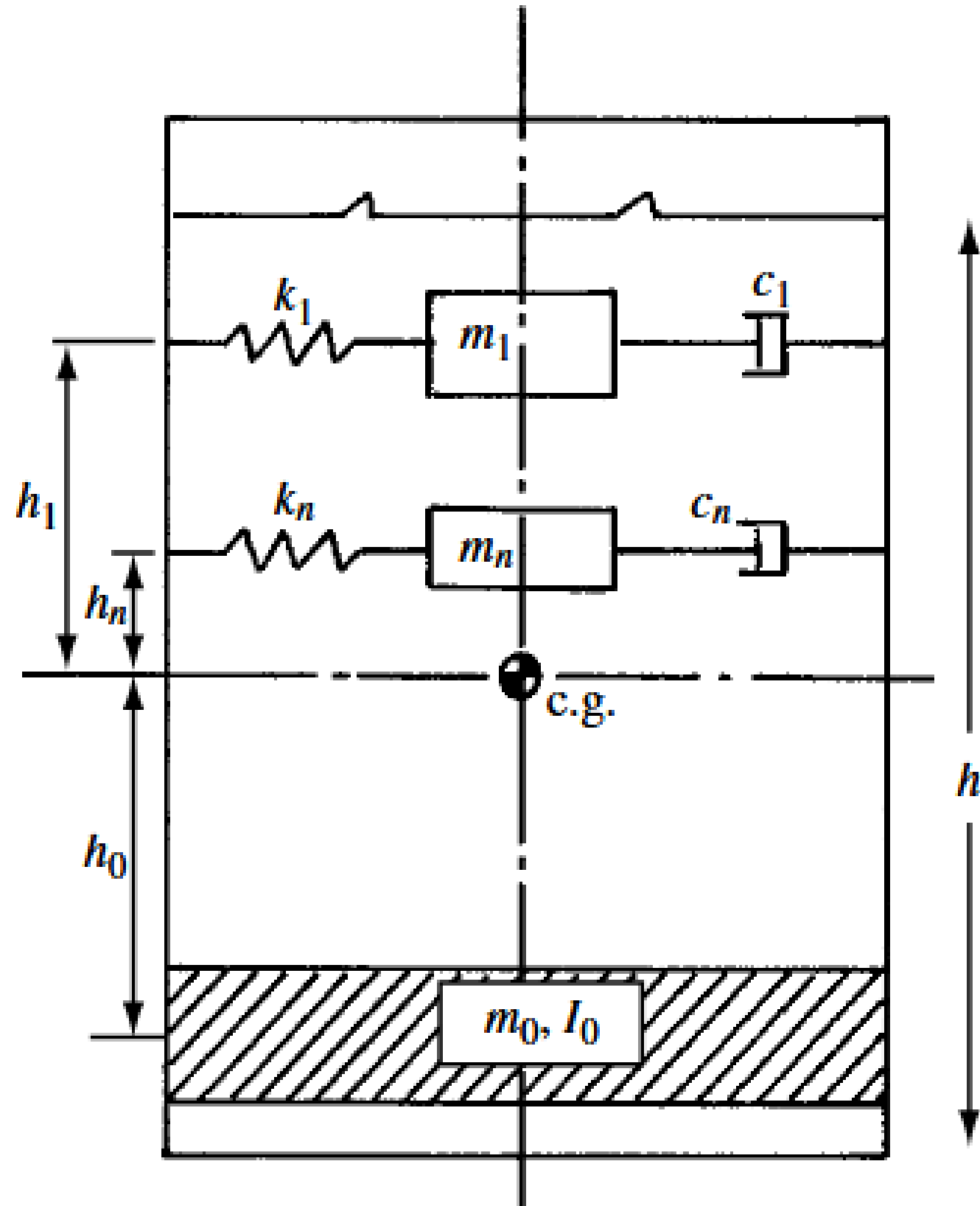
$$\ddot{q}_n + \omega_n^2 q_n = f_n(t), \quad k_n = \frac{n\pi}{L}$$

Oscillator for modal amplitudes

$$\omega_n^2 = \left(gk_n + \frac{\sigma}{\rho} k_n^3 \right) \tanh(k_n h)$$

Mechanical Model

Simulating sloshing effects with a mechanical equivalent model



- Parameters (modal masses, heights and spring constants) derived from linear sloshing theory
- Dashpots are not taken into account yet (inviscid)
- **Limits** : linear sloshing, vertical center of mass displacement

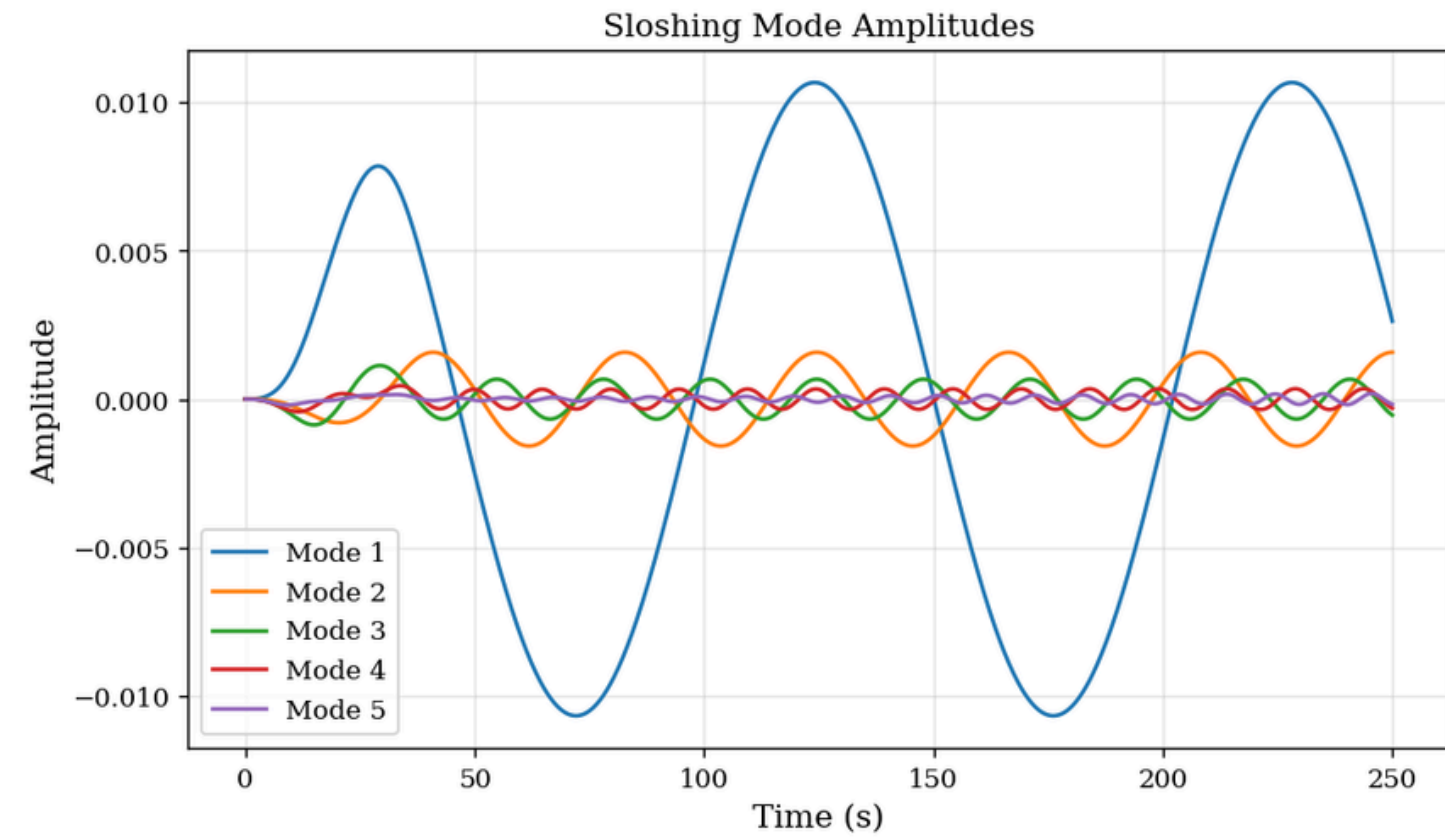
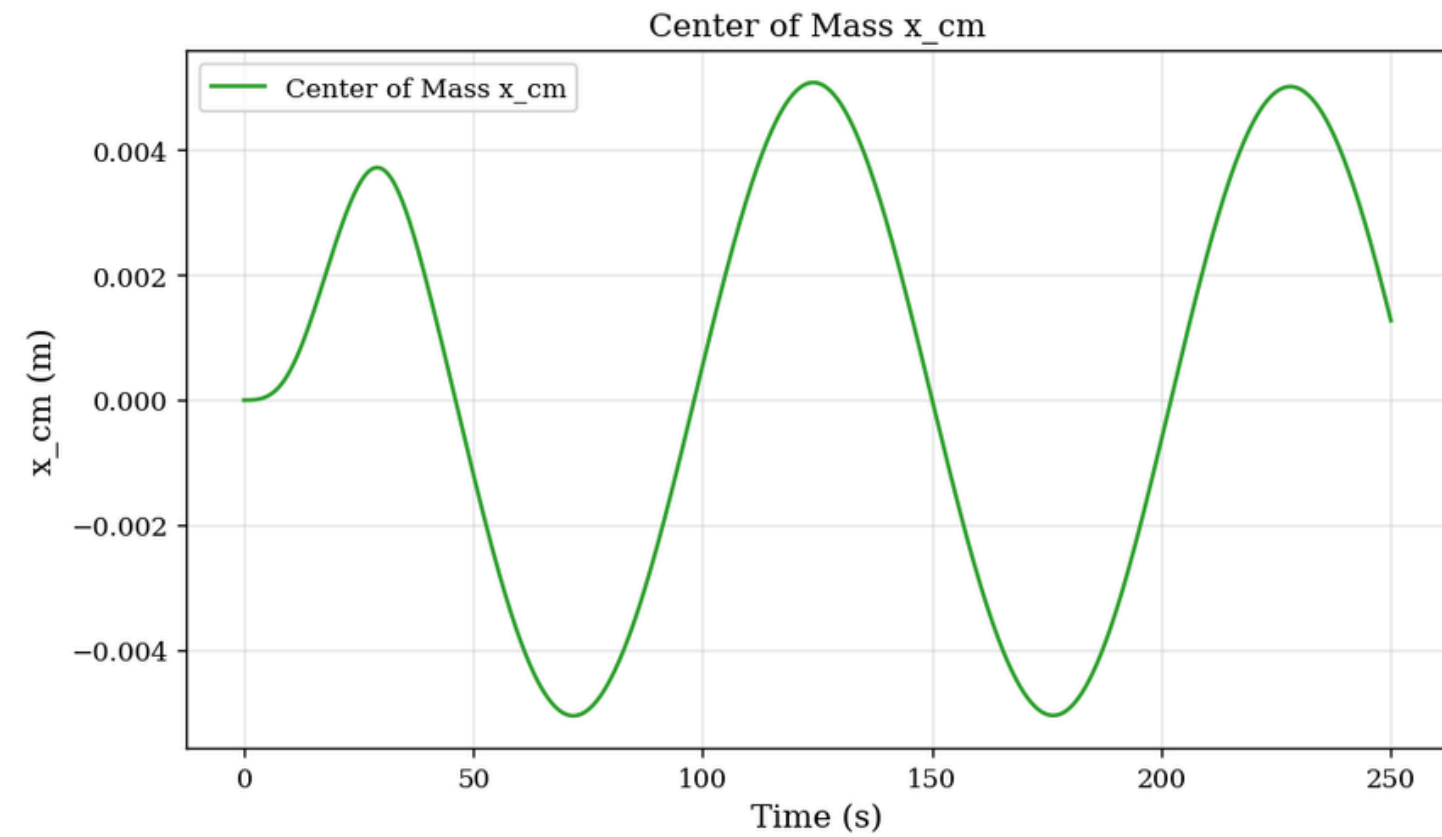
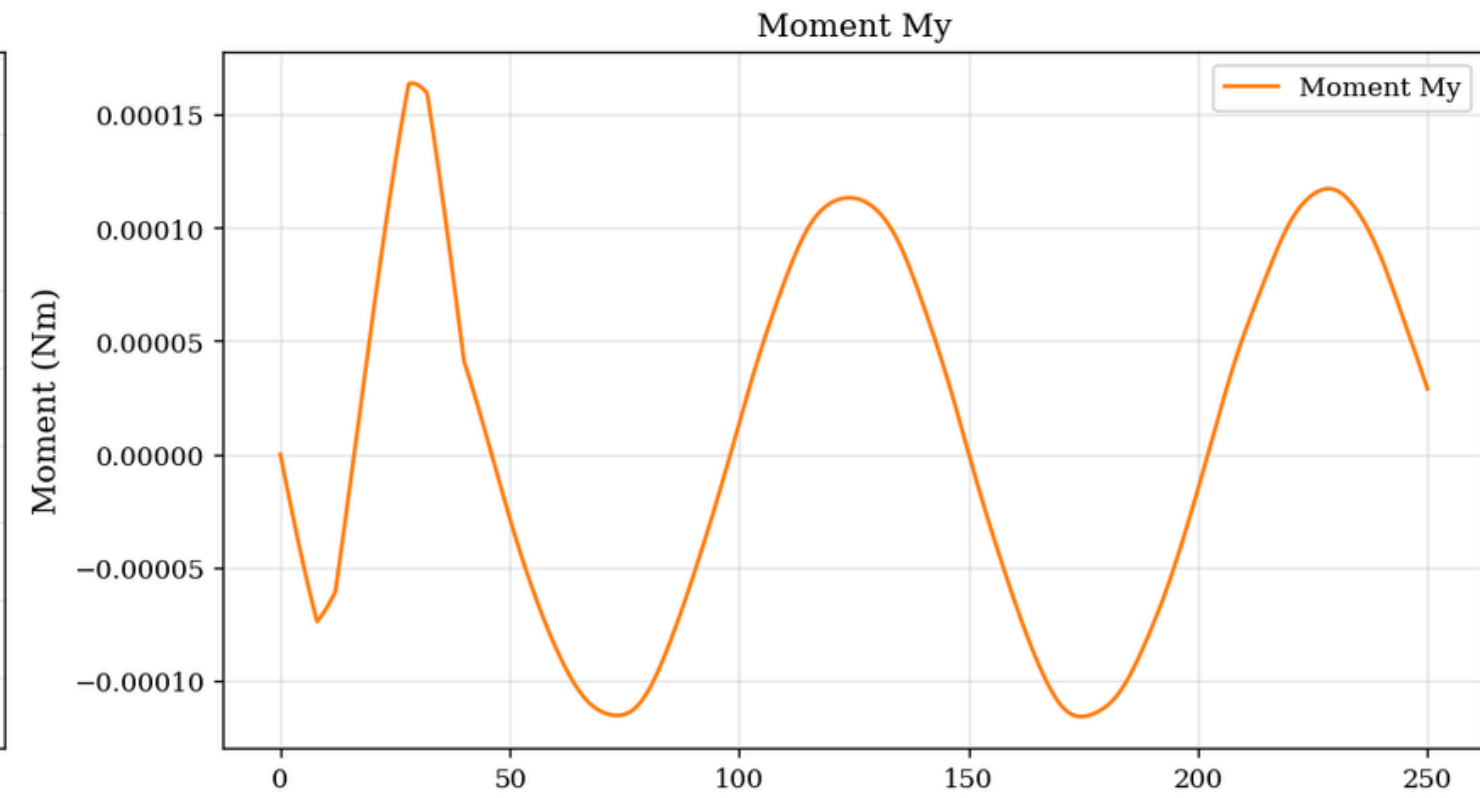
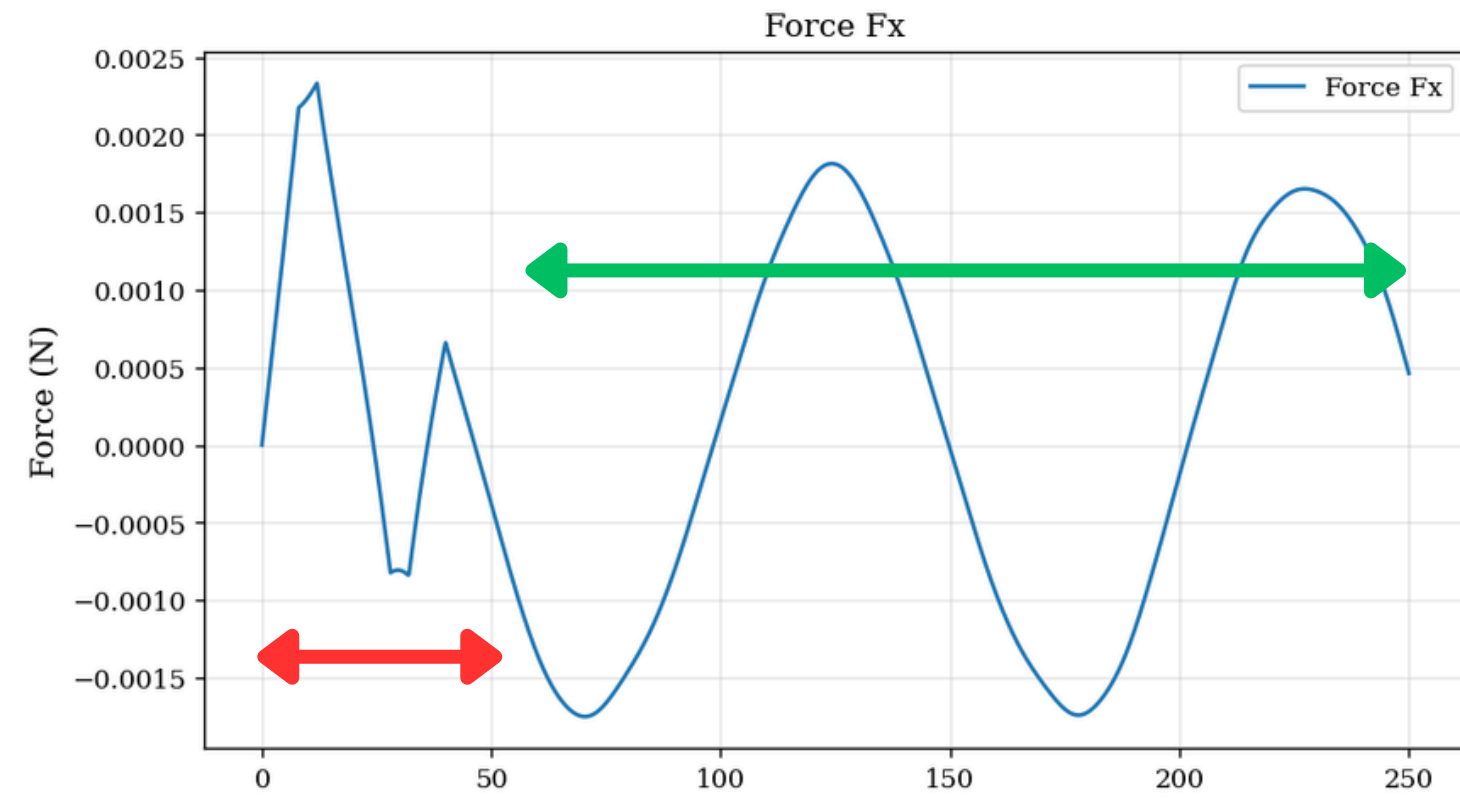
$$\mathbf{M} \ddot{\mathbf{q}}(t) + \mathbf{C} \dot{\mathbf{q}}(t) + \mathbf{K} \mathbf{q}(t) = \mathbf{F}(t)$$

$$\mathbf{q} = \begin{bmatrix} x & \psi & x_1 & \cdots & x_n \end{bmatrix}^T$$



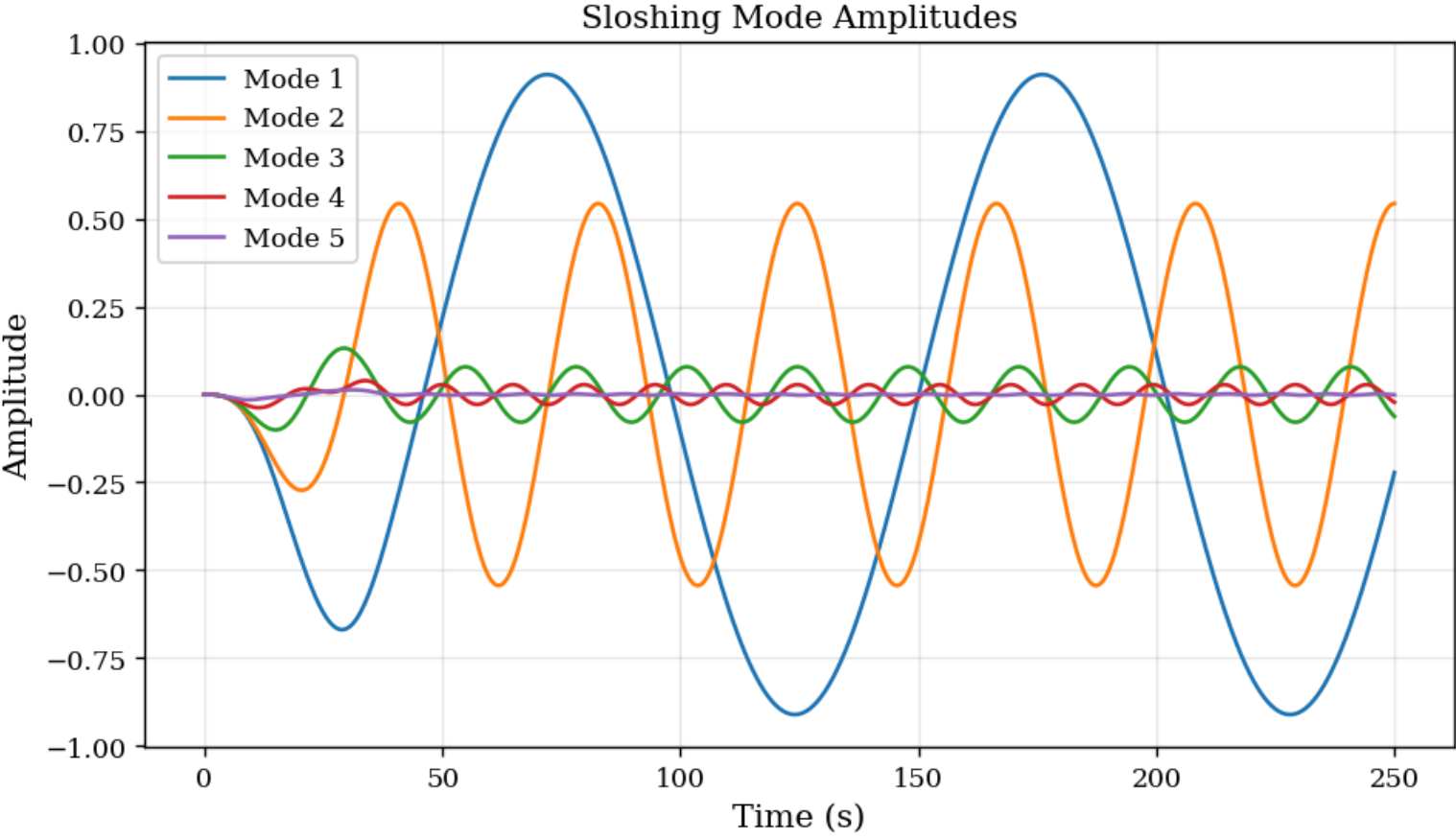
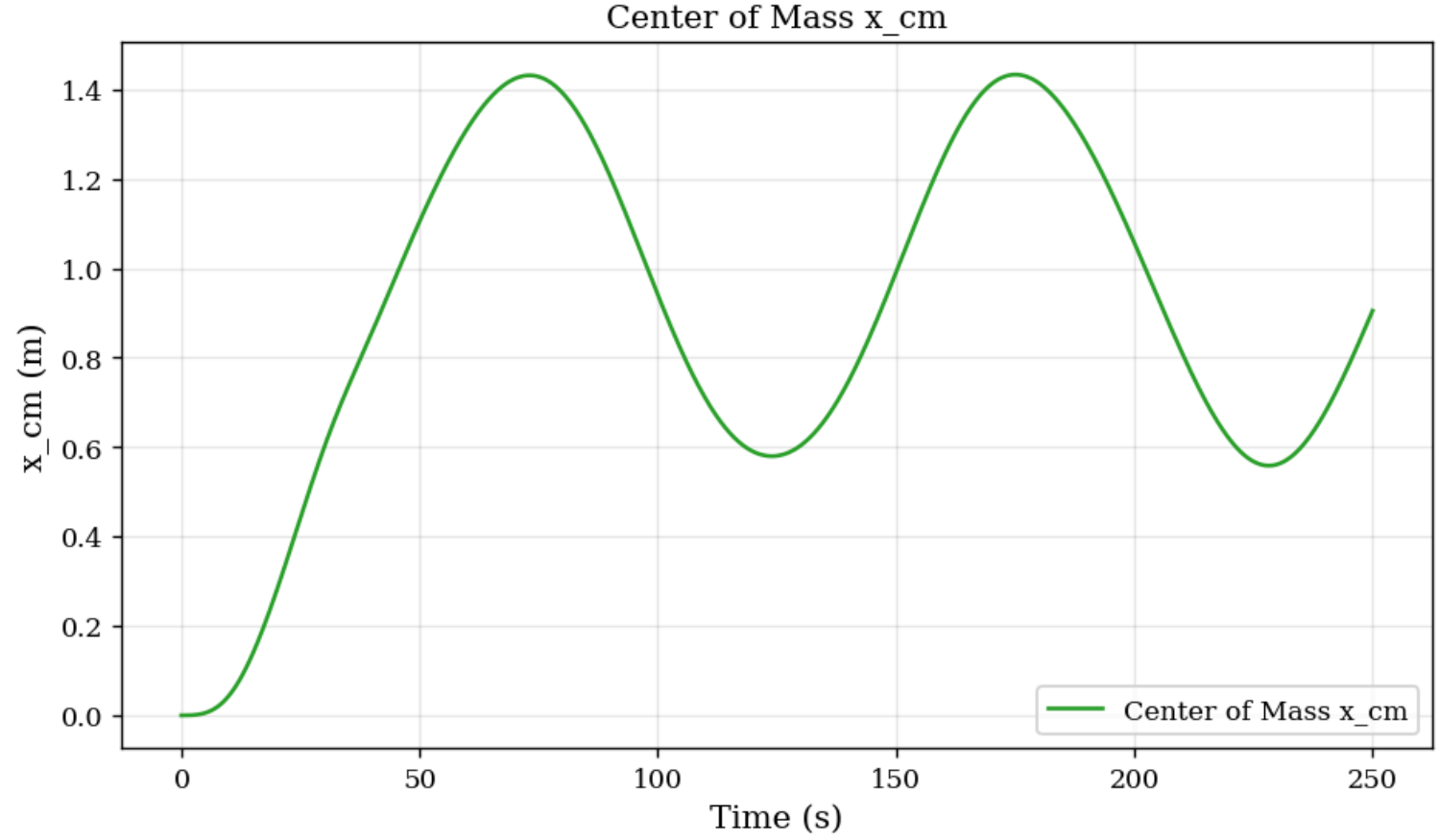
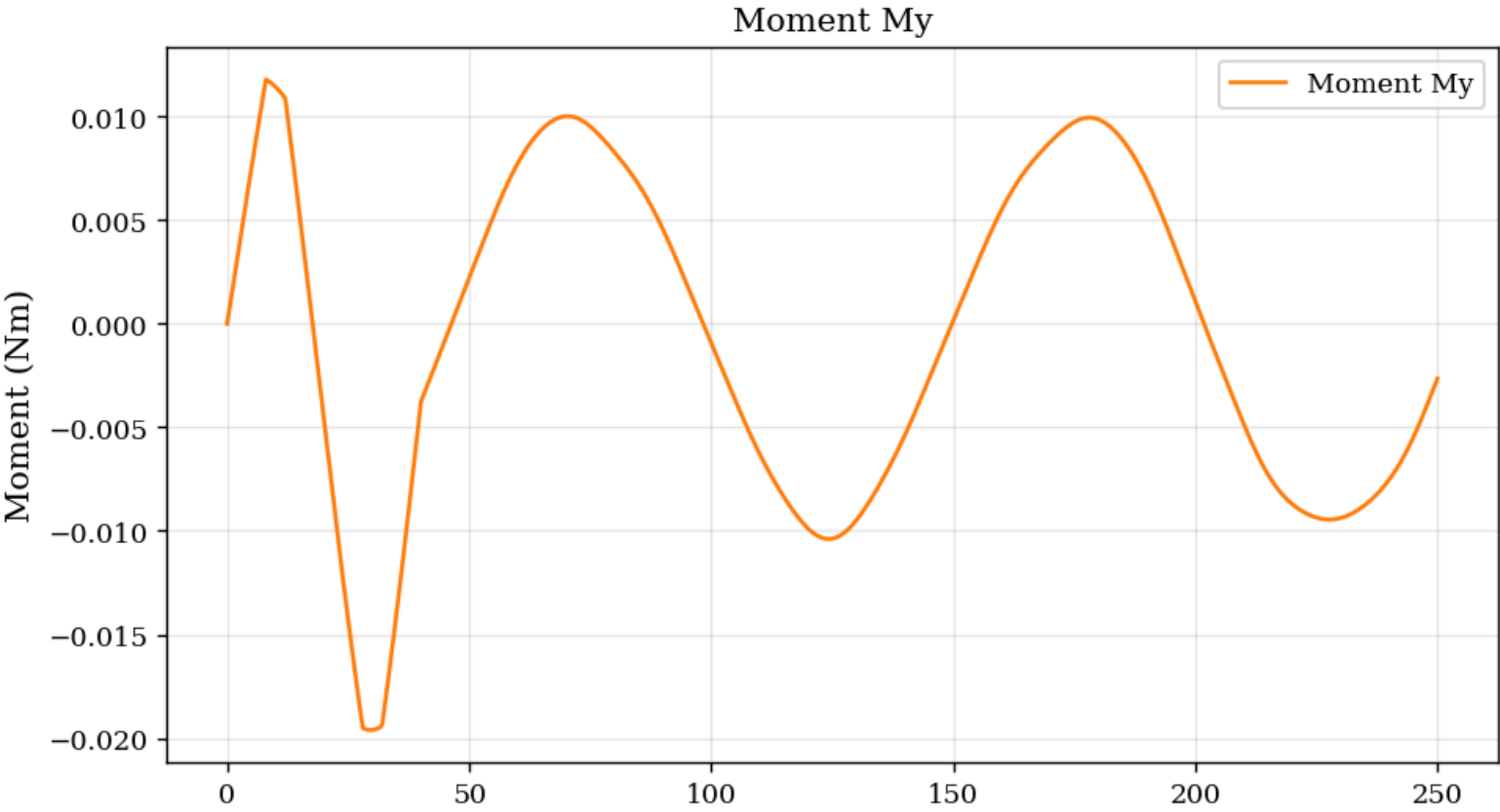
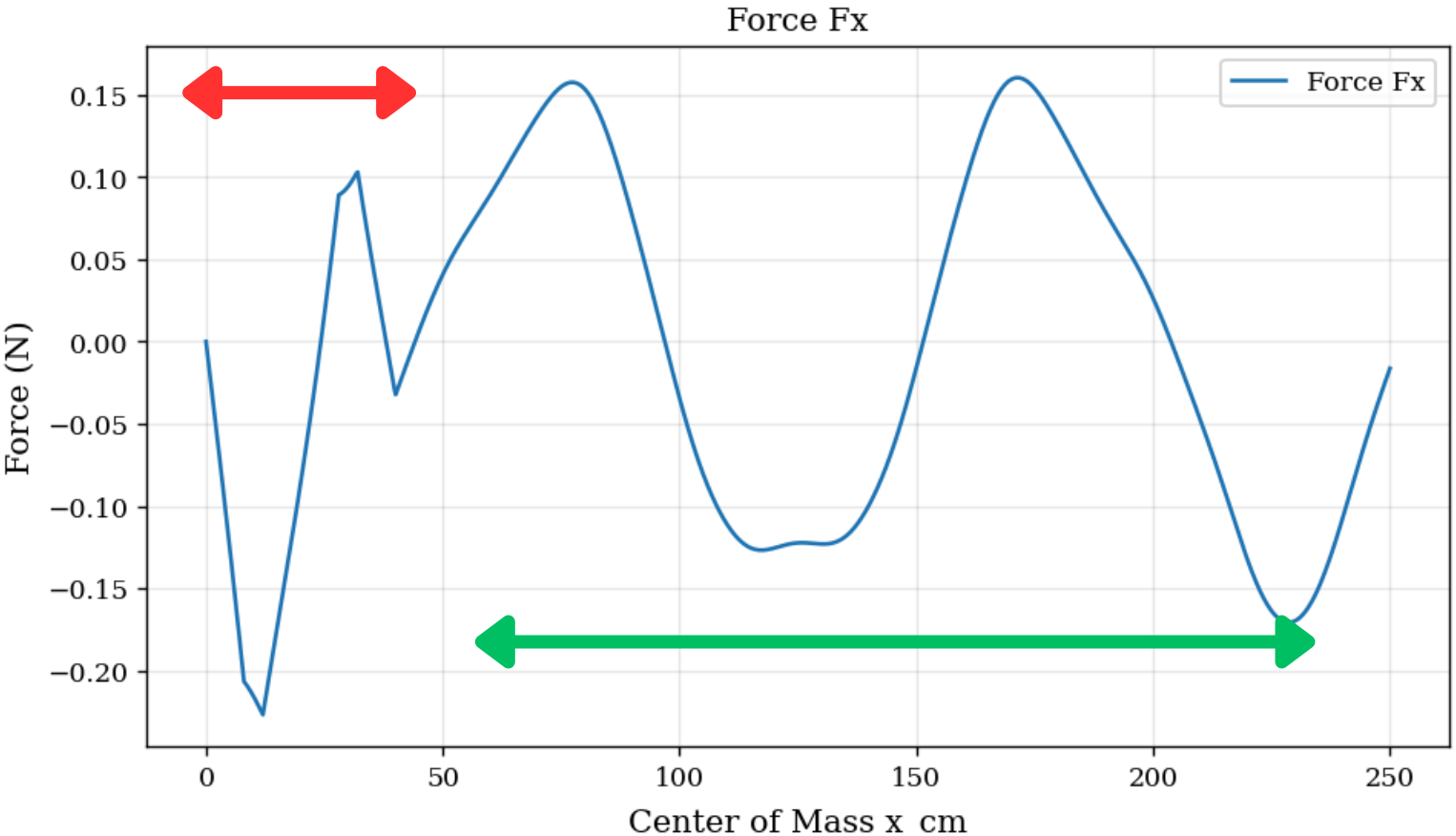
Reorientation Maneuver

Results given by the model for the reorientation maneuver



Translation Maneuver

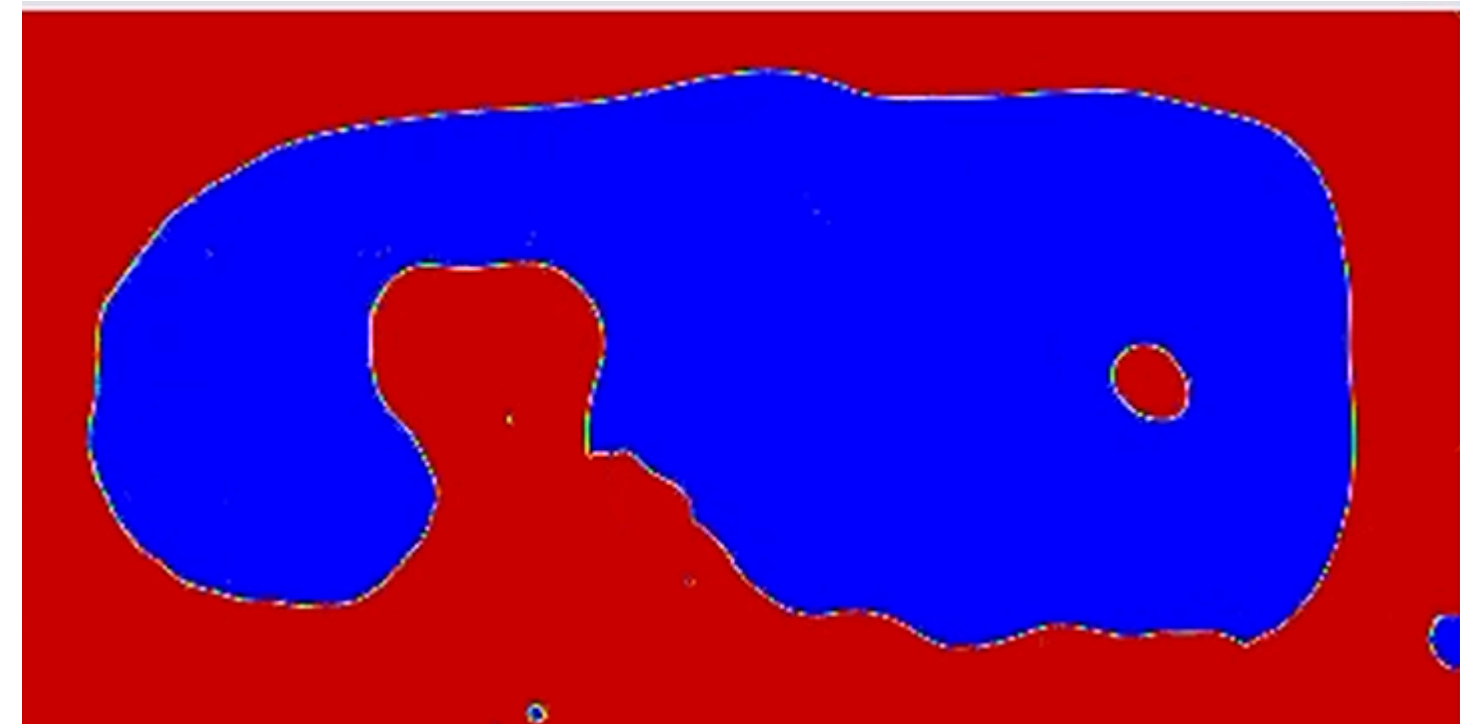
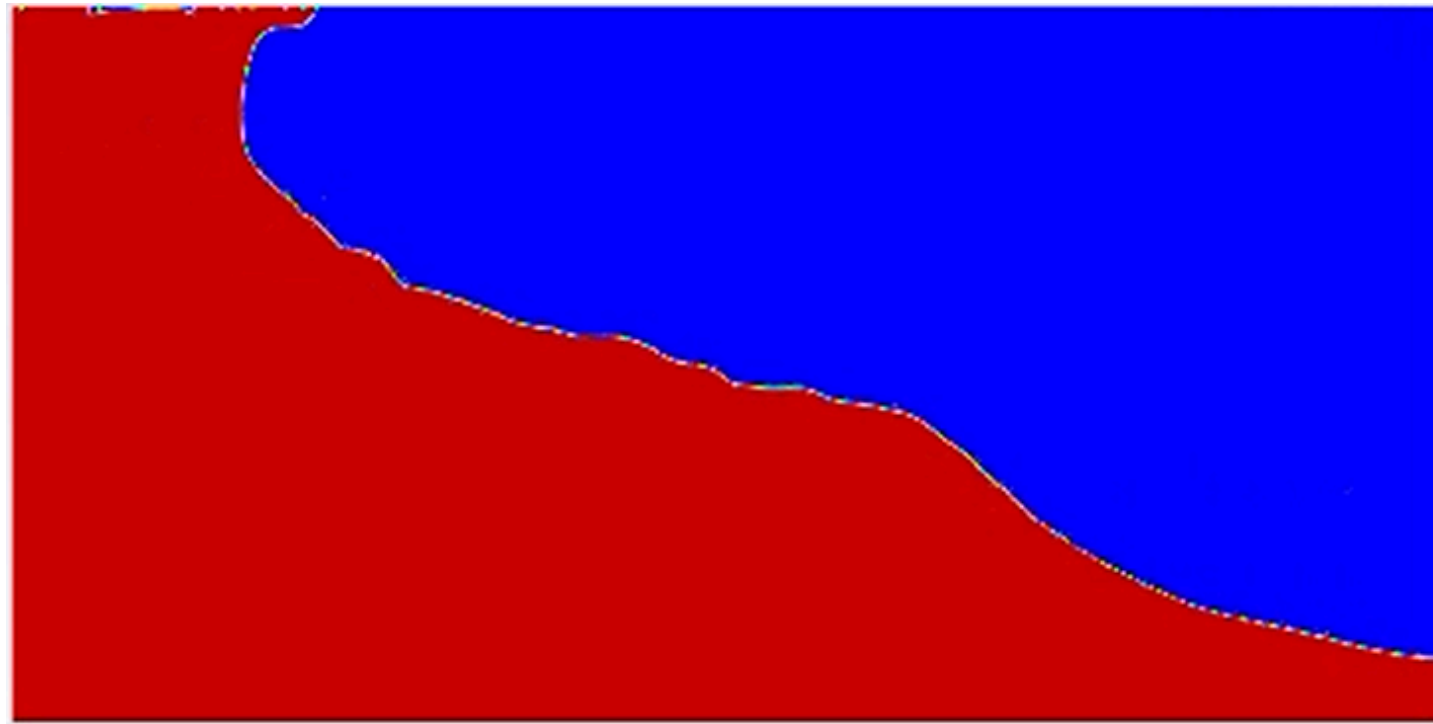
Results given by the model for the reorientation maneuver



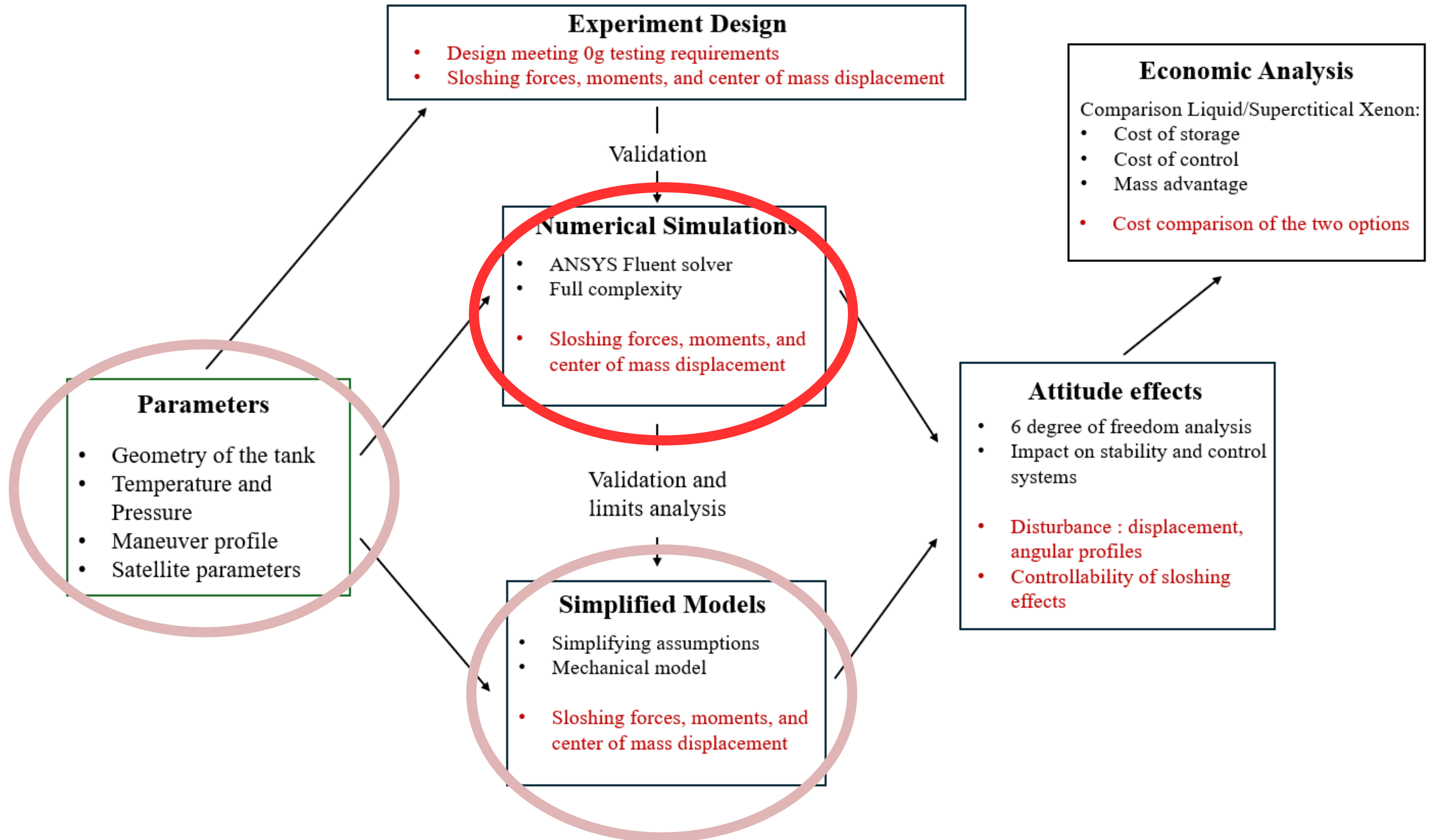
Non Linear Sloshing

What is non linear sloshing ?

- Large **geometric deformations** of the interface
- **Two main causes** : initial configuration (bubbles), high acceleration maneuvers
- Models are primarily descriptive (optimization methods to fit parameters)



Volume fraction for a case of non linear sloshing

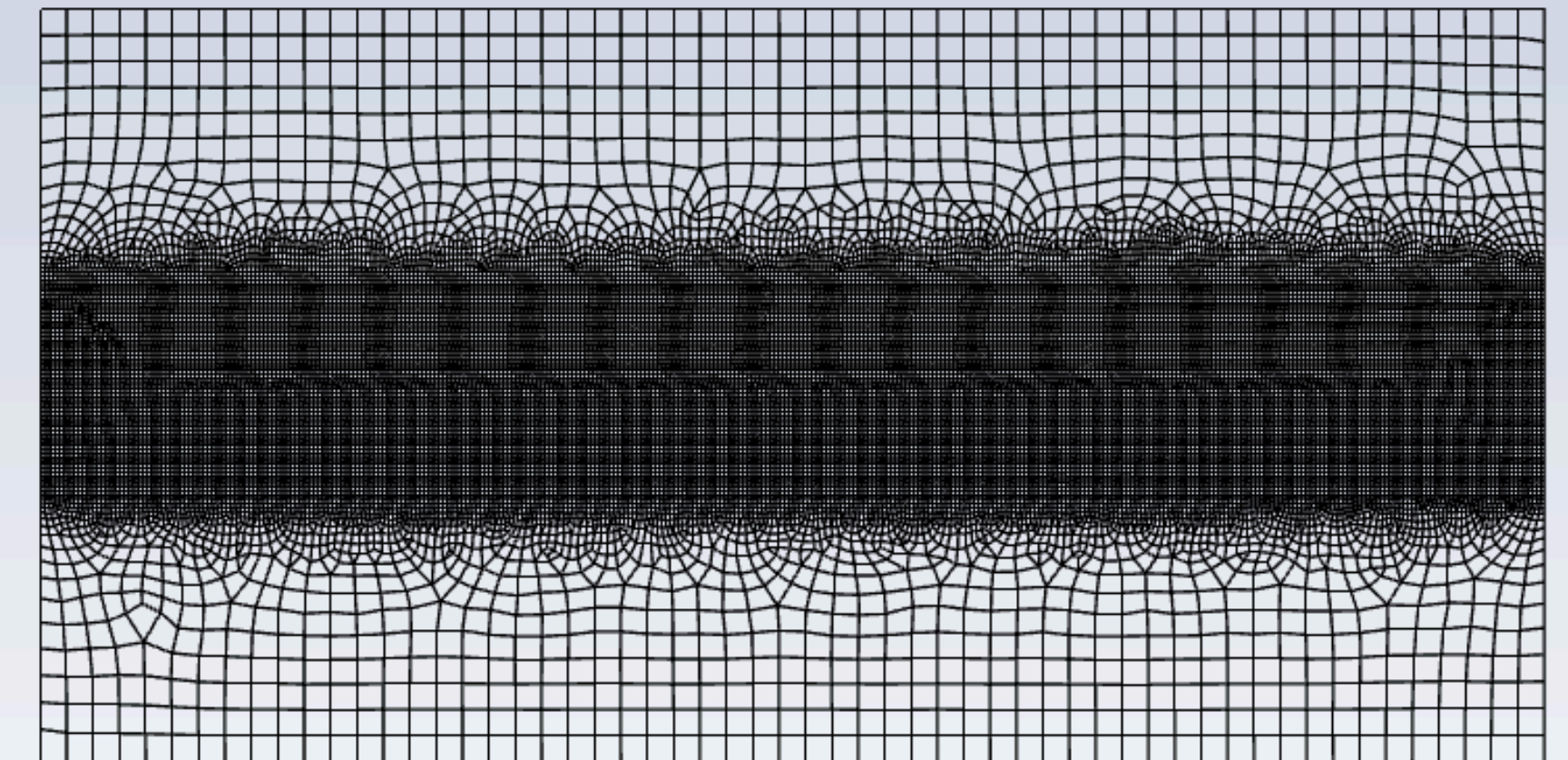


Numerical Simulations



Methods and parameters used:

- **Volume of Fluid** : two phase flow (volume fraction transport)
- **Dynamic mesh** to simulate maneuvers (UDF)
- **Mesh refinement** at the interface (gradient)
- Contact angle of 90 degrees
- Xenon parameters
- Flat interface at $t=0$



Mesh at $t=0$

2D rectangular Simulations

Presentation of the work done for 2D simulations

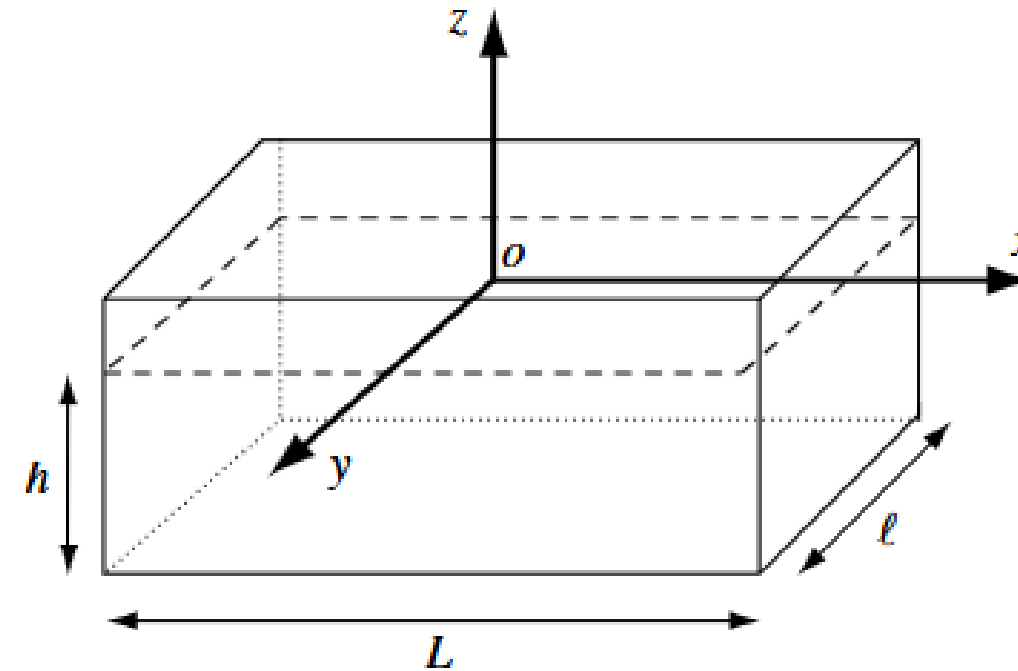
Important assumption: 2D simulations results can be extended to 3D assuming invariance in the direction normal to sloshing

Validating the linear model

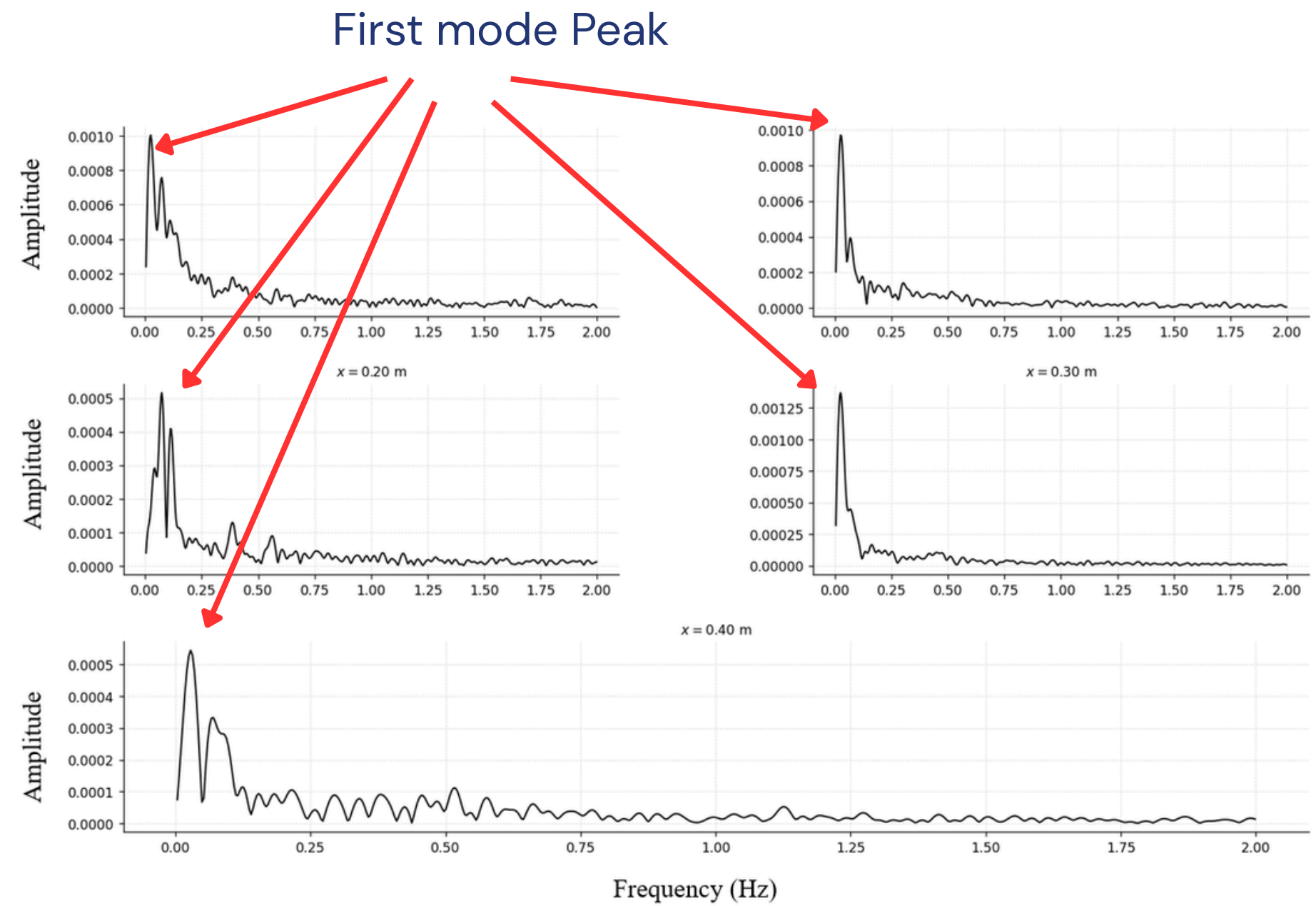
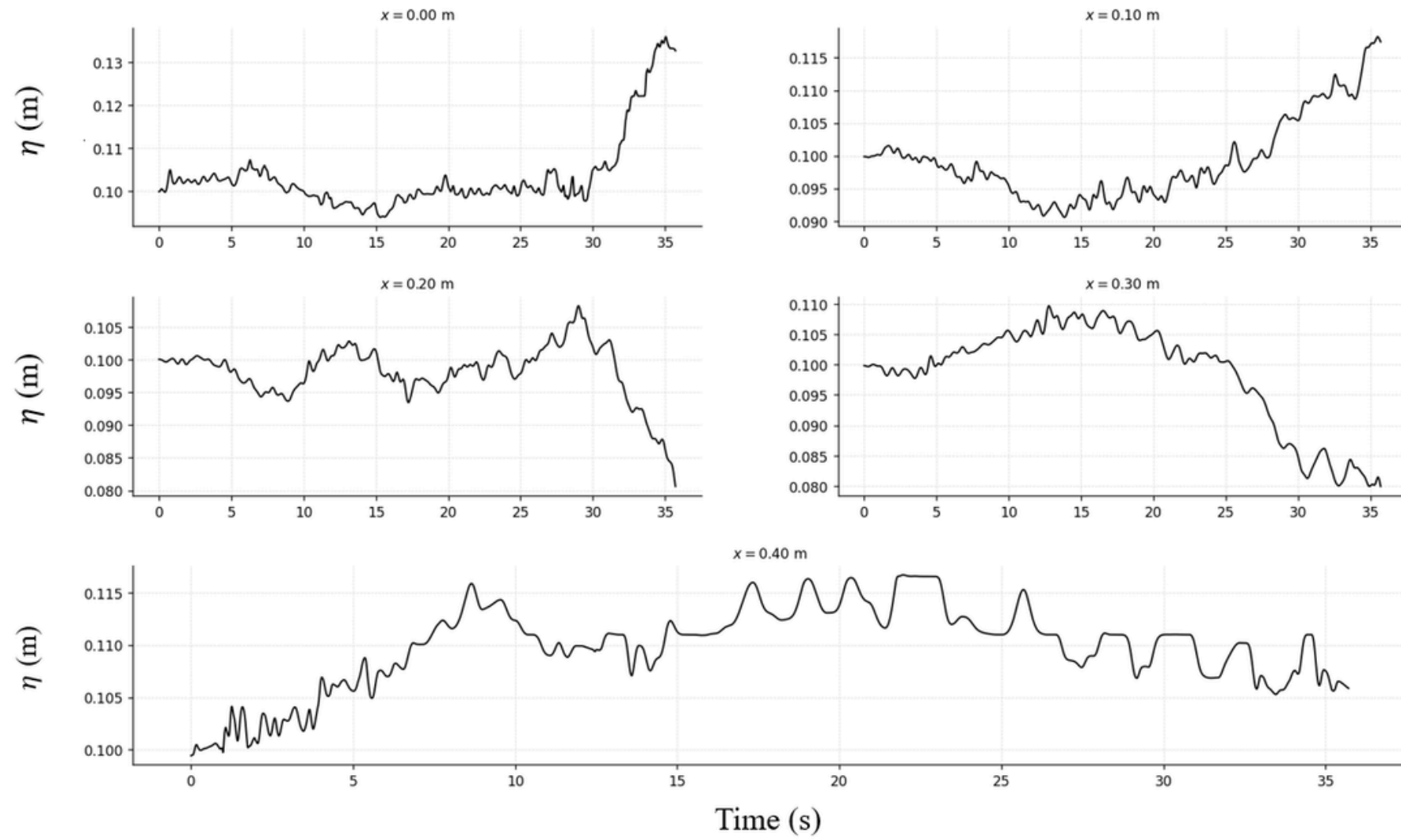
Idea : compare modal frequencies

FFT of interface height $\hat{\eta}(\omega, x) = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \cos(k_n x) \int_0^T A_n \cos(\omega_n t + \phi_n) e^{-i\omega t} dt \longrightarrow$ **Peaks**

Simulation: $a_{\text{input}}(t) = \begin{cases} 0.0005 \text{ m/s}^2, & 0 \leq t \leq T_i \\ 0, & t > T_i \end{cases}$ \longrightarrow Initial excitation (along x)
 \longrightarrow Free sloshing



Results



Mode Number	Linear Model frequency (rad/s)	CFD frequency (rad/s)	Relative error (%)
1	0.07	0.072	2.86
2	0.19	0.2	5
3	0.35	0.36	2.86
4	0.50	0.58	16
5	0.75	0.82	9.33

First modes well represented, satisfactory predictions

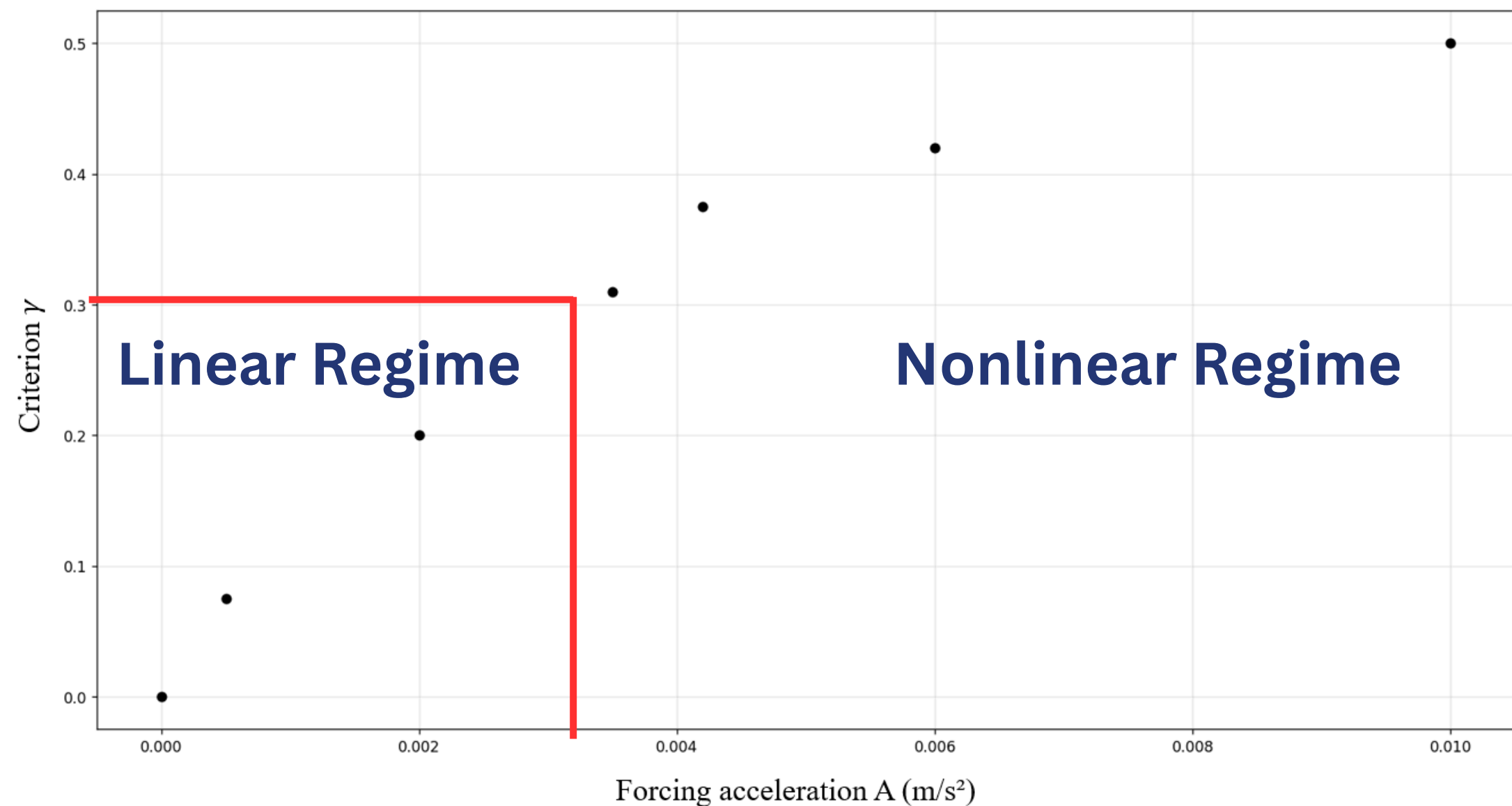
Non linear Sloshing:

Can we establish the validity limit of the linear model ?

Conditions:

- Flat initial interface
- Sinusoidal lateral acceleration with variable amplitude: $a = A \cos(\omega t)$

Criterion $\gamma = \frac{\max |\eta(x, t)|}{H}$ $\gamma \leq \gamma_c \Rightarrow$ linear regime, $\gamma > \gamma_c \Rightarrow$ non-linear regime.



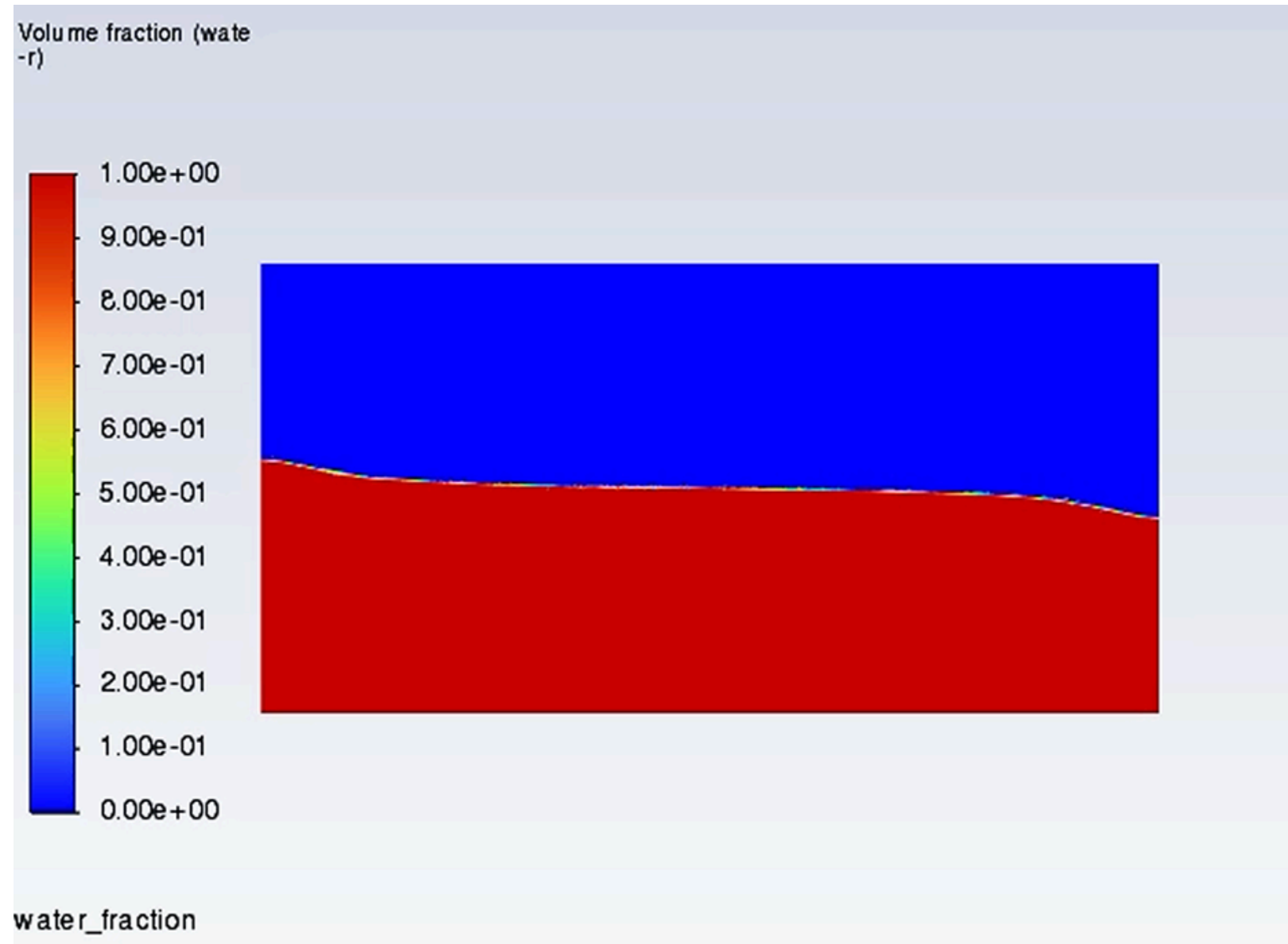
γ_c corresponds to : NMRSE=15% for the force

$$\text{NRMSE} = \frac{\|F_{\text{CFD}} - F_{\text{model}}\|_2}{\|F_{\text{CFD}} - \bar{F}_{\text{CFD}}\|_2}$$

Critical value : For a criterion $\gamma=0.3$, $a=0.003$ m/s²

Linear sloshing breaks down for anything above

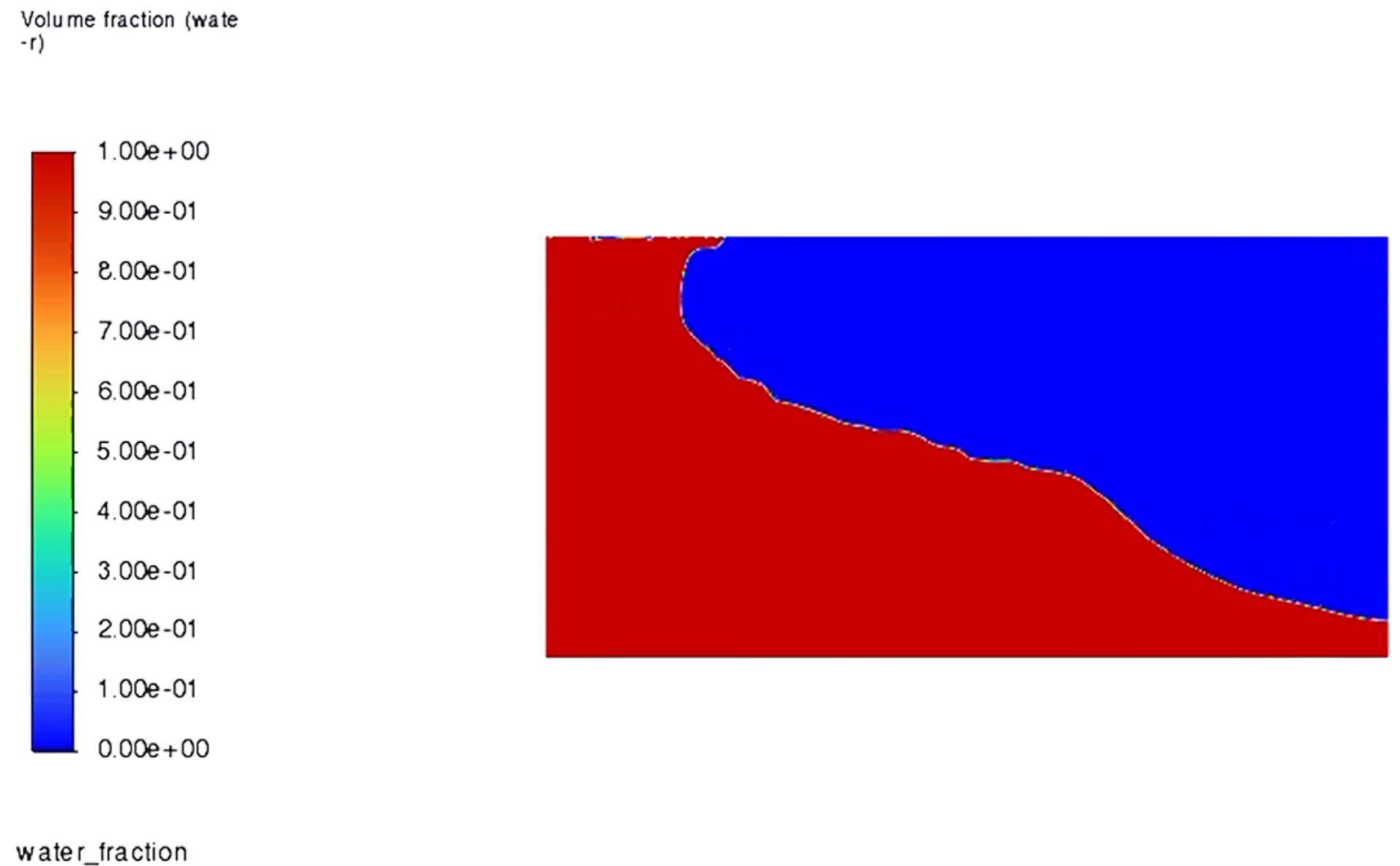
Illustration of the two regimes



'Linear' geometric deformations

$$A=0.001 \text{ m/s}^2$$

$$t=5\text{s}$$



'Non linear' geometric deformations

$$A=0.01 \text{ m/s}^2$$

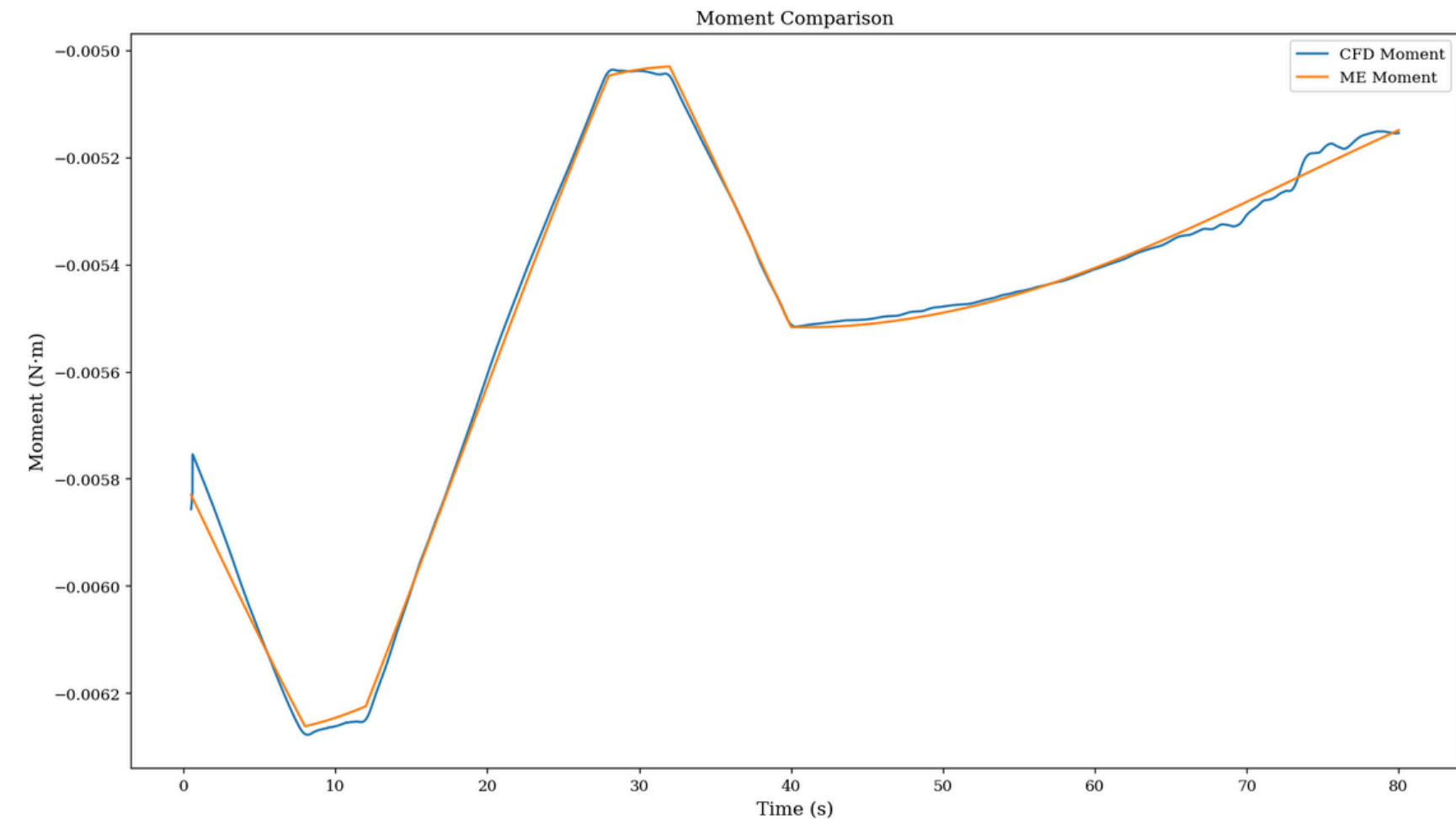
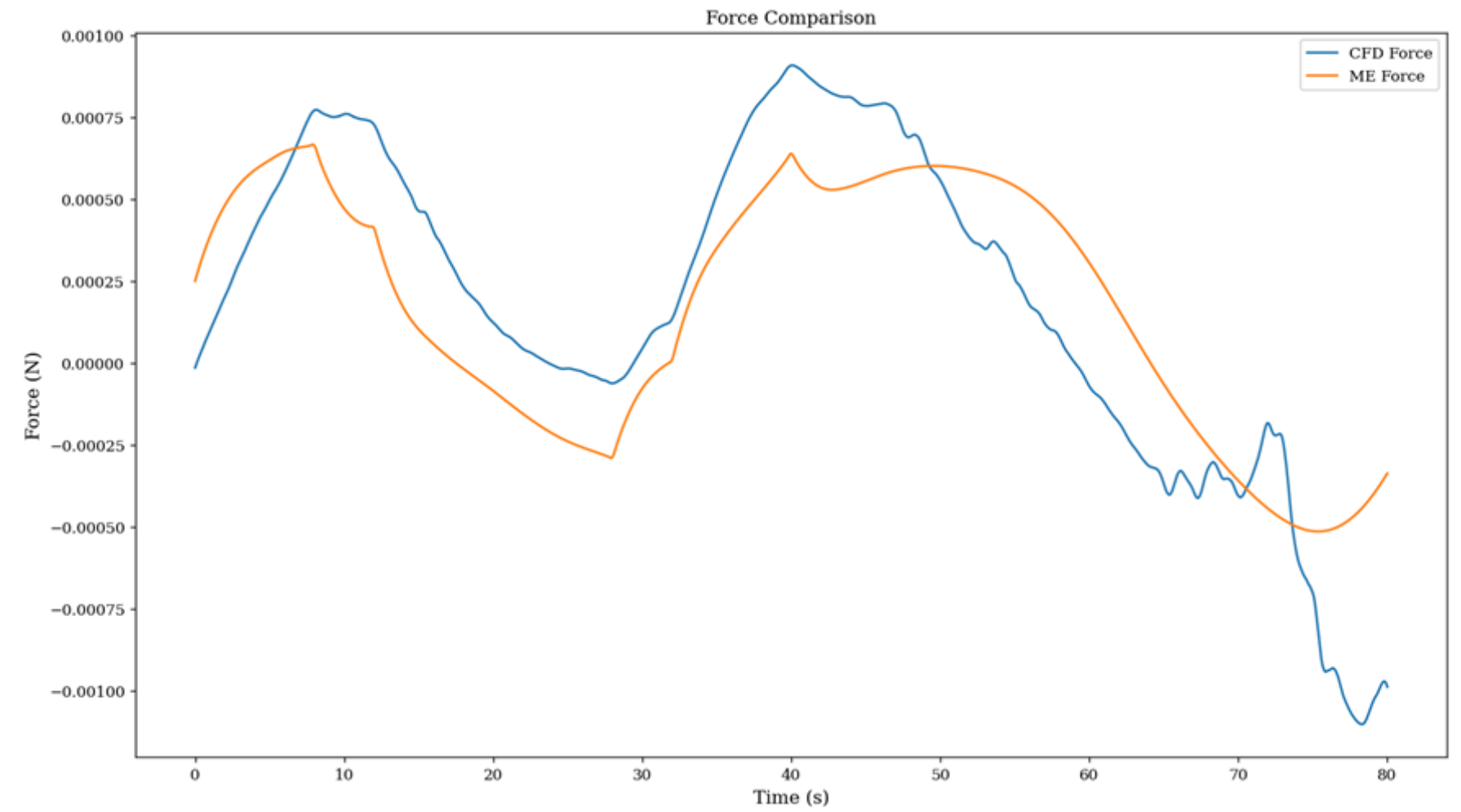
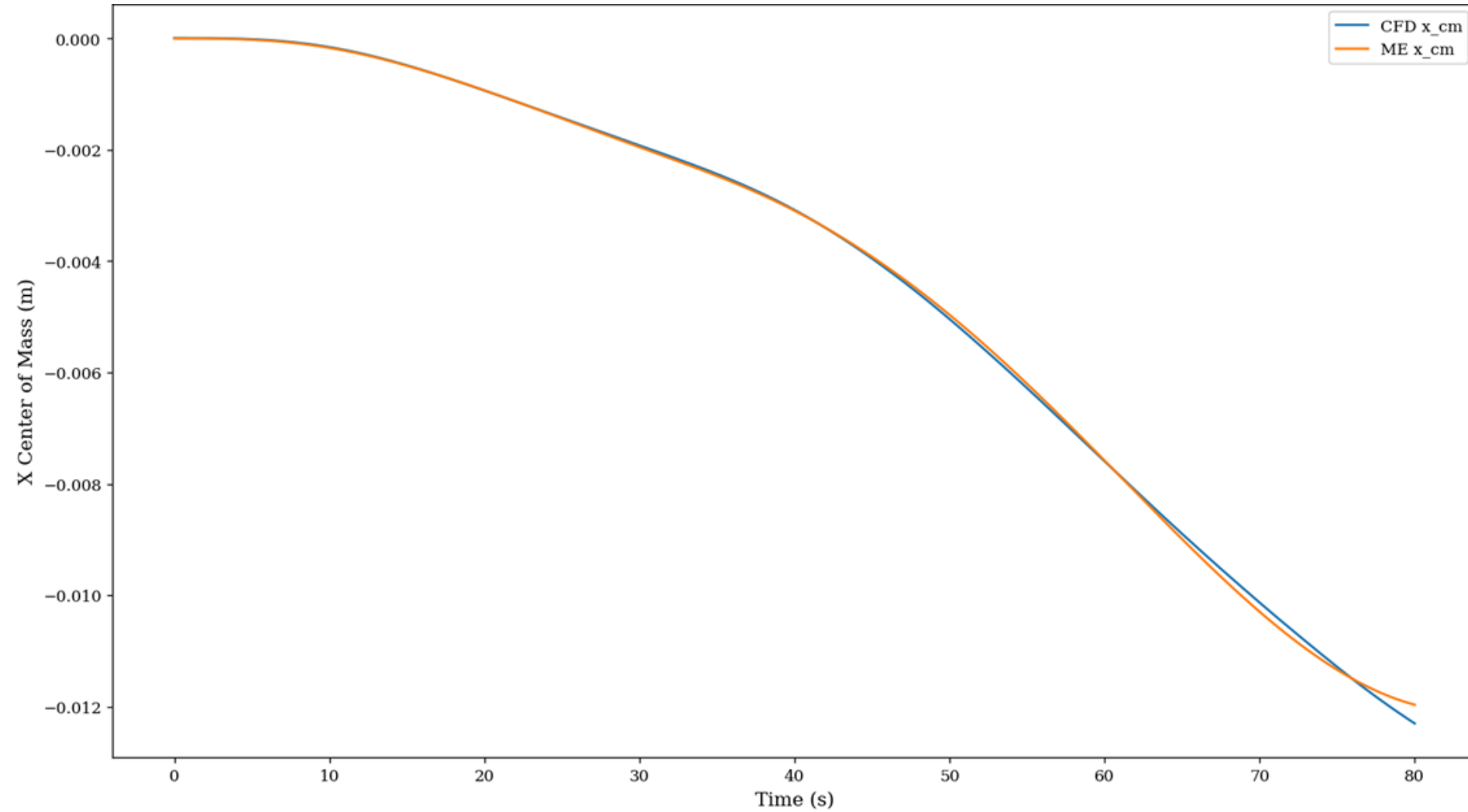
$$t=7\text{s}$$

Simulation of the maneuvers

Reorientation Maneuver

$$a_{max} = 2.8 \times 10^{-4} m \cdot s^{-2}$$

Linear behavior expected



$$NMRSE_{Force} = 9\%$$

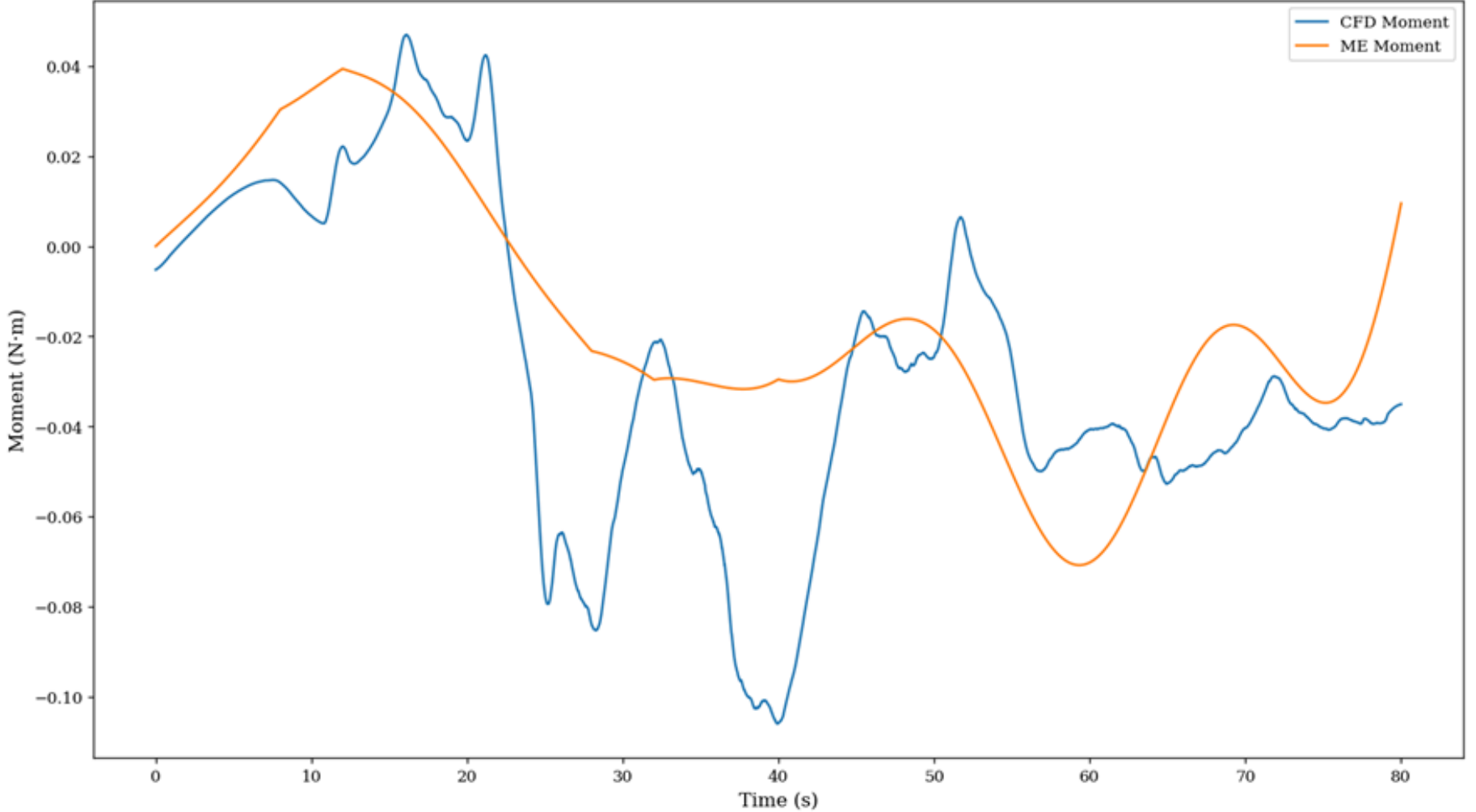
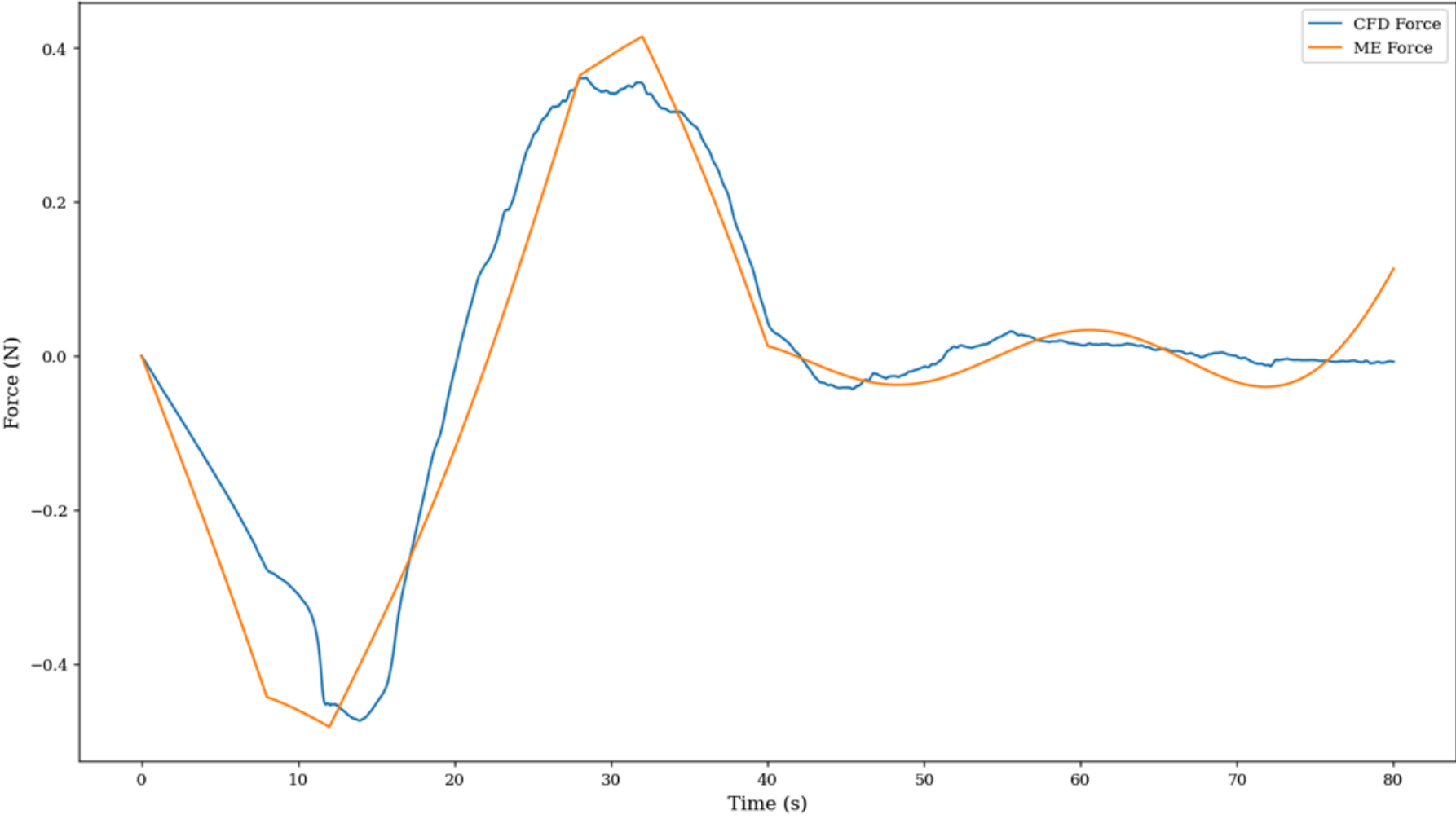
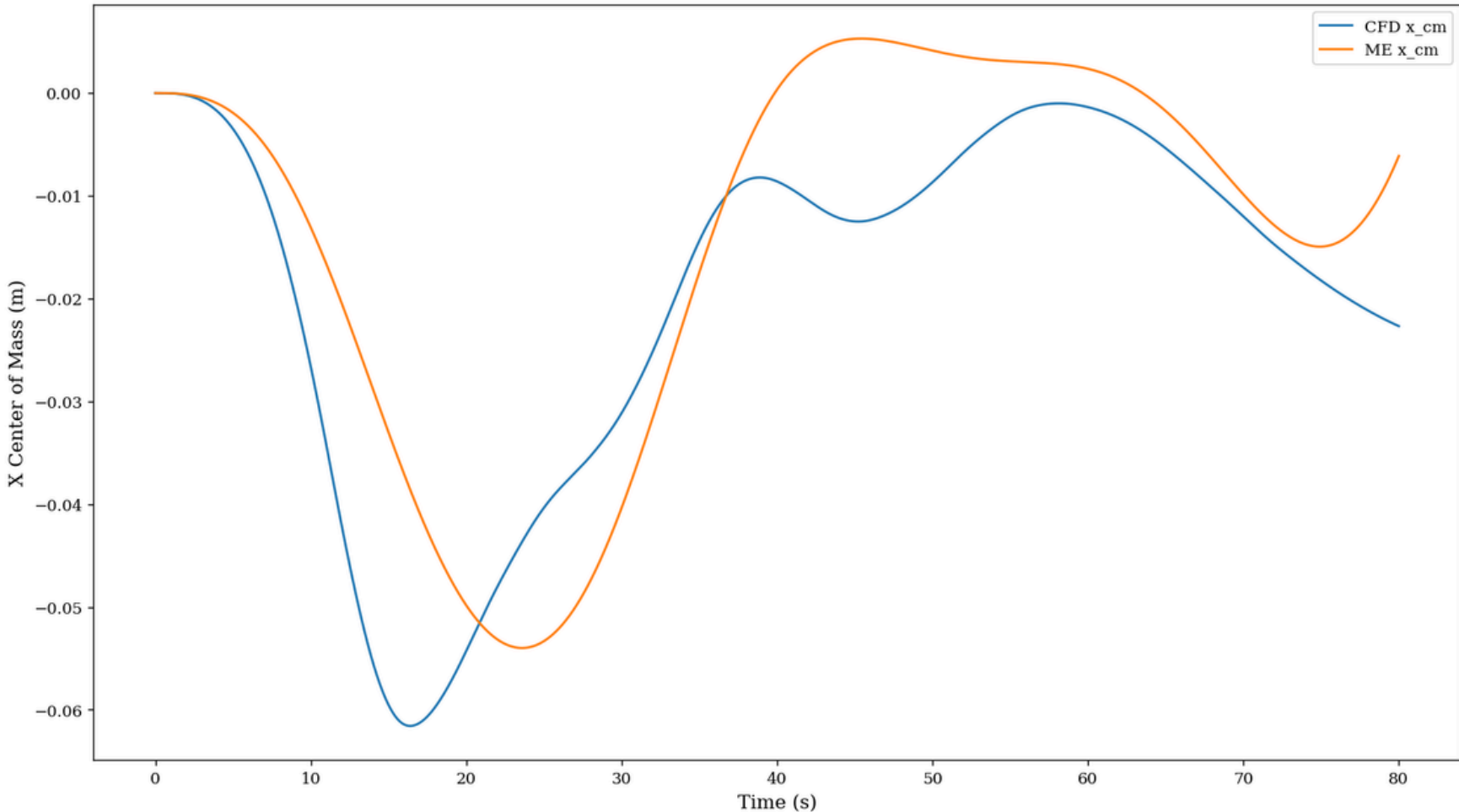
$$NMRSE_{Moment} = 1\%$$

$$NMRSE_{CM} = 1.5\%$$

Translation Maneuver

$$a_{max} = 0.004 m \cdot s^{-2}$$

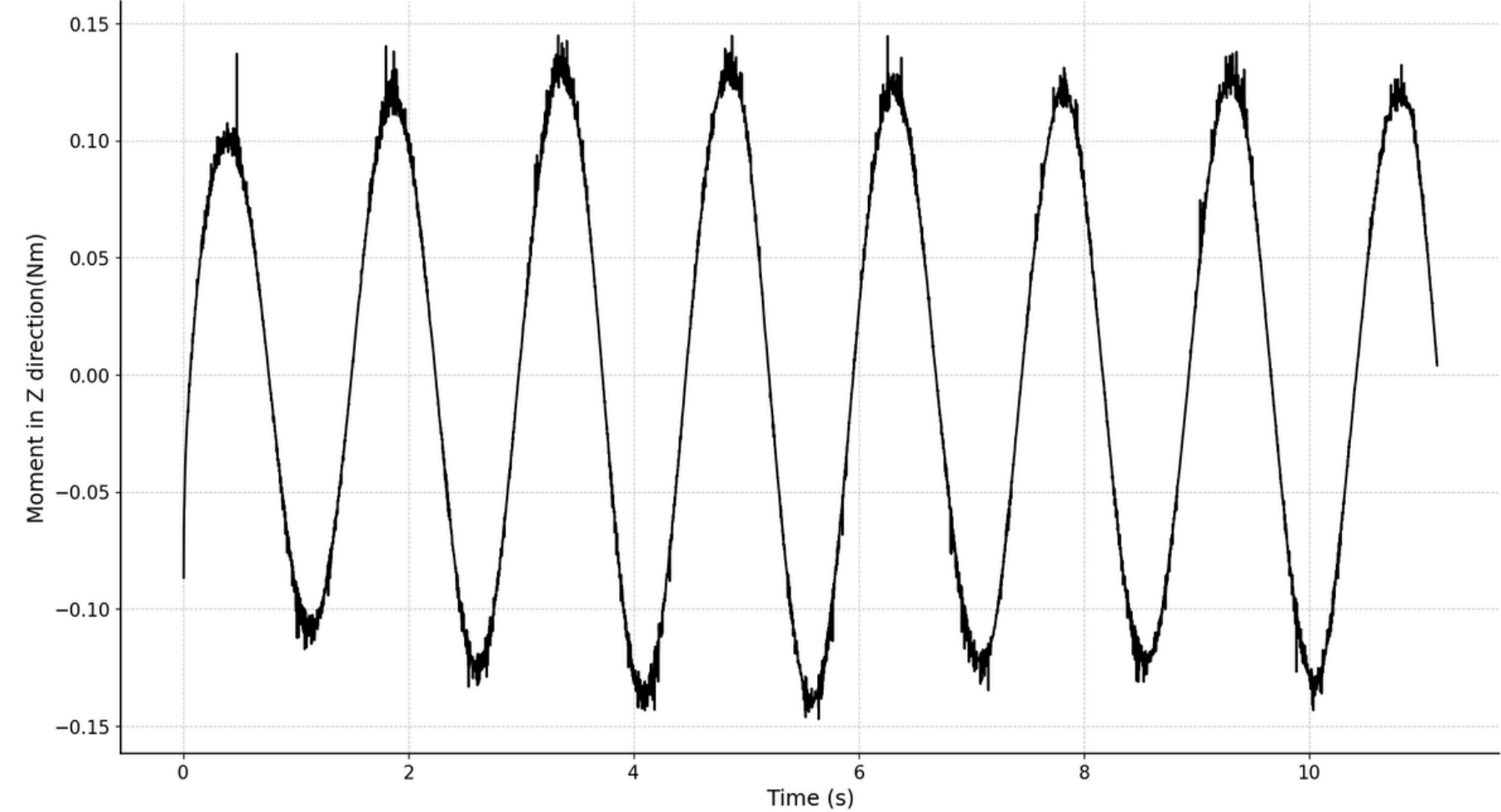
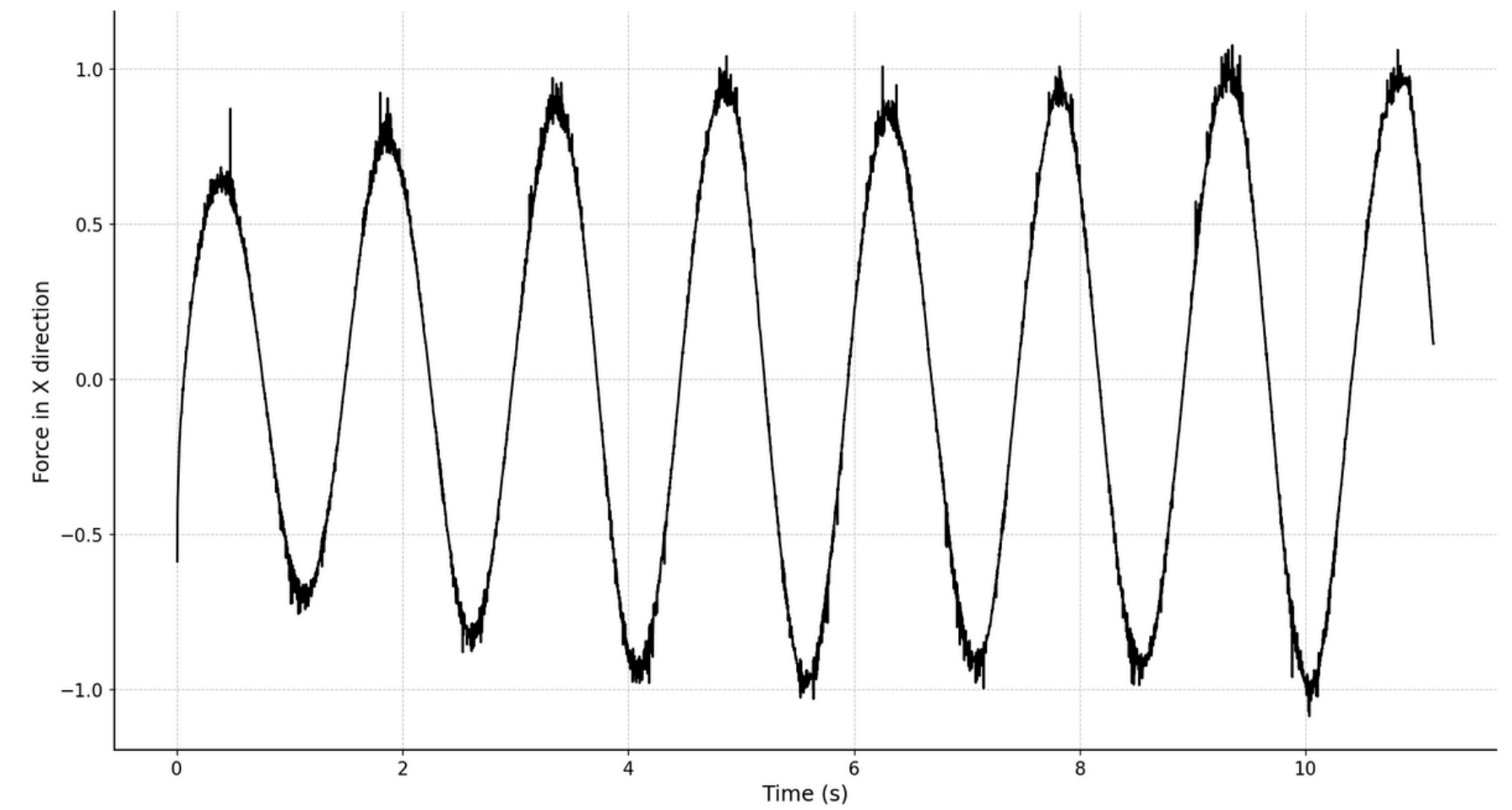
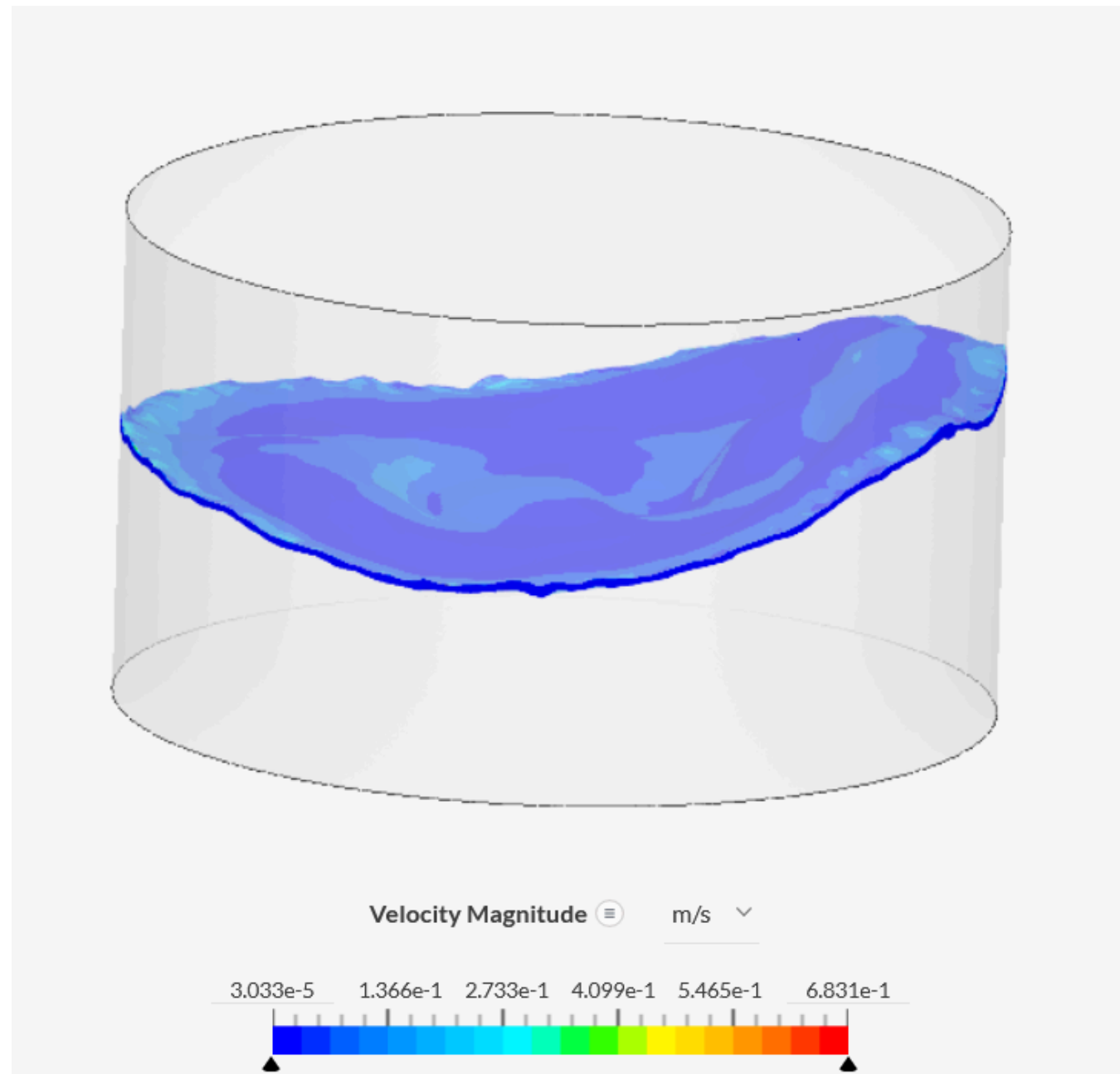
Non linear behavior expected: poor model predictions



$NMRSE_{Force} = 14\%$
 $NMRSE_{Moment} = 28\%$
 $NMRSE_{CM} = 17\%$

3D Simulations

- Computational challenge linked to the mesh sizes required
- First tests using cloud computing

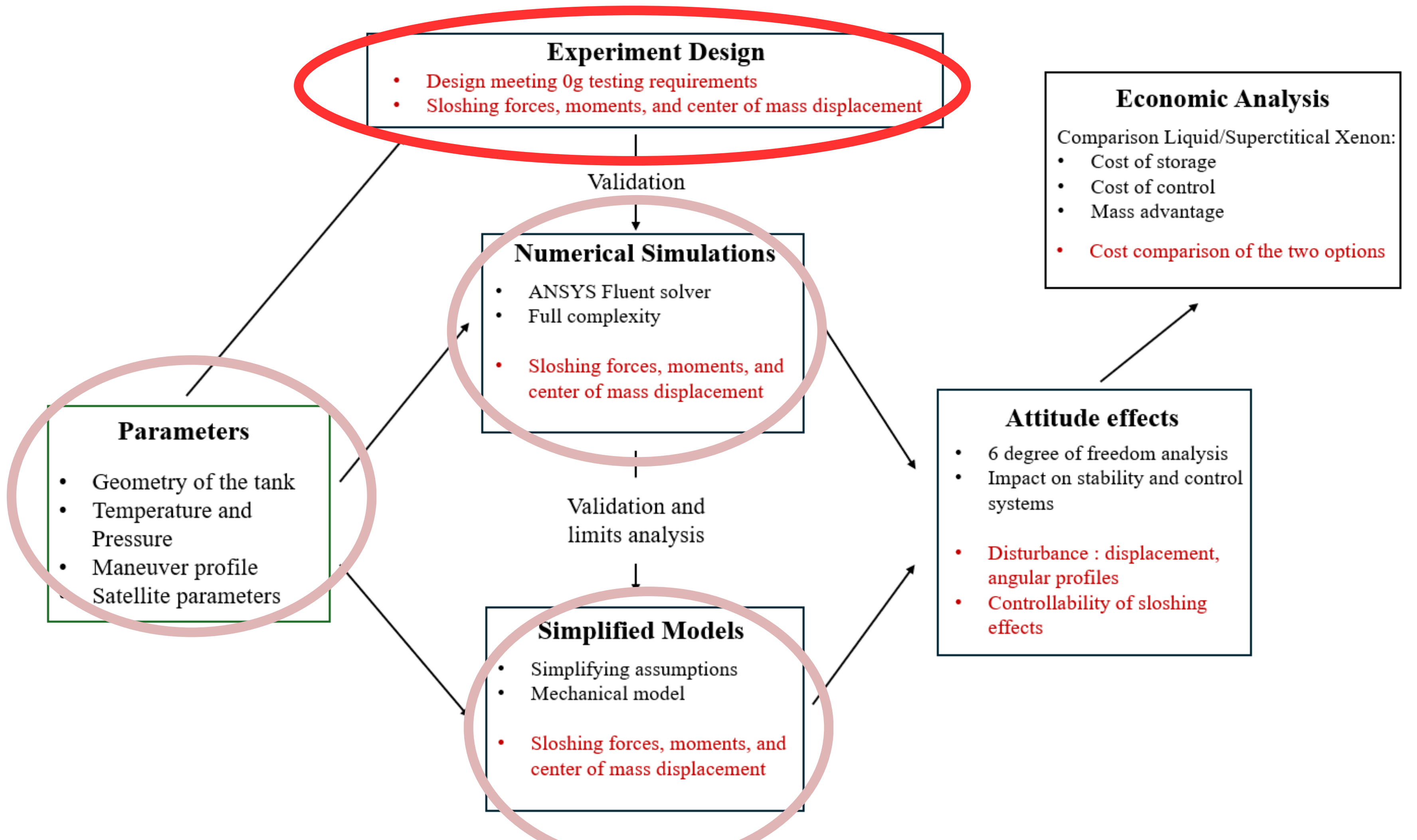


Finally we have...

- A linear sloshing model verified through simulation
- An idea of when it breaks down (empirical criterion)
- Simulations of the different maneuvers in 2D (parametric)
- Incomplete simulations in 3D

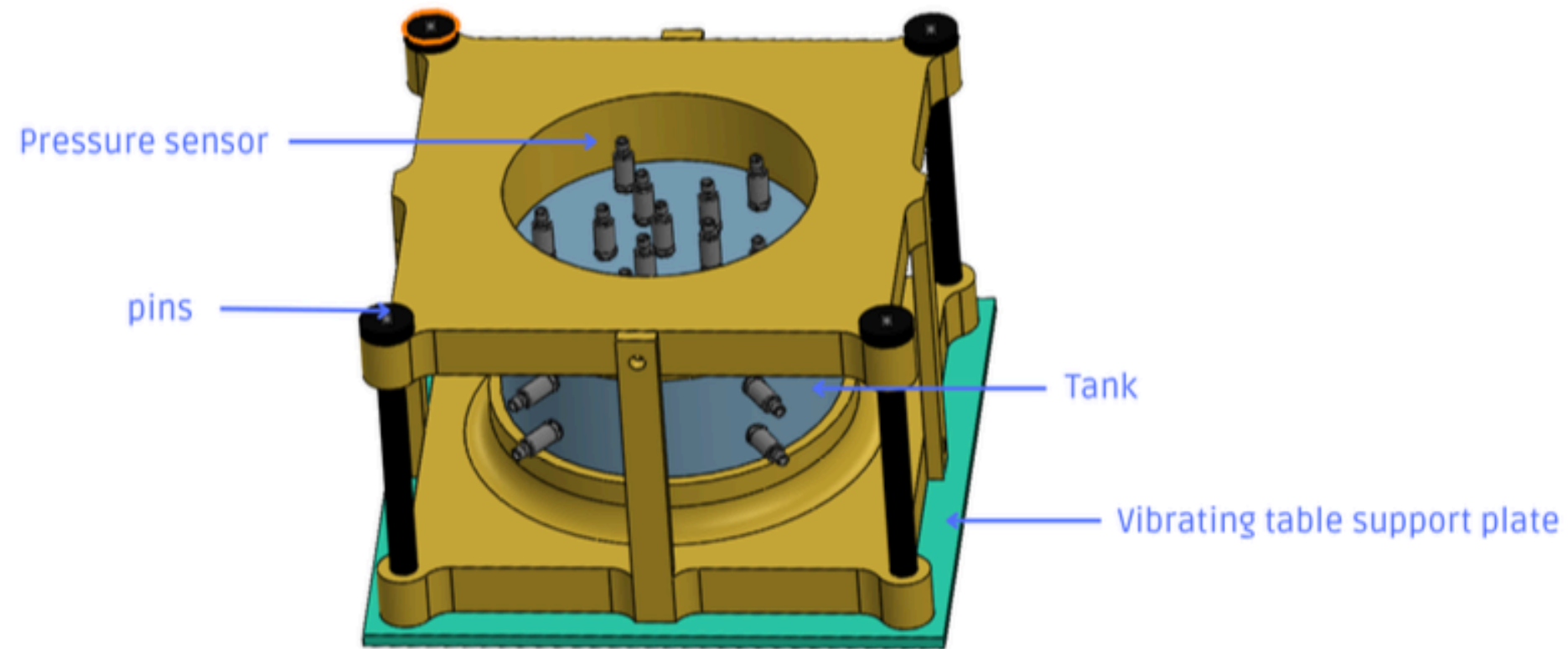
Future work should ...

- Try to implement descriptive models for non linear sloshing (LPVs)
- Concentrate on 3D simulations (cylindrical/rectangular)

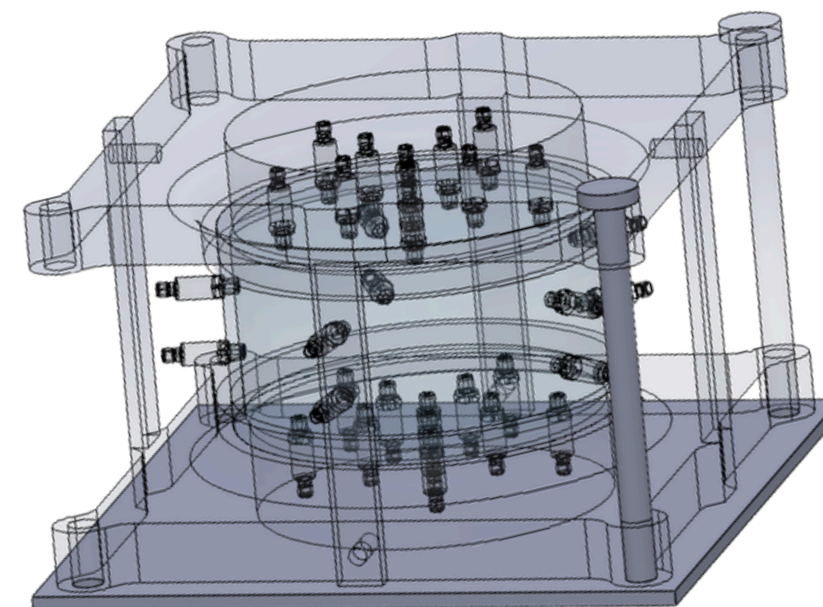
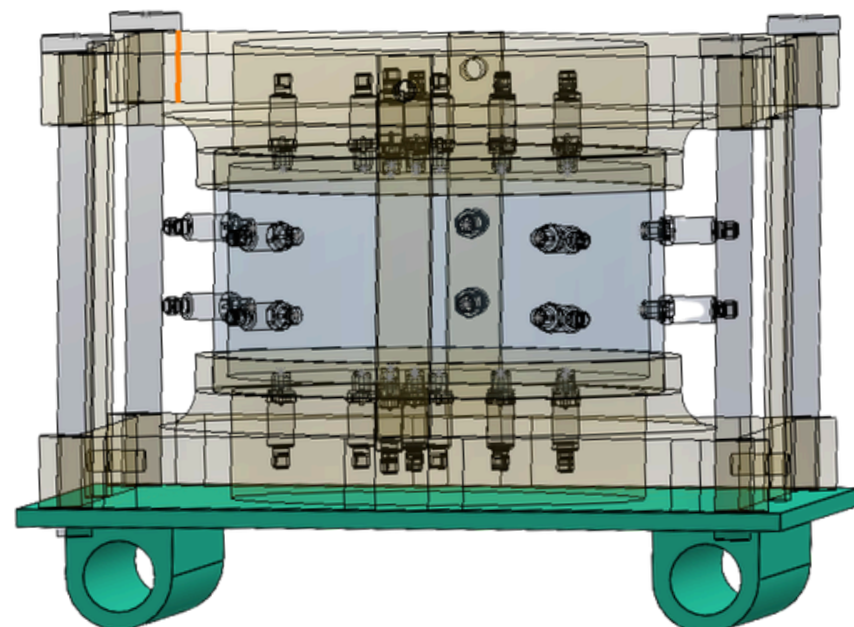


Experiment

Objective: Measure sloshing forces via wall pressure

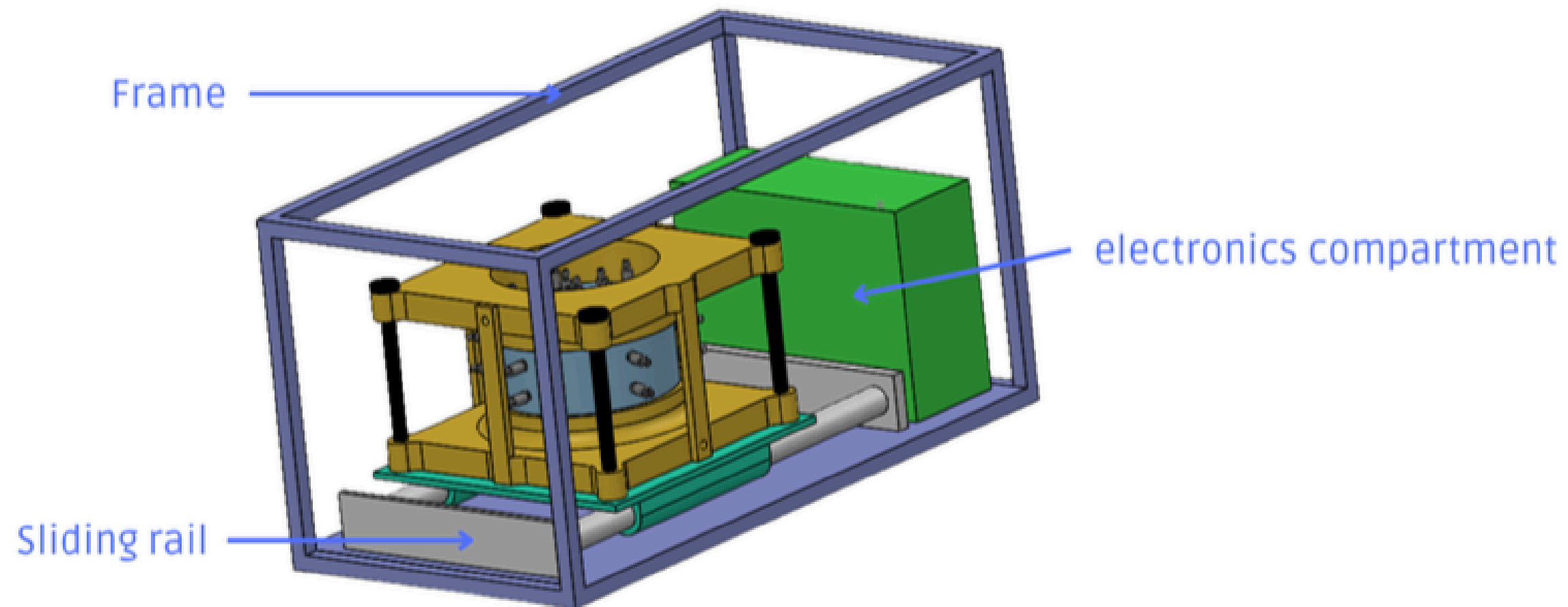


Pressure sensor
IP68 waterproof



Experimental Design for CFD Validation

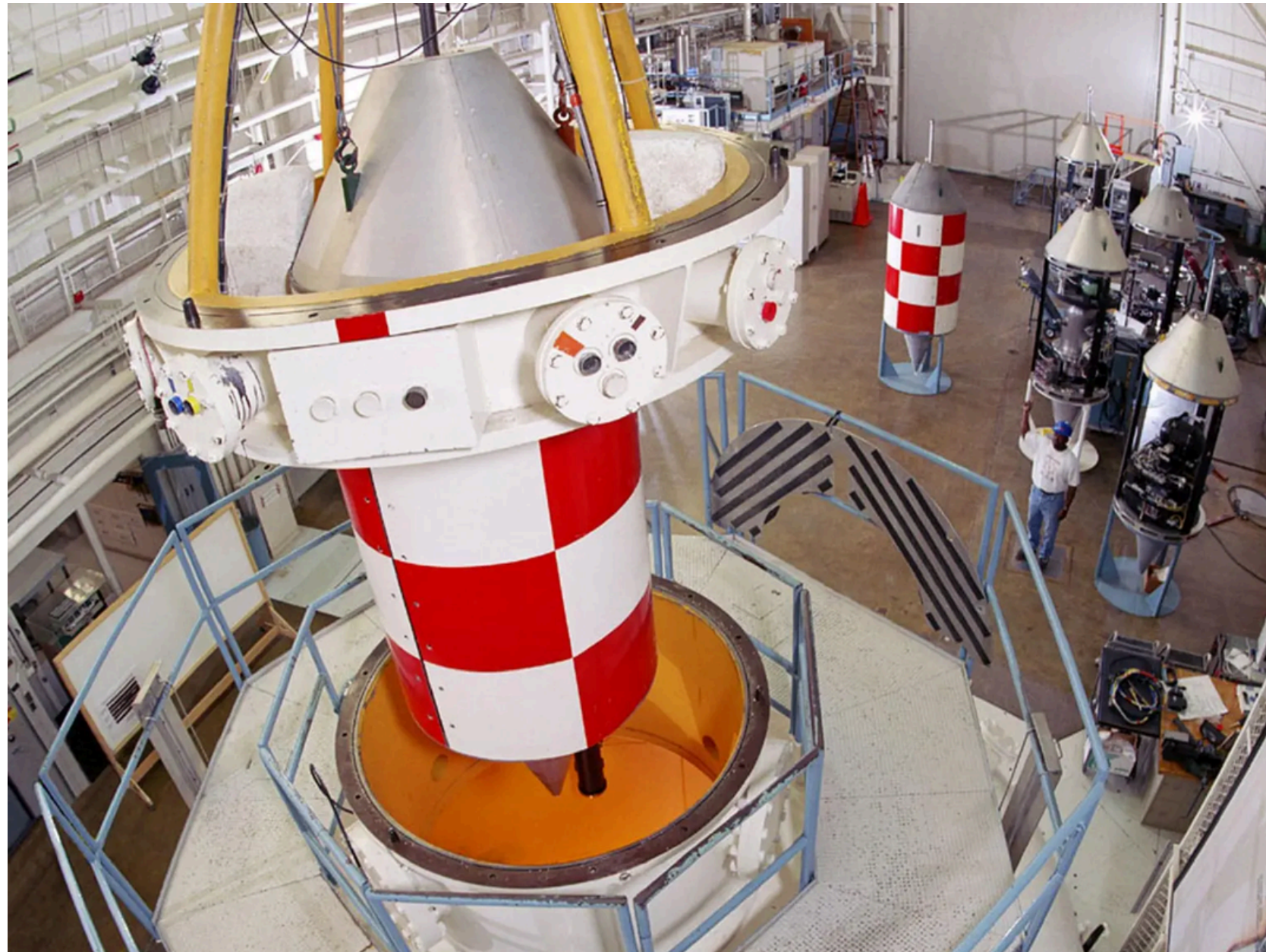
Objective: Measure sloshing forces via wall pressure



The vibrating plate is used to replicate lateral accelerations, with pressure sensors to measure the fluid sloshing dynamics.

Experimental Design for CFD Validation

A drop tower to achieve gravity conditions

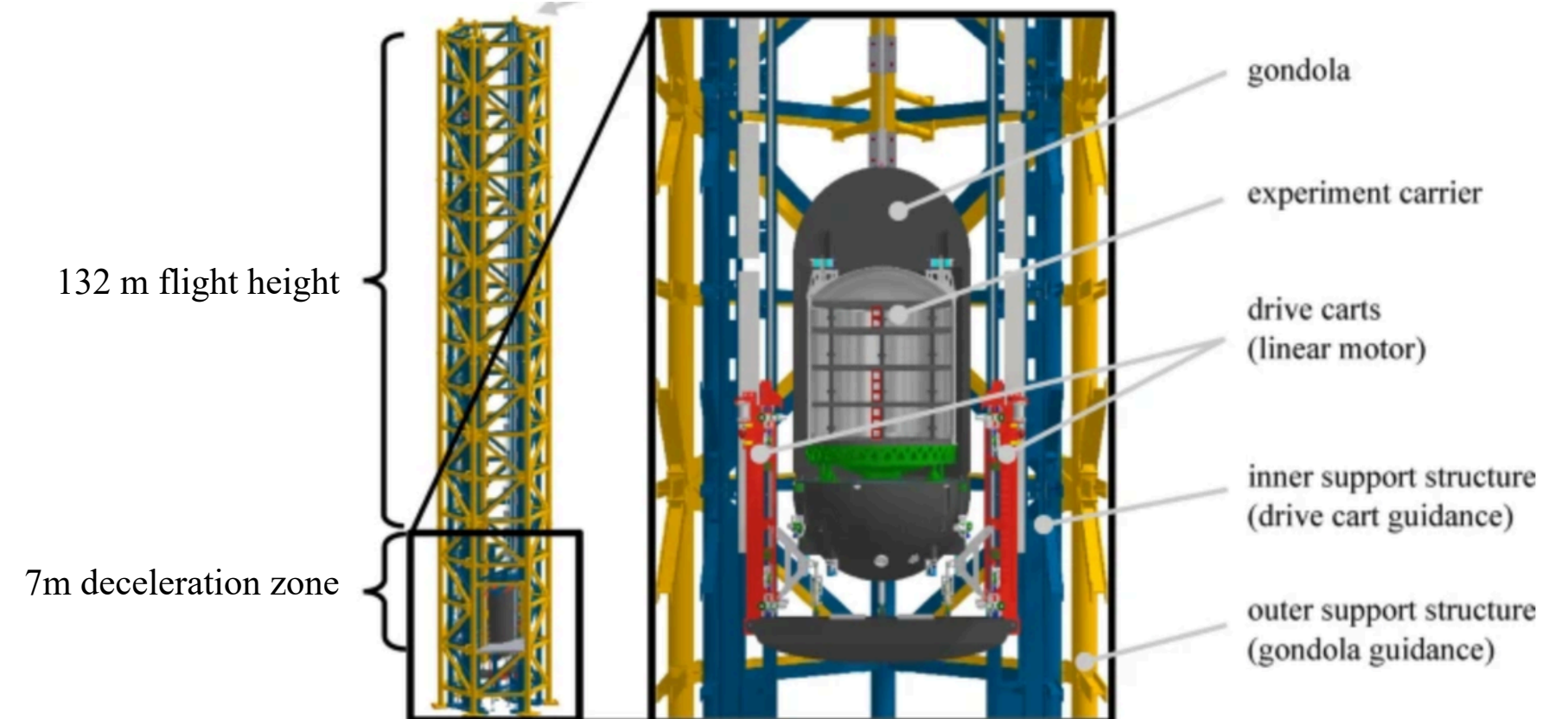


NASA Glenn Drop Tower (Cleveland, Ohio)

Height: 132 m

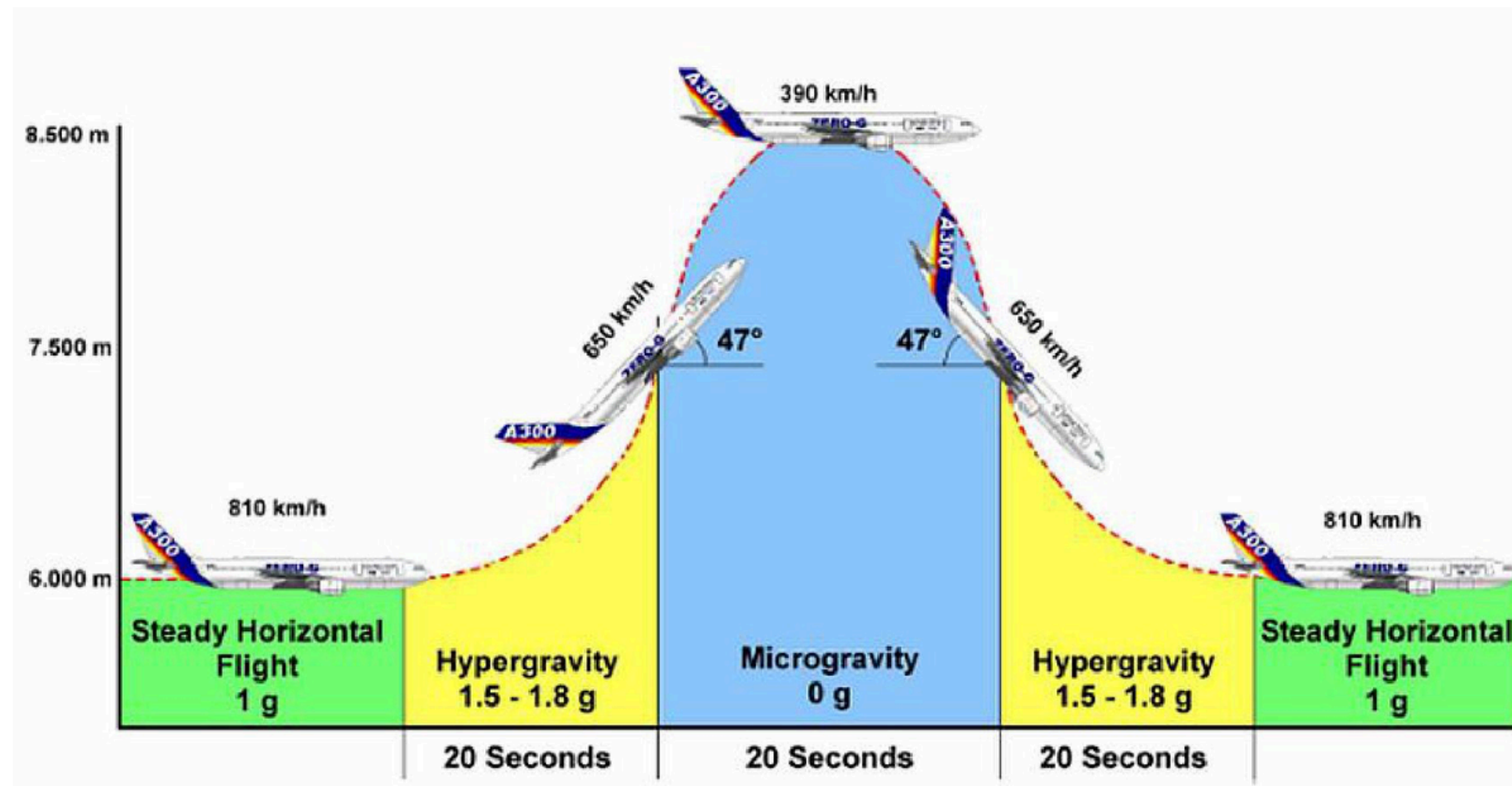
Free-fall height: 132 m \rightarrow 5.18 s microgravity

Peak deceleration: up to 65 g



Experimental Design for CFD Validation

A parabolic flight (Zero-G flight) to achieve gravity conditions



Mixed Payload (5' x 10' Section)

■ Research Flights

\$60,200
+ Tax

Book a 5' x 10' section aboard a shared flight with other researchers. Best for small/medium-sized experiments and rapid prototyping.

*If Booked More Than 90 Days In Advance

Up to 3 People

Experimental Design for CFD Validation

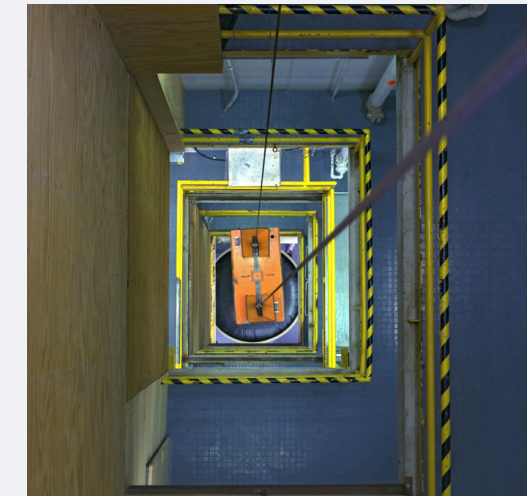
Comparison of the two experimental conditions are considered to achieve microgravity:

Parabolic flight (Zero-G flight)

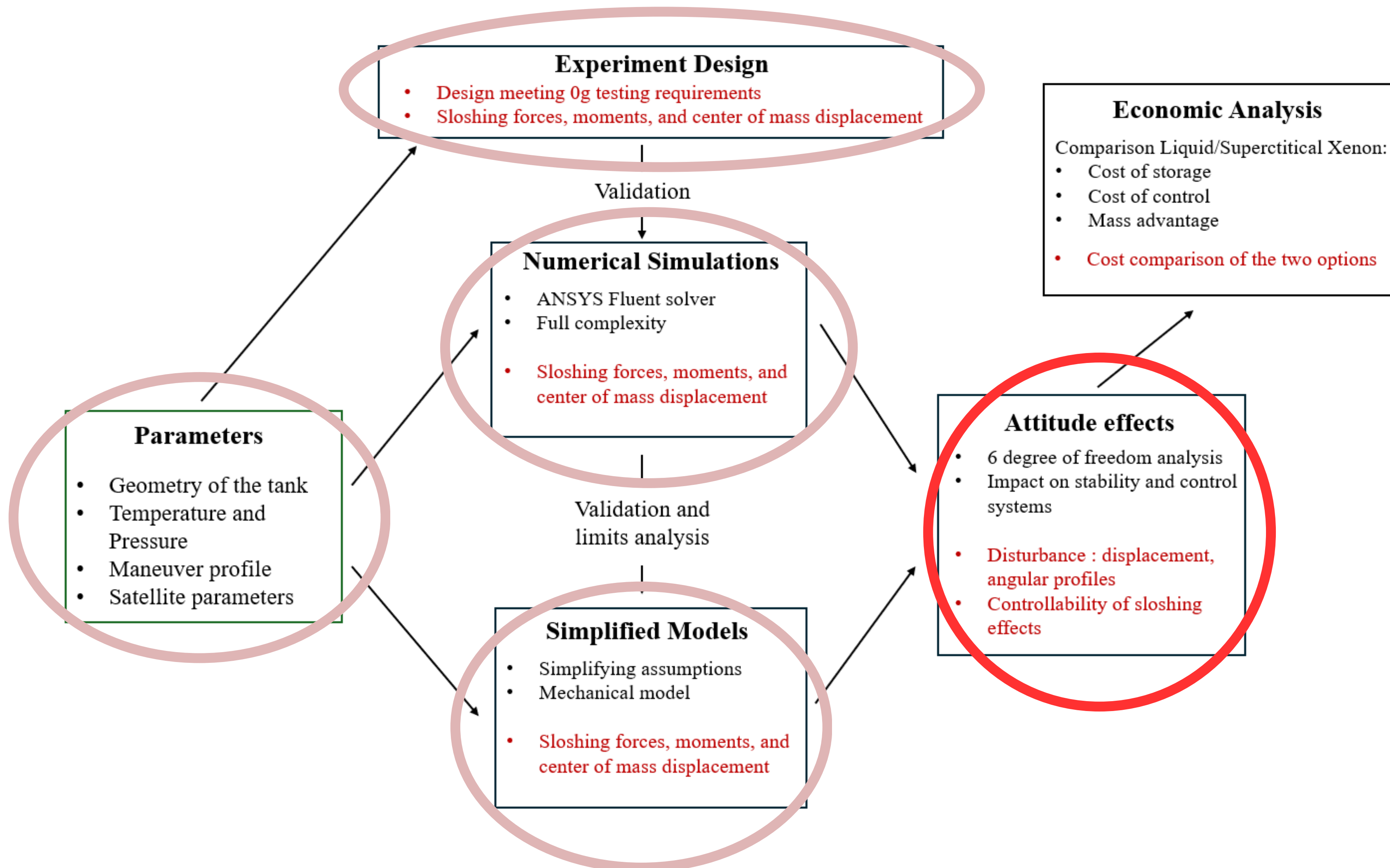


- 22 s of microgravity per parabola, with 25 repetitions per flight
- Payload must be fully integrated, flight-certified, and safely secured in a crewed aircraft environment
- System can be reset and adjusted between parabolas (allowing iterative testing and parameter tuning)
- Budget : ~\$70k → \$2,8k per parabola

Drop tower



- 5 s of microgravity through free fall, ideal for capturing early transient fluid dynamics
- Each drop allows only a single run
- Payload must be fully autonomous
- System must withstand high deceleration loads (~65g) during recovery, imposing strong structural constraints
- Budget: \$6k / drop



Attitude Analysis

CFD Outputs

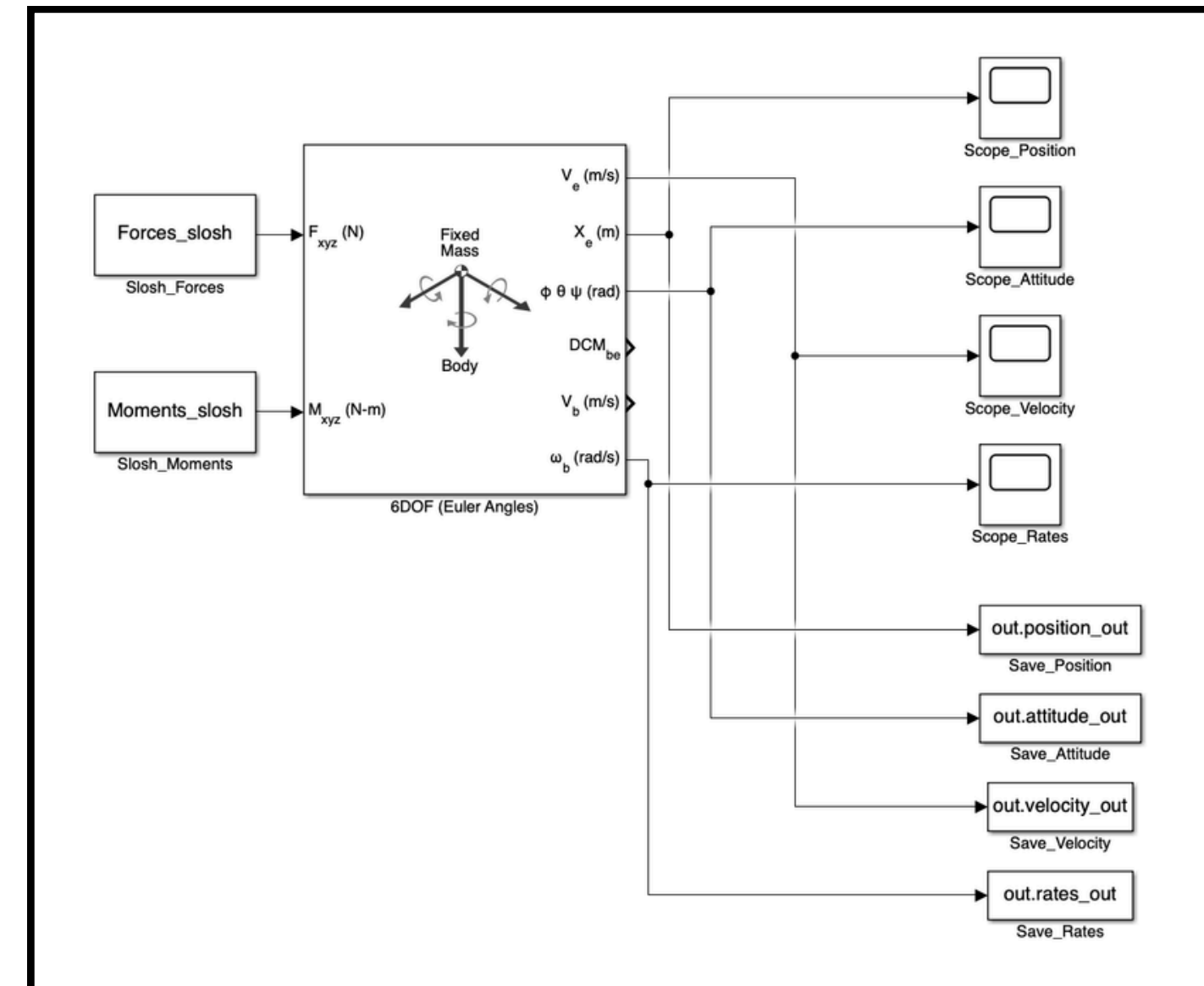
- Sloshing Force
- Sloshing Moment
- Center of Mass of Propellant

Simulink Outputs

- Positional Drift
- Angular Drift
- Velocity
- Angular Rate

Desired Outputs

- Linear Momentum
- Torque
- Accumulated Angular Momentum



Block Diagram of Matlab Simulink Setup

$$I = \begin{bmatrix} 36.25 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 29.7478 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 44.8639 \end{bmatrix} \text{ kg} \cdot \text{m}^2$$

$$m = 205.112 \text{ kg}$$

Attitude Analysis: 6DOF derivation

Spacial Calculations:

$$\mathbf{a} = \frac{1}{m} \mathbf{F}_{CFD} \longrightarrow \mathbf{v} = \mathbf{v}_0 + \int_0^t \mathbf{a} dt \longrightarrow \mathbf{s} = \mathbf{s}_0 + \int_0^t \mathbf{v} dt$$

Angular Calculations:

$$\mathbf{M}_{CFD} = \mathbf{I}\dot{\boldsymbol{\omega}} + \boldsymbol{\omega} \times (\mathbf{I}\boldsymbol{\omega})$$

$$\dot{\boldsymbol{\omega}} = \mathbf{I}^{-1} [\mathbf{M}_{CFD} - \boldsymbol{\omega} \times (\mathbf{I}\boldsymbol{\omega})]$$

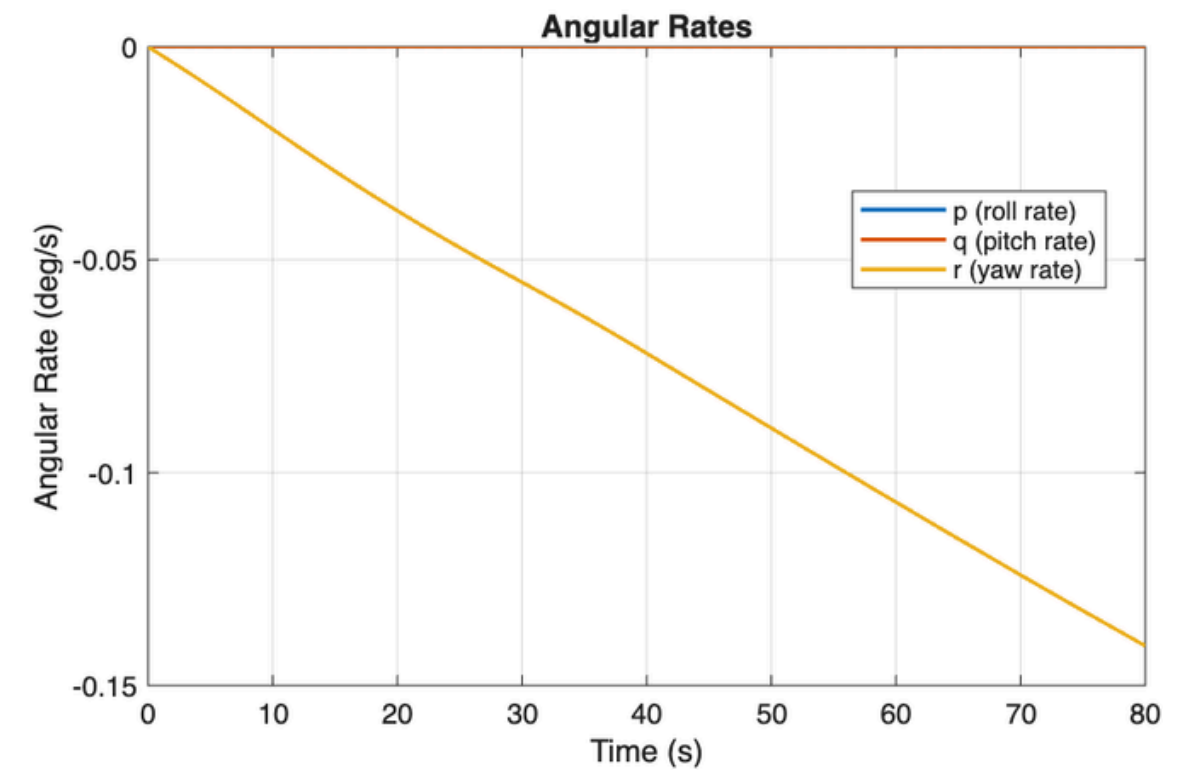
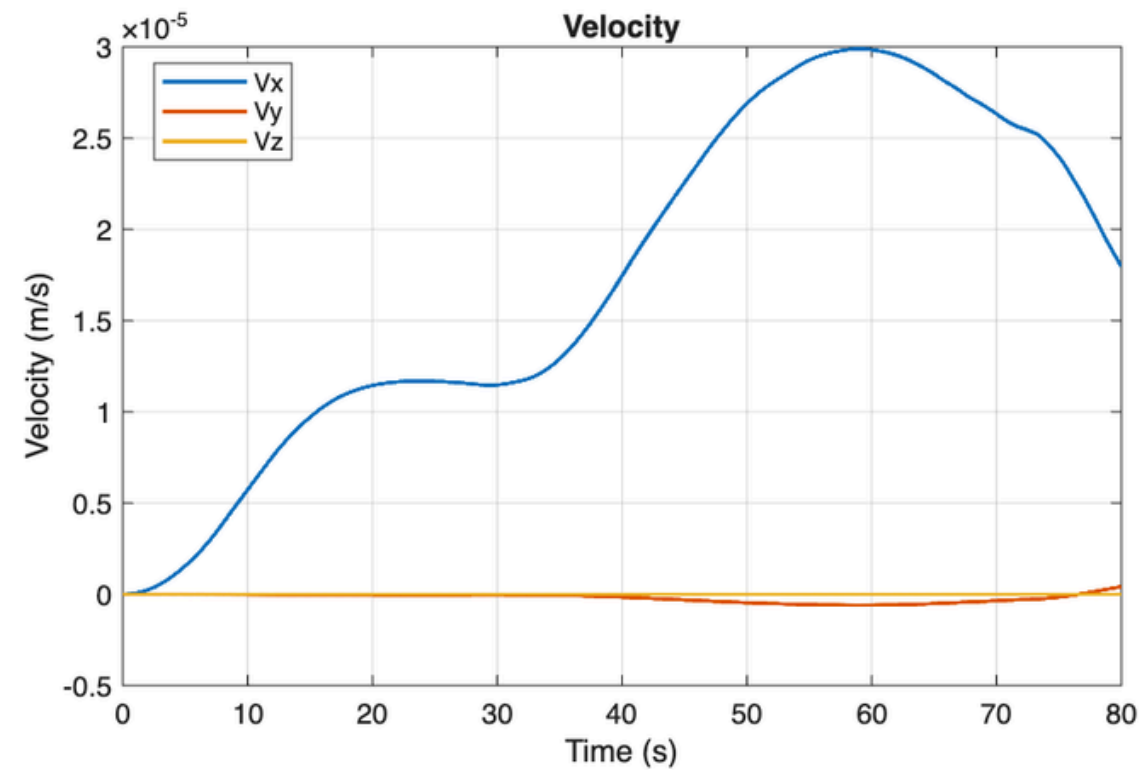
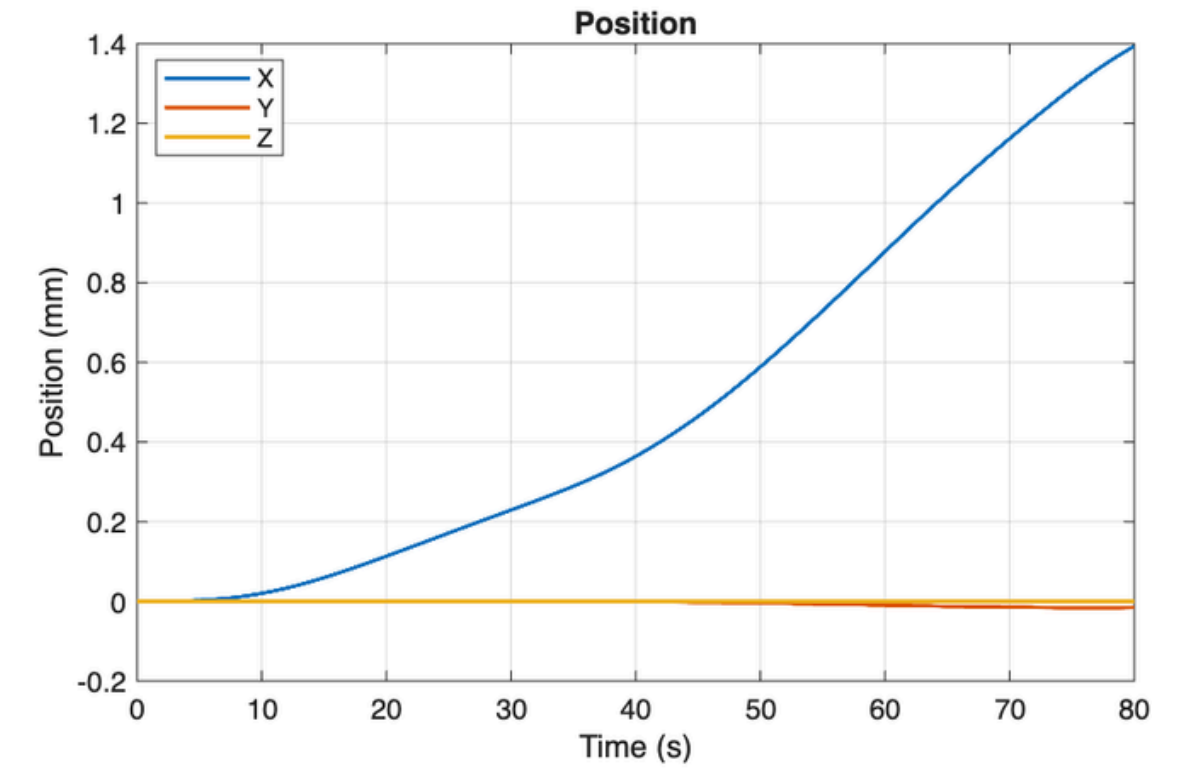
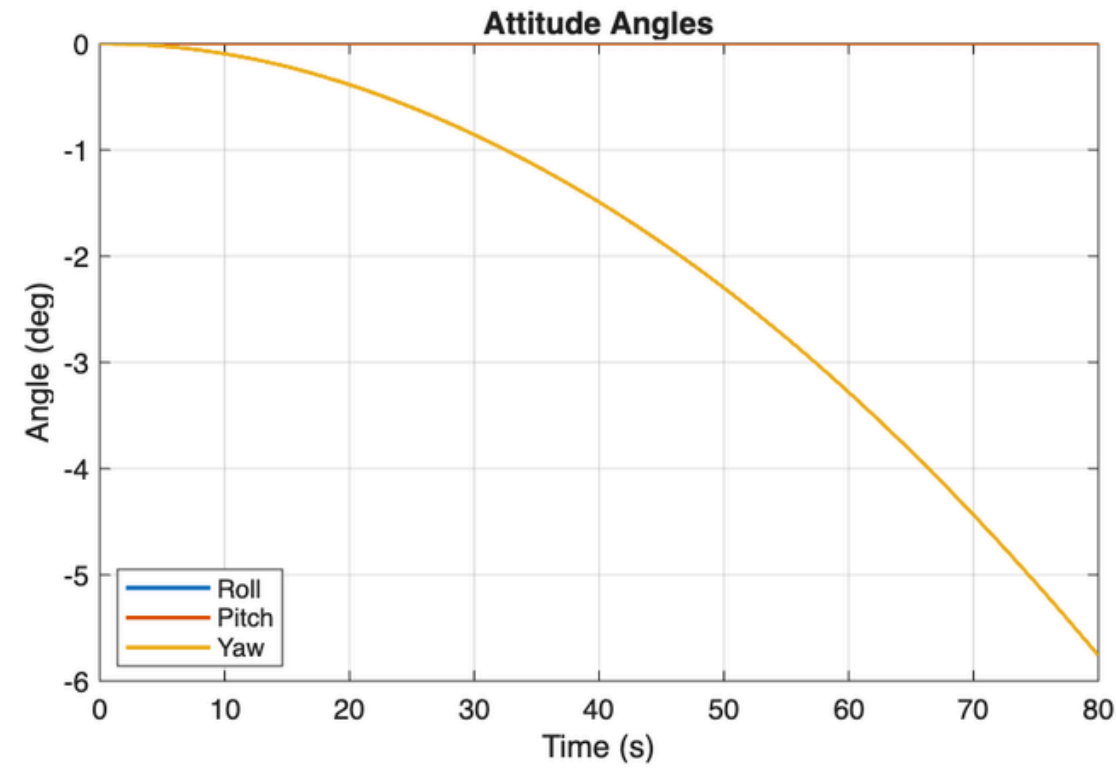
$$\boldsymbol{\psi} = \boldsymbol{\psi}_0 + \int_0^t \dot{\boldsymbol{\psi}} dt$$

$$\begin{bmatrix} \dot{\phi} \\ \dot{\theta} \\ \dot{\psi} \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & \sin \phi \tan \theta & \cos \phi \tan \theta \\ 0 & \cos \phi & -\sin \phi \\ 0 & \sin \phi \sec \theta & \cos \phi \sec \theta \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} \omega_x \\ \omega_y \\ \omega_z \end{bmatrix}$$

Attitude Response

Reorientation Maneuver

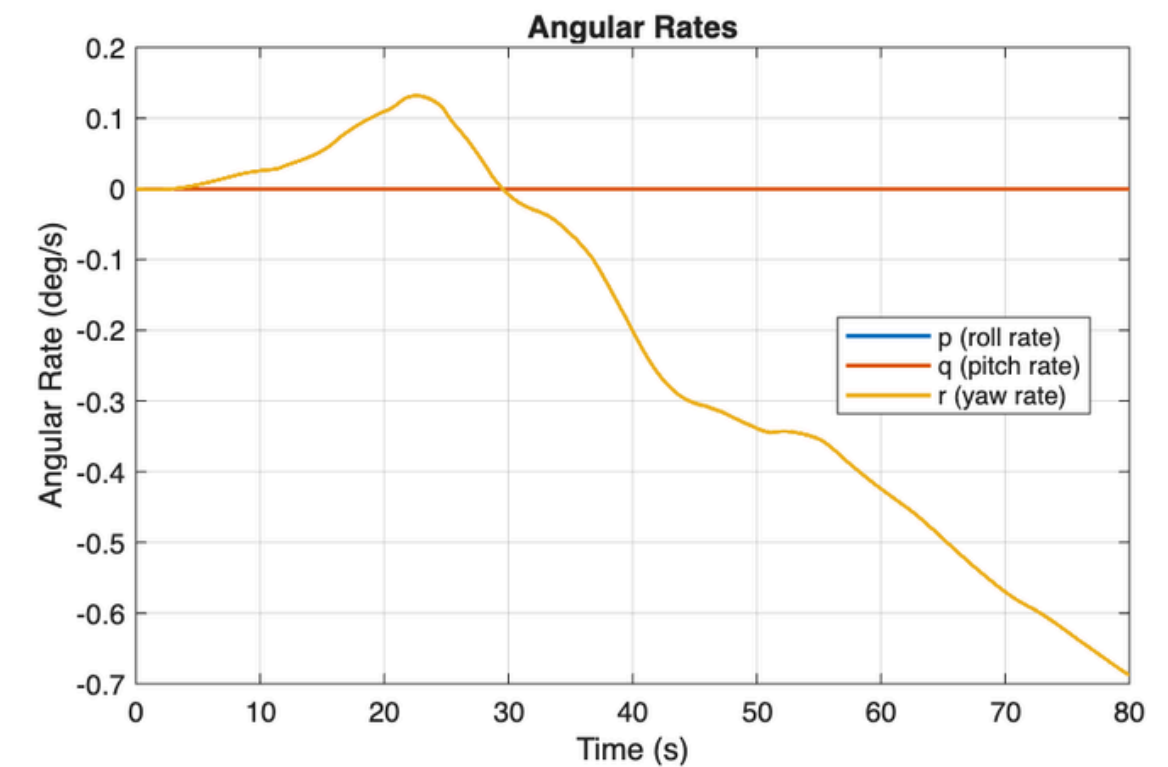
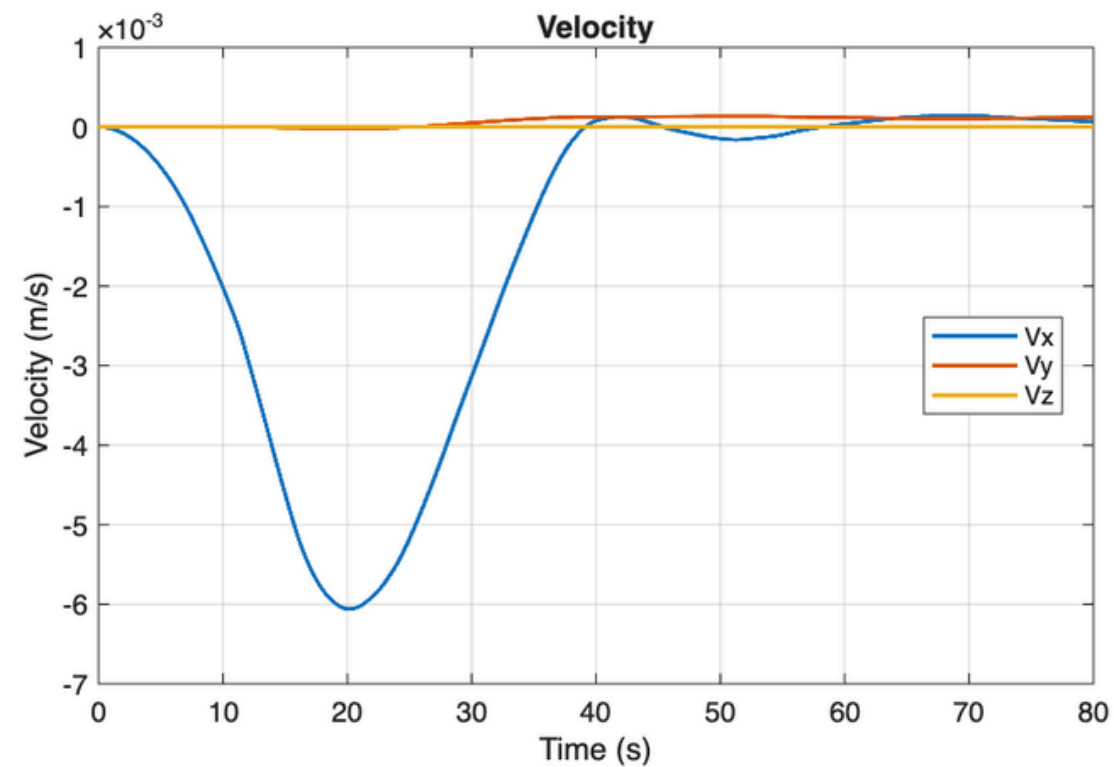
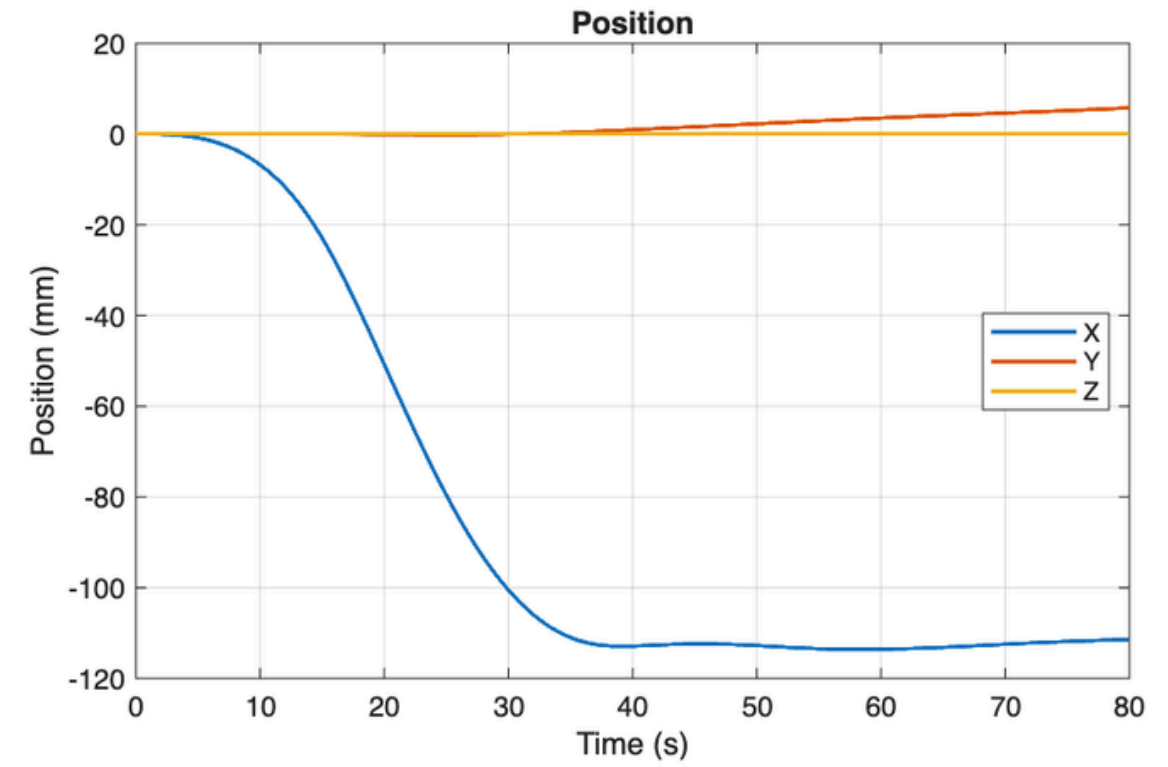
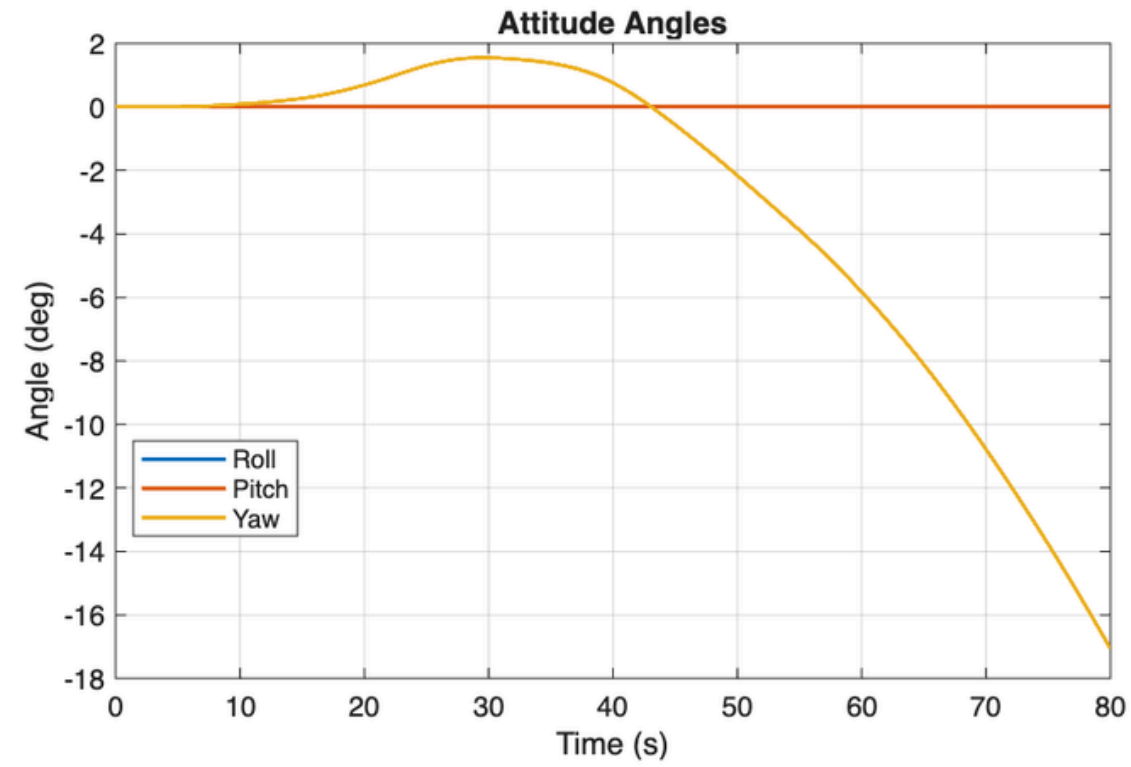
Satellite Attitude Response Analysis



Attitude Response

Translational Maneuver

Satellite Attitude Response Analysis



Attitude Analysis: Torque and Momentum Derivations

Torque (Nm):

$$\tau = \mathbf{M}_{CFD}$$

Accumulated Angular Momentum (Nms):

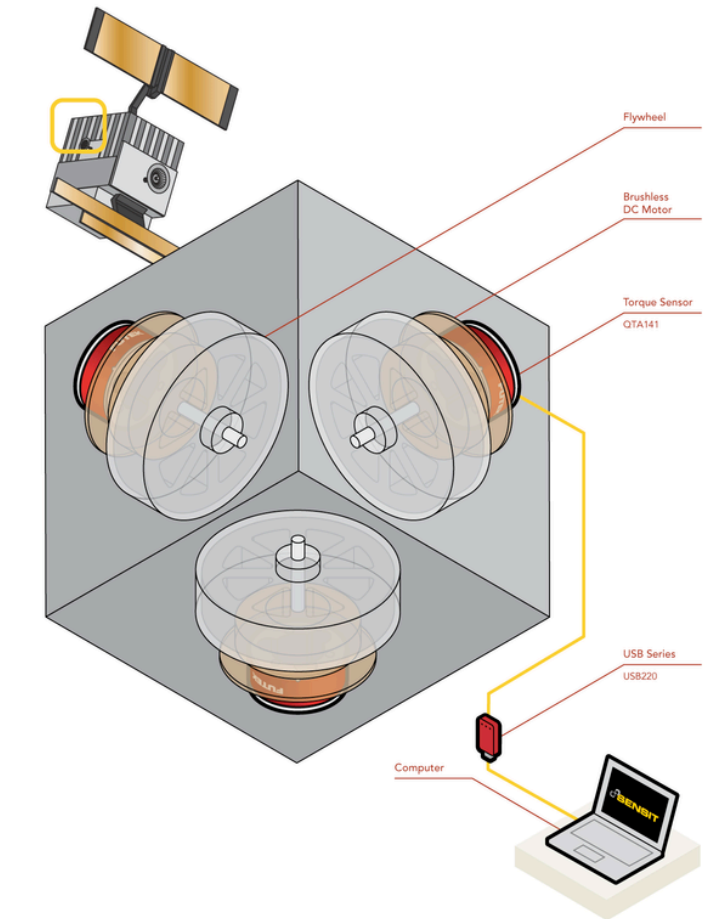
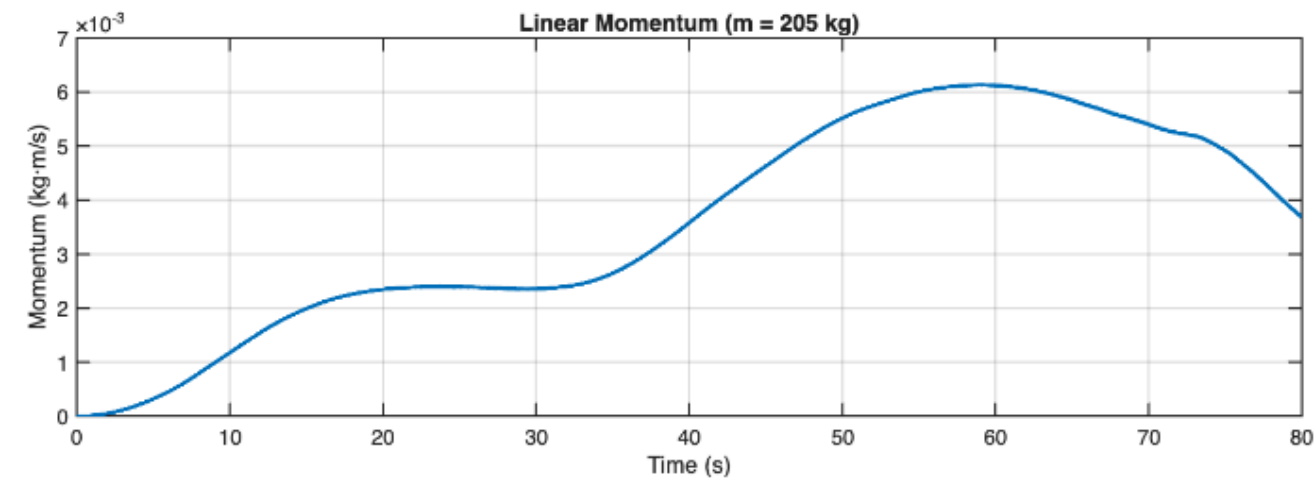
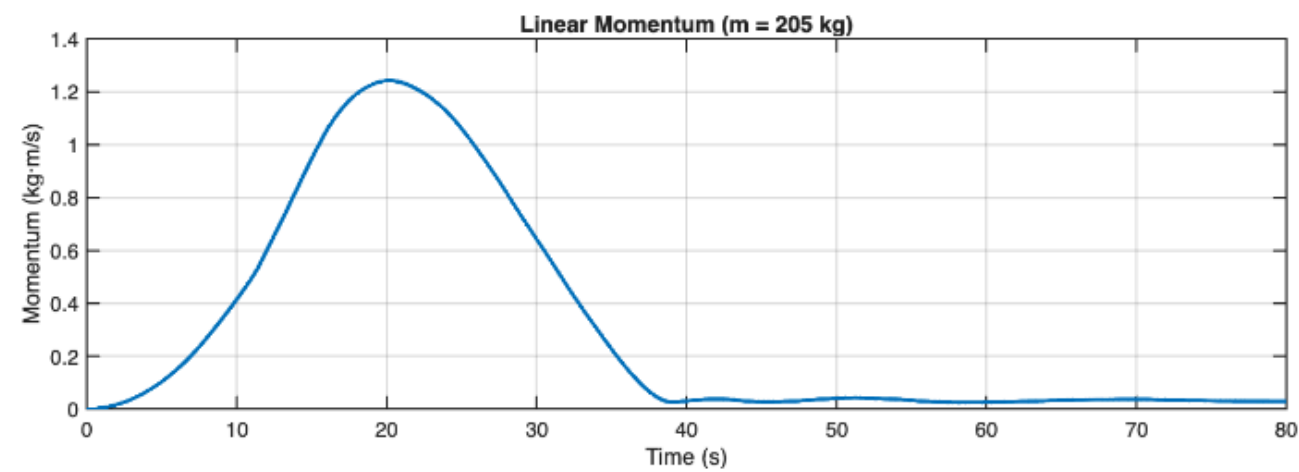
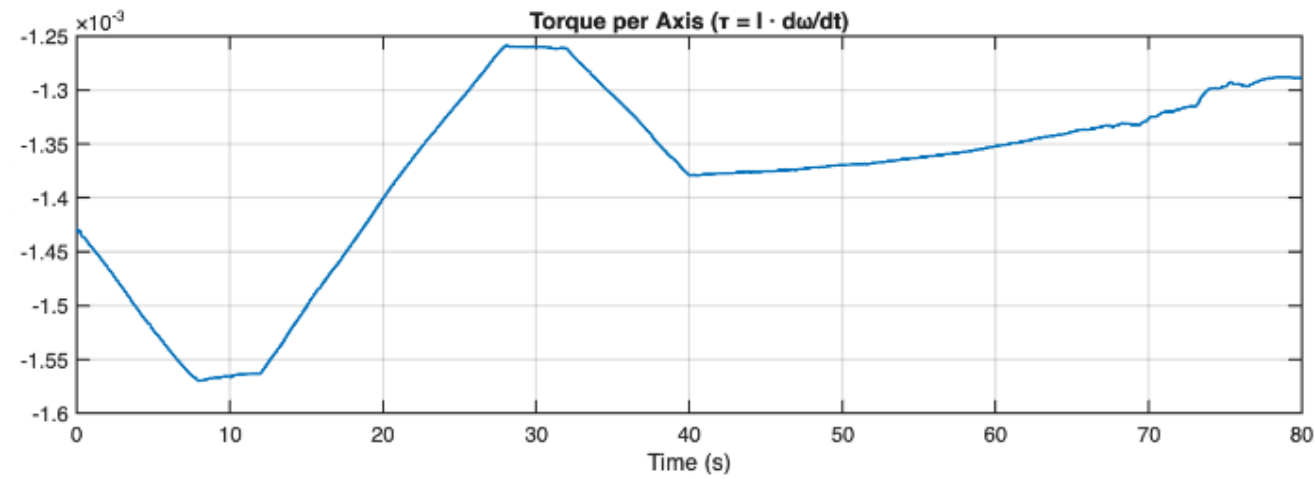
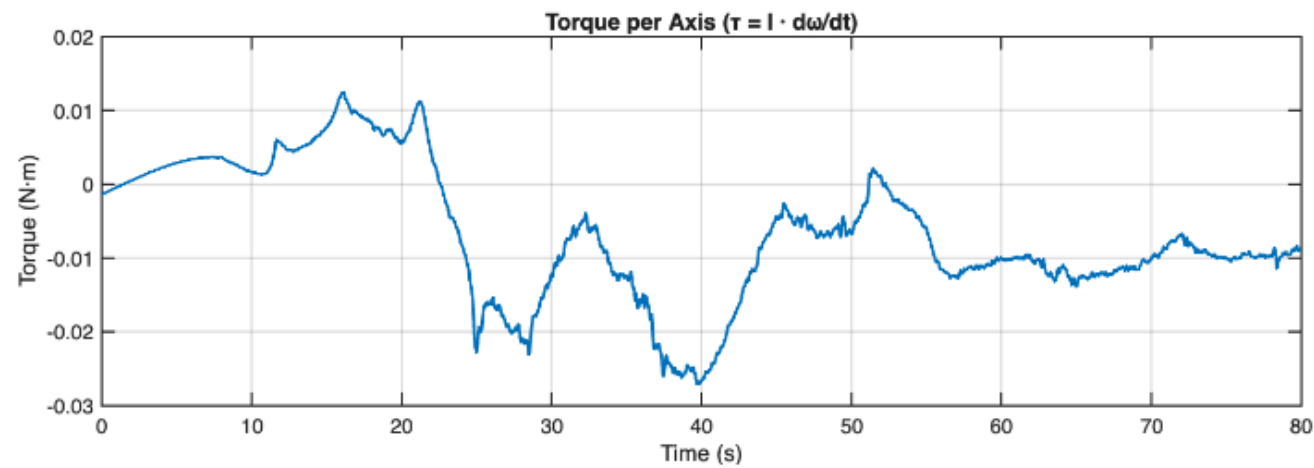
$$\mathbf{H}_{slosh}(t) = \int_{t_0}^t \mathbf{M}_{CFD}(\tau) d\tau$$

Linear Momentum (kg m s⁻¹):

$$\mathbf{p}(t) = m(t)\mathbf{v}(t) = \frac{d}{dt}\mathbf{F}_{CFD}$$

- **Torque** and **Accumulated Angular Momentum** are primary design specs of Satellite Reaction Wheels
- Mass and Inertia have no effects on momentum or torque!

Torque and Momentum Response



Translational Maneuver

- Max Instant Torque: **0.027 Nm**
- Max Total Torque: **0.538 Nms**

Rotational Maneuver

- Max Instant Torque: **0.00157 Nm**
- Max Total Torque: **0.110 Nms**

ARW-1a Reaction Wheel

- Max Instant Torque: **0.1 Nm**
- Max Total Torque: **1.0 Nms**

Comparative Analysis – Satellite Mass

How does affecting the mass of the satellite affect the attitude response?

High Mass: $m = 205.112 \text{ kg}$

$$I_{high} = \begin{bmatrix} 36.25 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 29.7478 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 44.8639 \end{bmatrix} \text{ kg} \cdot \text{m}^2$$

Low Mass: $m = 118.496 \text{ kg}$

$$I_{low} = \begin{bmatrix} 25.7839 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 16.6069 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 30.4959 \end{bmatrix} \text{ kg} \cdot \text{m}^2$$

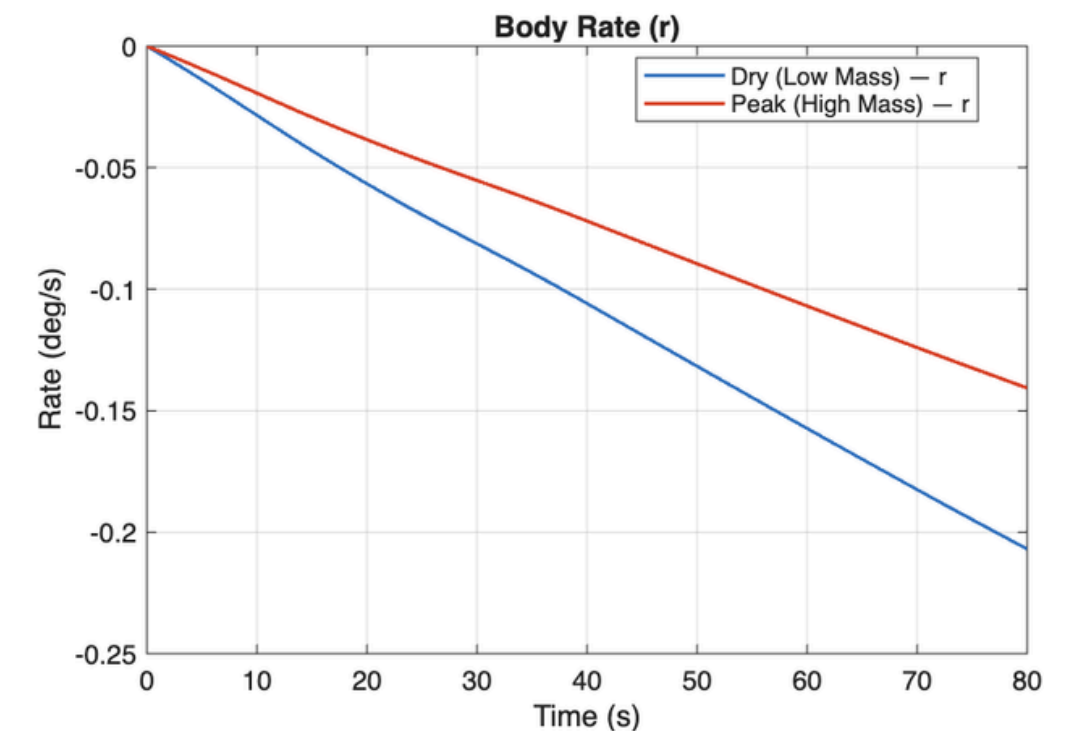
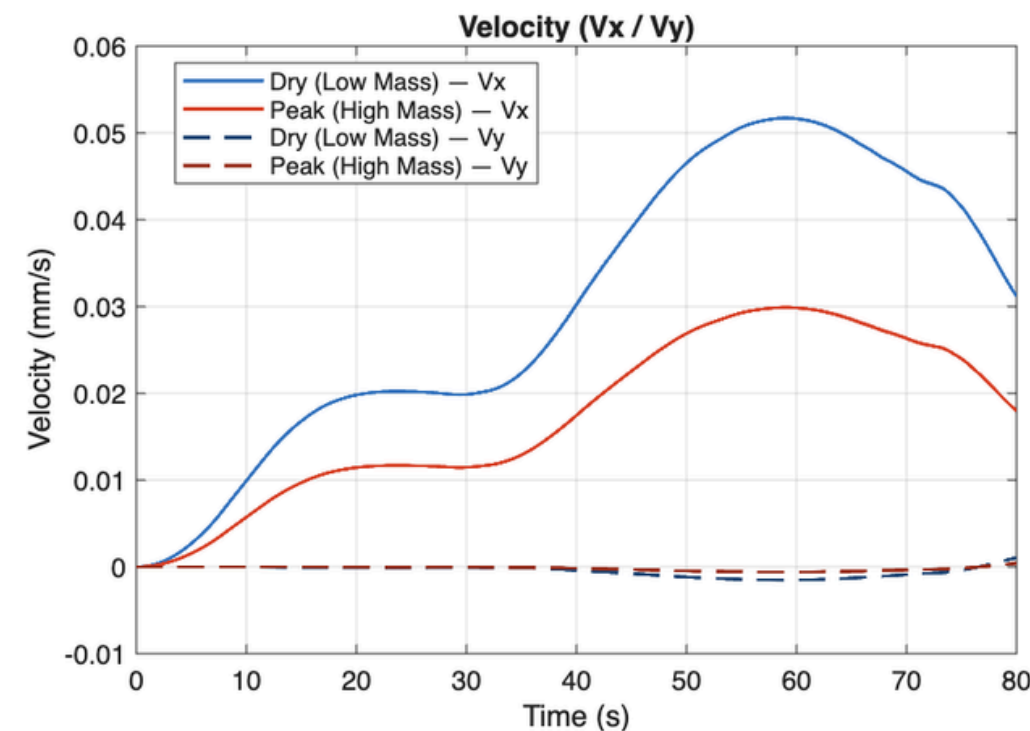
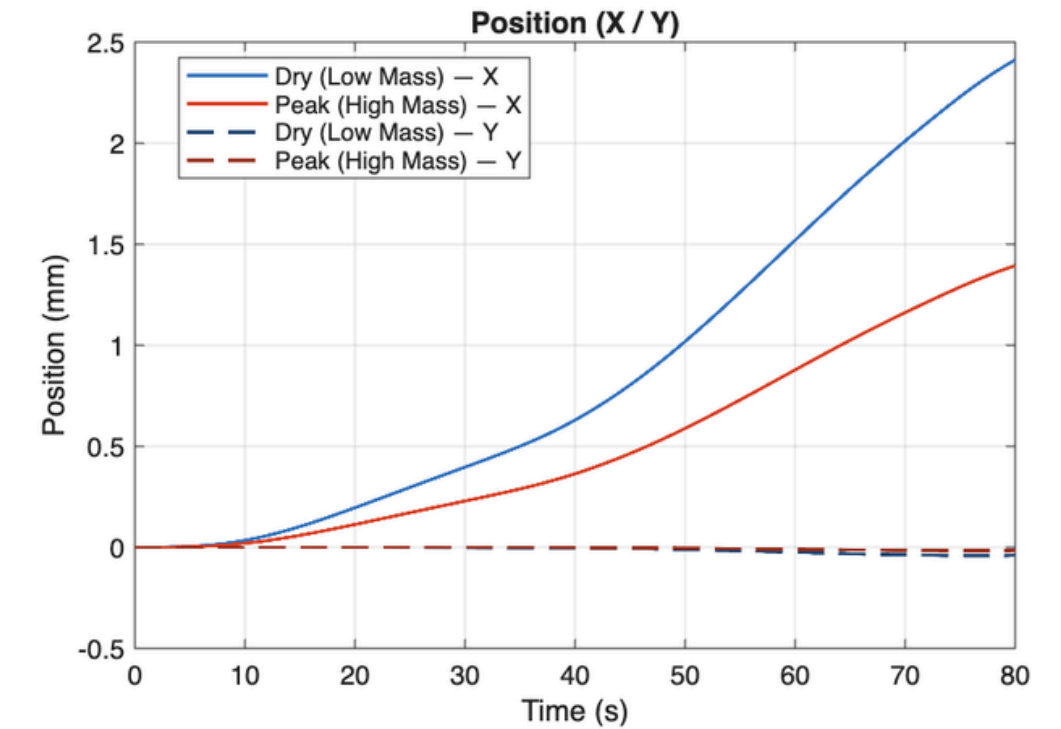
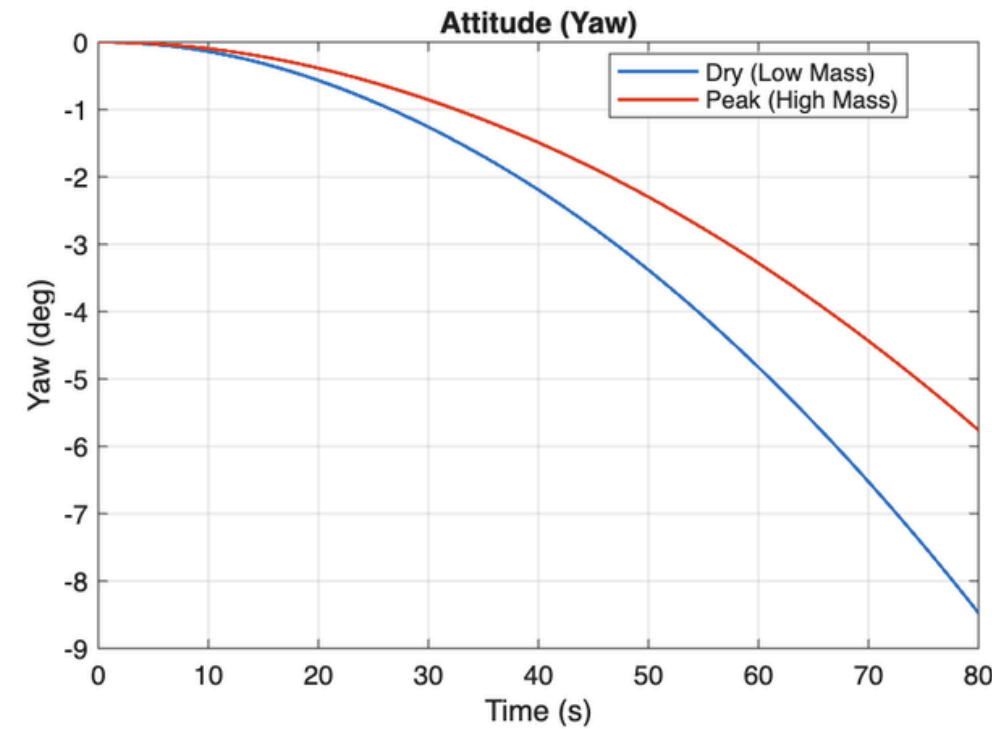
No effects on Torque or Linear Momentum!

Comparative Analysis – Satellite Mass

Reorientation Maneuver

	Low Mass (118.5 kg)	High Mass (205 kg)
Final Yaw (deg)	8.47	5.76
Peak X Position (mm)	2.41	1.39
Peak X Velocity (mm/s)	0.0517	0.0299
Pea Yaw Body Rate (deg/s)	0.207	0.141

Rotational Maneuver – Dry vs. Peak Mass

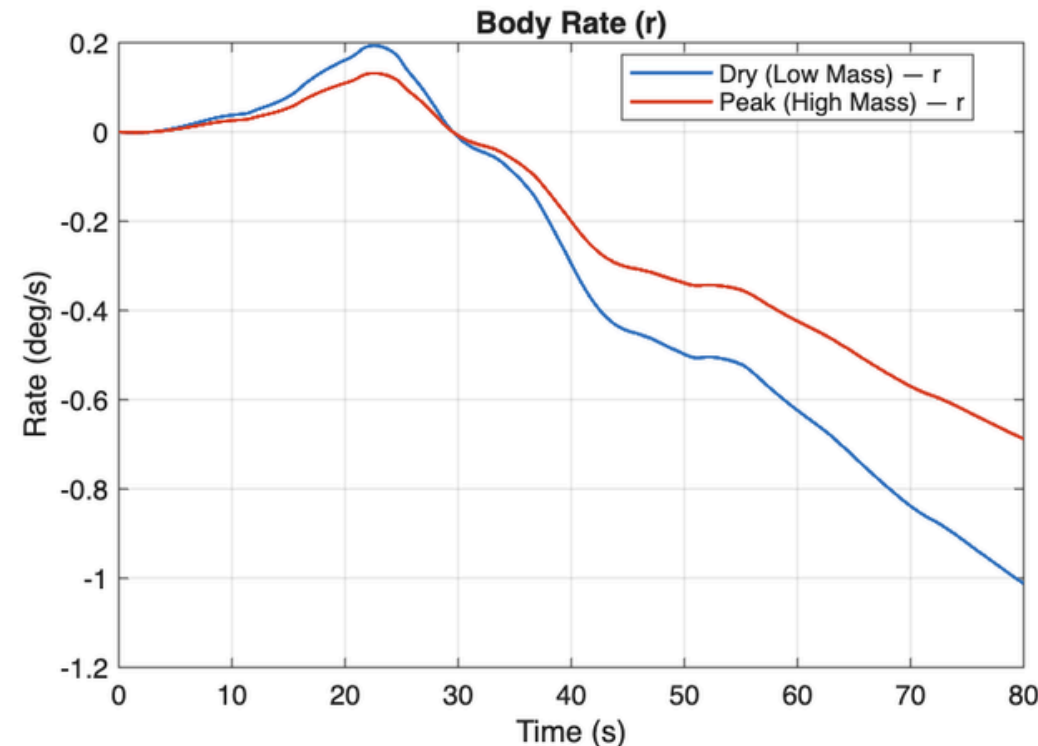
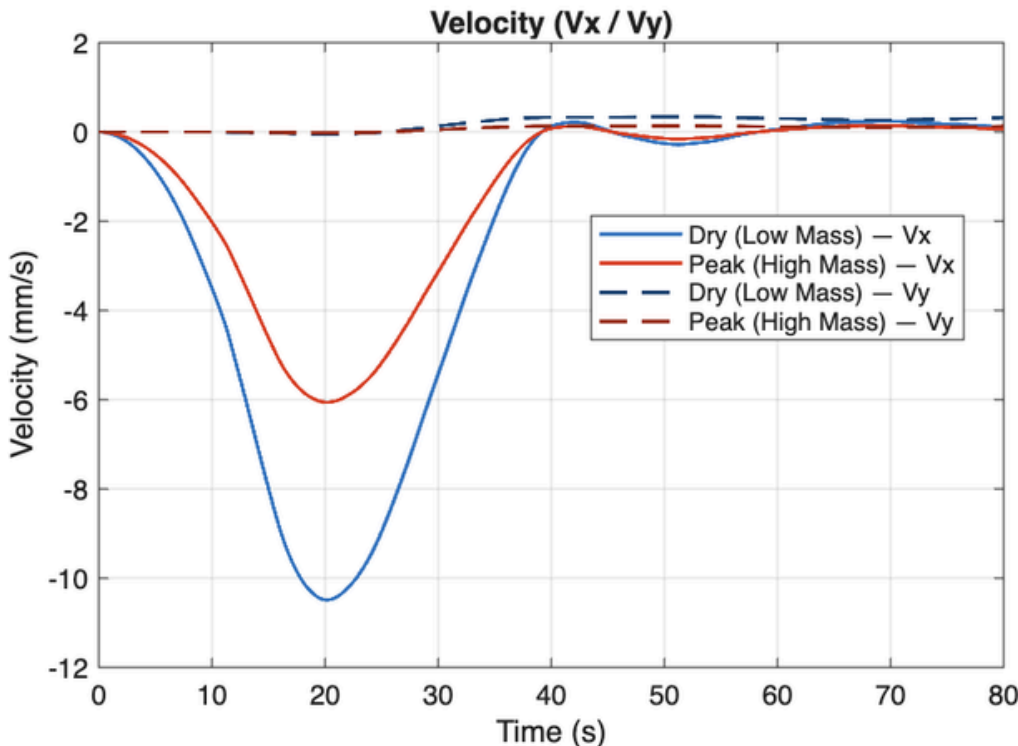
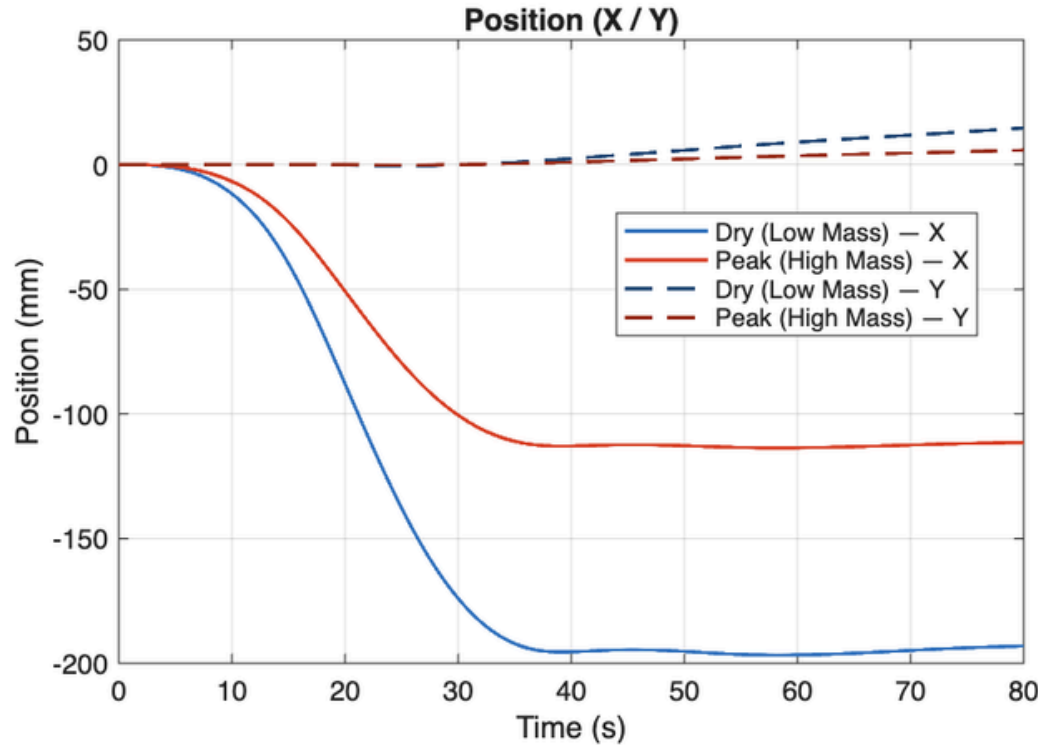
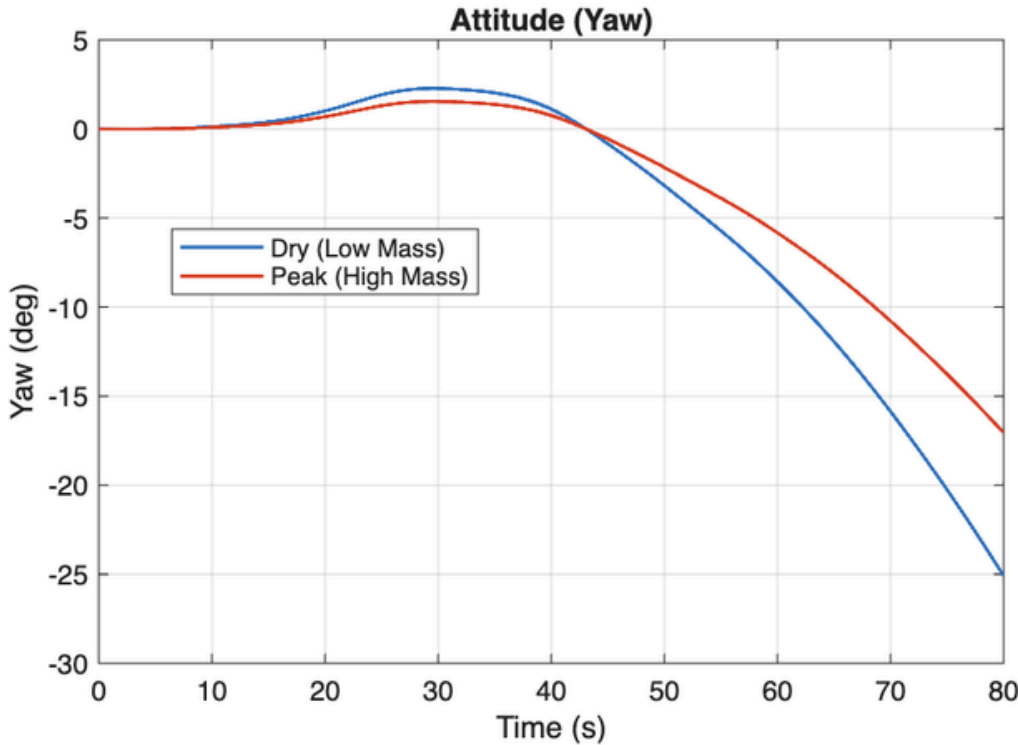


Comparative Analysis – Satellite Mass

Translational Maneuver

	Low Mass (118.5 kg)	High Mass (205 kg)
Final Yaw (deg)	25.10	17.06
Peak X Position (mm)	196.7	113.6
Peak X Velocity (mm/s)	10.49	6.06
Pea Yaw Body Rate (deg/s)	1.01	0.69

Translational Maneuver – Dry vs. Peak Mass

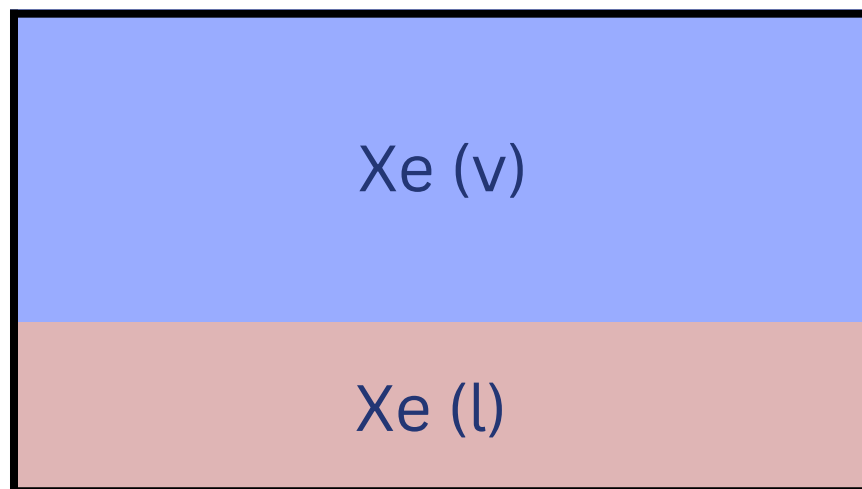


Comparative Analysis – Propellant Mass

How does adjusting the fill ratio of the propellant tank affect attitude and disturbance?

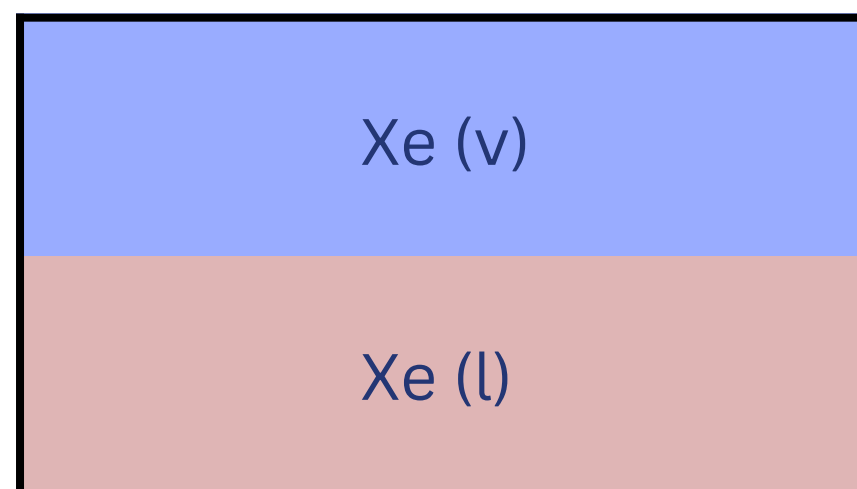
Case 1: 30% Fill

$$m_{Xe} = 18 \text{ kg}$$



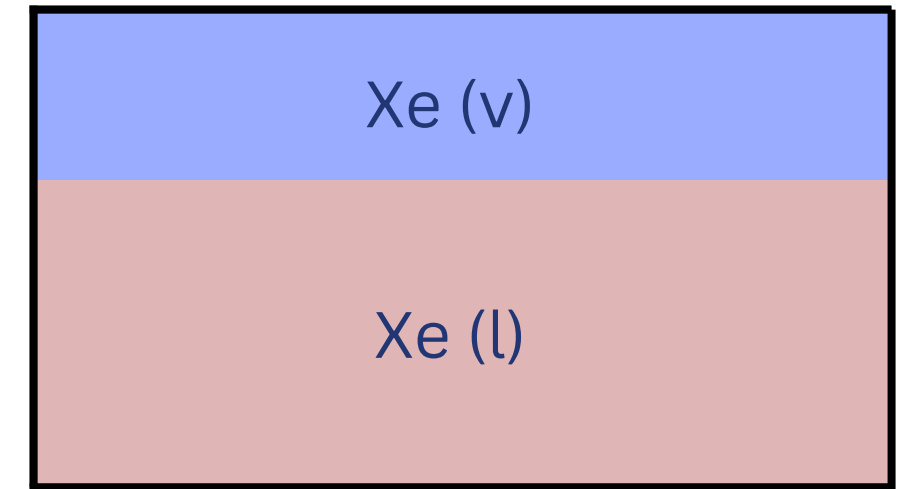
Case 2: 50% Fill

$$m_{Xe} = 24 \text{ kg}$$



Case 3: 70% Fill

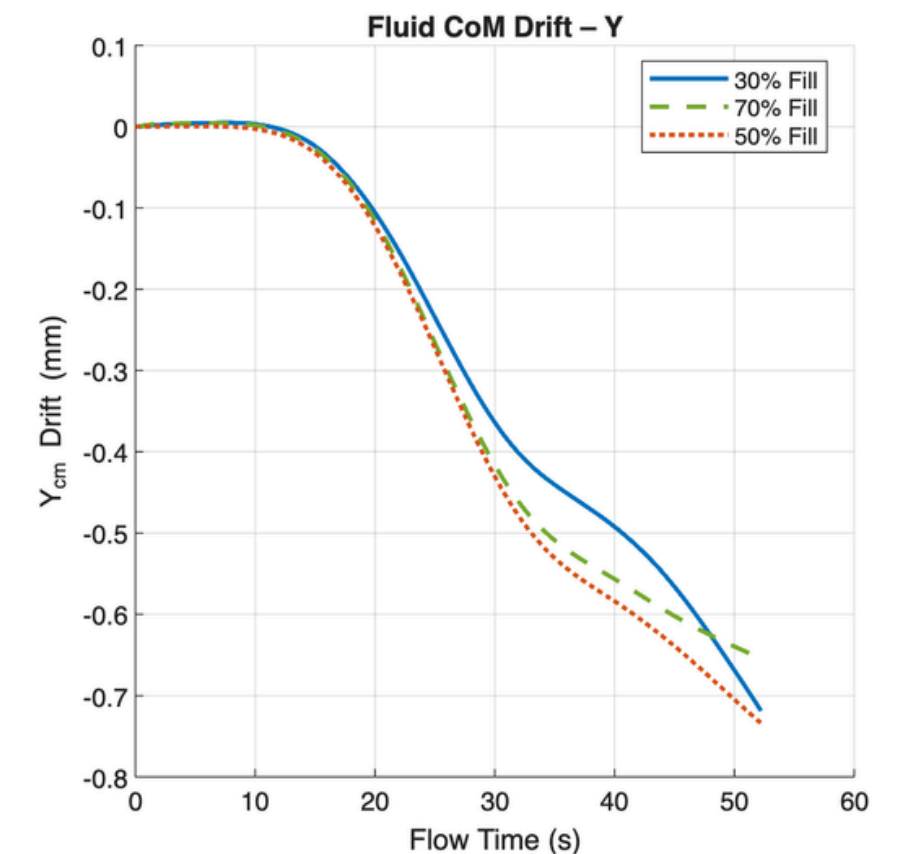
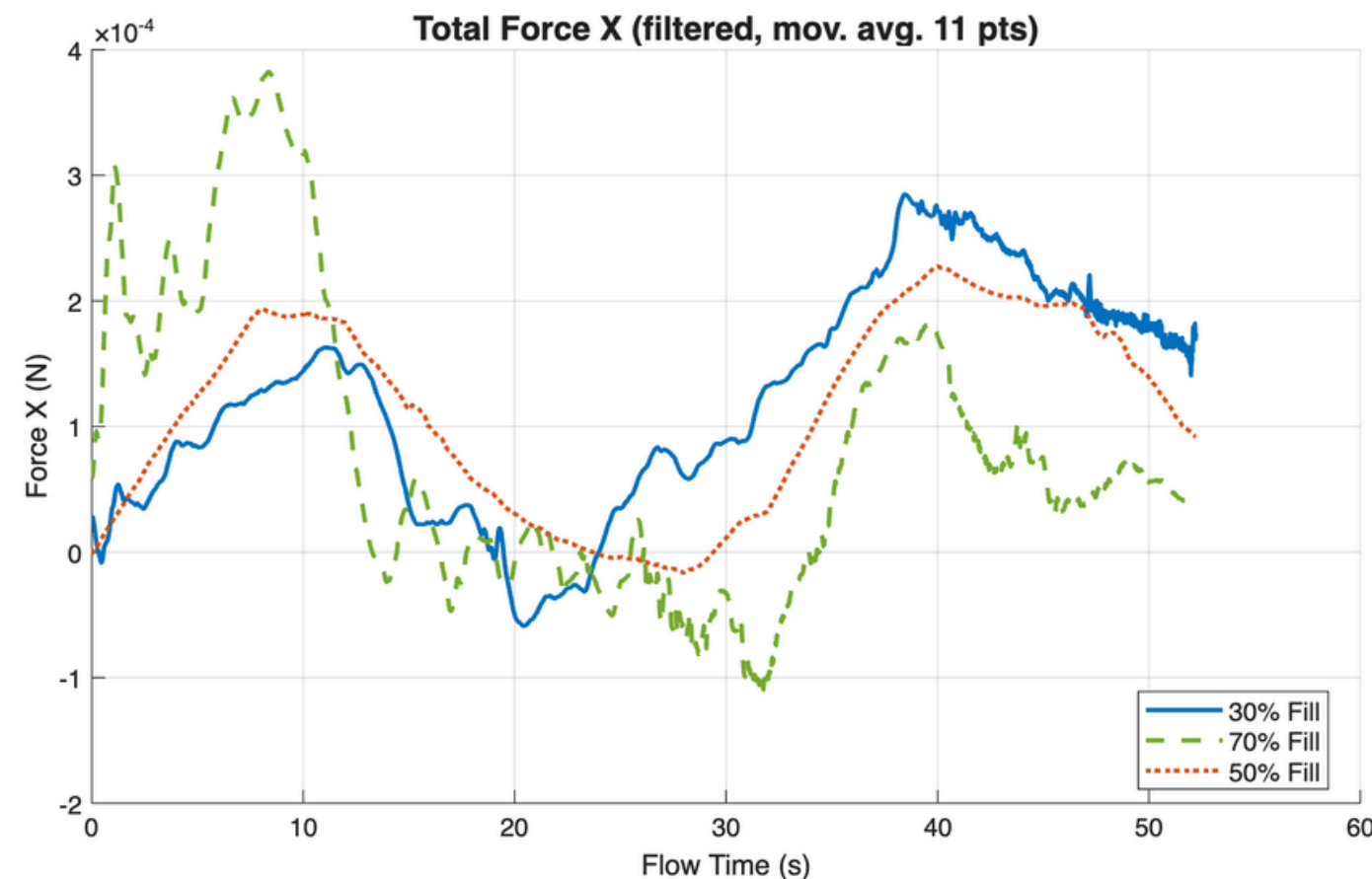
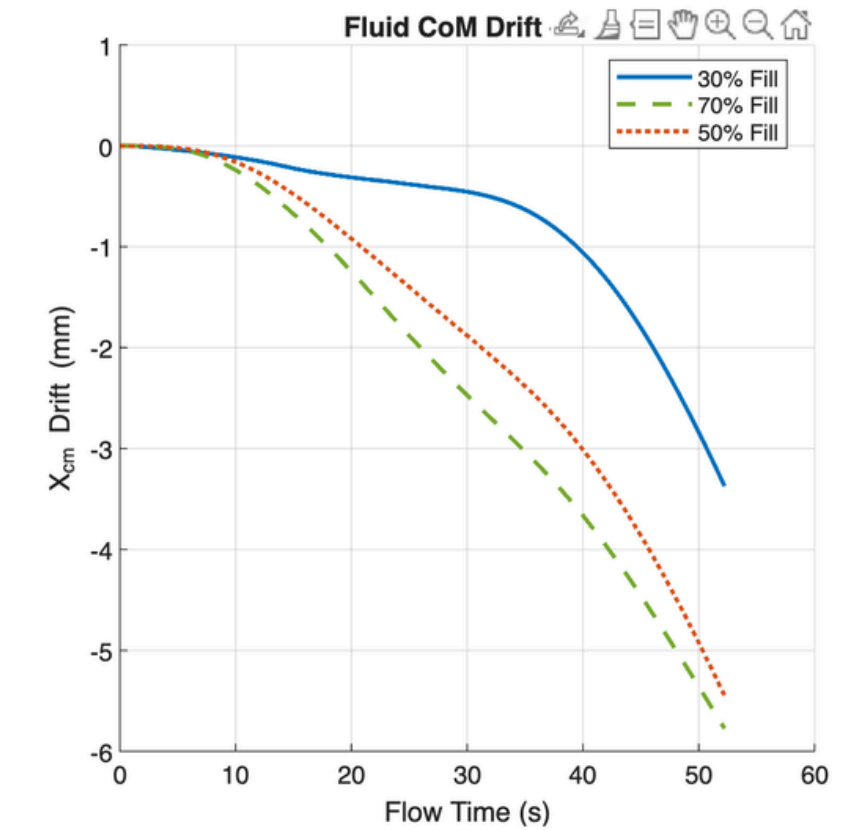
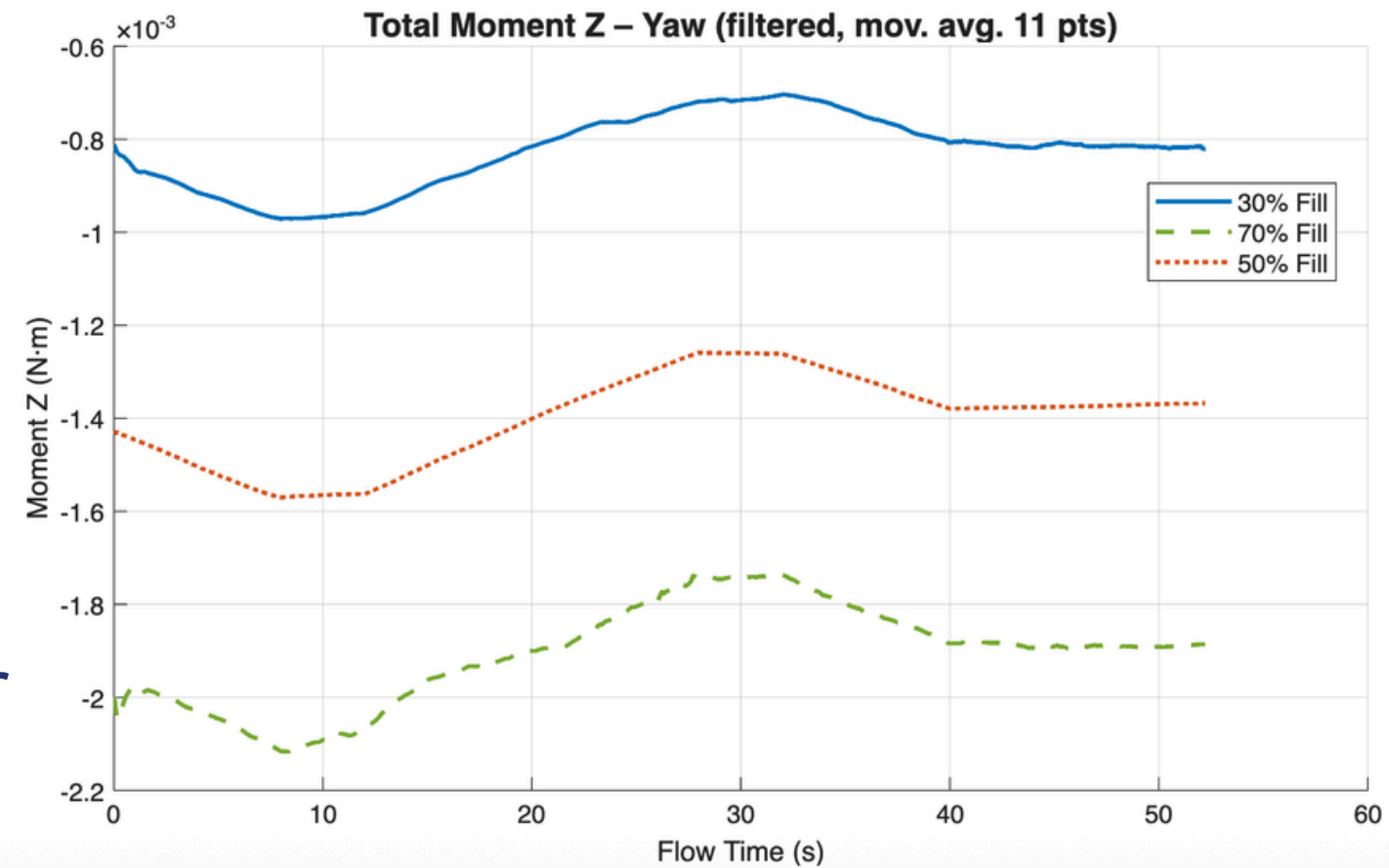
$$m_{Xe} = 29 \text{ kg}$$



Comparative Analysis – Fill CFD

Reorientation Maneuver:

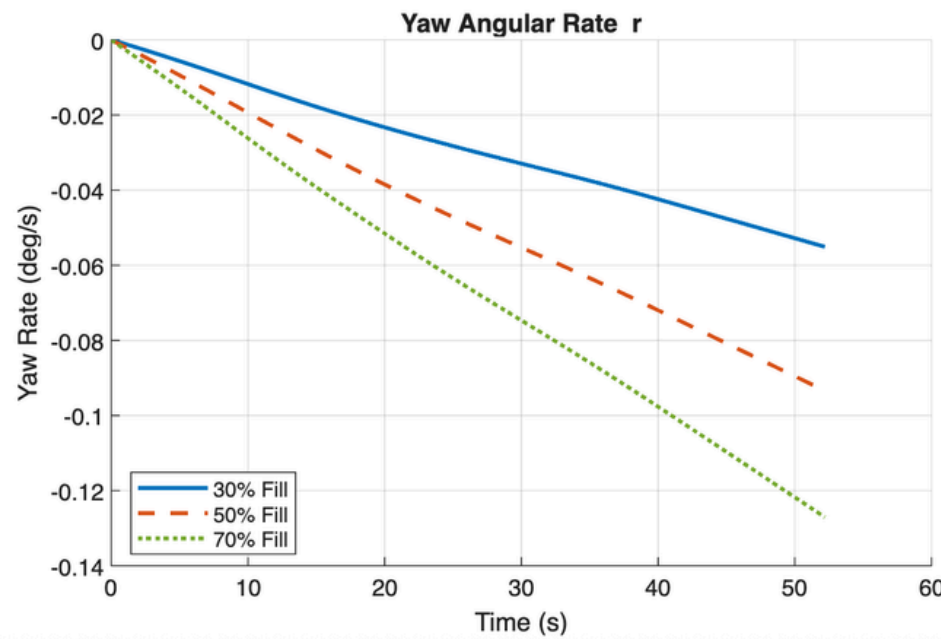
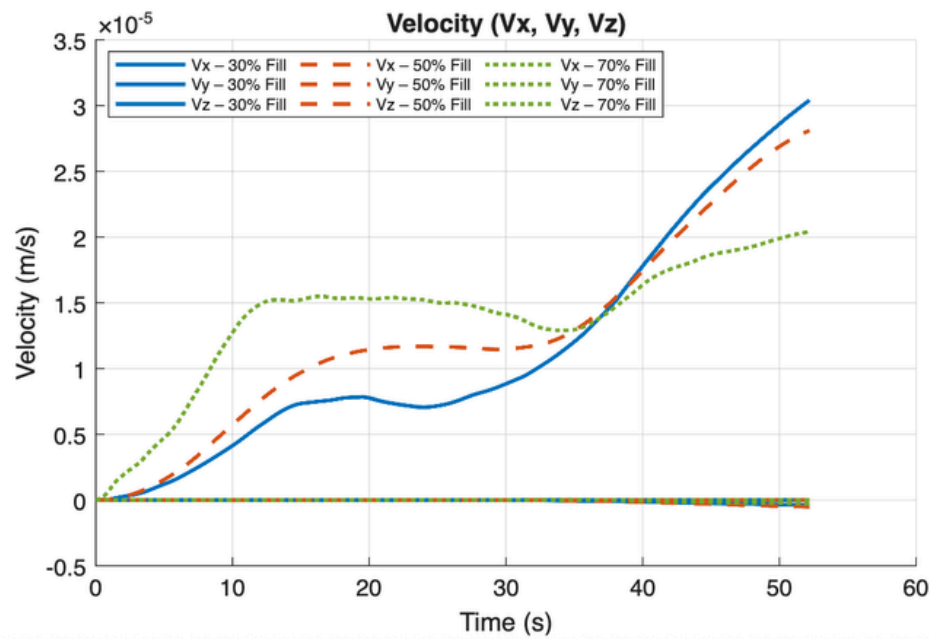
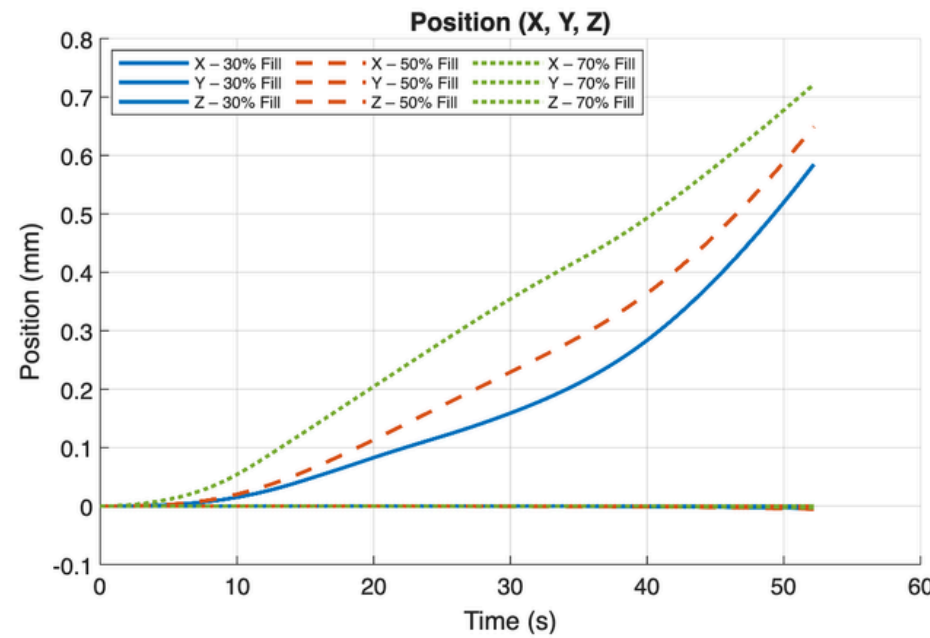
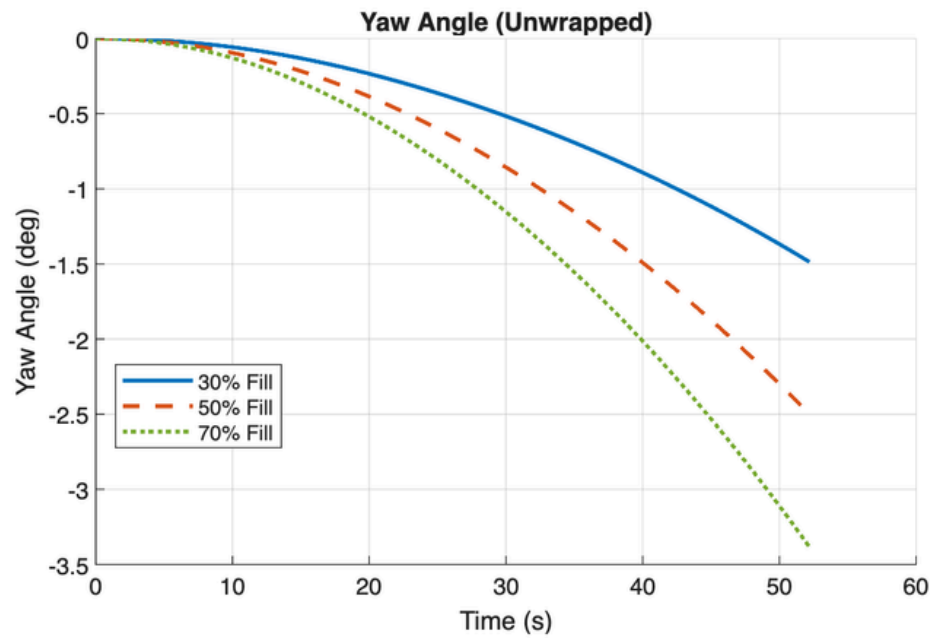
- Higher Fill Yields Higher Force, Moment, and COM Drift
- Moment Response has similar shape for different fills



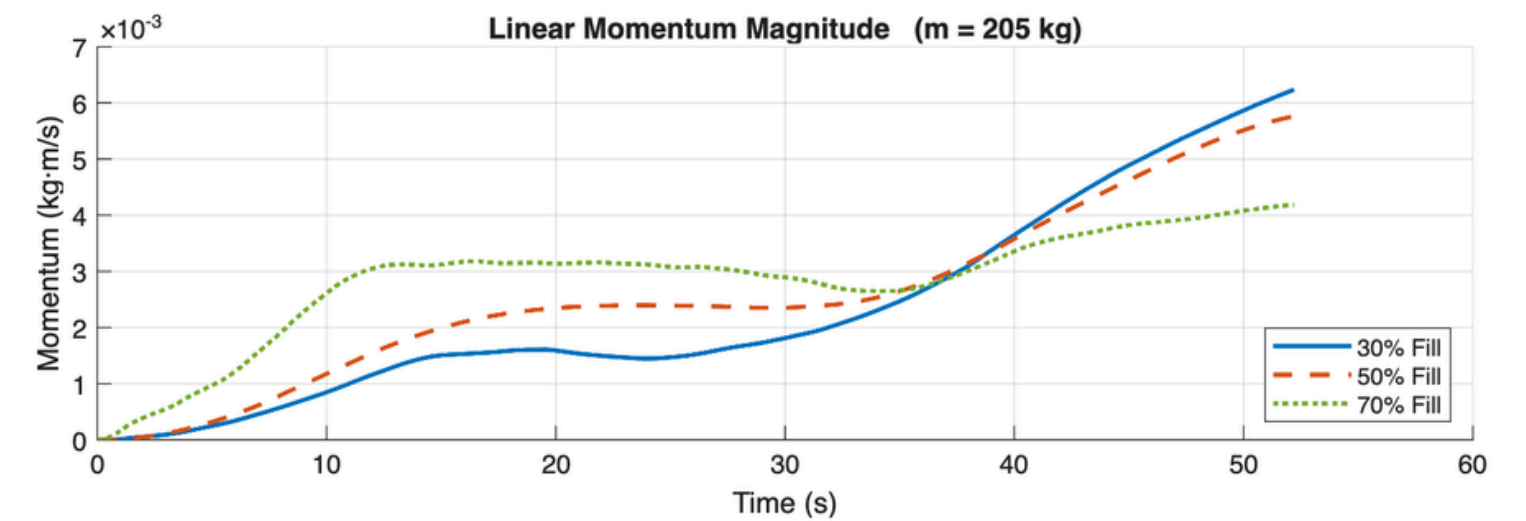
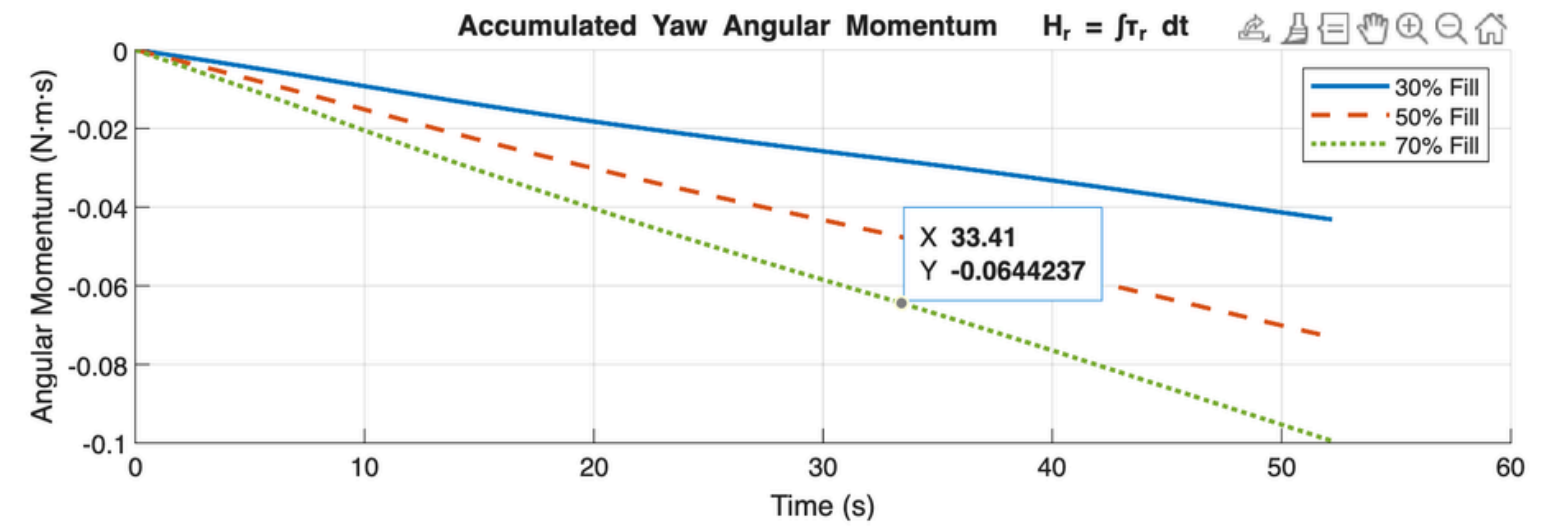
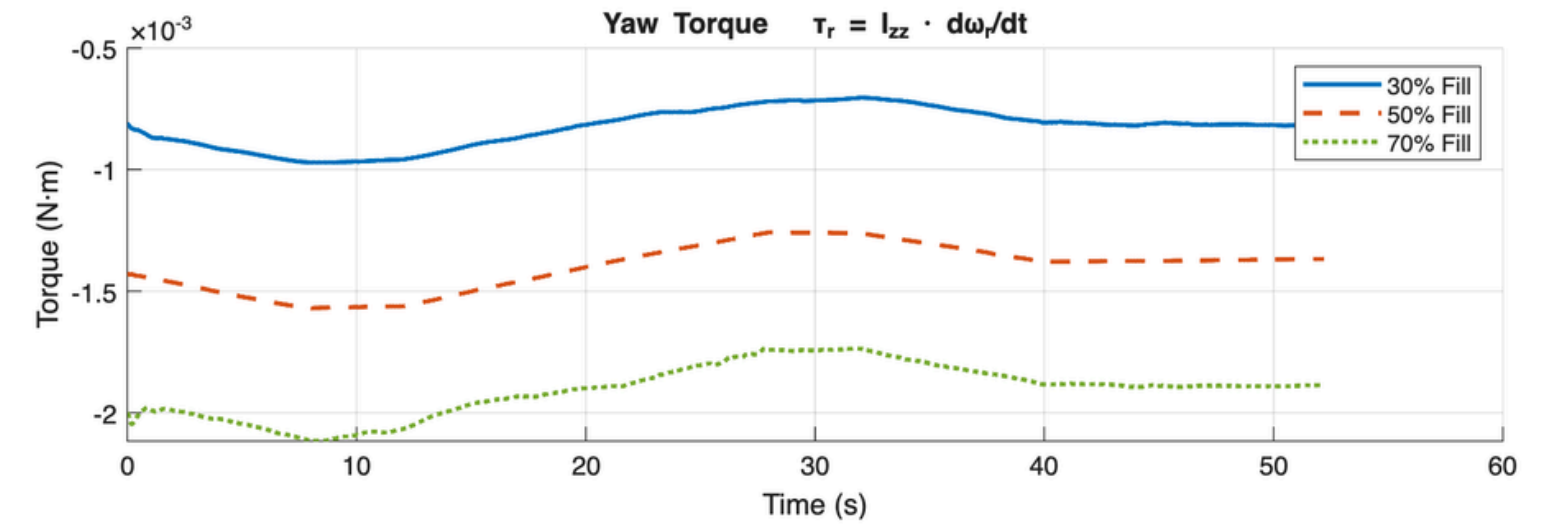
Comparative Analysis – Fill Response

Reorientation Maneuver:

Satellite 6-DOF Response – Fill Level Comparison (30 / 50 / 70%)



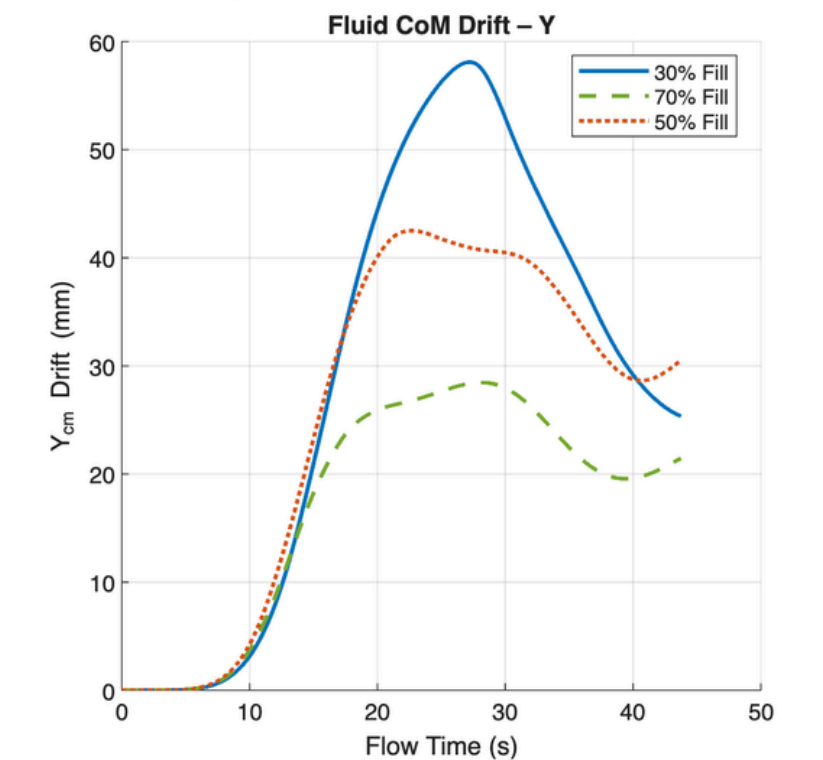
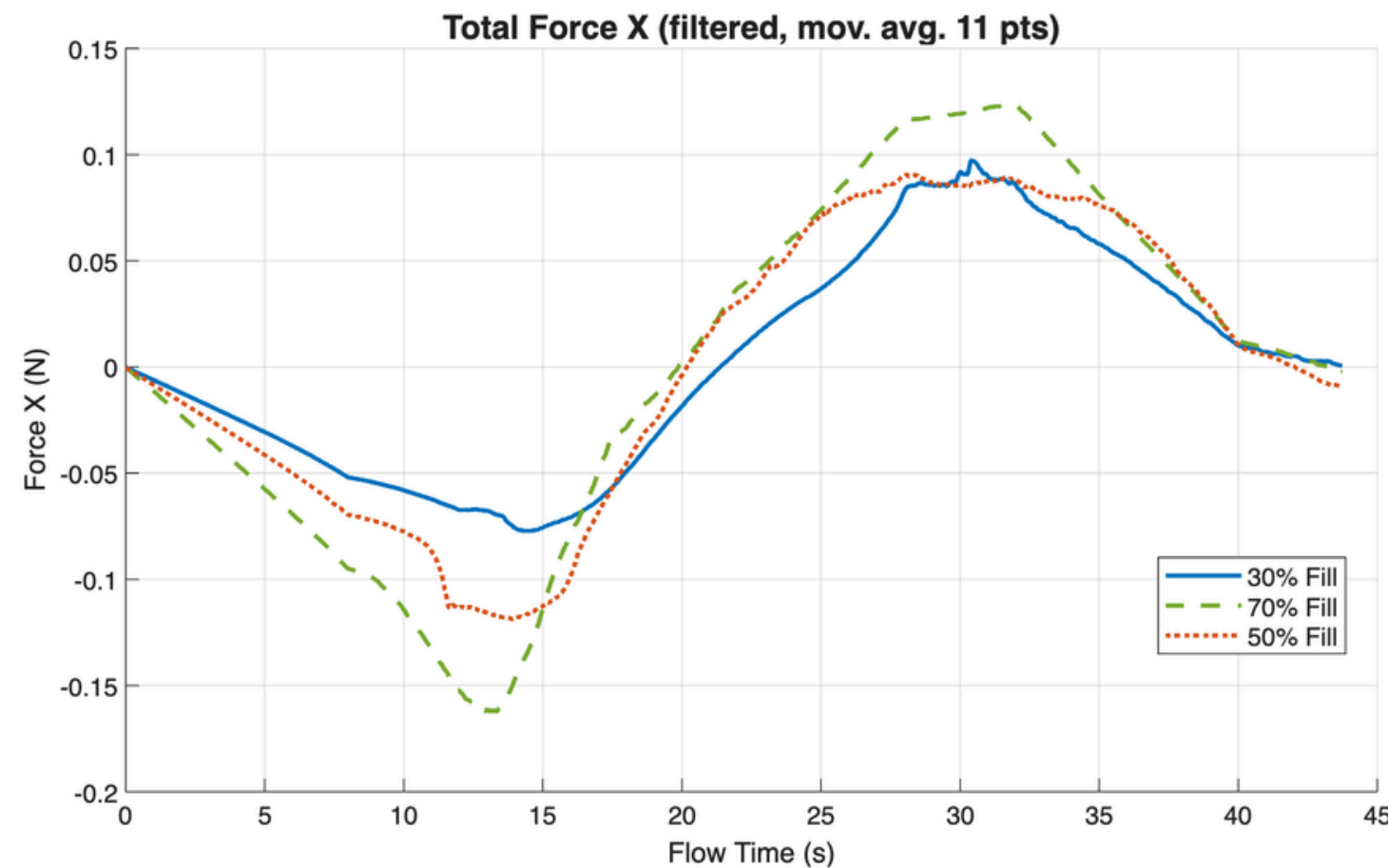
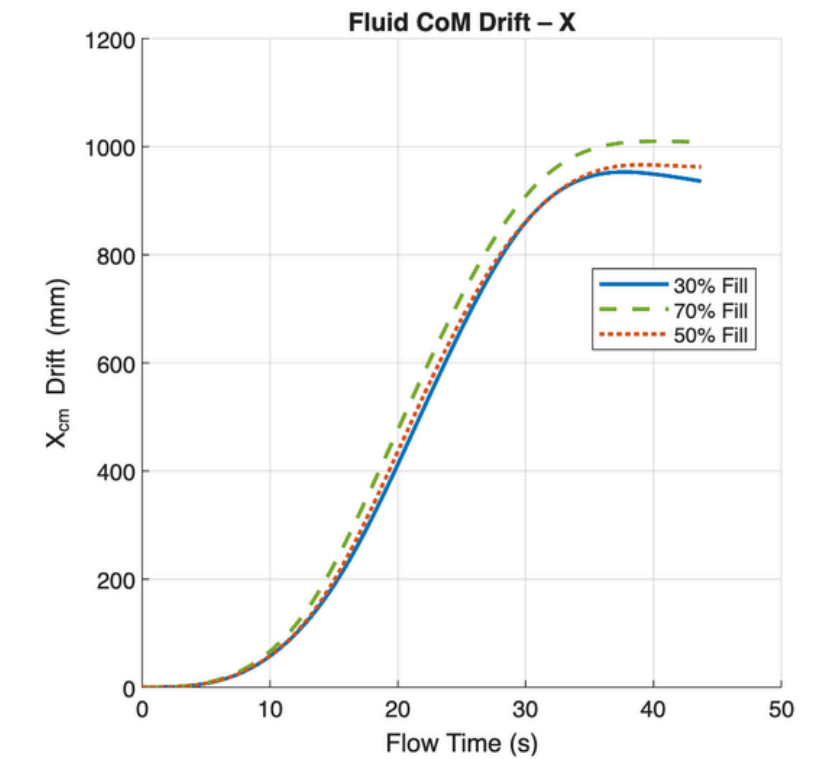
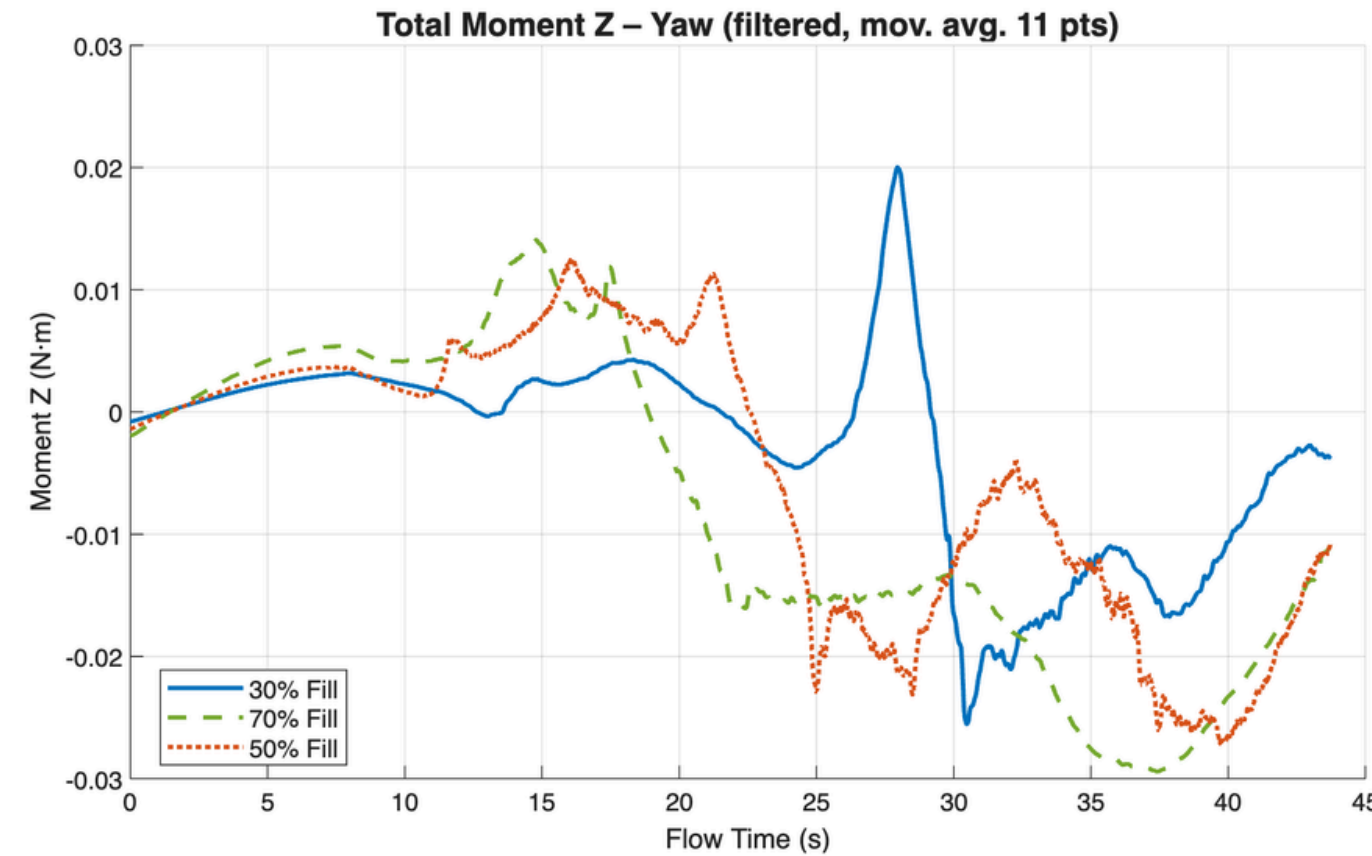
Yaw Torque, Angular Momentum & Linear Momentum – Fill Level Comparison



Comparative Analysis – Fill CFD

Translational Maneuver:

- Higher Fill Yields Higher Force and COM Drift
- Lower Fill has a delayed Moment Response

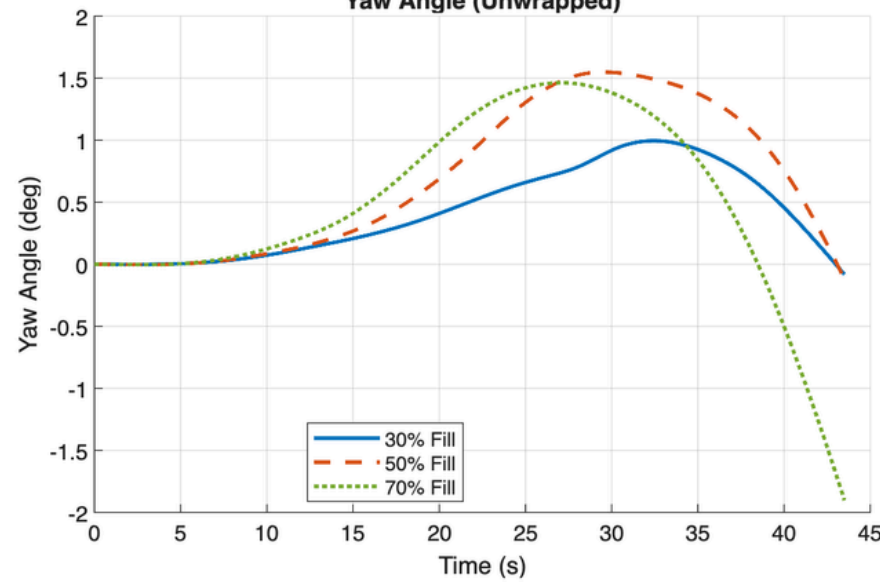


Comparative Analysis – Fill Response

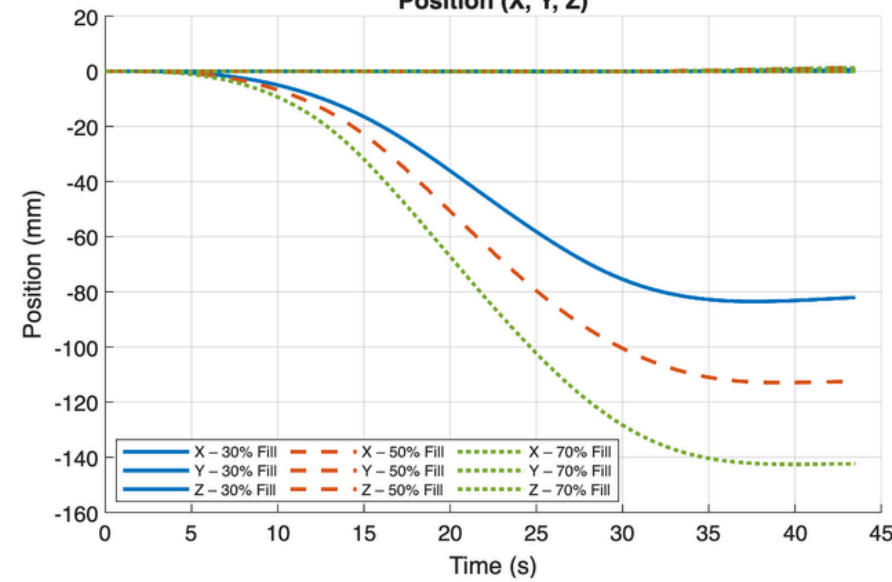
Translational Maneuver:

Satellite 6-DOF Response – Fill Level Comparison (30 / 50 / 70%)

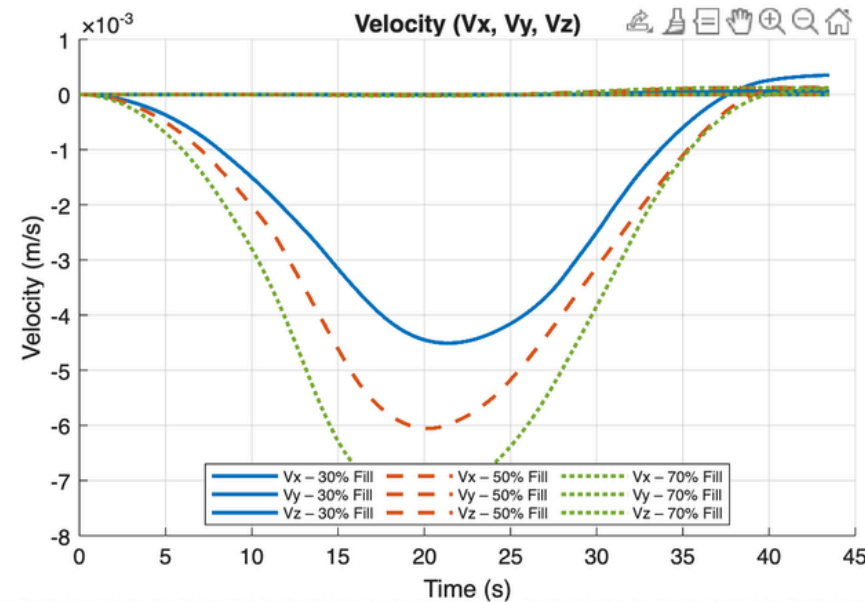
Yaw Angle (Unwrapped)



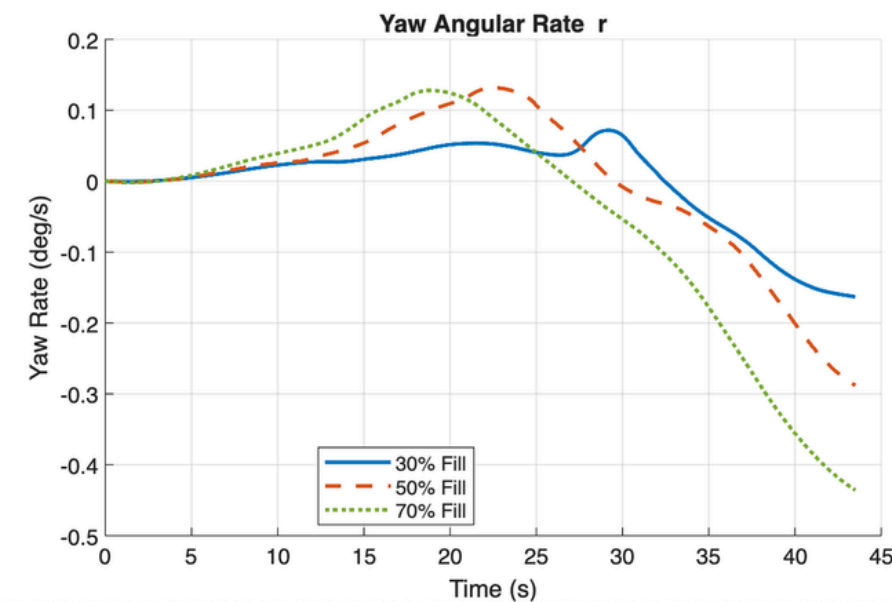
Position (X, Y, Z)



Velocity (Vx, Vy, Vz)

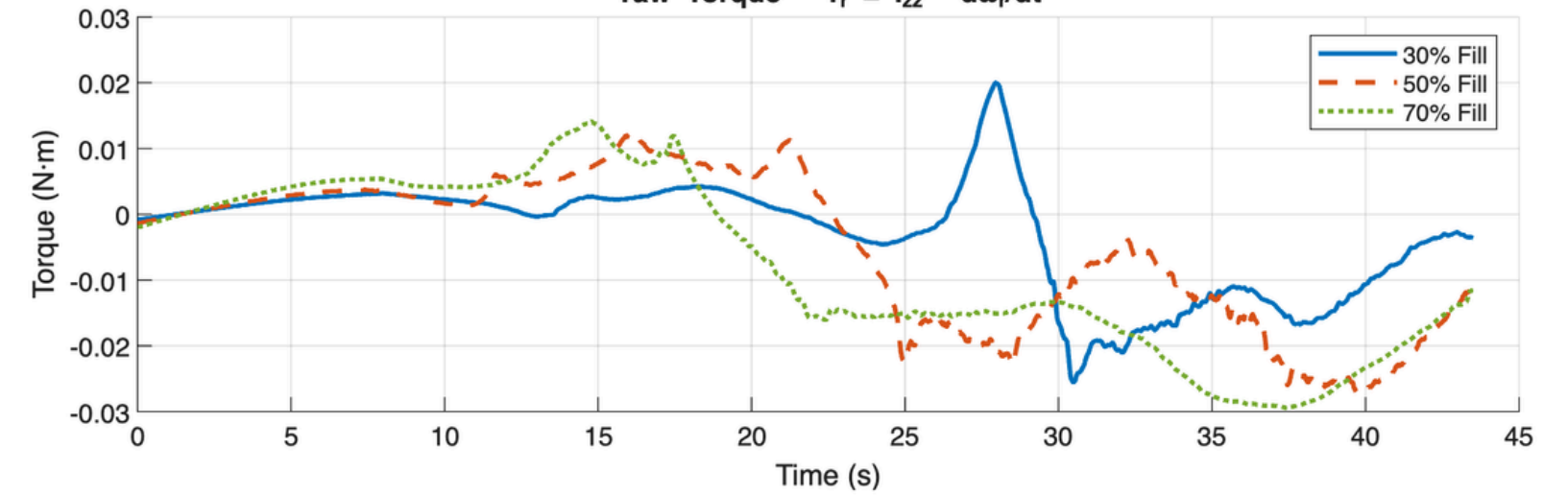


Yaw Angular Rate r

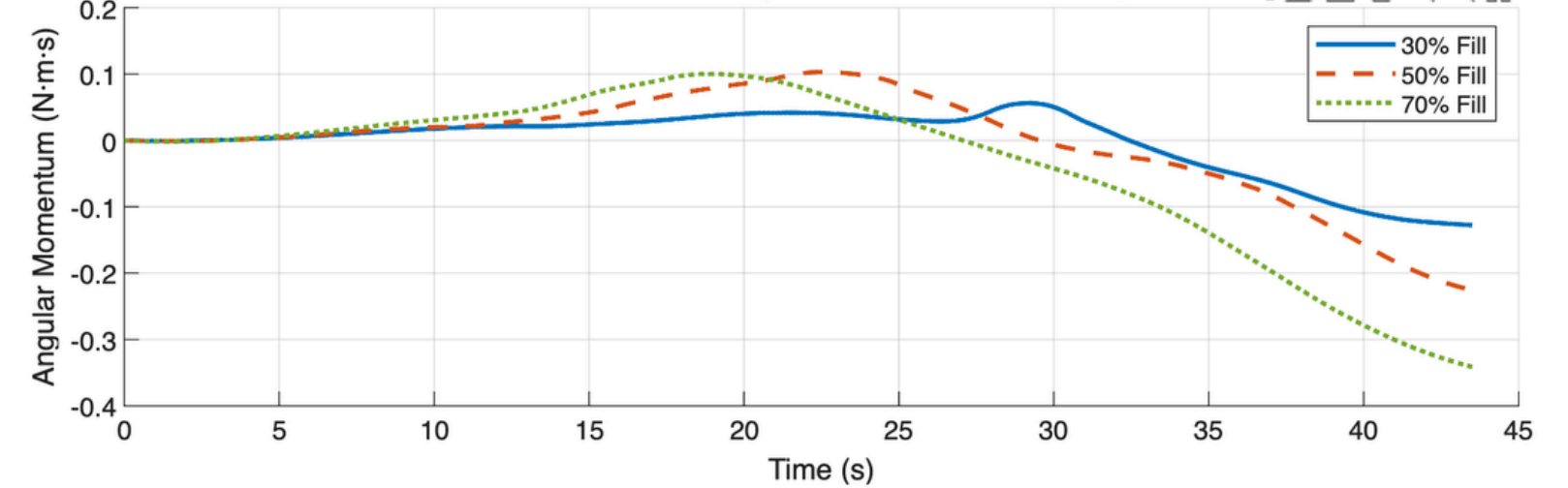


Yaw Torque, Angular Momentum & Linear Momentum – Fill Level Comparison

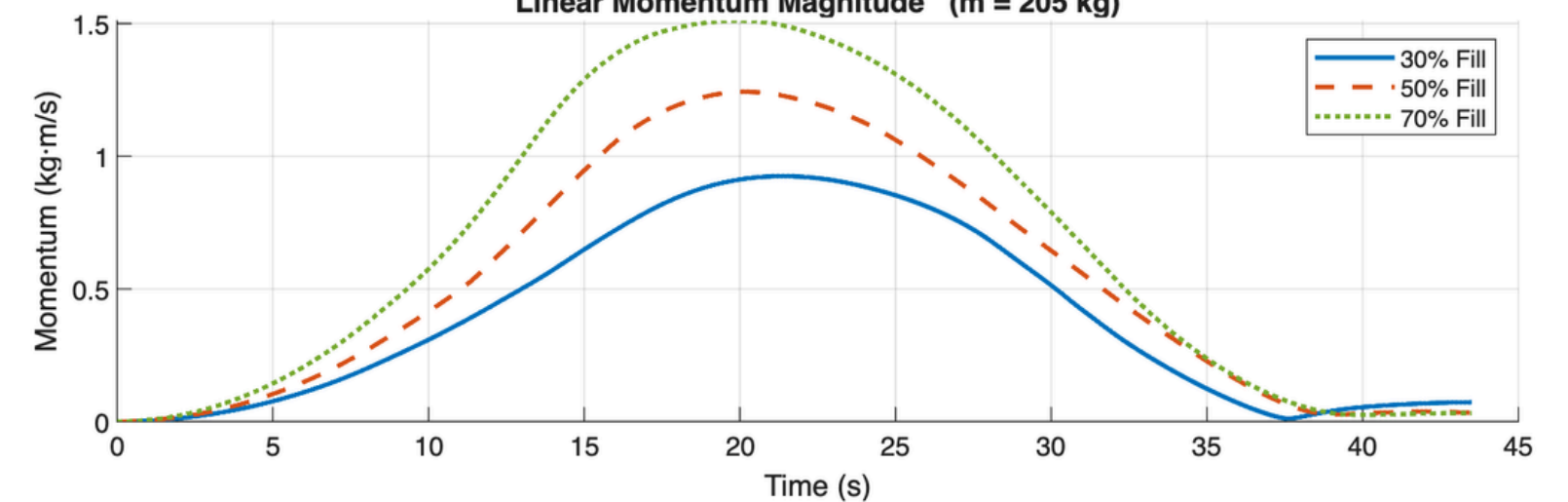
Yaw Torque $\tau_r = I_{zz} \cdot d\omega_r/dt$



Accumulated Yaw Angular Momentum $H_r = \int \tau_r dt$



Linear Momentum Magnitude (m = 205 kg)



Attitude Analysis Results

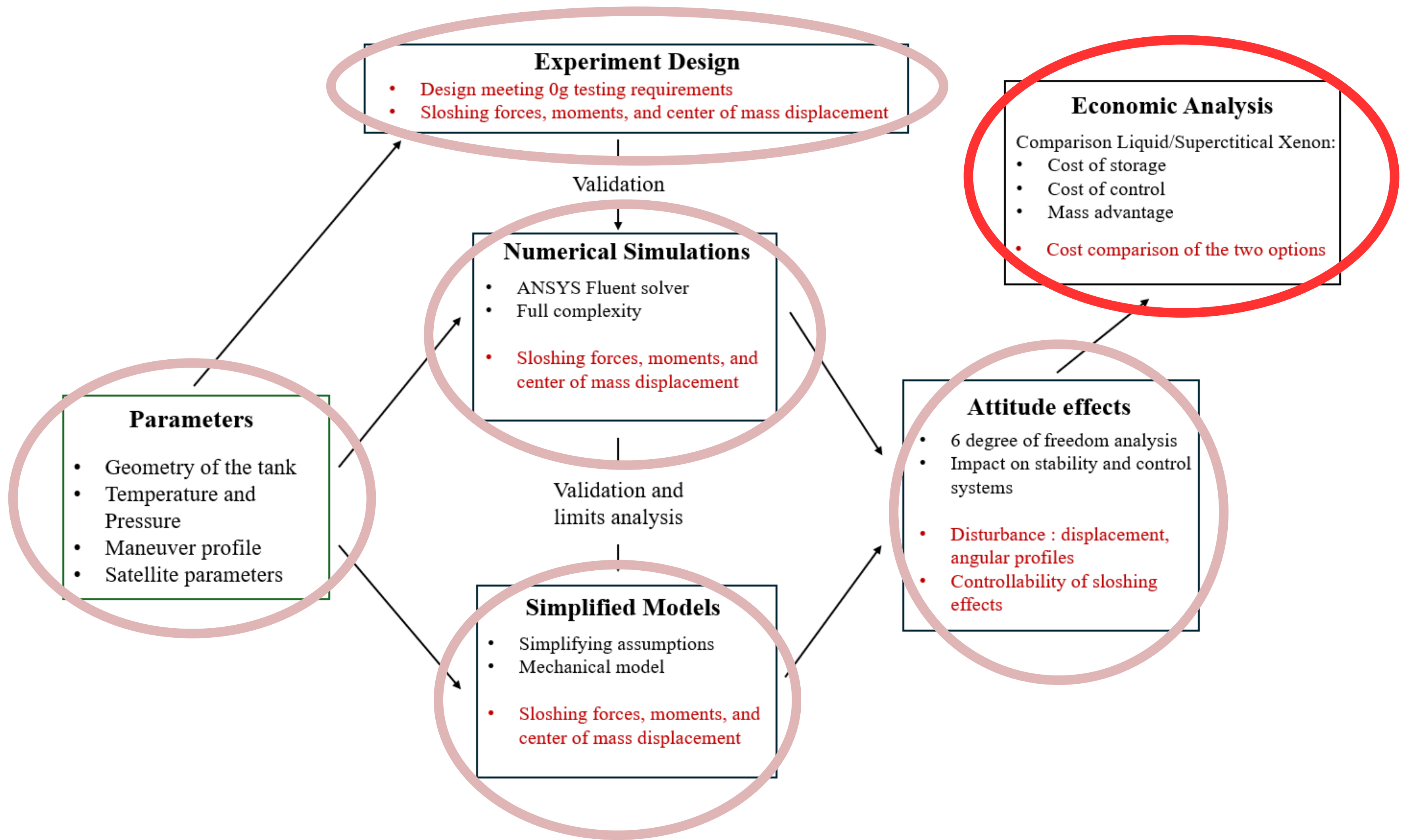
The sloshing effects are **fully controllable** for standard sized reaction wheels

Mass Comparison:

- Changing the Mass of a Satellite has **no effect** on Torque and Momentum
- A lower Mass has a **greater** response for attitude and position

Fill Comparison:

- A higher fill percentage results in **greater** effects in the Forces, Moments, and their respective attitude responses
- A lower fill percentage often has a delayed response in Moment



Economic Analysis

Is the energy used to keep Xenon in a supercritical state greater than the energy needed from reaction wheels to account for sloshing?

Case 1: Industry Method

- Xenon is kept as a vapor at 21°C
- No Sloshing occurs
- No Work from Reaction Wheel

Case 2: Sloshing Method

- Xenon is kept as a liquid at -3°C
- Sloshing Occurs
- Work from Reaction Wheel

Economic Analysis – Heat Cost

- Assume the propellant tank's heat is controlled **separately** to the rest of the satellite
- Heat is transferred by radiation and conduction through struts

$$T_{in, min} = -20^{\circ}\text{C} \quad T_{in, max} = 50^{\circ}\text{C}$$

Assumptions

Struts: Ti-6Al-4V Titanium

$$A_{struts} = 1 \text{ cm}^2$$

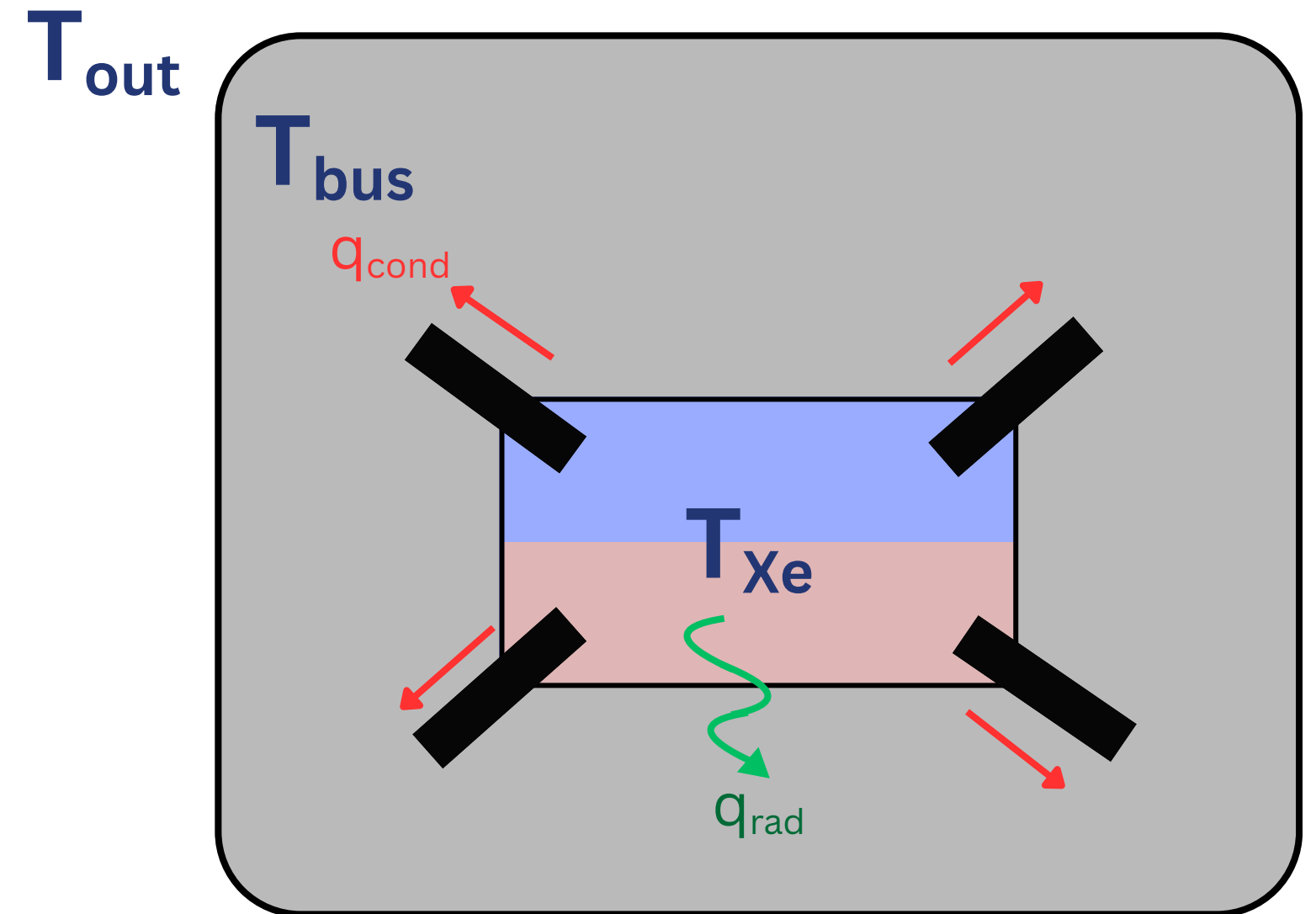
$$n = 4$$

$$k_{struts} = 6.7 \text{ W/m-K}$$

$$L = 3 \text{ cm}$$

Tank Coating: MLI (multi-layer insulation)

$$\epsilon = 0.018$$



Economic Analysis – Heat Cost

$$m_{\text{prop}} c_p \frac{dT}{dt} = q_{\text{in}} - q_{\text{loss}}$$

$$P_{\text{heating}} = q_{\text{loss}} = q_{\text{rad}} + q_{\text{cond}}$$

$$q_{\text{rad}} = \epsilon \sigma A_{\text{sat}} (T^4 - T_{\text{bus}}^4)$$

$$\Delta E = \int (P_{\text{heating}}(T_{sc}) - P_{\text{heating}}(T_{lv})) dt$$

$$q_{\text{cond}} = \frac{k A_{\text{struts}}}{L} (T - T_{\text{bus}})$$

Internal Bus Temperature	Supercritical (T_{sc}) Heating Power [W]	Liquid/Vapor ($T_{l/v}$) Heating Power [W]
High End (50°C)	0.0000	0.0000
Average (15°C)	0.7832	0.0000
Low End (-20°C)	5.0730 *	2.0092

*Based on real data, the low end can be up to 8-10 Watts!

Assuming Average Internal Bus Temperature,

$$\Delta E = 4229.34 \text{ J}$$

Economic Analysis – Reaction Cost

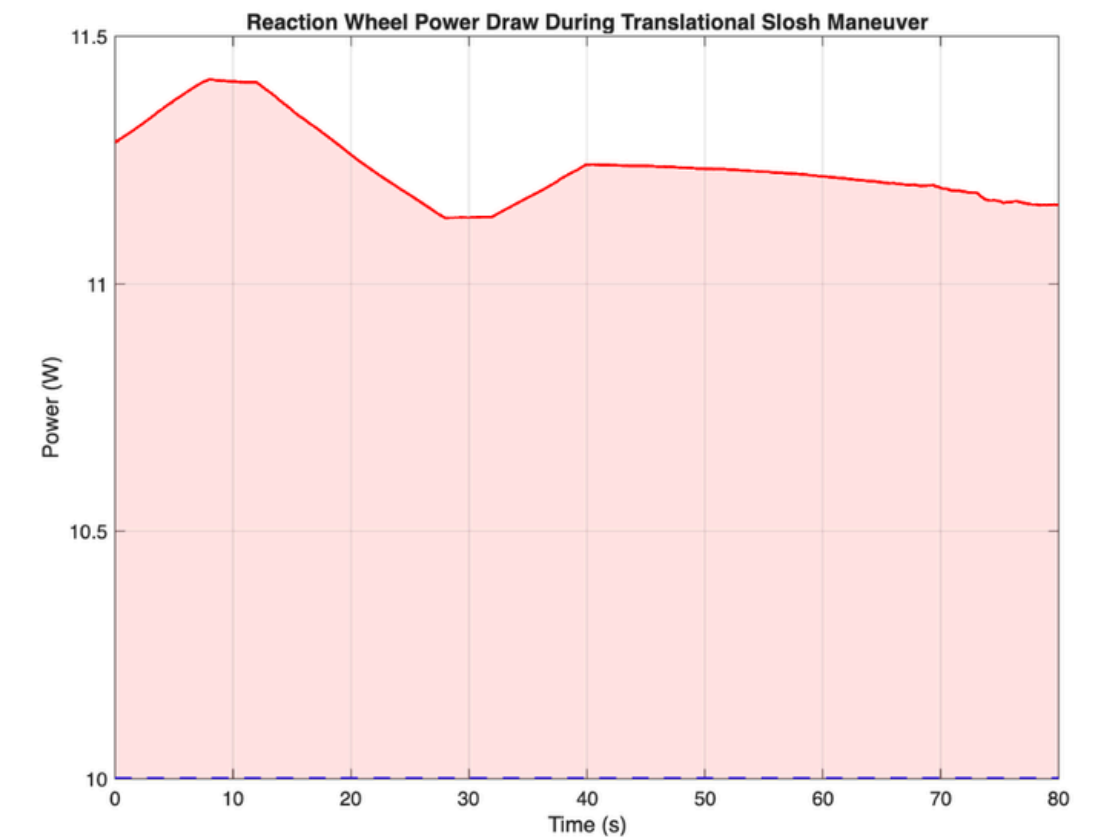
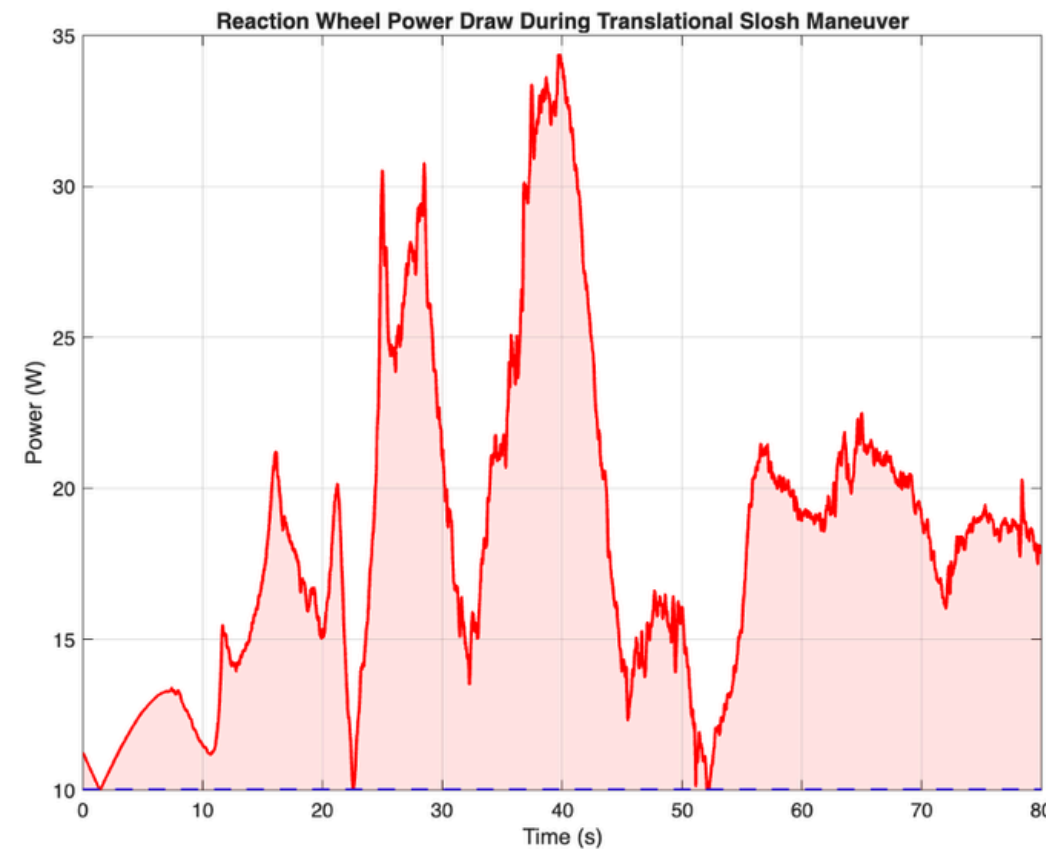
- A Linear Power Model is proposed for Reaction Wheel Power

$$P_{\text{steady}} = 10\text{W} \quad P_{\text{max}} = 100\text{W}$$

$$T_{\text{max}} = 0.1 \text{ Nm}$$

$$P_{\text{slosh-induced}} = \frac{P_{\text{max}} - P_{\text{steady}}}{T_{\text{max}}} * \tau_{\text{slosh}}$$

$$P_{\text{total}} = P_{\text{steady}} + P_{\text{slosh-induced}}$$



	Translational Maneuver	Rotational Maneuver
Average Power Consumption [W]	8.43	1.24
Energy Cost for Maneuver [J]	674.09	99.13

Economic Analysis Review

Case 1: Traditional Method

- Heat cost of propellant heating can get up to 8-10 W
 - ~50 kJ per orbit at peak times
- Assuming 15°C internal temperature, 0.48W
 - 4.23 kJ per 90 min orbital cycle

Case 2: Sloshing Method

Translational Maneuver:

- 674 J per maneuver
- Occur few times a month

Reorientation Maneuver:

- 99 J per maneuver
- Occur few times per 90 min orbital cycle

The Sloshing Method saves a significant amount of energy over time

- Can be redirected to other equipment
- Future Satellites can downsize solar arrays and batteries
 - saves mass and launch cost

Conclusion

- The cross-validation between the **Numerical Methods** and the **Simplified model** provided a proper estimate for the **Xenon CoM, Slosh Force, and Slosh Moment**
- The **Experiment Design** provides the framework for a real life model to verify the numerical results
- The **attitude** can be preserved, as the torque is controllable by the satellite's reaction wheel
- A substantial amount of energy can be preserved through allowing Xenon propellant to enter liquid phase

Note:

This project came with several assumptions. However, it can be used as a baseline for future projects and considerations.

Thank You!

Any Questions?



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