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1       **Effect of fracture voids on the swelling behaviour of**  
2                                   **Callovo-Oxfordian claystone**

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41 **Abstract:** The Callovo-Oxfordian (COx) claystone has been considered as a possible  
42 host rock for deep geological repository of high-level radioactive waste in France.  
43 When constructing the repository, it is unavoidable to generate a fractured zone in the  
44 vicinity of excavated repository walls. In the assessment of the repository  
45 performance, it is important to investigate the role of the fractures on the swelling  
46 capacity of COx claystone and to further characterize the fractured zone evolution. In  
47 this study, the effect of fracture voids on the swelling behaviour of COx claystone was  
48 investigated by simulating the fracture voids with a space created by a limited amount  
49 of grains sandwiched between claystone disks, and by performing a series of swelling  
50 tests in oedometer under a low vertical stress (0.05 MPa) and swelling pressure tests  
51 under constant-volume condition. Results showed that, with water infiltrating into the  
52 sample with fracture voids, the grains collapsed before the swelling of claystone disks.  
53 The whole sample was composed of swelling zones corresponding to the claystone  
54 disks with higher dry density than the expected final value, and of compression zones  
55 corresponding to the initial fractures with lower dry density. Moreover, the axial strain  
56 and swelling pressure decreased as the fracture void increased. The maximum fracture  
57 voids that might be fully filled by the swelling of COx claystone (sealing) were found  
58 to be 5.14% - 7.65% without considering the long-term creep contribution in the field  
59 condition.

60

61 **Key words:** COx claystone; Fracture voids; Swelling behaviour; Sealing

62

## 63 **1 Introduction**

64 The Callovo-Oxfordian (COx) claystone has been considered as a possible host rock  
65 for deep geological disposal of high-level radioactive waste by the French  
66 Radioactive Waste Management Agency (ANDRA) thanks to its favorable properties  
67 such as low permeability and diffusion coefficient, high retention capacity for  
68 radionuclides (ANDRA, 2005). In order to assess the reliability of the host rock as a  
69 geological barrier for radioactive waste confinement in field condition, an  
70 underground research laboratory (URL) was constructed at a depth of 490 m in the  
71 150 m-thick formation of COx claystone in Bure, France (Armand et al., 2013). As  
72 excavation of the underground repository in this formation induced shear and tensile  
73 fractures, a damaged zone around the galleries was created with fractures smaller than  
74 1 mm (Armand et al., 2014). A part of this zone is normally unsaturated during the  
75 construction and exploitation of the galleries due to ventilation. It becomes  
76 progressively saturated with the up-take of underground water. Under the effect of  
77 water infiltration, the COx claystone in the fractured zone is expected to swell and to  
78 close the excavation-induced fractures, leading to a significant reduction of water  
79 transmissivity. Thereby, in the assessment of repository performance, it is important to  
80 account for the swelling behaviour of the COx claystone with fractures.

81 The swelling behaviour of COx claystone under the effect of fractures has been  
82 scarcely reported in literature, mainly because of the difficulty related to the sampling  
83 of fractured samples in field (Armand et al., 2014), as well as the relatively large  
84 variability of natural COx claystone in terms of dry density and mineralogy (Conil et

85 al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2020). On the-other hand, the self-sealing behaviour of  
86 fractured CO<sub>x</sub> claystone has been widely investigated by means of gas/water  
87 permeability tests in the laboratory and in the field condition (Davy et al., 2007;  
88 Zhang and Rothfuchs, 2008; Zhang, 2011; de La Vaissière et al., 2015; Auvray et al.,  
89 2017). It was found that the gas/water permeabilities of strongly fractured CO<sub>x</sub>  
90 claystone sample significantly decreased after water re-saturation, indicating a  
91 relatively high self-sealing capacity of CO<sub>x</sub> claystone. This point was confirmed by  
92 the X-ray tomography technique (Ando et al., 2017; Giot et al., 2018; Di Donna et al.,  
93 2019). Moreover, the swelling behavior of compacted sealing/backfilling materials in  
94 the presence of artificial fractures was also widely reported in literature (Wang et al.,  
95 2011, 2013; Bian et al., 2019; Jia et al., 2019). Results show that the swelling pressure  
96 decreased as the fractures increased. Basically, the sealing of fractured claystone is a  
97 complex long-term hydro-mechanical process, which is controlled by many factors  
98 such as the extent and intensity of fractures, the swelling capability of claystone as  
99 well as the boundary conditions (e.g., the stress state, the build-up backfill pressure).  
100 From a practical point of view, well understanding the swelling behaviour of CO<sub>x</sub>  
101 claystone with the presence of fractures is helpful in analyzing the self-sealing process  
102 in the fractured zone.

103 In this study, a series of swelling tests were performed in oedometer on CO<sub>x</sub>  
104 claystone with different fracture voids either under a low vertical stress (0.05 MPa) or  
105 under constant-volume condition, the fracture voids being simulated by a limited  
106 quantity of CO<sub>x</sub> claystone grains of defined sizes, sandwiched between CO<sub>x</sub>

107 claystone disks. For comparison and further analysis, the results from the swelling and  
108 compression tests performed by Zhang et al. (2020) on intact CO<sub>x</sub> claystone samples  
109 were considered. After the tests under constant-volume condition, the water content  
110 and dry density profiles were determined, allowing further interpretation of the  
111 swelling behaviour of CO<sub>x</sub> claystone samples with fracture voids. Emphasis was put  
112 on the initial fracture void on the swelling and swelling pressure as well as the  
113 maximum fracture voids that might be sealed by CO<sub>x</sub> claystone swelling, which are  
114 key questions in the assessment of deep geological repository performance of nuclear  
115 waste disposal.

116

## 117 **2 Materials and methods**

### 118 **2.1 Materials**

119 Undisturbed CO<sub>x</sub> claystone samples were extracted at 490 m depth from the  
120 Underground Research Laboratory (URL) at Bure in France, following the direction  
121 parallel to the bedding plane that was found to be parallel to the ground surface  
122 through observation of a piece of CO<sub>x</sub> claystone immersed in water. They were then  
123 covered by foil and conserved in a fully confined cell (T1), preventing water loss and  
124 soil rebounding (Conil et al., 2018). At 490 m depth, the average mineralogical  
125 composition is (Armand et al., 2013): 50-55 % clay minerals, 20% tectosilicates,  
126 20-25% carbonates and 3% other minerals (subordinate pyrite and iron oxides). The  
127 clay minerals composition contains 55% I/S (interstratified illite-smectite), 30% illite  
128 and 15% kaolinite and chlorite.

129 The synthetic water used in this study had the same chemical composition as the  
130 pore water of COx claystone from the ANDRA URL in Bure (Table 1).

131

## 132 **2.2 Preparation of samples**

133 In this study, five cores (EST56054, EST56056, EST56062, EST57173 and  
134 EST57175) with 300 mm length and 80 mm diameter were used. After opening the  
135 COx claystone from the confined cell (T1) in the laboratory, a cylinder with 50 mm  
136 diameter was drilled in the direction perpendicular to the bedding. Then, this cylinder  
137 (50 mm diameter) was cut with a scroll saw machine to prepare disks with 5 mm  
138 height for samples with fracture voids. The fracture voids for samples with two, three  
139 and four disks were simulated with a defined space created by COx claystone grains  
140 of defined sizes between the disks of 5 mm height each (see Fig. 1). The grains were  
141 obtained by crushing intact COx claystone and passing through different sieves, and  
142 their mass was kept less than 1% of the whole sample in order to minimize its effect  
143 on the global swelling behaviour of the sample. The fracture void of the sample was  
144 defined as the volume of fractures divided by the volume of the whole sample  
145 (including the volume of disks and fractures).

146

## 147 **2.3 Experimental methods**

148 The swelling tests on the samples with fracture voids under 0.05 MPa vertical stress  
149 were performed in a conventional oedometer. The inner surface of the metallic cell  
150 was smeared with silicone grease in order to minimize the side friction during the  
151 swelling tests, following ASTM D2435-96. The experimental programs are shown in

152 Table 2. Two tests were performed on samples with two disks (CS(2 disks)01-02),  
153 five tests on samples with three disks (CS(3 disks)01-05) and two tests on samples  
154 with four disks (CS(4 disks)01-02), the height of each disk being 5 mm. The crushed  
155 CO<sub>x</sub> grains respectively passing through sieves of 0.2-0.25, 0.315-0.4, 0.5-0.63,  
156 0.63-0.8 and 0.8-1.0 mm were used, allowing creation of the fracture voids ranging  
157 from 1.78% to 10.68% (see Table 2). Note that swelling tests under different vertical  
158 stresses (CS(1 disk)01-04) and compression test (SC(1 disk)01) on intact samples  
159 with a height of 10 mm (see Table 2) were performed by Zhang et al. (2020). To  
160 facilitate the sample installation in the oedometer cell, an initial small gap  
161 corresponding to a void ratio of 0.015 - 0.02 (see Table 2) was kept between the  
162 sample and the oedometer cell. In further analysis, these initial gaps are regarded as  
163 space allowing soil free swelling (Zhang et al., 2020). However, for the samples with  
164 fractures, due to the difficulty of calculating the void ratio corresponding to initial  
165 gaps, these initial gaps together with the fractures created by grains contributed to the  
166 initial fracture voids as well as the global void ratios. Moreover, the void ratio  
167 corresponding to the filter paper thickness (0.09 mm) was equal to 0.009. Thus, the  
168 effect of such small void ratio on the swelling behaviour during wetting was ignored.  
169 It is worth noting that to facilitate the synthetic water infiltration, the top, bottom and  
170 lateral surfaces of sample were covered with filter papers. With water infiltration from  
171 the bottom of the cell (the water head was about 0.5 m), water will go through the  
172 filter papers into the bottom, and then through the lateral filter paper to the fractures  
173 and the top surface, prior to the disks. Thereby, the adopted water infiltration



174 condition was close to the field condition: water mainly infiltrates into fractures prior  
175 to being adsorbed by claystone. The axial displacement was monitored using a LVDT  
176 (Linear Variable Differential Transformer), and the deformation was considered as  
177 stabilized when the axial strain rate was less than  $5 \times 10^{-4}/8$  h (AFNOR, 1997).

178 The swelling pressure was determined by the constant-volume method, and the  
179 experimental setup is presented in Fig. 2. The sample covered with filter papers was  
180 placed between two porous stones in a stainless cell with a diameter of 50 mm. The  
181 synthetic water was infiltrated from the bottom of the cell and a force transducer was  
182 mounted to measure the axial force/swelling pressure. The experimental program is  
183 shown in Table 3. Three tests were performed on samples with two disks (CV(2  
184 disks)01-03), two tests on samples with three disks (CV(3 disks)01-02) and one test  
185 on sample with four disks (CV(4 disks)01). The initial fracture voids varied from 2.44%  
186 to 7.65% (Table 3). Note that the swelling pressure test CV(1 disk)01 on intact sample  
187 with a height of 10 mm was performed by Zhang et al. (2020). When the swelling  
188 pressure was stabilized, the test was considered as completed (Villar and Lloret,  
189 2004).

190 It is worth noting that the sealing of excavation-induced fractures (smaller than 1  
191 mm) is a complex long-term hydro-mechanical process (Armand et al., 2014), which  
192 is controlled by many factors such as the extent and intensity of fractures, the swelling  
193 capability of claystone as well as the boundary conditions (e.g., the stress state). This  
194 is the reason why the different grain sizes (0.2-0.25 mm, 0.315-0.4 mm, 0.5-0.63 mm,  
195 0.63-0.8 mm, 0.8-1.0 mm) and the different quantities of disks (2, 3 and 4), as well as

196 the two boundary conditions (constant-stress 0.05 MPa and constant-volume  
197 condition) were considered in this study.

198 After the swelling tests under constant-volume condition, the samples were  
199 extracted from the oedometer cell and then divided into several layers (see Fig. 1). For  
200 the sample with two disks (Fig. 1a), layers 1, 2 included the top and bottom disks,  
201 respectively, while layer 1.5 included the top and bottom disks, and the fracture voids  
202 in between. Corresponding definitions were adopted for the samples with three and  
203 four disks (Figs. 1b and 1c). Each layer was then cut into small pieces for the water  
204 content and dry density determinations. The water content was determined by oven  
205 drying the samples at 105 °C for 24 h and the dry density was determined by  
206 immersing the samples into a non-wetting hydrocarbon liquid called Kerdane (Delage  
207 et al., 2007; Tang et al., 2010, 2011; Zhang et al., 2018). Accordingly, the water  
208 content and dry density profiles were determined following the definitions of layers  
209 shown in Fig. 1.

210 All the tests were performed at a controlled temperature of  $20 \pm 1^\circ\text{C}$ .

211

### 212 **3 Experimental results**

213 Fig. 3 shows the results from tests CS(1 disk)01-04 on intact samples (Zhang et al.,  
214 2020). It can be observed that the axial strain slowly increased in the first 0.001 day  
215 (1.4 min), then quickly increased till approximately 0.3 day (432 min). Afterwards,  
216 the axial strain slowly increased until stabilization. In addition, the stabilized axial  
217 strain decreased with the increase of vertical stress.

218 Fig. 4a presents the compression curve from test SC(1 disk)01 on intact sample  
 219 (Zhang et al., 2020). It appeared that, upon wetting, the sample swelled under a low  
 220 vertical stress of 0.05 MPa. After the swell completion, further compression gave a  
 221 normal consolidation curve (NCL) that allowed determination of the compression  
 222 index in the range of stress from 2 to 16 MPa ( $C_c = 0.0366$ ). In addition, by  
 223 approximating each curve with two straight lines, the yield stress  $\sigma'_y$  was determined,  
 224 equal to 0.55 MPa, as indicated by the arrow in this figure. For further analysis, the  
 225 compression curve shown in Fig. 4a was used to determine the oedometric modulus  
 226  $E_{\text{oed}}$  as follows:

$$227 \quad E_{\text{oed}} = -\frac{d\sigma_v}{d\varepsilon_v} = -h_i \frac{d\sigma_v}{dh} = -(1 + e_0) \frac{d\sigma_v}{de} \quad (1)$$

228 where  $h_i$  and  $e_0$  are respectively the initial height and void ratio of the sample,  $d\varepsilon_v$ ,  $dh$   
 229 and  $de$  are respectively the volumetric strain, height and void ratio changes under an  
 230 increment of vertical stress  $d\sigma_v$ . Fig. 4b plots the  $E_{\text{oed}}$  versus vertical stress in a  
 231 logarithmic scale. It appeared that, upon loading below 0.5 MPa stress (close to the  
 232 yield stress 0.55 MPa), the  $E_{\text{oed}}$  decreased as the vertical stress increased. By contrast,  
 233 beyond the yield stress 0.55 MPa, the  $E_{\text{oed}}$  linearly increased. This is consistent with  
 234 the results reported by Nguyen et al. (2013) on Boom clay and by Ye et al. (2014) on  
 235 GMZ01 bentonite: with the increase of vertical stress, the  $E_{\text{oed}}$  decreased at the  
 236 beginning and then linearly increased when the stress was higher than the yield stress  
 237 in a logarithmic scale. These observations suggest that the  $E_{\text{oed}}$  is a good indicator of  
 238 soil yielding. Moreover, a linear relationship between the oedometric modulus and the  
 239 vertical stress was obtained after yield.

240 The results from tests CS(2 disks)01-02 on samples with fracture voids are  
241 shown in Fig. 5 in terms of axial strain versus time (Fig. 5a) and void ratio versus  
242 time (Fig. 5b). For comparison, the result from test CS(1 disk)01 on intact sample  
243 (Zhang et al., 2020) was also presented. It is worth noting that when the axial strain  
244 was positive, the decrease/increase of axial strain referred to the decrease/increase of  
245 the magnitude. By contrast, in case of negative value, the decrease/increase of axial  
246 strain referred to the increase/decrease of the magnitude. It appeared from Fig. 5a that,  
247 for the intact sample (CS(1 disk)01), the axial strain increased with time until  
248 stabilization. For samples with fracture voids (tests CS(2 disks)01-02), the axial strain  
249 decreased in the first 0.001 day (1.4 min), showing a closing trend of fractures due to  
250 collapse of COx claystone grains. Afterwards, the axial strain slowly increased up to  
251 approximately 0.006 day (8.6 min), then quickly increased till 0.3 day (432 min).  
252 Finally, the axial strain slowly increased until stabilization. Moreover, the higher the  
253 initial fracture void, the larger the initial collapse and the smaller the final axial strain  
254 at stabilization, suggesting the significant effect of fracture voids. The results  
255 identified in Fig. 5b show that, for intact sample, the void ratio increased all the time,  
256 while for samples with fracture voids, the void ratio decreased in the first 0.001 day  
257 (1.4 min), then increased until stabilization. Moreover, the higher the initial fracture  
258 void, the larger the final void ratio at stabilization. The results from tests CS(3  
259 disks)01-05 and tests CS(4 disks)01-02 on samples with fracture voids are presented  
260 in Fig. 6 and Fig. 7, respectively. For comparison, the result from test CS(1 disk)01 on  
261 intact sample (Zhang et al., 2020) was also presented. As for samples with two disks

262 shown in Fig. 5, it is observed that: i) for samples with fracture voids, the axial strain  
263 (or void ratio) decreased during the initial collapse stage, then increased until  
264 stabilization; ii) the higher the initial fracture void, the larger the final void ratio and  
265 the smaller the final axial strain at stabilization.

266 The maximum void that could be filled by claystone swelling corresponded to  
267 the one at which the total swelling part was equal to the total collapse part. For its  
268 determination, all the axial strains corresponding to the total collapse and swelling  
269 parts, as well as the total axial strains were determined from the curves of axial strain  
270 versus time shown in Figs. 5a, 6a and 7a. Taking test CS(2 disks)01 as an example  
271 (see Fig. 5a): i) during hydration, water flowed into the fracture voids, leading to a  
272 collapse of grains up to -0.84% at approximately 0.001 day (1.4 min); ii) the total  
273 axial strain at stabilization being 1.29%, the axial strain related to the total swelling of  
274 disks was thus calculated to be 2.13% (equal to 1.29% - (-0.84%)). For other tests  
275 (CS(2 disks)02, CS(3 disks)01-05 and CS(4 disks)01-02), the total axial strains and  
276 the corresponding collapse and swelling parts were determined in the same manner,  
277 and the results are presented in Fig. 8. It appeared that, with increasing initial fracture  
278 void, the total axial strain and the collapse part significantly decreased, while the  
279 swelling part slightly decreased, revealing the significant effect of fracture voids. In  
280 addition, the fracture void at which the swelling part was equal to the collapse part  
281 (also zero total axial strain) could be also determined from Fig. 8. Due to the scatter of  
282 the test data, it appeared necessary to introduce two curves to define the upper and  
283 lower limits for the total axial strain, as indicated in Fig. 8. The maximum fracture

284 voids that could be filled by the swelling of disks were thus estimated at 5.14%-7.65%.  
285 This suggests that only the fracture voids smaller than 5.14%-7.65% can be sealed by  
286 claystone swelling. The range of this maximum fracture void implies the variability of  
287 claystone in terms of mineralogy and dry density (Conil et al., 2018; Zhang et al.,  
288 2020). It should be however noted that this conclusion does not consider the  
289 long-term creep contribution in the field condition.

290 Fig. 9 shows the results from tests CV(1 disk)01, CV(2 disks)01-03, CV(3  
291 disks)01-02 and CV(4 disks)01. It was observed that, for the intact sample (CV(1  
292 disk)01) (Zhang et al., 2020), the swelling pressure first slowly then quickly increased.  
293 Afterwards, the swelling pressure slowly increased until stabilization. For the samples  
294 with fracture voids, the swelling pressure decreased in the first 0.001 day (1.4 min),  
295 showing a collapse feature. Afterwards, the swelling pressure slowly increased up to  
296 approximately 0.006 day (8.6 min), then quickly increased up to 0.3 day (432 min).  
297 Finally, the swelling pressure slowly increased until stabilization. Moreover, the  
298 stabilized swelling pressure decreased as the initial fracture void increased, suggesting  
299 a significant effect of fracture voids (Wang et al., 2011, 2013).

300 Figs. 10a-10f present the water content and dry density profiles (following the  
301 definitions of layers in Fig. 1) of samples with fracture voids wetted under  
302 constant-volume condition. For comparison, the expected final dry densities here  
303 calculated using the total mass of CO<sub>x</sub> solids (including the disks and the grains)  
304 divided by the volume of the whole sample at the end of the test (including the disks  
305 and the fracture voids) were also presented. It appeared that, for samples with two

306 disks (Figs. 10a-10b), larger water contents and lower dry densities were found at  
307 position 1.5 that included the top and bottom disks as well as the fracture void in  
308 between, as compared with the values at position 1 (top disk) and position 2 (bottom  
309 disk). In addition, with increasing initial fracture void, the water contents for positions  
310 1, 1.5 and 2 increased, while the dry densities for positions 1 and 2 decreased.  
311 Moreover, the measured dry densities for disks (represented by the full numbers 1 and  
312 2) were larger than the expected final one, showing the significant effect of fracture  
313 voids. The similar phenomena were observed for samples with three and four disks  
314 (Figs. 10c-10f): i) larger water contents and lower dry density were found for disks  
315 sandwiching fracture voids, as compared with the values for disks only; ii) with  
316 increasing initial fracture void, the water contents for disks, and for disks sandwiching  
317 fracture voids increased, while the corresponding dry densities decreased; iii) the  
318 measured dry density of disks were larger than the expected final one.

319

## 320 **4 Discussion**

321 During the hydration of sample with fracture voids, the synthetic water flowed into  
322 the fracture voids first. As a result, the grains were fully hydrated and subsequently  
323 collapsed, leading to a decrease of axial strain and swelling pressure before 0.001 day  
324 (1.4 min), as shown in Figs. 5, 6, 7 and 9. Afterwards, the disks started to swell (after  
325 0.001 day (1.4 min) in Figs. 5, 6, 7 and 9), and the sample showed swelling (at which  
326 the sample with a dry density larger than the expected final state, was subjected to  
327 further swelling with a decrease of dry density over time) and compression zones

328 (where the sample with a dry density lower than the expected final state, was  
329 subjected to compression with an increase of dry density over time), in agreement  
330 with test results on MX80 bentonite by Bian et al. (2019). Examination of the dry  
331 density profiles in Figs. 10b, 10d and 10f showed that the disks corresponded to the  
332 swelling zones, while the initial fracture voids corresponded to the compression zones.  
333 Thereby, the decrease of axial strain of swelling part with initial fracture void  
334 identified in Fig. 8 represented the compression of grains by the swelling of disks.  
335 The larger the initial fracture void, the larger the compression of swollen grains. This  
336 explained the decrease of the total axial strain (Fig. 8) and the swelling pressure (Fig.  
337 9) with the increase of initial fracture void.

338 For further analysis, all the results of samples with fracture voids under  
339 constant-volume condition were replotted in Fig. 11 in terms of the measured swelling  
340 pressure versus the expected final void ratio. The expected final void ratio was  
341 calculated using the total volume of voids (including the voids in the disks and  
342 fracture voids) divided by the total volume of solids (including the solids in the disks  
343 and grains). For comparison, the evolution of swelling pressure with the void ratio of  
344 intact COx claystone samples (tests CS(1 disk)01-04 listed in Table 2 and CV(1  
345 disk)01 listed in Table 3) is also presented. It is worth noting that the swelling line  
346 determined by the swelling tests on intact COx claystone samples defined the swelling  
347 limit: the samples upon wetting from the same initial state stopped at this limit,  
348 whatever the stress path followed (Zhang et al., 2020). It appeared that at the same  
349 swelling pressure, higher void ratio was found for the samples with fracture voids.



350 This might be due to the fracture voids that were not fully filled at stabilization of  
351 swelling. This deduction was confirmed by the swollen grain distributions on the  
352 surface of disk after test CV(3 disks)02 (see Fig. 12, obtained by camera): the swollen  
353 grains distributed in an inhomogeneous fashion and the inter-grain voids could be  
354 clearly identified, indicating that the initial fracture voids created by grains were not  
355 fully filled. If the void ratio corresponding to the fracture voids that were not filled  
356 was subtracted from the global void ratio, the relationship between the swelling  
357 pressure and the void ratio was expected to be similar to that for intact samples. To  
358 verify this point, the variation of swelling pressure with the average void ratio of disks  
359 (average value of disks calculated from the dry density values after the tests shown in  
360 Table 3) were considered and the results are presented in Fig. 13. It appeared that at  
361 the same swelling pressure, the void ratios of disks were close to those on the swelling  
362 line, confirming that the difference identified in Fig. 11 was due to the fracture voids  
363 which were not fully filled. In that case, the transmission of total swelling pressure in  
364 the fracture voids zone was controlled by the swollen grains. It is worth noting that  
365 the slightly higher void ratio of disks observed in Fig. 13 could be partly attributed to  
366 the rebound while extracting the samples from the oedometer cell. It could be also due  
367 to the natural material variability in terms of mineralogy and dry density (Conil et al.,  
368 2018; Zhang et al., 2020).

369 For further analyzing the compression of swollen grains under constant-volume  
370 condition, the oedometric modulus  $E_{\text{oed}}$  defined in Eq. (1) was considered. As  
371 mentioned previously, the void ratio of grain was not measured after the swelling test,

372 which rendered the calculation of oedometric modulus  $E_{\text{oed}}$  of grain by Eq. (1)  
373 difficult. Note however that the compression of swollen grains approximately  
374 corresponded to the swelling of disks under constant-volume condition: i) the  
375 swelling pressure generated by the disks' swelling was approximately equal to the  
376 value that was imposed to the grains' compression; ii) the corresponding axial  
377 displacement of the disks' swelling was equal to that of the grains' compression.  
378 Moreover, the void ratios of the disks and grains before hydration were also the same,  
379 equal to the initial value  $e_0$ . Thus, the oedometric modulus  $E_{\text{oed}}$  of grains was  
380 approximately equal to the value of disks for simplicity. Taking test CV(2 disks)01 as  
381 an example, the oedometric modulus  $E_{\text{oed}}$  of grains was determined as follows: i) the  
382 swelling pressure at the start of disks' swelling and the corresponding void ratio were  
383 firstly determined. With water infiltration, the grains collapsed and the swelling  
384 pressure quickly decreased from the initial stress of 0.059 MPa to the lowest value of  
385 0.0389 MPa at approximately 0.001 day (1.4 min) (Fig. 9), where the disks could  
386 reasonably be regarded to start to swell and the corresponding void ratio was  
387 determined (0.2098, average value of top and bottom disks calculated from the dry  
388 density before the test); ii) the swelling pressure at stabilization and the corresponding  
389 void ratio of disks were determined afterwards. The stabilized swelling pressure was  
390 0.346 MPa, and the corresponding void ratio of disks was determined (0.2533,  
391 average value of top and bottom disks calculated from dry density after the test in  
392 Table 3); iii) the  $E_{\text{oed}}$  corresponding to the swelling of disks was finally calculated  
393  $((0.346 \text{ MPa} - 0.0389 \text{ MPa}) \times (1 + 0.2098) / (0.2533 - 0.2098) = 8.54 \text{ MPa})$ . Thus, the

394  $E_{\text{oed}}$  of grains under 0.346 MPa stress was estimated at 8.54 MPa. For other tests  
395 (CV(2 disks)02-03, CV(3 disks)01-02 and CV(4 disks)01), the  $E_{\text{oed}}$  of grains was  
396 estimated in the same manner, and the results are shown in Fig. 14. For comparison,  
397 the results of  $E_{\text{oed}}$  that was determined from oedometer test shown in Fig. 4b are also  
398 presented. It appeared that: i) the  $E_{\text{oed}}$  of grains was lower than that of intact sample; ii)  
399 the  $E_{\text{oed}}$  of grains was lower than that deduced from the normally consolidated line  
400 (NCL). This could be attributed to the fracture voids that were not fully filled (Fig.  
401 12), which did not enable the compression of swollen grains to obey the  
402 one-dimensional  $K_0$  condition. It could be logically deduced that the  $E_{\text{oed}}$  of grains  
403 would be closer to that deduced from NCL if the quantity of grains or the stress  
404 during hydration increased. Following up this logic, the line of  $E_{\text{oed}}$  versus vertical  
405 stress was extrapolated to the NCL. A stress 1.56 MPa was obtained at the intersection  
406 of the two lines. This stress corresponds to the value which theoretically verifies the  
407 one-dimensional  $K_0$  compression. In that case, the fracture voids are expected to be  
408 totally filled.

409

## 410 **5 Conclusions**

411 In this study, the effect of fracture voids on the swelling behaviour of COx claystone  
412 was experimentally investigated by performing swelling tests either under 0.05 MPa  
413 vertical stress or under constant-volume condition. At the end of swelling tests under  
414 constant-volume condition, the water content and dry density profiles were  
415 determined. The results obtained allow the following conclusions to be drawn.

416 During the hydration of COx claystone samples with fracture voids, the grains  
417 collapsed first while in contact with water. Afterwards, the disks started to swell and  
418 the whole sample presented swelling zones corresponding to the claystone disks and  
419 compression zones corresponding to the initial fracture voids.

420 The axial swelling strain and swelling pressure decreased as the initial fracture  
421 void increased. The correlation between the swelling pressure for sample with fracture  
422 voids and the expected final void ratio was found to be higher than that of intact  
423 sample, which was explained by the fact that the fracture voids were not fully filled.

424 The maximum fracture voids that might be fully filled or sealed by the swelling  
425 of COx claystone were found to be 5.14% - 7.65% without considering the long-term  
426 creep contribution in the field condition.

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534 fractured samples without consideration of fracture voids

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Table 1 Salts used for synthetic water preparation

Salt	NaCl	NaHCO <sub>3</sub>	KCl	CaSO <sub>4</sub> .2H <sub>2</sub> O	MgSO <sub>4</sub> .7H <sub>2</sub> O	CaCl <sub>2</sub> .2H <sub>2</sub> O	Na <sub>2</sub> SO <sub>4</sub>
Concentration (g/l)	1.950	0.130	0.035	0.630	1.020	0.080	0.700

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Table 2 Test program for samples wetted under constant-stress condition and compression test

No.	Core	Initial void ratio with/without considering gap (void ratio corresponding to initial gap)	Initial water content (%)	Grain size (mm)	Initial fracture void (%)	Description
CS(1 disk)01	EST56062	0.217/0.202 (0.015)	6.61	-	-	Wetted under 0.05 MPa
CS(1 disk)02	EST56054	0.218/0.198 (0.02)	6.59	-	-	Wetted under 0.5 MPa
CS(1 disk)03	EST56054	0.220/0.202 (0.018)	6.59	-	-	Wetted under 2.0 MPa
CS(1 disk)04	EST56062	0.215/0.199 (0.016)	6.61	-	-	Wetted under 8.0 MPa
SC(1 disk)01	EST56062	0.217/0.202 (0.015)	6.61	-	-	Wetted under 0.05 MPa then load to 32 MPa
CS(2 disks)01	EST56062	-	6.61	0.5-0.63	3.16	
CS(2 disks)02	EST57175	-	7.43	0.8-1.0	6.95	
CS(3 disks)01	EST56062	-	6.61	0.2-0.25	1.78	
CS(3 disks)02	EST56062	-	6.61	0.315-0.4	2.69	
CS(3 disks)03	EST57173	-	6.93	0.5-0.63	4.85	Wetted under 0.05 MPa
CS(3 disks)04	EST57173	-	6.93	0.63-0.8	8.47	
CS(3 disks)05	EST57175	-	7.43	0.8-1.0	9.41	
CS(4 disks)01	EST57173	-	6.93	0.5-0.63	5.48	
CS(4 disks)02	EST57175	-	7.43	0.8-1.0	10.68	

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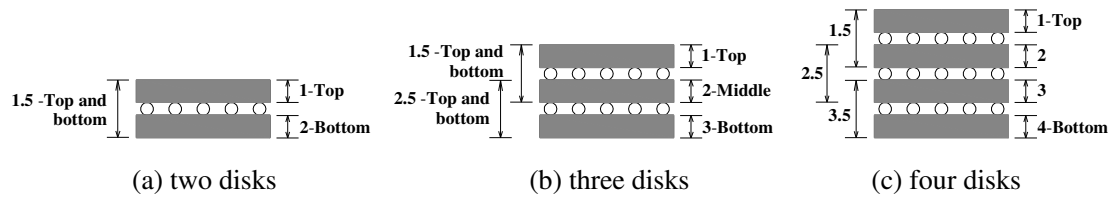
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Table 3 Test program for samples wetted under constant-volume condition



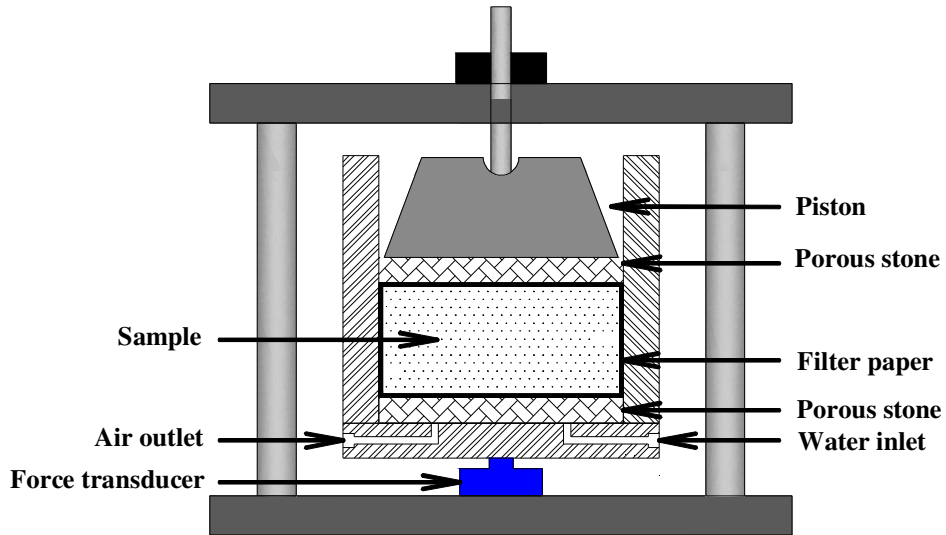
No.	Core	Grain size (mm)	Initial fracture void (%)	Water content before/after test (%)	Dry density before/after test (Mg/m <sup>3</sup> )
CV(1 disk)01	EST56056	-	-	6.53/9.46	2.231/2.163
CV(2 disks)01	EST57173	0.315-0.4	2.44	6.93/10.08 (1)	2.240/2.162 (1)
				-/10.87 (1.5)	-/2.106 (1.5)
CV(2 disks)02	EST57173	0.5-0.63	4.30	6.93/10.46 (2)	2.224/2.146 (2)
				6.93/10.55 (1)	2.226/2.134 (1)
CV(2 disks)03	EST57173	0.63-0.8	5.66	6.93/10.49 (2)	2.237/2.163 (2)
				6.93/10.97 (1)	2.219/2.127 (1)
				-/12.04 (1.5)	-/(1.5)
CV(3 disks)01	EST57175	0.5-0.63	6.11	6.93/11.10 (2)	2.263/2.131 (2)
				7.43/10.75 (1)	2.227/2.121 (1)
				7.43/10.64 (2)	2.218/2.145 (2)
CV(3 disks)02	EST57173	0.63-0.8	7.65	7.43/10.74 (3)	-/2.121 (3)
				6.93/10.85 (1)	2.244/2.126 (1)
				6.93/11.12 (2)	2.230/2.113 (2)
CV(4 disks)01	EST57175	0.5-0.63	6.90	6.93/11.02 (3)	2.256/2.114 (3)
				7.43/10.15 (1)	2.240/2.144 (1)
				-/10.53 (1.5)	-/2.124 (1.5)
				7.43/10.45 (2)	2.230/2.136 (2)
				7.43/10.56 (3)	2.243/2.132 (3)
				-/10.68 (3.5)	-/2.118 (3.5)
				7.43/10.37 (4)	2.228/2.138 (4)

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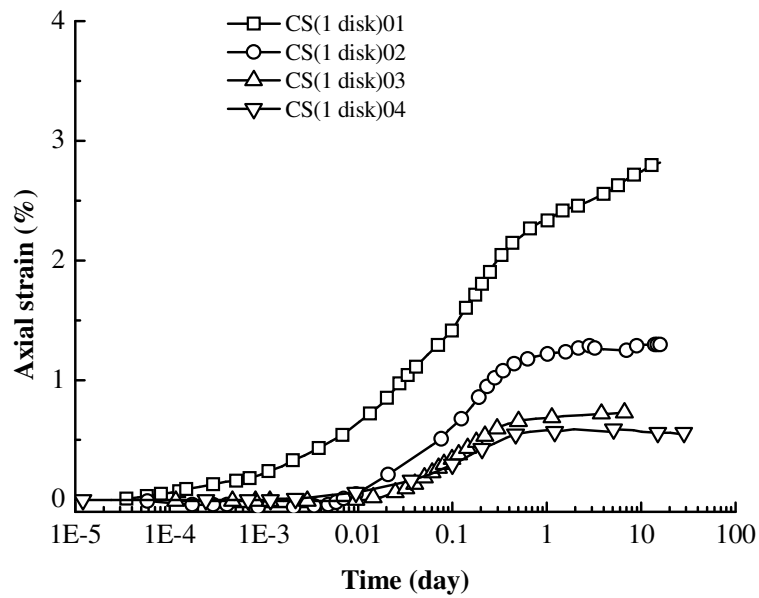
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Fig. 1. Schematic diagram of samples with fracture voids: (a) two disks, (b) three disks, (c) four disks



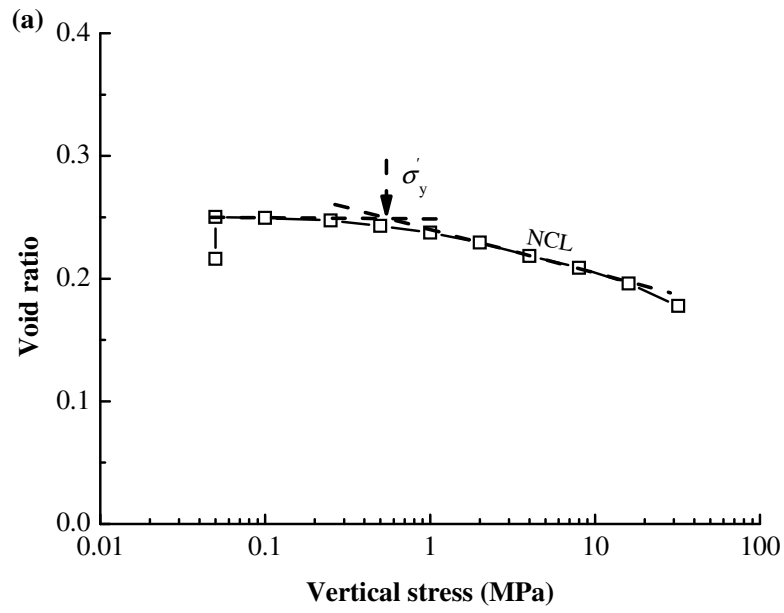
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Fig. 2. Layout of the constant-volume cell

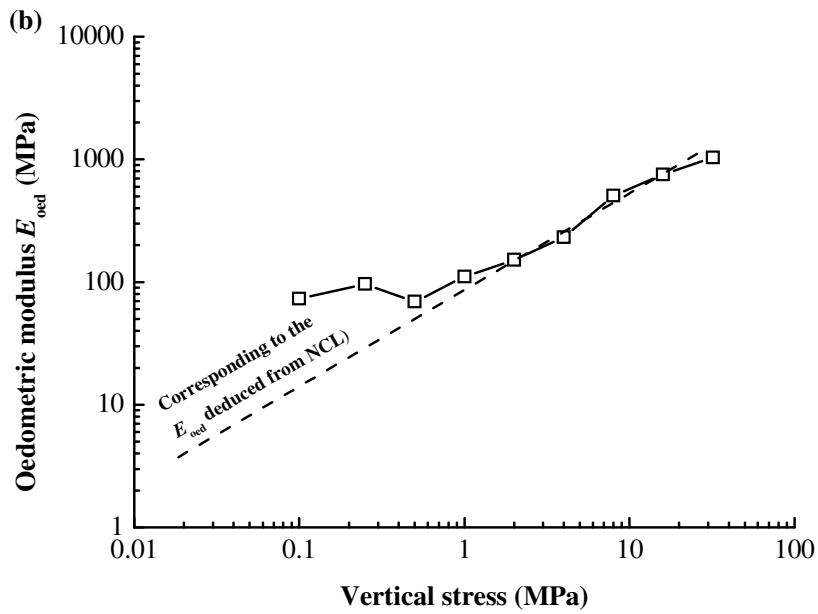


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Fig. 3. Axial strain versus time for intact samples



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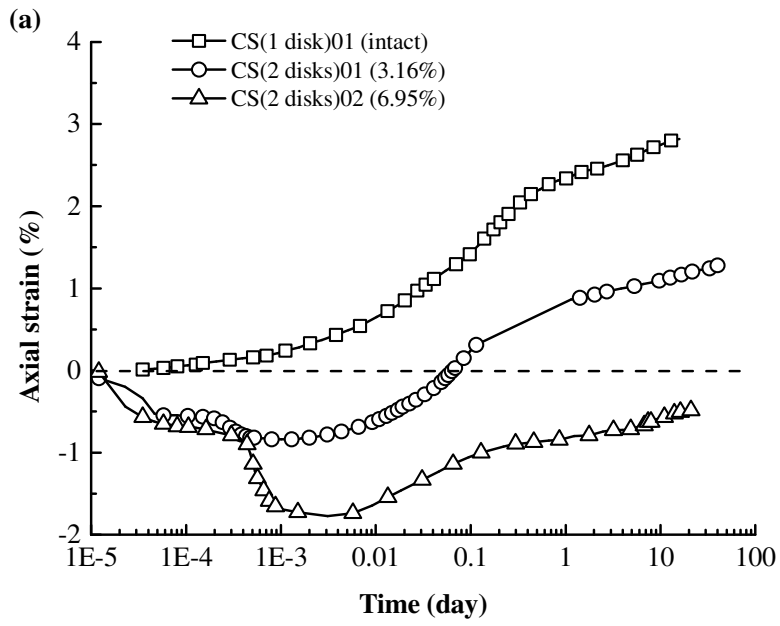


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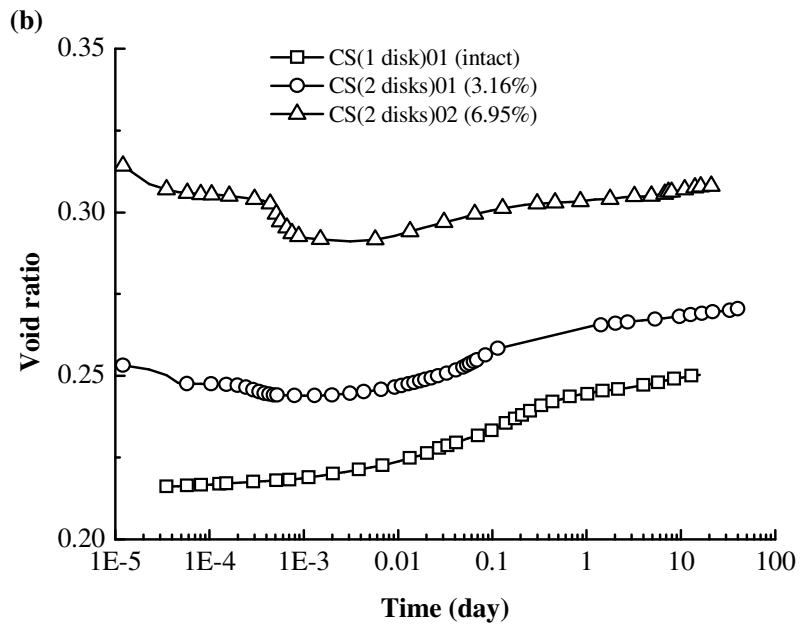
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Fig. 4. Compression test SC(1 disk)01 on intact sample: (a) void ratio versus vertical stress, (b) oedometric modulus versus vertical stress

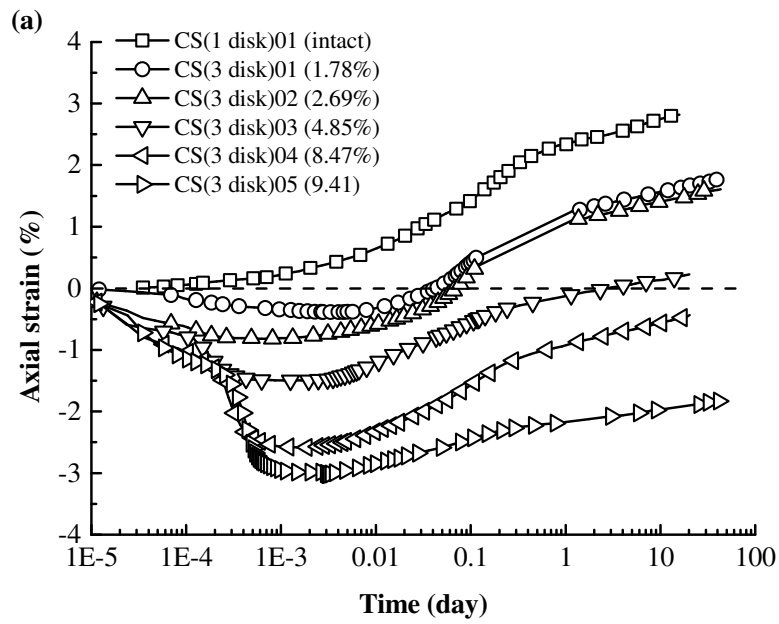


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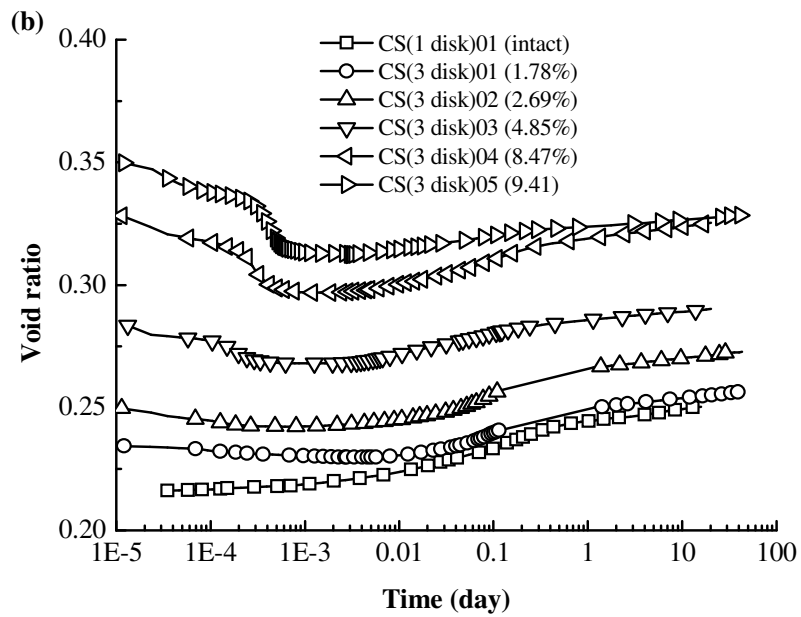


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589 Fig. 5. Results of samples with fracture voids wetted under 0.05 MPa from tests CS(2 disks)01-02,  
 590 together with those of intact sample from test CS(1 disk)01: (a) axial strain, (b) void ratio

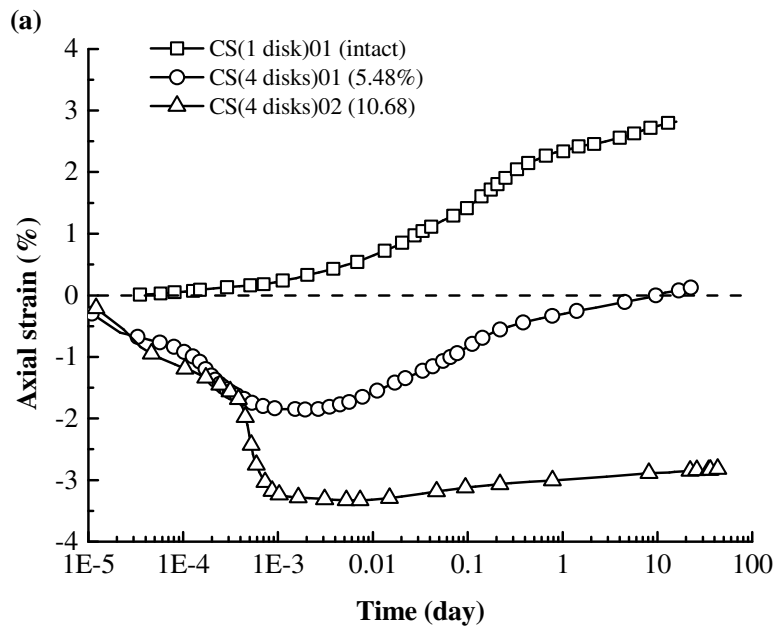


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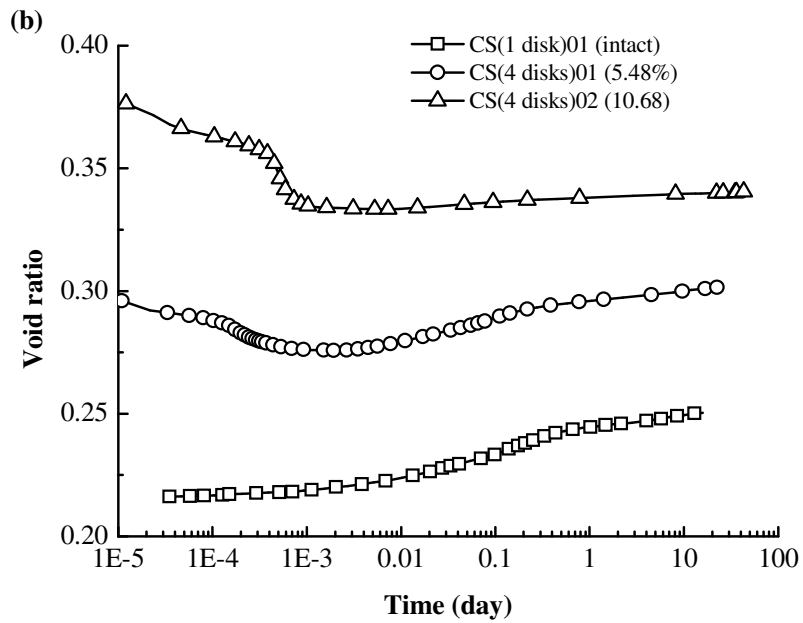


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593 Fig. 6. Results of samples with fracture voids wetted under 0.05 MPa from tests CS(3 disks)01-05,  
 594 together with those of intact sample from test CS(1 disk)01: (a) axial strain, (b) void ratio

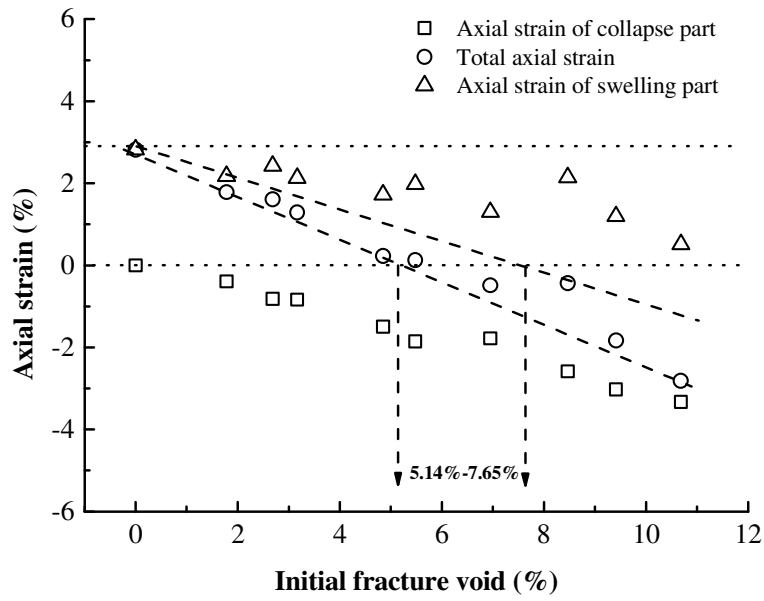


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597 Fig. 7. Results of samples with fracture voids wetted under 0.05 MPa from tests CS(4 disks)01-02,  
 598 together with those of intact sample from test CS(1 disk)01: (a) axial strain, (b) void ratio

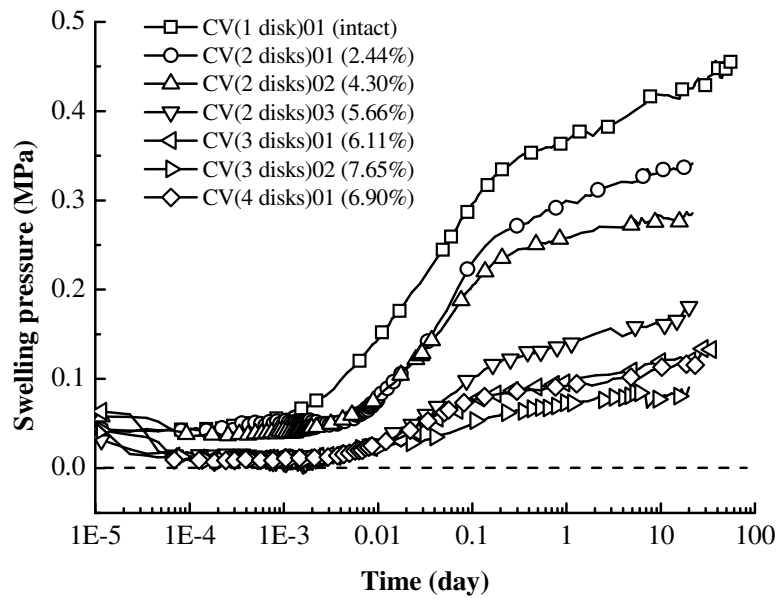


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Fig. 8. Total axial strains and the corresponding collapse and swelling parts versus initial fracture void for samples with one, two, three and four disks

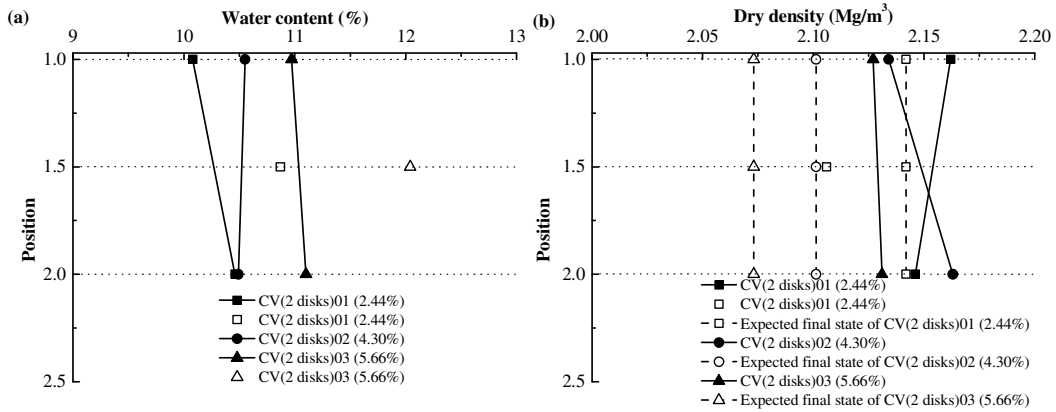
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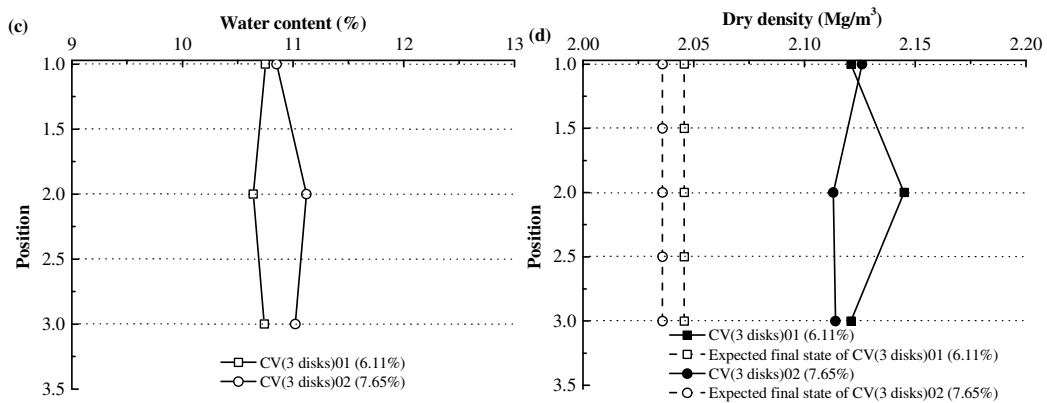
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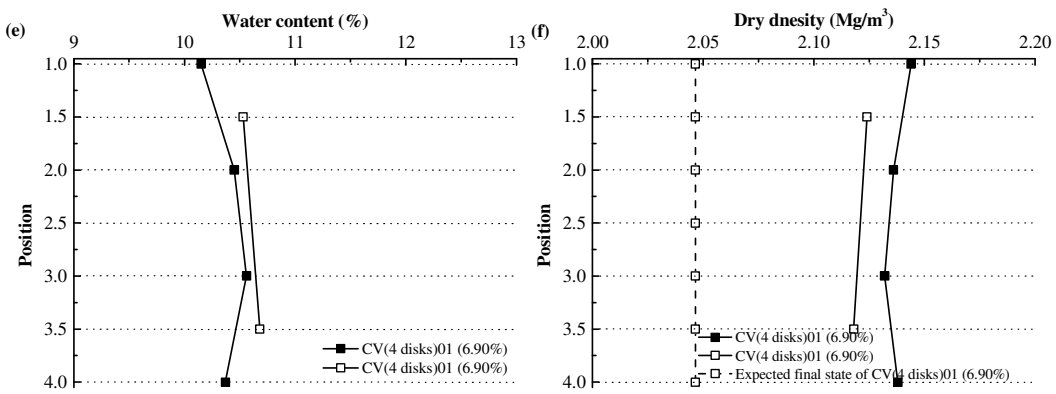
Fig. 9. Evolution of swelling pressure under constant-volume condition



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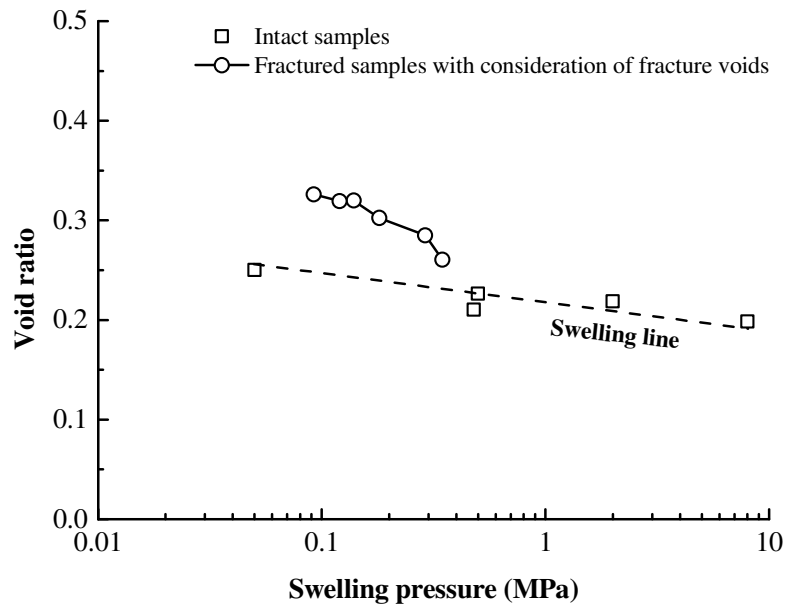
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607 Fig. 10. Water content and dry density profiles for samples with fracture voids after swelling tests  
 608 under constant-volume condition: (a) water content profile (two disks), (b) dry density profile (two  
 609 disks), (c) water content profile (three disks), (d) dry density profile (three disks), (e) water  
 610 content profile (four disks), (f) dry density profile (four disks)



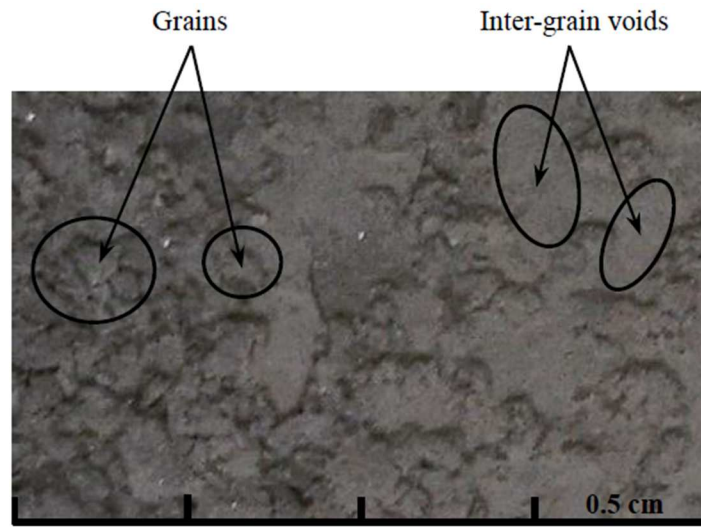


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Fig. 11. Comparison of swelling pressure between intact samples and fractured samples with consideration of fracture voids

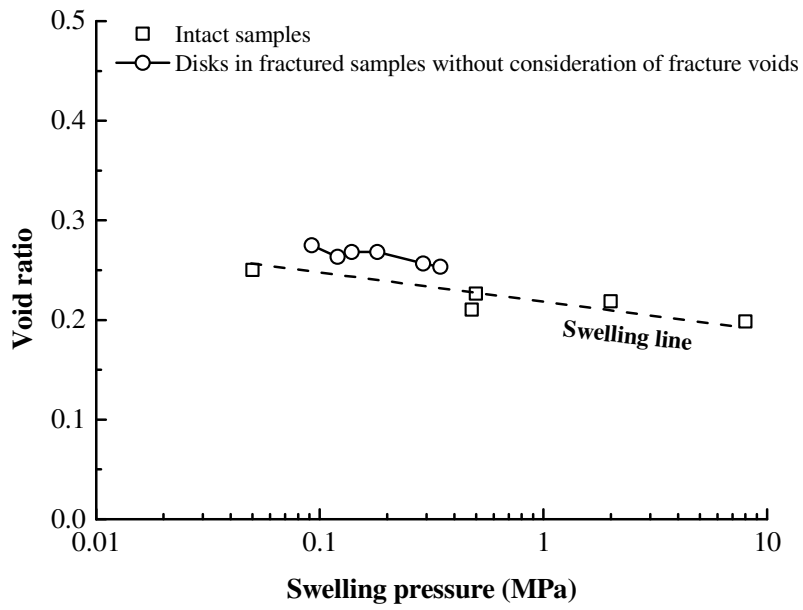
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Fig. 12. Distribution of grains on the disk surface after test CV(3 disks)02

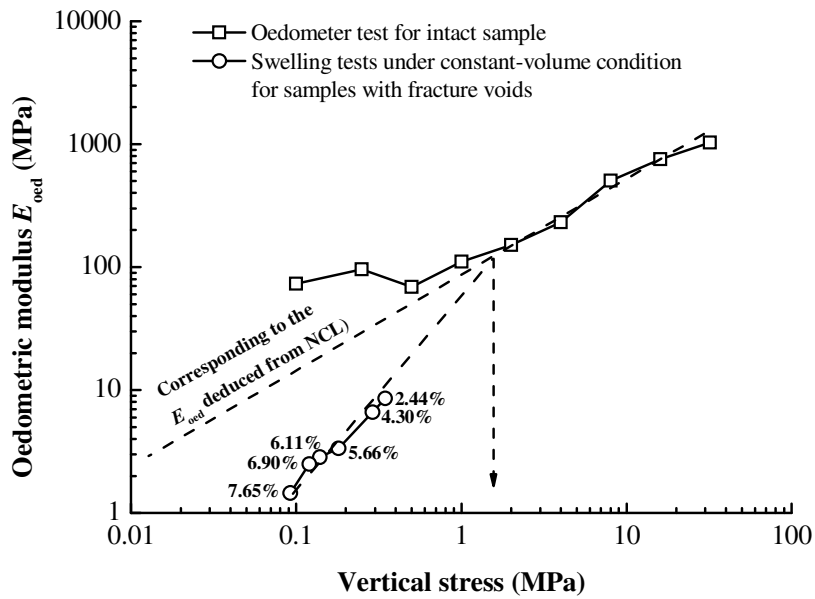


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Fig. 13. Comparison of swelling pressure between intact samples and disks in fractured samples without consideration of fracture voids

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Fig. 14. Variation of oedometric modulus with vertical stress

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