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Effect of monotonic and cyclic temperature variations on the mechanical behavior of a compacted soil

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Abstract

Settlement and slope stability of an embankment are mechanical aspects that play a major role in structural safety. Due to the tendency towards renewable energy, the embankments can be considered as a suitable medium for thermal energy storage. Using horizontal heat exchanger tubes, the thermal energy will be stored in different compacted soil layers in an embankment. Therefore, this structure can be subjected to daily and seasonally temperature variations due to heat extraction. Cyclic temperature variation can modify the mechanical behavior of compacted soils. Thus this study aims to investigate the effect of monotonic and temperature cycles in the range of 5 to 50 °C, on consolidation parameters and shear characteristics of a compacted sandy lean clay. To achieve this, temperature-controlled oedometric and direct shear tests were performed. Results showed that the effect of heating and cooling on mechanical properties is more pronounced under vertical stresses higher than the preconsolidation pressure. By heating, the normal consolidation line shifted to the left and consequently, the apparent preconsolidation decreased. Compression and swelling indexes could be considered independent of temperature variation. Due to the temperature cycles, the volumetric response of the compacted soil in oedometric and shear tests was stress history-dependent. Results of the direct shear tests showed that by temperature variation (heating/cooling and temperature cycles) the cohesion increased and the friction angle remained unchanged.

Keywords: Embankment, thermal energy storage, compacted soil, Thermo-Hydro-

30 Mechanical behavior, temperature-controlled oedometer tests, temperature-controlled di-
31 rect shear tests.

32 **1 Introduction**

33 To limit the environmental impact of the production of needed energy, the energy geostruc-
34 tures could provide new and clean solutions to the important issue of global warming for
35 the years to come. These solutions still need to be further studied to provide appropriate
36 techniques for both domestic and industrial energy needs.

37 Solar energy is an infinite, clean, and affordable source, it has a great potential to
38 produce renewable thermal and electrical energy. Several technologies convert solar energy
39 into a utilizable kind of energy for human needs like space heating. For example, solar
40 energy storage consists of heat storage in a proper medium during summer to be preserved
41 and later discharged for utilization in the winter (Stojanović and Akander 2010; Abedin
42 and Rosen 2011). Several studies have demonstrated that the thermal energy storage in
43 soils is a pertinent technique, due to their appropriate thermal properties and ease of
44 access (Gan 2013; Beier and Holloway 2015).

45 In geotechnical engineering, different types of structures are made of compacted soils,
46 such as roads and rail embankments. These linear structures contain several layers of
47 compacted soils. To store the heat in an embankment in summer, and extract it in
48 winter (or vice versa), the horizontal heat exchanger loops can be easily installed in these
49 layers during the construction phase (Boukelia 2016; Jradi et al. 2017; Lahoori, Jannot,
50 Rosin-Paumier, Boukelia and Masrouri 2020). For limited size embankments, in which
51 the soil-atmosphere interaction during the charging and discharging season is high, the
52 use of insulation material can be considered in design stage to avoid heat loss (Lahoori,
53 Rosin-Paumier, Stoltz and Jannot 2020).

54 Generally, the soils and earthen structures are exposed to external daily and seasonally
55 temperature variations. When the serviceability of these structures as thermal energy
56 storage medium starts, they will be subjected in addition to internal seasonal temperature

57 variations. The temperature variation in soil storage mediums can fluctuate in the range
58 of 10 to 50°C (Hesaraki et al. 2015). Variations in temperature have an impact on the
59 volume of the constituents, which leads to changes in the deformability of the aggregates
60 and the viscosity of the water. Thus, a heated material would be more deformable and
61 the pore water would be less viscous and more mobile. However, this effect would be
62 more or less important depending on the nature of soil constituents and its structure,
63 inherited from the previous loading history (Cekerevac and Laloui 2004; Uchaipichat and
64 Khalili 2009). This aspect is particularly important in the case of compacted soils. To
65 prevent any damage, such as settlement and slope failure, and also to ensure the long-term
66 structural stability of these energy structures, the effect of temperature variation on their
67 mechanical behavior should be investigated.

68 Compacted soils are initially set up in an unsaturated state close to the saturation
69 state (degree of saturation between 85 to 95%). During their service life and thermal
70 exploitation in an embankment, the water content, the temperature and the applied
71 mechanical loads are changing simultaneously.

72 Among different types of external loading, it is well known that landslides, settle-
73 ments, and disorders of all kinds occur generally as a result of intense rainfall and seepage
74 in embankments (Iverson and Major 1987; Rahardjo et al. 2001; Thibbotuwawa and
75 Weerasekera 2013). Usually, the rainfall decreases the suction and increases the hydraulic
76 conductivity in these unsaturated soils, this accelerates the soil saturation and the pore
77 water pressure increase. As a result, the shear strength and factor of safety of the slope
78 decrease (Rahardjo et al. 2001; Liu et al. 2017; Li et al. 2019).

79 Based on the aforementioned statements, this study focuses on investigating the thermo-
80 hydro-mechanical behavior of compacted natural soil at saturated state, as in embank-
81 ments, it is clearly the most critical state. For energy geostructures, a better understand-
82 ing of the effect of monotonic and cyclic temperature variations on mechanical behavior
83 such as consolidation and shear characteristics of compacted soil is of great importance.

84 Several researchers investigated the effect of temperature variations on consolidation
85 and volumetric behavior of different types of soils under different stress paths (Tidfors and

86 Sällfors 1989; Eriksson 1989; Moritz 1995; Burghignoli et al. 2000; Cekerevac and Laloui
87 2004; Uchaipichat and Khalili 2009; Di Donna and Laloui 2015). These investigations
88 indicated that the effect of temperature on THM behavior of soils depends on the soil
89 nature; the stress history and the thermal variation path.

90 Regarding the consolidation behavior, heated specimens exhibit a plastic behavior
91 earlier compared to unheated ones, afterwards the elastic domain size reduces and shows a
92 clear soil softening (Tidfors and Sällfors 1989). Thus, Thus, the apparent preconsolidation
93 pressure (σ'_p) decreases upon heating (Marques et al. 2004; Cekerevac and Laloui 2004).
94 The effect of temperature variation on the compression and swelling indices (C_c and C_s)
95 are found to be negligible in the temperature ranges from 20 to 90 °C (Cekerevac and
96 Laloui 2004; Di Donna 2014).

97 In terms of volumetric behavior under temperature cycles, the soil initially in the
98 normally consolidated state (NC) exhibits a contraction when temperature increases
99 (Burghignoli et al. 2000; Cekerevac and Laloui 2004). However, different observations
100 are reported during the following cooling. In some studies, cooling removes a small part
101 of the thermal contraction caused by heating (Shetty et al. 2019), but in others, during
102 cooling the thermal contraction continues to increase (Campanella and Mitchell 1968;
103 Di Donna and Laloui 2015). Ma et al. (2017) reported that the thermal contraction
104 becomes smaller after 4 or 5 successive heating and cooling cycles.

105 The soil in an overconsolidated state exhibits a thermal expansion during heating
106 and with subsequent cooling, a reversible behavior is observed. Therefore, the thermal
107 expansion with heating is dissipated (Di Donna and Laloui 2013; Shetty et al. 2019). This
108 reversible behavior was observed with further heating and cooling cycles.

109 Based on most of the investigations that have focused on the study of the effect of
110 temperature variations between 20 to 90 °C, it can be concluded that the preconsolidation
111 pressure is a temperature dependent parameter and decreases with heating. But despite
112 the importance of this parameter in thermal energy storage systems, its variations due to
113 cooling and several heating-cooling cycles are poorly understood.

114 The other important mechanical characteristics of an energy structure such as a road

115 embankment are shear parameters: strength and stiffness, where the strength can be
116 expressed in terms of apparent cohesion (c) and friction angle (φ). Although their de-
117 pendency on temperature variations has been studied in recent years, the results are still
118 controversial.

119 Cekerevac and Laloui (2004), using a temperature-controlled triaxial device in drained
120 conditions for normally consolidated kaolin clay, have observed an increase of peak shear
121 strength due to temperature increase while the critical state shear strength was indepen-
122 dent of temperature. The same observation was reported by Abuel-Naga et al. (2007)
123 for a normally consolidated soft Bangkok clay. Yavari et al. (2016), by performing direct
124 shear tests, showed that for Fontainebleau sand and both normally and overconsolidated
125 kaolin clay, the peak shear strengths were almost independent of temperature (5 to 40 °C).
126 Maghsoodi et al. (2020) using a temperature controlled direct shear device, showed that
127 the peak and critical shear strength of normally consolidated kaolin clay increased with
128 a temperature increase from 22 to 60 °C, but no temperature dependence was observed
129 for Fontainebleau sand.

130 The effect of temperature on friction angle (φ) was reported to be negligible in several
131 studies (Moritz 1995; Cekerevac and Laloui 2004; Maghsoodi et al. 2020). But there are
132 different results for the cohesion (c) variation upon heating and cooling cycles. Yavari
133 (2014) found that the cohesion of a kaolin clay at three different temperatures (5, 20, and
134 40 °C) is almost unchanged. On the contrary Maghsoodi et al. (2020) found that the
135 temperature increase from 22 to 60 °C increased the cohesion for kaolin clay.

136 Regarding the mechanical loading cycles, Ng and Zhou (2014) using a temperature
137 controlled device reported that the axial plastic strain accumulated during cyclic load-
138 ing-unloading is larger at higher temperatures for a silty soil. Very few studies have
139 investigated the impact of thermal cycles on shear characteristics. For example, Yazdani
140 et al. (2019) have investigated the effect of temperature cycles on shear characteristics.
141 Their study is mostly focused on soil-structure interface mechanical behavior. There-
142 fore, the effect of several temperature cycles on the shear behavior of soils needs to be
143 investigated.

144 The shear characteristics evolution due to the monotonic and cyclic temperature vari-
145 ations depends on several parameters such as material characteristics and soil nature,
146 overconsolidation ratio, experimental conditions, and thermo-mechanical paths. But the
147 results are not numerous enough, and there are still many unanswered questions on this
148 subject.

149 This experimental study aims to investigate the thermo-mechanical behavior of a com-
150 pacted sandy lean clay that is currently used in embankment constructions, in the sat-
151 urated state under different stress paths. Temperature-controlled oedometer and direct
152 shear devices were used to perform consolidation and shear tests under monotonic and
153 cyclic temperature variations. The main aspects of the thermo-mechanical behavior of
154 the compacted soil that are tackled in this study are to investigate the effect of cooling
155 (20 to 5 °C), heating (20 to 50 °C), and thermal cycles (5-50 °C) on consolidation and
156 shear characteristics.

157 **2 Soil properties, devices, and specimen preparation**

158 **2.1 Soil properties**

159 The tested soil was extracted from the Paris region in France. X-ray diffractograms
160 analysis reveals that it contains 81% quartz, 7% dolomite, 5% calcite, 5% clayey materials,
161 and 3% feldspar (Boukelia 2016). This material was dried, pulverized, and sieved through
162 a 2 mm sieve before being used for various experiments. According to the particle-size
163 distribution tests, almost 20% of the particles of the soil were smaller than 2 μm, and 41%
164 were smaller than 80 μm (Figure 1). With a liquid limit (LL) of 27% and a plastic limit
165 (PL) of 21%, the plasticity index (PI) was 6% (AFNOR 1993). The standard Proctor
166 test results showed an optimum water content (w_{opt}) of 16% and a maximum dry density
167 (ρ_d) of 1.81 Mg.m⁻³ (Table 1).

168

169 The material was classified as sandy lean clay, CL, according to the Unified Soil Clas-
170 sification System (ASTM 2000). In this study, the soil specimens were prepared at a

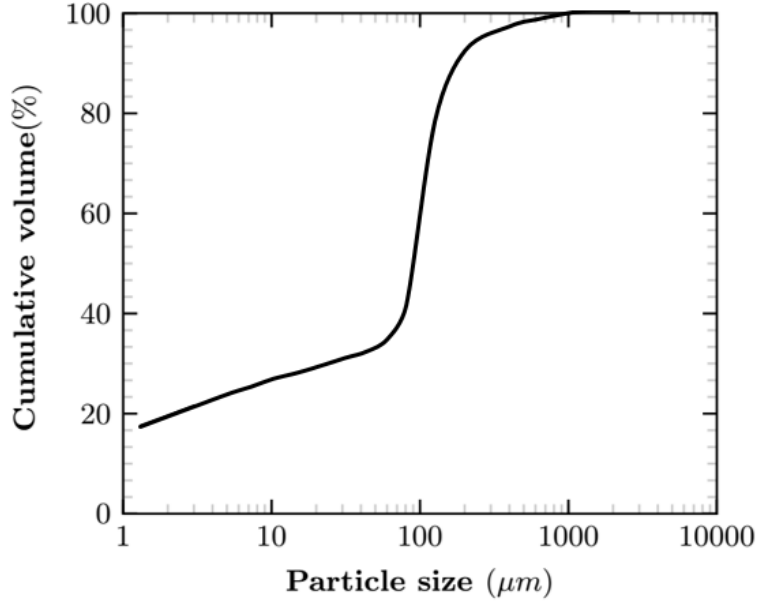


Figure 1: Particle size distribution (Boukelia 2016)

Table 1: Characteristics of the studied soil

Properties	Amount
Plasticity limit (%)	20.5
Liquidity limit (%)	27.2
Plasticity index (%)	6.6
w_{opt} (%)	16.1
ρ_d (Mg/m^3)	1.8
Class of soil	CL
Thermal conductivity (W/m.K)	2.46
Volumetric heat capacity ($J/k.m^3$)	2.64
Thermal diffusivity (m^2/s)	9.6×10^{-7}

171 water content (w) of 16.3 % and a dry density ρ_d of $1.79 Mg.m^{-3}$ in accordance with the
 172 optimal thermal condition defined by Boukelia (2016). The dry soil was wetted up to the
 173 desired water content by adding the distilled water and stored in plastic bags for almost
 174 3 days before being compacted in the cells for each test.

175 2.2 Device and specimen preparation: oedometric tests

176 A temperature-controlled oedometric device was used to investigate the effect of temper-
 177 ature on the consolidation behavior of the studied compacted soil. The system included
 178 a cylindrical cell of stainless steel (70 mm in diameter) and a piston to apply the vertical
 179 stress using a load frame (Figure 2). The vertical deformation of the specimen was mea-
 180 sured using a linear variable differential transducer (LVDT) with an accuracy of 10^{-5} m.

181 To impose the desired temperature, a heating-cooling device circulated fluid in the spiral
 182 tubes around the soil specimen, and a K-type thermocouple was placed in the bottom
 183 part of the oedometer cell to measure the temperature of the specimen during the tests.
 184 The system comprised also a volume/pressure controller to control the pore water pres-
 185 sure at the base of the specimen. To minimize the thermal losses, the oedometric cell was
 186 insulated with a polystyrene box. To maintain a constantly saturated state during tests,
 187 a continuous water supply was maintained.

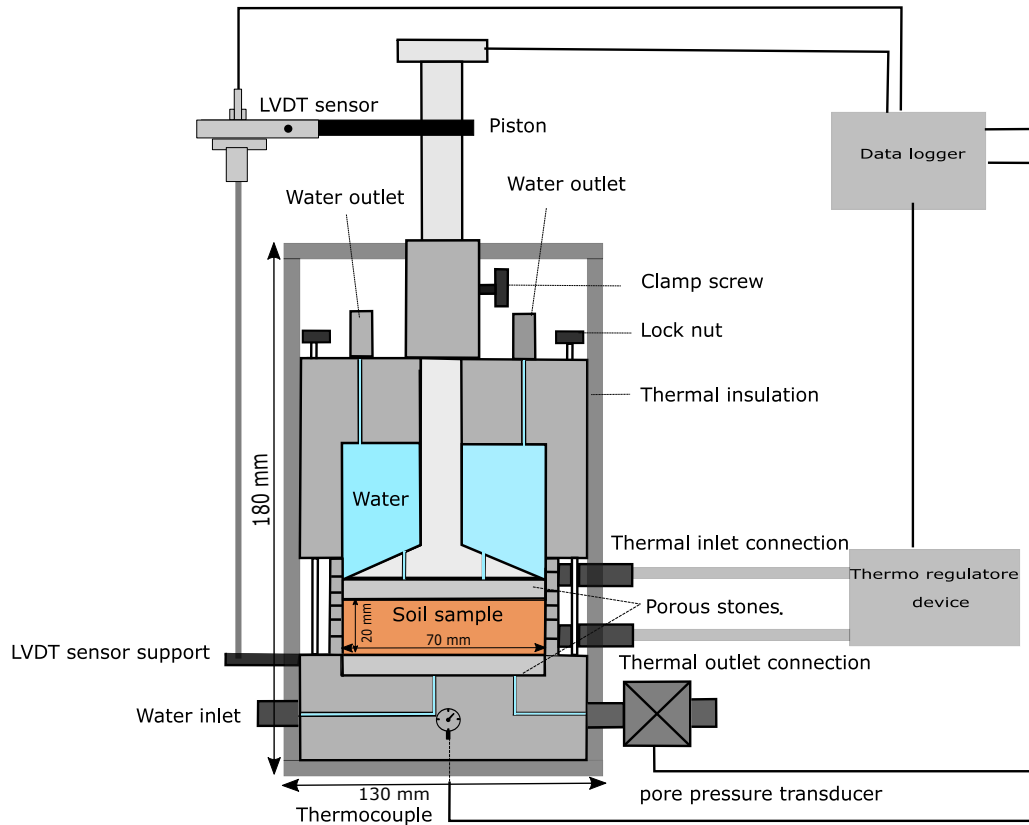


Figure 2: Temperature-controlled oedometer device.

188 Thermal calibration was performed to take into account the effect of temperature on
 189 different parts of the device and corrections were applied to the results. The thermal
 190 deformation of the oedometric cell was observed by measuring the vertical displacement
 191 of the piston during cycles of heating and cooling under 10 kPa of vertical stress. The
 192 device was first heated from 20 °C to 50 °C, and then was cooled up to 5 °C and finally
 193 was heated up to 20 °C in steps of 10 °C. Figure 3 shows the relationship between
 194 the measured thermal vertical displacement (Δh_T) of the oedometric cell using LVDT at

195 different applied temperatures. The heating caused dilation in the oedometric cell, while
 196 cooling caused a contraction. A linear equation can be determined as follows:

$$\Delta h_T = -0.0026\Delta T + 0.05 \quad (1)$$

197 Where ΔT is temperature variation ($^{\circ}C$).

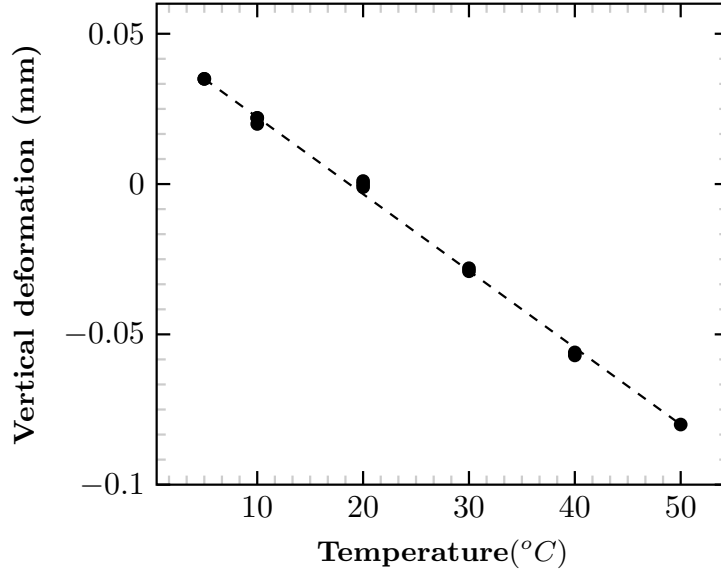


Figure 3: Thermal calibration of temperature-controlled oedometric device.

198 The abovementioned relationship was used to correct the measurements of the sample
 199 deformation during temperature variations by following equation:

$$\Delta h_{T(sample)} = \Delta h_{T(sample+cell)} - \Delta h_{T(cell)} \quad (2)$$

200 where $\Delta h_{T(sample+cell)}$ is the measured total displacement during heating or cooling
 201 phases.

202 To perform oedometric tests, the soil at the water content 16.3 % was compacted
 203 directly in the oedometric cell (70 mm in diameter and 20 mm in height) to reach the
 204 target dry density of $1.79 Mg.m^{-3}$. Then, the saturation phase was started by applying
 205 a backwater pressure of 9 kPa through the bottom part of the oedometric cell (through
 206 the water inlet, in Figure 2). The saturation phase was performed at 20 $^{\circ}C$ under 9 kPa
 207 of vertical stress. To check the saturation state, the hydraulic conductivity was measured

208 over a long time (7 days) to achieve an equilibrium state, and also the water content of
 209 several samples was measured after several days. Afterward, different thermo-mechanical
 210 paths were applied, they are presented in detail in section 3.1.

211 2.3 Device and specimen preparation: direct shear tests

212 The temperature-controlled direct shear device contains a shear box (60 x 60 x 30 mm)
 213 that is placed inside a container filled with water to maintain the saturation state of the
 214 samples (Figure 4). The heating-cooling system circulates fluid at the desired temperature
 215 under the container. The temperature is checked using 3 different thermocouples placed:
 216 in the upper half of the shear box; in the lower half of the shear box and the container.
 217 A piston applies the normal stress σ_n (kPa) on the top of the soil specimen using a load
 218 frame. The shear displacement and the normal displacement were measured using two
 219 linear variable differential transducers (LVDT) (Figure 4). To obtain the real volume
 220 change of the soil sample, the thermal calibration of the different parts of the device was
 221 performed.

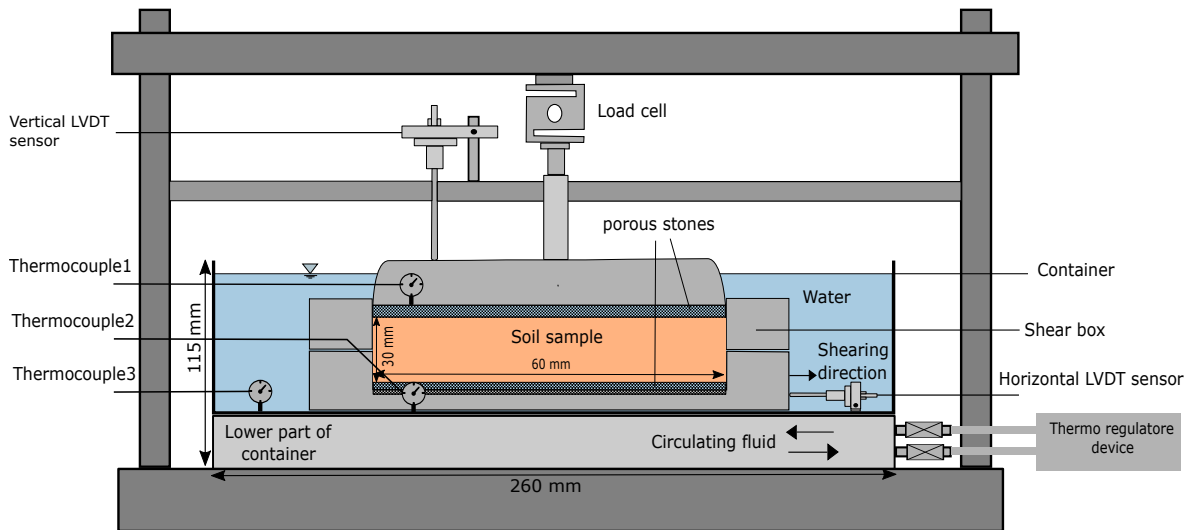


Figure 4: Temperature-controlled direct shear device.

222 Before direct shear tests, the soil at the initial water content (16.3 %) was compacted
 223 directly in the shear box at the density of 1.79 Mg.m^{-3} . The specimens were saturated
 224 by leaving them inside a water container at $20 \text{ }^\circ\text{C}$. The saturation level was checked by
 225 measuring the water content of different specimens after several days. After one week, the

226 measured water content was close to the estimated water content of a saturation state.
227 This duration was repeated for all the samples.

228 **3 Experimental programs**

229 The experimental programs to take into account the effect of cooling (20 to 5 °C), heating
230 (20 to 50 °C), and several heating-cooling cycles in the range of 5 to 50 °C on consolidation
231 and shear behavior are presented in the following.

232 **3.1 Consolidation program**

233 **3.1.1 Monotonic thermo-mechanical paths**

234 Standard oedometric tests were conducted at different temperatures to investigate the
235 effect of temperature on the consolidation parameters as compression index (C_c), swelling
236 index (C_s), and apparent preconsolidation pressure (σ'_p). After the saturation phase, one
237 reference standard oedometric test at 20 °C was performed (test number 1 in Table 2).
238 The specimen was loaded by applying successive vertical stress increments in different
239 steps in the range of 9 to 1600 kPa and then was unloaded to 100 kPa. From ASTM
240 (2011), each step took 24 hours, and from t90 of settlement versus time curves, the end
241 of consolidation was determined. For oedometric tests at different temperatures, the soil
242 specimen was cooled from 20 to 5 °C or heated up from 20 to 50 °C with a heating/cooling
243 rate of 5 °C/h after the saturation phase. The heating/cooling rate was sufficiently slow to
244 avoid excess pore water pressure generation due to the temperature variation (Cekerevac
245 and Laloui 2004; Shetty et al. 2019). Then the complete oedometric tests were performed
246 (tests number 2-3 in Table 2).

247

248 **3.1.2 Cyclic thermo-mechanical paths**

249 The tests numbers 4 to 7 in Table 2 were supposed to reproduce the volumetric response
250 of compacted soil element in different depths of an embankment which is under internal

Table 2: Experimental programme for consolidation tests (*L*=loading, *U*=unloading, *C*=cooling, *H*=heating and *TC* = thermal cycles).

Test number	Test type	Temperature ($^{\circ}C$)	Vertical effective stress (kPa)	OCR before TC	TC ($^{\circ}C$)
1	L-U	20	9-1600-100	-	-
2	C-L-U	5	9-1600-100	-	-
3	H-L-U	50	9-1600-100	-	-
4	L-4 TC	20	9	8	5-50
5	L-4 TC	20	9-170	1	5-50
6	L-4 TC	20	9-400	1	20-50
7	L-U-4 TC	20	9-1600-100	16	20-50

251 and external seasonal temperature variations.

252 Therefore, to simulate the effect of external seasonal temperature variation due to
 253 the soil-atmosphere interaction, compacted soil sample in test number 4 (Table 2) was
 254 subjected to 4 temperature cycles in the range of 5 to 50 $^{\circ}C$ after saturation phase under
 255 9 kPa. The thermal load (heating and cooling) was applied by successive increments of
 256 $\Delta T=10^{\circ}C$ (5 $^{\circ}C/h$).

257 The test numbers 5 to 7 consider the effect of internal temperature variation due to
 258 the heat transfer from a horizontal heat exchanger that is commonly horizontal installed
 259 at 2m from the base. Considering 10m height embankment, the total vertical stress is 170
 260 kPa ($20.8 kN.m^{-3} \times 8 m$). Therefore, test number 5 (Table 2) was thus done by applying
 261 the vertical stress from 9 to 170 kPa, and then 4 temperature cycles (5 to 50 $^{\circ}C$) were
 262 applied. Besides these conditions, during the lifetime of the embankment, the compacted
 263 soil may be loaded or unloaded. Test number 6 (Table 2) simulated a subsequent loading
 264 of the compacted soil. Therefore, the soil sample was vertically loaded from 9 to 400 kPa
 265 and then 4 temperature cycles (20 to 50 $^{\circ}C$) were applied (test number 6 in Table 2). To
 266 reach a highly overconsolidation state (OCR=16) four temperature cycles in the range
 267 of 20 to 50 $^{\circ}C$ were applied after a loading (1600 kPa) and unloading of 100 kPa (test
 268 number 7 in table 2).

3.2 Direct shear program

3.2.1 Monotonic thermo-mechanical paths

The direct shear tests at different temperatures were conducted to investigate the effect of the cooling and heating on shear parameters. After the saturation phase at 20 °C, the normal stress was applied to the compacted soil (paths 0 – 1 in Figure 5). Three values of initial normal stresses ($\sigma'_n=50, 100, 200$ kPa) were chosen. These values correspond to the soil pressure in the depths of 2.5 m, 5 m, and 10 m in an embankment assuming a density of 20.8 kN.m^{-3} . After the consolidation phase, the shear test at 20 °C was done (paths 1 – 2 in Figure 5, tests 1-3, Table 3). From the settlement curve and the time required for the specimen to achieve 50 percent of its consolidation under the maximum normal stress (t_{50}) a shearing rate of 0.02 mm.min^{-1} was calculated (ASTM 1994). This slow rate applied for the shear test was supposed to ensure drained conditions during shearing. To take into account the effect of temperature variation on shear parameters, after the consolidation phase, the cooling or heating phase was applied (paths 1 – 1' and 1 – 1'' in Figure 5). Finally, when the soil volumetric variation stabilized, the specimens were sheared with a rate of 0.02 mm.min^{-1} (paths 1' – 2' and 1'' – 2'' in Figure 5, tests 4-10, Table 3).

3.2.2 Cyclic thermo-mechanical paths

The thermal cycles under constant normal stress were performed on compacted soil specimens in the direct shear box to evaluate the variation of shear parameters (cohesion and friction angle) after the thermal cycles. As the monotonic thermo-mechanical path, after the saturation phase at 20 °C, three normal stresses ($\sigma'_n=50, 100, 200$ kPa) were applied on different compacted soil specimens at 20 °C. After the consolidation phase, 5 thermal cycles in the range of 5 to 50 °C were applied by a successive increment of $\Delta T=10$ °C (5 °C/h). After thermal cycles, when the thermal volume change stabilized, the specimens were sheared at 20 °C with a displacement rate of 0.02 mm.min^{-1} (tests 11 to 13, Table 3).

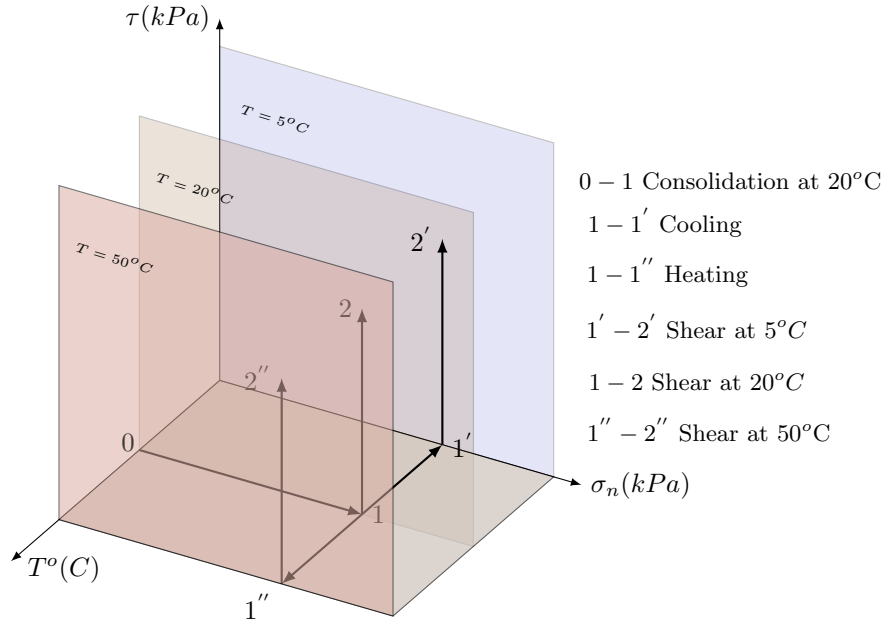


Figure 5: Thermo-mechanical path for direct shear tests at different temperatures.

296

297 4 Experimental results

298 This part presents the results from oedometric and direct shear tests under different
 299 thermo-mechanical paths. The following part will be dedicated to the scientific discussion.

300 4.1 Thermo-mechanical results for oedometric tests

301 4.1.1 Monotonic thermo-mechanical oedometric results

302 Three standard oedometric tests at different temperatures were carried out (5, 20, and
 303 50°C). The void ratios for all of the specimens after saturation remained unchanged
 304 due to the zero swelling potential of this compacted soil. The void ratio variations after
 305 cooling and heating were negligible.

306 Figures 6a and b show the normalized settlement and void ratio variations against
 307 the vertical effective stresses at different temperatures respectively. The results show
 308 that, with temperature increase at vertical stresses higher than 100 kPa, the vertical
 309 displacement increased, and at the same time the void ratio decreased (Figure 6b). These

Table 3: Experimental programme for direct shear test (TC=thermal cycles)

Test number	Density (Mg/m ³)	Type	Temperature °C	effective normal stress (kPa)
1	1.77	Loading-Shearing	20	50
2	1.76	Loading-Shearing	20	100
3	1.76	Loading-Shearing	20	200
4	1.75	Loading-Cooling-Shearing	5	50
5	1.76	Loading-Cooling-Shearing	5	100
6	1.77	Loading-Cooling-Shearing	5	100
7	1.76	Loading-Cooling-Shearing	5	200
8	1.75	Loading-Heating-Shearing	50	50
9	1.77	Loading-Heating-Shearing	50	100
10	1.76	Loading-Heating-Shearing	50	200
11	1.78	Loading-5 TC-Shearing	20 (5-50)	50
12	1.78	Loading-5 TC-Shearing	20 (5-50)	100
13	1.78	Loading-5 TC-Shearing	20 (5-50)	200

310 results show that the heated soil becomes more compressible and the soil capability to
311 support a vertical stress decreases, as a consequence the normal consolidation line moves
312 to the left. Therefore, for the studied soil, the consolidation behavior could be considered
313 as temperature-dependent and with temperature increase, a thermal softening could be
314 expected.

Table 4: Consolidation parameters of studied soil at different temperatures.

Temperature °C	Initial void ratio	C_c	C_s (unloading)	σ'_p (kPa)
5	0.516	0.035	0.01	80
20	0.517	0.037	0.01	75
50	0.518	0.040	0.013	65

315

316 From the results obtained in standard oedometric tests at different temperatures
317 (Figure 6b), the slope of the normal compression lines defined as compression index
318 ($C_c = \Delta e / \Delta \log \sigma'_v$), and the slope of the unloading lines defined as a swelling index
319 ($C_s = \Delta e / \Delta \log \sigma'_v$) were obtained and are presented in the Table 4. The results showed
320 that their variation with temperature appears as they changed very slightly with temper-
321 ature variation.

322 The apparent preconsolidation pressure σ'_p was evaluated using the Casagrande method
323 (Casagrande 1936) for each standard oedometric curves at each temperatures (5, 20, 50

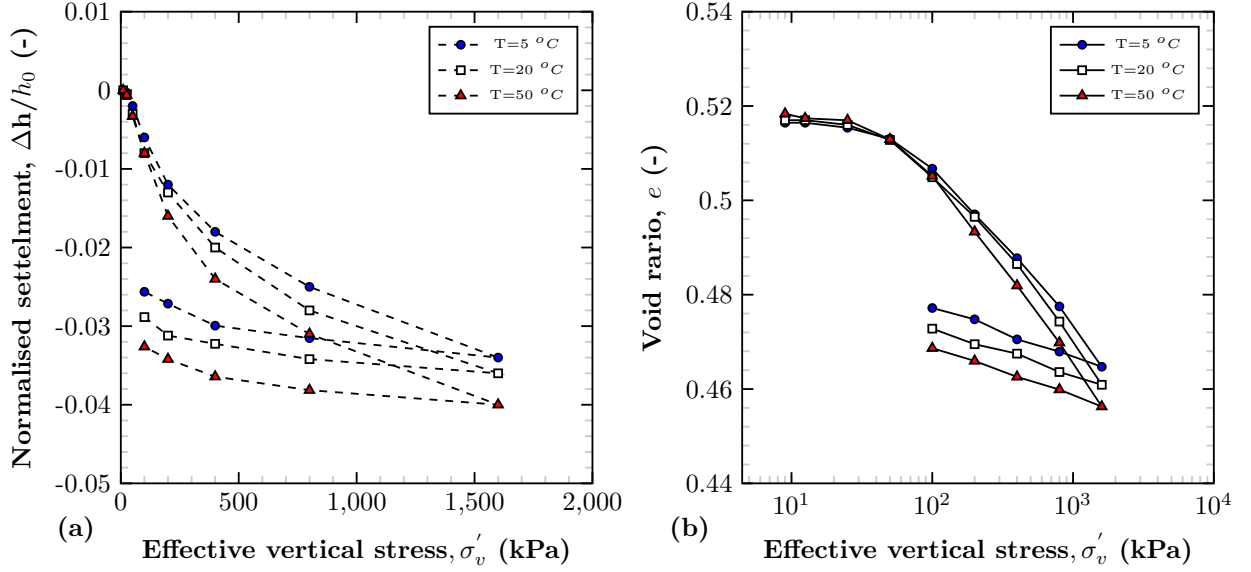


Figure 6: (a) normalized settlement and (b) void ratio variations against effective vertical stress at different temperatures.

324 °C). The results presented in Table 4. The preconsolidation pressure σ'_p reached 80, 75,
 325 and 65 kPa at 5, 20 to 50 °C respectively.

326 From the results of void ratio variations against vertical stress the hydraulic conduc-
 327 tivity was calculated for each load increment at different temperatures using the following
 328 equation:

$$k = C_v m_v \gamma_w \quad (3)$$

329 where k is the hydraulic conductivity ($m.s^{-1}$), C_v is the coefficient of consolidation
 330 ($m^2.s^{-1}$), m_v is the coefficient of volume compressibility (kPa^{-1}) and γ_w is the unit
 331 weight of water at a given temperature ($kN.m^{-3}$).

332 The hydraulic conductivity as function of void ratio is shown in Figure 7 (a). Figure
 333 7(a) shows that when the void ratio decreased, the hydraulic conductivity decreased due
 334 to the increasing density. For example, in Figure 7(a), under 1600 kPa of vertical stress,
 335 the hydraulic conductivity increased as temperature increases whereas the void ratio de-
 336 creased. Delage et al. (2009) observed the same trend for hydraulic conductivity of Boom
 337 clay under different temperatures. They pointed out that these results may be due to
 338 the coupled effect of changes in water properties and porosity due to the temperature
 339 variation. However, Morin and Silva (1984) and Abuel-Naga et al. (2005) reported that

340 the impact of soil volume change due to the temperature variation is too small to be con-
341 sidered as a reason for the change of hydraulic conductivity at elevated temperature (90
342 °C). With temperature increase, the viscosity of water decreases and leads to an increase
343 in the soil hydraulic conductivity (Hillel 1980) therefore the water flows are more freely
344 through the porous network.

345 Based on the hydraulic conductivity test results at different temperatures, an equation
346 is proposed to determine the intrinsic permeability K (m^2):

$$k = \frac{K\gamma_w(T)}{\mu(T)} \quad (4)$$

347 where k is the hydraulic conductivity ($m.s^{-1}$), γ_w is the unit weight of water ($kN.m^{-3}$), μ
348 is the water viscosity ($Pa.s$) and T is the temperature (K). According to the literature,
349 the viscosity of water in effective porosity decreases at higher temperature:

$$\mu(T) = -0.00046575Ln(T) + 0.00239138 \quad (5)$$

350 Figure 7 (b) shows the variation of intrinsic permeability against the void ratio. Based
351 on this figure a linear relationship was evidenced between the intrinsic permeability and
352 the void ratio variations. These results were in agreement with the study of Li et al.
353 (2018) on intact and remolded sensitive clay and with the study of Delage et al. (2009)
354 on Boom clay. Therefore, the temperature dependence of water viscosity could partly
355 explain the hydraulic conductivity variations upon thermal solicitations.

356 4.1.2 Thermal cycles effect on the volumetric variation of studied compacted soil

357 The results of volumetric variation against temperature cycles under 9 kPa are presented in
358 Figure 8a (test number 4, Table 2). With heating from 20 to 50 °C the volumetric response
359 was almost negligible whereas, during cooling from 50 to 5 °C the sample dilated slightly.
360 With further temperature cycles, the soil specimen showed a thermo-elastic response and
361 the volumetric variations were reversible. This reversible behavior corresponds to the
362 thermo-elastic expansion and contraction of the solid skeleton.

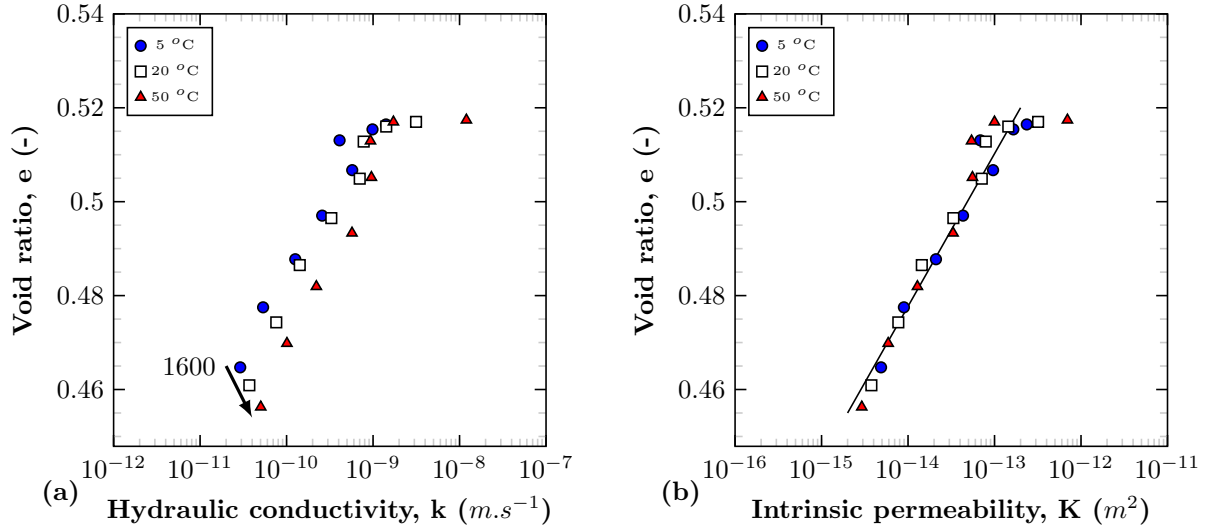


Figure 7: Effect of the temperature on (a) hydraulic conductivity (k) and (b) intrinsic permeability (K).

363 Under 170 kPa the soil was in normally consolidated condition (void ratio after tem-
 364 perature cycles=0.5) and after first heating (20 to 50 °C), the specimen contracted as
 365 a volume decrease of 0.13% was observed (Figure 8a). To determine the elastic or plas-
 366 tic nature of thermal loading, after heating, the sample is cooled down to 5 °C and the
 367 volume of the specimen slightly decreased (0.17%). The volume variations during the
 368 first thermal cycle (20-50-5 °C) were irreversible. But this thermal contraction decreased
 369 cycle by cycle and after four thermal cycles, the deformation was stabilized and an elastic
 370 behavior was reached. In Figure 8a, it appears that the part of the curve under 20 °C is
 371 superimposed. In the following, the temperature cycles were applied in the range of 20 to
 372 50 °C.

373 After thermally induced volume changes verification for effective in-situ stress states,
 374 two extreme cases were applied. In test number 6 under 400 kPa (NC state, void ratio
 375 after temperature cycles=0.48), 4 thermal cycles (20 to 50 °C) exhibited a thermal plastic
 376 contraction increasing when the number of thermal cycles increased (Figure 8b). In highly
 377 OC state (OCR=16) in test number 7 (Table 2), again 4 thermal cycles in the range of 20
 378 to 50 °C were applied. In this state, after a slight deformation, the soil specimen showed
 379 a reversible volumetric response (Figure 8b).

380 The elastoplastic deformation due to the thermal cycles at OC (at 9 kPa) and NC (at
 381 170 and 400 kPa) states leads to a void ratio variation at constant vertical stress. To

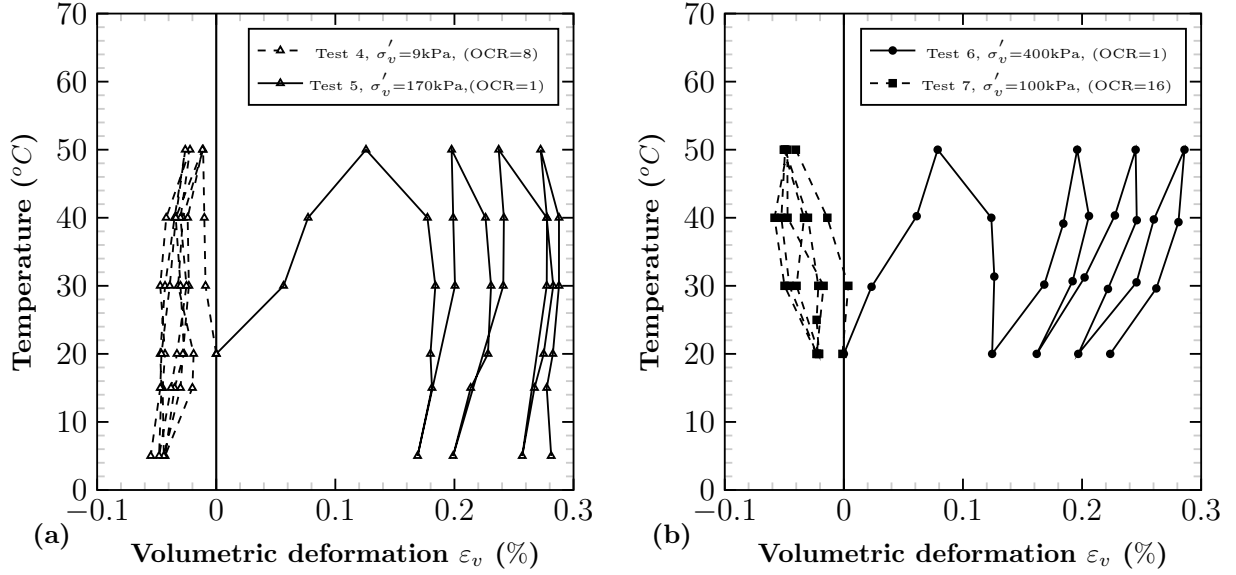


Figure 8: Volumetric deformation during thermal cycles under a) 9 kPa (test 4, $\text{OCR}=8$) and 170 kPa (test 5, $\text{OCR}=1$) b) 400 kPa (test 6, $\text{OCR}=1$) and 100 kPa (test 7, $\text{OCR}=16$)

382 compare the effect of thermal cycles on soil with a reference oedometric test at 20 °C,
 383 the evolution of normalized void ratios versus effective vertical stress for both types of
 384 tests with thermal cycles and reference oedometric tests, are depicted in Figure 9. Figure
 385 9a shows that the void ratio increased after the thermal cycles under 9 kPa (OC state).
 386 To detect the effect of this variation on the subsequent loading, the specimen was then
 387 loaded vertically. The whole curve is slightly higher than the reference test (black points).
 388 The slope of the consolidation line ($C_c=0.036$) was the same as the reference test, and
 389 the temperature cycles had a negligible effect on the apparent preconsolidation pressure.

390 Figure 9b and 9c show the void ratio variations for applied thermal cycles under 170
 391 and 400 kPa respectively (test 5 and 6, Table 2). The void ratios, before applying thermal
 392 cycles, coincided with the reference oedometric test at 20 °C. After thermal cycles, the
 393 void ratio in NC state decreased for both tests. These variations are due to the thermally
 394 induced plastic deformation that can be considered as a thermal hardening. These void
 395 ratios corresponded to a void ratio in higher vertical stress for the reference test at 20 °C.
 396 For instance, in Figure 9b the normalized void ratio after thermal cycles under 170 kPa
 397 was 0.95 which corresponds to vertical stress of 230 kPa for the reference test at 20 °C
 398 (blue point in Figure 9b). Therefore, when the specimen is subjected to thermal cycles

399 it behaves like an over-consolidated soil. After this loading, the specimens were loaded
400 vertically and the void ratios for both tests reached the same void ratio as the reference
401 test. The slope of the subsequent loading line after thermal cycles (slope of ac line in
402 Figure 9b) is 0.021 while the slope for the normal consolidation line at 20 °C is 0.037.

403 **4.2 Thermo-mechanical results for direct shear test**

404 **4.2.1 Monotonic thermo-mechanical direct shear results**

405 In this section, the effect of cooling and heating on shear characteristics is investigated.
406 In temperature-controlled direct shear tests, after the saturation phase, the consolida-
407 tion phase was started and the specimen was loaded vertically at three different normal
408 stresses $\sigma'_n=50, 100, \text{ and } 200$ kPa at 20 °C. After this consolidation phase, a heating
409 or cooling phase (5 °C/h), was applied to the compacted soil specimens. The cooling
410 phase was conducted from 20 to 5 °C and the heating phase from 20 to 50 °C. The re-
411 sults showed that the cooling phase had a negligible effect on the volumetric deformation
412 of the specimens whereas during heating, the specimens contracted and the volumes of
413 the specimens decreased slightly. Figure 10a shows the volumetric deformation due to the
414 thermal softening of the samples in the shear box. The volume of the specimens decreased
415 by 0.07, 0.12, and 0.14 % for the normal stresses of 50, 100, and 200 kPa respectively.

416 When the thermal volumetric deformation stabilized, the compacted soil was sheared
417 with a rate of 0.02 mm/min. Figure 11 shows the variation of the shear strength against
418 shear displacement for $\sigma'_n=50, 100, \text{ and } 200$ kPa at 5, 20, and 50 °C. To ensure the
419 quality of the results, several tests were duplicated, for example, the test under $\sigma'_n=100$
420 kPa at 5 °C (Figure 11b). Under normal effective stress of 50 kPa and 100 kPa, the shear
421 strengths were not affected by heating or cooling (Figure 11a). However, the heated and
422 cooled specimens showed a higher dilatation than the specimen at 20 °C (Figure 11d).
423 Under 200 kPa, the shear stress was not affected by heating whereas cooling reduced it by
424 9 % (Figure 11c). For these samples during shearing, the soil specimen slightly contracted
425 at first, then this contraction was followed by a negligible dilatation (Figure 11f).

426 To obtain the shear characteristics (cohesion, c and friction angle φ), the shear stress

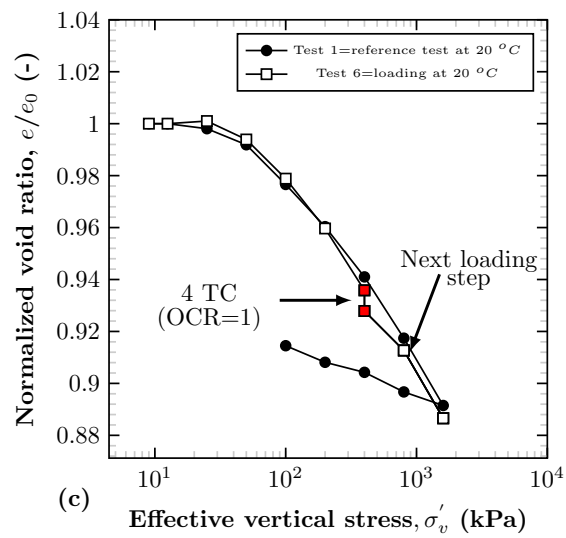
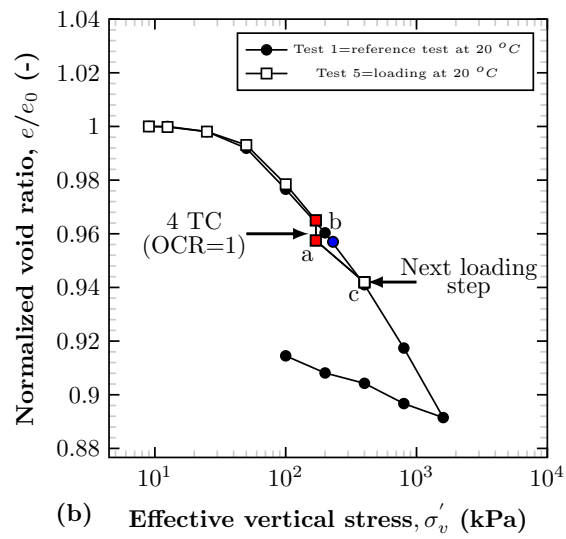
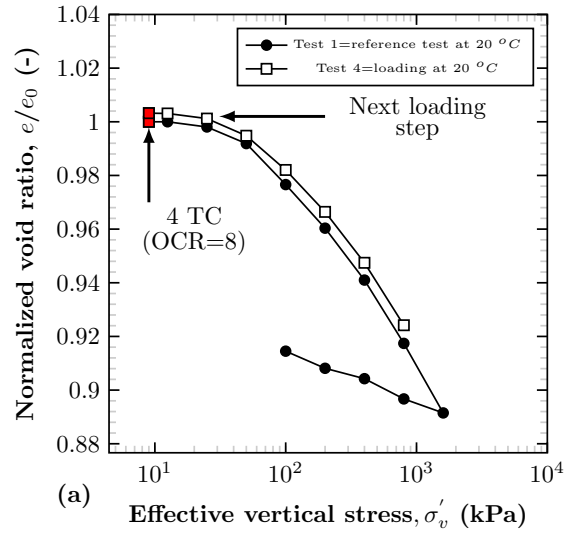


Figure 9: Void ratios variation after thermal cycles under (a) 9 kPa (b) 170 kPa (b) 400 kPa, TC=temperature cycles.

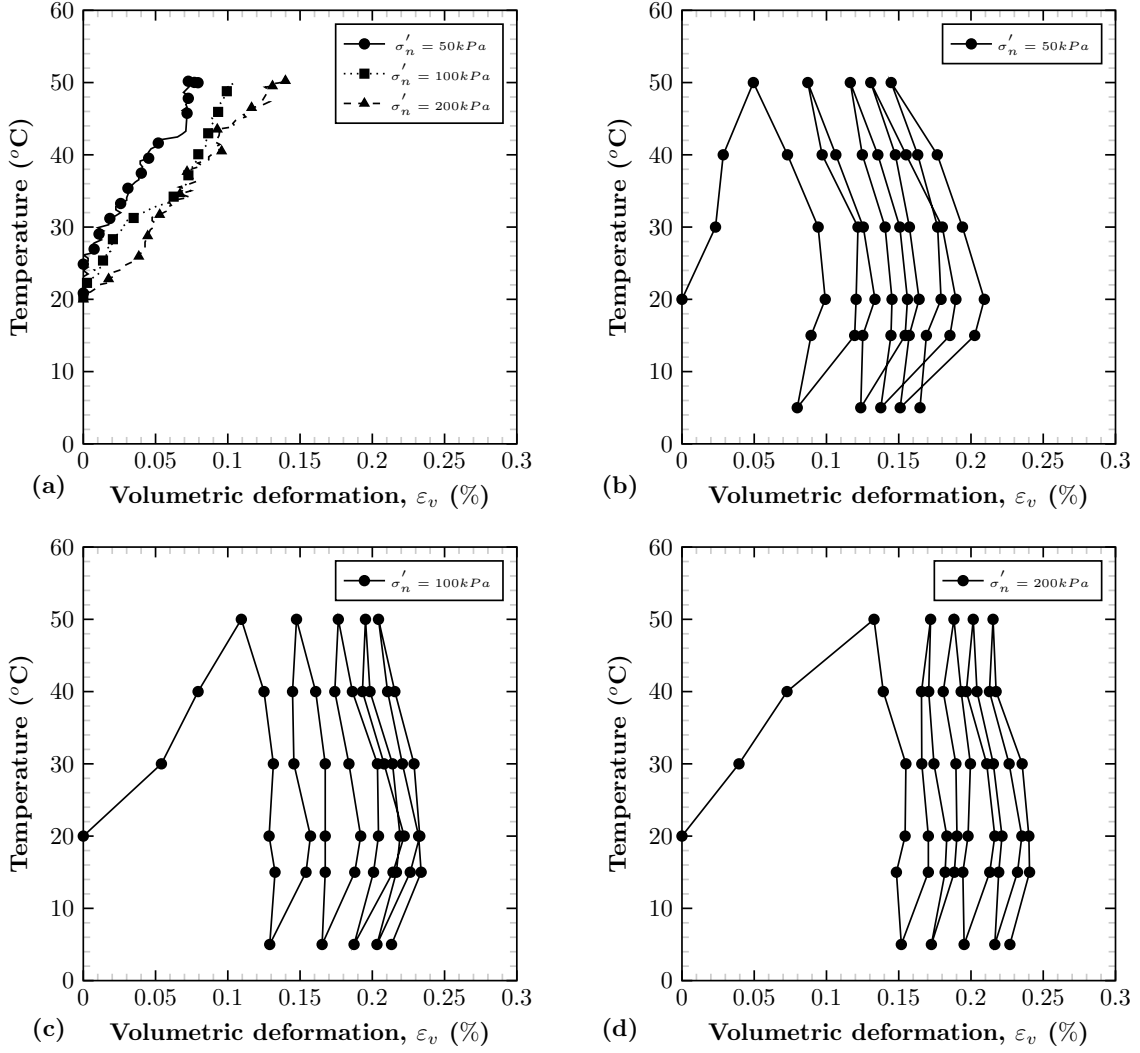


Figure 10: Thermal volumetric deformation (a) during heating from 20 to 50 °C (b), (c) and (d) during 5 thermal cycles at $\sigma'_n = 50, 100$ and 200 kPa respectively.

427 corresponding to 10 % of the sample length was taken for each test and is presented in
 428 Table 5. Figure 12 shows the Mohr-Coulomb plane for the studied soil at different temper-
 429 atures. The results show that cooling ($\Delta T = -15^\circ C$) changed the shear characteristics:
 430 the cohesion increased from 13.0 to 20.5 kPa and the friction angles decreased slightly
 431 from 34.4° to 30.5° . The heating ($\Delta T = +30^\circ C$) increased slightly the cohesion by 4 kPa
 432 (from 13.0 to 17.4 kPa) and the friction angle was not affected.

433 It can be concluded that the thermal volumetric deformation during heating did not
 434 affect the shear strength but cooling decreased it and this behavior was more pronounced
 435 under high normal stresses. Regarding the volumetric variation during the shear phase,
 436 at low normal effective stresses, the compacted soil tended to dilate. However, with

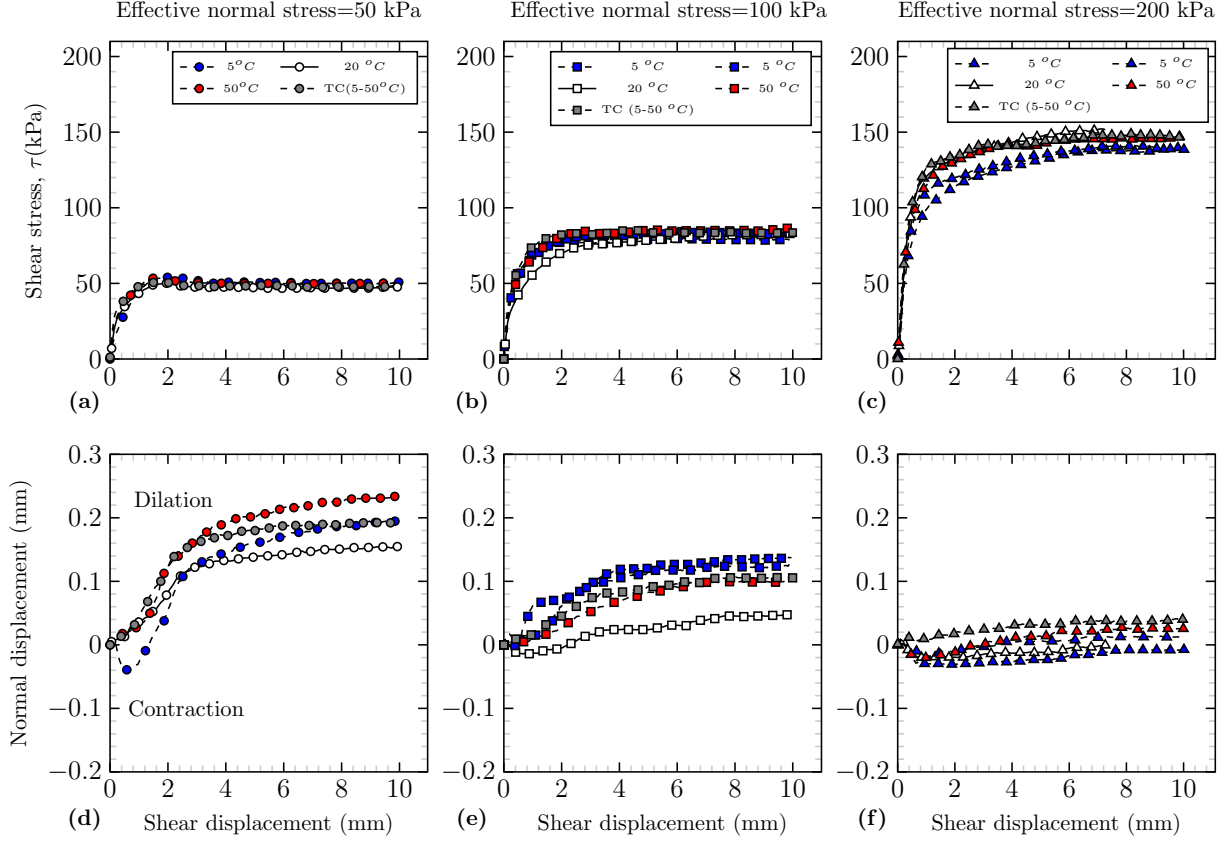


Figure 11: Effect of temperature on shear stress and normal displacement at three different effective normal stresses a-d) 50 kPa b-e) 100 kPa and c-f) 200 kPa, TC=temperature cycles.

Table 5: Shear characteristics of studied soil for different temperatures.

T (°C)	τ (kPa)			c (kPa)	φ (°)
	$\sigma'_n=50$ kPa	$\sigma'_n=100$ kPa	$\sigma'_n=200$ kPa		
5	49.7	79.0	137.0	20.6	30.5
20	48.0	80.5	150.5	13.0	34.4
50	49.8	84.7	149.5	17.4	33.5
TC(5-50)	48.6	83.7	146.0	17.4	33.0

437 increasing the normal stress, this tendency is fading.

438 4.2.2 Cyclic thermo-mechanical direct shear results

439 For thermal cyclic tests after saturation, the same normal stresses as monotonic section
 440 ($\sigma'_n=50, 100,$ and 200 kPa) were applied. After reaching the desired normal stress, the
 441 compacted soil samples were subjected to temperature cycles: they were first heated up
 442 from 20 to 50 °C then cooled down from 50 to 5 °C and subsequently followed by 4
 443 temperature cycles from 5 to 50 °C.

444 Figure 10b, c, and d show the volumetric deformation due to the temperature cycles

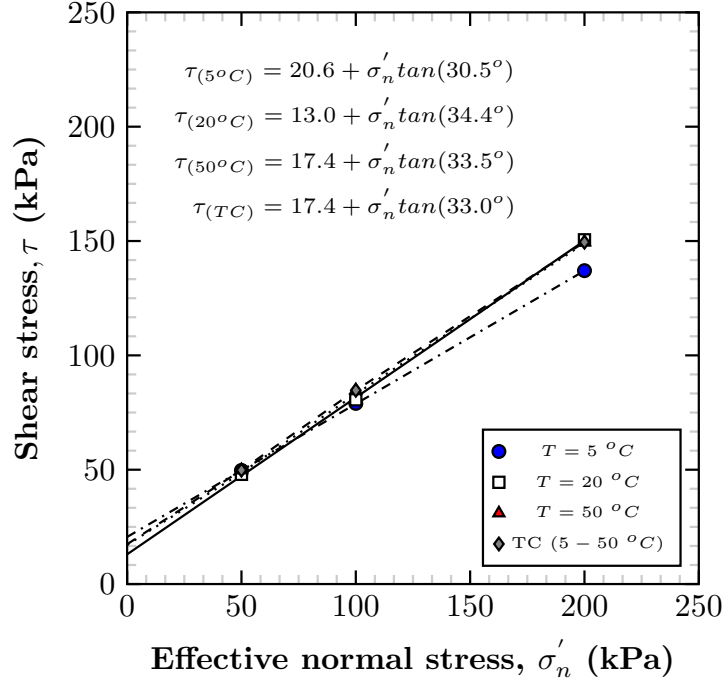


Figure 12: Shear stress against effective normal stress at $T = 5^\circ\text{C}$, $T = 20^\circ\text{C}$, $T = 50^\circ\text{C}$ and after 5 TC (temperature cycles, 5-50 °C).

445 under each normal stress. The compacted soil upon heating from 20 to 50 °C contracted
446 by 0.05, 0.11, and 0.14 % under normal stress of 50, 100, and 200 kPa respectively.
447 This order of magnitude is coherent with the results of monotonic thermo-mechanical
448 paths as is shown in Figure 10a. After that, the samples cooled down to 5 °C and
449 slightly contracted. The contraction of the sample upon the first heating was found to be
450 irreversible. The first cycle caused a higher contraction compared to subsequent cycles
451 (Figure 10b, c, and d). The final thermal contractions after 5 thermal cycles were 0.16 %,
452 0.21 % and 0.22 % under 50, 100 and 200 kPa respectively. When the thermal volumetric
453 deformation stabilized, the samples were sheared (0.02 mm/min) at 20 °C (Figure 11).
454 The shear stress corresponding to 10 % of the sample length in table 5 showed that the
455 temperature cycles have slightly increased the shear strength of the compacted soil under
456 normal stresses of 50 and 100 kPa while it decreased slightly under 200 kPa compared to
457 reference tests at 20 °C. This shear stress variation as well as the volumetric response of
458 the cyclic tests follows the same trend as the monotonic tests at 50 °C (Figure 11). In both
459 tests, with increasing the normal stress, the dilative response under lower normal stress
460 (50 and 100 kPa) tends towards a contractive one under higher vertical stress (200 kPa).

461 The Mohr-Coulomb plane after temperature cycles showed that the cohesion increased
462 by 4 kPa (from 13.0 to 17.4 kPa) and the friction angle remained unchanged compared
463 to the reference test at 20 °C (Table 5). The variation of the cohesion was the same as
464 the test at 50 °C. If the volumetric deformation due to heating will be one reason for the
465 shear increase, it can be concluded that the first heating has a significant impact on the
466 shearing response.

467 5 Discussion

468 5.1 Temperature effect on consolidation parameters

469 The shrinkage of the elastic domain, generally denoted thermal softening in literature,
470 is generally explained by the temperature-dependent properties of water and changes
471 in the fabric of pores structure (Baldi et al. 1988; Mon et al. 2013). This thermal
472 softening causes the normal consolidation line shifts to the left and consequently the
473 apparent preconsolidation pressure decreases (Tidfors and Sällfors 1989; Shariatmadari
474 and Saeidijam 2012).”

475 In terms of consolidation behavior, temperature variations had a negligible effect on
476 the compression index (C_c) and swelling index (C_s) of the studied compacted soil but they
477 had an impact on apparent preconsolidation pressure (σ'_p). The observed results are in
478 accordance with those of other authors on saturated natural and compacted soil samples
479 (François et al. 2007; Kaddouri et al. 2019).

480 The shrinkage of the elastic domain, generally denoted thermal softening in literature,
481 is generally explained by the temperature-dependent properties of water and changes
482 in the fabric of pores structure (Baldi et al. 1988; Marques et al. (2004); Mon et al.
483 2013). This thermal softening causes the normal consolidation line shifts to the left
484 and consequently the apparent preconsolidation pressure decreases (Marques et al. 2004;
485 Tidfors and Sällfors 1989; Shariatmadari and Saeidijam 2012).

5.2 Volumetric response due to the temperature cycles

The thermo-elastoplastic volumetric response of the compacted soil due to temperature cycles under different vertical stresses was found to be state-dependent (OC or NC). Whatever the vertical stresses, in the overconsolidated state, the elastic volumetric deformation was induced whereas in normally consolidated states, for both oedometric and shear tests, a significant thermal plastic strain was observed during the first temperature cycle (Figures 8 and 10). After the first cycle, subsequent cycles induced lower thermal plastic strain. In NC state, the sample is subjected to the maximum experienced vertical stress, and simultaneously, the temperature is raised. This modification would lead to a decrease in pore water viscosity, which consequently increases the permeability and facilitates the particle rearrangements. Campanella and Mitchell (1968), Baldi et al. (1988), Di Donna and Laloui (2015); Ng et al. (2019) and Shetty et al. (2019) observed the same type of thermo-plastic strain induced by heating-cooling cycles, in NC clayey and silty clay soils. Some researchers reported that the amount of thermal volumetric change depends on the plasticity index (PI) of the soil (Abuel-Naga et al. 2007; Ghaaowd et al. 2015). The soil with higher plasticity index shows more thermo-plastic deformation (Delage et al. 2000). Di Donna and Laloui (2013) reported a volumetric deformation of 0.6 % for natural silty clay soils with a plasticity index of 18% while, for the studied soil in this paper, the volumetric deformation was 0.15% with a plasticity index of 6.6% .

5.3 Temperature cycles effect on consolidation parameters

The compacted soil in NC state after being subjected to thermal cycles (under 170 and 400 kPa), was reloaded vertically at 20 °C. After thermal plastic deformation and void ratio decrease, the compacted soil shows less compressibility with subsequent loading (slope of a_c is less than the compression index, C_c at 20 °C, Figure 9b). This behavior can be due to the increase in the stiffness and hardness of the soil caused by thermal cycles. While by subsequent loading the void ratio converged to the void ratio of the reference oedometric test at 20 °C (Figure 9b and 9c). This means that the impact of thermal plastic deformation of the compacted soil in NC state disappears upon subsequent

514 loading. This observation is corroborated with the findings reported by Di Donna and
515 Laloui (2013) and Shetty et al. (2019) who have studied the effect of thermal cycles on
516 the thermal volumetric change of silty clay soil.

517 **5.4 Heating or cooling and temperature cycles effect on shear characteristics**

518 In terms of structural stability of an embankment made of studied compacted soil, the
519 friction angle was not affected by temperature variation which has been confirmed by
520 several studies on other soils in the literature (Hueckel and Baldi 1990; Burghignoli et al.
521 2000; Ghahremannejad 2003; Cekerevac and Laloui 2004; Maghsoodi et al. 2020). The
522 induced thermal volumetric deformation during heating or temperature cycles slightly
523 increased the cohesion. Cooling decreased the shear stress under higher normal stresses
524 and consequently, the cohesion increased by 7.6 kPa.

525 In consolidation and shear behavior, two different behavior was observed. Regarding
526 the consolidation behavior, on one hand, the heated compacted soil showed a softening
527 behavior, on the other hand, the shear stress slightly increased. The increase in cohesion
528 can be related to the thermal volumetric contraction that occurred in the heating phase
529 which densified the samples. At lower temperature ($5\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$) oedometric tests showed lower
530 settlement during the consolidation phase, while, the shear test results showed that the
531 compacted soil under high normal stress has low shear strength. This trend needs to be
532 confirmed with triaxial tests or other tests under higher stress. This could be explained
533 by the fact that the links between soil particles in low temperatures at the microstructural
534 level could become more fragile and consequently the strength could decrease. Further
535 investigations on the microstructure of heated and cooled specimens are necessary to
536 confirm this explanation.

537 Regarding the volumetric response during shearing, the dilatation is the result of two
538 different events: (i) rolling and sliding of soil particles (ii) normal stress-induced con-
539 traction. The soil particle rearrangements caused a disturbance and result in a volume
540 augmentation, whereas the contraction process decreases the soil volume. When the nor-
541 mal stress is relatively small, the soil particle rolling and the subsequent disorder are

542 dominant. In high normal stresses, the contraction becomes more dominant and the par-
543 ticle rearrangement is confined (Yavari et al. 2016; Zhao et al. 2017; Kouakou et al. 2020).
544 Therefore, the dilatation decreases with normal stress increase.

545 **5.5 Engineering implications of results**

546 Based on thermo-mechanical paths in this study, it can be confirmed that in the construc-
547 tion phase the horizontal heat exchanger loops can be placed in different depths in an
548 embankment. The experimental results showed that the temperature variations, either
549 monotonic (heating or cooling) or temperature cycles tend towards conservation or even
550 improvement of bearing capacity and embankment slopes stability. In terms of consoli-
551 dation behavior in thermal charging and discharging seasons, when the compacted soil is
552 exposed to monotonic temperature variations, due to the very small differences in com-
553 pression index at different temperatures, the effect of temperature on the embankment
554 global settlement can be considered negligible. Furthermore, the volumetric response un-
555 der different vertical stresses (50 to 200 kPa) at different embankment depths (2.5 to 10
556 m) due to heating and temperature cycles could be also small enough to be neglected.

557 Thus, it can be concluded that the effect of temperature on the global mechanical
558 behavior of the studied compacted soil with temperature variation range from 5 to 50
559 °C could be negligible. It should be noted that the embankment is in interaction with
560 the atmosphere from its top and lateral surfaces, the thermal efficiency of the structure
561 could be affected due to the heat losses. Consequently, it is better to place the heat
562 exchangers far from the top and lateral surfaces. The tests in this study were performed
563 on compacted soil at an initial optimal compaction state for thermal properties ($w=16.3$
564 and $\rho_d = 1.79Mg.m^{-3}$). This initial soil condition could affect thermo-hydro-mechanical
565 responses to the temperature variation. Therefore, the initial soil compaction state should
566 take into account the optimal thermal soil properties.

6 Conclusions

This study investigated the consolidation and shear behavior of compacted sandy lean clay subjected to the monotonic and cyclic temperature variations. This type of soil is frequently used for embankment application in France. It should be noted that these tests were performed in the saturated state which underestimates soil mechanical properties. The temperature-controlled oedometric and direct-shear devices were used to perform non-isothermal tests.

Based on the results of the oedometric test, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- the heated compacted soil shows a softening behavior, in contrast, cooled compacted soil shows hardening behavior;
- the compression index and swelling index were unchanged with temperature variation;
- the apparent preconsolidation pressure decreased with heating and increased with cooling;
- the volumetric response of compacted soil depends on the stress history. In an overconsolidated state, a reversible deformation was observed, and in a normally consolidated state the temperature cycles induced a thermal plastic contraction;
- the compacted soil subjected to temperature cycles showed a hardening behavior.

The results of direct shear tests showed that heating from 20 to 50 °C and temperature cycles had a negligible effect on shear characteristics whereas cooling from 20 to 5 °C decreased the shear stress at higher normal stresses (200 kPa).

These results are essential in designing the energy geostuctures in a similar range of temperatures. Further work should be performed to investigate the microstructural behavior of studied soil due to heating or cooling. Moreover, in terms of thermal efficiency behavior, a numerical simulation will be performed to investigate the suitable position of horizontal heat exchanger loops due to the heat loss caused by soil-atmospheric interaction.

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730 **List of symbols**

- 731 • σ'_v (kPa) Effective vertical stress
- 732 • τ (kPa) Shear stress
- 733 • σ'_n (kPa) Effective normal stress
- 734 • σ'_p (kPa) Preconsolidation pressure
- 735 • φ ($^\circ$) Friction angle of soil
- 736 • C_c (–) Compression index
- 737 • C_s (–) Swelling index
- 738 • c (kPa) Cohesion
- 739 • T ($^\circ C$) Temperature
- 740 • w (%) water content
- 741 • ρ_d (Mg/m³) Dry density
- 742 • e (–) void ratio
- 743 • ε_v (%) Volumetric deformation
- 744 • k (m/s) Hydraulic conductivity
- 745 • K (m²) Intrinsic permeability
- 746 • μ (Pa.s) Water viscosity
- 747 • C_v (m².s⁻¹) Coefficient of consolidation
- 748 • m_v (kPa⁻¹) Coefficient of volume compressibility
- 749 • γ_w (kN.m⁻³) unit weight of water
- 750 • OCR Overconsolidated ratio
- 751 • NC Normally consolidated state
- 752 • OC Overconsolidated state

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