FEM@LLNL Seminar Series, June 12, 2025

## **Interpolation-Based Immersed Finite Element**

## and Isogeometric Analysis

John A. Evans

Associate Professor

Smead Aerospace Engineering Sciences

University of Colorado Boulder

john.a.evans@colorado.edu



## CU Boulder

### UCSD



John Evans



Nils Wunsch



Kurt Maute



David Kamensky



Jennifer Fromm



Ru Xiang



Han Zhao



## CU Boulder

### UCSD



John Evans



Kurt Maute



J.S. Chen



Jennifer Fromm



Nils Wunsch



Ryan Caputo



Ru Xiang



Han Zhao



## **Smead Aerospace Engineering Sciences at CU Boulder**



## **Smead Aerospace Engineering Sciences at CU Boulder**



## Part 1:

Motivation

Classical finite element analysis requires the generation of a high quality bodyfitted finite element mesh which can require upwards of 80% of the time required in a design-through-analysis cycle:



This is especially true for geometrically complex, multi-material, multi-physics problems:







Isogeometric analysis directly employs the basis employed in CAD for CAE and thus bypasses the need for the generation of a high quality body-fitted finite element mesh. However, isogeometric analysis requires an explicit parameterization of the geometric domain, and thus it cannot be directly applied to trimmed CAD geometries:



Immersed finite element (and isogeometric) analysis is another approach that bypasses the need for the generation of a high quality body-fitted finite element mesh. In this approach, basis functions defined on a non-body-fitted background mesh are instead used for CAE, so it can be directly applied to trimmed CAD geometries:



Immersed finite element analysis can also be applied to problems out of reach by both classical finite element analysis and isogeometric analysis, such as problems exhibiting a change in domain topology:



Immersed finite element analysis can also be applied to problems out of reach by both classical finite element analysis and isogeometric analysis, such as problems exhibiting a change in domain topology:



(a) t = 0.000 s

(b) t = 0.875 s



Casquero, H.., et al. "The divergence-conforming immersed boundary method: Application to vesicle and capsule dynamics." *JCP* 425 (2021): 109872.

Immersed finite element analysis is also an ideal technology for level set topology optimization as the geometric domain does need to be reparametrized or re-meshed at every design iteration:



Noël, L., et al. "Adaptive level set topology optimization using hierarchical B-splines." *SAMO* 62.4 (2020): 1669-1699.

However, implementation of an immersed finite element analysis code is a challenging and time consuming task even for domain experts. The primary challenge is numerical integration over cut cells:



Several different strategies have been introduced for this integration, each giving rise to a specialized quadrature rule for every single cut cell:



The purpose of the EXHUME project is to ease the burden of implementing an immersed finite element code.

In particular, the EXHUME project enables one to transform classical finite element codes into immersed finite element codes with minimal implementation effort.

The key technology underlying the EXHUME project is the concept of interpolation-based immersed finite element analysis.

## **Part 2:**

## **Interpolation-Based Immersed Finite Element Analysis**

## Defining the Method for a Model Problem

- Use **Poisson equation** as model PDE for exposition
- <u>Strong form</u>: Find solution *u* s.t.

$$-\Delta u = f$$
 in  $\Omega$ 

u = g on  $\partial \Omega$ 

• <u>Weak form</u>: Find  $u \in H_0^1(\Omega) + \ell_g$  s.t.  $\forall v \in H_0^1(\Omega)$ 

$$\int_{\Omega} \nabla u \cdot \nabla v \, d\Omega = \int_{\Omega} f v \, d\Omega$$

• <u>Discrete problem</u>: Find  $u^h \in V^h \subset H^1(\Omega)$  s.t.  $\forall v^h \in V^h$ 

$$\begin{split} &\int_{\Omega} \nabla u^{h} \cdot \nabla v^{h} \, d\Omega - \int_{\partial \Omega} \nabla u^{h} \cdot \boldsymbol{n} \, v^{h} \, d\Gamma \\ &\mp \int_{\partial \Omega} \nabla v^{h} \cdot \boldsymbol{n} \, (u^{h} - g) d\Gamma \\ &+ \int_{\partial \Omega} \frac{\alpha}{h} (u^{h} - g) v^{h} \, d\Gamma = \int_{\Omega} f \, v^{h} \, d\Omega \end{split}$$



Using <u>Nitsche's method</u> for weak enforcement of Dirichlet BCs

## Quadrature-Based Immersed Methods



### In Mathematical Notation:

Discrete problem is: Find  $u^h \in V^h$  s.t.  $\forall v^h \in V^h$ ,

$$a_h(u^h, v^h) = L_h(v^h)$$
,

where

$$a_{h}(u,v) \coloneqq \sum_{e=1}^{\nu_{el}} \int_{\omega_{e}} \nabla u \cdot \nabla v \, d\Omega + \sum_{e=1}^{\nu_{el}} \int_{\partial \omega_{e} \cap \partial \Omega} -v \nabla u \cdot \boldsymbol{n} + u \nabla v \cdot \boldsymbol{n} + \left(\frac{\alpha}{h}\right) uv \, d\Gamma ,$$
$$L_{h}(v) \coloneqq \sum_{e=1}^{\nu_{el}} \int_{\omega_{e}} fv \, d\Omega + \sum_{e=1}^{\nu_{el}} \int_{\partial \omega_{e} \cap \partial \Omega} \mp g \nabla v \cdot \boldsymbol{n} + \left(\frac{\alpha}{h}\right) gv \, d\Gamma ,$$

 $\{\omega_e\}_{e=1}^{\nu_{el}}$  are elements of the foreground mesh, and the discrete space is

 $V^h \coloneqq \operatorname{span}\{N_i|_{\Omega}\}_{i=1}^n$ 

with basis functions  $\{N_i\}_{i=1}^n$  defined on the background mesh.

**Implementation problem:** Quadrature defined on foreground mesh, but basis functions defined on background mesh; cannot use standard FEM data structures and assembly algorithms!

## Interpolation-Based Immersed Methods

Want: Basis functions used for assembly defined on the same mesh as the quadrature rule.

#### Approach:

- Define nodal basis on foreground mesh:  $\{\phi_j\}_{j=1}^{\nu}$  with nodes  $\{x_j\}_{j=1}^{\nu}$
- Interpolate background basis functions in foreground space:  $\widehat{N_i} = \sum_{j=1}^{\nu} N_i(x_j)\phi_j$
- Use span of interpolated background basis functions as solution space:  $V^h = \operatorname{span}\{\widehat{N_i}\}_{i=1}^n$

#### Equivalent to quadrature-based method *if*:

- Foreground mesh fitted to background mesh
- Foreground basis can exactly represent all monomials in background basis functions

#### Possible approximations (new numerical methods):

- Reduced polynomial degree of foreground basis ⇒ More efficient assembly
- Background-unfitted foreground mesh ⇒ More flexibility in mesh generation

## **Interpolated Basis Functions**



Domain in red, background mesh in black



"Background-fitted" foreground mesh







 $\widehat{N_i}$  for piecewise-quadratic Lagrange foreground basis  $\{\phi_j\}$ 



 $C^1$  quadratic B-spline background basis function  $N_i$ 



"Background-<u>un</u>fitted" foreground mesh





 $\widehat{N_i}$  for piecewise-linear Lagrange foreground basis  $\{\phi_j\}$ 

 $\widehat{N_i}$  for piecewise-quadratic Lagrange foreground basis  $\{\phi_j\}$ 

## Implementation Using an Existing FE Code

Matrix notation for discrete problem we want to solve:

$$\mathbf{Kd} = \mathbf{F}$$
, where  $K_{ij} = a_h(\widehat{N_j}, \widehat{N_i})$  and  $F_i = L_h(\widehat{N_i})$ .

What is easy to assemble over the foreground mesh with an <u>existing FE code</u>:  $A_{ij} = a_h(\phi_j, \phi_i)$  and  $B_i = L_h(\phi_i)$ .

Transformation to desired problem, using standard linear algebra routines (e.g., backend library):

 $\mathbf{K} = \mathbf{M}^T \mathbf{A} \mathbf{M}$  and  $\mathbf{F} = \mathbf{M}^T \mathbf{B}$ , where  $M_{ij} = N_j(\mathbf{x}_i)$ .

**Only non-standard assumption:** Existing FE code can implement  $a_h$  and  $L_h$  for <u>Nitsche's method</u>.

## Interpolation Error Bound

For background-fitted foreground meshes, and under various technical assumptions, we have the interpolation bound

$$\inf_{v^h \in \operatorname{span}\{\widehat{N_i}\}} \left\| u - v^h \right\|_{H^1(\Omega)} \le Ch^{\widehat{k}} \| u \|_{H^{\widehat{k}+1}(\Omega)}$$

where  $\hat{k} = \min\{k, \kappa\}$  is the minimum degree of polynomial completeness between the background (k) and foreground ( $\kappa$ ) function spaces.

**Note:** Background space may have some monomials with degree  $\geq k$ ; these do not need to be captured in foreground space for optimal-order interpolation error.

Numerical results suggest that this holds under significantly more general conditions.

## **Results:** 2D Poisson with Background-*Fitted* Foreground Mesh



Convergence testing using a manufactured solution to Poisson's equation



#### **Convergence at optimal rates**

## **Results:** 3D Poisson with Background-*Fitted* Foreground Mesh



#### **Convergence at optimal rates**

## **Results:** 2D Poisson with Background-<u>Unfitted</u> Foreground Mesh



## **Results:** Biharmonic (<u>non-conforming</u>!)



interpolation of a  $C^1$  quadratic Bspline function is not exactly  $C^1$ , and thus not  $\in H^2(\Omega)$  !

Still obtain convergence rates expected from theory for conforming formulation.

## Interpolation-Based Isogeometric Analysis of Navier-Stokes Flow Using Equal-Order Elements and VMS Stabilization



Taylor-Green Vortex at *Re* = 100

## Interpolation-Based Isogeometric Analysis of Navier-Stokes Flow Using Equal-Order Elements and VMS Stabilization



Interpolation-Based Isogeometric Analysis of Navier-Stokes Flow Using Equal-Order Elements and VMS Stabilization



### Image-Based Analysis for Composite Materials

Linear elastic analysis of alumina particles embedded in epoxy from Micro-CT image



## Image-Based Analysis for Composite Materials





#### **Body-Fitted FEA**

#### Immersed FEA

## Image-Based Analysis for Composite Materials





#### Immersed FEA

#### Body-Fitted FEA

## Application to Thermo-Elasticity: Heating of Plate with Inclusion

Subdomain A: E = 1.0 v = 0.3  $\alpha = 1.0 \times 10^{-5}$  u = 0 T = 0Subdomain B: E = 1.0 v = 0.3  $\alpha = 10.0 \times 10^{-5}$ 

q

## Application to Thermo-Elasticity: Heating of Plate with Inclusion



Interpolation-Based Immersed Isogeometric Analysis  $k_1 = k_1 = 2$  Quadrature-Based Immersed Isogeometric Analysis  $k_1 = k_1 = 2$  Interpolation-Based Trimmed Isogeometric Shell Analysis



#### Background-fitted foreground mesh



Background-unfitted foreground mesh

Interpolation-Based Trimmed Isogeometric Shell Analysis



Background-fitted foreground mesh

Background-unfitted foreground mesh

Interpolation-Based Trimmed Isogeometric Shell Analysis



## Part 3:

## **Transforming Classical Codes Into Immersed Codes with EXHUME**

## Retrofitting Classical Finite Element Codes for Interpolation-Based Immersed Analysis

Our software library EXHUME creates foreground meshes, extraction operators, and connectivity arrays outside of the confines of any particular finite element code:



As demonstrated later, we have leveraged these extraction data structures to transform the popular open-source classical finite element code FEniCS into an interpolation-based immersed finite element code.

## The MORIS Software Library for XFEM-Based Level Set Topology Optimization



## The MORIS Software Library for XFEM-Based Level Set Topology Optimization



## The EXHUME Software Library



## Part 4:

## **Enabling Interpolation-Based Immersed FEA in FEniCS**

## Leveraging Code Generation: The FEniCS Project



## Interpolation-Based Immersed Finite Element Analysis Workflow



## FEniCS: Solving the Poisson Problem with Classical FEA

from	dolfin	import	*
------	--------	--------	---

Load mesh and define subdomains	<pre>#load mesh, and define geometry subdomains mesh_f = Mesh() file = XDMFFile(mesh_f.mpi_comm(), 'mesh.xdmf') file.read(mesh_f) sub_domains=MeshFunction('size_t',mesh_f.geometry().dim()) file.read(sub_domains, 'material') outside_ID = 1; block_ID = 2; surf_ID = 3 sub_domains_surf = MeshFunction("size_t",mesh_f,mesh_f.geometry().dim()-1)</pre>
	<pre>&gt; for facet in facets(mesh_f):</pre>
	<pre>dx_custom = Measure('dx', subdomain_data=sub_domains,subdomain_id=block_ID, metadata={'quadrature_degree': 2*k}) ds_custom = Measure('dS', subdomain_data=sub_domains_surf,subdomain_id=surf_ID, metadata={'quadrature_degree': 2*k})</pre>
Define classic FE function space	<pre>#Define a foreground function space on the mesh, with continuous Galerkin elements, with polynomial order k = 2 k = 2 V_f = FunctionSpace(mesh_f, 'CG', k) u_f = Function(V_f) v_f = TestFunction(V_f) int_constant = Constant(0.0)*v_f*dx(domain=mesh_f, subdomain_data=sub_domains)</pre>
Define variational _ problem	<pre># define the exact solution, to be used with the method of manufactured solutions x = SpatialCoordinate(mesh) u_ex = sin(x[0])*cos(x[1]) f = -div(grad(u_ex)) a = inner(grad(u_ex)) a = inner(grad(u_f),grad(v_f))*dx_custom</pre>
L	L = Inner(1, v_1)*ux_custom



## FEniCS: Solving the Poisson Problem with Classical FEA





## FEniCS: Solving the Poisson Problem with Interpolation-Based Immersed FEA



## Part 5:

## **Current Status and Future Plans**

## Capability #1: Support for Locally Refined Mixed Foreground Meshes of Tris/Quads (in 2D) and Tets/Hexes (in 3D) with Hanging Nodes



## Capability #2: Support for Locally Refined Background Discretizations of Hierarchical B-splines



#### **Hierarchical basis enables refinement**



0.750.50.250.2500123456Basis function is sum of

Basis function is sum of scaled and translated versions of itself

Repeated refinement where needed

#### Truncation leads to:

- Reduced support size
- Retain partition of unity





## Capability #3: Support for Enriched Background Discretizations for Multi-Material Problems



Enriched interpolated background function for  $\Omega_1$ 



Foreground mesh with local refinement



Enriched interpolated background basis function for  $\Omega_2$ 

## Capability #4: Support for Separate Background Discretizations for Multi-Physics Problems



Thermo-elastic multi-material problem subject to a spatially varying heat load



#### Background mesh for displacement field



Background mesh for temperature field

## Capability #5: Basis Stabilization in Presence of Small Cut Cells

Burman, E., et al. "Extension operators for trimmed spline spaces." CMAME 403 (2023):

**Issue:** Stability and condition number deteriorate in the presence of small cut cells



**Solution:** Remove basis functions with small support and modify remaining basis functions to maintain: (i) polynomial completeness

(ii) partition of unity

Step 1: For each bad element, extend basis functions from neighboring good element

**Step 2:** Project back into original spline space

The end-user does not need to modify their analysis code or workflow to include stabilization – it only affects the extraction operators and connectivity!

## **Planned Capabilities**

Support for foreground meshes of curved integration elements is currently being implemented.

Support for Boundary Representation (B-Rep) geometric descriptions is currently being implemented.

We are also equipping EXHUME with the capability to generate and output cutcell quadrature rules.

## Part 6:

## **Can Interpolation Be Used To Enable Other Capabilities in FEniCS?**



Jennifer Fromm

## A (brief) introduction to meshfree methods



## **Classic Finite Element (FE):**

Domain is discretized by a boundary fitted mesh



## Meshfree methods:

Domain is discretized by a point cloud



## Meshfree methods: the reproducing kernel particle method (RKPM)



$$\Psi_I(\mathbf{x}) = C(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{x} - \mathbf{x}_I) \phi_a(\mathbf{x} - \mathbf{x}_I)$$
Shape Correction Kernel
Function Function Function



**Typically B-splines** 

$$C(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{x} - \mathbf{x}_I) = \mathbf{H}^T(0)\mathbf{M}^{-1}(\mathbf{x})\mathbf{H}(\mathbf{x} - \mathbf{x}_I)$$

**Basis Vector:** 

$$H(x) = [1, x, y, x^2, xy, y^2, \dots xy^{n-1}, y^n]$$

**Moment Matrix:** 

$$\boldsymbol{M}(\boldsymbol{x}) = \sum_{I} \boldsymbol{H}(\boldsymbol{x} - \boldsymbol{x}_{I}) \boldsymbol{H}^{T}(\boldsymbol{x} - \boldsymbol{x}_{I}) \phi_{a}(\boldsymbol{x} - \boldsymbol{x}_{I})$$

Chen, J. S., Pan, C., Wu, C. T., and Liu, W. K., "Reproducing Kernel Particle Methods for Large Deformation Analysis of Nonlinear Structures," *Computer Methods in Applied Mechanics and Engineering*, Vol. 139, pp. 195-227, 1996.



## Interpolated-RKPM: introducing a foreground mesh



Foreground integration mesh, with Lagrange polynomial basis  $\{N_i\}_{i=0}^{\nu}$ 



Each shape function can be interpolated:  $\widehat{\Psi}_{I}(\mathbf{x}) = \sum_{i=1}^{n} \widehat{\Psi}_{I}(\mathbf{x})$ 

UC San Diego

## Int-RKPM shape functions: equal element size and polynomial order



Interpolation-based immersed finite element analysis and applications



62

## Int-RKPM shape functions: foreground h-refinement





63

## Int-RKPM shape functions: foreground p-refinement





64

# Int-RKPM analysis of multi-material problems with enrichment and local refinement

Linear-elasticity problem with a circular inclusion and induced eigenstrain





## Part 7:

**Useful Links** 

## **Useful Links**

• EXHUME (MORIS) software library

https://github.com/kkmaute/moris

• FEniCS implementation of interpolation-based immersed analysis:

https://github.com/jefromm/interpolation-based-immersed-fea

• First paper on interpolation-based immersed analysis:

J.E. Fromm, N. Wunsch, R. Xiang, H. Zhao, K. Maute, J.A. Evans, and D. Kamensky. "Interpolation-based immersed finite element and isogeometric analysis." CMAME 405 (2023): 115890.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cma.2023.115890



FEniCS Implementation



## **Useful Links**

• Slides and videos from Fall 2023 EXHUME Collaborators Workshop



FEM@LLNL Seminar Series, June 12, 2025

## Thank you!

Funding for EXHUME and MORIS provided by:









