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# From ground motion simulations to landslide occurrence prediction

Ashok Dahal<sup>1\*</sup>, David Alejandro Castro Cruz<sup>2</sup>, Hakan Tanyas<sup>1</sup>, Islam Fadel<sup>1</sup>, Paul Martin Mai<sup>2</sup>, Mark van der Meijde<sup>1</sup>, Cees van Westen<sup>1</sup>, Raphaël Huser<sup>3</sup>, Luigi Lombardo<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

1

2 Ground motion simulations solve wave equations in space and time, thus producing de-  
3 tailed estimates of the shaking time series. This is essentially uncharted territory for geomor-  
4 phologists, for we have yet to understand which ground motion (synthetic or not) parameter,  
5 or combination of parameters, is more suitable to explain the coseismic landslide distribution.  
6 To address this gap, we developed a method to select the best ground motion simulation  
7 using a combination of Synthetic Aperture Radar Interferometry (InSAR) and strong mo-  
8 tion data. Upon selecting the best simulation, we further developed a method to extract a  
9 suite of intensity parameters, which we used to both bivariately and multivariately analyse  
10 coseismic landslide occurrences taking the Gorkha earthquake as a reference. Our results  
11 show that beyond the virtually unanimous use of peak ground acceleration, velocity, or dis-  
12 placement in the literature, different shaking parameters could play a more relevant role  
13 in landslide occurrence. These parameters are not necessarily linked to the peak values but  
14 mostly linked to the actual displacement, velocity, frequency content and shaking duration,  
15 elements too often neglected in geomorphological analyses. This in turn implies that we  
16 have yet to fully acknowledge the complexity of the interactions between full waveforms and  
17 hillslope responses.

18 **Keywords:** Landslide Modeling; Earthquake simulation; Geophysics; Geostatistics; InSAR.

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<sup>1</sup>University of Twente, Faculty of Geo-Information Science and Earth Observation (ITC), PO Box 217, Enschede, AE 7500, Netherlands

<sup>2</sup>Physical Sciences and Engineering (PSE) Division, King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST), Thuwal, Saudi Arabia

<sup>3</sup>Computer, Electrical and Mathematical Sciences and Engineering (CEMSE) Division, King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST), Thuwal, Saudi Arabia

# 1 Introduction

Coseismic landslides are a cascading hazard caused by earthquake ground motion and constitute a threat to infrastructure and communities in tectonically-active mountainous regions (Fan *et al.*, 2019). This is the case because landslides have the dual ability to cause financial and life losses associated with short (Nowicki Jessee *et al.*, 2020) and long term consequences (Oven *et al.*, 2021) and also to do the same by hindering the timely arrival of rescue teams during the emergency phases (Williams *et al.*, 2018). Therefore, the prediction of areas likely affected by co-seismic landslides could play a role of prime importance in terms of emergency response (e.g. Robinson *et al.*, 2017) and long-term planning actions (e.g. Lombardo and Tanyas, 2021). In this context, the footprint of ground shaking needs to be accurately assessed to better predict the spatial distribution of co-seismic landslides.

The increasing number of publicly available landslide inventories (e.g. Schmitt *et al.*, 2017; Tanyaş *et al.*, 2019) has resulted in an increasing number of coseismic landslide hazard models with respect to ground motion. However, this type of studies hardly make use of modern ground motion simulation techniques (e.g., Guatteri *et al.*, 2004; Peter *et al.*, 2011).

This research explores the use of synthetic ground motion obtained via full waveform simulations in the context of landslide modelling. To do so, we develop a procedure to recognise the best parameterisation for earthquake simulations representative of the Gorkha earthquake that occurred on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2015. The simulations are generated via the Salvus software (Afanasiev *et al.*, 2018). On the basis of the synthetic ground motion, we then carry out bivariate and multivariate analyses to correlate the coseismic landslide distribution to a large suite of ground motion parameters. From these, we isolate the ones that explain the slope failures the most. Overall, we hypothesise that the full spectral information contained in the waveforms can be used to better understand the genesis of coseismic landslides.

# 2 Background

Spatial distribution of co-seismic landslides is controlled by variations in the terrain, soil and ground motion characteristics (Fan *et al.*, 2019). Terrain and soil characteristics essentially stay the same at the scale of human perception and therefore their influence on landslide activation is mainly interpreted in a predisposing manner (Donati and Turrini, 2002). As for the ground motion, its spatial and temporal dynamics constitute the main trigger of a single or of a population of coseismic slope failures (Lee, 2014). For this reason, dedicated analyses on the ground motion are required to understand slope responses (Nowicki *et al.*, 2014). In fact, the ground motion varies not only as a function of depth and magnitude but also thanks to the contributions due to rupture propagation, fault geometry, velocity structure and local site conditions (Oglesby and Mai, 2012; Vyas *et al.*, 2016), which also controls the spatial distribution of co-seismic landslides (Jibson, 2011; Fan *et al.*, 2019).

Traditionally, the geomorphological community has attempted to study the dependence

56 between landslide occurrences and seismic shaking by using two major sources of ground mo-  
57 tion parameters: strong-motion databases (SMDs) and ground motion prediction equations  
58 (GMPEs). The former are repositories of seismic records collected within networks often  
59 operated nationally (e.g., [Pacor et al., 2011](#)) or even globally (e.g., [Chiou et al., 2008](#)). Time  
60 series are recorded at locations where sensors are deployed and spatially-continuous shaking  
61 parameters are then obtained through interpolation (e.g., [Wald et al., 1999](#)). In terms of the  
62 prediction of landslide occurrences, SMDs are primarily used to build the link between ground  
63 motion and associated landslide displacements ([Jibson, 1993, 2007](#)). This link is expressed  
64 by various regression equations in the literature and further exploited to develop predictive  
65 displacement models through Newmark ([Newmark, 1965](#)) sliding block model ([Jibson et al.,  
66 2000; Gallen et al., 2017](#)). This is to say that, SMDs are quite valuable data sources shedding  
67 light on the genesis of co-seismic slope failures. However, a number of limitations affect the  
68 use of these data sources to understand and model coseismic landslides. The major limita-  
69 tion of SMDs is that, even though they can provide accurate observation of ground motion,  
70 they lack the required spatial coverage to finely resolve the shaking at the level of single  
71 slopes. Specifically, any interpolative procedure acts as a spatial smoother, thus removing  
72 precious information for the landslide modelling. This is even more exacerbated in low to  
73 medium-income countries where very few strong-motion stations are present. But, even for  
74 very dense seismic networks such as the K-Net in Japan ([Aoi et al., 2004](#)) or the USArray  
75 in the United States ([Meltzer et al., 1999](#)), local and spatially-continuous variations in the  
76 ground motion signal due to soil and/or topographic amplification are hardly observable. In  
77 fact, to provide spatially-continuous variables representing ground motion footprint, SMDs  
78 are also used as inputs for GMPEs.

79 GMPEs refer to data-driven models capable of empirically relating the ground motion sig-  
80 nal to earthquake source characteristics, attenuation and distributions of Vs30 data ([Atkin-  
81 son and Boore, 2011](#)). The most common products of such models boil down to a few  
82 summary statistics of the original waveform, these being for instance, the Peak Ground Ac-  
83 celeration (PGA) or the Peak Ground Velocity (PGV) ([García et al., 2012; Worden and  
84 Wald, 2016](#)). This is mainly the case because GMPEs are designed to estimate ground mo-  
85 tion parameters, and it is not possible to resolve the full waveform uniquely via statistical  
86 relationships because of the complex interaction of the waveform with the medium it inter-  
87 acts with. Also, GMPEs are derived from past events or from different regions, and can suffer  
88 from large uncertainties and bias ([Castro-Cruz et al., 2021](#)); among which are the limited  
89 number of observations on strong motion data they are built upon. As a result, GMPEs  
90 can be ill-defined and the ground motion they generally estimate poorly reflects some im-  
91 portant characteristics of earthquake waveforms associated with, for instance, topographic  
92 amplification, duration of shaking and/or rupture directivity, which plays an important role  
93 in landslide occurrence ([Fan et al., 2019](#)).

94 To surpass those limitations, numerical physical models have been implemented to simu-  
95 late landslides because of the importance of earthquakes in abruptly raising rates of erosion,



96 sediment transport, and deposition (e.g., [Simonett, 1967](#); [Pearce and Watson, 1986](#)). Us-  
97 ing numerical simulations, several works (e.g., [Bouchon, 1985](#); [Geli et al., 1988](#); [Tripe et al.,](#)  
98 [2013](#)) found the high relevance of the site effects of a slope on the amplification of the ground  
99 motion. Following this, many works also saw how the 3d effects from geology and topogra-  
100 phy are relevant in landslide occurrence by studying the incoming waves (e.g., [Khalil and](#)  
101 [Lopez-Caballero, 2021](#); [He et al., 2020](#); [Dunham et al., 2022](#)). Because those analyses are at  
102 local scales, they implement complex constitutive models for the soil materials' resistance  
103 and rupture. This paper aims to perform simulation at a large scale. In such models are  
104 not possible to follow complex constitutive laws, first because of the need for more specific  
105 information on all the area and the computational cost. It is still challenging to join regional  
106 physic earthquake simulation with a landslide analysis. [Huang et al. \(2020\)](#) employ a SEM  
107 simulation to recreate the ground motion and use this at each part of the region a Newark  
108 analysis to study the landslide occurrences. In this paper, we also use SEM simulations to  
109 recreate the earthquake but try to analyze the landslide through a statistic analysis.

110 Even with such limitations, virtually every single coseismic landslide study so far adopts  
111 GMPE-based estimates of ground motion, mostly because of their accessibility as part of  
112 the USGS ShakeMap service ([Wald et al., 2008](#)). ShakeMap system provides near-real-time  
113 estimates of ground motion parameters globally for any significant earthquake ( $M_w \geq 5.5$ ).  
114 These estimates are updated over time with new data acquisitions, which is mostly the case  
115 for large earthquakes such as the 2015 Gorkha event. Specifically, GMPEs allocated to derive  
116 ground motion estimates depending on earthquake mechanism and seismotectonic setting,  
117 rupturing geometry, citizen science feedback regarding shaking intensity and SMDs are used  
118 to update ShakeMap products over time ([Wald et al., 2022](#)). The most widely used param-  
119 eters in landslide studies are the PGA, PGV, and Modified Mercalli Intensity (MMI) (e.g.,  
120 [Nowicki et al., 2014](#); [Lombardo et al., 2018](#); [Nowicki Jessee et al., 2018](#)). However, looking  
121 beyond the typical reach of the landslide community, geophysicists are used to representing  
122 the full waveform via a much larger range of ground motion parameters, each one carrying  
123 its own specific physical meaning (see [Riddell, 2007](#); [Shahaki and Celikag, 2019](#)). These  
124 parameters can be either computed individually or as multiple respective combinations, and  
125 their strength resides in the ability to carry much richer shaking information as compared  
126 to the few ones mentioned above.

127 Beyond the SMD and GMPE options largely explored by the geomorphological commu-  
128 nity, a third possibility is routinely explored by seismologists since 1960'ies, in the form of  
129 physics-based simulations (e.g., [Harris et al., 2011](#); [Imperatori and Mai, 2013](#)). An extensive  
130 description of these methods and their formulation is provided in part II of the book authored  
131 by [Igel \(2017\)](#). Among these, the most accurate methods include finite difference method  
132 ([Alterman and Karal Jr, 1968](#)), finite element method ([Lysmer and Drake, 1972](#)), and spec-  
133 tral element method ([Seriani and Priolo, 1994](#); [Faccioli et al., 1996](#)). They essentially solve  
134 for the ground motion (mostly velocity or displacement) in space and time using wave elastic  
135 equations. Specifically, their use is particularly suited for large-scale wavefield reconstruc-

136 tions, obtained by solving wave equations according to specific source mechanisms in a 3D  
137 space partitioned according to a mesh, whose structure mimics the earth’s sub-surface and  
138 topography. These simulations are computationally expensive, and the input parameters  
139 often contain large uncertainties. The major sources of uncertainties are the source model,  
140 which largely depends on the inversion mechanism and input data; velocity structure which  
141 depends on the location; and the model parameters, which need to be carefully selected to  
142 obtain a good fit. In data-poor regions where strong motion records are limited, selecting the  
143 best combination of the finite fault model, velocity structure, and the model parameter is  
144 difficult because of a limited number of observations to compare the full waveform solutions  
145 against.

146 Given these constraints, there are only a few studies aiming to exploit 3D earthquake  
147 simulations to better assess the occurrence of co-seismic landslides. Those studies either  
148 couple the spectral element method with the Newmark sliding block analysis (Huang *et al.*,  
149 2020; Chen and Wang, 2022; Sun and Huang, 2023) or the material point method (Feng  
150 *et al.*, 2022) to accurately identify landslide displacements, or examine the spatial distribu-  
151 tion of co-seismic landslides with respect to peak modeled ground motions (Harp *et al.*, 2014;  
152 Dunham *et al.*, 2022). Among these studies, the research carried out for the 2015 Gorkha  
153 earthquake (Dunham *et al.*, 2022) is particularly important because this was the first time  
154 that topographically amplified seismic velocity and acceleration and their relation to land-  
155 slide sizes were investigated for such a large area ( $1^\circ \times 2^\circ$ ) and a large earthquake-induced  
156 landslide event ( 25,000 co-seismic landslides) using a 3D earthquake simulation.

157 In this broad overview of the current state of the coseismic landslide literature, the choice  
158 of the most suitable ground motion parameter to explain the landslide scenario have been  
159 rarely discussed in detail. As a result, this research gap hinders the development of a holistic  
160 understanding of the ground motion and slope interactions.

## 161 3 Material

### 162 3.1 Study area

163 The experiments part of this research have been run in the area affected by the 2015 Gorkha  
164 (Nepal) earthquake of magnitude Mw7.8 that occurred on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2015. This was one of  
165 the largest the largest ever recorded earthquake across the whole Main Himalayan Thrust  
166 (MHT). The earthquake is the result of the dominant thrust faulting mechanism typical of  
167 the MHT; the strike and dip angle of the seismogenic fault is estimated to be  $293^\circ$  and  $7^\circ$ ,  
168 respectively (Ekström *et al.*, 2012). Zhang *et al.* (2016) estimate that the rupture propagation  
169 of the mainshock nucleated near the hypocenter and propagated along the dip direction  
170 southeastwards with a total duration of 70 seconds and maximum slip of 5.2 meters.

## 3.2 Landslide inventory

Aside from the infrastructural damage, approximately 25,000 landslides were triggered by the 25 April 2015 Mw7.8 Gorkha earthquake and its aftershocks [Roback et al. \(2018\)](#). The authors mapped co-seismic landslides triggered by the mainshock using multi-sensor high-resolution optical images (0.2-0.5 meters). The resulting polygonal landslide inventory discerns source and deposition areas, whose combined extent leads to a landslide area distribution centred at a mean value of  $3,473 \text{ m}^2$ , with a standard deviation of  $11,240 \text{ m}^2$ . The largest one, Langtang Valley Landslide, reached up to  $1,720,500 \text{ m}^2$ .

Being the focus of this work aimed at explaining coseismic landslide occurrences according to a suite of synthetic ground motion parameters, the Gorkha earthquake certainly satisfies the requirements of landslide inventory quality and completeness ([Tanyaş and Lombardo, 2020](#)). As for the requirements for the simulations, further details will be provided in Section 4.

## 3.3 Observations and spatial domain

Figure 1, shows the mainshock-induced landslide inventory (red polygons), together with the approximate rupture plane (yellow rectangle), ground motion simulation domain (grey rectangle) and the actual test site (green shaded area). Notably, the simulation domain extends over an area of  $4^\circ \times 3^\circ$ . The asymmetry in the two directions is due to the main thrust whose expression was mainly along the eastward direction.

To compare our earthquake simulations against ground motion records, we accessed the data collected at one seismic station (labelled as KATNP in Figure 1) as well as six high-frequency Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS) stations. The data recorded at KATNP was processed and shared by [Shigefuji et al. \(2022\)](#) whereas the GNSS station data was processed and shared by [Galetzka et al. \(2015\)](#).

As for how to partition the test site into meaningful mapping units, we opted for a slope unit partition [Alvioli et al. \(2016\)](#). These slope units represent half sub-basins and constitute the building block of our model for the landslide analyses. From the slope unit map, all the areas below the  $10^\circ$  slope were removed to exclude flat areas from our analysis. Details on the slope unit generation are provided in [Dahal and Lombardo \(2022\)](#).

## 4 Methods

Our analytical protocol involves: *i*) ground motion simulation and *ii*) their validation, *iii*) extraction of ground motion parameters and *iv*) geo-statistical bivariate and multivariate data-driven analyses of landslide occurrence data. Each of these steps required multiple nested operations whose details and justifications will be provided in the following sections.

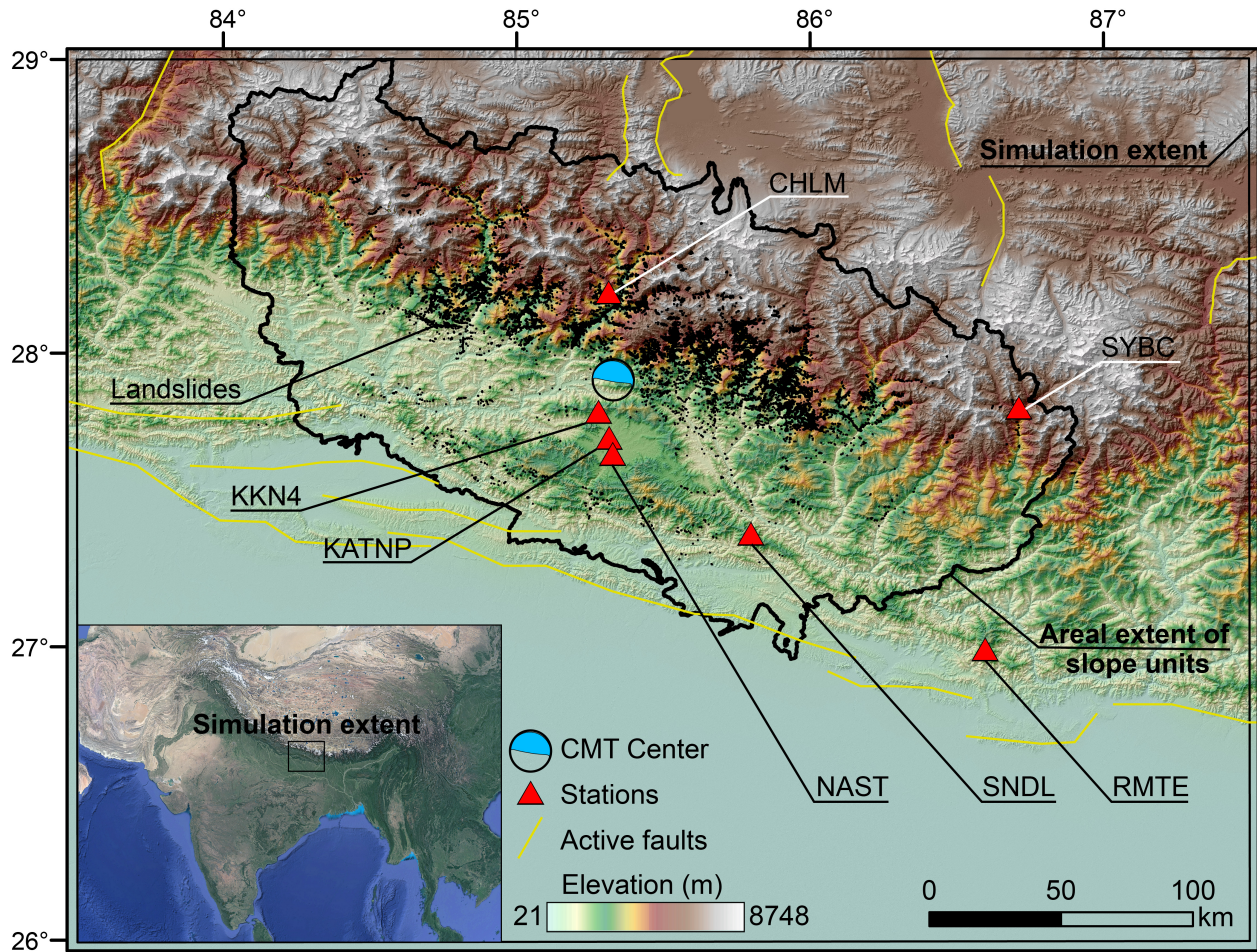


Figure 1: Study area representing the ground motion simulation domain, the test site for landslide analyses partitioned into slope units (indicated by green polygons) and the landslide inventory. The stations in the map represent the ground motion recording stations, and the CMT centre is the centroid of the moment tensor generated by global CMT project. Active faults are also shown characterising the tectonics of the MHT fault zone.



## 205 4.1 Simulation configuration

206 To generate full waveform simulations we used Salvus (Afanasiev [et al.](#), 2018). This is a  
207 community software which solves for the 3D elastic wave equation using spectral element  
208 method. The fundamental requirements for Salvus are: *i*) a source model, *ii*) a simulation  
209 mesh, and *iii*) a suite of model hyperparameters; detailed description of each requirement is  
210 provided below.

211 The fault model of the 25 April 2015 Mw7.8 Gorkha earthquake has been extensively  
212 studied, each one based on different types of data including, teleseismic, GNSS, InSAR  
213 and their combinations. Some of those sources are the point source model derived by both  
214 the Global Centroid Moment Tensor (GCMT) project (Ekström [et al.](#), 2012) and United  
215 States Geological Survey (USGS) (USGS, 2015). There are also four well known finite  
216 fault models derived for the same event using multiple combinations of the teleseismic and  
217 geodetic data (Hayes [et al.](#), 2015; Yagi and Okuwaki, 2015; Kobayashi [et al.](#), 2016; Wei  
218 [et al.](#), 2018). The model from Wei [et al.](#) (2018) heavily relied on InSAR data from Sentinel-1  
219 and ALOS PALSAR missions, together with the teleseismic data. Conversely, the models  
220 proposed by Hayes [et al.](#) (2015) and Yagi and Okuwaki (2015) have not used INSAR data  
221 but rather teleseismic and strong motion ones. Moreover, Kobayashi [et al.](#) (2016) has used  
222 displacement points from InSAR (21 in total), and GNSS stations together with teleseismic  
223 data. In this work, we tested both the point source solutions mentioned above and the  
224 resulting ground simulations were unsatisfactory compared to those obtained from the full  
225 fault models (unreported results). As for the latter, we had to test which of the four faults  
226 reproduced the most realistic wavefield.

227 Notably, Nepal does not have a permanent seismic array deployed with a high spatial  
228 resolution. For the specific case of the Gorkha earthquake, most of the available seismic  
229 stations were located in the sedimentary basin, where the underlying velocity structure is  
230 not known (Kobayashi [et al.](#), 2016). Therefore, with only 7 stations available (see Fig. 1),  
231 any validation of the forward simulation was difficult. Thus, to create a complementary  
232 testing scheme, we integrated InSAR data in our validation protocol (see Section 4.2).

233 To design the mesh required for the 3D elastic wave propagation we opted to use the  
234 waveform adaptive mesh recommended by Thrastarson [et al.](#) (2020). The depth of the  
235 mesh was set at 35 km below the mean sea level. This choice followed a criterion where  
236 enough volume was defined below the deepest point along the finite fault solution to remove  
237 any source of reverberation from the bottom. As for the top, the surface topography was  
238 added above the mean sea level. A 50-meter topography was obtained from the global multi  
239 resolution topography data synthesis project (Ryan [et al.](#), 2009). The horizontal distance  
240 between the mesh elements was automatically calculated within Salvus, based on the velocity  
241 of the S-wave and the design frequency. The resulting mesh spatial resolution was around  
242 300 meters, a resolution capable to resolve frequencies up to 3.0 Hz. However, the four  
243 source models considered here were designed with an upper limit of 1.0 Hz which limited the  
244 resolved frequency range.)

245 Once the mesh was created, each element in the mesh was populated with the velocity  
246 and density structure. Each of the four source models we considered had different velocity  
247 structure in their source model inversion, which we maintained in the respective simulations.  
248 Specifically, for the finite fault model of [Wei et al. \(2018\)](#), we used velocity structure from  
249 [Mahesh et al. \(2013\)](#). For the remaining source models, we used instead the velocity density  
250 structure they respectively assumed during the fault model inversion ([Kobayashi et al.](#),  
251 [2016](#); [Hayes et al., 2015](#); [Yagi and Okuwaki, 2015](#)). All fault solutions and velocity structure  
252 information are available at the SRCMOD database ([Mai and Thingbaijam, 2014](#)). With  
253 the velocity structure and mesh elements defined, we then calculated the Mass and Stiffness  
254 matrices required by the spectral element method before propagating the elastic waves from  
255 source model ([Igel, 2017](#)).

256 The total duration of each simulation was set to 200 seconds to accommodate for roughly  
257 three times the Gorkha rupture duration ( $\approx 60''$ ; [Wei et al., 2018](#)). Out of the simulated field,  
258 we opted to store the full velocity waveform in time domain. We did so for each mesh element  
259 and only at the earth surface. Moreover, we also recorded the full waveform at locations  
260 defined by the seven available stations (see Fig. 1). Furthermore, we also added an absorbing  
261 boundary 16 km in each direction except the free surface boundary to avoid reflections of the  
262 seismic wave. The absorbing boundary width was set on the basis of multiple (unreported)  
263 tests, with starting width of 4 km and up to 64 km. All simulations were performed in a  
264 HPC environment distributed over 42 CPU cores. The resulting computational time for a  
265 single fault solution was  $\approx 96$  hours for a total of  $\approx 4032$  CPU hours.

## 266 4.2 Validation of simulation

267 The most accepted method to validate the ground motion simulation relies on the compar-  
268 ison of synthetic and recorded waveforms. The sparse and non-uniform spatial distribution  
269 of the Nepalese stations can be visualized in Figure 1, where four out of the seven stations  
270 are clustered near the CMT center (within 35 km), whereas the remaining three are only  
271 available in the eastern sector ( $\approx 100$ -200 km). Such distribution is not sufficient to support  
272 a robust validation of the synthetic waveform simply because we could not compare syn-  
273 thetic waveforms in all directions and distances. Moreover, the number of stations is very  
274 low, to begin with. Therefore, we implemented a validation protocol that would include the  
275 InSAR displacement together with the standard waveform comparison. This dual informa-  
276 tion contextually provides an overview of the ground motion on the basis of few locations  
277 but where a full time series is available. As for the InSAR component, it trades the breadth  
278 of temporal data with space, as for each InSAR point only one displacement value can be  
279 obtained. However, this comes with a much larger and continuous spatial coverage.

280 Notably, a similar approach has been tested by ([Paolucci et al., 2015](#); [Shen et al., 2022](#)),  
281 although they only use the average ground displacement information pertaining to the last  
282 5 seconds of the simulation. Conversely, we opted for checking the cumulative displacement  
283 over the full time-series, without taking the arbitrary choice of a fixed time window. As a

284 result, our validation method goes beyond the visual comparison proposed by [Paolucci et al.](#)  
285 (2015) ensuring a quantitative assessment.

286 Specifically, our approach requires information on the total displacement along the Line  
287 of Sight (LoS) from the InSAR data. To obtain it, we used pre (22 Feb 2015) and post (3  
288 May 2015) ALOS PALSAR images acquired in ScanSAR mode. The LoS displacement was  
289 obtained by using the GMTSAR software ([Sandwell et al., 2011](#)) while the phase unwrapping  
290 was done through SNAPHU ([Chen and Zebker, 2002](#)). For reasons of conciseness, the InSAR  
291 protocol is not specified here but we followed the same protocol described in [Lindsey et al.](#)  
292 (2015). Upon completion of the InSAR step, we calculated the unit vectors pointing towards  
293 the position of the satellite at each location on the surface, which is then used to convert  
294 the total simulated displacement to the LoS displacement.

295 Theoretically, one should be able to retrieve the total displacement through InSAR. Simi-  
296 larly, the spectral element method should also be able to model such cumulative displacement  
297 in all directions. Therefore, the former could be used to validate the latter.

298 To obtain the synthetic cumulative displacement, we filtered out frequencies above 1.5  
299 Hz and then calculated the cumulative displacement over the whole time series. As a result,  
300 we obtained a measure of cumulative displacement along east-west, north-south and up-  
301 down directions, which we further aggregated along the InSAR LoS direction by multiplying  
302 with the unit vectors. The resulting spatial pattern can then be correlated to the InSAR  
303 displacement using the Pearson’s correlation coefficient, as shown in equation 1.

$$r = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n (x_i - \bar{x})(y_i - \bar{y})}{\sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^n (x_i - \bar{x})^2} \sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^n (y_i - \bar{y})^2}}, \quad (1)$$

304 where  $x$  is the observed LoS displacement from the InSAR observation and  $\bar{x}$  is the mean  
305 displacement.  $y$  and  $\bar{y}$  are the simulated LoS displacement and mean simulated LoS displace-  
306 ment, respectively. The Pearson’s coefficient  $r$  is the correlation coefficient which provides  
307 represents the correlation between the variables.

### 308 4.3 Ground motion parameter extraction

309 Upon completion of the ground motion simulations, to understand how synthetic waveform  
310 correlate with coseismic landslide scenario – beyond the conventional PGA, PGV, AI, and  
311 SA – we computed a suite of ground motion parameters, the list of which is presented in  
312 Table 1. Prior to that, the three ground motion components have been aggregated taking  
313 their dot product.

### 314 4.4 Geostatistical evaluation

315 For the geostatistical evaluation, we employed several methods to measure the strength of  
316 the dependence between ground motion parameters and landslides’ distribution. The major  
317 methods we employed encompass: cross-correlation ([Pearson, 1895](#)), bivariate point biserial

Name	Abbr.	Formula	Source
Acceleration Related Parameters			
Earthquake Power Index	Pa	$P_a = \frac{1}{t_2-t_1} \int_{t_1}^{t_2} a^2(t)dt$	Housner (1975)
Peak Ground Acceleration	PGA	$A_{\max} = \max  a(t) $	Gutenberg and Richter (1942)
Arias Intensity	IA	$I_A(\xi) = \frac{\cos^{-1}\xi}{g\sqrt{1-\xi^2}} \int_0^{t_f} a^2(t)dt$	Arias (1970)
Squared Acceleration	Asq	$a_{sq} = \int_0^{t_f} a^2(t)dt$	Housner and Jennings (1964)
RMS Power Index	Arms	$a_{rms} = \sqrt{P_a}$	Housner and Jennings (1964)
Root Squared Acceleration	Ars	$a_{rs} = \sqrt{a_{sq}}$	Housner (1970)
Characteristic Intensity	Ic	$I_C = a_{rms}^{1.5} t_d^{0.5}$	Park <a href="#">et al.</a> (1985)
Compound Index	Ia	$I_a = a_{\max} t_d^{1/3}$	Riddell and Garcia (2001)
Velocity Related Parameters			
Compound Index	If	$I_F = v_{\max} t_d^{0.25}$	Fajfar <a href="#">et al.</a> (1990)
Compound Index	Iv	$I_v = v_{\max}^{2/3} t_d^{1/3}$	Riddell and Garcia (2001)
Peak Ground Velocity	PGV	$V_{\max} = \max  v(t) $	Rosenblueth (1964)
Cumulative Velocity	CUV	$V_{cu} = \int_{t_0}^{t_n} a(t)dt$	EPRI (1988)
Power Index	Pv	$P_v = \frac{1}{t_{95}-t_5} \int_{t_5}^{t_{95}} v^2(t)dt$	Housner (1975)
Squared Velocity	Vsq	$v_{sq} = \int_0^{t_f} v^2(t)dt$	Housner and Jennings (1964)
RMS Power Index	Vrms	$v_{rms} = \sqrt{P_v}$	Housner and Jennings (1964)
Root Squared Velocity	Vrs	$v_{rs} = \sqrt{v_{sq}}$	Housner (1970)
Potential Destructiveness	Pd	$P_D = \frac{I_A}{v_0^2}$	Araya and Saragoni (1980)
Spectral Intensity	SI	$S_I(\xi) = \int_{0.1}^{2.5} S_v(\xi, T)dT$	Housner (1952)
Displacement Related Parameter			
Peak Ground Displacement	PGD	$D_{\max} = \max  D(t) $	Newmark and Hall (1973)
Cumulative Displacement	CUD	$D_{cu} = \int_{t_0}^{t_n} v(t)dt$	Walsh and Watterson (1987)
Power Index	Pd	$P_d = \frac{1}{t_{95}-t_5} \int_{t_5}^{t_{95}} d^2(t)dt$	Housner (1975)
Square Displacement	Dsq	$d_{sq} = \int_0^{t_f} d^2(t)dt$	Housner and Jennings (1964)
RMS Power Index	Prms	$d_{rms} = \sqrt{P_d}$	Housner and Jennings (1964)
Root Squared Displacement	Drs	$d_{rs} = \sqrt{d_{sq}}$	Housner (1970)
Compound Index	Id	$I_d = d_{\max} t_d^{1/3}$	Riddell and Garcia (2001)
Other Parameters			
Significant Duration	Sigdur	<i>Significant duration</i>	Trifunac and Brady (1975)
Maximum Frequency	MaxFreq	<i>F<sub>maximum amplitude</sub></i>	Millen (2019)
Shaking Intensity Rate	Sir	$SIR = I_{a5-75}/D_{5-75}$	Dashti <a href="#">et al.</a> (2010)
Ratio of PGV and PGA	PGVpA	$PGV/PGA$	Poreddy <a href="#">et al.</a> (2022)

Table 1: Table representing the list of equations used to extract the ground motion intensity parameters and their sources.



318 correlation (Gupta, 1960), and local spatial autocorrelation (Ord and Getis, 1995). Further-  
319 more, to understand the combined influence of the ground motion parameters on the landslide  
320 occurrence, we performed a variable selection routine as part of a susceptibility model based  
321 on a frequentist Binomial Generalized Additive Model (GAM; Hastie, 2017). Ultimately, we  
322 measured the deviation in performance calculated between our best susceptibility model and  
323 a model built on the basis of GMPEs, accessed through the USGS ShakeMap service. The  
324 latter were initially published right after the Gorkha earthquake and refined with time, thus  
325 providing three empirical versions of the ground motion (2015, 2017 and 2020; García et al.,  
326 2012; USGS, 2015), which we tested one by one. Further details on each of these statistical  
327 tests are provided in Appendix A.

## 328 5 Results

### 329 5.1 Ground motion validation

330 The comparison between an observed and estimated ground motion for each of the four  
331 fault solutions is graphically shown in Figure 2. There, the signal at each of the seven  
332 stations is plotted along the three main directions. Among the synthetic signals, we can  
333 notice that in most cases amplitudes and frequencies are suitably represented. However, on  
334 a few occasions, a marked difference stands out. For instance, KATNP and NAST show a  
335 general underestimation along the horizontal directions, likely due to soil amplification in the  
336 Kathmandu valley. As for the rest, some mismatch appears in SNDL, but this is confined  
337 to timing rather than amplitude. However, the misfits mentioned above are significantly  
338 reduced when checking the ground motion generated via the finite fault model proposed by  
339 Wei et al. (2018). This has been further verified by evaluating the ground motion simulation  
340 via the Kristekova method (Kristeková et al., 2006), which shows that the Wei et al. (2018)  
341 fault model produces the best simulation results. A detailed description of the validation  
342 and its results for all the fault models is presented in B. To visualize the simulation in the  
343 examined spatio-temporal domain, we have plotted a few summary snapshots of the velocity  
344 magnitude at different time steps for the best-fitting simulation in Figure 3.

345 The results of the InSAR analyses are shown in Figure 4. There, similarly to the waveform  
346 comparison highlighted before, the best fit corresponds to the simulations made using the  
347 fault solution of Wei et al. (2018). In this case though, it is also possible to visually appreciate  
348 a ranking of the four available solutions, with the second best being obtained with the fault  
349 model from Kobayashi et al. (2016), followed by Yagi and Okuwaki (2015) and Hayes et al.  
350 (2015). It is important to note that the worst agreement between cumulative displacements  
351 is obtained with a source model that was obtained right after the earthquake occurrence.  
352 And yet, the obtained Pearson correlation is still quite acceptable (0.61).

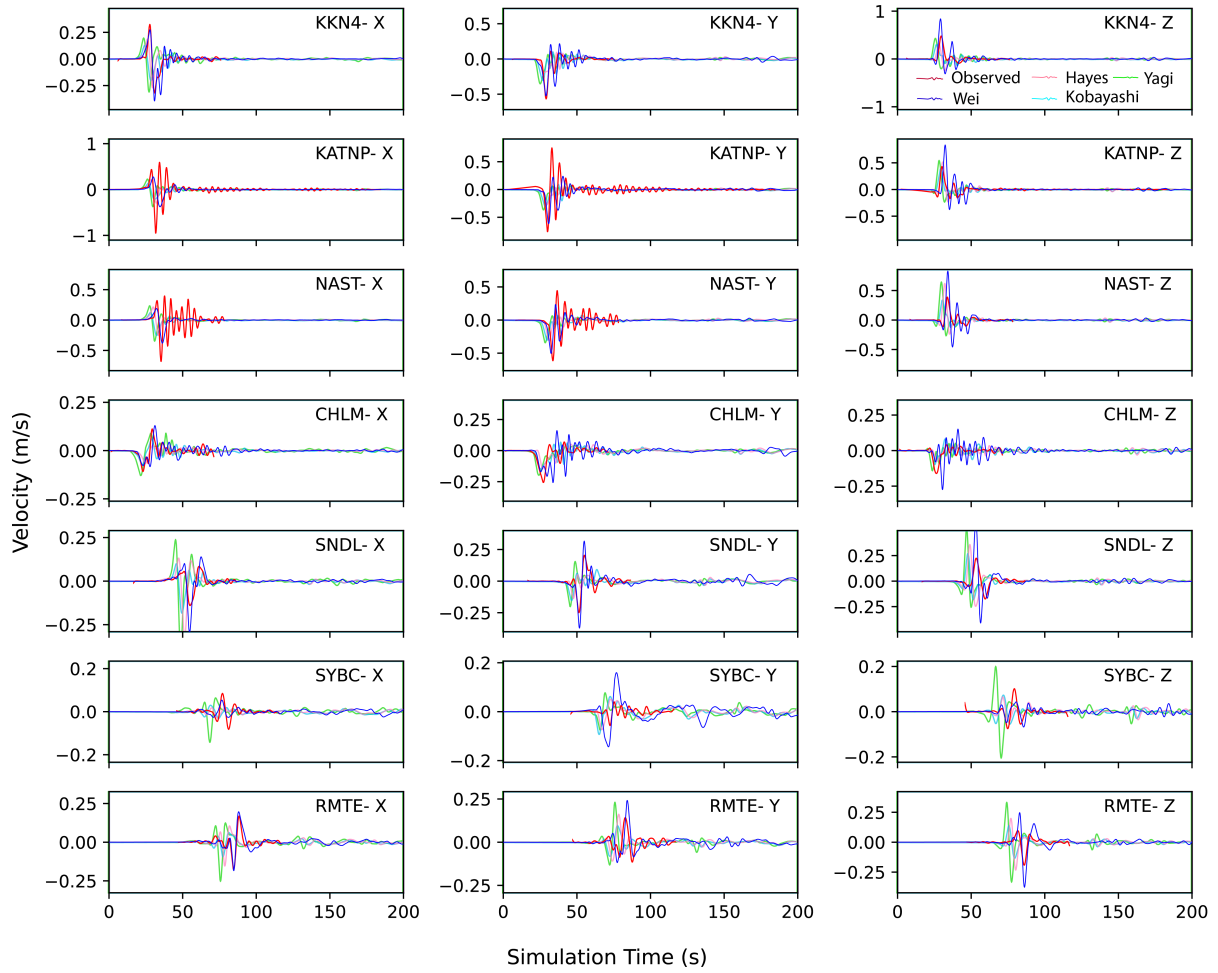


Figure 2: Comparison of simulated and observed waveforms. Best fit corresponding to the simulations generated on the basis of the fault solution proposed by [Wei et al. \(2018\)](#).

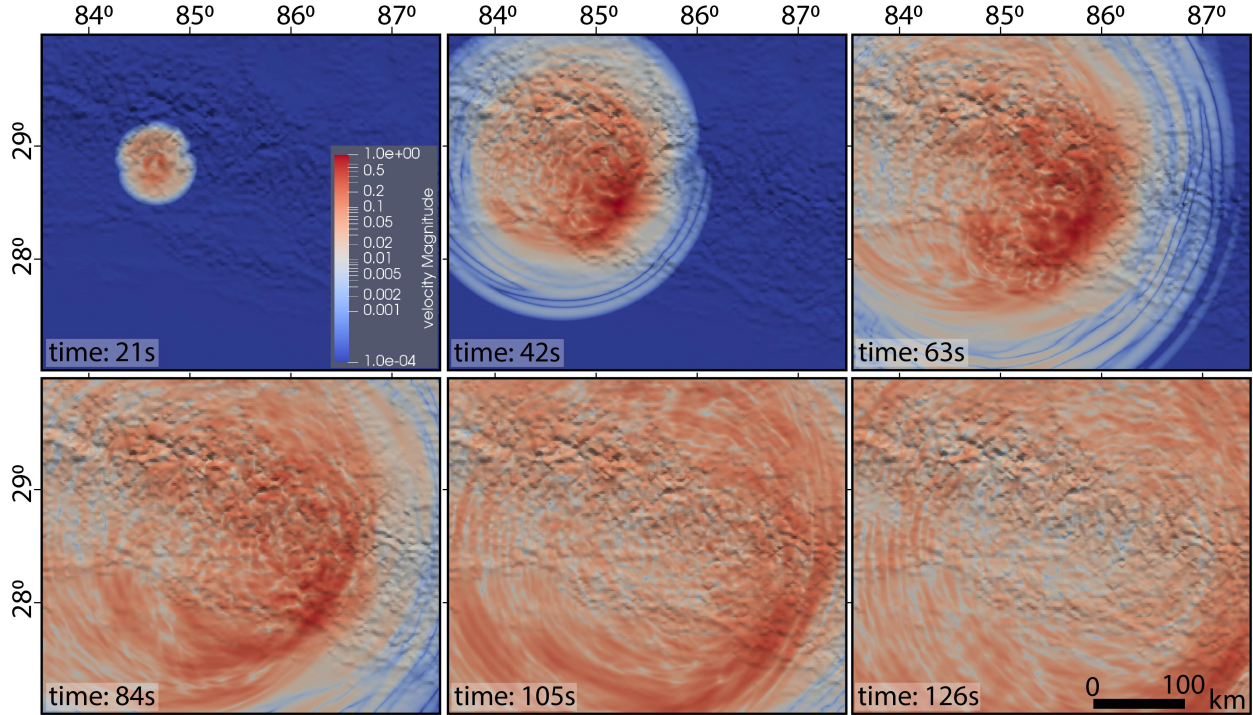


Figure 3: Snapshot of velocity wavefield at different timesetps for the best fitting simulation developed on the basis of fault model proposed by [Wei et al. \(2018\)](#).

## 5.2 Evaluation of Shaking Parameters for landslide prediction

From the synthetic ground motion records, we extracted the suite of 28 shaking parameters listed in Table 1 with the aim of testing them to predict unstable slopes. For this reason, we included an initial exploratory step where we examined the pairwise correlation among the 28 intensity summaries (see Fig. 5). What stands out is that few of them are dependent on each other.

To explore ground motion effects on landslide occurrences, we opted for a binary (presence/absence) visualization of the parameters distribution at specific slope steepness intervals. This is shown through violin plots (see Fig. 6) and already at this bi-variate stage, it is possible to rank the mean-biserial values from the parameter with the highest explanatory power to the least one. Out of these, we choose here to highlight the most prominent ones: Drs (0.27), Id (0.26), PGD (0.26), and Dsq (0.25). Notably, for certain shaking parameters such as Pa, Ic and Arms, their respective distributions appear very heavy-tailed, making their linear use difficult, if correlated with landslide occurrences.

We further analysed the spatial bivariate correlation using Moran’s I and the LISA clustering (see Appendix A). This is geographically shown in Figure 7. There, we can observe that similarly to the information conveyed by the violin plots, the highest spatial correlation is now achieved using the Drs parameter. In such cases, Drs shows a number of True Positives comparable to those estimated for CUD and Iv. However, Moran’s I value in Drs

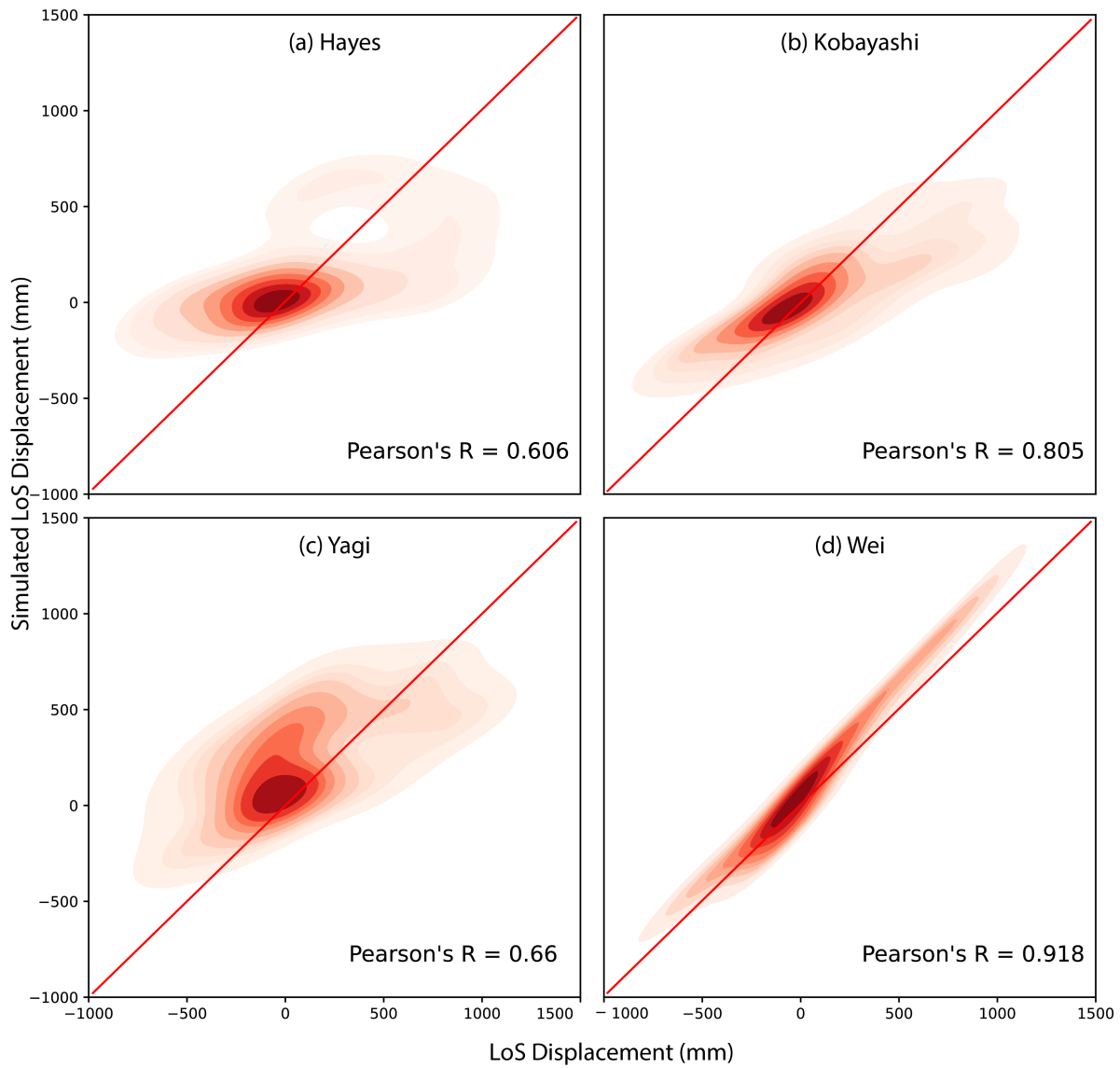


Figure 4: Two-dimensional density plot for the InSAR-based LoS cumulative displacement and the ground motion simulated one.

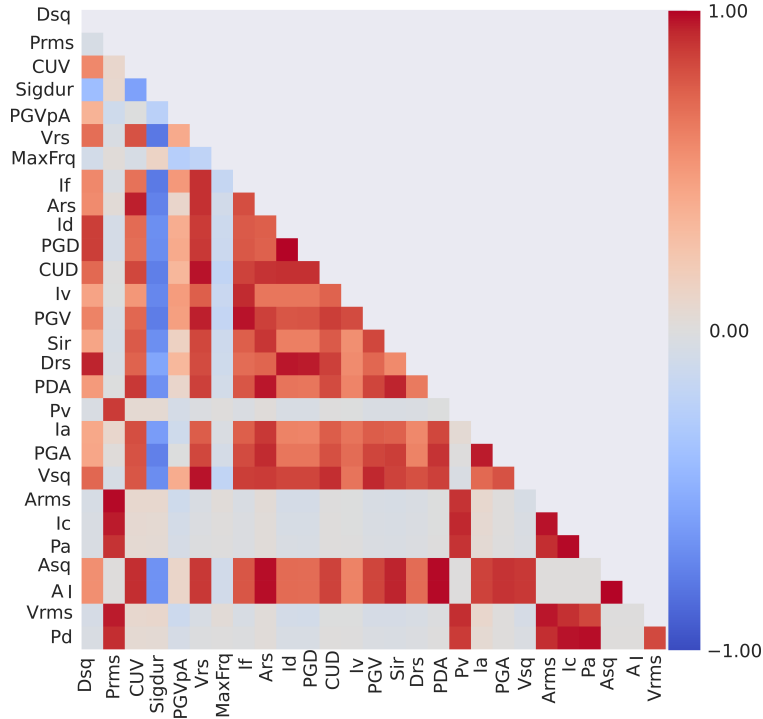


Figure 5: Cross-Correlation between the ground motion parameters extracted from the simulation.

372 is the highest because it also contains the lowest number of False Positives.

373 Even if we noticed Drs to be the best bi-variately performing parameter, we cannot state  
 374 at this stage whether this is valid in a multivariate framework. To answer this question,  
 375 we featured all intensity summaries as part of a GAM equipped with a variable selection  
 376 routine. These results are shown in Figure 8.

377 There, we rank the AIC values for each parameter set, sorted from the best single variable  
 378 model to the best pair, then to the best triplet and so on. What stands out the most is that  
 379 after the inclusion of the 10<sup>th</sup> parameter (PGD), AIC values cease to significantly decrease.  
 380 Notably, a stepwise variable selection is not really designed to address collinearity issues  
 381 (Katrutsa and Strijov, 2017). For this reason, despite the selection of ten parameters, some  
 382 residual collinearity still appeared among them with PGD and Ars being strongly correlated  
 383 to other properties. For this reason, we also removed these two and built a binomial GAM  
 384 with the remaining eight.

385 The partial dependence plots estimated from the fitted model is shown in Figure 9.  
 386 There, each nonlinear effect on the Gorkha susceptibility model can be compared to one  
 387 another. For instance, Dsq appears to exert an almost linear contribution to the probability  
 388 of coseismic landslide occurrence and it is also the covariate with the narrowest confidence  
 389 interval. However, the largest variations to the susceptibility pattern are brought by CUV,  
 390 Vrs, Prms and PGVpA. As for the remaining Sigdur, MaxFrq and If, these covariates appear  
 391 to be almost not significant (most of the width of the 95% confidence interval contains the

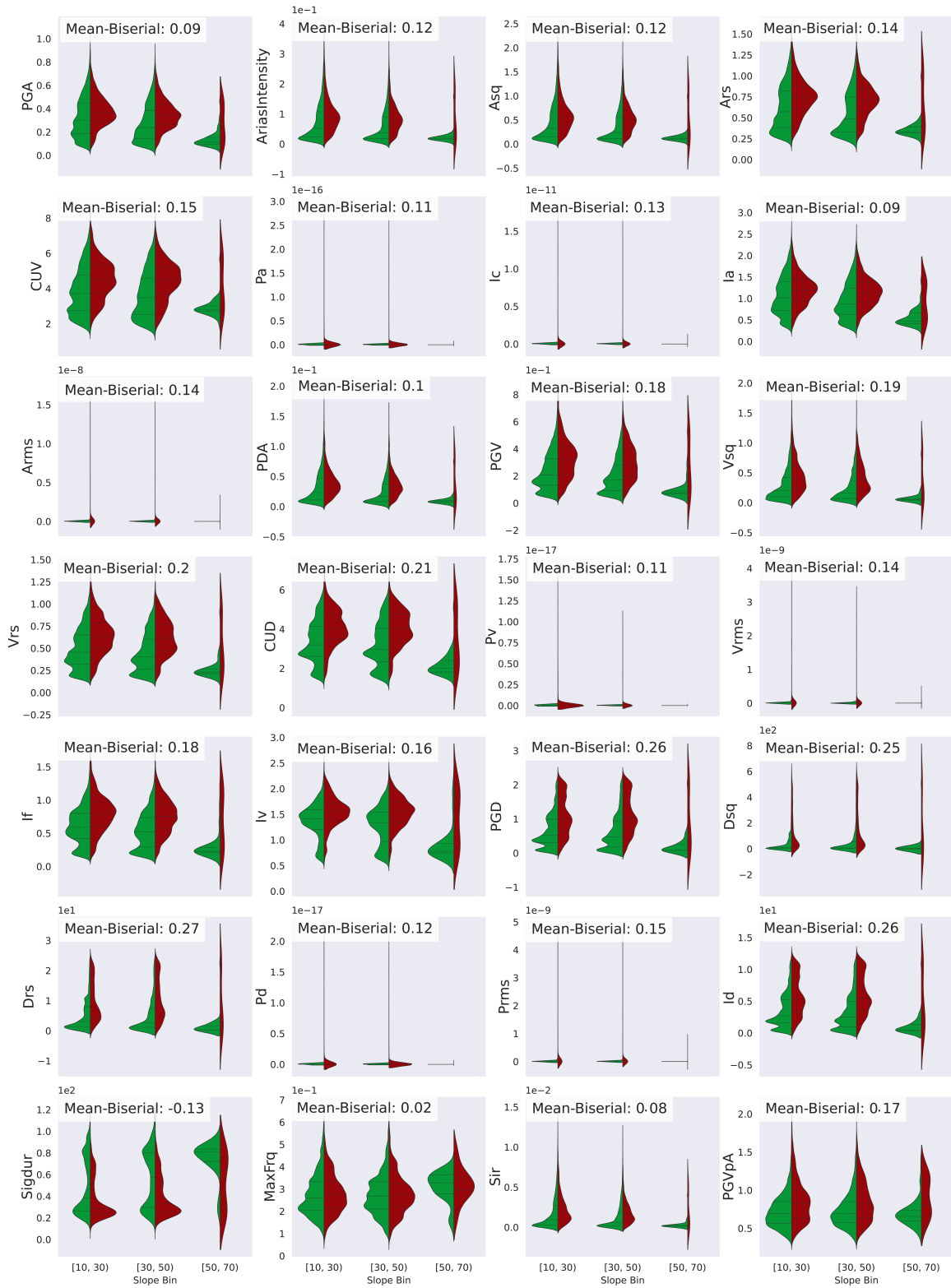


Figure 6: Violin plots representing the distribution of ground motion parameters across multiple slope categories. Their respective average bi-serial correlation is listed at the top left of each sub-panel.



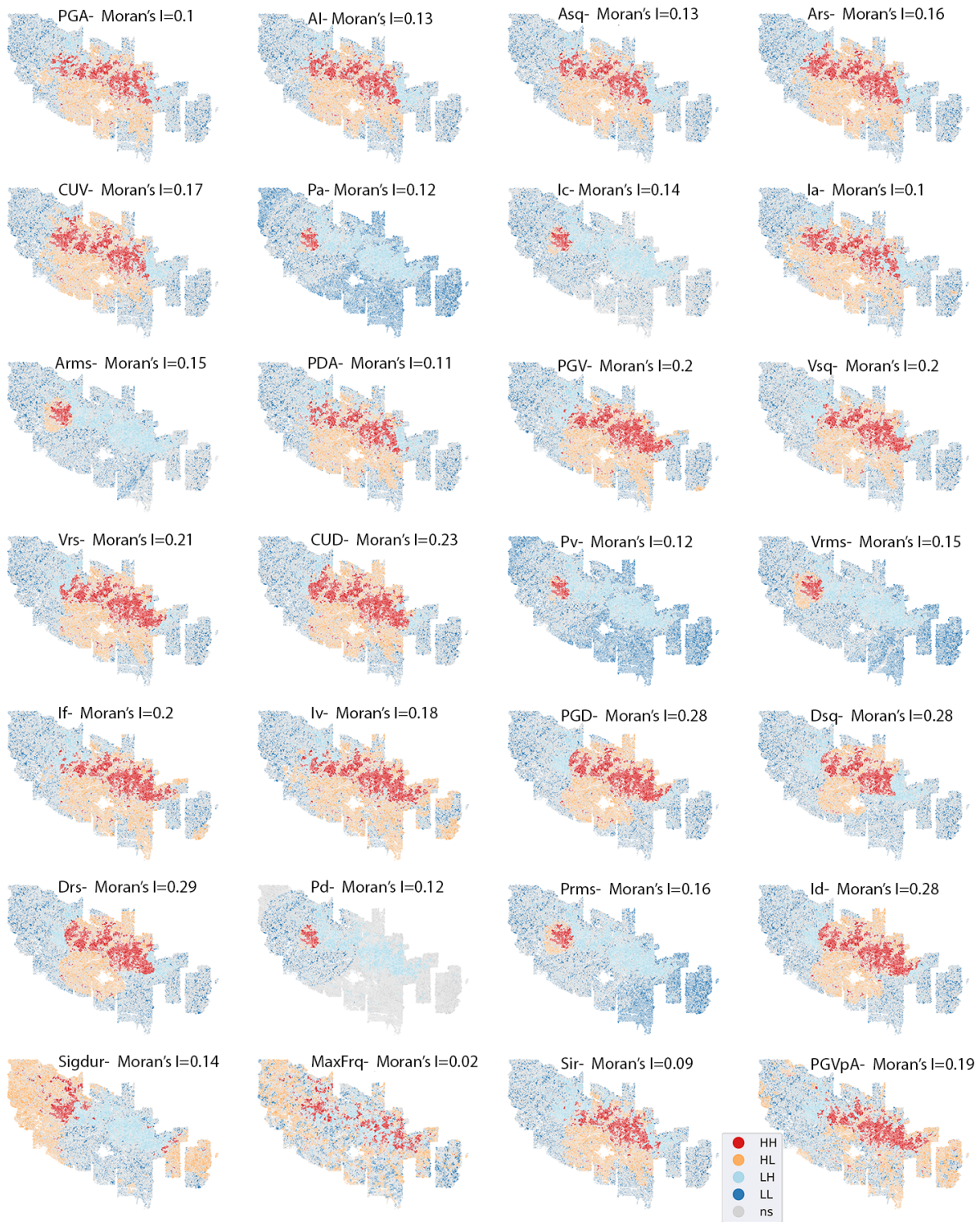


Figure 7: Local Bivariate LISA plot and Moran's I value showing the spatial correlation and clustering of the landslides and the ground motion parameters. HH: High-High clustering, HL: High-Low clustering, LH:Low-High clustering,and LL:Low-Low clustering, where first letter represents the ground motion parameter and second letter represents the landslide.

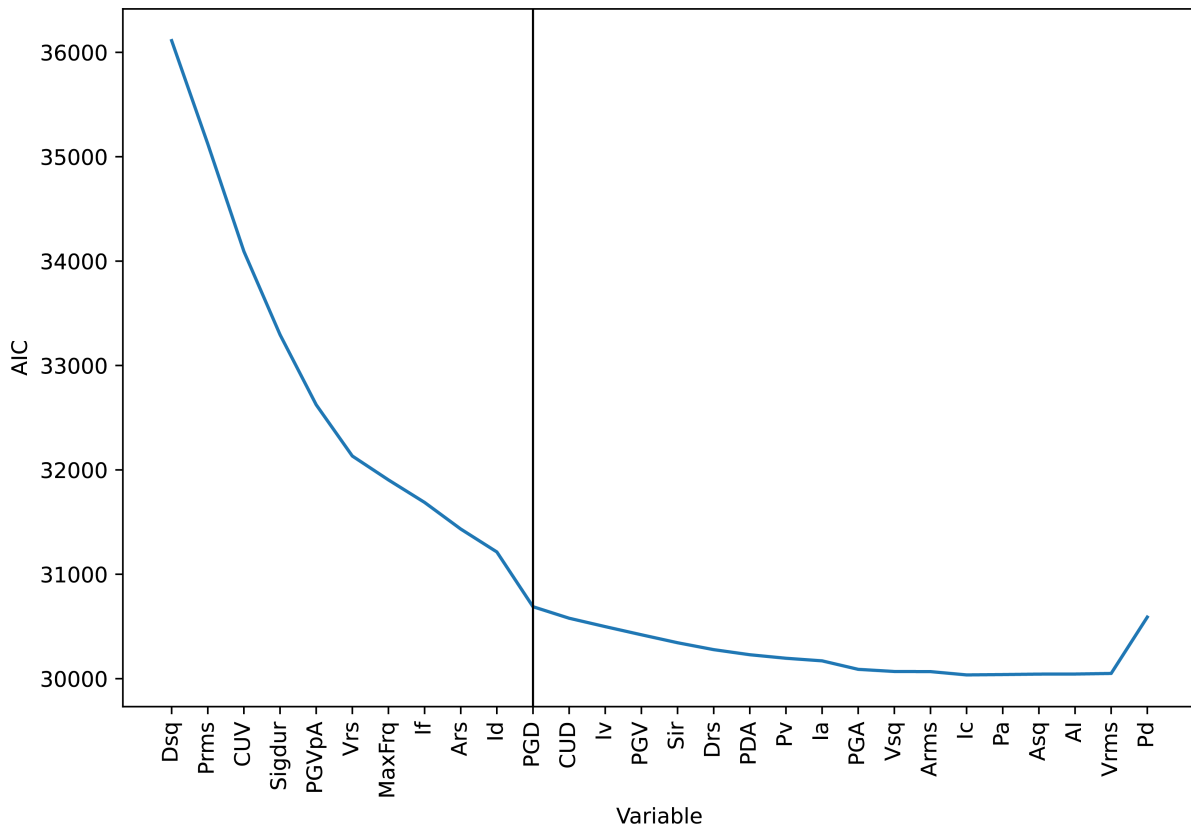


Figure 8: Variation in AIC values with the addition of new variables to the previously selected one.



392 zero line).

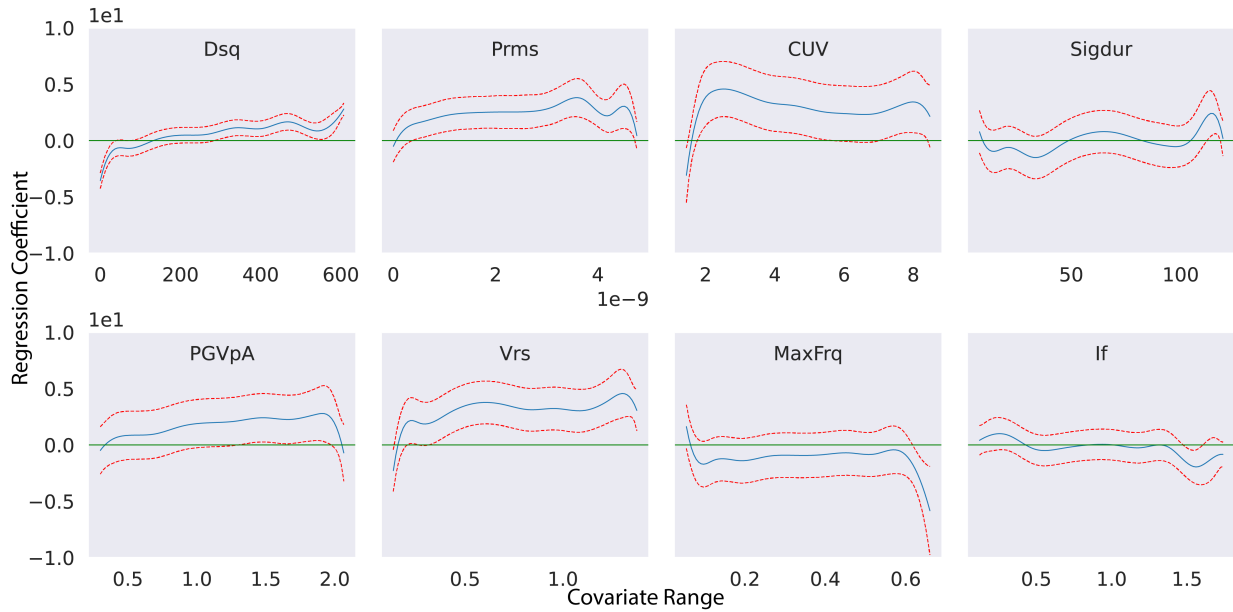


Figure 9: Partial dependence of the ground motion parameters in the fitted binomial GAM. The blue line represents the mean nonlinear effect, the two red lines define the 95% confidence interval and the green one corresponds to the line where the regression coefficient is zero.

393 Aside from the interpretation aspects, one interesting question is to understand whether  
394 a susceptibility model that relies on synthetic ground motion can produce a better spatial  
395 prediction as compared to the standard inclusion of GMPEs-based solutions (MMI, PGV,  
396 and PSA) from the USGS ShakeMap system (García et al., 2012). To address this question,  
397 we performed the same analyses done before by initially examining pairwise correlations  
398 among GMPE solutions and then building a binomial GAM with the GMPE-related best  
399 set. Figure 10 shows very high interdependence among these shaking parameters; hence  
400 we tested them all and selected the PGA as the single best. Notably, the USGS updated  
401 all the ground motion parameters for the Gorkha earthquake with time. For this reason,  
402 we opted to present the result of susceptibility models built with each PGA update and to  
403 compare those to our final model relying on eight synthetic parameters as well as our own  
404 PGA alone. These results are shown in Figure 11, where we can observe that the model  
405 based on multiple ground motion properties outperforms every other single-variable model.  
406 However, the PGA-only model based on the data the USGS released in 2020 performs better  
407 than the PGA-only model we obtained using our synthetic data. In Section 6 we will further  
408 provide our interpretation of why this is the case. Here we complete the overview by showing  
409 the results of the LISA model, highlighting the spatial autocorrelation between the actual  
410 landslide distribution and the models obtained with the USGS-PGA and our own with eight  
411 covariates (see Fig. 12).

412 Moran’s I appears to be much larger when using synthetic ground motion parameters.

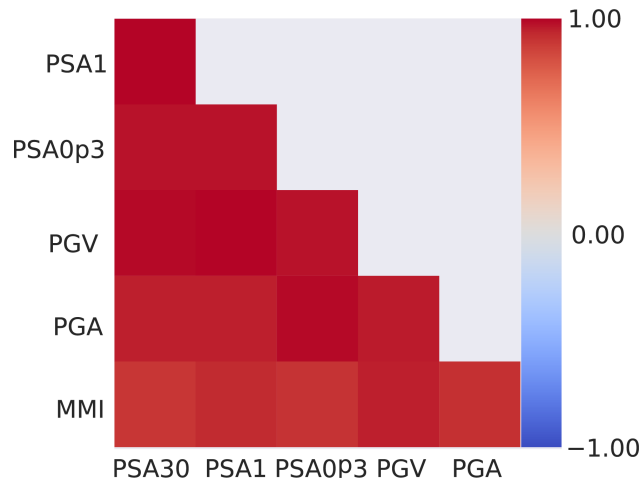


Figure 10: Correlation plot of the USGS provided ground motion data.

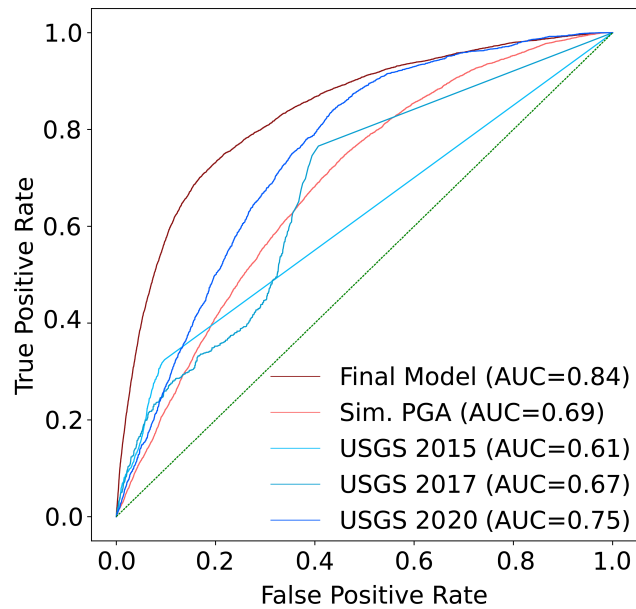


Figure 11: AUC plot with the fitted model and ground motion parameters from USGS. Sim. PGA refers to the model based on our own PGA alone and Final Model corresponds to the one relying on eight synthetic parameters of the simulated PGA.

413 Even though in Figure 11 the AUC difference between the two models is 0.09, the difference  
 414 in Moran's I is 0.17. This corresponds to a relative improvement of  $\approx 62\%$ . Aside from pure  
 415 numerical considerations, the spatial patterns are also visibly better when using synthetic  
 416 data. In fact, the number of False Positives drastically decreases in the second panel.

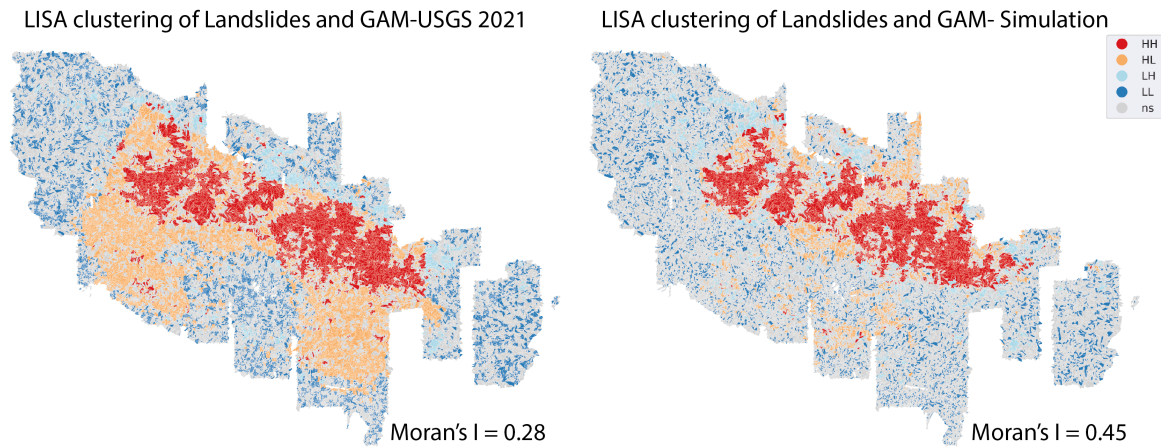


Figure 12: Overview of spatial autocorrelation between the single-variable model that uses the USGS-PGA from 2020 and the Final model that uses our synthetic parameters.

## 417 6 Discussion

418 The following sections will separately elaborate considerations on two different aspects:  
 419 ground motion simulation and landslide evaluation.

### 420 6.1 Ground motion simulation

421 Based on the four different finite fault models, results show that the best simulation was  
 422 with the finite fault model from [Wei et al. \(2018\)](#), for it provided better fit both in terms of  
 423 amplitude and phase timing when examining the recorded ground motion compared data (see  
 424 Fig. 2). The same model proved to be the best also in terms of InSAR-based considerations  
 425 (Fig. 4), for it showed a very strong correlation between satellite- and synthetic-based  
 426 cumulative displacements. It is important to stress here that [Wei et al. \(2018\)](#) used a  
 427 large number of InSAR data-points in their fault inversion. As a result, the correlation  
 428 between synthetic and observed displacements is to be expected. Even though this is the  
 429 case, it should not be considered a weakness but rather a sign that the inversion the authors  
 430 performed is reliable. Moreover, using InSAR as a validation tool, one must also consider  
 431 the simulation frequency range as well as the dominant frequency range of the earthquake  
 432 because displacement caused by large frequency waves cannot be observed from the InSAR  
 433 data. In any case, our choice is also confirmed with station data. In this case, some additional

434 considerations should be made in relation to the match between simulated and observed  
435 ground motion (Fig. 2). Specifically, the NAST and KATNP stations both show significant  
436 oscillations along the E-W and N-S directions after the S-wave arrival. This is most likely  
437 due to soil amplification within the sedimentary basin of the Kathmandu valley. In fact,  
438 the basin structure and resulting soil amplification in the valley are not well represented  
439 in any of our simulations because we lack information on the 3D earth velocity structure.  
440 The subsurface model we used is very coarse and provides a smoothed representation of the  
441 P- and S-wave velocity structure, something that results in a limited spatial variation in  
442 all directions other than the vertical one. This being said, our research focuses exclusively  
443 on coseismic landsliding. As a result, the mismatch within the Kathmandu basin is of  
444 no practical relevance because flat areas are actually removed ( $< 10^\circ$  steepness) from the  
445 susceptibility analyses (Kritikos et al., 2015).

446 The major limitation in our simulations has to do with the frequency content. In fact, the  
447 four finite fault models have been designed with a respective maximum inversion frequency  
448 ranging from 0.25 to 1.0 Hz. As a result, it is also difficult to synthetically radiate high  
449 frequencies. Furthermore, the Gorkha earthquake nucleated and propagated along approx-  
450 imately 150 km the fault (MHT). Thus, it affected a large region forcing us to extend our  
451 simulation domain in a geographic space of  $3^\circ \times 4^\circ$ . In such a domain, the mesh creation  
452 could not resolve very high frequencies as the computational costs would raise drastically.  
453 Nevertheless, even our maximum resolved frequency of 3.0 Hz should be suitable for this  
454 specific earthquake for it has been reported in a number of publications that the dominant  
455 frequency ranged between 0.25-0.3 Hz in all directions (Parajuli and Kiyono, 2015).

## 456 6.2 Geostatistical evaluation of landslides

457 We envisioned this experiment because coseismic landslides are almost unanimously modelled  
458 by using GMPE-based solutions and specifically the PGA accessed at the USGS ShakeMap  
459 System. Our hypothesis is that the genesis of landslides may be due to factors that go be-  
460 yond the mere PGA. For this reason, we generated a suite of synthetic seismic parameters,  
461 each one explaining a different aspect of the interaction between wavefields and topographies.  
462 Our results (see 6) highlight that parameters such as the Drs is the property with the highest  
463 point-biserial correlation with respect to the landslide scenario. We recall here that Drs is  
464 calculated as the square root of the cumulative squared displacement. Thus, it represents  
465 an absolute value of the total displacement. The common peak ground displacement (PGD)  
466 alternative can only inform on maximum values whereas Drs is a summary of the full wave-  
467 form. Other variables, such as PGD and Dsq also showed high point-biserial correlations,  
468 meaning that in general, displacement-related parameters tend to better explain the land-  
469 slide distribution compared to acceleration and velocity metrics. However, the intensity with  
470 which a particle is exposed to may not be the only cause of slope failures. Another reason  
471 could be the duration of the shaking itself. This may be the reason why Significant duration  
472 (Sigdur) appears to be among the parameters with the largest association to landslides.

473 Similar considerations arise when looking at the spatial autocorrelation patterns in Figure  
474 7. There, analogous ranks can be seen in the Moran's I values with the best parameters  
475 standing out in the bivariate analyses being also the ones that have the largest number of  
476 True Positives and the smallest of False Negatives.

477 Moving to the multivariate analyses, the variable selection opens up considerations on  
478 variable interactions. Specifically, the information each seismic parameter carries does not  
479 inform on the full waveform signal and its destabilizing effect on slopes. However, a multi-  
480 variate approach can borrow strength by combining each seismic information. This can be  
481 seen in the selection of eight dominant covariates (see Fig. 8).

482 In addition to the information on the absolute cumulative displacement brought by Dsq  
483 (see above), RMS power index (Prms) and Root squared velocity (Vrs) would play a similar  
484 role, increasing the probability of coseismic landsliding. Notably, they have both been com-  
485 puted as the root mean square of the significant displacement and total velocity, respectively.  
486 Here significant refers to the terminology used by [Trifunac and Todorovska \(2001\)](#), indicating  
487 the part of the full waveform that is not zero nor noise. The term total refers instead to the  
488 integration of the velocity spectrum over the whole time series. Thus, they inform the model  
489 of the intensity and rate at which particles on a soil column are perturbed by the earthquake.  
490 As for the Cumulative velocity (CUV), this parameter also acts positively within the model.  
491 Differently from Vrs though, this parameter considers also the ground motion phases, thus  
492 bringing information on the overall resulting effect of particle velocities hanging on a slope.  
493 Furthermore, ratio of PGA and PGV (PGVpA) also contributed to increasing the suscep-  
494 tibility. Being computed as the ratio between PGV and PGA, this means that when the  
495 velocity at which particles oscillate is persistently high over time as compared to short-term  
496 velocity variations, the slope will be more prone to fail. This is something that intuitively  
497 gives value to our experiment for similar considerations have been otherwise impossible in  
498 a traditional context. Our interpretation is that a large and prolonged high velocity is jus-  
499 tified to exhibit a positive influence as compared to a short-duration one because the latter  
500 may not bring the slope to the brink of failure but the latter could definitely perturb its  
501 equilibrium for so long that it triggers a landslide. A very similar consideration applies to  
502 Sigdur for this covariate precisely conveys the significant duration of the ground motion. In  
503 fact, whether a cluster of particles oscillates in one direction or another or with a certain  
504 frequency or another, if these phenomena occur with a short or prolonged duration should  
505 make a difference, which is what we assume to be captured by Sigdur. Figure 9 shows an  
506 overall positive contribution to the final landslide occurrence probability although most of  
507 its 95% confidence interval contains the zero line. As a result, Sigdur is the first covariates  
508 of the ones discussed so far that exhibits limited statistical significance. The same is also  
509 valid for maximum frequency (MaxFrq) and compound index (If), the former still showing  
510 an average effect far from the zero regression coefficient mark and the latter being mostly  
511 aligned along the same non-contributing level. In turn, this implies that most of the variation  
512 in landslide susceptibility is explained by six significant covariates and that the last two may

bring some minor details. These can be explained by understanding how they have been computed and what they may indicate. MaxFrq corresponds to the dominant frequency at a particular location obtained by extracting the frequency with the maximum amplitude in the spectral domain. As a result, the slightly negative contribution it shows can be explained with long period oscillations being mostly responsible for landslides occurrences. However, here it is important to stress that our simulations did not contain very high frequencies, to begin with. Therefore the interpretation of this property needs to be re-adjusted to the short range we simulated for, with a maximum of 3.0 Hz. This may also be the reason why this covariate appears mostly not-significant and in another geographic contexts where high frequency simulations are possible, it could theoretically give rise to entirely different results. Ultimately, If essentially corresponds to a combination of PGV and duration. For this reason, its limited and non-significant contribution may be due to CUV and Sigdur largely capturing this effect.

The results from the fitted model when compared with the USGS GMPEs' products show an interesting pattern (see Fig. 11). We can clearly see that the full waveform simulation can provide better modelling results when the eight parameters are multivariately used (AUC of 0.84). However, when focusing on our synthetic PGA against those produced by USGS through the years some differences must be acknowledged. Firstly, we can see that the GMPEs' output in 2015 right after the Gorkha event produced a very low AUC (0.61). However, subsequent versions of the same were more informative, leading to better performance with an AUC of 0.67 for the 2017 product and an AUC of 0.75 for the 2020 one. This is due to USGS constraining more and more the GMPE as they collected more data (Allstadt et al., 2018). For instance, the PGA obtained in 2020 includes terrain characteristics and slope in its empirical formulation. Moreover, the authors implemented an optimisation step to match the ground motion observations, they included  $VS_{30}$  information. Ultimately, they also run several GMPE and retrieved the final PGA as a weighted ensemble of all the single outputs. Therefore, the PGA obtained in 2020 represents the fruit of a five-year effort by the USGS, and it also included information that was not accessible to us. For instance, we had no notion of the shallow velocity field (no  $VS_{30}$ ). The most relevant consideration may be related once more to the frequency limitations we encountered. In fact, GMPEs can be used to empirically estimate large frequency ranges, far beyond the 3.0 Hz we simulated for. And, because PGA is the shaking parameter mostly linked to high frequencies, the recent USGS product may be more suitable than our own PGA alone. However, when examining the LISA plot (Fig. 12), the Moran's I appears quite low (0.28), and the spatial autocorrelation between landslide inventory and PGA produces large patterns of False Positives propagating towards the south of the study area. Conversely, our model built on the basis of the eight ground motion parameters produces excellent Moran's I results (0.45) and very few False Positives and Negatives. The difference may be due to the fact that as elaborate the 2020 GMPE may be, it still produces very smooth PGA values along the footwall mainly as a function of distance from the rupture and attenuation. Conversely, the combination of



553 synthetic parameters limits this overestimation.

## 554 **7 Conclusion**

555 The use of ground motion simulations to examine coseismic landslides are quite limited in the  
556 literature (Harp *et al.*, 2014; Chen and Wang, 2022; Dunham *et al.*, 2022; Feng *et al.*, 2022;  
557 Sun and Huang, 2023). Their focus mainly gravitates around better assessment of landslide  
558 displacements by coupling their simulation results with physically-based methods or the effect  
559 of topographic amplification on landslide sizes. In this context, they mostly target capturing  
560 peak ground motion values (e.g., PGA, PGV and/or PGD) in a more accurate way. In this  
561 work, we take a very different stance by hypothesising that landslides are the product of the  
562 interaction between the terrain and the full waveform rather its single peak. For this reason,  
563 we generated a full suite of ground motion parameters to be bivariately and multivariately  
564 used to model coseismic landslide susceptibility. Our observations indicate that with a  
565 maximum simulation frequency of 3.0 Hz, displacement-related parameters largely explain  
566 the landslide distribution, in addition to velocity and duration ones.

567 Any future development from this angle will also rely on ground motion simulations.  
568 However, the choice of the study area will determine the extent to which one can dive into  
569 the problem. In fact, the density of seismic stations influences the capacity to resolve the  
570 earthquake source characteristics and from there to produce meaningful simulations. Nepal,  
571 as most countries, is not equipped with a dense seismic network and this certainly affected  
572 our ability to simulate for high frequencies. Future experiments may need to be placed  
573 in places such as Japan, where the station density is particularly favourable. Moreover,  
574 even if we extended our seismic parameters far beyond the few considered in the literature,  
575 our 28 ground motion characteristics are still individual representations of the whole time  
576 series. A likely better venue to explore would welcome the use of the whole time series into  
577 the susceptibility model rather than being approximated into single summaries. As for the  
578 regional landslide model itself, the choice of a susceptibility context is also largely improvable.  
579 In fact, whether a slope is unstable may not be the most relevant information. Estimating  
580 how large coseismic landslides may in fact complement the pure occurrence location studies.

## 581 **8 Acknowledgement**

582 We would like to thank Jean-Philippe Avouac for sharing the processed high-rate GPS data  
583 used in (Galetzka *et al.*, 2015). The project was supported by King Abdullah University of  
584 Science and Technology (KAUST) in Thuwal, Saudi Arabia, Grant URF/1/4338-01-01.

## 585 **9 Author contributions**

586 The work was carried out by Ashok Dahal with support from co-authors. The experiment  
587 was co-designed and drafted in a manuscript together with Luigi Lombardo. Martin Mai,  
588 David Alejandro Castro Cruz, Islam Fadel and Mark van der Meijde helped with the pa-  
589 rameterization of the ground motion simulations. Raphael Huser helped design a suitable  
590 statistical analytical protocol. Hakan Tanyas reviewed and edited the manuscript and re-  
591 designed the figures for aesthetic and qualitative betterment. Cees van Westen helped to  
592 interpret the model results.



## A Overview of statistical tests

The cross correlation between the parameters indicates the (dis)similarity between continuous properties and specifically between two ground motion parameters in this work. Ranging from  $-1$  to  $+1$ , the former implies a perfect positive correlation where an increase of one parameter also increases the other at the same rate and vice versa. Similarly, the latter example implies that the increase in one parameter causes a decrease in the other at the same rate. The correlation coefficient is here calculated pairwise using a Pandas Library in python ([pandas development team, 2020](#)). The actual formulation of the correlation coefficient is given by [1](#).

Moreover, to understand how landslides and ground motion parameters are correlated in different slope domains, we grouped slope units into three different bins of  $10^\circ$ -  $30^\circ$ ,  $30^\circ$ - $50^\circ$  and  $50^\circ$ - $90^\circ$  to obtain point-biserial correlation coefficients. The point-biserial correlation is a similar concept to the correlation coefficient explained above, though it addresses a response variable which is dichotomous in nature. The mathematical formulation to calculate the point-biserial correlation coefficient is given by [2](#).

$$r_{pb} = \frac{(\bar{y}_1 - \bar{y}_2) \cdot \sqrt{pq}}{s_y}, \quad (2)$$

where,  $p$  is the proportion for which the nominal value is 1,  $q$  represents the proportion for which the nominal value is 0,  $\bar{y}_1$  is the conditional mean of the quantitative or numerical variable  $y$  when the nominal score is 1,  $\bar{y}_2$  is the conditional mean of the quantitative or numerical variable  $y$  when the nominal score is 0, and  $s_y$  represents the standard deviation of the numerical property.

The point-biserial correlation can certainly provide information on how strong the relationship is between the ground motion parameters and the landslide occurrence but it fails to provide information on their spatial dependence. To highlight spatial dependence, we calculated the bi-variate local Moran's I ([Anselin et al., 2002](#)). To do so, we created a neighbourhood matrix between the slope units using their centroid location, using the Queen contiguity method ([Berry and Marble, 1968](#)). We then used the method illustrated by [Anselin et al. \(2002\)](#) to obtain the Moran's Index. This information does quantify spatial dependence, which we then visualized using the Local Indicator of Spatial Association (LISA) ([Anselin, 1995](#)).

To further understand how multiple ground motion parameters interact to influence landslide occurrences, we initially developed a routine for variable selection. The latter was generated as part of a Generalized Additive Model (GAM; [Hastie, 2017](#)), for we repeatedly calculated the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC; [Akaike, 1998](#)) value for individual ground motion parameters. We started by selecting the parameter with the lowest AIC to be considered the best predictor. Then, as part of an iterative procedure covering the whole parameter space, we proceeded to extract the best combination of two, then three and so on, selecting each time the set that would yield the minimum AIC value. The procedure

630 stops once adding new covariate information does not contribute to the AIC decrease. This  
 631 stepwise selection can provide numerical information on the best parameter set. However, it  
 632 does not specifically address collinearity issues (i.e., the linear dependence between one or  
 633 more covariates responsible for inflated error estimates and convergence issues; [Harrell et al.,](#)  
 634 [2001](#); [Amato et al., 2019](#)). For this reason, from the best covariate set, we further removed  
 635 those variables with  $-0.85 > \text{pairwise correlation} < 0.85$ .

636 These resulting variables were used as nonlinear effects as part of a binomial GAM whose  
 637 performance was evaluated using the area under (AUC) the receiver operating characteristic  
 638 (ROC) curve ([Hosmer and Lemeshow, 2000](#); [Rahmati et al., 2019](#)).

## 639 B Validation of ground motion simulation

640 We compare the simulation results with the records at seven stations (see Fig. 13). Figure 13  
 641 compares the simulation and the records in the “NS” direction for the station CHLM using  
 642 the Kristekova method ([Kristeková et al., 2006](#)). The method quantifies the agreement in  
 643 phase and the amplitude of both signals. In the case of the station CHLM, for the “NS”  
 644 direction the comparison results in a score of 6.28/10 and 6.87/10 for amplitude and phase  
 645 respectively.

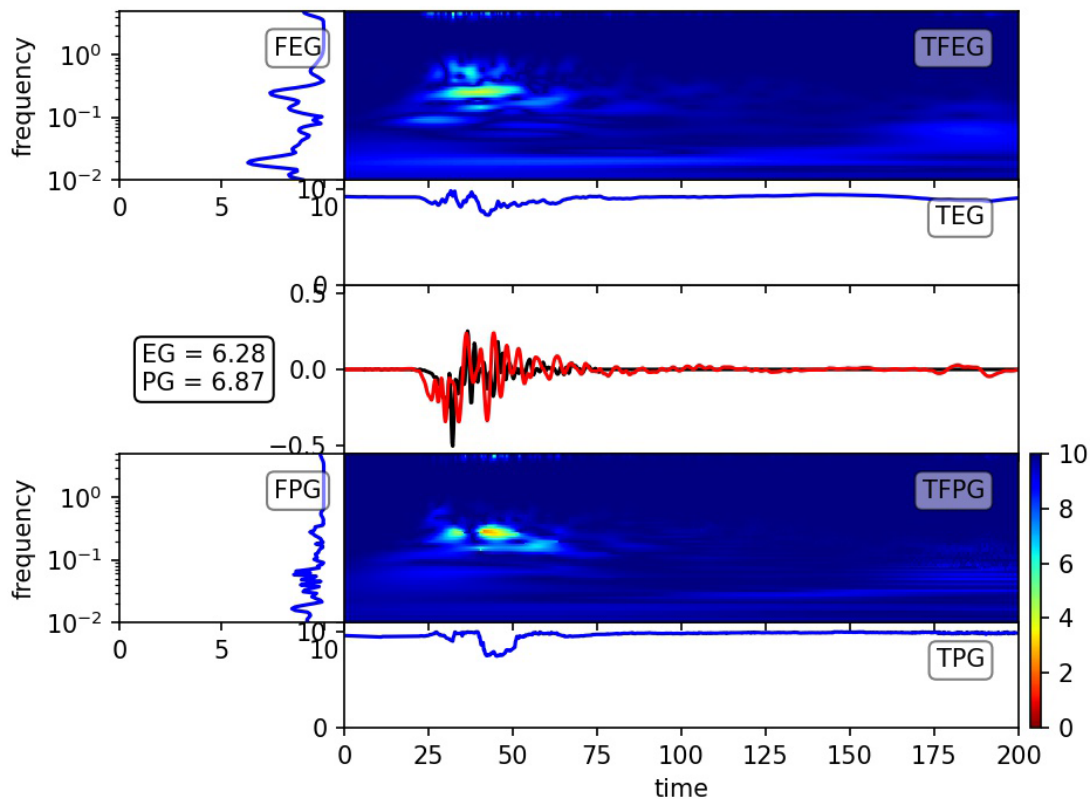


Figure 13: Spectra of the data in acceleration at the station CHLM

646 The scores for all the other stations, directions, and contemplated faults in this paper  
647 are, in most cases, higher than 4 in phase and amplitude (see Fig. 14). For most of them, the  
648 score is still upper than 4, meaning that the comparison is fair following the categorization  
649 of the method. In general, the source from [Wei et al. \(2018\)](#) and [Kobayashi et al. \(2016\)](#)  
650 produce the best fitting among all the alternatives.

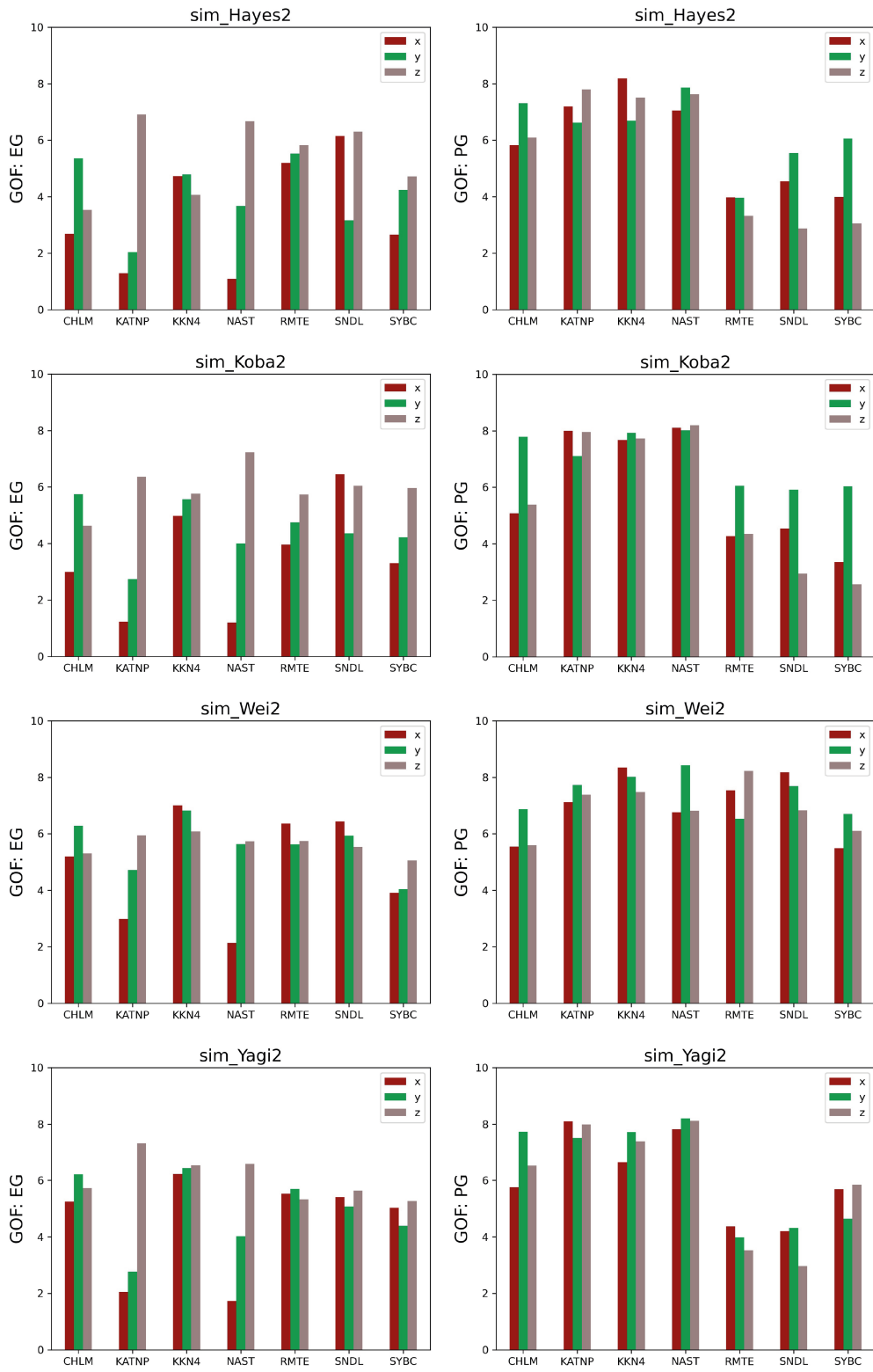


Figure 14: Kristekova values for all cases at all the stations and directions

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