Crustal deformation at the oblique spreading Reykjanes Peninsula, SW Iceland: GPS measurements from 1993 to 1998

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Abstract. In 1993 and 1998 a 38-point GPS network was surveyed on the Reykjanes Peninsula, SW Iceland. According to the NUVEL-1A plate motion model the spreading rate of the North American and Eurasian plates in SW Iceland is 18.9 ± 0.5 mm/yr toward N102.7° ± 1.1°E, highly oblique to the plate boundary. Instead of oblique spreading, the measurements indicate left-lateral shear strain accumulation parallel to the Reykjanes Peninsula seismic zone (~N76°E) at the rate of about \( \dot{\varepsilon}_{xy} \approx -0.2 \ \mu \text{strain/yr} \) (tensor shear strain). Subsidence is generally observed toward the seismic zone. A local maximum subsidence of 60 mm was measured in the Svartsengi geothermal area. Subsidence in this area has previously been detected with geodetic measurements and is considered a result of geothermal usage. Expansion was observed in the area of the Hengill triple junction. This is probably a result of magma accumulation beneath Mount Hrómundartindur, as previous seismic and geodetic measurements have indicated. Using a simple screw dislocation model, we fit the majority of the data. Assuming a left-lateral shear zone at depth along the seismic zone, we estimate locking depth of ~6.5 km and deep slip rate of ~16.5 mm/yr. The maximum left-lateral displacement predicted by the screw dislocation model, 11.85 ± 0.06 mm/yr, is consistent with the observed value of 11.9 ± 0.5 mm/yr. If the Hengill area is excluded, little extension is observed across the peninsula. The discrepancy between the NUVEL-1A oblique spreading and the observed transcurrent motion is thought to be caused by lack of magma intrusion into the crust during this time period.

1. Introduction

One of the effects of the Iceland mantle plume on the mid-Atlantic plate boundary is to break it up into a series of transform zones and rift zones, some of which are highly oblique. The Reykjanes Peninsula oblique rift in SW Iceland is one of these. It connects the Reykjanes Ridge offshore to other plate boundary segments in Iceland (Figure 1). In this area the relative plate velocity between the Eurasian and North American plates is 18.9 ± 0.5 mm/yr toward N102.7° ± 1.1°E, calculated from the NUVEL-1A plate motion model [DeMets et al., 1990, 1994]. The Reykjanes Peninsula plate boundary has a trend of ~N76°E (Figure 2). This highly oblique rift became active after a ridge jump from the Snæfellsnes rift, Snæfellsnes Peninsula (Figure 1), ~6-7 Ma ago [Sæmundsson, 1978; Jóhannesson, 1980; Kristjánsson and Jónsson, 1998]. The rift on the peninsula is marked by active, NE trending volcanic systems or spreading segments that are arranged en echelon along the zone. Each of the volcanic systems is associated with a high-temperature geothermal area. The rift structures of individual systems are oblique to the regional spreading direction as derived from the NUVEL-1A model and the obliqueness is in the same sense as that of the zone itself. Toward the east the plate boundary branches into the South Iceland Seismic Zone (SISZ) and the Western Volcanic Zone (WVZ) (Figure 1).

A large part of the Reykjanes Peninsula is covered by postglacial lavas [Sæmundsson and Einarsson, 1980], and all the volcanic systems have produced lavas in historic times, i.e., the last 1100 years. It has been suggested that volcanic activity on the peninsula is episodic. Periods of high volcanic activity, lasting a few
hundred years, are followed by volcanically quiet periods that last several hundred years. Each cycle thus lasts of the order of 1000 years [Sigurgeirsson, 1992]. The last major magmatic episode on the peninsula occurred in the tenth to the thirteenth century, and the last known eruption on Reykjanes Peninsula occurred around 1240 A.D. [Johannesson and Einarsson, 1998].

In volcanically quiet periods the Reykjanes Peninsula appears to be seismically very active. Earthquakes and earthquake swarms have been frequent on the peninsula in the last century, with the largest events exceeding magnitude 6 [Erlendsson, 1996]. However, excluding the Hengill area, the peninsula has been relatively quiet from 1974 to 1999, following a period of high activity in 1967-1973 [Einarsson, 1991].

Seismic studies suggest that the seismicity follows a narrow zone along the peninsula rather than the fissure swarms (Figure 2). The seismic zone lies along the whole peninsula with the average trend of ~N80°E [Einarsson, 1991]. About 90% of the detected earthquakes occur at depths of ~ 1-5 km with the focal mechanism of normal faulting or strike-slip movement [Klein et al., 1973, 1977; A. Tryggvason et al., Three-dimensional imaging of the P- and S-wave velocity structure and earthquake locations beneath southwest Iceland, submitted to, 2000 (hereinafter cited as A. Tryggvason et al., submitted manuscript, 2000)]. In or near this narrow seismic zone, ground observations have shown N-S trending, right-lateral strike slip faults, indicating bookshelf style of deformation (left lateral).
Figure 2. Volcanic systems and fracture zone on the Reykjanes Peninsula. The shaded area shows location of earthquake swarms in 1971-1975 [Einarsson and Björnsson, 1992], and letters indicate volcanic systems: R, Reykjanes; K, Krísuvík; B, Brennisteinsfjöll; He, Hengill; Hr, Hrómundartindur; G, Grensdalur. Central volcanos are from Árnason et al. [1986] and Einarsson and Saxmundsson [1987], fissures and faults are from Saxmundsson and Einarsson [1980], and N-S trending strike-slip faults are from P. Einarsson et al. (manuscript in preparation, 2001).

along the E-W trending seismic zone (P. Einarsson et al., manuscript in preparation, 2001).

Leveling and tilt measurements have been performed on numerous profiles on the Reykjanes Peninsula since 1966 [e.g., Tryggvason, 1968, 1970, 1974, 1982; Eysteinsson, 1993], and repeated distance measurements were performed on the SW tip of the Reykjanes Peninsula from 1969 to 1979 [Calvert, 1969; Brander, 1973; Brander et al., 1976; Wood, 1982]. These measurements have indicated left-lateral movements parallel to the Reykjanes Peninsula seismic zone, extensional movements perpendicular to the seismic zone and subsidence of existing grabens. In addition, a local subsidence has been measured in the Svartsengi geothermal area, Reykjanes volcanic system (Figure 2), which is considered a result of geothermal exploitation in the area [Eysteinsson, 1993].

In 1986 the first GPS measurements were performed on the Reykjanes Peninsula when a countrywide GPS campaign was conducted in Iceland [Foulger et al., 1987, 1993]. Seven of the original nine GPS points located on the peninsula were remeasured in 1989 and 1992. The measurements from 1986 to 1992 indicate left-lateral strain accumulation on the peninsula [Sturkell et al., 1994; Sigmundsson et al., 1995]. The direction of maximum left-lateral shear strain estimated in the period 1986-1992 was N76° ±6°E with tensor shear strain rate of −0.222 ± 0.0054 µstrain/yr [Sturkell et al., 1994].

Vadon and Sigmundsson [1997] used satellite-based synthetic aperture radar (SAR) interferometry to measure crustal deformation from 1992 to 1995 on the Reykjanes Peninsula. The largest signal in their data was subsidence in the Svartsengi geothermal area at the rate of up to 13 mm/yr from 1992 to 1995. A weaker signal resulting from strain accumulation due to plate movements could also be detected, indicating left-lateral strain accumulation across the seismic zone and subsidence of the plate boundary at the rate of ~6.5 mm/yr.

In 1993 a GPS network of 38 points was measured on the Reykjanes Peninsula. In 1998 the whole network was remeasured for the first time. The main purpose of the network was to allow more detailed study of the style of deformation at the Reykjanes Peninsula than previously possible. Here we present the results from these measurements. We attempt to explain the observed displacement field by three superimposed sources of deformation: strike-slip movement along the oblique plate boundary, magmatic inflation of the Hengill-Hrómundartindur volcanic system near
the eastern end of the peninsula, and subsidence due to man-made pressure reduction in the Svartsengi geothermal area in the western part of the peninsula.

2. Measurements and Analysis

2.1. GPS Measurements

In the 1993 GPS campaign, three dual-frequency Trimble 4000SST receivers were used. One of the receivers was operated continuously at a reference point in Reykjavik, ARNA, while other points in the network were measured. In the 1998 GPS campaign an International GPS Service (IGS) permanent tracking station in Reykjavik was used as a reference station. It has a dual-frequency Rogue SNR-8000 receiver. Three dual-frequency Trimble 4000SST receivers were used for the measurements of other points in the network. The former reference station, ARNA, was measured for 7 days during the 1998 measurements to enable accurate estimation of the position of REYK relative to ARNA. The displacements from 1993 to 1998 were calculated relative to the ARNA station [Hreinsdóttir et al., 1999].

All the measurements were divided into eight hour long sessions, and each point was measured for at least one whole session and part of two sessions. The Trimble 4000SST receivers collected data at 15 s intervals, while the IGS tracking station in Reykjavik collected data at 30 s intervals [Hreinsdóttir et al., 1999].

2.2. Data Analysis

The data were analyzed with the Bernese GPS Software, version 4.0, [Rothacher and Mervart, 1996] using orbit information from the Center for Orbit Determination in Europe (CODE). No meteorological data were collected during the measurements. The Saastamoinen tropospheric refraction model was used to estimate site troposphere values.

In processing the 1993 data, precise orbit information from CODE, given in the ITRF91 reference frame [Boucher and Altamimi, 1996], were used to calcu-

| Table 1. Site Deformation Rates Relative to Reykjavik* |
|---------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Station | Latitude, °N | Longitude, °E | H, m | \(v_{\text{north}}, \text{mm/yr}\) | \(v_{\text{east}}, \text{mm/yr}\) | \(v_{\text{up}}, \text{mm/yr}\) |
| GARD   | 64.0681       | -22.6859      | 78.9 | -1.8 ± 0.5 | 1.7 ± 0.5 | 3.3 ± 2.1 |
| KINN   | 63.8706       | -22.6849      | 99.5 | -4.5 ± 0.5 | 6.3 ± 0.5 | -8.3 ± 2.6 |
| HAFN   | 63.9272       | -22.6780      | 81.7 | -4.3 ± 0.7 | 3.7 ± 0.5 | -2.4 ± 2.6 |
| RNES   | 63.8252       | -22.6530      | 90.4 | 0.6 ± 0.7 | 8.4 ± 0.5 | -9.2 ± 2.6 |
| TJAL   | 63.8515       | -22.6263      | 83.5 | -1.1 ± 0.7 | 7.8 ± 0.5 | -7.1 ± 2.7 |
| HLBV   | 64.0291       | -22.5601      | 94.4 | -2.7 ± 0.5 | 2.6 ± 0.5 | -2.9 ± 1.8 |
| URDA   | 63.9266       | -22.5590      | 107.3 | -3.6 ± 0.7 | 4.7 ± 0.7 | -3.3 ± 2.7 |
| STAD   | 63.8208       | -22.5232      | 81.3 | 3.9 ± 0.7 | 9.1 ± 0.5 | -8.2 ± 2.8 |
| THOP   | 63.8938       | -22.5223      | 228.2 | -3.9 ± 0.7 | 8.1 ± 0.5 | -4.7 ± 0.7 |
| GRIM   | 63.9716       | -22.4258      | 138.7 | -3.1 ± 0.5 | 2.5 ± 0.5 | -3.4 ± 2.4 |
| ARSE   | 63.9315       | -22.4232      | 88.5 | 0.8 ± 0.7 | 4.5 ± 0.5 | -1.9 ± 1.9 |
| SVAR   | 63.8792       | -22.3434      | 99.6 | -4.3 ± 0.7 | 6.0 ± 0.5 | -11.2 ± 2.5 |
| VOGA   | 63.9737       | -23.4343      | 143.6 | -0.7 ± 0.7 | 6.2 ± 0.5 | -8.2 ± 2.7 |
| KAST   | 63.8800       | -22.3232      | 191.8 | 0.9 ± 0.7 | 4.0 ± 0.5 | 0.0 ± 2.7 |
| NAUT   | 63.9184       | -22.2881      | 126.1 | -2.7 ± 0.7 | 1.8 ± 0.5 | -2.8 ± 2.7 |
| KUAG   | 64.0022       | -22.2349      | 80.7 | 0.4 ± 0.5 | 10.9 ± 0.5 | -5.0 ± 1.9 |
| SELA   | 63.8459       | -22.2344      | 256.6 | 0.7 ± 0.8 | 7.7 ± 0.5 | -3.6 ± 3.3 |
| SELS   | 63.9007       | -22.1505      | 196.2 | 1.7 ± 0.7 | 1.0 ± 0.5 | -0.9 ± 2.7 |
| HOSK   | 63.9548       | -22.1132      | 176.9 | -2.0 ± 0.5 | 4.3 ± 0.5 | -3.8 ± 2.6 |
| KRIS   | 63.8674       | -22.0895      | 196.2 | 1.7 ± 0.7 | 1.0 ± 0.5 | -0.9 ± 2.7 |
| GRAE   | 64.0309       | -22.1091      | 96.7 | 2.1 ± 0.7 | 10.0 ± 0.5 | -3.0 ± 2.5 |
| MOHA   | 63.9199       | -22.0595      | 264.5 | -0.9 ± 0.7 | 5.3 ± 0.5 | -6.4 ± 2.2 |
| LAMB   | 63.9103       | -22.0126      | 206.8 | 0.1 ± 0.7 | 6.4 ± 0.5 | -4.1 ± 2.7 |
| KLOP   | 63.9659       | -21.9661      | 220.3 | -1.1 ± 0.7 | 3.6 ± 0.5 | -4.3 ± 2.6 |
| ASFJ   | 64.0513       | -21.9430      | 192.2 | -0.8 ± 0.7 | 1.3 ± 0.5 | -2.3 ± 2.3 |
| BURF   | 64.0454       | -21.8558      | 163.2 | -0.3 ± 0.5 | 0.6 ± 0.5 | 2.7 ± 2.0 |
| HERD   | 63.8691       | -21.8391      | 79.1 | -0.3 ± 0.5 | 10.7 ± 0.5 | -1.0 ± 2.5 |
| GRIN   | 63.9925       | -21.7771      | 293.2 | -1.6 ± 0.7 | 2.8 ± 0.5 | 1.9 ± 2.7 |
| BRIN   | 63.9457       | -21.7671      | 525.6 | 0.3 ± 1.1 | 5.8 ± 1.1 | 2.5 ± 4.2 |
| ULFA   | 64.1470       | -21.7102      | 361.7 | 2.7 ± 0.8 | -0.1 ± 0.8 | 4.4 ± 2.9 |
| HOLM   | 64.0888       | -21.7017      | 158.9 | 2.2 ± 0.5 | 0.2 ± 0.5 | 1.9 ± 2.4 |
| STRA   | 63.8448       | -21.6577      | 99.2 | -1.5 ± 0.7 | 12.4 ± 0.5 | 3.1 ± 1.9 |
| BLAF   | 63.9883       | -21.6508      | 514.0 | -0.9 ± 0.5 | 0.5 ± 0.5 | -2.8 ± 2.1 |
| HNUK   | 63.8752       | -21.5701      | 253.8 | -2.1 ± 0.6 | 12.3 ± 0.5 | 2.0 ± 2.1 |
| KAFF   | 64.0611       | -21.4847      | 309.2 | 2.0 ± 0.5 | -3.1 ± 0.5 | 5.2 ± 2.4 |
| THRE   | 63.9884       | -21.4645      | 337.6 | -1.7 ± 0.5 | 0.3 ± 0.5 | 6.5 ± 1.8 |
| THOR   | 63.9086       | -21.3654      | 106.9 | -7.0 ± 0.7 | 11.3 ± 0.5 | 3.4 ± 2.5 |

*Reykjavik (ARN) 64.14°N, -21.95°E, 91.7 m. H, Height; v, velocity.
late point coordinates relative to the reference station. Data from the 1998 Reykjanes Peninsula GPS campaign were calculated relative to the IGS tracking station in Reykjavik using precise orbit information, given in the ITRF96 reference frame [Rothacher et al., 1998]. Initially, each session was processed separately. Then the solutions for all the sessions were combined into a network solution [Hreinsdottir et al., 1999]. When processing each session, the estimation program gives formal errors which indicate the phase scatter. Systematic errors or mismodeled parameters are not taken into account, and the formal error can be unrealistic. For more realistic error estimation the scatter in the whole network solution was used to estimate a scaling factor for the formal uncertainties. We used Dynamic Adjustment Program (DYNAP) from the National Geodetic Survey to estimate the scaling factor and calculate the scaled formal errors for each set of point coordinates. The error estimation does not take into account potential errors in antenna position. To minimize this error, the position of each antenna was measured accurately before and after the measurements.

3. Crustal Deformation

The measured displacement rates relative to the reference station in Reykjavik are listed in Table 1. In Figure 3a the displacements are shown, horizontal displacement with solid vectors and vertical displacement with shaded bars. Using orbit determination in the ITRF reference frame, ITRF91 for the 1993 GPS campaign and ITRF96 for the 1998 GPS campaign, we hope to minimize possible reference frame errors. According to Boucher and Altamimi [1996], no rotation is expected between the reference frames, and given the size of the Reykjanes Peninsula GPS network (80 km × 40 km), small rotation should not have significant effect on the observed deformation.

The plate motion model NUVEL-1A predicts a velocity of 18.8 ± 0.5 mm/yr in direction N77.2° ± 1.1°W for Reykjavik relative to the Eurasian plate [DeMets et al., 1990, 1994]. The IGS tracking station in Reykjavik was included in the global velocity field model GPSVEL 0.0 that is based on 4 years of data span [Blewitt et al., 2000]. According to Blewitt et al. [2000], the velocity at Reykjavik is very similar to that predicted by the NUVEL-1A plate motion model, with ~ 2.5 mm/yr less northward motion. Their velocity errors are at the level of 1 mm/yr (G. Blewitt personal communications, 2000). Using the result of Blewitt et al. [2000], a velocity vector of 18.5 mm/yr in direction N84.7°W was assumed for the reference station. Other velocity vectors were adjusted accordingly (Figure 3b). To study the deformation on the Reykjanes Peninsula relative to
the plate boundary rather than a fixed plate, we then subtracted half the expected NUVEL-1A velocity vector from all the sites (Figure 3c).

The observed displacements on the Reykjanes Peninsula from 1993 to 1998 show a pattern which can be interpreted in terms of strain accumulation in a left-lateral shear zone at depth striking about N76°E. The horizontal displacement vectors tend to be parallel to the seismic zone, given the assumed motion of Reykjavík. North of the zone the GPS points move toward the west, and south of the zone the GPS points move toward the east. The vertical displacement vectors show increased subsidence (relative to the reference station) toward the zone. The horizontal vectors, in general, increase in length with distance from the seismic zone, and at the same time, they tend to rotate away from the zone.

There are some departures from the general picture described above. In the easternmost part of the Reykjanes Peninsula, the Hengill area, we observe expansion. Instead of subsidence toward the seismic zone, as observed in the western part of the peninsula, the points are rising. The horizontal displacements are also larger than observed in other parts of the peninsula. Two active volcanic systems, Hengill and Hrómundartindur, and the extinct Grensdalur volcanic system are located in the Hengill area. Sigmundsson et al. [1997] concluded from geodetic and seismic measurements that surface deformation and increased seismicity was caused by magma accumulation in the roots of the Hrómundartindur volcanic system in the 1991-1995 period. GPS measurements conducted in the Hengill area in 1995 and 1998 indicate continued inflation in the Hengill area [Hreinsdóttir, 1999]. This episode of magma accumulation appears to have begun in 1993 and ended in 1998. The inflation has also been observed with interferometric SAR (InSAR) measurements [Feigl et al., 2000]. Here inflation is detected on points in the easternmost part of the Reykjanes Peninsula GPS network, 15-25 km southwest of the inflation center.

Another signal, quite the opposite to the one in the Hengill area, is observed in the western part of the peninsula, in the area of the Svartsengi geothermal area (SGA). The area is contracting, most likely in response to exploitation of the geothermal field by the Svartsengi power station. The maximum subsidence measured on the peninsula, 60±10 mm in 5 years, occurred in this area, at a point next to the Svartsengi power station. Óysteinsson [1993] observed subsidence in this area using leveling from 1975 to 1992, and Vadon and Sigmundsson [1997] also documented subsidence with satellite-based SAR interferometry from 1992 to 1995.
The average rate of subsidence measured from 1993 to 1998 with GPS, \( \sim 12 \text{ mm/yr} \), is similar to the average rate determined from the leveling measurements from 1975 to 1982 (\( \sim 14 \text{ mm/yr} \)) [Eyestinsson, 1993] and the InSAR measurements from 1992 to 1995 (\( \sim 13 \text{ mm/yr} \)) [Vadon and Sigmundsson, 1997]. Measurements made at other time periods and shorter time intervals suggest that the subsidence rate varies from one year to another [Eyestinsson, 1993; Vadon and Sigmundsson, 1997].

Observed displacements near the central axis of the plate boundary, in the Reykjanes Peninsula seismic zone, are more irregular than elsewhere on the peninsula. Some of the points move orthogonally to the seismic zone rather than parallel to it and their velocity is larger than should be expected. The observed deformation in the zone could be a result of displacement of blocks within the seismic zone. The density of the network and the accuracy of the measured displacement vectors is not sufficient to verify this directly.

4. Plate Boundary

The observed displacements resemble those expected at a transform zone and observed at the SISZ [Sigmundsson et al., 1995]. The measurements from 1993 to 1998 show that left-lateral strain is accumulating across the peninsula at a rate of about

\[
\varepsilon_{xy} = \frac{1}{2} \frac{\partial w_y}{\partial x} \\
\approx \frac{1}{2} \frac{(-13 \text{ mm/yr})}{35 \text{ km}} = -0.2 \mu \text{strain/yr},
\]

where \( x \) is the maximum distance between GPS points perpendicular to the plate boundary and \( w_y \) is their relative displacement rate parallel to the plate boundary. This is consistent with GPS measurements from 1986 to 1992 that show tensor shear strain rate of \(-0.222 \pm 0.0054 \mu \text{strain/yr} \) in direction N76° ± 6°E [Sturkell et al., 1994].

We determine how well the measurements fit a simple transcurrent motion model in a uniform elastic half-space. We use a simple screw dislocation model assuming that the uppermost part of the crust does not slip and is locked down to a certain depth, the locking depth of the brittle crust. Below it the plates slide past each other at a constant rate. The interseismic displacement at the surface is then related to the perpendicular distance to the plate boundary \( x \), the uniform slip rate beneath the locking depth \( V \), and the locking depth of the crust \( D \) [Savage and Burford, 1973]:

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Figure 3c. Measured displacement rate in the period 1993-1998. Half the NUVEL-1A predicted motion (Figure 3b) has been subtracted from each velocity vector to study the deformation relative to the plate boundary rather than fixed plate. The NUVEL-1A predicted motion is shown for comparison. SGA, Svartsengi geothermal area; He, Hengill volcanic system; Hr, Hrúmundartindur volcanic system; G, Grensdalur volcanic system.
\[ v(x) = V \pi^{-1} \arctan(x/D). \] (2)

Fault ruptures found in or near the Reykjanes Peninsula seismic zone and seismic studies indicate that the left-lateral deformation observed along the seismic zone is accomplished by right-lateral motion on many parallel N-S trending strike slip faults (bookshelf-style deformation) (P. Einarsson et al., manuscript in preparation, 2001). For simplification, we assume that the transient motion is a result of strain accumulation on a left-lateral shear zone along the seismic zone. The seismic zone bends in the westernmost part of the peninsula. To resemble that, we allow the shear zone to bend at 22°25′W. The shear zone parameters that best fit the measurements give a shear zone that strikes N79°E east of 22°25′W but N72°E west of 22°25′W. The shear zone’s strike and location fit reasonably well with seismic studies and the location of faults ruptures in the seismic zone.

We use each point’s velocity parallel to the shear zone and distance perpendicular to the shear zone as data and estimate the best fitting values for the deep slip rate and the locking depth using weighted least squares inversion [Menke, 1984]. The interseismic displacement is a nonlinear function of the locking depth \( D \) (equation (2)). We linearize the equation using Taylor Series about a nominal \( D = D^\text{est} \) and estimate the difference \( \Delta D = D - D^\text{est} \) in the inversion. Using reasonable starting values for the locking depth and deep slip rate, we iterate the inversion until the solution converges.

Figure 4a shows the velocity parallel to the Reykjanes Peninsula seismic zone as a function of the distance perpendicular to the seismic zone. The velocity field does not reveal symmetry over the seismic zone given the assumed velocity of Reykjavík (9.2 mm/yr in direction N92.5°W). Instead, the velocity field seems to be offset by a few mm/yr. It is possible that the deformation across the Reykjanes Peninsula seismic zone is nonsymmetric. The reason for the observed nonsymmetry could also be due to the assumed velocity of the reference station, Reykjavík. Uncertainties in the NUVEL-1A plate motion model (0.5 mm/yr) and uncertainties in the results of Blewitt et al. [2000] (≈ 1 mm/yr) have not been taken into account. In addition, it is possible that the

Figure 4. Velocity parallel to the seismic zone versus perpendicular distance to the seismic zone. (a) A velocity correction term of 2 mm/yr, which had to be added to the data to get symmetry over the seismic zone. (b) The best fitting screw dislocation model for all the peninsula (dashed line), excluding four points next to the inflating mount Hrómundartindur (solid line). (c) Best fitting screw dislocation model excluding four points next to the inflating mount Hrómundartindur (dashed line) and nine points in the westernmost part of the peninsula (solid line).
NUVEL-1A plate motion model is slightly biased for the North American-Eurasian plate pair. To correct for this nonsymmetry problem, we repeated the inversion several times, adding extra velocity to all the data to find a correction term that best fits the inversion. Owing to the general strike of the plate boundary the inversion is not very sensitive to a change in the northward motion. We therefore kept the north component of the velocity fixed but changed the east component to find a best fit. As a result we added a velocity vector of 2.0 mm/yr in direction N90°E to all the points. It is noteworthy that any change in the northward motion does change this result slightly; for every \( \delta v_{\text{north}} = \pm 0.1 \text{ mm/yr} \) we get an extra \( \delta v_{\text{east}} = \mp 0.02 \text{ mm/yr} \).

The results of the inversion, using the estimated velocity correction term, are shown in Figures 4b and 4c. When including all the points, the inversion gives a deep slip rate of \( V = (15.6 \pm 0.6) \text{ mm/yr} \) and a locking depth of \( D = (5.2 \pm 0.5) \) km. The \( \chi^2 \) for this model is 7.7. The majority of the data fit the screw dislocation model within their uncertainties (Figure 4b). Some of the points, however, show displacements that are significantly different from the model estimations. This suggests that signals other than uniform left-lateral strain accumulation across the seismic zone affect the data.

Geodetic measurements in the Hengill area indicate magma accumulation beneath the Hrómundartindur volcanic system in the period [e.g., Sigmundsson et al., 1997]. In addition, a \( m_b 5.1 \) earthquake occurred west of mount Hrómundartindur in June 1998, a month before the second GPS campaign was performed [Thorbergsson and Vigfusson, 1998; Agústsson, 1998; Árnadóttir et al., 1999]. Excluding four points next to Hrómundartindur volcano, we get a significantly better fit to the data.

The inversion gives a deep slip rate of \( V = (16.2 \pm 0.8) \) mm/yr and a locking depth of \( D = (6.7 \pm 0.7) \) km with \( \chi^2 = 1.8 \) (Figure 4b).

Points in the westernmost part of the peninsula also show significantly different motion from the estimated best fitting model. We therefore excluded points west of 22°25'W as well as four points next to Hrómundartindur volcano (Figure 4c). We obtain a good fit to the points in the eastern part of the peninsula (solid line) with a deep slip rate of \( V = (16.8 \pm 0.9) \) mm/yr and a locking depth of \( D = (6.4 \pm 0.8) \) km, giving \( \chi^2 = 1.0 \). The difference between the two models, with and without the westernmost part of the peninsula (Figure 4c), is not significant.

The locking depth and deep slip rate are highly correlated. In Figure 5 the trade-off between model parameters for these two inversions are shown. A locking depth of 6.5 km is in a good agreement with seismic observations which have indicated that majority of earthquakes on the peninsula occur at depths of \( \sim 1-5 \) km [Klein et al., 1973, 1977; A. Tryggvason et al., submitted manuscript, 2000]. The estimated deep slip rate of \( 16.8 \pm 0.9 \) mm/yr is also consistent with the NUVEL-1A plate motion parallel to the seismic zone (16.8 \pm 0.6 mm/yr in direction N76° ± 3°E).

The comparison of the measurements to the best fitting model are shown in Figure 6. To reveal the remaining signal(s), we use the model estimated excluding both points next to Hrómundartindur volcano and points in the westernmost part of the peninsula, locking depth of 6.4 km, and deep slip rate of 16.8 mm/yr. The fit to the observations is reasonable, but there are obvious misfits in the easternmost part of the peninsula, increasing toward the Hengill area, and the model fails to
predict the measured displacements next to the Svartsengi geothermal area. It is also evident that our model is oversimplified in the westernmost part of the peninsula where the plate boundary bends. The measured displacements follow the bending, whereas our model assumes that all the bending occurs at one point.

Subtracting the calculated transient motion from the observed velocities gives residual velocities (Figure 7) where other unmodeled signals become more apparent. The outward motion away from the inflating Hengill area is more obvious even though the deformation field is still somewhat complicated. We suggest that it could be a result of combination of the effect from the June 1998 M 5.1 earthquake west of mount Hrómundartindur and the magma injection. An additional signal apparent in Figure 7 is the displacement of points toward the seismic zone in the western part of the peninsula. It is probably a response to the subsidence observed toward the seismic zone and the Svartsengi geothermal area. A slight southward motion is also observed at some points on both sides of the plate boundary that could indicate that the assumed velocity of the reference station lacks a few mm/yr of northward motion. Other signals are small or within the uncertainty limits of the measurements.

If the Hengill area is excluded, we observe little extension across the peninsula. The measurements in the western part of the peninsula show subsidence toward the seismic zone relative to the reference station (Figure 3). The measured subsidence suggests that material loss due to usage of geothermal energy by the Svartsengi power station and extension in the western part of the peninsula were not balanced by inflow of material during the observation period. Horizontal contraction associated with the subsidence may have a significant effect on the horizontal velocity field (Figure 7) and partly mask out extension across the plate boundary from our measurements. Figure 8 shows measured vertical displacements as a function of perpendicular distance from the plate boundary. The vertical deformation due to a contracting, infinitely long line source at the estimated locking depth of 6.4 km is also shown. The majority of the measured vertical displacements in the western part of the peninsula (solid circles) fit reasonably well with deformation due to the line source assuming maximum subsidence of 8 mm/yr. In Figure 9, calculated vertical and horizontal displacement profiles due to the line source are compared. According to Figure 9 the expected horizontal signal at a 25 km distance is ~ 25% of the maximum vertical signal. All the GPS points on the Reykjanes Peninsula are within 25 km distance from the seismic zone. Assuming that the line source approximation is valid for the Reykjanes Peninsula seismic zone, this would mean that for a maximum subsidence of 8
Figure 7. Residual velocities calculated from the difference between the observed and predicted velocities shown in Figure 6. The inverted triangles indicate stations not used in estimating the best fitting model. SGA, Svartsengi geothermal area; He, Hengill volcanic system; Hr, Hrómundartindur volcanic system; G, Grensdalur volcanic system.

![Image of a map showing residual velocities]

Figure 8. Vertical velocity relative to the reference station in Reykjavík as a function of distance perpendicular to the Reykjanes Peninsula seismic zone. The line shows the calculated vertical deformation due to a contracting, infinitely long line source at the estimated locking depth of 6.4 km. Solid circles indicate stations east of Reykjavík, while open circles indicate stations west of Reykjavík. The star marks the maximum vertical velocity, 11 mm/yr, measured next to the Svartsengi power station.

![Image of a graph showing vertical velocities]

mm/yr a horizontal signal of 2 mm/yr toward the seismic zone could be expected at points farthest from the seismic zone. NUVEL-1A predicts extensional motion of 8.5 ± 0.9 mm/yr across the Reykjanes Peninsula seismic zone. The measurements indicate that the locking depth of the Reykjanes Peninsula seismic zone is ~ 6.4 km. According to a simple screw dislocation model 84% of the deformation should occur within 25 km from the plate boundary (equation (1)). A horizontal signal of 2 mm/yr as a result of subsidence can therefore explain less than half of the lacking extension across the peninsula.

5. Discussion

Inversion of the geodetic data indicates that they represent deep slip rate of ~ 16.5 mm/yr between the North American plate and the Eurasian plate, with a locking depth of ~ 6.5 km. According to a simple screw dislocation model 95% of the deformation should occur in a zone 12.7 times wider than the locking depth (equation (1)). For the plate boundary at Reykjanes Peninsula that would mean that the deforming zone should be at least 70 km wide. The maximum width of the peninsula is only ~ 40 km, suggesting that the zone of current deformation is wider than the peninsula. The maximum left-lateral separation on the peninsula
predicted by the screw dislocation model, $11.85 \pm 0.06 \text{ mm/yr}$, is consistent with the left-lateral shear observed across the peninsula, $11.9 \pm 0.5 \text{ mm/yr}$.

According to the NUVEL-1A plate motion model, the relative velocity between the North American plate and the Eurasian plate on the Reykjanes Peninsula is $18.9 \pm 0.5 \text{ mm/yr}$ in direction $N102.7^\circ \pm 1.1^\circ E$. The GPS measurements presented here show mostly transcurrent motion parallel to the Reykjanes Peninsula seismic zone ($N76^\circ \pm 3^\circ E$). The NUVEL-1A velocity component parallel to the seismic zone is $16.8 \pm 0.6 \text{ mm/yr}$. Inversion of the geodetic data indicates a deep slip rate of $16.8 \pm 0.9 \text{ mm/yr}$, in agreement with the NUVEL-1A plate motion model. Little extension, however, is observed across the peninsula. Instead of rifting of $8.5 \pm 0.9 \text{ mm/yr}$ across the seismic zone as predicted by the NUVEL-1A motion model, the observation shows subsidence toward the seismic zone. We have shown that horizontal contraction associated with the subsidence can obscure some rifting. It is also possible that some part of the extension is taken up over the Eastern Volcanic Zone (EVZ, Figure 1).

We suggest that the main discrepancy between the NUVEL-1A model and the GPS measurements can be explained by considering tectonic features found on the Reykjanes Peninsula. Fissures, normal faults, hyaloclastite ridges, and eruptive fissures in the fissure swarms indicate rifting in the average direction $N130^\circ E$. According to the measurements, little or no rifting seems to be occurring now across these structures. Observations from the Krafla volcanic system in the Northern Volcanic Zone (NVZ, Figure 1) indicate that rifting events are episodic and are triggered by magma injection into the crust [Binarsson, 1991]. In the last rifting episode of Krafla, 1975-1984, an 80 km long segment of the Krafla fissure swarm widened up to 9 m [Tryggvason, 1994] and was associated with magmatic activity, both fissure eruptions and diking.

Figure 9. Calculated surface deformation due to infinitely long line source at the depth of $6.4 \text{ km}$.

Figure 10. Constant left lateral transform motion parallel to the seismic zone and rifting in the fissure swarms in volcanically active periods, which results in the expected NUVEL-1A plate movement on the peninsula on a long timescale. In the far field we expect to see continuous deformation as predicted by the NUVEL-1A plate motion model.
last known magmatic event on the Reykjanes Peninsula occurred around 1240 A.D. The two preceding centuries were volcanically very active, but the activity seemed to be highly episodic, e.g., at least six eruptions occurred around 1226 A.D. [Jóhannesson, 1989]. It therefore looks like the rifting occurs in pulses, and because of lack of magma the only movement we observe now is the transcurrent motion and subsidence toward the seismic zone. At the time of rifting the maximum principal compressive stress $\sigma_1$ changes from horizontal to vertical. Dikes are injected perpendicular to the minimum stress $\sigma_3$ causing extension perpendicular to the fissure swarms. On a long timescale, $\sim 1000$ years, the total average motion on the peninsula is the sum of the two components and should resemble the predicted NUVEL-1A motion (Figure 10). In the far field of the plate boundary, however, we expect to see continuous deformation, as predicted by the NUVEL-1A plate motion model.

6. Conclusions

The measured deformation on the Reykjanes Peninsula from 1993 to 1998 indicates that the Reykjanes Peninsula seismic zone is the presently active central axis of the plate boundary, taking up the relative movement between the North American and Eurasian plates by transcurrent deformation. Instead of oblique spreading in direction N102.7° $\pm$ 1.1°E, as predicted by the NUVEL-1A motion model, the majority of the data are consistent with a simple screw dislocation model with a locking depth of $\sim 6.5$ km and a deep slip rate of $\sim 16.5$ mm/yr. The discrepancy could be caused by lack of magma intrusion into the crust at the present time. Fissures on the peninsula indicate rifting in the average direction N130°E. We conclude that transcurrent motion and rifting activity are separated in time. Thus the average deformation observed at the Reykjanes Peninsula over long time periods, of the order of 1000 years, conforms to the NUVEL-1A model. On shorter timescales, however, the mode of deformation is determined by the availability of magma in the crust. Rifting in the average direction N130°E occurs during magmatic periods, but during magma-starved periods, like the present one, the deformation is dominated by transcurrent motion.

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