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Fault-Tolerant Process Control

Methods and Applications

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Preface

The chemical industry is a vital sector of the global economy. Increasingly faced with the requirements of safety, environmental sustainability, energy efficiency, and profitability, chemical process operation is relying extensively on automated process control systems involving a large number of control actuators and measurement sensors. While process automation is critical in achieving the above requirements, the increasing reliance on actuators and sensors tends to increase the vulnerability of the process to faults (for example, defects/malfunctions in process equipment, sensors and actuators, failures in the controllers or in the control loops), leading to the failure of the control system and potentially causing a host of economic, environmental, and safety problems that can seriously degrade the operating efficiency of the process. Problems due to faults may include physical damage to the process equipment, raw material and energy waste, increase in process downtime, resulting in significant production losses, and jeopardizing personnel and environmental safety. Management of abnormal situations resulting from actuator and sensor malfunctions is a challenge in the chemical industry since abnormal situations account for tens of billions of dollars in annual lost revenue in the US alone.

The above considerations provide a strong motivation for the development of methods and strategies for the design of advanced fault-tolerant control systems that ensure an efficient and timely response to enhance fault recovery, prevent faults from propagating or developing into total failures, and reduce the risk of safety hazards. To this end, this book presents methods for the design of advanced fault-tolerant control systems for chemical processes which explicitly deal with actuator/controller failures and sensor data losses. Specifically, the book proposes: (i) a fault-detection, isolation, and diagnosis framework for handling actuator and sensor faults for nonlinear systems; (ii) reconfiguration and safe-parking based fault-handling methodologies; (iii) integrated data and model based fault-detection and isolation and fault-tolerant control methods; (iv) methods for handling sensor malfunctions; and (v) methods for monitoring the performance of low-level proportional-integral-derivative (PID) control loops. The proposed methods employ tools ranging from nonlinear systems analysis, Lyapunov techniques, optimization, statistical methods, and hybrid systems theory and are predicated upon the idea of

integrating fault-detection, local feedback control, and supervisory control. The applicability and performance of the proposed methods are demonstrated through a number of chemical process examples.

Application of the proposed fault-tolerant control methods to processes subject to actuator and sensor malfunctions is expected to significantly improve their operation and performance, increase process safety and reliability, and minimize the negative economic impact of failures on overall process operation.

The book requires basic knowledge of differential equations, linear and nonlinear control theory, and optimization methods, and is intended for researchers, graduate students, and process control engineers. Throughout the book, practical implementation issues are discussed to help engineers and researchers understand the application of the methods in greater depth.

Finally, we would like to thank all the people who contributed in some way to this project. In particular, we would like to thank our colleagues at McMaster University, the University of Alberta, and UCLA for creating a pleasant working environment. Last, but not least, we would like to express our deepest gratitude to our families for their dedication, encouragement and support over the course of this project. We dedicate this book to them.

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Contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Motivation	1
1.2	Background	2
1.3	Objectives and Organization of the Book	5
2	Background on Nonlinear Systems and Control	9
2.1	Notation	9
2.2	Nonlinear Systems	9
2.3	Stability of Nonlinear Systems	10
2.3.1	Stability Definitions	11
2.3.2	Stability Characterizations Using Function Classes \mathcal{K} , \mathcal{K}_∞ , and \mathcal{KL}	12
2.3.3	Lyapunov's Direct (Second) Method	13
2.3.4	LaSalle's Invariance Principle	15
2.3.5	Lyapunov's Indirect (First) Method	16
2.3.6	Input-to-State Stability	17
2.4	Stabilization of Nonlinear Systems	18
2.5	Feedback Linearization and Zero Dynamics	20
2.6	Input Constraints	23
2.7	Model Predictive Control	24
2.8	Lyapunov-Based MPC	26
2.9	Hybrid Systems	28
2.10	Conclusions	28
3	Integrated Fault-Detection and Fault-Tolerant Control	29
3.1	Introduction	29
3.2	Process Description	29
3.3	Motivating Example	30
3.4	State Feedback Case	32
3.4.1	Bounded Lyapunov-Based Control	32
3.4.2	State Feedback Fault-Tolerant Control	33
3.4.3	Simulation Results	38

3.5	Handling Availability of Limited Measurements: The Output Feedback Case	40
3.5.1	Output Feedback Control	42
3.5.2	Integrating Fault-Detection and Fault-Tolerant Output Feedback Control	44
3.5.3	Simulation Results	49
3.6	Conclusions	54
4	Integrated Fault-Detection and Isolation and Fault-Tolerant Control	55
4.1	Introduction	55
4.2	Preliminaries	56
4.3	State-Feedback Fault-Tolerant Control	57
4.3.1	State-Feedback Fault Detection and Isolation Filter	57
4.3.2	State-Feedback Fault-Tolerant Controller	59
4.4	Output-Feedback Fault-Tolerant Control	61
4.4.1	Output Feedback Controller	61
4.4.2	Output-Feedback Fault Detection and Isolation Filter	63
4.4.3	Output-Feedback Fault Detection and Isolation and Fault Tolerant Control	64
4.5	Simulation Examples	66
4.6	Application to a Reverse Osmosis Desalination Process	76
4.6.1	Process Description and Modeling	77
4.6.2	Fault-Detection and Isolation and Fault-Tolerant Control	79
4.6.3	Simulation Results	82
4.7	Conclusions	84
5	Safe-Parking	85
5.1	Introduction	85
5.2	System Description	86
5.2.1	Process Description	86
5.2.2	Motivating Example	86
5.2.3	Lyapunov-Based Model Predictive Control	88
5.3	Safe-Parking of Nonlinear Process Systems	89
5.3.1	Problem Definition	90
5.3.2	Safe-Parking to Resume Nominal Operation	90
5.3.3	Incorporating Performance Considerations in Safe-Parking	94
5.3.4	Illustrative Simulation Example	97
5.4	Application to the Styrene Polymerization Process	100
5.5	Conclusions	103
6	Fault Diagnosis and Robust Safe-Parking	105
6.1	Introduction	105
6.2	Preliminaries	106
6.2.1	System Description	106
6.2.2	Lyapunov-Based Predictive Control	107
6.3	Fault Detection and Diagnosis Structure	109

- 6.3.1 Fault Diagnosis Under State Feedback Control 109
- 6.3.2 Handling State Estimation Errors for Fault Diagnosis 113
- 6.4 Robust Safe-Parking for Fault-Tolerant Control 114
- 6.5 Simulation Example 116
- 6.6 Conclusions 124
- 7 Utilizing FDI Insights in Controller Design and PID Monitoring 125**
 - 7.1 Introduction 125
 - 7.2 Controller Enhanced FDI 128
 - 7.2.1 Data-Based Fault Detection 131
 - 7.2.2 Data-Based Isolation Based on a Fault Signature 133
 - 7.2.3 Controller Enhanced Isolation 137
 - 7.2.4 Simulation Case Studies 142
 - 7.3 Using FDI for Controller Performance Monitoring 161
 - 7.3.1 Monitoring and Retuning of Low-Level PID Loops 163
 - 7.3.2 Application to a Nonlinear Chemical Process Network 166
 - 7.4 Conclusion 176
- 8 Isolation and Handling of Sensor Faults 179**
 - 8.1 Introduction 179
 - 8.2 Preliminaries 180
 - 8.3 Practical Stability of the Closed-Loop System Under Output Feedback Control 184
 - 8.4 Fault Isolation and Handling Design 188
 - 8.5 Application to a Chemical Reactor Example 196
 - 8.6 Conclusions 203
- 9 Control and Fault-Handling Subject to Asynchronous Measurements 205**
 - 9.1 Introduction 205
 - 9.2 Handling Sensor Malfunctions in the Control Design 206
 - 9.2.1 Lyapunov-Based Control 207
 - 9.2.2 Modeling of Sensor Data Losses 208
 - 9.2.3 LMPC Formulation with Asynchronous Feedback 208
 - 9.2.4 Application to a Continuous Crystallizer 215
 - 9.3 FDI Using Asynchronous Measurements: Problem Formulation and Solution 231
 - 9.3.1 Class of Nonlinear Systems 231
 - 9.3.2 Modeling of Asynchronous Measurements 233
 - 9.3.3 Asynchronous State Observer 234
 - 9.3.4 Design of Fault-Detection and Isolation Filter 234
 - 9.3.5 Application to a Polyethylene Reactor 237
 - 9.4 Conclusions 250
- References 253**
- Index 261**

List of Figures

Fig. 1.1	A traditional fault-tolerant control structure	2
Fig. 1.2	An active fault tolerant control structure	3
Fig. 3.1	A schematic of the CSTR showing the three candidate control configurations	31
Fig. 3.2	Integrated fault-detection and fault-tolerant control design: state feedback case	36
Fig. 3.3	Evolution of the closed-loop state profiles under the switching rule of Eq. (3.8) subject to failures in control systems 1 and 2 (<i>solid line</i>) and under arbitrary switching (<i>dashed line</i>)	39
Fig. 3.4	Evolution of the closed-loop (a) temperature and (b) reactant concentration under the switching rule of Eq. (3.8) subject to failures in control systems 1 and 2 (<i>solid lines</i>) and under arbitrary switching (<i>dashed lines</i>)	39
Fig. 3.5	Evolution of the closed-loop residual under the fault-detection filter for (a) control configuration 1 and (b) control configurations 2 and 3 under the switching rule of Eq. (3.8) subject to failures in control systems 1 and 2 (<i>solid lines</i>) and under arbitrary switching (<i>dashed lines</i>)	40
Fig. 3.6	Manipulated input profiles under (a) control configuration 1, (b) control configuration 2, and (c) control configuration 3 under the switching rule of Eq. (3.8) subject to failures in control systems 1 and 2 (<i>solid lines</i>) and under arbitrary switching (<i>dashed lines</i>)	41
Fig. 3.7	Integrated fault-detection and fault-tolerant control design under output feedback	45
Fig. 3.8	Evolution of the closed-loop (a) temperature (<i>solid line</i>), estimate of temperature (<i>dash-dotted line</i>) and the temperature profile generated by the filter (<i>dashed line</i>) and (b) concentration (<i>solid line</i>), estimate of concentration (<i>dash-dotted line</i>) and the concentration profile generated by the filter (<i>dashed line</i>) under	

control configuration 1 when the fault detection filter is initialized at $t = 0.005$ minutes 50

Fig. 3.9 Evolution of (a) the residual and (b) the manipulated input profile for the first control configuration when the fault detection filter is initialized at $t = 0.005$ minutes 51

Fig. 3.10 Evolution of the closed-loop (a) temperature (*solid line*), estimate of temperature (*dashdotted line*) and the temperature profile generated by the filter (*dashed line*) and (b) concentration (*solid line*), estimate of concentration (*dash-dotted line*) and the concentration profile generated by the filter (*dashed line*) under the switching rule of Eq. (3.22) subject to failures in control systems 1 and 2 51

Fig. 3.11 Evolution of the closed-loop state trajectory under the switching rule of Eq. (3.22) subject to failures in control systems 1 and 2, using an appropriate fault-detection filter (*solid line*) and in the absence of a fault-detection filter (*dashed line*) 52

Fig. 3.12 Evolution of the residual for (a) the first control configuration and (b) the second control configuration 52

Fig. 3.13 Evolution of the closed-loop (a) temperature (*solid line*), estimate of temperature (*dash-dotted line*) and the temperature profile generated by the filter (*dashed line*) and (b) concentration (*solid line*), estimate of concentration (*dash-dotted line*) and the concentration profile generated by the filter (*dashed line*) under the switching rule of Eq. (3.22) subject to failures in control systems 1 and 2 in the absence of a fault-detection filter 53

Fig. 3.14 Manipulated input profiles under (a) control configuration 1, (b) control configuration 2, and (c) control configuration 3 under the switching rule of Eq. (3.22) subject to failures in control systems 1 and 2 in the presence (*solid lines*) and absence (*dashed lines*) of a fault-detection filter 53

Fig. 4.1 A schematic of two CSTRs operating in series 67

Fig. 4.2 Evolution of reactor one closed-loop temperature profile under the switching rule of Theorem 4.3 (*solid line*) and in the absence of fault-tolerant control (*dashed line*) subject to simultaneous failures in both the heating jackets 70

Fig. 4.3 Evolution of reactor two closed-loop temperature profile under the switching rule of Theorem 4.3 (*solid line*) and in the absence of fault-tolerant control (*dashed line*) subject to simultaneous failures in both the heating jackets 70

Fig. 4.4 Evolution of reactor one closed-loop reactant concentration profile under the switching rule of Theorem 4.3 (*solid line*) and in the absence of fault-tolerant control (*dashed line*) subject to simultaneous failures in both the heating jackets 71

Fig. 4.5 Evolution of reactor two closed-loop reactant concentration profile under the switching rule of Theorem 4.3 (*solid line*) and in the absence of fault-tolerant control (*dashed line*) subject to simultaneous failures in both the heating jackets 71

Fig. 4.6 Evolution of residuals $e_{1,1}$ (*solid line*) and $e_{2,1}$ (*dashed line*) corresponding to the manipulated inputs in the first reactor 72

Fig. 4.7 Evolution of residuals $e_{3,1}$ (*solid line*) and $e_{4,1}$ (*dashed line*) corresponding to the manipulated inputs in the second reactor 72

Fig. 4.8 Evolution of the closed-loop temperature (*solid line*), estimate of temperature (*dash-dotted line*), and the temperature profile generated by the FDI filter (*dashed line*) with fault-tolerant control in place. Evolution of the temperature (*dotted line*) without fault-tolerant control in place 73

Fig. 4.9 Evolution of the residual corresponding to Q_1 before switching ($k = 1$, *solid line*), and Q_3 after switching ($k = 2$, *dashed line*). A fault is declared when $e_{1,1}$ reaches the threshold at 0.1 73

Fig. 4.10 Evolution of the residual corresponding to Q_2 before switching ($k = 1$, *solid line*), and after switching ($k = 2$, *dashed line*). No fault is declared 74

Fig. 4.11 (a) Temperature profile of reactor two with reconfiguration (*solid line*) and without reconfiguration (*dotted line*), (b) Q_1 residual profile, and (c) Q_2 residual profile (note fault detection at time $t = 40.79$ min) 75

Fig. 4.12 (a) Temperature profile of reactor two with reconfiguration (*solid line*) and without reconfiguration (*dotted line*), (b) Q_1 residual profile, and (c) Q_2 residual profile (note fault detection at time $t = 41.33$ min) 77

Fig. 4.13 Single membrane unit reverse osmosis desalination process 78

Fig. 4.14 Evolution of the closed-loop state profiles under fault-tolerant control (*dashed line*) and without fault tolerant-control (*solid line*). FTC recovers the desired brine flow, v_3 83

Fig. 4.15 Evolution of the closed-loop pressure profile under fault tolerant control (*dashed line*) and without fault tolerant control (*solid line*). FTC recovers the desired operating pressure 84

Fig. 5.1 A schematic illustrating the safe-parking framework for a process with two actuators. Ω denotes the stability region under nominal operation. Safe-parking candidates lie on the equilibrium curve corresponding to the fail-safe value of the first actuator, and admissible values of the second actuator. Arbitrarily choosing a safe-park candidate (e.g., safe-parking candidate 2) does not guarantee resumption of nominal operation upon fault-recovery, while choosing safe-park candidate 1 guarantees resumption of nominal operation upon fault-recovery 93

Fig. 5.2 Evolution of closed-loop states for the CSTR example. *Dashed line* (- -) indicates the case when a safe-park point S_1 is arbitrarily chosen (resulting in the inability to resume nominal operation upon fault-recovery) while the *solid line* (—) indicates the case when S_2 is chosen according to Theorem 5.2, guaranteeing resumption of nominal operation upon fault-recovery. The *dash-dotted lines* show the closed-loop response when optimality considerations are included in the choice of the safe-park point and S_3 is chosen 98

Fig. 5.3 Evolution of the closed-loop state (a)–(b) and input (c)–(d) profiles for the CSTR example. *Dashed lines* (- -) indicate the case when a safe-park point S_1 is arbitrarily chosen (resulting in the inability to resume nominal operation upon fault-recovery) while the *solid lines* (—) show the case when S_2 is chosen according to Theorem 5.2, guaranteeing resumption of nominal operation upon fault-recovery. The *dash-dotted lines* show the closed-loop response when optimality considerations are included in the choice of the safe-park point and S_3 is chosen 99

Fig. 5.4 Evolution of the state profiles for the styrene polymerization process for an arbitrarily chosen safe-park point (*dashed lines*) and under the proposed safe-park mechanism (*solid lines*). Fault occurs at 33.3 min and is rectified at 300 min. The nominal equilibrium point N and the safe-park points S_5 and S_1 are denoted by the markers \star , \circ , and $+$, respectively 102

Fig. 5.5 The input profiles for the styrene polymerization process for an arbitrarily chosen safe-park point (*dashed lines*) and under the proposed safe-park mechanism (*solid lines*). Fault occurs at 33.3 min, resulting in the coolant flow rate being stuck at the maximum value during this time, and is rectified at 300 min 102

Fig. 6.1 Schematic of the integrated fault diagnosis and safe-parking framework 116

Fig. 6.2 Schematic illustrating the choice of a safe-park point. The range $[\bar{u}_{s,i,j} - \delta_s, \bar{u}_{s,i,j} + \delta_s]$ is designed off-line for the actuator position $\bar{u}_{s,i,j}$ with the robustness margin δ_s . The range $[\bar{u}_{i,l}, \bar{u}_{i,u}]$ is identified online, which contains the actual value of the failed actuator position $\bar{u}_{i,f}$ 116

Fig. 6.3 Schematic of the chemical reactor example 117

Fig. 6.4 Closed-loop state trajectories for the chemical reactor example where the process starts from O_1 and the cooling valve fails at F_1 . The *solid line* shows the case where the fault is confirmed at D_1 , the process is stabilized at the safe-park point S_4 , and nominal operation is resumed upon fault repair. The *dashed line* shows process instability when no fault-handling mechanism is implemented. The *arrows* show the directions of the trajectories 118

Fig. 6.5 Illustration of the FDD scheme of Theorem 6.2 for the chemical reactor example. The cooling valve fails at time 0.05 hr. The fault is first detected and isolated at 0.1 hr and confirmed at 0.175 hr after 4 consecutive alarms. *Crosses* denote the prescribed inputs, *circles* denote the implemented inputs, and *error bars* denote the estimated bounds on the actual inputs for C_{A0} (a), Q_c (b), and Q_h (c) 120

Fig. 6.6 Binary residuals (a)–(b) defined by Eq. (6.16) and residuals (c)–(d) defined by Eq. (6.9) for manipulated variables C_{A0} and Q_c , respectively, in the chemical reactor example 121

Fig. 6.7 Closed-loop state (a)–(b) and input (c)–(d) profiles for the chemical reactor example. The safe-parking operation starts from 0.175 hr, and nominal operation is resumed at 1.5 hr 122

Fig. 6.8 Closed-loop state trajectory for the chemical reactor example with asynchronous concentration measurements where the process starts from O_2 and the cooling valve fails at F_2 . The fault is confirmed at D_2 , the process is stabilized at the safe-park point S_6 , and nominal operation is resumed upon fault repair. The *arrow* shows the direction of the trajectory 122

Fig. 6.9 Illustration of the FDD scheme of Theorem 6.3 for the chemical reactor example with asynchronous concentration measurements. The cooling valve fails at time 0.05 hr. The fault is first detected and isolated at 0.125 hr and confirmed at 0.2 hr after 4 consecutive alarms. *Crosses* denote the prescribed inputs, *circles* denote the implemented inputs, and *error bars* denote the estimated bounds on the actual inputs for Q_c (a) and Q_h (b) 123

Fig. 6.10 Closed-loop state (a)–(b) and input (c)–(d) profiles for the chemical reactor example with asynchronous concentration measurements. The safe-parking operation starts from 0.2 hr, and nominal operation is resumed at 1.5 hr 123

Fig. 7.1 (a) (*top*) Common methods of fault diagnosis apply the FDI scheme and feedback control law to the closed-loop system independently from each other. (b) (*bottom*) This work proposes integrating the feedback control law design with the FDI scheme in the closed-loop system 126

Fig. 7.2 Closed-loop system with MPC as advanced model-based controller and low-level PID controller implemented to regulate the control actuators 127

Fig. 7.3 Incidence graph and reduced incidence graph for the system of Eq. (7.2) 130

Fig. 7.4 Isolability graph for the system of Eq. (7.2) 134

Fig. 7.5 CSTR example. Distribution of normalized, fault-free operating data compared with a normal distribution of the same mean and variance 144

Fig. 7.6 Isolability graph for the system of Eq. (7.16). $v_1 = \{\zeta_1\}$, $v_2 = \{\zeta_2\}$, and $v_3 = \{\eta\}$ 145

Fig. 7.7 CSTR example. State trajectories of the closed-loop system under feedback-linearizing (\diamond) and P (\times) control with a fault d_1 at $t = 0.5$ hr 147

Fig. 7.8 CSTR example. Closed-loop system under feedback-linearizing control with sample size $m = 10$. Statistics T^2 , T_1^2 , and T_2^2 (solid) with T_{UCL} (dashed) with a failure in d_1 at $t = 0.5$ hr 147

Fig. 7.9 CSTR example. Closed-loop system under feedback-linearizing control with sample size $m = 1$. Statistics T^2 , T_1^2 , and T_2^2 (solid) with T_{UCL} (dashed) with a failure in d_1 at $t = 0.5$ hr 148

Fig. 7.10 CSTR example. Closed-loop system under proportional control with sample size $m = 10$. Statistics T^2 , T_1^2 , and T_2^2 (solid) with T_{UCL} (dashed) with a failure in d_1 at $t = 0.5$ hr 148

Fig. 7.11 CSTR example. Closed-loop system under proportional control with sample size $m = 1$. Statistics T^2 , T_1^2 , and T_2^2 (solid) with T_{UCL} (dashed) with a failure in d_1 at $t = 0.5$ hr 149

Fig. 7.12 CSTR example. Closed-loop system under feedback-linearizing control with sample size $m = 1$. Statistics T^2 , T_1^2 , and T_2^2 (solid) with T_{UCL} (dashed) with a failure in d_2 at $t = 0.5$ hr 149

Fig. 7.13 CSTR example. Closed-loop system under proportional control with sample size $m = 1$. Statistics T^2 , T_1^2 , and T_2^2 (solid) with T_{UCL} (dashed) with a failure in d_2 at $t = 0.5$ hr 150

Fig. 7.14 CSTR example. Manipulated input profiles for both the proportional controller (\diamond) and the feedback-linearizing controller (\times) with a failure in d_1 at time $t = 0.5$ hr 150

Fig. 7.15 Isolability graph for the system of Eq. (7.18) 155

Fig. 7.16 Polyethylene reactor example. Distribution of normalized, fault-free operating data compared with a normal distribution of the same mean and covariance 156

Fig. 7.17 Polyethylene reactor example. State trajectories of the closed-loop system under decoupling (solid) and PI-only (dashed) controllers with a fault d_2 at $t = 0.5$ hr 157

Fig. 7.18 Polyethylene reactor example. State trajectories of the closed-loop system under the decoupling (solid) and PI-only (dashed) controllers with a fault d_3 at $t = 0.5$ hr 158

Fig. 7.19 Polyethylene reactor example. State trajectories of the closed-loop system under the decoupling (solid) and PI-only (dashed) controllers with a fault d_1 at $t = 0.5$ hr 158

Fig. 7.20 Polyethylene reactor example. Statistics T^2 , T_1^2 , T_2^2 , and T_3^2 (solid) with T_{UCL} (dashed) of the closed-loop system under the decoupling controller with a failure in d_2 at $t = 0.5$ hr 159

Fig. 7.21 Polyethylene reactor example. Statistics T^2 , T_1^2 , T_2^2 , and T_3^2 (solid) with T_{UCL} (dashed) of the closed-loop system under the decoupling controller with a failure in d_3 at $t = 0.5$ hr 159

Fig. 7.22 Polyethylene reactor example. Statistics T^2 , T_1^2 , T_2^2 , and T_3^2 (solid) with T_{UCL} (dashed) of the closed-loop system under the decoupling controller with a failure in d_1 at $t = 0.5$ hr 160