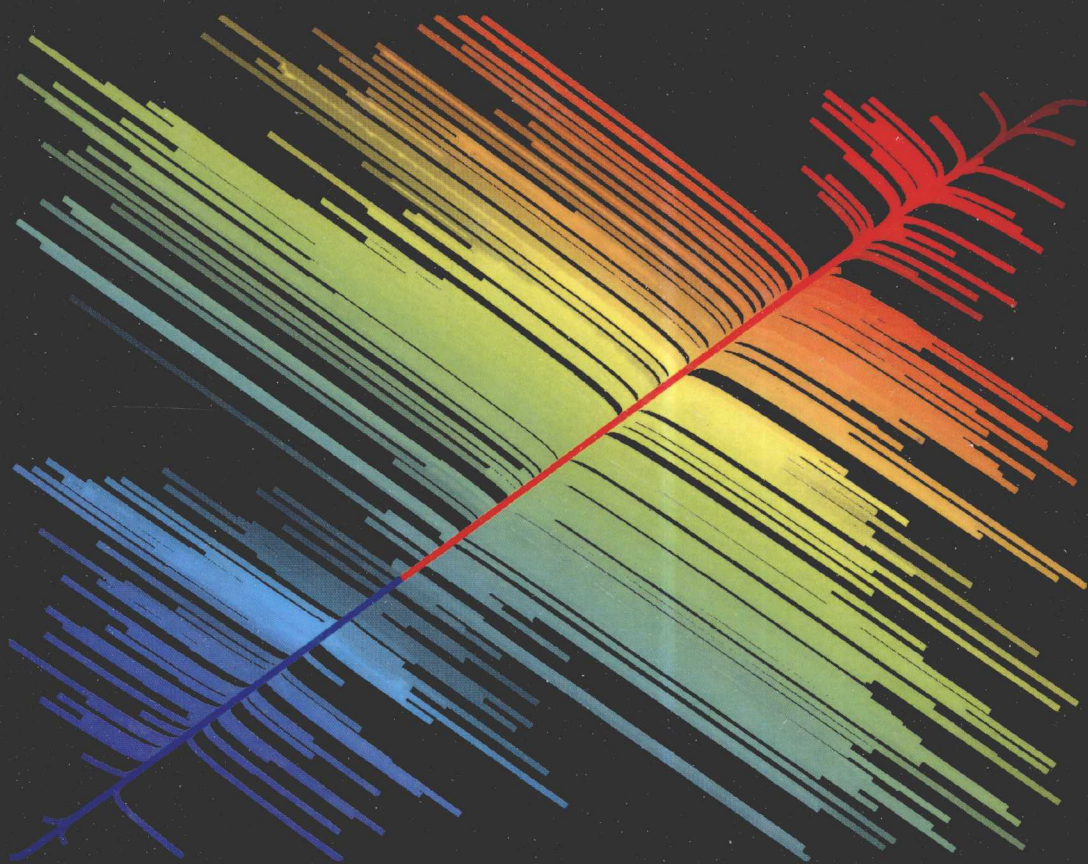


Dynamics and Nonlinear Control of Integrated Process Systems

Michael Baldea and Prodromos Daoutidis



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Dynamics and Nonlinear Control of Integrated Process Systems

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Dynamics and Nonlinear Control of Integrated Process Systems

Presenting a systematic model reduction and hierarchical controller design framework for broad classes of integrated process systems encountered in practice, this book first studies process systems with large material recycle and/or with small purge streams, followed by systems with energy integration. Step-by-step model reduction procedures are developed to derive nonlinear reduced models of the dynamics in each time scale. Hierarchical control architectures, consisting of coordinated levels of control action in different time scales, are proposed for each class of process systems considered in order to enforce stability, tracking performance, and disturbance rejection. Numerous process applications are discussed in detail to illustrate the application of the methods and their potential to improve process operations. Matlab codes are also presented to guide further application of the methods developed and facilitate practical implementations.

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To our families

Preface

The chemical process industry is an intensely competitive environment, where cost reduction represents a critical factor towards increasing profit margins. Over the last few decades, an ever growing need to lower utility costs and energy consumption, and to improve raw material use, has spurred the development and implementation of increasingly integrated process designs that make extensive use of material recycling and energy recovery.

The significant reduction in capital and operating costs associated with process integration does, however, come at the price of additional operational and control challenges. Research on the control of interconnected process systems and entire chemical plants has been driven both by developments in control and optimization theory, and by shifts in market demands and industry needs. Initial efforts focused on decentralized multi-loop control structures and on including plant-wide considerations in the tuning of PID controllers. The associated benefits dwindled, however, with the rise of modern, tightly integrated processes with strong dynamic coupling between the different process units. More recently, control systems developed within the linear model predictive control (MPC) paradigm have allowed centralized decision making and accounting for economic optimality under operating constraints. In the (petro)chemical industry, MPC remains the established means for regulatory control and plant operation around a given steady state.

The current economic environment is, however, highly dynamic. Economically optimal plant operations thus entail frequent switching among different operating conditions (i.e., different steady states), having different product grades and production rates. Adopting or adapting the existing fully centralized or completely decentralized control designs for enforcing such transitions is neither practical nor effective in the context of integrated processes, where the interactions between the process units become significant and unique dynamic features emerge.

Developed around an extensive body of recent research by the authors, this book provides a new paradigm for the effective control of tightly integrated process systems, by

- documenting rigorously the dynamic behavior that emerges at the plant level when tight integration through material recycling and energy recovery is employed
- presenting the means for deriving explicit and physically meaningful low-dimensional models of the dominant plant dynamics
- describing a hierarchical controller design framework that discerns and coordinates between regulatory control at the unit level and supervisory, plant-wide control, and enables the design of nonlinear controllers for enforcing plant-wide transitions
- illustrating the application of the theoretical concepts to several integrated processes found in the chemical and energy industries

The chapters strive to balance rigor and practicality. The systematic analysis of generic, prototypical processes that exemplify the process integration structures encountered in practice is emphasized together with the unique dynamic features and control challenges that they present. Illustrative examples and extensive case studies on specific problems support the theoretical developments and provide a practical vista. The text adopts a unique and quintessentially chemical engineering perspective by introducing the concept of a process-level dimensionless number to characterize process integration from both a process *design* and a process *control* point of view. We are hopeful that our approach will allow readers to rapidly master the underlying theory and develop extensions to other classes of problems. Implementation details (sample computer codes) are provided in order to further encourage the rapid deployment of practical applications.

The book targets graduate students and researchers interested in dynamics and control, as well as practitioners involved in advanced control in industry. It can serve as a reference text in an advanced process systems engineering or process control course and as a valuable resource for the researcher or practitioner. Written at a basic mathematical level (and largely self-contained from a mathematical point of view), the material assumes some familiarity with process modeling and an elementary background in nonlinear dynamical systems and control.

We are grateful to our colleagues at the Department of Chemical Engineering and Materials Science at Minnesota for maintaining an environment of scientific excellence and collegiality over the years. M.B. is also grateful to the fellow researchers at the Praxair Technology Center in Tonawanda, NY for creating an intellectually stimulating atmosphere. We owe special thanks to Ed Cussler for his advice and encouragement in the initial stages of the writing of this book, the staff at Cambridge University Press for their support and advice, and the National Science Foundation for the support it provided for the research that formed the basis for this book. We also owe a special note of appreciation to Aditya Kumar for his instrumental role in the initial phase of research on this subject, and to Sujit Jogwar, whose recent work further solidified the basic thesis and direction of the book.

This book is dedicated to my parents, with gratitude for their unconditional love and support, and to the memory of my grandparents, who fondly followed my childhood scientific pursuits.

M.B.

I dedicate this book to my wife Aphrodite for her uncompromising pursuit of beauty in all aspects of our life, and to my children Stylianos and Euphrosyne for the immeasurable joy and inspiration they bring.

P.D.

Contents

Preface

page xi

Part I Preliminaries	1
1 Introduction	3
2 Singular perturbation theory	11
2.1 Introduction	11
2.2 Properties of ODE systems with small parameters	11
2.3 Nonstandard singularly perturbed systems with two time scales	21
2.4 Singularly perturbed systems with three or more time scales	29
2.5 Control of singularly perturbed systems	30
2.6 Synopsis	31
Part II Process systems with material integration	33
3 Process systems with significant material recycling	35
3.1 Introduction	35
3.2 Modeling of process systems with large recycle streams	35
3.3 Model reduction	39
3.3.1 Fast dynamics	39
3.3.2 Slow dynamics	40
3.4 Control of integrated processes with large recycle	42
3.4.1 Hierarchical controller design	42
3.4.2 Control of the fast dynamics	43
3.4.3 Control in the slow time scale	43
3.4.4 Cascaded control configurations	44
3.5 Case study: control of a reactor–distillation–recycle process	47
3.5.1 Process description	47
3.5.2 Model reduction and hierarchical controller design	51
3.5.3 Simulation results and discussion	58
3.6 Synopsis	63

4	Process systems with purge streams	64
4.1	Introduction	64
4.2	Motivating examples	65
4.2.1	Processes with light impurities	65
4.2.2	Processes with heavy impurities	67
4.3	Modeling of process systems with recycle and purge	70
4.4	Dynamic analysis and model reduction	73
4.5	Motivating examples (continued)	77
4.5.1	Processes with light impurities	77
4.5.2	Processes with heavy impurities	79
4.6	Further applications	80
4.6.1	Processes with slow secondary reactions	80
4.6.2	An analogy with systems with large recycle	82
4.6.3	Processes with multiple impurities	84
4.7	Control implications	84
4.8	Case study: control of a reactor–condenser process	85
4.8.1	Process description	85
4.8.2	System analysis	86
4.8.3	Controller design	86
4.8.4	Simulation results and discussion	88
4.9	Synopsis	101
5	Dynamics and control of generalized integrated process systems	102
5.1	Introduction	102
5.2	System description and modeling	102
5.3	Time-scale decomposition and nonlinear model reduction	105
5.3.1	Fast dynamics at the unit level	105
5.3.2	Process-level dynamics	106
5.3.3	Slow dynamics of the impurity levels	108
5.4	Hierarchical controller design	110
5.4.1	Distributed control at the unit level	110
5.4.2	Supervisory control at the process level	110
5.4.3	Control of impurity levels	111
5.4.4	Real-time optimization	111
5.5	Case study: dynamics and control of a reactor–separator process core	112
5.5.1	Process description	112
5.5.2	System analysis	115
5.5.3	Reduced-order modeling	116
5.5.4	Hierarchical control system design	122
5.5.5	Simulation results and discussion	126
5.6	Synopsis	139

Part III Process systems with energy integration	141
6 Process systems with energy recycling	143
6.1 Introduction	143
6.2 Dynamics of processes with significant energy recovery	144
6.3 Model reduction	147
6.4 Control implications	151
6.5 Illustrative examples	151
6.5.1 Cascade of heated tanks	152
6.5.2 Processes with feed–effluent heat exchange	153
6.5.3 Energy-integrated distillation	156
6.6 Case study: control of a reactor–FEHE process	159
6.6.1 Process description	159
6.6.2 System analysis	161
6.6.3 Reduced-order modeling	163
6.6.4 Controller design	169
6.6.5 Simulation results and discussion	171
6.7 Synopsis	176
7 Process systems with high energy throughput	177
7.1 Introduction	177
7.2 Modeling of process systems with high energy throughput	177
7.3 Nonlinear model reduction	178
7.4 Control implications	180
7.5 Case study 1: dynamics of high-purity distillation columns	180
7.5.1 System description	180
7.5.2 Reduced-order modeling	183
7.5.3 Control implications	195
7.5.4 Simulation results and discussion	195
7.6 Case study 2: control of a reactor with an external heat exchanger	201
7.6.1 Process description	201
7.6.2 System modeling and model reduction	202
7.6.3 Control implications and controller implementation	208
7.6.4 Simulation results and discussion	212
7.7 Synopsis	220
Part IV Appendices	221
Appendix A Definitions	223
A.1 Lie derivatives. Involutivity	223
A.2 Order of magnitude	224
A.3 Differential algebraic equations (DAEs)	224

Appendix B	Systems with multiple-time-scale dynamics	229
Appendix C	Matlab code	237
	<i>References</i>	246
	<i>Index</i>	256

Part I

Preliminaries

1 Introduction

Integrated process systems, such as the one in Figure 1.1, consisting of multiple reaction and separation units, heat integrated and interconnected through material recycle streams, represent the rule rather than the exception in the modern process industries. The dynamics and control of such systems present distinct challenges: in addition to the nonlinear behavior of the individual units, the feedback interactions caused by the recycle connections typically give rise to a more complex, *overall* process dynamics. The use of design modifications, such as surge tanks and unit oversizing, and the choice of mild operating conditions, preventing the propagation of disturbances through the plant, initially allowed the problem of controlling chemical plants with material recycling to be dealt with at the unit level, using the “unit operations” approach (Umeda *et al.* 1978, Stephanopoulos 1983): control loops were designed for each unit, their tuning being subsequently adjusted to improve the operation of the entire plant. However, the shortage of raw materials, rising energy prices, and the need to lower capital costs have, over the past few decades, spurred the process industry’s tendency to build “lean,”¹ integrated plants, relying heavily on material recycles and energy recovery.

Owing to dwindling fossil-fuel supplies (and the associated increase in the cost of energy), improving energy efficiency has become particularly important. Energy integration and recovery are key enablers to this end. Fundamentally, energy integration involves identifying the energy sources and sinks *within* a system and establishing the means for energy transfer between them,² thereby reducing the use of external energy sources and utility streams. Chemical reactors and distillation columns inherently contain such sources and sinks and clearly constitute prime targets for energy integration. Numerous energy-integrated process configurations have been proposed at the conceptual level: reactor-feed effluent heat exchanger systems, heat exchanger networks, heat-integrated and thermally coupled distillation columns, etc.

The design and optimization of energy integration schemes has been an active research area from the early days of process systems engineering. Initial efforts (Rathore *et al.* 1974, Sophos *et al.* 1978, Nishida *et al.* 1981) focused on the

¹ With little, if any, design margin (Stephanopoulos 1983).

² Assuming, of course, that such transfer is thermodynamically feasible.

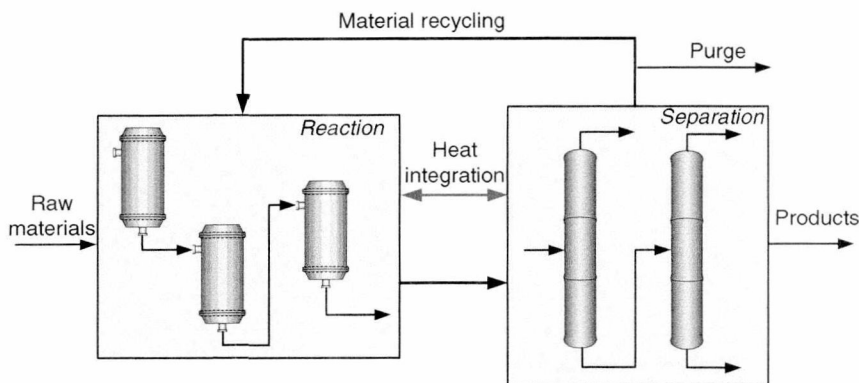


Figure 1.1 An integrated process system.

synthesis of energy-integrated processes using heuristics. Later, pinch analysis (Linnhoff and Hindmarsh 1983, Linnhoff *et al.* 1983) and bounding techniques for utility usage (Morari and Faith III 1980, Andreovich and Westerberg 1985a, Mészáros and Fonyó 1986) were introduced, and they have since seen numerous successful applications in the synthesis of new energy integration systems as well as in plant retrofits. Mathematically rigorous formulations such as mixed-integer linear/nonlinear programming (Andreovich and Westerberg 1985b, Floudas and Paules 1988, Yeomans and Grossmann 1999, Wei-Zhong and Xi-Gang 2009) and genetic algorithms (Wang *et al.* 1998, Yu *et al.* 2000, Wang *et al.* 2008) were subsequently developed to ensure the *optimality* of integrated processes. The significant reduction in capital and operating costs resulting from energy integration is now well documented (Muhner *et al.* 1990, Yee *et al.* 1990, Annakou and Mizsey 1996, Reyes and Luyben 2000b, Westerberg 2004, El-Halwagi 2006, Diez *et al.* 2009).

As integrated process designs continued to gain acceptance owing to their improved economics, the process control community also became aware of the distinct challenges posed by the operation of such plants, and a number of research studies ensued.

An initial theoretical study (Gilliland *et al.* 1964) established that, for a simple plant model consisting of a continuous stirred-tank reactor (CSTR) and a distillation column, the material recycle stream increases the sensitivity to disturbances together with increasing the time constant of the overall plant over those of the individual units. Moreover, it was shown that in certain cases the plant can become unstable even if the reactor itself is stable.

Several papers have since focused on either reaction–separation–recycle processes (Verykios and Luyben 1978, Denn and Lavie 1982, Luyben 1993a, Scali and Ferrari 1999, Lakshminarayanan *et al.* 2004) or individual multi-stage processes (Kapoor *et al.* 1986) and have shown that recycle streams can “slow down” the overall process dynamics (described by a small number of time constants) compared with the dynamics of the individual units, and may even lead to the recycle