

Allocation of Distributed Flaps for Gust Load Alleviation

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Abstract—Increasing the number and functionality of control surfaces provides great potential to improve aircraft performance. This, however, complicates the design of the control allocation system commonly used for flight control. A novel method for linear control allocation is presented which allows considering an arbitrary number of frequency dependent control objectives. The method systematically identifies principal control input directions for predefined performance channels by means of a balancing state space transformation. The effectiveness of the method is proven by designing a gust load alleviation system for a flexible aircraft with distributed trailing edge flaps.

I. INTRODUCTION

In order to allow for a more economic and environmentally friendly operation of transport aircraft, it is inevitable to actively control, for instance, aerodynamic drag, structural loads or noise emissions [1]. Certainly, the efficiency of each individual control function strongly depends on available control surfaces. Hence, increasing the number of control surfaces and using them for multiple purposes offers great potential to improve aircraft performance [2]. This leads, however, to new challenges in flight control design due to the increased number of control inputs.

In [3], the concept of a variable camber continuous trailing edge flap (VCCTEF) is presented. It introduces a large amount of control variables allowing adapting the wing shape according to the current flight conditions. In order to form a smooth trailing edge, virtual control variables based on Fourier series are introduced in [4]. Different approaches are presented in [5] and [6], where respectively Chebyshev and Bernstein polynomials are used for control allocation. Furthermore, the individual segments of each flap allow for active camber control, but are generally allocated based on simple geometric functions. All in all, for controlling the VCCTEF, linear control allocation using polynomials is widely applied, with the drawback of being independent of any control objective.

On the contrary, common linear control allocation methods, as summarized for example in [7], [8], [9], [10], directly consider the intended control objective. To that end, a so called control effector matrix has to be determined first. In flight control, this matrix typically maps the control surface deflections to the three rotational degrees of freedom of a rigid aircraft. Methods based on inversion or optimization can then be used to determine an appropriate allocation matrix. For controlling the dynamic response of a flexible

aircraft, however, a control effector matrix is needed which captures the whole frequency range of interest.

In this paper, a novel linear control allocation method is presented that allows accounting for frequency dependent control objectives. To that end, principal control input directions are identified using balanced truncation. The necessary preliminaries and the proposed procedure for control allocation are described in Section II and Section III, respectively. The effectiveness of the proposed method is then demonstrated with an example of a gust load alleviation (GLA) controller design in Section IV.

II. PRELIMINARIES

A. Linear Time-invariant Systems

In this paper, the focus is put on allocation of inputs for linear time-invariant (LTI) systems [11]. Generally, an LTI system

$$\mathbf{G} : \begin{bmatrix} \dot{\mathbf{x}}(t) \\ \mathbf{w}(t) \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{A} & \mathbf{B} \\ \mathbf{C} & \mathbf{D} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{x}(t) \\ \mathbf{r}(t) \end{bmatrix} \quad (1)$$

with the states $\mathbf{x}(t) : \mathbb{R}_+ \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^{n_x}$ maps the input signal $\mathbf{r}(t) : \mathbb{R}_+ \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^{n_r}$ to the output signal $\mathbf{w}(t) : \mathbb{R}_+ \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^{n_w}$. The system \mathbf{G} is defined by the constant matrices $\mathbf{A} \in \mathbb{R}^{n_x \times n_x}$, $\mathbf{B} \in \mathbb{R}^{n_x \times n_r}$, $\mathbf{C} \in \mathbb{R}^{n_w \times n_x}$, $\mathbf{D} \in \mathbb{R}^{n_w \times n_r}$ and considered stable if all eigenvalues of \mathbf{A} have negative real part. Note that, for ease of notation, the time argument of signals is commonly dropped.

B. Balanced Order Reduction

In order to obtain a balanced realization of a stable LTI system \mathbf{G} , a state transformation $\tilde{\mathbf{x}} = \mathbf{T}\mathbf{x}$ can be found leading to identical controllability and observability Gramians

$$\mathbf{W}_c = \mathbf{W}_o = \text{diag}(\sigma_{H,1}, \dots, \sigma_{H,n_x}), \quad (2)$$

where $\sigma_{H,1} \geq \dots \geq \sigma_{H,n_x} > 0$ are the Hankel singular values (HSVs), see [12],[13]. The balanced system

$$\tilde{\mathbf{G}} : \begin{bmatrix} \dot{\tilde{\mathbf{x}}} \\ \mathbf{w} \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{TAT}^{-1} & \mathbf{TB} \\ \mathbf{CT}^{-1} & \mathbf{D} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} \tilde{\mathbf{x}} \\ \mathbf{r} \end{bmatrix} \quad (3)$$

has the same input-output behavior as \mathbf{G} , which is dominated by the states $\tilde{\mathbf{x}}_i$ associated with the largest HSVs $\sigma_{H,i}$. Hence, the balanced state space realization is widely used for model order reduction. A common method for order reduction is to truncate the states with the smallest HSVs by partitioning the state space matrices of $\tilde{\mathbf{G}}$ into

$$\tilde{\mathbf{A}} = \begin{bmatrix} \tilde{\mathbf{A}}_{11} & \tilde{\mathbf{A}}_{12} \\ \tilde{\mathbf{A}}_{21} & \tilde{\mathbf{A}}_{22} \end{bmatrix}, \tilde{\mathbf{B}} = \begin{bmatrix} \tilde{\mathbf{B}}_1 \\ \tilde{\mathbf{B}}_2 \end{bmatrix}, \tilde{\mathbf{C}} = [\tilde{\mathbf{C}}_1 \quad \tilde{\mathbf{C}}_2], \quad (4)$$

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resulting in a reduced order system

$$\tilde{\mathbf{G}}_1 : \begin{bmatrix} \dot{\tilde{\mathbf{x}}}_1 \\ \mathbf{w} \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} \tilde{\mathbf{A}}_{11} & \tilde{\mathbf{B}}_1 \\ \tilde{\mathbf{C}}_1 & \mathbf{D} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} \tilde{\mathbf{x}}_1 \\ \mathbf{r} \end{bmatrix}. \quad (5)$$

An alternative method would be to residualize the states with the smallest HSVs, which allows retaining the steady state behavior of the system. Furthermore, a certain frequency or time interval may be emphasized for a balanced order reduction as described in [14].

C. H_∞ Control Design

In H_∞ control design [15], a stabilizing controller \mathbf{K} is derived that minimizes an upper bound γ on the H_∞ -norm

$$\|\mathcal{F}_l(\mathbf{P}, \mathbf{K})\|_\infty = \sup_{\mathbf{d} \in \mathcal{L}_2 \setminus \{0\}} \frac{\|\mathbf{e}\|_2}{\|\mathbf{d}\|_2} < \gamma \quad (6)$$

of the closed-loop interconnection given by the lower fractional transformation $\mathcal{F}_l(\mathbf{P}, \mathbf{K})$ depicted Figure 1.

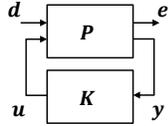


Fig. 1. Closed-loop interconnection $\mathcal{F}_l(\mathbf{P}, \mathbf{K})$.

In Equation (6), the generalized plant

$$\mathbf{P} : \begin{bmatrix} \dot{\mathbf{x}} \\ \mathbf{e} \\ \mathbf{y} \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{A} & \mathbf{B}_d & \mathbf{B}_u \\ \mathbf{C}_e & \mathbf{D}_{ed} & \mathbf{D}_{eu} \\ \mathbf{C}_y & \mathbf{D}_{yd} & \mathbf{D}_{yu} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{x} \\ \mathbf{d} \\ \mathbf{u} \end{bmatrix} \quad (7)$$

maps the performance and control inputs \mathbf{d} and \mathbf{u} to the performance and measurement outputs \mathbf{e} and \mathbf{y} . In order to achieve the desired closed-loop performance, weighting filters are typically added to the performance channels \mathbf{d} and \mathbf{e} , introducing some additional degrees of freedom for controller tuning.

III. LINEAR ALLOCATION USING BALANCING

In order to shorten notations, only the allocation of inputs, generally known as control allocation, is treated here. However, the allocation of outputs, also called sensor allocation, may be derived in a similar way.

A. Linear Control Allocation Problem

In this section, the linear control allocation problem in terms of input directions is presented. Generally, linear control allocation is described by

$$\mathbf{u} = \mathbf{T}_{uv} \mathbf{v}, \quad (8)$$

where $\mathbf{T}_{uv} \in \mathbb{R}^{n_u \times n_v}$ with $n_v < n_u$ is the allocation matrix mapping the virtual control inputs $\mathbf{v} \in \mathbb{R}^{n_v}$, to the actual control inputs $\mathbf{u} \in \mathbb{R}^{n_u}$. The allocation matrix

$$\mathbf{T}_{uv} = [k_1 \tilde{\mathbf{v}}_1 \quad \dots \quad k_{n_v} \tilde{\mathbf{v}}_{n_v}] \quad (9)$$

contains n_v linear independent control input directions $\tilde{\mathbf{v}}_i$ with $|\tilde{\mathbf{v}}_i| = 1$ for $i = 1, \dots, n_v$, which are scaled by a constant

factor $k_i \in \mathbb{R} \setminus \{0\}$. Obviously, control allocation can lead to a degradation of controllability as certain control input directions may lie within the null space of \mathbf{T}_{uv} . Hence, it is of major interest that the control allocation matrix contains the principal input directions in order to achieve a certain control objective. Thus, the linear control allocation problem considered here is partitioned into

- 1) finding a minimum number of linear independent control input directions $\tilde{\mathbf{v}}_i$ which have high impact on the predefined control objective, and
- 2) finding appropriate scaling factors k_i for each control input direction.

Note that, the determination of the scaling factors may be neglected here as it can also be seen as a part of the subsequent controller design. For numerical stability, however, it makes sense to scale each virtual input so the corresponding time signals are of comparable magnitude.

B. Proposed Method

In this section, a novel method for designing a linear control allocation matrix \mathbf{T}_{uv} is proposed. The procedure starts with the generalized plant \mathbf{P} from Equation (7), which is assumed to be fully observable and controllable by \mathbf{y} respectively \mathbf{u} . In a first step, a balanced truncation is performed on the open-loop performance subsystem

$$\mathbf{P}_{d \rightarrow e} : \begin{bmatrix} \dot{\mathbf{x}} \\ \mathbf{e} \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{A} & \mathbf{B}_d \\ \mathbf{C}_e & \mathbf{D}_{ed} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{x} \\ \mathbf{d} \end{bmatrix} \quad (10)$$

of \mathbf{P} using the balancing state transformation $\tilde{\mathbf{x}} = \mathbf{T}\mathbf{x}$. The reduced performance subsystem has the states $\tilde{\mathbf{x}}_1 \in \mathbb{R}^{n_{\tilde{x}_1}}$ associated to the largest HSVs $\sigma_{H,i} > \sigma_{H,min}$ of $\mathbf{P}_{d \rightarrow e}$. Obviously, a desired order $n_{\tilde{x}_1}$ of the reduced performance subsystem is determined by adjusting the threshold $\sigma_{H,min}$. Note that, balanced truncation does not necessarily preserve pole locations, which may lead to an undesired transformation of system dynamics. However, for systems with weak natural damping (e.g. lightweight structures), a good matching is typically achieved, see [16], [17]. Hence, special care has to be taken in case the performance subsystem is dominated by poles with high natural damping in the frequency range of interest.

Secondly, the control input matrix \mathbf{B}_u of the generalized plant \mathbf{P} is transformed to

$$\tilde{\mathbf{B}}_u = \mathbf{T}\mathbf{B}_u = \begin{bmatrix} \tilde{\mathbf{B}}_{u,1} \\ \tilde{\mathbf{B}}_{u,2} \end{bmatrix}. \quad (11)$$

In Equation (11), the submatrix $\tilde{\mathbf{B}}_{u,1} \in \mathbb{R}^{n_{\tilde{x}_1} \times n_u}$ is associated to the dominating states $\tilde{\mathbf{x}}_1$ of $\mathbf{P}_{d \rightarrow e}$. Hence, the input directions of $\tilde{\mathbf{B}}_{u,1} \in \mathbb{R}^{n_{\tilde{x}_1} \times n_u}$ are considered as well suited for control allocation.

Thirdly, the input directions of $\tilde{\mathbf{B}}_{u,1}$ are orthogonalized using singular value decomposition (SVD). This leads to

$$\begin{aligned} \tilde{\mathbf{B}}_{u,1} &= \tilde{\mathbf{U}} \tilde{\Sigma} \tilde{\mathbf{V}}^T \\ &= [\tilde{\mathbf{U}}_1 \quad \tilde{\mathbf{U}}_2] \begin{bmatrix} \tilde{\Sigma}_1 & 0 \\ 0 & \tilde{\Sigma}_2 \end{bmatrix} [\tilde{\mathbf{V}}_1^T \quad \tilde{\mathbf{V}}_2^T]^T, \end{aligned} \quad (12)$$

where $\tilde{U} \in \mathbb{R}^{n_{\tilde{x}_1} \times n_{\tilde{x}_1}}$ and $\tilde{V}^T \in \mathbb{R}^{n_u \times n_u}$ are unitary matrices. Furthermore, the rectangular diagonal matrix $\tilde{\Sigma} \in \mathbb{R}^{n_{\tilde{x}_1} \times n_u}$ lists the singular values $\tilde{\sigma}_i \geq 0$ for $i = 1, \dots, n_{\tilde{\sigma}}$, $n_{\tilde{\sigma}} = \min(n_{\tilde{x}_1}, n_u)$ on its diagonal. Now, the columns of matrix $\tilde{V}_1^T = [\tilde{v}_1 \dots \tilde{v}_{n_v}]$ associated to the singular values $\tilde{\sigma}_i > \tilde{\sigma}_{min}$ are considered as the principal control input directions. Thus, the vectors \tilde{v}_i are directly used to define the virtual control inputs v . Certainly, the number of principal input directions and hence the number of virtual control inputs n_v may be reduced by increasing the threshold $\tilde{\sigma}_{min}$. However, in order to ensure a maximum controllability of the dominating states \tilde{x}_1 of $P_{d \rightarrow e}$, set $\tilde{\sigma}_{min} = 0$. Note that, for control allocation it is generally desired that $n_v < n_u$, which can be achieved by adjusting either $\sigma_{H,min}$, $\tilde{\sigma}_{min}$ or both of them.

In a fourth and final step, the principal control input directions $\tilde{v}_i, i = 1, \dots, n_v$ are scaled by the inverse of the corresponding singular values. This leads to the control allocation matrix

$$T_{uv} = \tilde{V}_1^T \tilde{\Sigma}_1^{-1} = \begin{bmatrix} \frac{1}{\tilde{\sigma}_1} \tilde{v}_1 & \dots & \frac{1}{\tilde{\sigma}_{n_v}} \tilde{v}_{n_v} \end{bmatrix}, \quad (13)$$

where $\tilde{\Sigma}_1$ is diagonal square matrix with the singular values $\tilde{\sigma}_i > \tilde{\sigma}_{min}$ for $\tilde{\sigma}_{min} \geq 0$ on the diagonal. Furthermore, it may be advantageous to scale the allocation matrix T_{uv} by its induced 1-norm $\|T_{uv}\|_{i1}$ to guarantee a bounded control input $\|u\|_{\infty} \leq 1$ for a bounded virtual input $\|v\|_{\infty} \leq 1$.

Concluding, the four steps of the proposed procedure for linear control allocation design can be summarized by

- 1) Balanced truncation of $P_{d \rightarrow e}$ with $\sigma_{H,min} \rightarrow T$
- 2) Transformation and truncation of $B_u \rightarrow \tilde{B}_{u,1}$
- 3) SVD of $\tilde{B}_{u,1}$ with $\tilde{\sigma}_{min} \rightarrow \tilde{V}_1^T$
- 4) Scaling of $\tilde{V}_1^T \rightarrow T_{uv}$.

In the proposed procedure, the thresholds $\sigma_{H,min}$ and $\tilde{\sigma}_{min}$ can be used as tuning knobs for designing the control allocation matrix T_{uv} . In addition to that, an initial scaling of inputs and outputs of the generalized plant P also affects the resulting control allocation matrix and can be used to balance certain performance specifications.

IV. EXAMPLE: GUST LOAD ALLEVIATION

For the evaluation of the effectiveness of the proposed allocation method, a GLA system is designed for a flexible aircraft with distributed flaps. To that end, the distributed flap inputs are first allocated using the proposed method. Subsequently, an H_{∞} output feedback controller is designed to alleviate structural loads during gust encounter. As a performance measure, the reduction of the peaks of the wing root bending and torsional moment is considered. The achieved performance is then compared with the performance of a GLA system using Chebyshev polynomials for control allocation and a GLA system without any allocation.

A. Modeling Flexible Aircraft

The flexible aircraft used for simulations is modeled according to [18]. The aeroservoelastic model interconnects a finite element model of the airframe with an unsteady

aerodynamics model. The aerodynamics model is computed in frequency domain by means of the doublet lattice method [19] and transformed to time domain using Roger's rational function approximation [20]. For the gust input, the aircraft is divided into 25 zones in the direction of flight and a Padé approximation is used to model the time delay for each zone. The resulting gust loads are then recovered by the force summation method [21]. As control surfaces, a pair of elevators and 9 equally distributed trailing edge flaps on each wing are modeled (see also Figure 2). The actuators for each control surface are approximated by a first order low pass filter with a bandwidth of $\omega_c = 20$ rad/s. More details on aeroservoelastic modeling can be found in [22], [19], [18], [23].

For evaluation of the proposed control allocation method, one single flight point at $Ma = 0.86$ and $h = 9108$ m is considered. Furthermore, only symmetric excitations are taken into account, meaning that gust encounter as well as control surface deflections are assumed to be equal on the left and right hand side of the aircraft. Hence, the model order can be reduced by discarding all non-symmetric modes and by combining the actuator models on both sides. The nonlinear aircraft model is linearized around steady horizontal flight. In addition to that, the order of the linearized aircraft is further reduced to a number of 44 states by applying an initial modal and balanced truncation. The resulting reduced order LTI system has 1 vertical gust and 10 control surface inputs. As outputs, acceleration sensors at the wing tip and the center of gravity as well as the wing root bending and torsional moment are taken into account. Due to the symmetric excitations, the outputs also are assumed to be equal on both sides of the aircraft and hence are not determined twice.

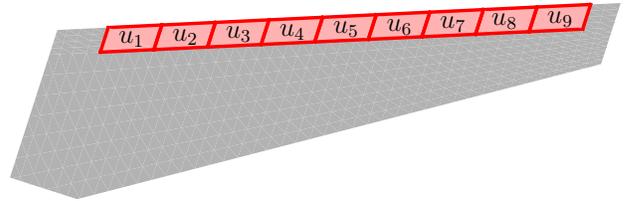


Fig. 2. Distributed trailing edge flaps on the wing used for GLA.

B. Allocation of Distributed Flaps

Before designing the actual GLA system, the distributed trailing edge flaps are allocated according to the method proposed in Section III-B.

In a first step, the open-loop performance subsystem $P_{d \rightarrow e}$ from the gust input to the loads outputs is selected and a balancing state space transformation is computed. The resulting states are ordered according to their HSVs, see also Figure 3.

For the second step, the threshold $\sigma_{H,min}$ is chosen so that only the four most dominant states remain after truncation. In Figure 4, the frequency responses of the performance subsystem with reduced and full order are compared. It can

be seen that the main dynamics from the gust input to the loads outputs are captured well.

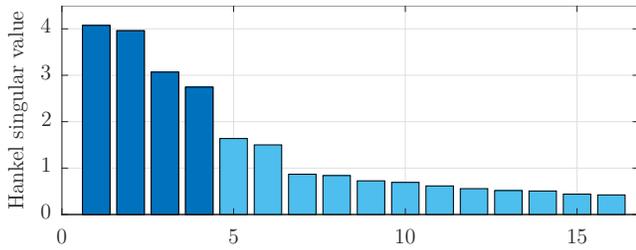


Fig. 3. Largest HSVs of $P_{d \rightarrow e}$ with the HSVs remaining after truncation marked in dark.

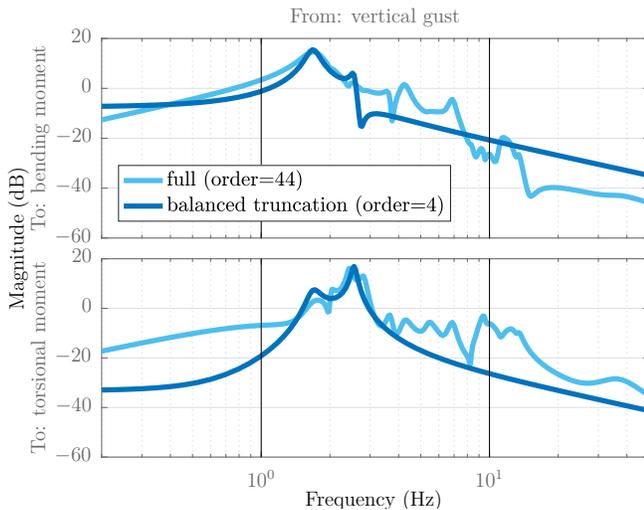


Fig. 4. Frequency response magnitude of $P_{d \rightarrow e}$ with full and reduced order.

In a third step, an SVD is carried out on the remaining control input matrix $\tilde{B}_{u,1}$. The resulting singular values are plotted in Figure 5 (left), where two of the singular values are considerably smaller than the others. Hence, they are truncated by adjusting the threshold $\tilde{\sigma}_{min}$. The remaining singu-

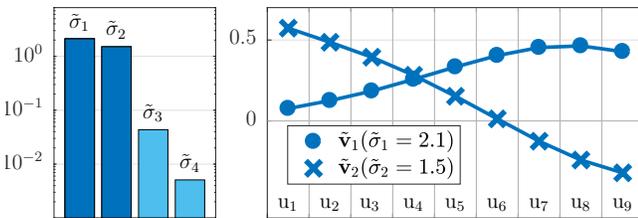


Fig. 5. Singular values $\tilde{\sigma}_i$ and principal input directions \tilde{v}_i of $\tilde{B}_{u,1}$, where $\tilde{\sigma}_3$ and $\tilde{\sigma}_4$ are truncated.

lar values correspond to the principal control input directions plotted in Figure 5 (right). A physical interpretation of these two directions is difficult due to numerous aeroelastic effects. On the one hand, the span- and chordwise distance of the respective flaps to the wing root plays an important role. On the other hand, natural coupling of bending and torsion as well as reversal effects of flap deflections for a swept flexible

wing may influence the results. Nevertheless, \tilde{v}_1 seems to be well suited to control the wing bending as it causes larger deflections at the outer wing. On the contrary, the control surface deflections caused by \tilde{v}_2 are larger at the inner part of the wing, where an increased chord length allows a better control of the wing root torsional moment.

In a fourth and final step, the selected principal control input directions are scaled with the inverse of the corresponding singular values. This results in the control allocation matrix \tilde{T}_{uv} , which allocates the trailing edge flaps according to the predefined control objective. However, by deflecting the flaps on the wing for the purpose of GLA, also some pitching moment is induced, which is typically compensated using the elevators. Hence, an additional column is added to the control allocation matrix which allows directly controlling elevator deflections. The resulting augmented control allocation matrix \tilde{T}_{uv} is then used to design an GLA controller as described in the next section.

C. Gust Load Alleviation Controller Design

For evaluation of the proposed control allocation method, a GLA controller is designed according to the H_∞ control methodology described in Section II-C. To that end, the flexible aircraft model from Section IV-A is augmented by weighted inputs and outputs enforcing the required performance specifications. Additionally, the augmented control allocation matrix \tilde{T}_{uv} is added, resulting in the generalized plant P marked with a dashed line in Figure 6.

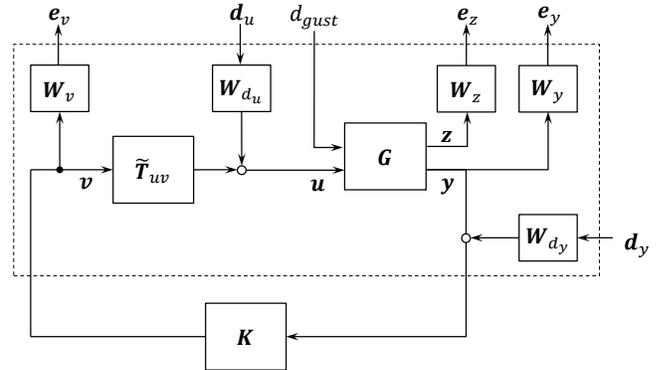


Fig. 6. Closed-loop interconnection for GLA controller design, where the generalized plant P is encircled with a dashed line.

As it can be seen, the outputs of the plant G are divided into measurable outputs y and non-measurable outputs z . Certainly, the two acceleration measurements described above are collected in y , whereas z consists of the non-measurable wing root bending and torsional moments. Both vector signals are weighted, yielding the performance outputs e_z and e_y . For the measurement outputs, a constant weighting matrix $W_y = 0.1I_{n_y}$ is employed. For the loads outputs, the bandpass weighting filters

$$W_{z_i}(s) = c_{z_i} \frac{0.001s^2 + 56.55s + 0.3948}{s^2 + 56.55s + 394.8} \quad (14)$$

with $i = 1, \dots, n_z$ is chosen, where the gains $\mathbf{c}_z = [c_{z_1} \dots c_{z_{n_z}}]^T$ are subject to be tuned. In order to limit the control effort, the virtual control inputs are further weighted by the bandstop filters

$$\mathbf{W}_{v_i}(s) = c_{v_i} \frac{s^2 + 56.55s + 394.8}{0.001s^2 + 56.55s + 0.3948} \quad (15)$$

with $i = 1, \dots, n_v$ and the tuning parameters $\mathbf{c}_v = [c_{v_1} \dots c_{v_{n_v}}]^T$. The weighting filters $\mathbf{W}_z = \text{diag}(\mathbf{W}_{z_1}, \dots, \mathbf{W}_{z_{n_z}})$ and $\mathbf{W}_v = \text{diag}(\mathbf{W}_{v_1}, \dots, \mathbf{W}_{v_{n_v}})$ thus restrict control activity and performance requirements to the frequency range of interest between 1 Hz and 10 Hz. Each weighting filter adds two additional states to the generalized plant and introduces a degree of freedom for controller tuning. Hence, the number of states as well as the number of tuning parameters can be reduced efficiently by weighting the virtual control inputs \mathbf{v} instead of the real control inputs \mathbf{u} .

As performance inputs, the symmetric gust input d_{gust} , the control input disturbance \mathbf{d}_u and the measurement noise \mathbf{d}_y are collected in $\mathbf{d} = [d_{gust} \ \mathbf{d}_u^T \ \mathbf{d}_y^T]^T$. The corresponding input weights \mathbf{W}_{d_u} and \mathbf{W}_{d_y} are set to a constant gain of 0.1 for each signal.

The H_∞ optimal controller \mathbf{K} is then synthesized by solving two Riccati equations using the Robust Control Toolbox of Matlab [24], [25], [26]. The actual GLA controller

$$\mathbf{K}_{GLA} = \tilde{\mathbf{T}}_{uv} \mathbf{K} \quad (16)$$

is finally obtained by multiplying the virtual control outputs of \mathbf{K} with the augmented control allocation matrix $\tilde{\mathbf{T}}_{uv}$.

D. Tuning Setup

In order to obtain a highly performant GLA system, it needs to be tuned. To that end, closed-loop time domain simulations are performed for a “1-cos” gust excitation with a gust gradient distance of 350 ft (see also [27], [28]). The increments of the resulting loads and control surface deflections are then optimized by adjusting the weighting filter gains \mathbf{c}_z and \mathbf{c}_v . After all, the optimization setup is defined as

$$\underset{\mathbf{c}_v, \mathbf{c}_z}{\text{minimize}} \quad \max(\bar{M}_{bending}, \bar{M}_{torsion}) \quad (17)$$

$$\text{subject to} \quad |u_i| \leq 25^\circ, i = 1, \dots, 10, \quad (18)$$

where $\bar{M}_{bending}$ and $\bar{M}_{torsion}$ are the normalized wing root bending respectively torsional moment increments. Eventually, the optimization is performed in MOPS [29] using an extended version of the pattern search algorithm proposed in [30].

E. Results

To assess the performance of the proposed method, three different control approaches for GLA are compared. In the first approach (“Chebyshev”), the trailing edge flaps are allocated using Chebyshev polynomials of the first kind.

Using two virtual control inputs v_1 and v_2 , a single flap deflection is then described by

$$u_i = v_1 + \frac{n_{flap} - i}{n_{flap} - 1} v_2, i = 1, \dots, n_{flap}, \quad (19)$$

where the number of trailing edge flaps $n_{flap} = 9$. Note that the control input of the elevators is handled separately here as well (see also Section IV-B). In the second control approach (“Balanced”) the control allocation matrix determined in Section IV-B is used, which is based on the method proposed above. And for the third approach (“All Flaps”), the allocation matrix $\tilde{\mathbf{T}}_{uv} = \mathbf{I}_{n_u}$, meaning that all flaps are directly controlled and no allocation is applied.

The resulting GLA performance, quantified by the achieved reduction of the peak loads, is good for all three control approaches as it is shown in Figure 7. Furthermore,



Fig. 7. Comparison of achieved load reduction performance.

it can be seen that the “Balanced” approach outperforms the “Chebyshev” approach by 2.6 percentage points. This means that the proposed allocation method allows a considerably increased GLA performance by directly taking into account the control objectives. In addition to that, the loads reduction is only marginally better using the controller designed without any control allocation. As this approach (“All Flaps”) is considered as an upper bound on the achievable GLA performance, the “Balanced” approach is already close to this upper bound, but requires a clearly lower flap deflections as depicted in Figure 8.

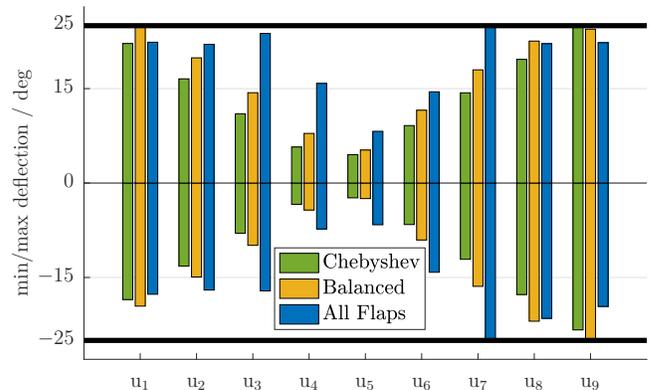


Fig. 8. Comparison of minimum and maximum trailing edge flap deflections.

From a practical point of view, also numerical stability plays an important role for controller design. For many

synthesis methods, numerical issues arise when the size of the control problem is too big. Hence, it is usually of advantage to keep the number of states, inputs and outputs at a minimum in order to be able to find appropriate solutions for controller candidates and tune them accordingly. For the example given here, this can also be seen in Table I, where an increased number of virtual control inputs n_v leads to an increased computational effort for controller synthesis and tuning. The reason for this is that weighting filters are assigned to each virtual control input, adding additional states and tuning parameters to the generalized plant. Note that the given computation times have to be seen as relative measures as controller design takes place under simplified assumptions. Nevertheless, the size of the control problem does not only affect computational effort but also convergence of the optimization. Thus, a control allocation system which keeps performance losses at a minimum offers great practical benefits.

	Chebyshev	Balanced	All Flaps
n_v (incl. elevators)	3	3	10
order of \mathbf{P}	54	54	68
synthesis time / ms	53.8	56.4	80.9
tuning time / min	10.2	9.9	35.5

TABLE I

COMPARISON OF CONTROL PROBLEM SIZE AND COMPUTATION TIMES

V. CONCLUSIONS

In this paper, the linear control allocation problem is considered in terms of input directions. A novel method is presented that allows identifying principal control input directions for predefined control objectives. For the design and tuning of the control allocation matrix, a meaningful guidance is given by the computed HSVs and singular values. The presented allocation method can be applied to systems with a large number of control inputs and may also be used for sensor allocation. The effectiveness of the proposed method is evaluated by designing a GLA system for a flexible aircraft with distributed flaps. The achieved load reduction is considerably higher than using Chebyshev polynomials for control allocation. Furthermore, a GLA controller which is designed without any control allocation performs only marginally better while requiring an increased actuator usage. Hence, the proposed allocation method shows high potential by greatly simplifying controller design and tuning while still taking into account the overall control objective.

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