

## Lecture 3: Youla Parameterization

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**Disclaimer:** *These notes have not been subjected to the usual scrutiny reserved for formal publications. They were developed when the author was a postdoc in Prof. Na Li's group at Harvard. Any typos should be sent to zhengy@eng.ucsd.edu.*

**Learning goals:**

1. Youla parameterization for open-loop stable plants;
2. Disturbance feedback implementation and internal model principle;
3. Youla parameterization in finite-time horizon;
4. Doubly-coprime factorization and Youla
5. Equivalence with System-level synthesis, and input-output parameterization.

## 1 Recap

Consider a linear time-invariant system

$$\begin{aligned} \dot{x} &= Ax + B_2u + \delta_x, \\ y &= C_2x + \delta_y, \end{aligned} \tag{1}$$

and a dynamic output feedback controller  $\mathbf{u} = \mathbf{K}\mathbf{y}$ , where  $\mathbf{K}$  has a state-space realization

$$\begin{aligned} \dot{\xi} &= A_k\xi + B_k y, \\ u &= C_k\xi + D_k y, \end{aligned} \tag{2}$$

with  $\xi \in \mathbb{R}^{n_k}$  being the internal state of controller  $\mathbf{K}$ . We define the set of internally stabilizing controllers as

$$\mathcal{C}_{\text{stab}} := \{\mathbf{K} \mid \mathbf{K} \text{ internally stabilizes } \mathbf{P}\},$$

and its state-space characterization is

$$\mathcal{C}_{\text{stab}} = \left\{ \mathbf{K} \mid \hat{A} := \begin{bmatrix} A + B_2 D_k C_2 & B_2 C_k \\ B_k C_2 & A_k \end{bmatrix} \text{ is stable} \right\},$$

where  $\mathbf{K} = C_k(zI - A_k)^{-1}B_k + D_k$ . We have introduced external transfer matrix characterizations of internal stability, and the corresponding system-level parameterization [9] and input-output parameterization [5] for  $\mathcal{C}_{\text{stab}}$ .

In this lecture, we present the classical Youla parameterization for  $\mathcal{C}_{\text{stab}}$  [10], as well as a useful disturbance-based implementation. We also present an explicit equivalence among Youla, system-level, and input-output parameterizations [11].

## 2 Youla parameterization for open-loop stable plants

When the plant is open-loop stable, *i.e.*,  $A$  is stable, then the Youla parameterization has a simple form.

**Theorem 1.** *Suppose the plant is open-loop stable. Then, the set of all stabilizing controllers can be represented as*

$$\mathcal{C}_{stab} = \{\mathbf{K} = \mathbf{Q}(I + \mathbf{G}\mathbf{Q})^{-1} \mid \mathbf{Q} \in \mathcal{RH}_\infty\}, \quad (3)$$

where  $\mathbf{G} = C_2(sI - A)^{-1}B_2$ .

*Proof.*  $\Rightarrow$ : Suppose  $\mathbf{K}_0 \in \mathcal{C}_{stab}$ . Then, we have  $\mathbf{Q}_0 := \mathbf{K}_0(I - \mathbf{G}\mathbf{K}_0)^{-1} \in \mathcal{RH}_\infty$  (which is the closed-loop response from  $\delta_y$  to  $\mathbf{u}$ ). It can be verified that  $\mathbf{K}_0$  can be expressed as follows

$$\mathbf{Q}_0(I + \mathbf{G}\mathbf{Q}_0)^{-1} = \mathbf{K}_0(I - \mathbf{G}\mathbf{K}_0)^{-1}(I + \mathbf{G}\mathbf{K}_0(I - \mathbf{G}\mathbf{K}_0)^{-1})^{-1} = \mathbf{K}_0.$$

$\Leftarrow$ : Suppose  $\mathbf{Q} \in \mathcal{RH}_\infty$ , and define  $\mathbf{K} = \mathbf{Q}(I + \mathbf{G}\mathbf{Q})^{-1}$ . We verify this controller internally stabilizes the plant. Since the plant is open-loop stable, we only need to check the closed-loop response from  $\delta_y$  to  $\mathbf{u}$  is stable.

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{u} &= \mathbf{K}(I - \mathbf{G}\mathbf{K})^{-1}\delta_y \\ &= \mathbf{Q}(I + \mathbf{G}\mathbf{Q})^{-1}(I - \mathbf{G}\mathbf{Q}(I + \mathbf{G}\mathbf{Q})^{-1})^{-1}\delta_y \\ &= \mathbf{Q}\delta_y. \end{aligned}$$

This completes the proof.  $\square$

From the proof above, it is easy to see that the Youla parameter  $\mathbf{Q}$  is exactly the same as the closed-loop response from  $\delta_y$  to  $\mathbf{u}$ . This is identical to the input-output parameterization [5].

### 2.1 Disturbance feedback implementation

The controller  $\mathbf{K} = \mathbf{Q}(I + \mathbf{G}\mathbf{Q})^{-1}$  can be implemented in a disturbance-based form (see Figure 1 for illustration):

$$\begin{aligned} \beta &= \mathbf{y} - \mathbf{G}\mathbf{u}, \\ \mathbf{u} &= \mathbf{Q}\beta. \end{aligned} \quad (4)$$

Recall that there is measurement noise in the plant dynamics, *i.e.*,  $\mathbf{y} = \mathbf{G}\mathbf{u} + \delta_y$ . Thus, if there is no noise in the control input, then in (4), we have  $\beta = \delta_y$ , and

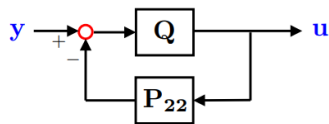
$$\mathbf{u} = \mathbf{Q}\delta_y,$$

which is a disturbance feedback implementation. Note that  $\delta_y$  is referred to as “nature’s  $y$ ” in [8]. Especially, in the discrete time, when the plant  $\mathbf{G}$  is strictly proper and approximated by a finite impulse response with length  $p$  and the Youla parameter is approximated by a finite impulse response with length  $q$ , *i.e.*,

$$\mathbf{G} = \sum_{k=1}^p G_k \frac{1}{z^k}, \quad \mathbf{Q} = \sum_{k=0}^q Q_k \frac{1}{z^k},$$

then (4) can be implemented as

$$\begin{aligned} \beta_t &= y_t - \sum_{k=1}^p G_k u_{t-k}, \\ u_t &= \sum_{k=0}^q Q_k \beta_{t-k}. \end{aligned}$$

Figure 1: Internal model principle, where  $\mathbf{P}_{22} := \mathbf{G}$ .

This disturbance-based implementation is explicitly used in [8] for regret analysis.

**Internal model principle:** In Fig. 1, we note that the controller  $\mathbf{K}$  explicitly incorporates the plant dynamics  $\mathbf{G}$ , which is known as the internal model principle [4] applied in Youla parameterization. The following paragraph is quoted from [2]: “*The concept of internal models plays a crucial role in regulator problems. The internal model principle can intuitively be expressed as: ‘Any good regulator must create a model of the dynamic structure of the environment in the closed loop system’*”.

### 3 Youla parameterization in finite-time horizon

In this section, we discuss the Youla parameterization in the finite-time horizon. The disturbance-based parameterization allows us to get a convex characterization of time-varying feedback policies with constraints on state and inputs. For simplicity, we consider state feedback policies in this section. The presentation of this section is based on [6].

Consider the following discrete-time LTI system:

$$x_{t+1} = Ax_t + Bu_t + w_t, \quad (5)$$

where  $x_t \in \mathbb{R}^n$  is the system state,  $u_t \in \mathbb{R}^m$  is the control input, and  $w \in \mathbb{R}^n$  is the disturbance at the current time instant. The system is subject to mixed constraints on the state and input:

$$\mathcal{Z} := \{(x, u) \in \mathbb{R}^n \times \mathbb{R}^m \mid Cx + Du \leq b\}, \quad (6)$$

where the matrices  $C \in \mathbb{R}^{s \times n}$ ,  $D \in \mathbb{R}^{s \times m}$  and the vector  $b \in \mathbb{R}^s$ . It is assumed that  $Z$  is bounded and contains the origin in its interior. A primary design goal is to guarantee that the state and input of the closed-loop system remain in  $\mathcal{Z}$  for all time and for all allowable disturbance sequences. Finally, a target/terminal constraint set  $X_f$  is given by

$$X_f := \{x \in \mathbb{R}^n \mid Yx \leq z\}, \quad (7)$$

where the matrix  $Y \in \mathbb{R}^{r \times n}$  and the vector  $z \in \mathbb{R}^r$ . It is assumed that  $X_f$  is bounded and contains the origin in its interior.

In the sequel, predictions of the system’s evolution over a finite control/planning horizon will be used to define a number of suitable control policies. Let the length  $N$  of this planning horizon be a positive integer and define stacked versions of the predicted input, state and disturbance vectors  $u \in \mathbb{R}^{mN}$ ,  $x \in \mathbb{R}^{n(N+1)}$  and  $w \in \mathbb{R}^{nN}$ , respectively, as

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{x} &:= [x_0^\top, \dots, x_N^\top]^\top, \\ \mathbf{u} &:= [u_0^\top, \dots, u_{N-1}^\top]^\top, \\ \mathbf{w} &:= [w_0^\top, \dots, w_{N-1}^\top]^\top, \end{aligned}$$

where  $x_0 = x$  denotes the current measured value of the state. Finally, let the set  $\mathcal{W} := W \times \dots \times W$ , so that  $\mathbf{w} \in \mathcal{W}$ .

Then, the system can be compactly written as

$$\mathbf{x} = \mathbf{A}\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{B}\mathbf{u} + \mathbf{E}\mathbf{w},$$

where

$$\mathbf{A} = \begin{bmatrix} I & 0 & 0 & \dots & 0 \\ A & 0 & 0 & \dots & 0 \\ 0 & A & 0 & \dots & 0 \\ \vdots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots & \vdots \\ 0 & \dots & 0 & A & 0 \end{bmatrix}, \quad \mathbf{B} = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 0 & \dots & 0 \\ B & 0 & \dots & 0 \\ 0 & B & \dots & 0 \\ \vdots & \ddots & \ddots & \vdots \\ 0 & \dots & 0 & B \end{bmatrix}, \quad \mathbf{E} = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 0 & \dots & 0 \\ I & 0 & \dots & 0 \\ 0 & I & \dots & 0 \\ \vdots & \ddots & \ddots & \vdots \\ 0 & \dots & 0 & I \end{bmatrix}.$$

**State feedback parameterization:** One natural approach to controlling the system in (5), while ensuring the satisfaction of the constraints, is to search over the set of time-varying affine state feedback control policies with knowledge of prior states:

$$u_t = \sum_{i=0}^t L_{t,i} x_i + g_t, \quad t = 0, \dots, N-1, \quad (8)$$

where each  $L_{t,i} \in \mathbb{R}^{m \times n}$  and  $g_t \in \mathbb{R}^m$ . For notational convenience, we also define the block lower triangular matrix  $\mathbf{L} \in \mathbb{R}^{mN \times n(N+1)}$  and stacked vector  $\mathbf{g} \in \mathbb{R}^{mN}$  as

$$\mathbf{L} = \begin{bmatrix} L_{0,0} & 0 & \dots & 0 \\ \vdots & \ddots & \ddots & \vdots \\ L_{N_1,0} & \dots & L_{N_1,N-1} & 0 \end{bmatrix}, \quad \mathbf{g} = \begin{bmatrix} g_0 \\ g_1 \\ \vdots \\ g_{N-1} \end{bmatrix}. \quad (9)$$

Then, the input sequence can be written as

$$\mathbf{u} = \mathbf{L}\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{g}.$$

For a given initial state  $x$ , we say that the pair  $(\mathbf{L}, \mathbf{g})$  is admissible if the control policy (8) guarantees that for all allowable disturbance sequences of length  $N$ , the constraints (6) are satisfied over the horizon  $t = 0, \dots, N-1$  and that the state is in the target set (7) at the end of the horizon. Precisely, the set of admissible  $(\mathbf{L}, \mathbf{g})$  is defined as

$$\Pi_N^{\text{sf}}(x) := \left\{ (\mathbf{L}, \mathbf{g}) \left| \begin{array}{l} (\mathbf{L}, \mathbf{g}) \text{ satisfy (9), } x_0 = x, \\ x_{t+1} = Ax_t + Bu_t + w_t \\ u_t = \sum_{i=0}^t L_{t,i} x_i + g_t \\ (x_t, u_t) \in Z, x_N \in X_f \\ t = 0, \dots, N-1, \forall \mathbf{w} \in \mathcal{W} \end{array} \right. \right\}. \quad (10)$$

**Proposition 1** ([6]). *The set of admissible affine state feedback parameters  $\Pi_N^{\text{sf}}(x)$  is non-convex.*

**Disturbance feedback parameterization:** An alternative to (8) is to parameterize the control policy as an affine function of the sequence of past disturbances, so that

$$u_t = \sum_{i=0}^{t-1} M_{t,i} w_i + v_t, \quad t = 0, \dots, N-1 \quad (11)$$

where each  $M_{t,i} \in \mathbb{R}^{m \times n}$  and  $v_t \in \mathbb{R}^m$ . It should be noted that, since full state feedback is assumed, the past disturbance sequence is easily calculated as the difference between the predicted and actual states at each step, i.e.

$$w_{t-1} = x_t - Ax_{t-1} - Bu_{t-1}.$$

For notational convenience, we define the vector  $\mathbf{v} \in \mathbf{R}^{mN}$  and the strictly block lower triangular matrix  $\mathbf{M} \in \mathbb{R}^{mN \times nN}$  such that

$$\mathbf{M} = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & \dots & \dots & 0 \\ M_{1,0} & 0 & \dots & 0 \\ \vdots & \ddots & \ddots & \vdots \\ M_{N-1,0} & \dots & M_{N-1,N-2} & 0 \end{bmatrix}, \mathbf{v} = \begin{bmatrix} v_0 \\ v_1 \\ \vdots \\ v_{N-1} \end{bmatrix}. \quad (12)$$

Then, the input sequence can be written as

$$\mathbf{u} = \mathbf{M}\mathbf{w} + \mathbf{v}.$$

In a manner similar to (10), we define the set of admissible  $(\mathbf{M}, \mathbf{v})$  as

$$\Pi_N^{\text{df}}(x) := \left\{ (\mathbf{M}, \mathbf{v}) \left| \begin{array}{l} (\mathbf{M}, \mathbf{v}) \text{ satisfy (12), } x_0 = x, \\ x_{t+1} = Ax_t + Bu_t + w_t \\ u_t = \sum_{i=0}^{t-1} M_{t,i}w_i + v_t \\ (x_t, u_t) \in Z, x_N \in X_f \\ t = 0, \dots, N-1, \forall \mathbf{w} \in \mathcal{W} \end{array} \right. \right\}. \quad (13)$$

It can be checked that one can find matrices  $F \in \mathbb{R}^{l \times mN}$ ,  $G \in \mathbb{R}^{l \times nN}$ ,  $H \in \mathbb{R}^{l \times n}$  and a vector  $c \in \mathbb{R}^s$ , where  $l := sN + r$  (see the Appendix of [6]), such that the expression for  $\Pi_N^{\text{df}}(x)$  can be rewritten more compactly as

$$\Pi_N^{\text{df}}(x) := \left\{ (\mathbf{M}, \mathbf{v}) \left| \begin{array}{l} (\mathbf{M}, \mathbf{v}) \text{ satisfy (12)} \\ F\mathbf{v} + (F\mathbf{M} + G)\mathbf{w} \leq c + Hx, \\ \forall \mathbf{w} \in \mathcal{W} \end{array} \right. \right\}.$$

We note that this is easily seen from the fact that under the policy (11), the state and input sequences can be written as

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{x} &= (I - \mathbf{A})^{-1}(\mathbf{B}\mathbf{M} + \mathbf{E})\mathbf{w} + (I - \mathbf{A})^{-1}\mathbf{B}\mathbf{v}, \\ \mathbf{u} &= \mathbf{M}\mathbf{w} + \mathbf{v}. \end{aligned} \quad (14)$$

Then it is easy to see the following result.

**Proposition 2.** *The set of admissible affine disturbance feedback parameters  $\Pi_N^{\text{df}}(x)$  is convex.*

Also, we have the following equivalence.

**Theorem 2** ([6]). *For any admissible  $(\mathbf{L}, \mathbf{g})$ , an admissible  $(\mathbf{M}, \mathbf{v})$  can be found that yields the same state and input sequence for all allowable disturbance sequences, and vice-versa.*

*Proof.*  $\Rightarrow$  Given  $(\mathbf{L}, \mathbf{g})$ , we find  $(\mathbf{M}, \mathbf{v})$  that yields the same state and input sequence. First, we have

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{x} &= \mathbf{A}\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{B}(\mathbf{L}\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{g}) + \mathbf{E}\mathbf{w} \\ \Rightarrow \mathbf{x} &= (I - \mathbf{A} - \mathbf{B}\mathbf{L})^{-1}\mathbf{E}\mathbf{w} + (I - \mathbf{A} - \mathbf{B}\mathbf{L})^{-1}\mathbf{B}\mathbf{g} \\ \Rightarrow \mathbf{u} &= \mathbf{L}(I - \mathbf{A} - \mathbf{B}\mathbf{L})^{-1}\mathbf{E}\mathbf{w} + \mathbf{L}(I - \mathbf{A} - \mathbf{B}\mathbf{L})^{-1}\mathbf{B}\mathbf{g} + \mathbf{g} \end{aligned}$$

Let us define

$$\mathbf{M} = \mathbf{L}(\mathbf{I} - \mathbf{A} - \mathbf{BL})^{-1}\mathbf{E}, \quad \mathbf{v} = \mathbf{L}(\mathbf{I} - \mathbf{A} - \mathbf{BL})^{-1}\mathbf{Bg} + \mathbf{g},$$

then, the closed-loop system with  $(\mathbf{M}, \mathbf{v})$  yields the same state and input sequence. It is routinely to show that  $(\mathbf{M}, \mathbf{v})$  has the same structure in (12).

$\Leftarrow$ : Almost similar; see [6] for details.  $\square$

We note that the disturbance feedback implementation has recently been employed in online learning with adversarial disturbances in [1].

## 4 Doubly co-prime factorization and Youla parameterization

Here, we introduce the Youla parameterization for general plants, which is based on a doubly coprime factorization.

**Definition 1.** A collection of stable transfer matrices,  $\mathbf{U}_l, \mathbf{V}_l, \mathbf{N}_l, \mathbf{M}_l, \mathbf{U}_r, \mathbf{V}_r, \mathbf{N}_r, \mathbf{M}_r \in \mathcal{RH}_\infty$  is called a doubly-coprime factorization of  $\mathbf{G}$  if  $\mathbf{G} = \mathbf{N}_r\mathbf{M}_r^{-1} = \mathbf{M}_l^{-1}\mathbf{N}_l$  and

$$\begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{U}_l & -\mathbf{V}_l \\ -\mathbf{N}_l & \mathbf{M}_l \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{M}_r & \mathbf{V}_r \\ \mathbf{N}_r & \mathbf{U}_r \end{bmatrix} = \mathbf{I}.$$

Such doubly-coprime factorization can always be computed if the state-space realization of  $\mathbf{G}$  is stabilizable and detectable [7]. We have the following equivalence [10]

$$\mathcal{C}_{\text{stab}} = \{\mathbf{K} = (\mathbf{V}_r - \mathbf{M}_r\mathbf{Q})(\mathbf{U}_r - \mathbf{N}_r\mathbf{Q})^{-1} \mid \mathbf{Q} \in \mathcal{RH}_\infty\}, \quad (15)$$

where  $\mathbf{Q}$  is denoted as the Youla parameter. Note that the Youla parameter  $\mathbf{Q}$  can be freely chosen in  $\mathcal{RH}_\infty$ . We refer the interested reader to [3, 10, 12] for more details on the Youla parameterization. Note that it is not difficult to derive a convex reformulation of the original optimal control problem in terms of the Youla parameter: Using the change of variables  $\mathbf{K} = (\mathbf{V}_r - \mathbf{M}_r\mathbf{Q})(\mathbf{U}_r - \mathbf{N}_r\mathbf{Q})^{-1}$ , one can derive

$$f(\mathbf{P}, \mathbf{K}) = \mathbf{T}_{11} + \mathbf{T}_{12}\mathbf{Q}\mathbf{T}_{21},$$

where  $\mathbf{T}_{11} = \mathbf{P}_{11} + \mathbf{P}_{12}\mathbf{V}_r\mathbf{M}_l\mathbf{P}_{21}$ ,  $\mathbf{T}_{12} = -\mathbf{P}_{12}\mathbf{M}_r$ , and  $\mathbf{T}_{21} = \mathbf{M}_l\mathbf{P}_{21}$ . Consequently, the optimal control problem can be equivalently reformulated in terms of the Youla parameter as

$$\begin{aligned} \min_{\mathbf{Q}} \quad & \|\mathbf{T}_{11} + \mathbf{T}_{12}\mathbf{Q}\mathbf{T}_{21}\| \\ \text{subject to} \quad & \mathbf{Q} \in \mathcal{RH}_\infty. \end{aligned} \quad (16)$$

**Computation of doubly-coprime factorization:** It is numerically easy to find a doubly coprime factorization if the plant is stabilizable and detectable [12, Theorem 5.9].

**Theorem 3.** Suppose  $\mathbf{G}(s)$  is a proper real-rational matrix and

$$\mathbf{G} = \left[ \begin{array}{c|c} A & B \\ \hline C & D \end{array} \right],$$

is a stabilizable and detectable realization. Let  $F$  and  $L$  be such that  $A + BF$  and  $A + LC$  are both stable, and a doubly co-prime factorization of  $\mathbf{G}$  is as follows.

$$\begin{aligned} \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{M}_r & \mathbf{V}_r \\ \mathbf{N}_r & \mathbf{U}_r \end{bmatrix} &= \left[ \begin{array}{c|cc} A + BF & B & L \\ \hline F & I & 0 \\ C + DF & D & I \end{array} \right], \\ \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{U}_l & -\mathbf{V}_l \\ -\mathbf{N}_l & \mathbf{M}_l \end{bmatrix} &= \left[ \begin{array}{c|cc} A + LC & -(B + LD) & L \\ \hline F & I & 0 \\ C & -D & I \end{array} \right], \end{aligned} \quad (17)$$

*Proof.* It is based on directly verification. See [7] for details.  $\square$

**Feedback control interpretation:** The coprime factorization of a transfer matrix can be given a feedback control interpretation. For example, right coprime factorization comes out naturally from changing the control variable by a state feedback. Consider the state-space model

$$\begin{aligned} \dot{x} &= Ax + Bu, \\ y &= Cx + Du. \end{aligned}$$

Next, introduce a state feedback and change the variable

$$v := u - Fx$$

where  $F$  is such that  $A + BF$  is stable. Then, we get

$$\begin{aligned} \dot{x} &= (A + BF)x + Bv, \\ u &= Fx + v \\ y &= (C + DF)x + Dv. \end{aligned}$$

From these equations, the transfer matrix from  $v$  to  $u$  is

$$\mathbf{M}_r(s) = \left[ \begin{array}{c|c} A + BF & B \\ \hline F & I \end{array} \right],$$

and that from  $v$  to  $y$  is

$$\mathbf{N}_r(s) = \left[ \begin{array}{c|c} A + BF & B \\ \hline C + DF & D \end{array} \right].$$

Therefore, we have

$$\mathbf{u} = \mathbf{M}_r \mathbf{v}, \quad \mathbf{y} = \mathbf{N}_r \mathbf{v},$$

so that  $\mathbf{y} = \mathbf{N}_r \mathbf{M}_r^{-1} \mathbf{u}$ , i.e.,  $\mathbf{G} = \mathbf{N}_r \mathbf{M}_r^{-1}$ .

## 5 Equivalence with SLP and IOP

An explicit equivalence among Youla, the SLP, and the IOP has been recently revealed in [11].

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