

Methodical Approach for Analyzing Process Parameters and Optimizing Boundary Conditions in Multi-Axis Robot Programs

Methodischer Ansatz zur Analyse von Prozessparametern und Optimierung von Randbedingungen in Multi-Achs-Roboterprogrammen

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Supervised by	Prof. Dr.-Ing. Michael Zäh Institute for Machine Tools and Industrial Management (iwb)
Submitted by	Jan Nalivaika Lerchenauerstrasse 10 80809 Munich
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Scope of Work

Title of the Master's Thesis:

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Methodischer Ansatz zur Analyse von Prozessparametern und Optimierung von Randbedingungen in Multi-Achs-Roboterprogrammen

Author: Jan Nalivaika

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Motivation:

Computer-aided manufacturing (CAM) is used to automatically generate tool paths for computer numerically controlled machines. The CAM software considers the models of the raw and finished parts, the constraints of the machine, the tools, and the manufacturing technology. Together with user-configurable parameters, tool paths for 3-axis, 5-axis, and robot-based machine tools are generated. The growing demand for flexibility in machine tools, such as the use of multiple manufacturing technologies in one machine or automated loading and unloading, has led to many machine tools being equipped with additional mechanical axes. Examples include robots mounted on linear axes and rotary-tilt tables. The tool paths created in CAM programs are usually defined by five degrees of freedom. The first three are the translational axes X, Y, and Z. The tilting and inclining of the tool are defined by the A- and B-axes. Occasionally, an additional rotation of the tool (C-axis) around the Z-axis (e.g., for dragging a swivel knife) is defined. Machines with more degrees of freedom than those limited by the toolpath often need user-defined constraints. These constraints are necessary to fully specify the movements of the machine axes. An example is the alignment of a part using the rotary-tilt table so that the Z-axis of the tool always points in the direction of gravity. This is helpful in processes like fused deposition modeling (FDM) and wire arc additive manufacturing (WAAM). It is common practice to set the user-defined constraints based on experience. The definition of these constraints does not affect the relative tool path generated by the CAM software. A preliminary literature review indicates that the configuration of

these degrees of freedom has an impact on the energy demand and stability of the process. As such, a methodical approach to optimize these constraints in terms of efficiency, speed, and energy demand of the machine is required. Currently, no literature provides a comprehensive analysis or methodology regarding this global optimization problem.

Objective:

This work aims to attain a methodical approach that analyzes a set of constraints and evaluates the influence of those constraints on a set of defined process variables. It will focus on a 6-axis robot with a rotary-tilt table, whereby the results should also be transferable to other machines. Furthermore, the experiments and validations will be limited to the manufacturing processes of WAAM and milling. First, the influence of the constraints on relevant process variables (energy demand, joint turnover, speed and acceleration peaks, and total joint movements) in a manufacturing process such as WAAM will be assessed. Subsequently, a process evaluation will be elaborated in the CAM software, by means of which the process quality can be determined. Depending on the respective process variables, approximation or machine learning methods will be investigated for the process evaluation. The process quality as a one-dimensional variable will be determined by weighting the process variables. Subsequently, a method for the optimization of the constraints will be elaborated. This task corresponds to an optimization problem in which the process quality will be maximized by selecting suitable constraints.

Procedure and working method:

The following work packages are conducted within this thesis:

- Literature research
- Familiarization with WAAM, milling machines, and CAM software
- Selection of suitable process parameters
- Elaboration of the proposed method in a suitable programming language
- Verification and validation of the elaborated method
- Documentation of the work

Agreement:

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Michael F. Zäh

B.Sc.
Jan Nalivaika

Abstract

Place your abstract here.

Zusammenfassung

Hier könnte Ihre Kurzzusammenfassung stehen.ROS

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List of Abbreviations

ROS Robot Operating System

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Motivation

In the age of "Industrie 4.0", advanced technologies like digital twins, have greatly transformed industrial manufacturing [1]. A considerable amount of data can be gathered from various processes, like milling or 3D printing. By analyzing this data, it is possible to find new and optimized methods for efficient manufacturing [2]. By doing so, a significant amount of resources, like time and money, can be saved while at the same time increasing the quality of the produced product [3, 4].

Computer-Aided Manufacturing (CAM) has been introduced as a crucial tool to improve productivity and accuracy in creating customized products [5]. CAM systems automate and optimize tasks such as machining, welding, and assembly [6]. One of the key strengths of CAM lies in its precision and consistency, ensuring that intricate components are produced with minimal error. Furthermore, CAM systems contribute to increased efficiency by minimizing material waste and reducing production time [7]. These capabilities play a significant role in achieving a carbon-neutral production process [8]. One of the most important areas of CAM is the calculation of the tool path for computer numerical control (CNC) machines as well as the movement and behavior of multi-axis industrial robots [9].

Manufacturing machines are the backbone of modern industrial processes [10]. These machines encompass a wide range of equipment, from CNC machining centers to 3D printers and automated assembly lines. Their primary ability lies in precision and efficiency. CNC machines, for instance, can repeatedly produce intricate parts with high accuracy, reducing human error and ensuring consistency [11].

Industrial robots are a dominant part in the area of manufacturing as they can perform multi-axis movements that are needed to fulfill the customers wishes for individualized products [12]. They are cheaper to acquire and more flexible compared to CNC milling machines, but have their own set of disadvantages [13]. One of the most important advantages is its wide adaptability. They allow for quick reconfiguration to produce different components or products, promoting flexibility in manufacturing [14]. Further, advancements in robotics

and artificial intelligence (AI) have broadened their capabilities, enabling tasks that were once deemed too complex or hazardous for humans [15].

Achieving efficiency and sustainability in the current fast-changing environment requires a thorough analysis of the interdependent relationships between the manufactured part, process parameters, and boundary conditions that govern multi-axis robot programs [9, 16]. As the companies that work with industrial robots can place a strong emphasis on energy reduction, cycle-time minimization, or precision, optimizing these parameters is essential. CAM enables the simulation of the planned process, thus adapting any boundary conditions to fit the selected goals [9, 17–19]. This thesis is focused on a methodical approach for analyzing process parameters and optimizing boundary conditions in multi-axis robot programs.

1.2 Problem Formulation

Manufacturing systems that incorporate redundant degrees of freedom (DoF) offer significant advantages in terms of flexibility and adaptability [20]. One example of a system with redundancy is a 6-DoF industrial robot with a rotary tilt table, which brings the system to eight DoF. However, these systems also present various conflict points that need to be carefully managed to ensure optimal performance [21, 22].

One of the critical challenges in manufacturing systems with redundant DoF is singularity avoidance [22]. Singularities occur when the robot manipulator loses control or achieves limited mobility due to certain configurations [23]. These configurations result in the loss of a DoF or make the system highly sensitive to small changes, leading to unstable or unpredictable behavior [24, 25]. Limiting the possible positions by adding artificial constraints can help to avoid this problem [26].

One significant aspect of manufacturing systems with redundant DoF is joint acceleration and jerk, which is the rate of change of acceleration. The robot must allocate accelerations effectively among its joints to achieve smooth and coordinated motion. Failure to do so can result in jerky or erratic movements, which not only compromise precision but also impact the efficiency of the manufacturing process [27]. Rapid changes in acceleration and jerk can cause mechanical stress, decrease system lifespan, and compromise precision. Additionally, the joints can be limited in their ability to keep up with the required speed due to limitations in power [28]. Therefore, advanced control algorithms and motion planning techniques are necessary to optimize joint motion and minimize conflicts in joint acceleration and jerk [27, 29].

Extension control is another critical aspect that needs to be addressed in systems with redundant DoF. Redundant DoF can provide additional extension capabilities to industrial robots, allowing them to reach difficult-to-access areas [27]. However, managing and controlling the extension can be challenging, particularly when precise positioning or maintaining stability is required [30]. The robot must accurately determine the appropriate position for each joint

to avoid unnecessary overextension and collisions with the surrounding environment. The robot pose, which is the combination of position and orientation in three-dimensional space, also has a significant effect on robot stiffness [31]. An increased number of joints can introduce more play and reduce overall system stiffness. This can affect precision, accuracy and stability. Robot pose and its DoF must be carefully considered to ensure the desired level of system rigidity [22, 32].

Precision is a crucial element in manufacturing systems, closely tied to its stiffness. The robot needs to have precise control over the movement of each joint to achieve the desired accuracy of position in the manufacturing process. Nevertheless, achieving and maintaining high accuracy and repeatability can be difficult due to the increased complexity and sensitivity to various factors [27]. Frequent changes in direction in the joints are another factor that affects precision. Due to the serial kinematics of industrial robots, the present play in the motor joints can add up the inaccuracies and impede the manufacturing process [33, 34]. Mechanical stress, decreased precision, and increased energy consumption can result from abrupt and frequent direction changes [35].

Furthermore, effectively coordinating the movement of multiple joints to execute rapid direction changes can prove to be a difficult and computationally intensive task [36]. Poor direction changes can result in prolonged and unnecessary movement times, ultimately hampering the overall productivity of the manufacturing process [37]. Minimizing production time is crucial for improving efficiency and throughput. Optimal path planning, motion optimization, and parallel processing techniques can be employed to reduce non-value adding movements while leveraging redundant DoF effectively [21].

Energy use is also a significant concern in manufacturing systems employing redundant DoF [38]. The presence of additional joints and their non-optimal usage can require more power to operate, potentially leading to increased energy consumption. As energy efficiency becomes a priority in modern manufacturing, efficient energy management strategies are necessary to mitigate the increased power demand [21, 39].

While redundant DoF may introduce potential conflicts and require special attention, they can also significantly enhance performance in manufacturing systems [40]. The added DoFs increase flexibility and adaptability, enabling the robot to carry out complex tasks more efficiently. Redundancy enables multiple approaches to achieve a desired end-effector position or orientation. By effectively utilizing the surplus of DoF, manufacturing systems can enhance their performance, increase efficiency, and exhibit greater flexibility in handling diverse tasks [21].

Currently, there is no integrated system that can evaluate a computed tool path based on the chosen objective, such as minimizing movement or maximizing stiffness, in conjunction with available CAM systems. Additionally, there is no option to provide an optimal or near-optimal solution for defining the necessary constraints for a specific goal like for example, minimizing energy usage.

1.3 Objective

The definition of the redundant constraints, mentioned in chapter 1.2, does not affect the relative tool path as generated by the CAM software. As such, a methodical approach to optimize these constraints without altering the toolpath in terms of efficiency, speed, and energy demand of the machine is required. Currently, no literature provides a comprehensive analysis or methodology regarding this global optimization problem. This work aims to attain a methodical approach that analyzes a set of constraints and evaluates the influence of those constraints on a set of defined process variables. This work is focused on a 6-axis robot with a rotary-tilt table, whereby the results should also be transferable to other machines. Furthermore, the experiments and validations will be limited to the manufacturing processes of WAAM and milling.

First, the influence of the constraints on relevant process variables (energy demand, joint turnover, speed and acceleration peaks, total joint movements) in a manufacturing process such as WAAM will be assessed. Subsequently, a process evaluation will be elaborated in the CAM software, by means of which the process quality can be determined. Depending on the respective process variables, approximation methods or machine learning methods will be investigated for the process evaluation. The process quality as a one-dimensional variable will be determined by weighting the process variables. Subsequently, a method for the optimization of the constraints will be elaborated. This task corresponds to an optimization problem in which the process quality will be maximized by selecting suitable constraints.

Chapter 2

State of Science and Technology

The following chapter gives an overview of manufacturing technologies, CAM, and algorithms for optimization problems. Special attention is given to the comparison of optimization problems in manufacturing with redundant degrees of freedom.

2.1 Manufacturing Technologies

Manufacturing technologies encompass a wide range of processes that are used to transform raw materials into finished products. Two major categories within this field are subtractive and additive manufacturing [41]. Subtractive manufacturing involves removing material from a workpiece to shape it into the desired form [42]. This is commonly achieved through techniques like cutting, drilling, milling, or grinding. On the other hand, additive manufacturing, also known as 3D printing, typically involves building up layers of material to create an object. This process offers greater design flexibility and the ability to create complex geometries [43]. Both subtractive and additive manufacturing play crucial roles in various industries, revolutionizing production methods and offering new possibilities for customization and innovation [44, 45].

2.1.1 Subtractive Manufacturing

Subtractive manufacturing, also referred to as subtractive fabrication or machining, is a precise and efficient method utilized in contemporary manufacturing processes [46]. This approach entails the removal of material from a workpiece, resulting in the formation of a desired shape or product [47]. In contrast to additive manufacturing techniques, like 3D printing, where material is applied layer by layer, subtractive manufacturing always relies on material that is removed [48].

Subtractive manufacturing involves various techniques such as milling, turning, drilling, and grinding that are mostly performed by using CNC machines [49]. Such machines are pro-

grammed to precisely control the cutting tool movement to clear material from the workpiece based on a predetermined design [50].

The versatility and precision of subtractive manufacturing are two of its significant advantages. A CNC machine can process a diverse array of materials, such as metals, plastics, and composites, with high levels of precision and surface quality, allowing for the creation of intricate and complex components [51, 52]. As a result, it finds applications in industries where precision and quality are critical, such as aerospace, automotive, and medical.

The process of subtractive manufacturing starts with the drafting of the intended component using computer-aided design (CAD) software. Subsequently, CAM software is used to generate instructions that are used to guide the CNC machine (see chapter 2.2 for more details). The machining process begins with the machine operator setting up and securing the workpiece in the machine and starting the execution of the generated instructions [53].

The cutting tools then perform various operations, such as drilling holes, creating pockets or slots, and shaping the external contours of the part, by following the predetermined movements. In a typical 3-axis machine, the degrees of freedom are along the X, Y, and Z axes. In a 5-axis machine, two additional degrees of freedom in form of rotations are present. Additionally, recent research is trying to extend the machines possibilities by adding advanced abilities like constantly monitoring and adjusting the cutting parameters on the fly to ensure the most efficient cutting speed, feed rate, and tool engagement while minimizing errors [54].

Subtractive manufacturing provides numerous advantages over alternative manufacturing techniques. This method allows for the creation of intricate and highly customizable components with tight tolerances and complex geometries [55]. In addition, it results in exceptional surface finish, dimensional accuracy, and consistency, guaranteeing uniform quality across production runs. Moreover, it is cost-effective for small to medium production volumes as it does not necessitate the use of costly molds or part-specific tooling, which makes it a great alternative to produce a multitude of parts [56].

One of the disadvantages of the process is the possibly long cycle time. Particularly for intricate and large-volume designs, the process can result in significant material waste [57]. Furthermore, it may not be appropriate for high hardness or brittle materials, which can lead to excessive tool wear or breakage [58]. In summary, subtractive manufacturing offers a wide range of applications but should be carefully considered for each situation. CNC technology, in combination with subtractive manufacturing, has become indispensable across a variety of industries. Nonetheless, it is crucial to evaluate its restrictions and suitability for specific design needs and material characteristics.

One common issue in CNC machining is tool vibration. Tool vibration, also called chatter, refers to the unwanted oscillation or movement of the cutting tool during the machining operation [59]. This phenomenon can have detrimental effects on the quality of the finished part and can lead to various problems, such as poor surface finish, reduced dimensional accuracy, increased tool wear, and even tool breakage [60].

Several factors contribute to tool vibration in CNC machining. One of the primary factors is the cutting parameters, which include the cutting speed, feed rate, and depth of cut. When these parameters are not optimized, excessive cutting forces can be generated, causing the tool to vibrate. It is crucial to find the right balance between material removal rates and minimizing tool vibration to ensure optimal machining outcomes [61].

The tool holder and spindle system also influence tool vibration. A rigid and stable tool holder and spindle are necessary to minimize vibrations and maintain accuracy during machining [62]. Any play or misalignment in these components can contribute to tool vibration.

In conclusion, tool vibration is a common challenge in CNC machining that can negatively impact part quality. Thus, it is paramount to ensure stiffness for high-precision operations. Chapter 2.1.3 gives a more in-depth look regarding the stiffness in machining operations executed with industrial robots.

Figure 2.1 shows the basic design of a CNC machine. In this design, the workpiece is placed on the worktable and secured using a vice to hold it in place. The worktable has the ability to move in two directions, namely the X and Y directions. This movement allows for precise positioning and maneuvering of the workpiece. On the other hand, the spindle, which is the rotating component responsible for cutting or shaping the workpiece, moves in the Z direction. This vertical movement of the spindle enables it to perform various machining operations at different depths.

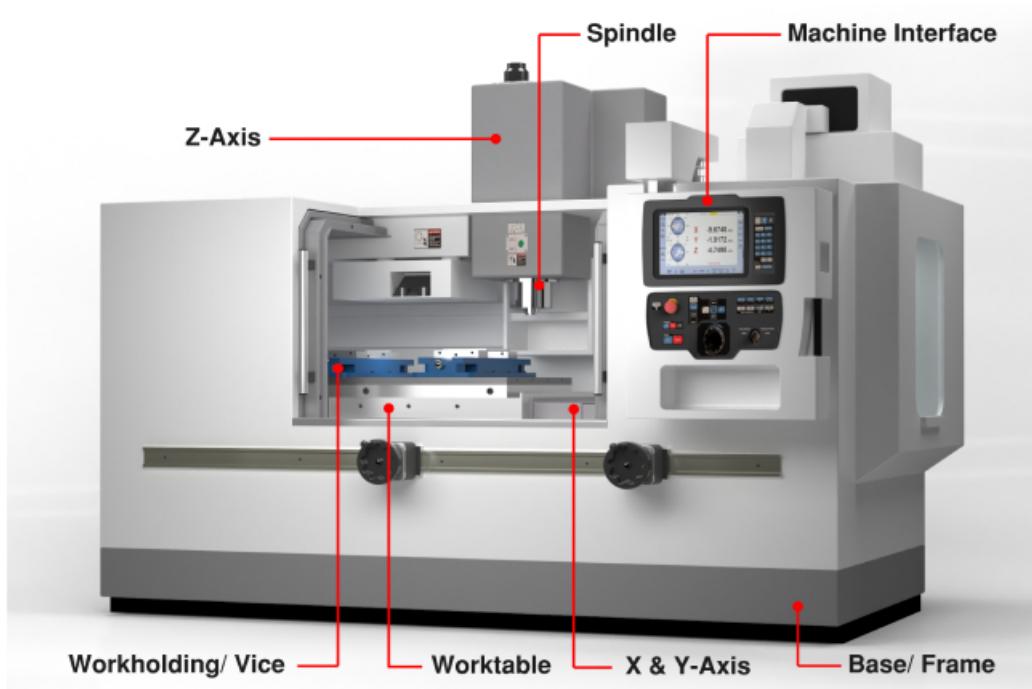


Figure 2.1: 3-Axis CNC Machine [63]

Additionally, the machine interface serves as the control panel for the CNC machine. It provides the user with options to select and load the desired CNC program. By selecting the appropriate program, operators can control the movements and actions of the CNC machine.

to achieve the desired part.

Figure 2.2 shows the schematic model of a 5-axis CNC machine. In this particular design, the spindle, which is responsible for cutting the workpiece, has the ability to move along three axes, namely the X, Y, and Z axes. This movement allows for precise control over the position and depth of the tool in relation to the workpiece.

In addition to the spindle movement, the machine features a rotary-tilt table that can adjust two additional axes, namely the A and B axes. These axes provide rotational and tilting capabilities to the worktable, allowing for more intricate movements and increased flexibility in part design. By adjusting the A and B axes, the workpiece can be positioned and oriented in different angles, enabling the CNC machine to access and machine complex geometries that would otherwise be difficult or impossible to achieve with fewer axes. Additionally, a tool magazine is included that allows for tool changes. In this way, a roughing and finishing operation can be performed without having to change the tool manually.

The inclusion of these two additional degrees of freedom in the 5-axis CNC machine significantly expands the range of operations that can be performed. It enables the machine to handle more complex and sophisticated machining tasks, such as multi-sided machining, contouring, and simultaneous machining on multiple surfaces. This increased flexibility and versatility make the 5-axis CNC machine a valuable tool in industries that require high precision and intricate part production.

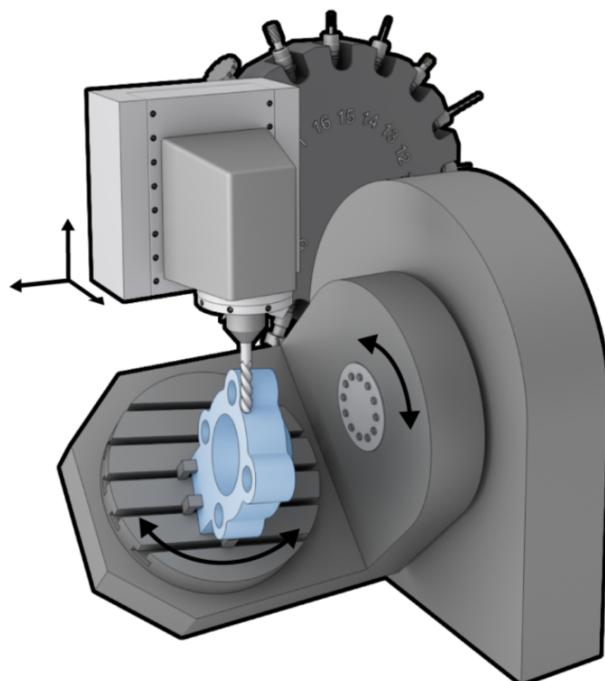


Figure 2.2: 5-Axis CNC Machine [64]

2.1.2 Additive Manufacturing

AM processes involve the conversion of CAD files into physical objects by building them layer by layer. This layering approach offers several advantages. Firstly, it allows for the creation of complex geometries that would be extremely challenging or impossible to produce using traditional manufacturing methods [65]. The ability to fabricate intricate structures with internal cavities, undercuts, and overhangs opens up new possibilities in engineering and design [48].

Various AM technologies utilize different methods to build the layers. Fused Deposition Modeling (FDM), for example, involves extruding molten thermoplastic filament through a heated nozzle, which solidifies as it cools, creating the desired shape [66]. Stereolithography (SLA) employs a liquid photopolymer resin that is solidified by a UV laser, while Selective Laser Melting (SLM) uses a high-power laser to selectively fuse powdered materials, such as plastics or metals [67, 68].

The compatibility of AM with a wide range of materials is another significant advantage [69]. It enables the production of components with diverse properties, including strength, flexibility, conductivity, and heat resistance. AM can accommodate various plastics, such as ABS, PLA, and nylon, as well as metals like titanium, aluminum, and stainless steel. Additionally, ceramics and even biomaterials, like hydrogels or living cells, can be used in AM processes. New materials specifically tailored for AM are continuously developed, expanding the possibilities for unique applications [70].

The design freedom offered by AM is a significant option. Traditional manufacturing methods often have design constraints due to limitations in tooling and manufacturing processes. With AM, designers have greater flexibility to create complex and organic shapes, lightweight structures, and intricate internal features. This freedom leads to optimized performance and improved functionality [71].

However, AM also poses scientific challenges. Post-processing requirements, such as smoothing, polishing, or heat treatment, may be necessary to achieve the desired surface finish or material properties [72]. Additionally, certain applications may have limited material options, particularly in terms of high-temperature or high-strength applications. Production speed can also be a constraint for large or complex parts, as AM processes can be time-consuming compared to traditional manufacturing methods [43].

As AM technologies continue to advance, they have the potential to transform supply chains. The concept of distributed manufacturing, where products are produced closer to the point of use, becomes feasible with AM [72]. This reduces transportation costs, lowers carbon emissions, and enables on-demand manufacturing, leading to shorter lead times and increased sustainability [73].

Figure 2.3 shows a commercially available 3D printer. The base plate has the ability to move along the Y axis, which allows for horizontal movement of the printed object. On the other

hand, the print head can move along the X and Z axes. The X-axis movement controls the horizontal positioning of the print head, while the Z-axis movement controls the vertical positioning. This combination of movements in the X and Z axes enables the print head to accurately deposit layers of material to create the desired 3D object.



Figure 2.3: 3D Printer [74]

Wire Arc Additive Manufacturing

Wire Arc Additive Manufacturing (WAAM) is a specific type of additive manufacturing process which is part of Directed Energy Deposition (DED) processes [75]. According to the DIN EN ISO 52900 standard, DED involves using focused thermal energy to melt material during the application process to build up the individual layers [76]. In the case of WAAM, an electric arc is used to generate the necessary energy for melting. In the most basic form, this process is utilizing standard welding technology, such as gas-shielded metal arc welding, in combination with precise spatial movement of the welding torch [77]. This process places multiple weld seams over each other and thus forms the workpiece layer by layer.

WAAM offers several advantages over other additive manufacturing techniques. One major advantage is its high deposition rate, which ranges up to 6kg/h. This high deposition rate enables the construction of large components in a relatively short amount of time. Components can be produced within a single workday, providing a significant time advantage compared to techniques like SLM, which typically operate at around 0.1kg/h and thus much slower deposition rates [78].

Another advantage of WAAM is its capability to construct large components without limitations on part size. The production volume is only constrained by the working range of the kinematics employed. For example, in the case of an articulated-arm robot, the range is de-

fined by its maximum reach. This means that WAAM has the potential to create components of various sizes without compromising its effectiveness [79].

However, it is important to note that WAAM components may have some inherent defects. These include residual stresses and deformations that persist after the production process, as well as relatively low geometric precision and modest surface quality. These limitations should be taken into consideration when utilizing WAAM for manufacturing purposes [80].

Figure 2.4 shows a schematic representation of a WAAM process. In this process, a wire is fed through the gas metal arc welding (GMAW) torch to supply a continuous stream of material. The wire is then subjected to high heat generated by an electric arc. The wire is melted and then deposited onto a substrate plate. The substrate plate serves as the foundation or base on which the material is built. As the molten wire is deposited, it solidifies and fuses with the previous layers, gradually building up the desired 3D object.

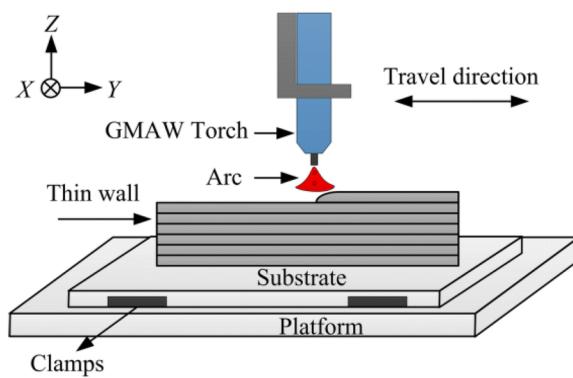


Figure 2.4: Schematic representation of WAAM [81]

Figure 2.5 shows a part produced by WAAM with the addition of a post processing step. The rough surface finish is clearly visible on the non post processed side of the part.

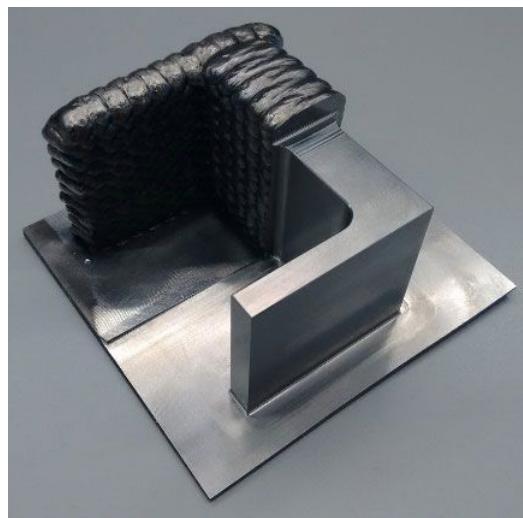


Figure 2.5: Part produced by WAAM with post machining [82]

WAAM-Process and Cold Metal Transfer

The operating principle of WAAM involves the generation of an arc through electrical discharge between an feed-wire and the workpiece. This arc transfers energy to the workpiece, causing melting in the fusion zone [83]. Additionally, if a welding filler material in the form of a wire is introduced into the arc, it also melts and can be used to deposit additional material onto a metallic substrate [77]. To ensure a continuous weld seam, a wire feed system must be employed [84].

The industrial manufacturing of components using WAAM involves a kinematic system that allows movement of the welding torch. This can be achieved using robot-configurations or gantry systems [85]. Alternatively, a spatially fixed welding torch, combined with robotic kinematics or rotary-tilt table, can be used to move the component [86].

Cold Metal Transfer (CMT) welding is a sophisticated process that merges the advantages of multiple welding techniques [87]. It functions based on the principle of controlled short-circuiting, wherein the welding torch generates a short circuit between the wire and the workpiece. This short circuit triggers the melting of the tip of the wire and subsequent detachment. The detachment is assisted by a retraction of the wire. This process is generating a sequence of droplets that are transferred to the weld pool with high precision [88, 89].

CMT welding provides superior heat control with lower heat input than conventional methods. The controlled arc and droplet transfer reduce the risk of overheating and distortion, making it suitable for thinner materials and heat-sensitive applications [90]. The process minimizes spatter formation, resulting in cleaner and smoother welds and reducing the requirement for post-weld cleaning [89]. CMT welding is ideal for applications that require the highest weld quality which includes structural fabrication and automotive manufacturing [91].

For dependable weld quality, CMT welding typically integrates advanced process control systems, which utilize adaptive control and real-time monitoring to consistently adjust welding parameters based on sensor feedback. This enhances the precision and dependability of the welding process [92].

A CMT cycle consists of three phases [88]:

1st - pulse phase: A high current pulse leads to the ignition of the arc, which melts the wire electrode. A droplet begins to form at the tip of the wire. The wire is moved forward in the direction of the workpiece.

2nd - arc phase: The arc is kept burning at a lower current. This prevents the melt droplet from detaching early and from detaching prematurely and transferring to the workpiece.

3d - short-circuit phase: as soon as the wire comes into contact with the substrate, the voltage drops to 0 V and the wire feeder is signaled to withdraw the wire. This supports the droplet detachment from the wire into the molten bath.

Figure 2.6 shows the three Phases of a CMT cycle. The voltage is constant in the first two phases and drops to zero in the short circuit phase. The spike of current is clearly visible in the first phase, which is also the shortest.

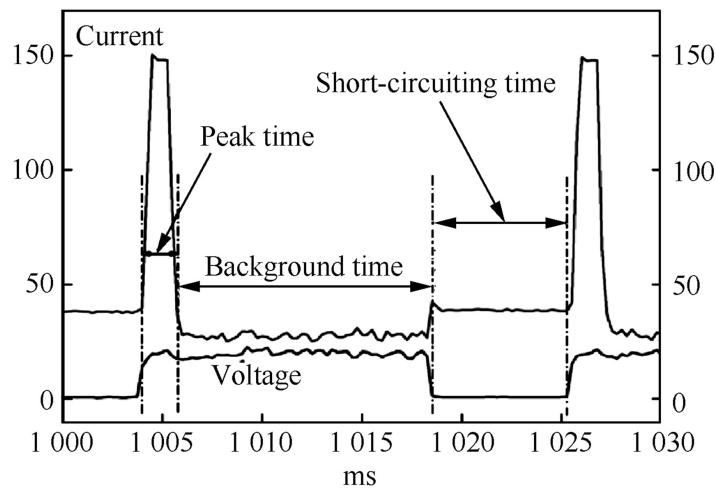


Figure 2.6: Current and Voltage wave forms of a CMT process [88]

Figure 2.7 shows the clearly distinct parts in a CMT cycle. At first an electric arc is formed and melts the wire. After a short circuit is established the wire retracts and detaches from the molten droplet. After that the cycle restarts.



Figure 2.7: Individual sections of a CMT cycle [93]

In summary, WAAM and CMT are highly sophisticated processes that enable the creation of 3D printed metal parts with specifically designed parameters. CMT achieves precise welds with low heat input and minimal spatter. It is ideal for thinner materials and applications requiring high weld quality. Advanced process control systems can enhance the reliability of CMT welding [94, 95].

2.1.3 Industrial Robots

Industrial robots are advanced machines designed to perform various tasks in manufacturing and industrial settings. They come in different types, each with its own set of capabilities and advantages. They are crucial to modern manufacturing and automation, transforming

production methods and repetitive task performance across diverse industries. Since their inception in the mid-20th century, these machines have undergone significant advancements, evolving into highly adaptive and sophisticated devices that promote productivity, accuracy, and safety within manufacturing processes [96]. At their core, industrial robots are programmable machines designed to execute tasks with a high degree of accuracy and efficiency. They can carry out repetitive actions consistently, which enhances productivity and reduces the risk of human error [97].

One common type of industrial robots are the articulated robots. These robots have rotary joints that allow them to move like a human arm, with multiple links and joints. They can perform a wide range of tasks, such as welding, material handling, or assembly operations [98, 99]. Another type is the Cartesian robot, also known as gantry robots. These robots move along three linear axes (X, Y, and Z) to perform tasks. They are commonly used for pick-and-place operations or in applications that require precise positioning [100]. SCARA robots, on the other hand, are designed for fast and precise movements in assembly operations. They have a selective compliance assembly robot arm that allows them to move quickly while maintaining accuracy [101]. Delta robots are used for high-speed pick and place applications, such as packaging or sorting. They are known for their rapid movements and high throughput [102]. Collaborative robots, or cobots, are designed to work safely alongside humans. They have built-in safety features, such as force sensors or vision systems, that allow them to interact with humans without causing harm. Cobots are often used in tasks that require human-robot collaboration, such as assembly or inspection operations [103].

Figure 2.8 shows a SCARA and Delta Robot.



Figure 2.8: SCARA and Delta Robot

Industrial robots are based on articulated robots and have a wide range of applications across various industries. They can be used for assembly operations, where they can perform tasks like fastening, welding, or soldering components together. These robots are also commonly used for material handling tasks, such as lifting, moving, and stacking materials in warehouses or production lines. Inspection tasks can be automated with robots equipped with sensors or cameras, allowing them to inspect products for defects or perform quality control checks [104].

Industrial robots offer several benefits. Firstly, they increase productivity by working continuously, without breaks or fatigue. This leads to higher production rates and shorter cycle times. Additionally, robots can perform tasks with high precision and accuracy, reducing errors and defects and thereby improving product quality [105]. Safety is another important aspect of industrial robots. They are designed to handle dangerous or hazardous tasks, keeping human workers safe. Robots can work in environments with high temperatures, toxic substances, or heavy loads, minimizing the risk of injury to humans [106]. While the initial investment in industrial robots can be high, they offer long-term cost savings. Robots can reduce labor costs by automating repetitive tasks and increasing efficiency. They also offer flexibility, as they can be reprogrammed or reconfigured to perform different tasks, allowing for greater adaptability in manufacturing processes [107].

When comparing industrial robots to CNC machines, there are a few notable disadvantages for industrial robots. Firstly, industrial robots generally have lower positional accuracy and repeatability compared to CNC machines. CNC machines are purpose-built for precise machining operations and can achieve high levels of accuracy and repeatability [46]. Secondly, industrial robots typically have a longer cycle time compared to CNC machines for similar tasks. The complex movements and computations involved in robot control can result in slower overall operation speeds, which may not be ideal for high-volume production environments [108]. Additionally, industrial robots can be more complex to program and set up than CNC machines. CNC machines follow a predefined set of instructions, whereas programming industrial robots often requires more advanced programming skills and can be time-consuming [109]. Lastly, industrial robots may have limitations when it comes to handling heavy loads or performing heavy-duty machining operations. CNC machines are specifically designed for heavy-duty cutting, milling, and drilling tasks, whereas industrial robots are better suited for lighter material handling and assembly operations [110]. These differences should be considered when deciding between industrial robots and CNC machines for specific manufacturing applications.

Industrial robots can be programmed using different methods. One common method is using a teach pendant, where operators manually move the robot to record positions and actions. Offline programming is another approach, where programs are created and simulated on a computer before being transferred to the robot. Sensor-based programming allows robots to respond to sensor inputs or interact with the environment [111].

Serial kinematics is a widely used configuration in industrial robots, where the robot arm is constructed as a sequential chain of joints and links. Each joint provides one DoF, enabling the robot to move and position its end-effector in a controlled manner. The joints can be of various types, including revolute, prismatic, spherical, and cylindrical, providing rotational, linear, and combined movements. The motion of the robot arm is controlled using forward kinematics and inverse kinematics. Forward kinematics calculates the position and orientation of the end-effector based on the joint angles, while inverse kinematics determines the joint angles required to achieve the desired end-effector pose [112].

In summary, the robots performance relies on sophisticated control algorithms and feedback systems that allow them to adapt to dynamic conditions, adjust movements in real-time, and maintain a consistently high level of accuracy [113]. This improves both the quality of the final product and the safety of the manufacturing process, as robots can navigate complex paths without risking collisions or accidents [114]. As technology continues to advance, industrial robots will play an even more prominent role in shaping the future of manufacturing and automation [115]

Figure 2.9 shows the schematic design of a 6-DoF industrial robot with a spindle and force sensor that is used for machining.



Figure 2.9: 6-DoF industrial Robot [116]

Redundancy in robotic systems

Industrial robots with redundant degrees of freedom are robotic systems that have been designed with more degrees of freedom (DOF) than are necessary for a specific task [22]. This extra DOF allows the robots to perform additional joint movements or configurations beyond what is required for basic movement or manipulation.

The primary advantage of these redundant robots is their increased flexibility and adaptability [27]. Robots with more DOF can access a wider range of positions and orientations, making it possible for them to complete complex tasks in constrained environments that would have been difficult or impossible otherwise. With this added flexibility, they can avoid obstacles and work around them without disrupting their duties. In industrial settings, redundant manipulators provide significant advantages. Their additional degrees of freedom enable them to improve accessibility to hard-to-reach areas and enhance overall operational capabilities [32].

Redundancy can take on many different forms in robotic systems. One option is to increase the number of joints in the serial kinematics of an articulated robot [25]. Another approach

to redundancy is the addition of a rotary tilt table, which is commonly used in WAAM in combination with a 6-DoF robot [117]. This combined system enables the robot to manipulate the workpiece from various angles, enhancing the manufacturing process.

Furthermore, the inclusion of a linear axis that the robot base can traverse on is yet another form of redundant DoF. This additional linear motion provides the robot with extended reach and the capability to access a larger workspace, making it suitable for tasks that require movement along a specific axis [39].

Additionally, redundancy can also be observed when using a generic 6-DoF system for operations that only necessitate 5 or fewer DoF (for example, milling or WAAM) [22, 98]. The system possesses more flexibility than required for the specific task and allows for adaptability and versatility, thus accommodating different operations without the need for reconfiguring the robot.

In summary, redundancy in robotic systems can be achieved through various means, such as increasing joint numbers, incorporating rotary tilt tables, including linear axes, or using a higher DoF system for tasks that demand fewer DoF. These redundant features enhance the capabilities and versatility of the robot, enabling it to perform a wide range of complex tasks efficiently.

Figure 2.10 shows two industrial robots from the manufacturer KUKA GmbH that are placed on a linear axis. This enables the robots to use the additional and redundant DoF to optimize the process. Multiple robots can be positioned on one linear unit. Figure 2.11 shows how a 7-DoF robot can have multiple poses reaching the same position. In this case, only six DoF are necessary to achieve the position, while one DoF can be defined manually.



Figure 2.10: Industrial robots with an additional linear axis [118]



Figure 2.11: 7 DoF robot [119]

While redundancy in industrial robots can provide increased flexibility and adaptability, it also comes with certain disadvantages. One major drawback is the increased complexity and cost associated with redundant systems [120]. The addition of extra joints, axes, or mechanisms adds to the overall complexity of the robot, requiring more sophisticated control algorithms and hardware [27]. This complexity not only increases the initial cost of the robot but also adds to the maintenance and troubleshooting efforts [121]. Additionally, the presence of redundant DoF can make the robot more susceptible to mechanical failures as more components are involved. This can result in increased downtime and higher maintenance costs. Moreover, the increased complexity of redundant systems can make programming and calibration more challenging, requiring specialized skills and expertise [122]. Therefore, while redundancy can offer advantages in certain scenarios, careful consideration must be given to the cost, complexity, and maintenance implications before implementing it in industrial robotics applications.

Continuous-path mode

In the context of industrial robotics, continuous paths without abrupt direction or velocity changes of a tool play a crucial role in achieving precise and smooth movements of robotic arms along a defined trajectory [11]. This ensures that the robot can execute complex tasks and movements with accuracy and efficiency. By incorporating continuous path mode into industrial robot programming, manufacturers can optimize production processes and improve the quality of manufactured products [123]. Constant velocity of a tool is especially important in applications like WAAM where the quality of the layer is directly dependent on the feed rate [124]. In CNC machining, discontinuities in velocity, acceleration, and jerk result in non-optimal surface finishes [125].

Continuous path mode refers to a mode of operation in high-speed robotics as well as CNC machines where the goal is to achieve a smooth and uninterrupted movement of the machine

along a toolpath. In this mode, the machine is expected to follow a path without any sudden changes in velocity, acceleration, or curvature. The purpose of continuous path mode is to minimize jerk spikes, machine vibrations, and other undesirable effects that can occur when there are discontinuities in the toolpath [11, 126].

Figure 2.12 shows where the smooth-path-requirement comes into conflict with the tool path, which is based on the part geometry. Sharp corners and small radii can require significant acceleration to maintain a constant velocity.

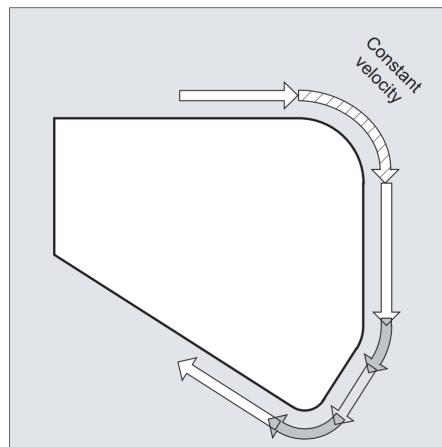


Figure 2.12: Desired path with constant velocity [127]

Figure 2.13 shows how specific G-code commands of the SINUMERIK 840D influence the targeted feedrate. When using the G60 command, the points are reached exactly, but the feedrate is reducing to 0 at every waypoint. When implementing the G64 command, the feedrate can be held at the desired value.

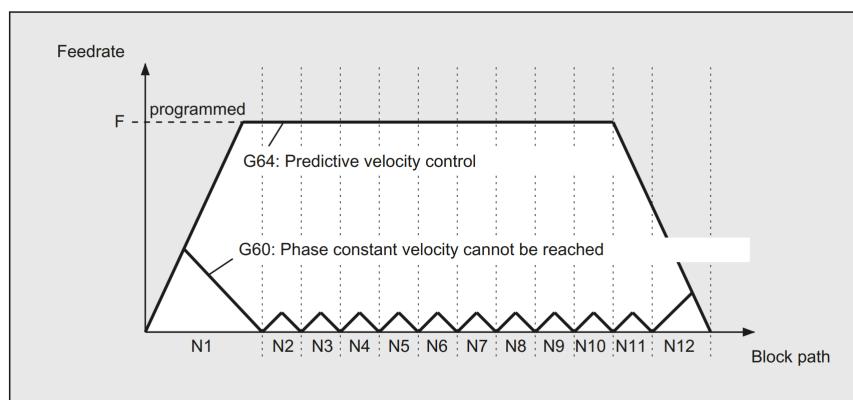


Figure 2.13: Influence of G-Code commands regarding feedrate compliance [127]

Figure 2.14 shows how the G-code command G641 ADIS=0.5 of the SINUMERIK 840D is influencing the programmed contour. The rounding of the path begins no more than 0.5 mm before the programmed end of the block and must finish 0.5 mm after the end of the block.

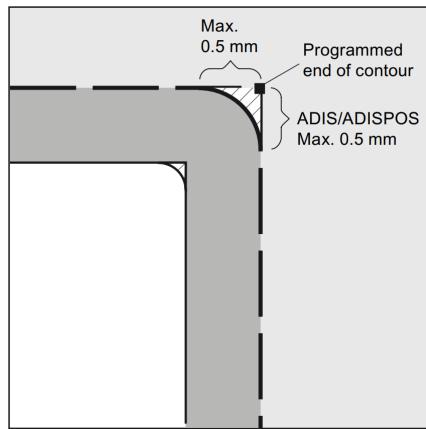


Figure 2.14: Predetermined deviation of the programmed and executed path [127]

Figure 2.15 shows how commands G601 and 602 influence the executed trajectory. In this case, two different tolerance limits allow the tool to deviate from the programmed path.

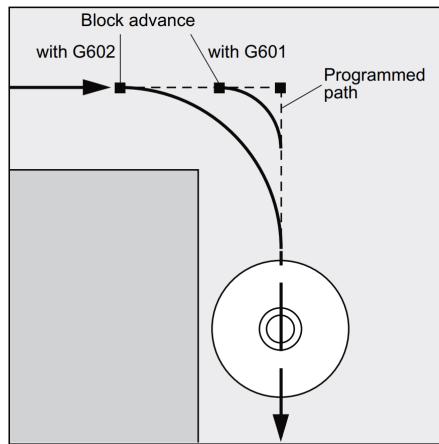


Figure 2.15: Influence of commands G601 and G602 [127]

Continuous-path mode in CNC machining is a crucial aspect when it comes to processing parts with rapidly varied geometric features. These types of components, often found in high-end equipment, pose challenges due to their intricate structures and strict requirements. The presence of rapidly varied geometric features, coupled with the continuous-path running characteristic, gives rise to trajectory errors during the machining process, which severely hampers the overall machining accuracy of such parts [128]. This becomes even more critical in high-speed machining scenarios, where existing studies struggle to effectively reduce this error without compromising machining efficiency [129].

In CNC machines, toolpaths are typically composed of lines and arcs [130]. At the transition points between these elements, careful consideration is required to ensure that the physical limits of the machine are not exceeded. For example, when the machine is moving at a constant feedrate, a sudden change in velocity can occur when two successive non-tangent linear moves meet. This can lead to undesirable effects on the machine and the quality of the cut [131]. Similar issues arise at transitions between lines and arcs or between two arcs,

where curvature discontinuities need to be addressed.

Contouring errors are caused by factors such as servo lag, dynamics mismatch, external disturbances, and more. Reducing contouring errors is essential for improving the performance of CNC motion systems and achieving high-speed and high-precision machining [11].

To overcome these challenges and achieve a smooth and continuous toolpath, path smoothing techniques are necessary. Many path smoothing methods have been proposed in the literature, but most of them are limited to linear toolpaths. However, in high-speed CNC machines and industrial robots, the toolpaths often consist of both lines and arcs. Therefore, there is a need for a path smoothing method that can handle both line-to-line transitions and transitions involving arcs [128].

To address this issue and enhance both processing efficiency and precision, various estimation and compensation methods have been proposed for reducing trajectory error. These approaches can be divided into contouring-error estimation and contouring-error reduction approaches [11]. These approaches include the "Moving frame based method", "Analytical method", "Generalized method" or "Servo-tuning approach". While this review paper compares the representative algorithms commonly used for contouring-error estimation and reduction, it is important to note that the comparison results only offer relative significance. Each algorithm has its own optimal range of applications and may outperform other methods within that range. Additionally, it is important to note that not every approach can be implemented on every system.

Another approach for achieving continuous path mode is by using biclothoid fillets. These fillets are used for corner smoothing and can be fitted between two arcs or a line and an arc. The main advantage of using biclothoid fillets is that they result in a smoother curvature profile compared to other methods, such as Bezier fillets. Especially with tight tolerance values, only a few biclothoid fillets are needed compared to Bezier fillets. Additionally, the biclothoid approach is more suitable in regards to the jerk and acceleration limits of the driving units. This smoother curvature profile allows for higher feedrates and shorter cycle times, ultimately improving the overall performance of the CNC machine [128].

G-code

Information about G-code here or too much ?

2.2 Computer-Aided Manufacturing

CAM is a technology that uses computer software to automate and optimize manufacturing processes. It involves the use of computer systems to control and operate machinery, such as CNC machines, robots, and 3D printers. CAM software can generate tool paths and instructions for machines based on Computer-Aided Design (CAD) models, allowing for precise and efficient production. By reducing manual labor, CAM helps improve productivity, accuracy, and consistency in manufacturing. It is widely used in industries like aerospace, automotive, and electronics to streamline production and reduce costs [132].

2.2.1 CAM Software

CAM software is a type of computer software used to automate and optimize the manufacturing process. CAM software takes the design data from computer-aided design (CAD) software and converts it into instructions that control machines and tools to produce the desired product [132]. It plays a critical role in modern manufacturing, helping to streamline production, improve efficiency, and reduce errors.

CAM software enables manufacturers to generate toolpaths and machining instructions for a variety of manufacturing processes, including milling, turning, drilling, and 3D printing [133]. It takes into account factors such as material properties, tool capabilities, and manufacturing constraints to generate the most efficient and accurate instructions for the machines. CAM software can also simulate the machining process to detect any potential collisions or issues before actual production begins, saving time and resources [134].

One of the key features of CAM software is its ability to optimize the machining process. It can automatically optimize toolpaths to minimize machining time, reduce material waste, and improve surface finish. By analyzing the geometry of the part, the software can determine the most efficient toolpath strategies, such as contouring, pocketing, or adaptive machining. It can also optimize tool selection, toolpath sequencing, and cutting parameters to achieve the best possible results [17].

It also offers advanced features such as multi-axis machining and support for complex geometries. It can generate toolpaths for machines with multiple axes of motion, allowing for more intricate and precise machining operations. It can handle complex geometries, including freeform surfaces and curved profiles, and generate toolpaths that accurately follow the desired shape [135].

Furthermore, CAM software often integrates with other manufacturing software systems, such as computer-aided engineering (CAE) and enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems [136]. This integration enables seamless data exchange, improves collaboration between different departments, and ensures that the manufacturing process is aligned with the overall production goals [137].

CAM software is a crucial tool for modern manufacturing. It automates and optimizes the manufacturing process, generating toolpaths and machining instructions based on CAD data. It enables manufacturers to improve efficiency, reduce errors, and achieve higher-quality products. With features such as optimization, simulation, multi-axis machining, and integration with other systems, CAM software empowers manufacturers to stay competitive in today's fast-paced and complex manufacturing environment [138].

Figure 2.16 shows the interface of Siemens NX, a CAM/CAD software that can be used to design parts and generate machine-specific instructions for manufacturing.

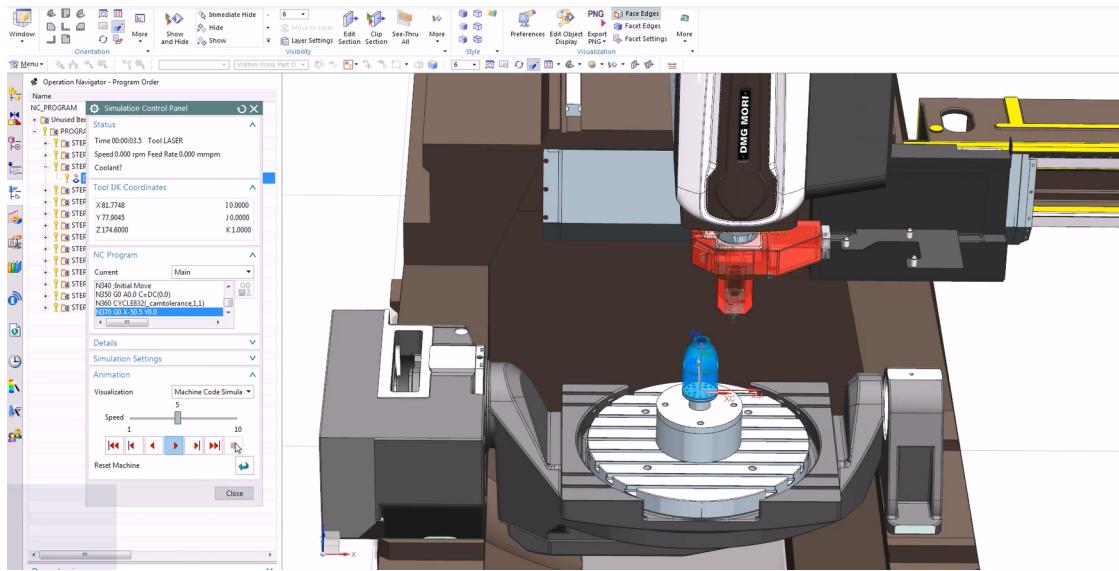


Figure 2.16: Interface of Siemens NX [139]

2.2.2 Path Planning

Path planning and generation are crucial features of CAM software. They involve establishing the most effective toolpaths for machining operations, guaranteeing efficient and precise production [140].

Path planning involves determining the optimal sequence of movements for the machining tool to follow while producing a component. It considers factors such as part geometry, tool capabilities, machining constraints, and desired parameters. Its goal is to minimize machining time, reduce waste, and improve the finished product [141]. CAM software employs algorithms and mathematical models to determine the tool's position and orientation on the toolpath. Additionally, factors such as cutting direction, feed rate, and tool engagement need to be taken into account [142].

Adaptive machining is a critical part of path planning and generation. It enables the CAM software to adjust the toolpath and cutting parameters in real-time based on material properties, tool wear, and other factors. This constant monitoring and adaptation ensure precise and dependable outcomes, even in difficult manufacturing conditions [143].

Multi-axis machining is an advanced function of CAM software, ideal for intricate cuts and shapes on complex geometries. By allowing the tool to move simultaneously along multiple axes, it delivers greater precision and accuracy during the machining of curved surfaces, freeform shapes, or parts with undercuts [144].

Simulation is vital in planning and generating paths for this process. CAM software typically includes simulation tools that enable users to visualize and verify the toolpath prior to production. These simulations can detect and resolve potential collisions, interference, or errors that may occur during machining, leading to cost savings and increased safety [7].

Figure 2.17 shows three different path trajectories for planar milling operations. Depending on the area of application, different paths can be optimal.



Figure 2.17: Three exemplary tool paths for iso-planar milling [145]

2.3 Optimization Algorithms

Optimization algorithms are computational methods used to find the best possible solution to a problem within a given set of constraints. These algorithms aim to minimize or maximize an objective function by iteratively adjusting the values of decision variables [146]. They are widely used in various fields, including engineering, operations research, finance, and machine learning, to optimize resource allocation, scheduling, parameter tuning, and other complex tasks. For the problem described in 1.2 optimization algorithms can be used for determining optimal parameters for the redundant degrees of freedom while considering the defined objective, like reduction of direction changes or energy optimization.

Optimization algorithms are computational techniques employed to identify the optimal solution or set of solutions for a given problem. There are several types of optimization algorithms, each exhibiting a unique methodology and characteristics. Gradient-based optimization algorithms, like gradient descent, update the solution iteratively by following the direction of the steepest ascent or descent of the objective function [147]. These algorithms are efficient for convex optimization problems where the objective function is smooth and has a unique global minimum or maximum.

Another type of optimization algorithm is the evolutionary algorithm, which is inspired by

biological evolution. Evolutionary algorithms employ mutation, crossover, and selection to progressively shape a population of solutions over time. These techniques are especially applicable to resolving intricate optimization problems characterized by non-linear and non-convex objective functions. By reading a wider range of the search space, evolutionary algorithms can uncover tier-one solutions that draw near to the global optimum, although they may necessitate enhanced computational resources [148].

Genetic algorithms are evolutionary algorithms that use genetic operators, like crossover and mutation, to evolve solutions in a population. They can handle various types of optimization problems. Genetic algorithms are particularly effective for multi-objective optimization problems. They generate a set of solutions called the Pareto front, which represents the trade-off between conflicting objectives [149, 150].

Particle swarm optimization (PSO) is a metaheuristic optimization algorithm based on the collective behavior of a particle swarm. In PSO, each particle represents a potential solution, and it moves through the search space to discover the optimal solution by exchanging information with nearby particles. This cooperative behavior enables the algorithm to efficiently converge to better solutions. PSO is especially beneficial for continuous optimization problems that have numerous local optima [148].

In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in metaheuristic optimization algorithms. Examples of such algorithms are ant colony optimization, differential evolution, and harmony search, which draw inspiration from natural phenomena or human behavior. These general-purpose algorithms can be applied to various optimization problems and provide efficient and flexible approaches to finding optimal solutions [151].

Optimization algorithms prove to be significant resources for uncovering optimal solutions to intricate issues. Be it via gradient-based means, evolutionary algorithms, metaheuristics, or other customized mechanisms. Optimization algorithms effectively fine-tune objectives, meet requirements, and refine decision-making processes across a broad spectrum of industries. The algorithm choice relies on the problem's characteristics, the available computational resources, and the desired balance between solution quality and computational efficiency.

2.4 Comparison of the State of the Art

In the following, a literature analysis is performed regarding the optimization of various process parameters. The focus lies on manufacturing systems with redundant DoF, specifically for tasks such as milling and WAAM. In cases where no literature is available that incorporates redundant DoF, non-redundant systems are analyzed. Table 2.1 summarizes the analyzed parameters.

Singularity avoidance [152]	Joint accelerations [35]
Joint jerks [35]	Stiffness [153]
Energy use [154]	

Table 2.1: Areas of influence of boundary conditions and process parameters

Additional parameters like transfer time, precision, and maximum load capacity can also be analyzed but are omitted from the detailed analysis due to the limitations of scope [155–157]. Direction changes in the joint are briefly mentioned in [158] but not discussed in detail in any other publication.

Singularity avoidance

As mentioned in Chapter 1.2, singularities occur when the robot manipulator loses control or achieves limited mobility due to certain configurations [23]. This results in the loss of a DoF or makes the system highly sensitive to small changes [24, 25]. Image 2.18 shows how the 5th joint needs to rotate significantly when moving along a straight line in Cartesian space. When an additional velocity boundary condition is set that defines the feed rate of that path, the rotation is very difficult to perform as the motor joints cannot keep up with the required angular acceleration. This is unnecessary movement that increases energy consumption and adds unnecessary wear to the joints.



Figure 2.18: Passing through a wrist singularity [159]

Due to the numerous possible solutions for the inverse kinematics of redundant manipulators, it is exceptionally challenging to predict and prevent the occurrence of singularity configurations during motion planning [32].

In tasks that involve functional redundancy, as where the manipulator has more DoF than required for the task, the general projection method cannot be applied [160]. Robotic industrial welding processes often have functional redundancy due to the presence of symmetry axes when using generic 6-DoF industrial robots. Different approaches have been proposed to solve functional redundancy, including adding a virtual joint to the manipulator or using the twist decomposition approach (TWA).

Most of the research is limited to the mathematical analysis of singularities and does not consider the industrial implementation of the proposed algorithms in an industrial setting. The manipulability measure and maximization of Jacobian minors are commonly used methods to avoid singularities. Other methods, such as condition number and singular value decomposition, can also be used [161]. Another mathematical analysis performs a differentiation between non-recoverable singularities and configurations where through self-motion recovery into a nonsingular configuration is possible [162]

Another approach proposes a kinetostatic performance index for evaluating the quality of robotic postures, which includes singularity avoidance and joint limit consideration [152]. This method is also transferable to applications like milling. A parameter called "condition number" and "manipulability" are introduced, which are used to calculate the "kinetostatic performance index". The presented method can increase the distance from singularities and lower the maximum rotation velocity of the fourth joint. One disadvantage of the proposed method is the manual selection of a parameter. This parameter is responsible for avoiding joint limits and minimizing joint velocities. Manual fine-tuning of that parameter is required for optimal performance.

Further approaches are proposing roll motion around the tool's symmetry axis to counter the loss of a degree of freedom at the singularity. Paths with varying tool roll or fixed roll angles can be chosen, with considerations for tool elevation changes. Selecting paths with a fixed roll angle simplifies implementation for existing robot controllers [25].

Another approach uses the non-square Jacobi matrix and, after analysis, derives a simplified version through the selection of coordinate systems and primary transformation. By using block matrix analysis, the singularity conditions of the articulated robot are determined. A singular configuration avoidance algorithm is used to avoid singular patterns through constraining redundant DoF [32].

Neural networks and other machine learning approaches are commonly used to solve the issue of inverse kinematics. In this case, the optimization variable is not only limited to singularity avoidance but can also be focused on precision or optimization of feed rate [160].

Optimization of Joint Accelerations and Jerk

Jerk and acceleration control are critical because high values can wear out the robot structure and significantly stimulate its resonance frequencies. Vibrations caused by non-smooth trajectories can harm the robot's actuators and produce substantial deviations when completing tasks like trajectory tracking. Furthermore, low-jerk trajectories can be accomplished more quickly and precisely [35].

One recently published approach uses an adaptive greedy algorithm to generate the jerk-optimized trajectory with discrete time constraints. The proposed algorithm improves the trajectory in an iterative routine after obtaining an initial trajectory by a graph-search method [163]. A further method proposes a sequential quadratic programming method. The results show that optimal time-jerk trajectories with traveling time constraints can be obtained [164].

Another method is proposing a method of reconstructing the path by a sequence of via-points that define the positions and orientations of the robot's end-effector. Unlike most minimum-jerk trajectory planning techniques, this algorithm does not force an execution time beforehand and takes into account constraints such as upper bounds on velocity, acceleration, and jerk. The algorithm uses a hybrid objective function that balances execution time and smoothness of the trajectory. The output of the algorithm is a vector of time intervals between consecutive via-points that minimizes the objective function [35].

A further method is using an algorithm for adjusting the increments of the generalized coordinate vector. By using a pseudo-inverse of the Jacobi matrix and a Taylor's expansion, the robot's acceleration and jerk can be calculated. Results show that when the end effector is closer to the center of the robot, joint jerk increases. It is also shown that if trajectories are designed on the OXZ plane and directed away from the robot's center, the jerk decreases [27].

Optimization of Stiffens

Stiffness plays a crucial role in machining with industrial robots. It refers to the ability of a machine or structure to resist deformation under an applied load. In the context of machining, stiffness directly affects the accuracy, precision, and overall performance of the robot. A high level of stiffness ensures that the robot remains stable and rigid during machining operations, minimizing unwanted vibrations, deflections, and inaccuracies [110]. This is particularly important when dealing with high-speed or heavy-duty machining tasks, as any lack of stiffness can result in poor surface finish, dimensional inaccuracies, and reduced tool life.

A recent publication is evaluating the stiffness of a robot using a newly defined performance index, which is maximized to optimize the robot's posture. The problem is solved using a discretization search algorithm, taking into account joint limits, singularity avoidance, and trajectory smoothness. Each joint of the robot is modeled as a linear torsion spring, which

is transferred into a stiffness matrix. This method is applied to a 6-DoF robot that is used for a milling operation. The goal of this method is to set the redundant angle in such a way that stiffness is maximized. Simulations and experiments on an industrial robot validate the performance index and optimization algorithm, demonstrating improved machining accuracy using this method [31].

Another approach is working with a dynamic model to reduce the chatter in a milling operation with a 6-DoF robot. By considering the frequency response function, the maximum possible cutting depth, without the occurrence of chatter can be determined. The cutting depth is a function of the redundant degree of freedom. In this case, the redundant degree of freedom is the rotation around the axis of the spindle. An experimental analysis of a full-slot cut is performed. The results show that a significant reduction in chatter can be achieved by setting the redundant degree of freedom to the optimal value [165].

A further publication performs a comparative study of robot pose optimization using static and dynamic stiffness models. The results suggest that the static stiffness model can achieve close to optimal results for pose selection for tasks where the process forces do not approach the resonant frequencies of the robot. It is also discussed that static and dynamic stiffness-based optimizations cannot reduce the deflections of the cutting tool to a range smaller than the robot's repeatability [153].

There are many more methods, like finite element analysis, matrix structure analysis, and virtual joint modeling. To enhance stiffness models, further investigation needs to be conducted. The current state of the art shows a need for standardization in stiffness modeling, as there is currently no universally accepted procedure for establishing such models. Developing a modeling process with standard principles, evaluation indicators, and measuring techniques can simplify the selection and application of modeling methods. Additionally, the application of machine learning techniques, such as artificial neural networks, can be explored for stiffness modeling. Processing experimental data using machine learning algorithms can yield high-precision stiffness models [110].

Optimization of Energy use

Energy-efficient usage of industrial robots is essential for achieving cost savings and sustainable manufacturing processes. Manufacturers can achieve this by implementing strategies such as optimizing robot movement paths, reducing idle time, and using energy-efficient components, resulting in significant reductions in energy consumption of their robotic systems. Incorporating advanced algorithms enables robots to adapt to changing conditions and operate at their most efficient levels, optimizing energy usage [19].

One paper analyzed the different methods at different development stages of a production environment in regards to energy optimization. The results show that operating speed and payload strongly influence power consumption, and reducing it can be achieved through optimizing speed, reducing weight, and smoothing motion [154].

Further analysis in a different publication shows that in a setting where a 6-DoF is used to perform a 5-DoF task, energy savings of up to 20.8% can be expected. The proposed method uses the yaw angle as an optimization variable that can be set to a value in a certain range [21].

Another publication analyzes the general energy consumption of an industrial robot. The results show that cooling and movement speed have the most significant impact on energy consumption. The axis drives are responsible for 23% of the energy consumption. Based on this result, it is shown that optimizing the robot's movement in regards to optimal cycle time will significantly reduce its energy usage [19].

Summary

Setting the appropriate process parameters directly impacts the performance and efficiency of a production system. By carefully fine-tuning parameters such as singularity avoidance, joint accelerations, and jerks, the system can operate smoothly, minimizing wear on the structure while achieving precise trajectory tracking. Moreover, optimizing energy usage through the adjustment of parameters related to movement speed not only contributes to environmental sustainability but also leads to economic benefits by reducing long-term operational costs. Additionally, the consideration of parameters like stiffness and joint limits ensures the safety of both the manufacturing system and its operators. The optimization of stiffness, for instance, enables the maximization of the system's performance and the attainment of improved machining accuracy. In conclusion, the careful selection and optimization of process parameters play a significant role in achieving optimal performance, efficiency, safety, and utilization of manufacturing systems, thereby contributing to overall operational success.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The proposed method aims to provide a framework for optimizing various parameters of an industrial robot. By effectively utilizing the redundant degrees of freedom mentioned in Chapter 1.3, this method is applicable to robotic milling operations and WAAM processes. The successful implementation of this methodology improves the robot's overall performance and efficiency, leading to increased productivity in industrial operations.

The first step involves constructing a basic model that captures the kinematics and dynamics of an industrial robot. To test the method in a simple case, the first tests are performed on a non-redundant 6-DoF model. After validation on this simple model, redundant degrees of freedom are introduced. After that, the method is connected to CAM software to be tested in more complex scenarios.

Once the basic mathematical model is established, various optimization algorithms are implemented to determine the optimal values for each parameter associated with the redundant degrees of freedom. These methods and optimization algorithms will consider the industrial robot's specific objectives and constraints, like energy consumption, feed rates, and accelerations. The validation process entails conducting real-world tests and simulations to evaluate optimized parameter performance and verify the effectiveness of the proposed methodology.

3.2 General Methodology for Process Analysis

3.2.1 General Methodology

The flowchart in figure 3.1 shows the interdependence of a tool path, the used manufacturing machine, the material, and set boundary conditions. The machine defines general parameters like total working volume, DoF, maximum feed rates, and manufacturing process (additive

or subtractive). It can be a 6-axis CNC machine or an 8-DoF industrial robot. The part is referred to as the finished geometry as designed in CAD. The material is a user-defined element from which the part should be manufactured. The elements "Machine", "Part" and "Material" directly influence the toolpath that is necessary for manufacturing. The machine, for example, defines if the spindle or the work piece itself needs to be tilted to achieve the desired geometric features. Further elements like, available end-mills, desired depth of cut, machining strategy and operation sequence is regarded as adjacent parameters.

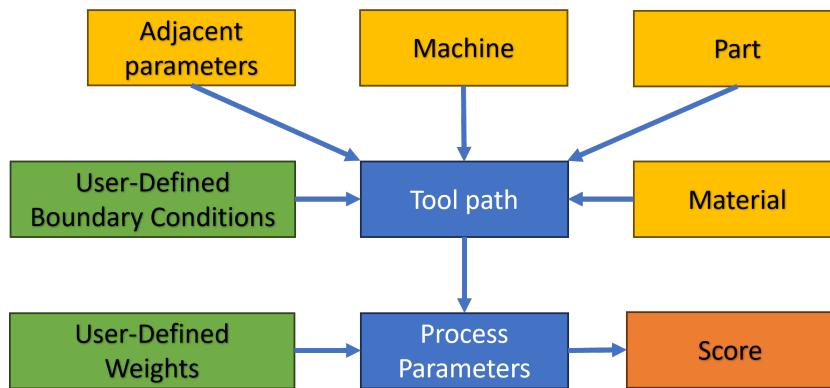


Figure 3.1: Interdependence of various parameters

As the tool path is only a relative movement in regards to the work piece, the user is required to define further parameters before starting the manufacturing process. One example is the positioning of the raw stock material in the machine itself and defining the coordinate system that is used as a reference for the tool center point (TCP). These two boundary conditions have to be in accordance with the machine's capabilities and can require extensive knowledge about the machine as well as performed process.

One of the other parameters that needs to be defined in the "User-Defined Boundary Conditions" is the positioning or constraining of redundant DoF. One of the simplest cases to illustrate this constraining, is when using a 6-DoF robot for milling operations. In milling, the TCP position is defined by three coordinates, namely X, Y, and Z, as well as the rotation around the X and Y axes. The rotation around the Z-axis needs to be defined manually, as the spindle is rotationally symmetrical around that axis. This constraint ensures that the robot maintains a specified pose while performing milling operations. The rotation around the Z axis can in theory be set to any arbitrarily value but can influence the overall process parameters significantly. In practical application this rotation value is limited due to factors like cable routing or joint limits.

After the constraints are set and the tool path is generated, various process parameters can be analyzed. Some of the more prominent parameters are the total angular travel of a specific joint or the total angular acceleration. In addition to these numerical values, the user can define a specific importance for the analyzed process parameters and, with a weighting of all available process parameters, calculate an overall score of the determined tool path.

3.2.2 Process Parameters

Table 3.1 presents a comprehensive overview of the various process parameters that can be derived from a tool path executed by an industrial robot.

Process Parameter	Numerical Form
Angular position of each joint	Time series
Angular velocity of each joint	Time series
Angular acceleration of each joint	Time series
Angular jerk of each joint	Time series
TCP coordinates (X,Y,Z)	Time series
TCP velocity (X,Y,Z)	Time series
TCP acceleration (X,Y,Z)	Time series
Direction changes of each joint	Scalar value
Total travel of each joint	Scalar value
Continuous energy usage	Time series
Total energy usage	Scalar value
Reachability index	Binary value
Singularity Analysis	Scalar value / Time series
Torch orientation	Time series

Table 3.1: Process parameter and their numerical form

One of the first key parameters is the joint position, which is typically recorded as an array containing the rotational position or extension values of each rotary or linear joint at every time-step. This information serves as a basis for determining subsequent parameters such as velocity, acceleration, and jerk.

By employing a forward kinematics approach or extracting it directly from the G-code, it becomes possible to determine the position (X Y Z position) and orientation (rotation) of the TCP (Tool Center Point). Additionally, the acceleration and jerk can be calculated by taking the respective derivatives with respect to time. These derived parameters, along with the joint positions, are all stored in the form of arrays that capture the temporal changes in their respective values.

In order to prolong the lifespan of an industrial robot, it is crucial to consider the load on individual joints. One important indicator of joint load is the number of direction changes that a joint undergoes during its operation. High-frequency rotation changes can result in significant degradation and loss of precision during manufacturing processes. This process parameter, known as the number of direction changes, is a scalar value that can be derived from the angular position of each joint. By further analyzing the joint position data, the total travel of a joint can be determined by taking the integral of the joint velocity over time.

Additionally, it can be analyzed whether a velocity change always at the same position and thus introduces wear at the same tooth flank.

Programs or tool paths that require less total joint travel are generally more desirable. By minimizing the number of direction changes and optimizing the joint travel, the stress and wear on the robot joints can be reduced, thereby extending the overall lifespan of the robot system.

Estimating the energy usage in industrial robot applications is another crucial aspect that is becoming more important in the current manufacturing environment. One option to accurately estimate energy consumption is to perform a multi body simulation. For that it is essential to have a correct 3D model that includes information about the weight and its distribution of the work piece, as well as the robot joints. Another option is to employ ML-approaches.

Furthermore, in cases where the industrial robot is utilized for WAAM, the power required for welding can be extracted from the G-code by analyzing the duration for which the welding torch remains active. The continuous energy usage is measured in Watts and, similar to the other parameters mentioned earlier, is also represented in the form of an array to capture the variations in energy consumption over time.

Total energy usage is a key parameter that can be measured directly during the manufacturing process. It provides valuable insights into the overall energy consumption of the industrial robot system. This parameter can be obtained by monitoring the energy usage in real-time or by integrating the time-series data of the energy consumption. By analyzing the energy usage, manufacturers can identify energy-intensive processes or operations, optimize energy consumption, and implement strategies to reduce overall energy consumption, leading to cost savings and environmental benefits.

The reachability index is a binary parameters used to determine the feasibility of executing a program in an industrial robot system. This index indicates whether all the necessary points defined in the tool path are inside the working volume of the robot and can be reached by the robot's TCP. This parameter helps ensure that the robot can physically access all the required positions in the work area. If any point is found to be outside the reachable workspace, it may indicate a need for adjustments in the program or the robot's positioning capabilities. Additional parameters like cable routing can also influence the reachability even though the endpoints lie inside the working volume of the robot. Wire-feed systems or optical fiber used to transmit a laser can only tolerate a set bending degree.

The singularity analysis parameter can be represented either as a time-series or as a single numerical value. It is based on the smallest eigenvalue of the Jacobian matrix, which is calculated using the robot's current configuration. This parameter can be stored in array form, capturing the changes in singularity analysis over time. Alternatively, only the smallest eigenvalue encountered during the entire tool path can be recorded. The analysis of the singularity time-series can be used to optimize non-optimal poses, ensuring that the robot avoids singular configurations that may lead to reduced performance or unexpected behavior.

Torch orientation is a critical parameter in WAAM. It monitors the tilt angle of the welding torch during the process. To achieve optimal performance, it is essential that the material depositions occur in the direction of gravity. When the welding head is positioned upside down, it represents a worst-case scenario where the welding process takes place against the force of gravity. When the tilt angle significantly deviates from the gravity vector, maintaining stability of the molten metal pool becomes more difficult, potentially leading to defects like sagging.

To ensure the torch orientation is properly monitored, a time series is used to record the deviation of the torch angle from the gravity vector. Analyzing this information helps identify any deviations or issues that may affect the quality of the deposited material.

Figure 3.2 visualizes how the different parameters are interconnected. It is clearly visible that all parameters can be derived from the angular position of the joints. This is a clear indicator of the importance of that information. The angular position data provides essential information for analyzing and optimizing the performance of the robot system. By monitoring and analyzing the joint positions, the user can gain insights into various aspects of the robot's operation and make informed decisions to optimize productivity.

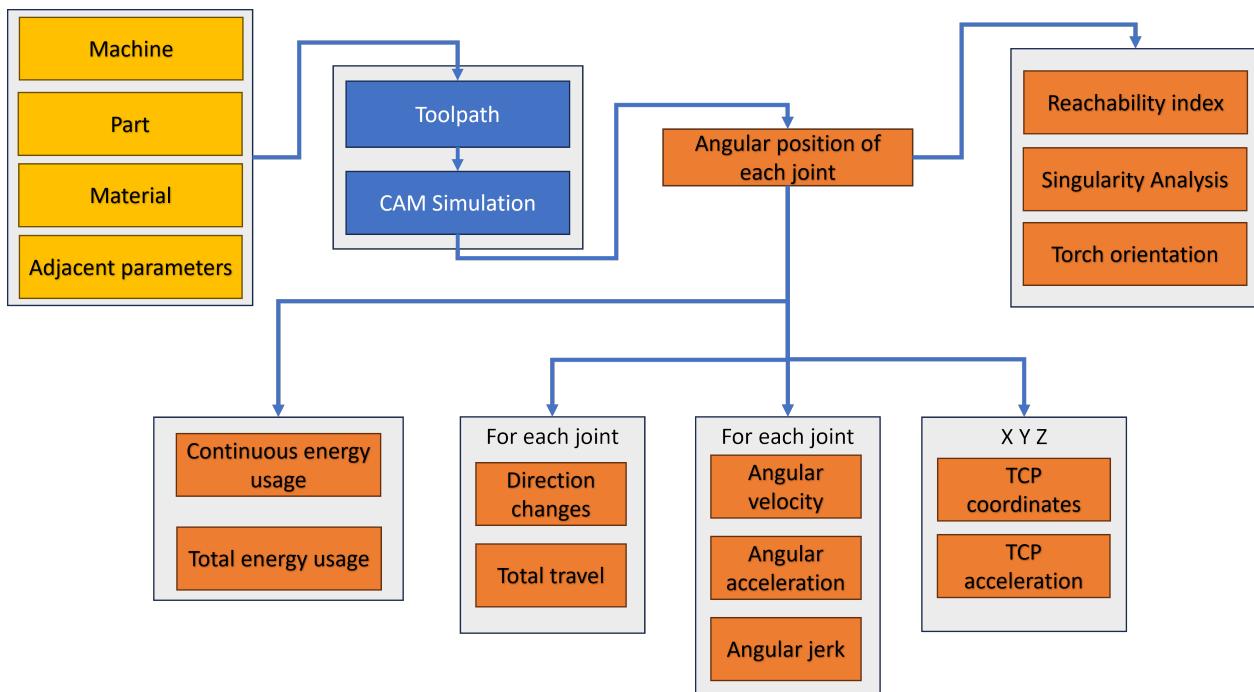


Figure 3.2: Parameter Flowchart

3.3 User-Defined Weights and Rating Calculation

To assess if a tool path is optimal or offers the possibility for improvement, a score or rating value is required that takes the process parameters and their importance into account.

Determining the relative importance of different parameters can involve subjective judgments, expert knowledge, and consideration of specific manufacturing constraints. For example, in some cases, minimizing joint jerk be the primary objective, while in others, energy usage may take precedence.

To quantify the performance of a tool path, the user can assign weights or importance factors to each parameter based on their specific requirements. These weights can reflect the relative significance of each parameter in achieving the desired manufacturing outcomes. A weighted sum or scoring method can then be used to evaluate and compare different tool paths based on the aggregated scores of the individual parameters.

It's important to note that the subjective weighing of parameters can vary between different manufacturing scenarios and may require continuous evaluation and adjustment based on changing priorities or goals.

The score of a tool path is calculated as shown in table 3.2. Each process parameter can take a local rating in the range 0-100. 0 being the least optimal, while 100 represents the optimal best case solution. This value is multiplied with the importance factor and returns the local score. All local scores are summed up and result in the overall global score of a that specific tool path with that specific importance assignment. The sum of all defined importance values must add up to 1 so that the most optimal tool path has the global score of 100.

Process Parameters	Local rating	Importance	Local score
Process Parameter 1	74	0.5	37
Process Parameter 2	34	0.1	3.4
Process Parameter 3	65	0.1	6.5
Process Parameter 4	22	0.3	6.6
Global Score			53,5

Table 3.2: Calculation of a tool path score

Calculating a local rating is not a straight-forward approach. The first problem is that based on a singular value like "direction changes," it is not possible to determine a local rating as it is not clear if that value is close to optimal or far from it. The solution to this problem is calculating the tool path with different boundary conditions or constraints like rotation around the C-axis. Figure 3.3 shows how a local score can be calculated by means of variation. Each variation leads to a different number of direction changes in joint 1. The local score is calculated by essentially applying a Min-Max scaler.

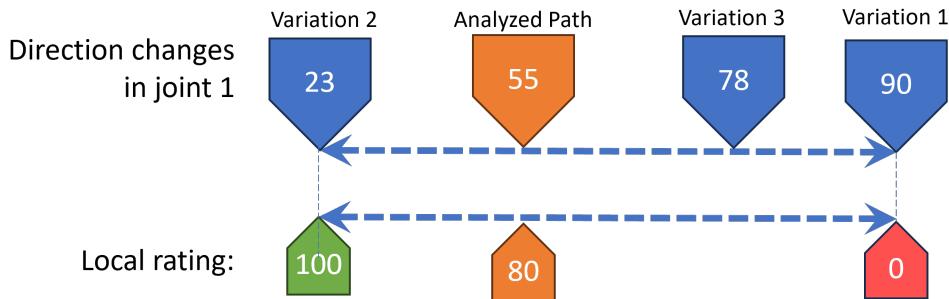


Figure 3.3: Calculation of the local score trough variation

Standardabweichung

3.4 Information Extraction form Time-Series Data

3.4.1 Information from Angular Velocity, Acceleration and Jerk

The next problem is connected to the time-series format of the recorded parameters. To acquire a local score, the time-series needs to be transformed into a scalar value. As each time series is capturing different phenomena, each one requires a individual analysis.

The angular position of a joint by itself does not provide much information from which much qualitative analysis can be performed. But by adding information like a temporal component it can serve as a significant information source.

Figure 3.4 visualizes what information needs to be added to enhance the information content of process parameters that are directly related to the angular position of joints.

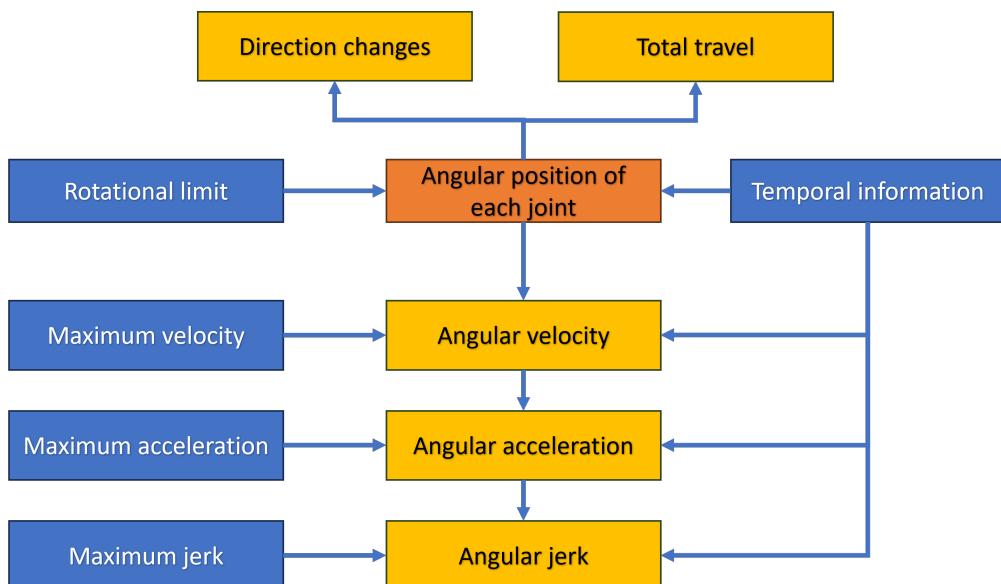


Figure 3.4: Additional Information for angular position of each joint

The first additional required information is the temporal element that specifies the time when a joint is supposed to be at which rotational position. This can either be recorded in equidistant time steps as shown in figure 3.5 or adapted to only record the change of position as shown in figure 3.6. Recording only the change of position is not optimal as it does not encompass the physical system where the position can not change from one time step to the other. Additionally it is not defined with which rotational velocity the joint need to change position. On the other hand, the continuous recording in equidistant time steps can result in significantly more recorded values and thus longer time-series.

Figure 3.5 shows the rotational position of a rotary joint in radians recorded with equidistant steps. Figure 3.6 shows how a time-series looks like if only the destination positions and the associate times are recorded.

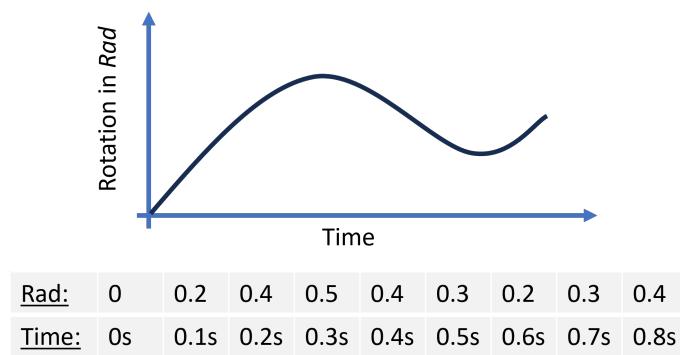


Figure 3.5: Time-series of a rotary joint with equidistant time steps

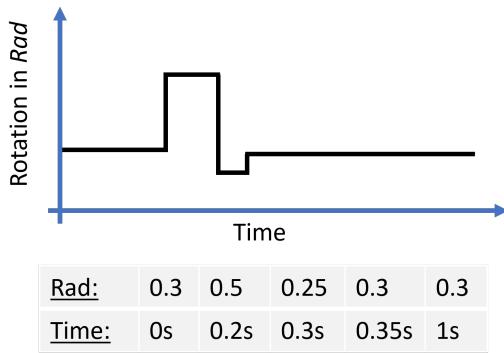


Figure 3.6: Time-series of a rotary joint with only the recorded end positions

Parameters that can be analyzed without any additional information is the number of direction changes as well as the total travel of a joint. The total travel is easily obtained by subtracting the position on two adjacent recorded points and summing up the absolute value. Additionally more information can be extracted by summing up, for example, the clockwise and anti-clockwise rotation individually. By combining the absolute value of these two values, the total travel of that joint is calculated. Figure 3.7 gives a visual representation on how the total travel can be calculated. Summing up the length of the green arrows result in the total forward rotation, while the sum of the length of the orange arrows is the backwards rotation.

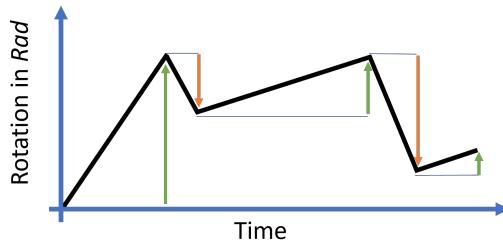


Figure 3.7: Summing up the rotation in the clockwise and anti-clockwise direction

The number of direction changes can also be determined by just analyzing the joint position. This value can be determined by finding all points where the position before and after is either smaller or larger. But this method does not apply to points where multiple positions are recorded at the same value right after each other. The solution to that problem is to introduce a tracking value that indicates if the previous change in direction was either up or down. If the direction of two positions is different from the tracking value, the direction change counter is incremented by 1. If the direction is in the same as the previous points or neutral, which means that two positions were identical, the counter is not changed.

Lastly, a simple analysis regarding the rotational limits can be performed, for that two different values need to be known. The first one is the physical limit that a joint can not exceed. Trying to drive the robot joint past that point can result in significant damage. The second value are possible soft limits that exist to prevent the joint from over rotation into its physical limits. To validate if any rotational positions are exceeded a simple comparison of all the values can be made.

Chapter 4

Implementation and Validation

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4.1 Implementation

4.2 Testing and Validation

4.3 Analysis and Discussion of the results

4.3.1 Analysis

4.3.2 Discussion

Chapter 5

Conclusion

5.1 Summary

5.2 Outlook

Cycle time

Stiffness value

Collision index

Man kann im Ausblick zeigen, dass ein Bauteil-Verschieben auch eine Verbesserung bringen kann, aber das ist erstmal nicht der Fokus

Chapter 6

Appendix

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Disclaimer

I hereby declare that this thesis is entirely the result of my own work except where otherwise indicated. I have only used the resources given in the list of references.

Garching, March 15, 2024

(Signature)