

MASTER THESIS

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Alogrithmic Payload Estimation

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Vienna, November 28, 2025

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Kurzfassung

Im Kontext der digitalen Fabrik an der UAS Technikum Wien, wo Menschen und Roboter sich die Aufgaben und den Arbeitsbereich teilen, ist die sichere und effiziente Handhabung von Nutzlasten von entscheidender Bedeutung. In der digitalen Fabrik der UAS werden Nutzlasten derzeit noch ohne Kenntnis ihrer internen Parameter gehandhabt, was zu potenziellen Manipulationsfehlern führen kann, die Menschen Schaden zufügen. Diese Studie beschreibt die Entwicklung einer fortschrittlichen Methode zur Kraft-/Drehmomentabschätzung, um die Fähigkeit eines UR5-Roboters zu verbessern, verschiedene Nutzlastbedingungen zu erkennen und zu handhaben. Diese Fähigkeit gewährleistet die Wahrnehmung des auf einer mobilen Industrieroboterplattform montierten UR5-Roboters, um den sicheren und effizienten Transfer von Nutzlasten zwischen verschiedenen Arbeitsbereichen innerhalb der Fabrik zu erleichtern. Die modernsten Methoden zur Kraft-/Drehmomentabschätzung für Industrieroboter nutzen neuronale Netze und Gauß-Prozesse als führende Methoden für genaue Nutzlastabschätzungen. Es wurde ein Gauß-Prozess-Modell entwickelt, um die Kräfte und Drehmomente abzuschätzen, die vom Roboter bei der Ausführung von Trajektorien erzeugt werden. In einem zukünftigen Projekt kann das Bewusstsein für Nutzlasten auf dem UR5-Roboter hinzugefügt werden. Auf diese Weise zielt die Studie darauf ab, die Intelligenz von Robotersystemen in industriellen Umgebungen zu verbessern und den Weg für eine höhere Produktivität und Sicherheit in digitalen Fertigungsumgebungen zu ebnen. Dieses Projekt führte auch zu einer Simulation, die eine Grundlage für die Aufzeichnung der Sensordaten aus dem UR5-Interieur.

Schlagworte: Gaussian Process, Force Estimation, Newton/Euler, UR5 Robot, Rigid Body

Abstract

In the context of the digital factory, at UAS Technikum Vienna, where humans and robots share the tasks and the workspace, the safe and efficient handling of payloads is essential. At the UAS digital factory payload is still handled without recognising anything about the payloads internal parameters, leading to potential manipulation failures causing human harm. This study describes the development of an advanced force/torque estimation method to improve a UR5 robots ability to recognize and handle different payload conditions. This capability ensures the perception of the UR5 robot mounted on a mobile industrial robot platform to facilitate the safe and efficient transfer of payloads between different workspaces within the factory. The state of the art methods of force/torque estimation for industrial robots serve neuronal networks and gaussian processes as the leading methods for accurate payload estimations. A gaussian process model has been developed to estimate the forces and torques generated by the robot when executing trajectories. In a future project face, an awareness of payloads can be added on the UR5 robot. In this way, the study aims to improve the intelligence of robotic systems in industrial environments and pave the way for higher productivity and safety in digital manufacturing environments. This project face also yeelted in a simulation that provides a basis to record the sensor data from the UR5's internal sensors and a force/torque sensor and a pipeline to train and evaluate gaussian process models.

Keywords: Gaussian Process, Force Estimation, Newton/Euler, UR5 Robot, Rigid Body

Acknowledgements

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1 Introduction

This chapter provides the common thread of the work and positions it within the broader field of robotic manipulation and human-robot collaboration. We first develop the motivation for the study, followed by a precise problem description, a formal problem statement, and the resulting aim of the work. Subsequent chapters present the State of the Art, the proposed methods, the experimental evaluation, a discussion of the results and their implications, and an outlook on future research directions.

1.1 Motivation

The motivation for this work is given in two subsections, where the Context subsection outlines the growing role of industrial and collaborative manipulators, while the Use Case subsection specifies a concrete manipulation scenario that requires accurate online identification of robot and payload parameters.

1.1.1 Context

As the robotics industry grows year over year, so does the number of robots operating around the world. It is estimated that there were approximately 3.4 million industrial robots in use worldwide in 2023 [1]. At the same time, the number of newly installed industrial robots has been increasing steadily since 2014; between 2021 and 2024, around 541 000 new industrial robots were installed per year [2]. Within this landscape, collaborative robots (cobots) represent about 10.5% of the industrial robot market, with 57 040 new units deployed in 2023, and annual cobot installations since 2020, 2022, and 2023 reaching roughly 50 000 units per year; importantly, these cobots are expected to complement rather than replace traditional industrial robots [3].

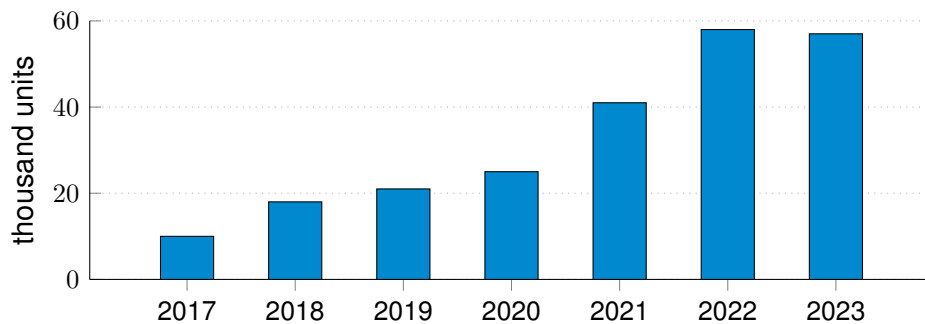


Figure 1: Global annual installations of collaborative robots from 2017 to 2023 (in thousand units). Data from [3].

The growing deployment of, and increasing collaboration with, robots imposes stringent requirements on safety and performance. As tasks become more complex and humans and robots share workspaces more closely, two closely related problems become central: safe manipulation of payloads and safe physical human-robot interaction. Addressing both problems requires accurate knowledge of the inertial parameters of the manipulated object together with consistent estimation of the robot's dynamic state and interaction forces. A collaborative robot must therefore maintain an internal representation of the mass-inertia properties of the payload or tool it manipulates and of the forces exchanged with its environment. This dynamic awareness is a prerequisite for compliant, contact-rich behaviour and for precise, high-performance manipulation in close proximity to humans. [4–15].

1.1.2 Use Case

The considerations above motivate a concrete use case in which a collaborative robotic arm must manipulate previously unseen objects in a shared workspace. A vision system can provide geometric information such as shape and dimensions of the payload, but it does not directly reveal its mass, center of mass (CoM), or inertia tensor. For safe and precise execution of contact-rich tasks, however, these inertial properties are indispensable.

In practice, the only viable way to obtain this information during operation is to exploit the robot's own sensor data, such as joint positions, velocities and accelerations, motor currents/torques, and optionally wrist force/torque measurements. From these signals, one can estimate both the robot's rigid-body parameters and the inertial properties of the attached payload. This leads to the dual identification problem of robot dynamic parameter identification (RDPI) and payload dynamic parameter identification (PDPI).

The targeted application scenario comprises typical industrial and collaborative tasks such as pick-and-place, human-assisted manipulation, and precise tool use. In all these cases, RDPI and PDPI must be performed online so that the controller maintains an up-to-date model of the combined robot-payload dynamics and the resulting contact forces. Robust online identification methods are therefore a key enabling technology for safe human-robot collaboration and high-performance manipulation with arbitrary payloads and tools.

Next is: use case, problem description (mathematical background), problem statement, contribution. Then state of the art.

1.2 Problem Statement

The subsection Kinematic and Dynamic Background of Robot Manipulation and Environment Interaction analyses why endowing a robotic manipulator with awareness of its own dynamics, payload, and tools is mathematically demanding and cannot be achieved by simple calculation or direct measurement alone. The subsection Limitations of the Current State of the Art then identifies the main shortcomings of existing identification and estimation methods in the literature, thereby motivating the contribution of this work.

1.2.1 Kinematic and Dynamic Background of Robot Manipulation and Environment Interaction

The inertial properties of a rigid body are collected in the standard 10-dimensional parameter vector

$$\phi^T = \begin{bmatrix} m & mc_x & mc_y & mc_z & J_{xx} & J_{xy} & J_{xz} & J_{yy} & J_{yz} & J_{zz} \end{bmatrix} \in \mathbb{R}^{10}, \quad (1)$$

which enters the Newton-Euler equations

$$\begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{f} \\ \boldsymbol{\tau} \end{bmatrix} = m \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{I}_{3 \times 3} & -[\mathbf{c}]^\times \\ [\mathbf{c}]^\times & \mathbf{J}_s \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{a} \\ \boldsymbol{\alpha} \end{bmatrix} + \begin{bmatrix} m[\boldsymbol{\omega}]^\times [\boldsymbol{\omega}]^\times \mathbf{c} \\ [\boldsymbol{\omega}]^\times \mathbf{J}_s \boldsymbol{\omega} \end{bmatrix}, \quad (2)$$

so that the wrench $(\mathbf{f}, \boldsymbol{\tau})$ depends nonlinearly on the motion $(\mathbf{a}, \boldsymbol{\alpha}, \boldsymbol{\omega})$ but linearly on ϕ .

For the equipment rigidly attached to the tool flange (gripper/tool, with or without payload/load) we define an effective rigid-body parameter vector

$$\phi_{\text{eff}} = \begin{cases} \phi_{\text{tool}}, & \text{no load,} \\ \phi_{\text{tool}} + \phi_{\text{load}}, & \text{with load,} \end{cases} \quad (3)$$

which acts on top of the nominal robot dynamics. In contrast, with a clean flange (no tool/no load) only the robot parameters ϕ_{robot} contribute to the system dynamics.

The robot structure itself is described by its own parameter vector ϕ_{robot} , which enters the standard joint-space rigid-body dynamics. We denote this contribution by $\boldsymbol{\tau}_{\text{robot}}$ (clean flange),

$$\boldsymbol{\tau}_{\text{robot}} = \mathbf{M}(\mathbf{q})\ddot{\mathbf{q}} + \mathbf{C}(\mathbf{q}, \dot{\mathbf{q}})\dot{\mathbf{q}} + \mathbf{G}(\mathbf{q}) + \boldsymbol{\tau}_f(\dot{\mathbf{q}}), \quad (4)$$

where $\boldsymbol{\tau}_f(\dot{\mathbf{q}})$ models joint-level non-idealities such as Coulomb and viscous friction, possible Stribeck effects, and drive-train phenomena like backlash.

The wrench generated by the effective rigid body at the flange induces an additional joint-space torque

$$\boldsymbol{\tau}_{\text{ext}} = \mathbf{J}^T(\mathbf{q}) \vec{F}_{\text{ext}}(\phi_{\text{eff}}), \quad (5)$$

where $\mathbf{J}(\mathbf{q})$ is the end-effector Jacobian. In the clean-flange case (no tool/no load), \vec{F}_{ext} reduces to purely external interaction forces with the environment (e.g. contacts or collisions).

The motor torques are therefore

$$\boldsymbol{\tau}_{\text{motor}} = \boldsymbol{\tau}_{\text{robot}} + \boldsymbol{\tau}_{\text{ext}}(\phi_{\text{eff}}), \quad (6)$$

and for brushless DC actuators with torque constant k_t one obtains the current–torque relation

$$\boldsymbol{\tau}_{\text{motor}} = k_t \mathbf{I} \quad \Rightarrow \quad \mathbf{I} = \frac{\boldsymbol{\tau}_{\text{robot}} + \boldsymbol{\tau}_{\text{ext}}(\phi_{\text{eff}})}{k_t}. \quad (7)$$

If a force/torque sensor is mounted at the flange, the measured wrench can be written, using the relations derived in the Appendix, as

$$\vec{F}_{\text{measured}} = Y(\mathbf{a}, \boldsymbol{\alpha}, \boldsymbol{\omega}) \phi_{\text{eff}} + \vec{F}_{\text{bias}} + \vec{n}, \quad (8)$$

where $Y(\cdot)$ is the 6×10 Newton-Euler regressor matrix defined in the Appendix. It is linear in the inertial parameter vector ϕ_{eff} , but depends nonlinearly on the motion variables $(\mathbf{a}, \alpha, \omega)$. The terms \vec{F}_{bias} and \vec{n} denote sensor bias and noise, respectively.¹ The motion variables $(\mathbf{a}, \alpha, \omega)$ are in turn determined by the joint state and motor torques through the nonlinear dynamics (4)–(7).

From an identification viewpoint, this creates two tightly coupled challenges. First, all available measurements (joint currents, positions, velocities and flange wrench) depend on the combined dynamics of robot, tool and load via the nonlinear relationships (4)–(8), so the contribution of the load parameters ϕ_{load} cannot be isolated by simple computation or direct measurement. Second, accurate payload or load dynamic parameter identification (PDPI) presupposes an equally accurate compensation of the underlying robot–tool dynamics, including unmodelled effects such as friction and joint transmission nonlinearities. Together, these aspects make dynamic awareness of payload, tool and robot a mathematically demanding inverse problem rather than a straightforward calculation from geometric or sensor data.

1.2.2 Limitations of the Current State of the Art

The SoA analysis in reveals several recurring gaps that are directly relevant for this work:

- **No unified dynamic representation of robot, tool and payload.** Classical methods typically treat robot RDPI in joint or motor space, PDPI in the FT frame, and interaction-force estimation via observers as largely separate problems [4, 6–8, 13, 14, 16–19] GP-based approaches lump robot, tool, payload, friction and contact into a single disturbance term on top of a nominal RBD [20–23], and deep sequence models either focus on contact / torque estimation or on payload identification, but not both in a single model [15, 24–30]. Physics-informed networks provide accurate robot dynamics but assume a fixed tool/payload and contact-free operation [31–35] None of these lines yields a compact, measurement-frame representation of the effective rigid body (robot+tool+payload) together with its interaction wrench.
- **Weak and fragmentary treatment of payload inertia and effective rigid body.** In Q1, payload mass (and often CoM) can be estimated accurately, but inertia tensors are frequently weakly excited, ill-conditioned or only partially validated, especially in cobot-safe regimes [4, 7, 8, 11, 36] Q2-Q4 largely assume fixed tools/payloads and do not identify the full effective rigid body at all [20, 23, 25, 26, 31, 33, 34] As a result, there is no robust, general mechanism to obtain and maintain an accurate ϕ_{eff} that could be used systematically for tool/gripper compensation and subsequent PDPI.
- **Entangled or black-box treatment of friction, transmission and contact effects.** Many observer-based and LS/NE methods in Q1 are highly sensitive to imperfect friction and transmission models; errors grow around velocity reversals and at higher speeds, even with advanced observers or NN friction terms [6, 16–19, 37] Q2 explicitly models all

¹All experiments in this work are simulation-based; in the subsequent method formulation, sensor bias and noise are therefore neglected and (8) is used without \vec{F}_{bias} and \vec{n} .

unmodelled dynamics, friction and contacts as a single GP disturbance [20–22], which improves prediction but makes it hard to separate payload, friction and contact contributions in a physics-consistent way. Q3 and Q4 introduce powerful black-box or PINN components, but again focus on reducing torque/current residuals rather than producing explicit, structured estimates of friction and interaction wrenches [25, 26, 31, 34].

- **Dependence on carefully designed excitation and repeated with/without-payload experiments.** Strong RDPI/PDPI results in Q1 and Q3 typically rely on long, highly exciting trajectories (S-curves, Fourier/RRT paths) and repeated runs with and without payloads, often for each new object [4, 8–10, 13, 15, 16, 28–30, 36] This calibration-style use of offline data is practical for commissioning, but gives limited evidence that a single offline-trained model, once obtained, can provide robust dynamic awareness across diverse everyday motions and payload changes without further re-identification.
- **Limited use of temporal models for physics-consistent PDPI and force estimation.** Deep sequence models (LSTM/GRU/TCN) are used in Q3 either for torque/force prediction [24–27] or for payload classification/estimation in largely static mappings [15, 28–30] No existing work combines a sequence model with an explicit effective rigid-body representation to jointly provide accurate joint-torque prediction, tool/gripper compensation and interaction-force estimation in the measurement frame.

Overall, the current SoA provides strong ingredients—classical LS/NE regressors, GP residuals, sequence models and physics-informed networks—but does not yet offer a compact, measurement-frame model that endows a manipulator with unified, robust dynamic awareness of its own robot-tool-payload system and its interaction forces under realistic cobot operating conditions.

1.3 Aim of Work

The SoA review suggests that the strongest results for robot inverse dynamics and friction modelling are obtained when physics-structured networks such as DeLaN/PINN are combined with data-driven residual learners. Extended DeLaN models can capture motor couplings and current–torque relations with high accuracy from encoder and motor data alone [31, 32], while recent PINN-based approaches demonstrate that adding a learned residual (e.g. TCN) on top of a structured dynamics model yields state-of-the-art joint-torque prediction and friction compensation on industrial robots [33, 34]. These works, however, focus purely on RDPI for a fixed robot-tool configuration and do not provide an explicit, measurement-frame model of the effective rigid body (robot+tool+payload) or its interaction wrench.

The aim of this thesis is to build on these insights and develop a physics-informed, sequence-model-based inverse-dynamics architecture that serves as a strong basis for tool/gripper compensation and, ultimately, payload dynamic parameter identification. Concretely, the work pursues the following objectives:

- Use a DeLaN-style structured network to learn the nominal robot inverse dynamics from joint states and motor currents, including joint friction and drive-train effects, following the ideas of [31, 32, 34]. The model is trained offline on carefully designed excitation trajectories (in simulation in this thesis), and then deployed for real-time torque prediction during operation.
- Augment this structured model with a recurrent sequence model (LSTM) that takes joint histories and DeLaN residuals as input and learns to predict the remaining flange wrench in the measurement frame. This separates the well-modelled robot base dynamics from the effective rigid-body contribution of tool and gripper, providing a compact representation of ϕ_{eff} —induced effects that is consistent with the kinematic and Newton-Euler background developed in Section ??.
- Evaluate the resulting DeLaN+LSTM architecture as a foundation for PDPI: first by quantifying its ability to compensate tool/gripper dynamics and predict joint torques across diverse trajectories, then by analysing how accurately the inferred effective wrench tracks changes in attached loads.

By combining a physics-informed inverse-dynamics backbone with a sequence model trained offline but executed online, this work aims to move from the fragmented, calibration-heavy SoA towards a unified and practically deployable notion of dynamic awareness: a robot that can reliably predict its own joint torques and separate its intrinsic dynamics from tool and payload effects in the measurement frame, under cobot-typical operating conditions.

2 State of the Art

2.1 Research Strategy

The literature search was organised around five content clusters C_1, \dots, C_5 and the goal/context term sets C_{mt} and C_{ct} . The clusters capture the main methodological families, while C_{mt} and C_{ct} constrain the queries to estimation-related objectives in robotic manipulation:

- C_1 = Classical / Observers
- C_2 = Gaussian Process (GP)
- C_3 = Deep Sequence Models (MLP / GRU / TCN / Transformer / LSTM)
- C_4 = Physics-Informed / Differentiable
- C_5 = Surveys
- C_T = Goal & Domain Terms
 - C_{mt} = Estimation & Modeling Terms
 - C_{ct} = Robotics Context Terms

The detailed index terms associated with each set are listed in Appendix B. For each content cluster C_i , a family of queries Q_i was constructed by combining (disjunctions of) its index terms with estimation & modelling terms from C_{mt} and robotics context terms from C_{ct} . Figure 2 illustrates this logic schematically as a generalised set intersection over the three term groups.

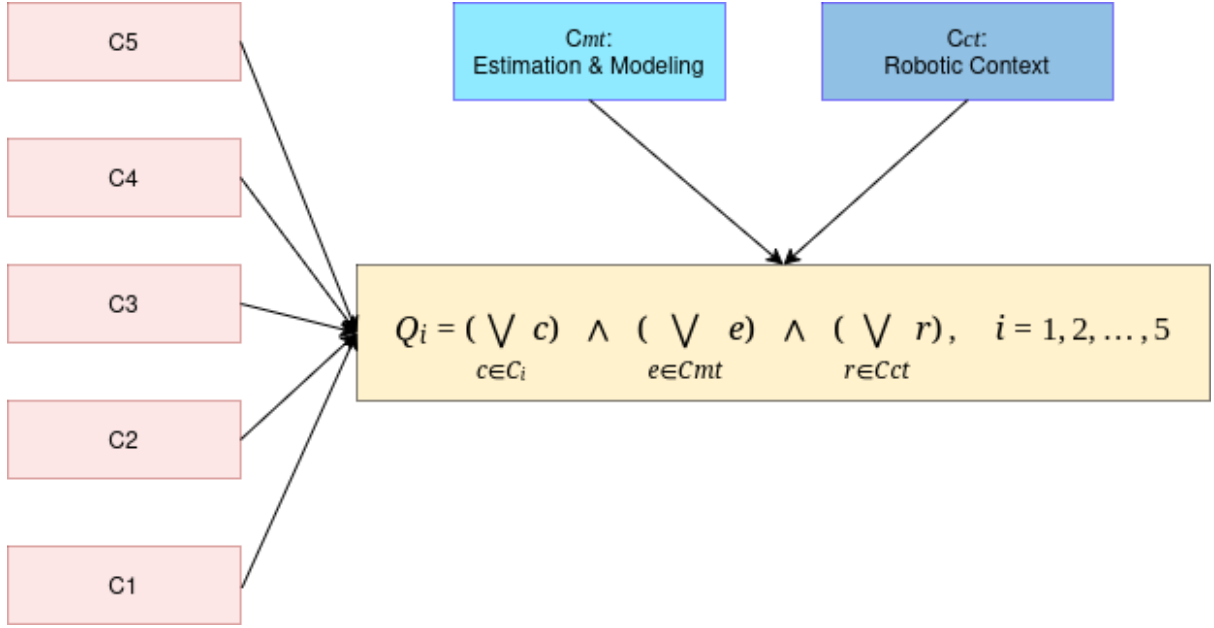


Figure 2: Query logic used to categorise the SoA papers. Each category Q_i is formed by combining content clusters C_i with estimation & modelling terms C_{mt} and robotics context terms C_{ct} . The combined representation C and query set Q are formed by the union of their respective subsets.

This process yielded 36 papers that are directly relevant to robot and payload dynamics, interaction force estimation and related identification problems. Table 1 summarises how these works are distributed across the five query categories and distinguishes whether each paper focuses on robot rigid-body dynamics, payload dynamics, or both.

Table 1: Overview of query results by category.

Query	Relev. SoA	Rigid-body	Payload	Both
Q_1 = Classical / Observers	17	7	7	3
Q_2 = Gaussian Process (GP)	4	4	0	0
Q_3 = Deep Sequence Models	8	4	4	0
Q_4 = Physics-Informed / Diff.	5	5	0	0
Q_5 = Surveys	2	—	—	—
Total	36	20	11	3

2.2 SoA for Q1

Category Q1 groups classical model-based methods for robot and payload dynamics and interaction force estimation, mostly based on linearly parameterised rigid-body dynamics (RBD) and LS/WLS-type Newton-Euler regressors, sometimes combined with observers and Kalman filters [4–11, 13, 14, 16–19, 36, 37]. Across these works, three main lines of research

can be distinguished: (i) payload dynamic parameter identification (PDPI) using force/torque (FT) sensing [4, 7, 8, 11], (ii) robot and payload dynamic parameter identification in joint or motor-current space without FT sensors [9, 10, 13, 16, 36, 37], and (iii) observer-based sensorless force/torque estimation and online payload identification using proprioceptive data [5, 6, 14, 17–19]. Across Q1, mass is usually identified accurately, CoM moderately well, and inertia emerges as the hardest quantity to estimate robustly [4, 7, 8, 11, 36].

A first group of methods performs PDPI directly in the FT frame [4, 7, 8, 11]. They typically exploit static poses to identify the payload mass and centre of mass, and then use dedicated dynamic excitation trajectories together with LS or TLS-type Newton-Euler regressors to estimate the inertia tensor. Representative works demonstrate that, given a sufficiently informative excitation and an FT sensor rigidly mounted at the flange, payload mass can be recovered very accurately and CoM can be estimated with reasonable precision, even for heavy payloads [4, 8]. However, inertia estimates are systematically more fragile—especially under cobot-typical safety constraints with short trajectories and low accelerations—and in several cases quantitative ground truth for CoM and inertia is missing or only partially available (validation is often given in terms of residual gravitational/inertial wrench after compensation rather than direct parameter error) [4, 7, 8, 11]. Moreover, these approaches require additional FT hardware and considerable experimental effort in the form of carefully designed calibration motions.

A second group tackles robot dynamic parameter identification (RDPI) and PDPI in joint space or motor-current space without FT sensors [9, 10, 13, 16, 36, 37]. Here, fully or partially decoupled identification schemes are designed to separate gravitational, frictional and inertial effects, often using families of S-curve or Fourier trajectories executed both with and without payload [9, 10, 13, 16]. Double-weighted WLS and optimisation-enhanced LS methods achieve very accurate joint-torque prediction and good agreement with CAD-based payload models, confirming that classical LS/NE pipelines—as systematised, for example, by Swevers et al. [13]—remain a strong baseline for RDPI and PDPI [9, 10, 13, 16, 36, 37]. At the same time, most of these methods are offline, rely on repeated execution of long, highly exciting trajectories, and assume that payloads are rigidly mounted and change only between identification runs; even in works that introduce an online payload-identification stage [36], the base robot model is still obtained by an offline procedure. They therefore provide an excellent commissioning tool, but do not by themselves endow the robot with continuous online awareness of changing tools and payloads during normal task execution.

A third line of work focuses on sensorless estimation of external joint torques and end-effector wrenches using observers and filters [6, 14, 17–19]. Momentum observers, higher-order sliding-mode observers, adaptive Kalman filters and high-order finite-time observers use a nominal RBD model together with controller torques and joint measurements to reconstruct external forces, sometimes with probabilistic covariance information. These methods achieve good performance in collision detection, binary contact decisions and execution monitoring, and some approaches augment classical friction models with learned nonlinear terms such as neural-network Stribeck approximations [6, 14, 19]. Nevertheless, their accuracy depends critically on the quality of the underlying RBD and friction models, and residual force errors remain significant in highly dynamic phases or around velocity reversals [6, 18, 19]. Importantly, most

observer-based schemes treat payloads and tools as fixed parts of the nominal model or as lumped disturbances, and do not explicitly estimate payload parameters.

More recent contributions bridge RDPI/PDPI and observer-based estimation by using proprioceptive data to identify payload parameters online [5, 36]. Momentum-observer-based schemes and parameter-difference methods compute external joint torques as residuals between measured and model-based torques and apply LS/RLS Newton-Euler regressors to recover payload mass, CoM and, in some cases, inertia during regular robot operation. These works demonstrate that accurate online PDPI is possible without FT sensors, provided that a reasonably accurate base robot model, friction compensation and sufficiently exciting motions are available [5, 36]. At the same time, they underline several structural limitations: inertia remains the hardest quantity to identify robustly; nonlinear friction, backlash and transmission effects must be modelled or learned carefully (with several authors explicitly noting residual error peaks near motion reversal due to unmodelled friction [13, 37]); and the resulting estimators still rely on a clear separation between “robot model” and “payload” rather than providing a unified, continuously updated representation of robot, tool and load.

Taken together, the Q1 literature shows that classical model-based techniques can deliver high-quality RDPI and PDPI, as well as useful sensorless interaction-force estimates, but typically only under carefully controlled excitation and with significant offline calibration [4, 7–10, 13, 16, 18, 19, 36, 37]. From the perspective of this work, the main gaps are the lack of a unified, online notion of dynamic awareness that jointly covers robot, tool and payload; the persistent difficulty of reliably identifying and exploiting payload inertia in cobot-safe regimes; and the sensitivity of existing approaches to friction and transmission nonlinearities. These limitations directly motivate the methodological choices and objectives formulated in the problem statement and aim of work.

2.3 SoA for Q2

Category Q2 groups Gaussian Process (GP) and GP-hybrid methods for inverse dynamics and sensorless contact estimation. In all cases, a GP is trained offline as a residual or surrogate model on top of a nominal rigid-body dynamics (RBD) description, and then deployed online for torque or disturbance prediction [20, 22]

The first two works use GPs to improve joint-space contact-force estimation. In [20], an enhanced GP learns the residual dynamics between an Euler-Lagrange model and measured torques; this residual is injected into a decoupling disturbance observer and Kalman filter to obtain external joint torques and end-effector forces. The follow-up [21] extends this to a GP-adaptive disturbance Kalman filter, where the disturbance covariance is adjusted based on the GP output. Both papers show reduced estimation error and faster convergence than purely model-based observers, but require a reasonably accurate nominal model, high-quality proprioception and extensive non-contact training data; payload and tool effects are absorbed into a single residual term.

A third work combines GP inverse dynamics with learning-based contact detection [22]. A GP predicts non-contact motor torques from joint states, and the residual between measured

and GP-predicted torques is passed to a convolutional neural network that classifies contact vs. no-contact during assembly tasks, achieving high classification accuracy on scripted collisions. The method remains task-specific and does not recover physical interaction forces or payload parameters.

Finally, [23] compares GPs and neural networks for inverse dynamics when the inputs include physics-inspired features (e.g. nominal RBD torques). Embedding such structure improves data efficiency and prediction accuracy, and GPs are competitive for moderate dataset sizes, but the study is limited to torque prediction for fixed tools and trajectories.

Overall, Q2 shows that GPs are effective residual models for unmodelled robot dynamics and can enhance sensorless contact estimation [20–23]. However, the GP is always a lumped compensator: there is no explicit separation of robot, tool and payload dynamics, no sequence-aware handling of backlash or history-dependent friction, and no unified dynamic representation in the measurement frame that could serve as a precise, task-agnostic basis for tool/gripper compensation and subsequent PDPI.

2.4 SoA for Q3

Category Q3 comprises deep-learning approaches for inverse dynamics, force estimation and payload identification. Most methods either learn residual dynamics on top of a nominal rigid-body model or learn a direct mapping from joint histories to payload parameters or contact indicators, using LSTM/GRU-type sequence models, feed-forward networks, CNNs or ensemble methods [15, 24–30].

A first group focuses on deep residual inverse dynamics on top of a nominal RBD model. In [24], the authors use the public Franka Panda dataset and the Gaz et al. model to compute joint-torque residuals between data and RBD prediction, and train a bootstrapped LSTM ensemble (BLL-LSTM) on sequences of (q, \dot{q}, \ddot{q}) to predict these residuals. The ensemble clearly improves torque prediction over Gaussian processes and single models on held-out dataset splits, but remains a purely offline, dataset-based study that assumes a reasonably accurate full robot model. Similarly, [25] trains LSTMs to map base FT-wrench and joint states to end-effector tip forces, and joint states to joint torques, on a 7-DoF Panda. The LSTMs outperform MLPs, 1D convolutions and a DeLaN baseline in both simulation and real experiments, but are evaluated in a task-specific setting and rely on FT hardware and simulation-generated ground-truth forces.

A second group uses deep models to infer end-effector wrench or contact directly from proprioception. The adaptive sparse GRNN force observer in [26] maps joint positions, velocities, accelerations and motor currents to 6D wrench on a UR5 teleoperation system, using an FT sensor only for supervision; it achieves strong soft/stiff collision force estimation and outperforms GP and MLP baselines. In [27], a CNN is trained in IsaacGym with domain randomisation to detect and localise link-environment contacts for a 7-DoF Panda using only link velocities and pose errors (no torque or FT sensing). The network reaches around 98% accuracy in sim-to-real contact localisation, but does not estimate wrench magnitude or payload dynamics.

The third line of work addresses payload dynamic parameter identification (PDPI) with deep

networks and ensembles. A learning-based method for the OpenMANIPULATOR-X in [15] combines a nominal RBD model and camera pose estimation with an MLP that processes joint states and velocity sign to estimate per-joint torque contributions; a subsequent LS step recovers payload mass and CoM of known objects, with average errors of about 9% in mass and 18% in CoM. For collaborative cobots, [29] proposes a batch ensemble of weak learners (NNs or decision trees) that directly map (q, \dot{q}, τ) to payload parameters for a library of 77 payloads along a fixed excitation trajectory on a Franka robot; the method achieves good sim-to-real transfer and clearly reduces mass/CoM error compared to RLS, but still requires a dedicated excitation path per payload. This is generalised in [28, 30], which introduce incremental ensemble learning for PDPI along arbitrary task paths. The initial incremental ensemble [28] adapts weak learners online based on Euclidean distance in feature space but suffers from catastrophic forgetting on previously seen trajectories. The follow-up work [30] adds a bag-based classifier that routes new path segments to the most relevant weak learner and spawns new learners as required, thereby preserving accuracy on old paths while adapting to new ones and eliminating the explicit excitation trajectory. The price is a growing ensemble size and the fact that the individual learners remain small feed-forward networks without explicit temporal structure.

Overall, the Q3 literature shows that deep models can substantially improve torque and force estimation and can achieve competitive PDPI, including sim-to-real transfer for collaborative robots. At the same time, existing works either depend on accurate nominal models and FT supervision, or operate as largely black-box payload regressors, and none provide a unified deep sequence model that simultaneously delivers joint-torque prediction, tool/payload compensation and interaction-force awareness during general manipulation tasks.

2.5 SoA for Q4

Category Q4 groups physics-informed and differentiable dynamics models, where deep networks are structured by Lagrangian or state-space physics and trained on joint data to predict torques or currents. The central goal in all works is accurate robot dynamic parameter identification (RDPI) and inverse dynamics prediction for fixed robots; payload dynamics and interaction forces are not estimated explicitly.

A first line of work builds on Deep Lagrangian Networks (DeLaN) and related continuous-time models. The survey and benchmark in [32] compares structured DeLaN/HNN models against black-box neural networks on low-DoF systems and a 4-DoF WAM arm, showing that physics-informed architectures achieve lower normalised errors and much longer valid prediction horizons than unconstrained networks. However, these models assume conservative dynamics without contacts, and friction is either neglected or handled separately. Extending this idea, [31] learns an “extended DeLaN” that incorporates motor couplings and friction on a UR10e arm, using joint positions, velocities and accelerations together with motor currents. The network learns Lagrangian terms plus actuator/friction parameters and predicts motor currents with high accuracy in simulation and on hardware, outperforming the original DeLaN and a feed-forward baseline, yet still under fixed tool/payload and contact-free conditions.

A second line of work uses physics-informed neural networks (PINNs) as refinements of classical LS/NE identification. In [33], base parameters are first obtained by a Newton-Euler regressor; a decomposed PINN then minimises a hybrid loss combining data residuals and the rigid-body dynamics equations, reducing joint-torque RMSE compared to LS alone. Building on this, [34] proposes a friction-inclusive PINN for multi-joint industrial robots without joint torque sensors, combining Lagrangian dynamics with an explicit Stribeck friction model and a history-based residual network that learns remaining errors over a time window. The resulting hybrid model achieves very strong joint-torque (or current) prediction across several joints and outperforms DeLaN-type and LS baselines. Finally, [35] introduces an H-PINN for a single collaborative robot joint, embedding the joint’s state-space dynamics into an RNN cell and jointly estimating physical parameters and state transitions, with highly accurate joint-level dynamics prediction in simulation and experiments. Across Q4, physics-informed deep models consistently improve inverse-dynamics prediction and friction compensation compared to purely black-box networks, while using only encoder and motor data [31–35]. At the same time, they are trained offline on carefully designed excitation trajectories, do not model changing payloads or contact forces explicitly, and can be architecturally complex—especially when scaling beyond low-DoF setups or single joints. Thus, Q4 provides strong structured baselines for fixed robot dynamics, but does not yet realise an online, unified dynamic awareness of robot, tool and payload with explicit force estimation, as targeted in this work.

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A Appendix Kinematic and Dynamic Background of Robot Manipulation and Environment Interaction

The external wrench \vec{F}_{ext} in (5) is a 6-dimensional vector expressed in the sensor/tool frame S ,

$$\vec{F}_{\text{ext}} = \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{f} \\ \boldsymbol{\tau} \end{bmatrix} \in \mathbb{R}^6, \quad (9)$$

with $\mathbf{f} \in \mathbb{R}^3$ the linear force and $\boldsymbol{\tau} \in \mathbb{R}^3$ the moment about the frame origin. For a rigid body with parameters ϕ_{eff} (mass, CoM and inertia) moving with linear and angular motion $(\mathbf{a}, \boldsymbol{\alpha}, \boldsymbol{\omega})$, the Newton–Euler equations (cf. (2)) give

$$\begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{f} \\ \boldsymbol{\tau} \end{bmatrix} = m \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{I} & -[\mathbf{c}]^\times \\ [\mathbf{c}]^\times & \mathbf{J}_s \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{a} \\ \boldsymbol{\alpha} \end{bmatrix} + \begin{bmatrix} m[\boldsymbol{\omega}]^\times [\boldsymbol{\omega}]^\times \mathbf{c} \\ [\boldsymbol{\omega}]^\times \mathbf{J}_s \boldsymbol{\omega} \end{bmatrix}. \quad (10)$$

The translational part \mathbf{f} can be written as

$$\mathbf{f} = m\mathbf{a} - m[\mathbf{c}]^\times \boldsymbol{\alpha} + m[\boldsymbol{\omega}]^\times [\boldsymbol{\omega}]^\times \mathbf{c}, \quad (11)$$

where the first term $m\mathbf{a}$ is the familiar inertial force, while $-m[\mathbf{c}]^\times \boldsymbol{\alpha}$ and $m[\boldsymbol{\omega}]^\times [\boldsymbol{\omega}]^\times \mathbf{c}$ collect the additional centripetal and Coriolis contributions induced by the angular motion $\boldsymbol{\omega}$ and the CoM offset \mathbf{c} . Similarly, the rotational part $\boldsymbol{\tau}$ can be written as

$$\boldsymbol{\tau} = m[\mathbf{c}]^\times \mathbf{a} + \mathbf{J}_s \boldsymbol{\alpha} + [\boldsymbol{\omega}]^\times \mathbf{J}_s \boldsymbol{\omega}, \quad (12)$$

where $\mathbf{J}_s \boldsymbol{\alpha}$ is the inertial moment due to angular acceleration, $m[\mathbf{c}]^\times \mathbf{a}$ is the torque induced by the translational acceleration of the offset CoM, and $[\boldsymbol{\omega}]^\times \mathbf{J}_s \boldsymbol{\omega}$ represents gyroscopic effects associated with the angular velocity $\boldsymbol{\omega}$.

In compact form, for a given motion $(\mathbf{a}, \boldsymbol{\alpha}, \boldsymbol{\omega})$ this can be written as

$$\vec{F}_{\text{ext}} = \vec{F}_{\text{dyn}}(\mathbf{a}, \boldsymbol{\alpha}, \boldsymbol{\omega}; \phi_{\text{eff}}) = Y(\mathbf{a}, \boldsymbol{\alpha}, \boldsymbol{\omega}) \phi_{\text{eff}}, \quad (13)$$

where $Y(\cdot)$ is a 6×10 regressor matrix that is linear in ϕ_{eff} but nonlinear in the motion variables. Hence, \vec{F}_{ext} is not simply $m\mathbf{a}$, nor can it be written as $\phi_{\text{eff}} \ddot{\mathbf{q}}$; the mapping from joint accelerations $\ddot{\mathbf{q}}$ to \vec{F}_{ext} passes through the robot kinematics and the Newton–Euler relations.

Once the wrench at the flange is known, the corresponding joint torques are obtained via

$$\boldsymbol{\tau}_{\text{ext}} = {}^S J(\mathbf{q})^\top \vec{F}_{\text{ext}}, \quad (14)$$

where ${}^S J(\mathbf{q})$ is the Jacobian of the sensor/tool frame S . Combining the relations above yields the identification-friendly form

$$\boldsymbol{\tau}_{\text{ext}} = \mathbf{J}^T(\mathbf{q}) Y(\mathbf{a}, \boldsymbol{\alpha}, \boldsymbol{\omega}) \phi_{\text{eff}}, \quad (15)$$

which makes explicit that $\boldsymbol{\tau}_{\text{ext}}$ is linear in ϕ_{eff} , but nonlinear in $\mathbf{q}, \dot{\mathbf{q}}, \ddot{\mathbf{q}}$ through the dependence on $\mathbf{a}, \boldsymbol{\alpha}, \boldsymbol{\omega}$.

B Query Categories - Index Terms

This appendix lists the index terms used to construct the query categories illustrated in Fig. 2. The original nine term groups were consolidated into five content clusters C_1, \dots, C_5 and the goal/context term sets C_{mt} and C_{ct} .

Content Clusters C_i

C_1 : **Classical / Observers**

- momentum observer (MO)
- generalized momentum observer (GMO)
- disturbance observer (DOB)
- reaction force observer (RFOB)
- Kalman filter (KF)
- extended Kalman filter (EKF)
- unscented Kalman filter (UKF)
- state observer
- least squares (LS)
- weighted least squares (WLS)
- iterative reweighted least squares (IRLS)
- recursive least squares (RLS)
- momentum-based observer
- dynamic state observer
- observer
- force observer
- torque observer

C_2 : Gaussian Process (GP)

- gaussian process regression (GPR)
- sparse gaussian process (SGP, SGPR)
- multi-output gaussian process (MOGP)
- multi-task gaussian process (MTGP)
- gaussian process state space model (GPSSM)
- hybrid gaussian process
- GP residual
- gaussian process dynamics
- GP inverse dynamics
- bayesian nonparametric regression (BNPR)

C_3 : Deep Sequence Models (MLP / GRU / TCN / Transformer / LSTM)

- neural network inverse dynamics (NN-ID)
- deep learning
- multi layer perceptron (MLP)
- residual network (ResNet)
- long short-term memory (LSTM)
- gated recurrent unit (GRU)
- temporal convolutional network (TCN)
- causal convolution
- dilated convolution
- transformer model
- attention model
- sequence-to-sequence (seq2seq, S2S)
- sequence GAN (SeqGAN, TimeGAN)
- GAN
- Generative Adversarial Networks
- residual neural network (ResNN)

- residual GAN
- domain adaptation (DA)
- transfer learning (TL)
- meta learning (ML)
- context variable dynamics
- latent variable model (LVM)
- amortized inference (AI)
- test time adaptation (TTA)
- online adaptation (OA)
- feature invariance
- domain invariant features (DIF)
- few shot learning (FSL)
- zero shot transfer (ZSL)
- reinforcement
- reinforcement learning
- Isaac Gym differentiable
- Isaac Lab differentiable
- Isaac Gym
- Isaac Lab

C_4 : Physics-Informed / Differentiable

- residual learning dynamics
- hybrid model dynamics
- analytical dynamics neural network (ADNN)
- physics residual
- rigid body dynamics residual (RBD residual)
- Newton Euler residual (NE residual)
- nominal dynamics model (NDM)
- neural correction

- learning inverse dynamics residual (ID residual)
- physics-informed neural network (PINN)
- differentiable physics
- differentiable simulation (DiffSim)
- differentiable robot model
- differentiable dynamics
- neural ODE (NODE)
- torchdiffeq
- ODE-net
- physics-guided machine learning robotics (PGML)

C_5 : **Surveys**

- survey
- benchmarking
- review
- overview
- systematic comparison

Goal & Domain Terms C_T

C_{mt} : **Estimation & Modeling Terms**

- external force
- force measurement
- force estimation
- force/torque estimation
- wrench estimation
- joint torque estimation
- end-effector force
- end-effector torque
- inertial parameters

- inertial parameter identification (IPI)
- online payload identification
- payload identification
- payload estimation
- object parameter estimation
- parameter identification
- inertia tensor
- inertia tensor estimation
- center of mass (CoM)
- rigid body dynamics
- friction approximation
- nonlinear friction model
- external perturbations
- force torque sensor (F/T sensor)
- external force estimation (EFE)
- external torque estimation (ETE)
- torque estimation
- parameter identification differentiable simulation
- payload identification (PI)
- payload estimation (PE)
- contact force
- nonlinear systems
- noise
- signal noise
- noise estimation

Note that the last four entries (nonlinear systems, noise, signal noise, noise estimation) are generic terms that occur across many physical systems beyond robotic manipulators. Including them in the queries significantly increased the number of retrieved results.

C_{ct} : **Robotics Context Terms**

- robotic manipulator
- robotic arm
- robotic manipulation
- robot payload