
Differential Flatness of Two Quadrotors Carrying a Cable-suspended Payload

Minhuan Guo
gmh_njust@163.com

November 10, 2017

According to the work in [1, 2] and other similar papers, two quadrotor and a cable-suspended payload is a differential flatness system. The detailed derivation and a matlab project will be summarized in this paper.

1 DYNAMIC MODEL

The basic nonlinear dynamic model is

$$m_{Qi}\ddot{\xi}_{Qi} = f_i R_i e_3 - m_{Qi} g e_3 - T_i \rho_i \quad (1.1)$$

$$J_i \dot{\omega}_i + \omega_i \times J_i \omega_i = M_i \quad (1.2)$$

$$m_P \ddot{\xi}_P = T_1 \rho_1 + T_2 \rho_2 - m_P g e_3 \quad (1.3)$$

where, $i = 1, 2$ indicates the first and second quadrotor and ρ_i indicate unit direction vector from payload to quadrotors respectively.

2 DIFFERENTIAL FLATNESS

Choosing $\{\xi_P, T_2 \rho_2, \psi_1, \psi_2\}$ and their corresponding high order derivatives as flat output. As a result, we can describe both the states and control inputs with these outputs.

Step 1: Obtain T_1 and ρ_1

Based on Eq(1.3), we have

$$\begin{aligned} T_1 \rho_1 &= m_P \ddot{\xi}_P - T_2 \rho_2 + m_P g e_3 \\ \Rightarrow \rho_1 &= \frac{T_1 \rho_1}{\|T_1 \rho_1\|} \\ T_1 &= T_1 \rho_1 \cdot \rho_1 \end{aligned} \quad (2.1)$$

Step 2: $\dot{T}_1, \dot{\rho}_1$

Differentiating Eq(1.3), we have

$$m_P \xi_P^{(3)} = \dot{T}_1 \rho_1 + T_1 \dot{\rho}_1 + \frac{d}{dt}(T_2 \rho_2) \quad (2.2)$$

According to $\dot{\boldsymbol{\rho}}_1 \cdot \boldsymbol{\rho}_1 = 0$, we have

$$\begin{aligned} m_P \boldsymbol{\xi}_P^{(3)} \cdot \boldsymbol{\rho}_1 &= \dot{T}_1 + \frac{d}{dt} (T_2 \boldsymbol{\rho}_2) \cdot \boldsymbol{\rho}_1 \\ \Rightarrow \dot{T}_1 &= m_P \boldsymbol{\xi}_P^{(3)} \cdot \boldsymbol{\rho}_1 - \frac{d}{dt} (T_2 \boldsymbol{\rho}_2) \cdot \boldsymbol{\rho}_1 \\ \dot{\boldsymbol{\rho}}_1 &= \frac{1}{T_1} \left(m_P \boldsymbol{\xi}_P^{(3)} - \dot{T}_1 \boldsymbol{\rho}_1 - \frac{d}{dt} (T_2 \boldsymbol{\rho}_2) \right) \end{aligned} \quad (2.3)$$

Step 3: $\ddot{T}_1, \ddot{\boldsymbol{\rho}}_1$

Differentiating \dot{T}_1 obtained in former step yields,

$$\ddot{T}_1 = m_P \boldsymbol{\xi}_P^{(4)} \cdot \boldsymbol{\rho}_1 + m_P \boldsymbol{\xi}_P^{(3)} \cdot \dot{\boldsymbol{\rho}}_1 - \frac{d^2}{dt^2} (T_2 \boldsymbol{\rho}_2) \cdot \boldsymbol{\rho}_1 - \frac{d}{dt} (T_2 \boldsymbol{\rho}_2) \cdot \dot{\boldsymbol{\rho}}_1 \quad (2.4)$$

Meanwhile, differentiating Eq(2.2), we have

$$m_P \boldsymbol{\xi}_P^{(4)} = \ddot{T}_1 \boldsymbol{\rho}_1 + 2\dot{T}_1 \dot{\boldsymbol{\rho}}_1 + T_1 \ddot{\boldsymbol{\rho}}_1 + \frac{d^2}{dt^2} (T_2 \boldsymbol{\rho}_2) \quad (2.5)$$

As a result, we have

$$\ddot{\boldsymbol{\rho}}_1 = \frac{1}{T_1} \left(m_P \boldsymbol{\xi}_P^{(4)} - \ddot{T}_1 \boldsymbol{\rho}_1 - 2\dot{T}_1 \dot{\boldsymbol{\rho}}_1 - \frac{d^2}{dt^2} (T_2 \boldsymbol{\rho}_2) \right) \quad (2.6)$$

Step 4: $T_1^{(3)}, \boldsymbol{\rho}_1^{(3)}$

Similarly, Differentiating \ddot{T}_1 yields,

$$\begin{aligned} T_1^{(3)} &= m_P \boldsymbol{\xi}_P^{(5)} \cdot \boldsymbol{\rho}_1 + 2m_P \boldsymbol{\xi}_P^{(4)} \cdot \dot{\boldsymbol{\rho}}_1 + m_P \boldsymbol{\xi}_P^{(3)} \cdot \ddot{\boldsymbol{\rho}}_1 \\ &\quad - \frac{d^3}{dt^3} (T_2 \boldsymbol{\rho}_2) \cdot \boldsymbol{\rho}_1 - 2\frac{d^2}{dt^2} (T_2 \boldsymbol{\rho}_2) \cdot \dot{\boldsymbol{\rho}}_1 - \frac{d}{dt} (T_2 \boldsymbol{\rho}_2) \cdot \ddot{\boldsymbol{\rho}}_1 \end{aligned} \quad (2.7)$$

Similarly, differentiating Eq(2.5), we have

$$m_P \boldsymbol{\xi}_P^{(5)} = T_1^{(3)} \boldsymbol{\rho}_1 + 3\dot{T}_1 \ddot{\boldsymbol{\rho}}_1 + 3\ddot{T}_1 \dot{\boldsymbol{\rho}}_1 + T_1 \boldsymbol{\rho}_1^{(3)} + \frac{d^3}{dt^3} (T_2 \boldsymbol{\rho}_2) \quad (2.8)$$

Thus, we have

$$\boldsymbol{\rho}_1^{(3)} = \frac{1}{T_1} \left(m_P \boldsymbol{\xi}_P^{(5)} - T_1^{(3)} \boldsymbol{\rho}_1 - 3\dot{T}_1 \ddot{\boldsymbol{\rho}}_1 - 3\ddot{T}_1 \dot{\boldsymbol{\rho}}_1 - \frac{d^3}{dt^3} (T_2 \boldsymbol{\rho}_2) \right) \quad (2.9)$$

Step 5: $T_1^{(4)}, \boldsymbol{\rho}_1^{(4)}$

Similarly, Differentiating $T_1^{(3)}$ yields,

$$\begin{aligned} T_1^{(4)} &= m_P \boldsymbol{\xi}_P^{(6)} \cdot \boldsymbol{\rho}_1 + 3m_P \boldsymbol{\xi}_P^{(5)} \cdot \dot{\boldsymbol{\rho}}_1 + 3m_P \boldsymbol{\xi}_P^{(4)} \cdot \ddot{\boldsymbol{\rho}}_1 + m_P \boldsymbol{\xi}_P^{(3)} \cdot \boldsymbol{\rho}_1^{(3)} \\ &\quad - \frac{d^4}{dt^4} (T_2 \boldsymbol{\rho}_2) \cdot \boldsymbol{\rho}_1 - 3\frac{d^3}{dt^3} (T_2 \boldsymbol{\rho}_2) \cdot \dot{\boldsymbol{\rho}}_1 - 3\frac{d^2}{dt^2} (T_2 \boldsymbol{\rho}_2) \cdot \ddot{\boldsymbol{\rho}}_1 - \frac{d}{dt} (T_2 \boldsymbol{\rho}_2) \cdot \boldsymbol{\rho}_1^{(3)} \end{aligned} \quad (2.10)$$

Differential Eq(2.8), we have

$$m_P \boldsymbol{\xi}_P^{(6)} = T_1^{(4)} \boldsymbol{\rho}_1 + 4T_1^{(3)} \dot{\boldsymbol{\rho}}_1 + 6\ddot{T}_1 \ddot{\boldsymbol{\rho}}_1 + 4\dot{T}_1 \boldsymbol{\rho}_1^{(3)} + T_1 \boldsymbol{\rho}_1^{(4)} + \frac{d^4}{dt^4} (T_2 \boldsymbol{\rho}_2) \quad (2.11)$$

As a result, we have

$$\boldsymbol{\rho}_1^{(4)} = \frac{1}{T_1} \left(m_P \boldsymbol{\xi}_P^{(6)} - T_1^{(4)} \boldsymbol{\rho}_1 - 4T_1^{(3)} \dot{\boldsymbol{\rho}}_1 - 6\ddot{T}_1 \ddot{\boldsymbol{\rho}}_1 - 4\dot{T}_1 \boldsymbol{\rho}_1^{(3)} - \frac{d^4}{dt^4} (T_2 \boldsymbol{\rho}_2) \right) \quad (2.12)$$

Step 6: $\xi_{Q_1}, \dot{\xi}_{Q_1}, \ddot{\xi}_{Q_1}, \xi_{Q_1}^{(3)}, \xi_{Q_1}^{(4)}, \xi_{Q_2}, \dot{\xi}_{Q_2}, \ddot{\xi}_{Q_2}, \xi_{Q_2}^{(3)}, \xi_{Q_2}^{(4)}$

According to the relationship of quadrotor and payload, we have

$$\begin{aligned}
\xi_{Q_i} &= \xi_P + Lr \rho_i \\
\dot{\xi}_{Q_i} &= \dot{\xi}_P + Lr \dot{\rho}_i \\
\ddot{\xi}_{Q_i} &= \ddot{\xi}_P + Lr \ddot{\rho}_i \\
\xi_{Q_i}^{(3)} &= \xi_P^{(3)} + Lr \rho_i^{(3)} \\
\xi_{Q_i}^{(4)} &= \xi_P^{(4)} + Lr \rho_i^{(4)}
\end{aligned} \tag{2.13}$$

Step 7: R_1 , f_1 , R_2 and f_2

According to Eq(1.1), we have

$$m_{Q1} \ddot{\xi}_{Q1} = f_1 \mathbf{z}_{B1} - m_{Q1} g \mathbf{e}_3 - T_1 \rho_1 \tag{2.14}$$

where, $\mathbf{z}_{B1} = R_1 \mathbf{e}_3$ defines the body frame z axis of the first quadrotor.

Furthermore, we have

$$\begin{aligned}
f_1 \mathbf{z}_{B1} &= m_{Q1} \ddot{\xi}_{Q1} + m_{Q1} g \mathbf{e}_3 + T_1 \rho_1 \\
\mathbf{z}_{B1} &= \frac{f_1 \mathbf{z}_{B1}}{\|f_1 \mathbf{z}_{B1}\|} \\
f_1 &= f_1 \mathbf{z}_{B1} \cdot \mathbf{z}_{B1}
\end{aligned} \tag{2.15}$$

Given the yaw angle ψ_1 , we can write the unit vector

$$\mathbf{x}_{C1} = [\cos(\psi_1), \sin(\psi_1), 0]^T \tag{2.16}$$

Then we can determine \mathbf{x}_{B1} and \mathbf{y}_{B1} as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}
\mathbf{y}_{B1} &= \frac{\mathbf{z}_{B1} \times \mathbf{x}_{C1}}{\|\mathbf{z}_{B1} \times \mathbf{x}_{C1}\|} \\
\mathbf{x}_{B1} &= \mathbf{y}_{B1} \times \mathbf{z}_{B1}
\end{aligned} \tag{2.17}$$

Provided that $\mathbf{y}_{B1} \times \mathbf{x}_{C1} \neq 0$, in other words, provided that we never encounter the singularity where \mathbf{z}_{B1} is parallel to \mathbf{x}_C .

Thus, we can uniquely determine

$$R_1 = [\mathbf{x}_{B1}, \mathbf{y}_{B1}, \mathbf{z}_{B1}] \tag{2.18}$$

The similar result for the second quadrotor is available by changing subscript 1 into 2.

Step 8: ω_1 , ω_2

Take the first derivative of Eq(2.14), we have

$$m_{Q1} \dot{\xi}_{Q1}^{(3)} = \dot{f}_1 \mathbf{z}_{B1} + \omega_1 \times f_1 \mathbf{z}_{B1} - \frac{d}{dt} (T_1 \rho_1) \tag{2.19}$$

Projecting this expression along \mathbf{z}_{B1} yields $\dot{f}_1 = m_{Q1} \dot{\xi}_{Q1}^{(3)} \cdot \mathbf{z}_{B1} + \frac{d}{dt} (T_1 \rho_1) \cdot \mathbf{z}_{B1}$, then we can substitute \dot{f}_1 into Eq(2.19) to define the vector $\mathbf{h}_{\omega1}$ as

$$\begin{aligned}
\mathbf{h}_{\omega1} &= \omega_1 \times \mathbf{z}_{B1} \\
&= \frac{1}{f_1} \left(m_{Q1} \dot{\xi}_{Q1}^{(3)} - \dot{f}_1 \mathbf{z}_{B1} + \frac{d}{dt} (T_1 \rho_1) \right) \\
&= \frac{1}{f_1} \left[\left(m_{Q1} \dot{\xi}_{Q1}^{(3)} + \frac{d}{dt} (T_1 \rho_1) \right) - \left(m_{Q1} \dot{\xi}_{Q1}^{(3)} \cdot \mathbf{z}_{B1} + \frac{d}{dt} (T_1 \rho_1) \cdot \mathbf{z}_{B1} \right) \mathbf{z}_{B1} \right]
\end{aligned} \tag{2.20}$$

Provided that $\omega_1 = p_1 \mathbf{x}_{B1} + q_1 \mathbf{y}_{B1} + r_1 \mathbf{z}_{B1}$, we have

$$\begin{aligned}
p_1 &= -\mathbf{h}_{\omega1} \cdot \mathbf{y}_{B1} \\
q_1 &= \mathbf{h}_{\omega1} \cdot \mathbf{x}_{B1} \\
r_1 &= \dot{\psi}_1 \mathbf{e}_3 \cdot \mathbf{z}_{B1}
\end{aligned} \tag{2.21}$$

The similar result for the second quadrotor is available by changing subscript 1 into 2.

Step 9: $\dot{\omega}_1, \dot{\omega}_2$

Take the second derivative of Eq(2.14), we have

$$\begin{aligned} m_{Q1}\ddot{\xi}_{Q1}^{(4)} &= (\ddot{f}_1 z_{B1} + \omega_1 \times \dot{f}_1 z_{B1}) \\ &\quad + (\dot{\omega}_1 \times f_1 z_{B1} + \omega_1 \times (\dot{f}_1 z_{B1} + \omega_1 \times f_1 z_{B1})) \\ &\quad - \frac{d^2}{dt^2} (T_1 \rho_1) \end{aligned} \quad (2.22)$$

Projecting this expression along z_{B1} yields

$$\ddot{f}_1 = m_{Q1}\ddot{\xi}_{Q1}^{(4)} \cdot z_{B1} - \omega_1 \times (\omega_1 \times f_1 z_{B1}) \cdot z_{B1} + \frac{d^2}{dt^2} (T_1 \rho_1) \cdot z_{B1}$$

Then we can substitute \dot{f}_1 and \ddot{f}_1 into Eq(2.22) to define $h_{\dot{\omega}_1}$ as

$$\begin{aligned} h_{\dot{\omega}_1} &= \dot{\omega}_1 \times z_{B1} \\ &= \frac{1}{f_1} \left[m_{Q1}\ddot{\xi}_{Q1}^{(4)} - (\ddot{f}_1 z_{B1} + \omega_1 \times \dot{f}_1 z_{B1}) - \omega_1 \times (\dot{f}_1 z_{B1} + \omega_1 \times f_1 z_{B1}) + \frac{d^2}{dt^2} (T_1 \rho_1) \right] \end{aligned} \quad (2.23)$$

Provided that $\dot{\omega}_1 = p_1 \dot{x}_{B1} + q_1 \dot{y}_{B1} + r_1 \dot{z}_{B1}$, we have

$$\begin{aligned} \dot{p}_1 &= -h_{\dot{\omega}_1} \cdot y_{B1} \\ \dot{q}_1 &= h_{\dot{\omega}_1} \cdot x_{B1} \\ \dot{r}_1 &= \ddot{\psi}_1 e_3 \cdot z_{B1} \end{aligned} \quad (2.24)$$

The similar result for the second quadrotor is available by changing subscript 1 into 2.

Step 10: M_1 and M_2

$$M_1 = \begin{bmatrix} M_{x1} \\ M_{y1} \\ M_{z1} \end{bmatrix} = \omega_1 \times I_B \omega_1 + I_B \dot{\omega}_1 \quad (2.25)$$

Similarly,

$$M_2 = \begin{bmatrix} M_{x2} \\ M_{y2} \\ M_{z2} \end{bmatrix} = \omega_2 \times I_B \omega_2 + I_B \dot{\omega}_2 \quad (2.26)$$

3 MATLAB IMPLEMENTATION

Based on these expressions, once given flat outputs and their higher derivatives, the states and controls are determined.

A matlab project is given based on these derivations and it is available on <https://github.com/mhguo321/differential-flatness.git>.

REFERENCES

- [1] Daniel Mellinger and Vijay Kumar. Minimum snap trajectory generation and control for quadrotors. In *Robotics and Automation (ICRA), 2011 IEEE International Conference on*, pages 2520–2525. IEEE, 2011.
- [2] Koushil Sreenath and Vijay Kumar. Dynamics control and planning for cooperative manipulation of payloads suspended by cables from multiple quadrotor robots. *rm*, 1(r2):r3, 2013.