

University of Pretoria etd – Ma, G (2006)

STOCHASTIC RELIABILITY MODELLING FOR COMPLEX SYSTEMS

by

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submitted in accordance with the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

Systems Engineering,
Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology,

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

PRETORIA

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January 2006

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincere gratitude goes to my promoter, Professor Yadavalli, for his excellent guidance and patience.

I have also enjoyed the support of, Mrs Tshamaano Joyce Malada and Mr John Marubini Malada, both my parents who have shown much interest in what I was doing for my studies. I hope this body of work will serve as an inspiration for all my four brothers (Hangwani, Nndanganeni, Tahulela and Mpho) and only sister (Tshanduko).

Without the help of a friend, Dr Solly Matshonisa Seeletse for all the technical assistance, this thesis would not have been possible.

My sincere gratitude goes especially to my beloved friend, N. Nobala, for all the words of encouragement I have received.

CONTENTS

SUMMARY

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION	2
1.2 FAILURE	6
1.3 REDUNDANCY AND DIFFERENT TYPES OF REDUNDANT SYSTEMS	
1.3.1 Parallel systems	7
1.3.2 k-out-of-n systems: F system	7
1.3.3 k-out-of-n: G-system	8
1.3.4 n-out-of-n: G system	8
1.4 REPAIRABLE SYSTEM	9
1.5 SYSTEMS WITH NON-INSTANTANEOUS SWITCHOVER	10
1.6 SYSTEMS WITH IMPERFECT SWITCH	10
1.7 INTERMITTENTLY USED SYSTEMS	11
1.8 MEASURES OF SYSTEM PERFORMANCE	11
(a) Reliability	11
(b) Pointwise availability	12
(c) Asymptotic or Steady-State Availability	12
(d) Interval Reliability	12
(e) Limiting Interval reliability	12
(f) Mean number of events in $(0, t)$	13
1.9 TECHNIQUES USED IN THE ANALYSIS OF REDUNDANT SYSTEMS	14
1.9.1 Renewal theory	14
1.9.2 Semi-Markov and Markov Renewal process	17
1.9.3 Stochastic point process	19
1.9.4 Product densities	20
1.9.5 Regenerative stochastic process	21
1.9.6 Concluding remarks and Scope of the work	22

CHAPTER 2: A STUDY OF A TWO UNIT PARALLEL SYSTEM WITH ERLANGIAN REPAIR TIME

2.1 INTRODUCTION	24
2.2 MODEL AND ASSUMPTIONS	25
2.3 ANALYSIS OF THE SYSTEM	25
2.3.1 Reliability	26
2.3.2 Mean Time Before Failure (MTBF)	28
2.3.3 System Availability	31
2.3.4 Steady State Availability	31
2.4 CONFIDENCE INTERVAL FOR STEADY-STATE AVAILABILITY OF THE SYSTEM	34
2.5 MLE OF SYSTEM RELIABILITY	34
2.6 NUMERICAL ILLUSTRATION	35

CHAPTER 3: AN n UNIT SYSTEM OPERATING IN A RANDOM ENVIRONMENT

3.1 INTRODUCTION	38
3.2 MODEL AND ASSUMPTIONS	39
3.3 NOTATION	40
3.4 STATE OF THE SYSTEM	41
3.5 STATIONARY DISTRIBUTION	44
3.6 TIME TO THE FIRST DISSAPOINTMENT	45
3.7 MEAN NUMBER OF DISSAPONTMENTS	47
3.8 MEAN STATIONARY RATE OF DISSAPOINTMENTS	47
3.9 CONCLUSIONS	48
3.9.1 Two unit system	48
3.9.2 Intermittently used n-unit standby redundant system	48

CHAPTER 4: BUSY PERIOD ANALYSIS OF A TWO UNIT SYSTEM WITH PREVENTITIVE MAINTENANCE AND IMPERFECT SWITCH

4.1 INTRODUCTION	50
4.2 SYSTEM DESCRIPTION	51
4.3 NOTATION	51
4.4 SYMBOLS FOR STATES OF THE SYSTEM	53
4.5 RELIABILITY ANALYSIS (MODEL 1)	55
4.6 AVAILABILITY ANALYSIS	60
4.7 BUSY PERIOD ANALYSIS	62
4.8 EXPECTED NUMBER OF VISITS BY REPAIR FACILITY	63
4.9 MODEL 2	65
4.10 AVAILABILITY ANALYSIS (MODEL 2)	66
4.11 BUSY PERIOD ANALYSIS (MODEL 2)	67
4.12 EXPECTED NUMBER OF VISITS BY REPAIR FACILITY	68
4.13 PROFIT ANALYSIS	68
4.14 NUMERICAL ILLUSTRATION	71

CHAPTER 5: RELIABILITY STOCHASTIC OPTIMIZATION WITH BRANCH AND BOUND TECHNIQUE

5.1 INTRODUCTION	73
5.1.1 Case 1: b follows Uniform distribution	74
5.1.2 Case 2: b follows normal distribution	75
5.1.3 Case 3: b follows log-normal distribution	77
5.2 GENERAL ALGORITHM	78
5.3 BRANCH-AND-BOUND (B&B) TECHNIQUE	79
5.4 NUMERICAL EXAMPLE	79
5.5 CONCLUSION	82

**CHAPTER 6: A TWO UNIT COLD STANDBY SYSTEM WITH
NON-INSTANTANEOUS SWITCOVER**

6.1 INTRODUCTION	84
6.2 MODEL ASSUMPTION	84
6.3 NOTATION	85
6.4 TRANSITION PROBABILITIES AND SOJOURN TIMES	85
6.5 TIME TO SYSTEM FAILURE	88
6.6 AVAILABILITY ANALYSIS	89
6.7 BUSY PERIOD ANALYSIS	91
6.8 EXPECTED NUMBER OF VISITS BY THE REPAIRMAN	93
6.9 SWITCHOVER ANALYSIS	96
6.10 COST ANALYSIS	98

**CHAPTER 7: A COMPLEX SYSTEM WITH CORRELATED
FAILURES**

7.1 INTRODUCTION	101
7.2 SYSTEM DESCRIPTION	101
7.3 NOTATION	102
7.4 TRANSITION PROBABILITIES AND SOJOURN TIMES	107
7.5 MEANTIME TO SYSTEM FAILURE	112
7.6 AVAILABILITY ANALYSIS	113
7.7 BUSY PERIOD ANALYSIS	116
7.8 PROFIT ANALYSIS	118
7.9 SPECIAL CASES	119
7.10 NUMERICAL ILLUSTRATION	121

BIBLIOGRAPHY

SUMMARY

Two well-known methods of improving the reliability of a system are

- (i) provision of redundant units, and
- (ii) repair maintenance.

In a redundant system more units are made available for performing the system function when fewer are required exactly. There are two major types of redundancy- parallel and standby. In this thesis we confine to both these redundant systems. A series system is also studied.

Some of the typical assumptions made in the analysis of redundant systems are

- (i) the repair times are assumed to be exponential
- (ii) the system measures are modeled but not estimated
- (iii) the system is available continuously
- (iv) environmental factors not affecting the system
- (v) the failures take place only in one stage
- (vi) the switching device is perfect
- (vii) system reliability for given chance constraints
- (viii) the time required to transfer a unit from the standby state to the operating stage is negligible (instantaneous switchover)
- (ix) the failures and repairs are independent

However, we frequently come across systems where one or more of these assumptions have to be dropped. This is the motivation for the detailed study of the models presented in this thesis.

In this thesis we present several models of redundant systems relaxing one or more of these assumptions simultaneously. More specifically it is a study of stochastic models of redundant repairable systems with 'rest period' for the operator, non-instantaneous switchover, imperfect switch, intermittent use, and series system optimization.

The thesis contains seven chapters. Chapter 1 is introductory in nature and contains a brief description of the mathematical techniques used in the analysis of redundant systems.

In chapter 2, a two unit system with Erlangian repair time is studied by relaxing the assumptions (i) and (ii). The difference- differential equations are formulated for the state probabilities, and the system measures like reliability and the availability are obtained over a long run. The asymptotic interval estimation is studied for these system measures. The model has been illustrated numerically.

In chapter 3, an n unit system operating intermittently, and in a random environment is studied, by relaxing the assumptions (iii) and (iv). In an intermittently used system, the mean number of disappointments is one of the important measures, which has been obtained for this system in the steady state.

In chapter 4, the assumption (v) and (vi) are relaxed. In most of the models studied earlier in reliability analysis is the study of system measures like reliability and availability. In this chapter, profit analysis of a single unit system with three possible modes of the failure of the unit is studied. This chapter consists of two models: in model 1, the unit goes under repair (if a repairman is available) the moment it fails partially, whereas in model 2 the unit goes under repair at complete failure. The repairman appears in, and disappears from, the system randomly. A comparison between these two

models has been studied, after calculating numerically the profit and the MTSF.

Contrary to the previous chapters, stochastic optimization is studied using the Branch and Bound technique in chapter 5 (relaxing the assumption (vii)). In this chapter, an n unit system operating in a random environment is considered. The environment determines the number of units required for the satisfactory performance of the system. Assuming that a unit in standby can fail and that the environment is described by a Markov process, we obtained expressions for the distribution and the moments of the time to the first disappointment, and the expected number of disappointments over an arbitrary interval $(0, t]$.

In chapter 6, the assumption (viii) is relaxed. The reliability, availability and the busy period analysis is studied with the assumption of the non-instantaneous switchover (the time taken from standby state to the operating state is non-negligible random variable). It is also assumed that the unit has three possible failure modes (normal, partial and total failure). Numerical example illustrated the results obtained.

The assumption (ix) is relaxed in chapter 7, and a two-unit cold standby system with the provision of rest for the operating unit is studied. Also, the failure and repair times of each unit assumed to be correlated by taking their joint density as bivariate exponential. The system is observed at suitable regenerative epochs to obtain various reliability characteristics of interest, such as the distribution of time to system failure and its mean, and the steady-state probabilities of the system being in up or down states or under repair. Earlier results are verified as particular cases. Numerical example illustrated the results obtained.