IMMPDAF Approach for Road-Boundary Tracking

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Abstract—Robust road-boundary extraction/tracking is one of the main problems in autonomous roadway navigation. Although the road boundary can be defined by various means including lane markings, curbs, and borders of vegetation, this paper focuses on road-boundary tracking using curbs. A vehicle-mounted (downward tilted) 2-D laser-measurement system is utilized to detect the curbs. The tracking problem is difficult because both the vehicle is moving and the target is disappearing, reappearing, and maneuvering in clutter. The interacting-multiple-model probabilistic-data-association filter (IMMPDAF) is proposed to solve the problems after detailed analysis. Track initiation, confirmation, and deletion are performed using the sequential-probability-ratio test. Extensive simulations followed by experiments in a campus environment show that the road-boundary tracking utilizing curbs is possible and robust through IMMPDAF.

Index Terms—Autonomous vehicles, laser radar, road transportation, robot-sensing systems.

I. INTRODUCTION

OAD SAFETY is a worldwide concern and has yet to be solved satisfactorily [1]. Sensing, detection, and tracking of roads are essential in intelligent and safe operation. Different technologies have been investigated for road-boundary detection and tracking including, camera [2]–[4], millimeter wave radar (MMWR) [5], [6], and laser-measurement systems (LMSs) [7], [8]. Camera-based methods are the most extensively researched and tested as it has the advantages of high information content, low cost, low operating power, and absence of a sweep time, but it performs poorly in bad illumination. Although MMWR has the ability to provide good-quality image of a road scene ahead over longer distances (1–200 m) in snow, haze, dust, and rain and is not susceptible to ambient light, it is still very expensive. The utilization of LMSs in automotive applications on the rise due to their low cost, low operating power, and small size, as compared with MMWR. In this paper, we utilize an LMS for detection of curbs and, hence, road boundaries.

The complex curb tracking can be considered as tracking of a maneuvering target in clutter. Adaptive techniques are usually used for the state estimation of maneuvering targets. The multiple-model approach, such as the interacting multiple model (IMM) [15], provides one of the most effective frameworks for tracking maneuvering targets [13]. Cluttered data complicate the maneuver detection and data association, which can be effectively handled in the framework of the probabilistic data association (PDA) [15]. The integration of IMM with PDA is collectively called IMMPDAF in the literature [15]. IMMPDAF has been applied to target tracking with radar sensors [15], [20], passive sensors such as infrared cameras [19], and multisensory systems (radar and an infrared sensor) in clutter [18], [22]. In this paper, we make an attempt to apply the IMMPDAF for curb tracking using an LMS, which can be effectively incorporated into motion planning [9], [10] and localization [11] in practice. The effectiveness of the proposed problem formulation and solution is demonstrated through extensive simulations and comparison with IMM and nearest neighbor data association, followed by realistic and thorough experimentations on a full-size carlike mobile robot in actual road environments.

The main contributions of this paper are as follows: 1) A novel method is presented in formulating the curb-tracking problem (using an LMS) as tracking a maneuvering line target in clutter with a moving observer, which successfully overcomes the inherent problems of curb tracking caused by conflicts between maneuver detection and data association; 2) the problems of disappearances and reappearances of the curbs (e.g., in intersections) are conveniently solved by geometric road constraints coupled with a probabilistically determined track termination and track initialization; and 3) problems due to irregularities of road surface, water puddles, or objects on the road are minimized by devising a methodology to detect/track vertical curb surfaces.

In Section II, the problem of road-boundary tracking is formulated. The IMMPDAF algorithm is described in Section III. In Section IV, simulations and experimental results are presented for various road scenarios. Section V concludes this paper, giving future directions.

II. PROBLEM FORMULATION

The main objective of this paper is to extract and track road boundaries in urban and suburban environments. Such environments inherently consist of curbs defining the road boundaries. In this paper, it is perceived that the road boundaries are defined by the temporal evolution of line segments corresponding to the vertical surfaces of curbs, which can be extracted by a looking-down (αL = 2.6°) front-mounted...
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Fig. 1. Sensor mounting and coordinate systems.

Fig. 2. Vehicle kinematics.

2-D LMS, as shown in Fig. 1. When the vehicle is in motion (moving observer), the line segments or targets move along the curbs (left/right). Straight road ahead defines a nonmaneuvering target state. Road bend ahead defines a maneuvering target state. The curb-tracking problem becomes nontrivial due to the maneuvering nature, vanishing and reappearance of the target, and the presence of clutter. It is further complicated by the utilization of a moving observer. IMMPDAF offers one of the most effective and robust techniques to handle such targets with modest computational requirements [15].

A. Process Model

The moving observer or the carlike vehicle process model can be derived from Fig. 2 as

\[
\mathbf{s}^v(k+1) = \begin{bmatrix} x^v_w(k) + \Delta T V(k) \cos \phi^v_w(k) \\ y^v_w(k) + \Delta T V(k) \sin \phi^v_w(k) \\ \phi^v_w(k) + \frac{\Delta T V(k) \sin \gamma(k)}{L} \end{bmatrix} + \mathbf{v}^v(k+1)
\]

where the states are given by \(s^v = [x^v_w, y^v_w, \phi^v_w]^T\), \(\{x^v_w, y^v_w\}\) are the coordinates of the center of the rear axle of the vehicle, \(\phi^v_w\) is the orientation of the vehicle axis with respect to the world-coordinate system shown in Fig. 2, \(V\) and \(\Delta T\) are the speed of the vehicle and sampling time, respectively, and \(\mathbf{v}^v(k+1)\) is the zero-mean Gaussian process noise.

In this tracking problem, the target (i.e., the curb) is represented as a line segment denoted by the midpoint \((x, y)\) and orientation \(\phi\). For the left-bend and right-bend curb scenarios (equivalent to a maneuvering target), the usual turn-rate model in the world-coordinate system is utilized [14]

\[
\mathbf{s}^t(k+1) = \begin{bmatrix} x^c_w(k) + \bar{m} \dot{x}^c_w(k) - \bar{n} \dot{y}^c_w(k) \\ y^c_w(k) + \bar{m} \dot{y}^c_w(k) + \bar{n} \dot{x}^c_w(k) \\ \omega \Delta T + \phi^c_w(k) \end{bmatrix} + \begin{bmatrix} 0.5 \Delta T^2 & 0 \\ \Delta T & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix} \mathbf{v}^t(k+1)
\]

\[
\bar{m} = \sin \omega \Delta T, \quad \bar{n} = \frac{(1 - \cos \omega \Delta T)}{\omega}
\]

where the states are \(s^t = [x^c_w, \dot{x}^c_w, y^c_w, \dot{y}^c_w, \phi^c_w]^T\), \(\{x^c_w, y^c_w\}\) are the coordinates of the midpoint of the line segment (target) corresponding to a curb, \(\phi^c_w\) is the orientation of the line segment, \(\{\dot{x}^c_w, \dot{y}^c_w\}\) are the target’s speeds along the \(x\)- and \(y\)-axes, \(\mathbf{v}^t(k+1)\) is the process noise (zero-mean Gaussian), and \(\omega\) is the turn rate of the target and can be assigned a few values to define several models, including \(\omega = 0\) for constant velocity model (for straight-curb scenario).
Suppose that \( \{M(k+1)\}, k \geq 0 \) represents the target operational regime or mode at time \( k + 1 \) and assume that \( M \) evolves as a homogeneous discrete-time Markov process in the state space \( \{1, \ldots, r\} \) with transition-probability matrix \( T_{ij} = P(M(k+1) = j | M(k) = i) \) with initial conditions \( P(M(0) = i) = \pi_0(i) \). Then, the composite nonlinear vehicle and target dynamics (1) and (2) can be described as

\[
s(k+1) = \begin{bmatrix} s'^{(k+1)} \\ s''^{(k+1)} \end{bmatrix} = f(M(k+1), s(k)) + B(M(k+1)) \nu(k+1)
\]

where \( s(k), \nu(k) \in \mathbb{R}^n \) with \( s(0) \) is a Gaussian random vector, \( f(M(k+1), s(k)) \) is the mode-dependent nonlinear-state transition matrix, and \( B(M(k+1)) \) is the mode-dependent matrix defined by (1) and (2). The process noise \( \nu(k+1) \) is a sequence of independent zero-mean Gaussian random vectors with positive-definite covariance matrix \( Q \). The process noise \( \nu(k+1) \) and \( s(0) \) are uncorrelated.

As depicted in Fig. 2, the road-curb (line) segment in the world coordinates is represented by \( \{x_{w}, y_{w}, \phi_{w}\} \), and the observation model

\[
\begin{bmatrix}
  x_{w}^{\text{GPS}}(k+1) \\
y_{w}^{\text{GPS}}(k+1) \\
\phi_{w}^{\text{GPS}}(k+1) \\
x_{c}^{L}(k+1) \\
y_{c}^{L}(k+1) \\
\phi_{c}^{L}(k+1)
\end{bmatrix} =
\begin{bmatrix}
x_{w}(k+1) \\
y_{w}(k+1) \\
\phi_{w}(k+1) \\
\pi \cos \phi_{w}(k+1) + b \sin \phi_{w}(k+1) - a \\
-\pi \sin \phi_{w}(k+1) + b \cos \phi_{w}(k+1) - b \\
\pi/2 + \phi_{w}(k+1) - k_{w}(k+1) + w(k+1)
\end{bmatrix}
\]

where \( a = x_{w}(k+1) - x_{w}^{u}(k+1), b = y_{w}(k+1) - y_{w}^{u}(k+1), x_{w}^{u}, y_{w}^{u}, \phi_{w}^{u} \) are the measurements of vehicle position using [global-positioning system, (GPS)] along the \( x \)-axis, \( y \)-axis, and vehicle orientation measured using a gyroscope, respectively. \( \{x_{c}^{L}, y_{c}^{L}, \phi_{c}^{L}\} \) is the curb data extracted by the laser scanner in laser coordinate system, and constants \( a \) and \( b \) are as defined in Fig. 2.

Therefore, the measurement model of the hybrid vehicle and LMS sensor is

\[
z(k+1) = h(s(k+1)) + w(k+1)
\]

where \( z(k) = [x_{w}^{\text{GPS}}(k+1), y_{w}^{\text{GPS}}(k+1), \phi_{w}^{\text{GPS}}(k+1), x_{c}^{L}(k+1), \ldots, y_{c}^{L}(k+1), \phi_{c}^{L}(k+1)]^T \), \( w(k) \in \mathbb{R}^m \) a sequence of zero-mean Gaussian random vectors with covariance matrix \( R \), the process \( \nu(k) \) is uncorrelated with \( w(k), s(0), \) and \( \{M(k)\} \).

The aim is now to find the hybrid vehicle and target-state estimate \( s(k+1) \) given the measurements \( Z(k+1) = \{z(1), \ldots, z(k+1)\} \).

### III. IMMADF Algorithm

Curb tracking can be formulated as a problem of tracking a maneuvering target in clutter. This section describes the utilization of IMMADF to solve for it.

#### A. Track Formation and Termination

False-track initiations give rise to missed detections, which may lead to track loss. Therefore, track initiation is an important aspect of the tracking algorithm, and in this paper, it is handled in the manner described as follows.

An unscented-Kalman-filter (UKF) [21]-based approach is used for laser data segmentation and line-parameter estimation [12]. Each segment is then analyzed through a sequence of filtering [12] to obtain the line segments corresponding to the road curbs. The midpoint of a line segment \( \{x_L, y_L\} \) is estimated as the mean of LMS data (in Cartesian coordinates) in a particular segmented data set, and \( \phi_L \) is directly estimated through UKF.

Although the initial tracks determined through the above procedure are robust to various road scenarios, there can be a little possibility that those are due to clutter. Therefore, these initial tracks are used to form tentative tracks, and ideas from the integrated PDA [16] with sequential-probability-ratio test (SPRT) [13] are used for track confirmation and termination. Using the Markov relationship, the probability of existence of the true target \( P_T(k+1|k) \) before the receipt of data in scan \( k+1 \) is [17]

\[
P_T(k+1|k) = P_{22} P_T(k|k) + P_{12} [1 - P_T(k|k)]
\]

where \( P_{22} \) is the probability of transition from an observable state to observable state, while \( P_{12} \) is the probability of transition from an unobservable state to observable state. Then, the update of the probability of target existence is [16]

\[
P_T(k+1|k+1) = \frac{1 - \delta_{k+1}}{1 - \delta_{k+1} P_T(k+1|k)} P_T(k+1|k)
\]

where \( \delta_{k+1} \) is defined by the expression shown at the bottom of the page. \( V = V_{Gk+1}/(N_{k+1} - P_{D} P_{G} P_T(k+1|k)) \), \( P_D \) is the probability of detection, \( P_G \) is the gate probability, \( V_G \) is the gate volume, \( N_{k+1} \) is the number of measurements inside the validation gate, \( S \) is the innovation covariance, and \( d^2 \) is the normalized innovation squared of the \( i \)th measurement.

The log-likelihood ratio (LLR) can now be defined as [13]

\[
\text{LLR}_{k+1} = \ln \left( \frac{P_T}{1 - P_T} \right).
\]
Once the LLR is obtained, track confirmation and termination thresholds are determined using the SPRT [13] as
\[
\text{LLR}_{k+1} \geq \ln \left( \frac{1 - \beta_T}{\alpha_T} \right), \quad \text{declare track confirmation}
\]
\[
\ln \left( \frac{\beta_T}{1 - \alpha_T} \right) < \text{LLR}_{k+1} < \ln \left( \frac{1 - \beta_T}{\alpha_T} \right), \quad \text{continue test}
\]
\[
\text{LLR}_{k+1} \leq \ln \left( \frac{\beta_T}{1 - \alpha_T} \right), \quad \text{delete track}
\]

where \(\alpha_T\) is the probability of false-track confirmation, and \(\beta_T\) is the probability of true-track termination.

### B. Track Maintenance

The IMMPDAF is capable of tracking highly maneuvering targets [15]. Therefore, it is used for track maintenance as detailed below.

1) **Mixing Probabilities:** In the IMM algorithm, input to the filter matched to the model \(j\) is computed using estimates with probabilistic weightings called mixing probabilities and are calculated as
\[
\mu_{ij}(k) = P \{ M_i(k) | M_j(k+1), Z^k \} = \frac{1}{\bar{c}_j} T_{ij} \mu_i(k)
\]

where \(\mu_{ij}(k)\) is the conditional probability that the target transitioned from state \(i\) to state \(j\) at scan \(k\), \(\mu_i(k)\) is the probability that the target is in mode \(i\) as computed just after data are received on scan \(k\), \(T_{ij}\) is the mode-transition probability matrix, and \(\bar{c}_j\) is the normalization constant, which is defined by \(\bar{c}_j = \sum_{i=1}^{r} T_{ij} \mu_i(k)\).
where $H$ formed and used in the covariance calculation

$$y = \begin{bmatrix} 1 \end{bmatrix} \mathbf{H} \mu_j(k) + \mathbf{w}(k) \quad \text{(10)}$$

$$P_j(k) = \mathbf{F}_j(k)P_j(k|k-1)\mathbf{F}_j^T(k) + \mathbf{Q}_j \quad \text{(11)}$$

where $\mathbf{F}_j(k|k-1)$ is the Kalman filter prediction matrix.

2) Mixing: Starting with $\tilde{s}_i^j(k|k)$, the mixed initial conditions for the filter matched to mode $M_j(k+1)$ can be computed as

$$\tilde{s}_i^j(k|k) = \sum_{i=1}^r \tilde{s}_i^j(k|k) \mu_{ij}(k) \quad \text{(12)}$$

$$\tilde{P}_i^j(k|k) = \sum_{i=1}^r \mu_{ij}(k) \left\{ \tilde{P}_i^j(k|k) + \tilde{s}_i(k|k)\tilde{s}_i^T(k|k) \right\} \quad \text{(13)}$$

where $\tilde{s}_i(k|k) = \tilde{s}_i^j(k|k) - \tilde{s}_i^G(k|k)$.

3) State Prediction and Associated Covariance: With the nonlinear process model, state prediction and covariance calculation are carried out using the standard extended Kalman filter (EKF)

$$\mathbf{s}^j(k+1) = f(\tilde{s}_i^j(k|k), M_j(k+1)) \quad \text{(14)}$$

$$\tilde{P}(k+1) = \mathbf{F}^j(\tilde{P}_i^j(k|k)\mathbf{F}^j_T + \mathbf{B}^j\mathbf{Q}\mathbf{B}^j_T) \quad \text{(15)}$$

where $\mathbf{F}^j = (\partial f/\partial s)|_{s = \tilde{s}_i^j(k|k)}$.

4) Measurement Prediction and Validation: Since the measurement model is nonlinear, EKF-based linearization is performed and used in the covariance calculation

$$\tilde{z}_i^j(k+1) = \mathbf{h}\left[ \mathbf{s}_i^j(k+1) \right] \quad \text{(16)}$$

$$\mathbf{S}_i^j(k+1) = \mathbf{H}^j\tilde{P}_i^j(k+1)\mathbf{H}^j_T + \mathbf{R} \quad \text{(17)}$$

where $\mathbf{H}^j = (\partial h_i/\partial s)|_{s = \tilde{s}_i^j(k|k)}$.

The measurement residuals $\mathbf{z}_i^j(k+1)$ are validated if and only if $|\mathbf{z}_i^j(k+1) - \mathbf{z}_i^j(k+1)|S_j^j(k+1)^{-1}|\mathbf{z}_i^j(k+1) - \mathbf{z}_i^j(k+1)|^T \leq \gamma_G$, where $|\mathbf{z}_i^j(k+1) - \mathbf{z}_i^j(k+1)|$ is the measurement residual of the $j$th mode, $S_j^j(k+1)$ is the innovation covariance of the $j$th mode, and $\gamma_G$ is the threshold, which is determined using chi-square tables.

5) Likelihood Calculation and Mode-Probability Update: The likelihood function $\Lambda^j$ is calculated for each mode $j$. This includes $N_{G+1}$ data association hypotheses corresponding to each observation ($l = 1, \ldots, N_{k+1}$) in the gate and the hypothesis that none of the observation is valid.

$$\Lambda^j(k+1) = (1 - P_{D}P_G)\beta_D + \sum_{l=1}^{N_{k+1}} \frac{P_{D}e^{-d_{lj}^2/2}}{\sqrt{(2\pi)^M|\mathbf{S}_j^j(k+1)|}} \quad \text{(18)}$$

where $\beta_D = N_{k+1}/V_G$, and $d_{lj}$ is the square of the Mahalanobis distance associated with the predicted measurement of the $j$th mode with $l$th measurement within the gate. Then, the mode probabilities are updated as

$$\pi_j(k+1) = \Lambda^j(k+1)\mu_j(k) \quad c = \sum_{j=1}^{r} \Lambda^j(k+1)\mu_j(k). \quad \text{(19)}$$

6) State and Covariance Update Using Nonparametric Version of PDA [18]: The probabilities associated with $N_{k+1} + 1$ hypotheses that assign observation $i$ to track $j$ are computed through

$$P_{ji} = \begin{cases} \frac{b^* + \sum_{j=1}^{N_{k+1}} \alpha_{ij}}{b^* + \sum_{j=1}^{N_{k+1}} \alpha_{ij}}, & i = 0 \\ \frac{b^* + \sum_{j=1}^{N_{k+1}} \alpha_{ij}}{b^* + \sum_{j=1}^{N_{k+1}} \alpha_{ij}}, & i = 1, \ldots, N_{k+1} \end{cases} \quad \text{(20)}$$

where $b^* = (1 - P_{D}P_G)\beta(2\pi)^{M/2} |\mathbf{S}|$, and $\alpha_{ij} = P_{D}e^{-d_{ij}^2/2}$. 

Fig. 6. Position rms error in $x$-direction for 50 runs. (a) Right-hand side curb. (b) Left-hand side curb.

Fig. 7. Position rms error in $y$-direction for 50 runs. (a) Right-hand side curb. (b) Left-hand side curb.
Fig. 8. RMS error in orientation for 50 runs. (a) Right-hand side curb. (b) Left-hand side curb.

Then, the standard EKF state update is

$$
\hat{s}_{j}(k+1|k+1) = \hat{s}_{j}(k+1|k) + K(k+1)\nu_j(k+1)
$$

$$
\nu_j(k+1) = \sum_{l=1}^{N_{k+1}} p_{jl} (z_l(k+1) - \hat{z}_j(k+1))
$$

$$
K(k+1) = P_j(k+1)H_j^T S_j(k+1)^{-1}\quad(19)
$$

The covariance has to be updated considering the uncertainties associated with the PDA. Therefore, it can be computed as

$$
P_j(k+1|k+1) = P_0(k+1|k+1) + dP(k+1)
$$

$$
P_0(k+1|k+1) = \mu_j(k+1) \{ \hat{P}_j(k+1|k+1) + s \cdot s^T \}
$$

$$
dP(k+1) = K(k+1) \sum_{l=1}^{N_{k+1}} (p_{jl}\nu_{jl}\nu_{jl}^T) - \nu_j\nu_j^T
$$

$$
\times K(k+1)^T \quad (20)
$$

where $P_0(k+1|k+1)$ is the covariance calculated assuming a single correct-measurement association, and $dP(k+1)$ is the incremental term added to compensate for the uncertainty in data association.

7) Output Step: Combination of the model-conditioned states and covariances are performed for output purposes. Note that these are not parts of the recursive filter

$$
\tilde{s}(k+1|k+1) = \sum_{j=1}^{r} \hat{s}_j(k+1|k+1) \overline{\mu}_j(k+1)
$$

$$
\tilde{P}(k+1|k+1) = \sum_{j=1}^{r} \overline{\mu}_j(k+1) \left\{ \hat{P}_j(k+1|k+1) + \overline{\tilde{s}} \cdot \overline{\tilde{s}}^T \right\}
$$

$$
\overline{\tilde{s}} = \hat{s}_j(k+1|k+1) - \tilde{s}(k+1|k+1)\quad(21)
$$

IV. SIMULATION AND EXPERIMENTAL RESULTS

A. Simulation Results

A simulation study has been carried out to compare the performance of the IMM global nearest-neighbor filter (IMMGNNF) with IMMPDAF and to analyze the robustness of the IMMPDAF in the road-boundary-tracking application. The sensors used are the vehicle-mounted 2-D LMS, GPS, and gyroscope. The LMS is assumed to be capable of detecting 1It should be noted that the process model for a maneuvering target is not known, and it is achieved as a probabilistically weighted output of a few target models and utilizes a bank of extended Kalman filters. Furthermore, the track initialization and termination are also handled within the filter. This makes the theoretical performance analysis of the IMMPDAF extremely hard, and thus, these analyses are commonly performed based on simulation experiments.
line segments with measurement errors of $\sigma_{x_L} = 0.1$ m, $\sigma_{y_L} = 0.1$ m, and $\sigma_{\phi_L} = 0.01$ rad. The vehicle-pose measurement errors are assumed to be $\sigma_{x_v} = 0.1$ m, $\sigma_{y_v} = 0.1$ m, and $\sigma_{\phi_v} = 0.01$ rad. All the sensor-errors are assumed to be zero-mean Gaussian distributions.

The vehicle is assumed to be traveling at a speed of $3 \text{ m s}^{-1}$ along the trajectory A–F, as shown in Figs. 3 and 4. The route consists of straight portions and bends with or without observations. The clutter is Poisson distributed with density $2.9 \times 10^{-4}$. Segment B-C resembles a cross road, where there are no curbs present on both sides of the road. Segment D-E resembles a right road branching at a bend, where there is no curb on the right side of the road. Three modes are considered: Mode 1 refers to straight road ahead [(2) with $\omega = 0$]; Mode 2 refers to left turns [(2) with $\omega = 0.3 \text{ rad/s}$]; and Mode 3 refers to right turns [(2) with $\omega = -0.3 \text{ rad/s}$]. The mode-transition-probability matrix used for the simulation is $T = \begin{pmatrix} 0.8 & 0.1 & 0.1 \\ 0.1 & 0.8 & 0.1 \\ 0.1 & 0.1 & 0.8 \end{pmatrix}$. The diagonal elements show that the target is more probable to be in the same mode. It can practically be achieved through the utilization of higher sampling rates.

The position-tracking performance of an IMMPDAF is shown in Fig. 5(a), while the orientation-tracking performance is shown in Fig. 5(b). It is interesting to consider the segments B-C and D-E, where there are no curbs present. The expanded B-C and D-E segments with uncertainty ellipses of the estimated vehicle and curb positions are shown in Fig. 5(c) and (d). During these periods, the IMM simply predicts without updating. It can be noted in Fig. 5(e) that the LLRs of both the right-hand and left-hand side curbs start to decrease after reaching position “B” by performing track termination. Although the tracks are being terminated (LLR bellow T1), the IMM simply predicts the states until there are observations fall within the validation gate. Once it finds an observation, a tentative track is initiated, and an LLR is calculated for the confirmation, as seen from position “C” of Fig. 5(e). Once the LLR exceeds the threshold T2, the track is confirmed as originating from a true target. A similar explanation can be given for the segment D-E, however, with only the right-hand track being terminated, while the left-hand track is a confirmed track. Fig. 5(f) and (g) shows the mode probabilities calculated in the IMMPDAF, which correctly resembles each road segment.

B. Experimental Results

The robustness of the IMMPDAF algorithm for curb tracking was evaluated experimentally using a carlike vehicle [12] equipped with onboard computers, a looking-down 2-D LMS, four-wheel encoders, one steering-wheel encoder, a GPS, and a gyroscope. The speed $V$ in (1) and steering angle $\gamma$ in (1) were determined by the wheel and steering encoders, respectively, and were known quantities. The sampling time was 100 ms. The vehicle was driven at a speed of $4 \text{ m s}^{-1}$ at a hilly test site, which had straight-road segments, a bend, right road branching, and an $x$-intersection.
Fig. 9 shows the curb-tracking results using the IMMPDAF in various road scenarios including straight-road segments, a bend, right road branching, and an x-intersection. Fig. 10(a) shows consecutive laser data corresponding to the window W1 in Fig. 9(a), which is a straight-road segment. In the plot, data in between $y = 4 \text{ m}$ and $y = -4 \text{ m}$ correspond to the road surface and curbs. On the left side of the road is a bank, and scatter data on the right-hand side is due to trees, poles, and other man-made structures. The data corresponding to the road surface forms a “V” shape due to the cylindrical nature of the road surface.

Fig. 10(b) shows the laser data corresponding to the window W2 of Fig. 9(a), which is a right turn. Window W3 in Fig. 9(a) corresponds to a right road branching, and laser data is shown in Fig. 10(c). In this portion of the road, the right-hand side track is terminated (see Fig. 9) due to low LLR. Then, the IMMPDAF simply predicts the states until a new observation is available. Once it receives an observation, it goes through a series of filters, namely, the orientation filter, neighborhood filter, and road-width filter [12], before a tentative track is initiated. Then, SPRT is carried out for track confirmation. Fig. 10(d) shows the laser data referring to the window W4 in Fig. 9(a). It corresponds to an x-intersection, where there are no curbs present on both sides of the road. As shown in Fig. 9, both tracks are being deleted during the x-intersection, and both were reinitiated after the x-intersection showing the robustness to target loss and reappearing.

V. CONCLUSION

In this paper, we have proposed a method of extracting and tracking of road boundaries using curbs. The tracking problem becomes nontrivial due to the utilization of a moving observer (vehicle), presence of clutter, and maneuvering nature of the target with disappearances and reappearances. The tracking problem has been successfully solved with an IMMPDAF framework. Track initiation, confirmation, and deletion were handled using SPRT. Extensive simulation studies showed that the IMMPDAF is superior to that of IMMNNF. The experimental results on a campus environment showed that the proposed methodology is robust in all the tested road scenarios including straight segments, bends, loss and reappearing of curbs due to road branching, and x-intersections. Temporary obstruction of curbs by passing vehicles can be successfully handled as in road branching or x-intersections. It can be concluded that the road-boundary tracking via curb tracking is viable and effective.

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