

Contents

| | | |
|----------|--|-----------|
| 1 | Introduction | 5 |
| 2 | Fuel cell functionality | 9 |
| 2.1 | Operating principle | 9 |
| 2.2 | Thermodynamic aspects | 11 |
| 2.3 | Fuel cell polarization | 13 |
| 2.3.1 | Activation overpotential | 14 |
| 2.3.2 | Ohmic overpotential | 16 |
| 2.3.3 | Concentration overpotential | 16 |
| 2.3.4 | The fuel cell polarization curve | 17 |
| 2.4 | Fuel cell efficiency | 18 |
| 2.5 | Fuel cell types | 21 |
| 2.5.1 | Proton exchange membrane fuel cell (PEMFC) | 21 |
| 2.5.2 | Direct methanol fuel cell (DMFC) | 22 |
| 2.5.3 | Alkaline fuel cell (AFC) | 23 |
| 2.5.4 | Solid oxide fuel cell (SOFC) | 24 |
| 3 | Diagnostics of fuel cell stacks | 27 |
| 3.1 | A simple model | 27 |
| 3.2 | Generalization | 30 |
| 3.2.1 | The thin MEA approximation | 30 |
| 3.2.2 | Linear transformation | 32 |
| 3.3 | Approximation of current losses | 33 |
| 4 | Numerical methods | 37 |
| 4.1 | Finite-Volume method for electrostatic boundary value problems | 37 |
| 4.1.1 | Basics | 37 |
| 4.1.2 | Discretization of the potential | 39 |
| 4.1.3 | Conductivity | 40 |
| 4.1.4 | Discretized boundary conditions | 41 |
| 4.1.5 | Discretized differential equation | 43 |
| 4.2 | Simulated annealing method | 44 |
| 5 | The forward problem | 47 |
| 5.1 | Numerical investigation of the bridge currents | 47 |
| 5.1.1 | Finite-volume grid | 47 |
| 5.1.2 | The slit bridge resistance | 48 |

| | | |
|----------|--|-----------|
| 5.1.3 | Bridge currents for various graphite plates | 51 |
| 5.1.4 | Thickness of metal plates | 52 |
| 5.1.5 | Diffusion layer | 55 |
| 5.2 | Stabilization of fuel cell stack operation | 57 |
| 5.2.1 | Stack without metal plates | 57 |
| 5.2.2 | Stack with additional metal plates | 58 |
| 5.2.3 | Comparison of defect propagation | 60 |
| 5.3 | Assembling the linear transformation | 62 |
| 6 | The inverse problem | 67 |
| 6.1 | The Lagrangian | 68 |
| 6.1.1 | Constraints | 69 |
| 6.1.2 | The function $f(i_{\text{seg}})$ | 71 |
| 6.1.3 | The total Lagrangian | 71 |
| 6.2 | Minimization of the Lagrangian | 72 |
| 6.3 | Inverse computations I : Damage extent | 74 |
| 6.4 | Inverse computations II : Voltage difference | 83 |
| 7 | Conclusion | 87 |
| A | Appendix | 89 |
| A.1 | Finite-volume conductivity in material interfaces | 89 |
| A.1.1 | The electric field at material interfaces | 90 |
| A.2 | Finite-volume method for the magnetic field | 91 |
| A.3 | Maxwell equations in the finite-volume method | 93 |
| A.4 | Circulation resistance approximation | 96 |
| A.5 | Normal resistance of a diffusion layer consisting of graphite fabric | 98 |