Robotics Lab: Homework 1

Bring up your robot

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1 Robot Visualization Setup in RViz

(a) creating a launch folder within the armando_description package containing the launch file named armando_display.launch



- Figure 1: Creation of the launch folder and corresponding launch file in armando_description
- Specifically, the launch file has the structure shown in the following image:

```
from launch import LaunchDescription
from launch ros.actions import Node
from ament index python.packages import get_package_share_directory
import os
def generate_launch_description():
    arm_description_path = os.path.join(get_package_share_directory('armando_description'))
    urdf_path = os.path.join(arm_description_path, "urdf", "arm.urdf")
   # Legge il file URDF
with open(urdf_path, 'r') as infp:
        robot_desc = infp.read()
    robot_description = {"robot_description": robot_desc}
    robot_state_publisher_node = Node(
        package="robot_state_publisher
        executable="robot_state_publisher",
        output="screen",
        parameters=[robot_description]
    # Nodo joint state publisher
    joint_state_publisher_node = Node(
        package="joint_state_publisher",
executable="joint_state_publisher",
        output="screen"
    rviz_node = Node(
        package="rviz2"
        executable="rviz2",
        name="rviz2",
        output="screen",
#arguments=["-d", rviz_config]
    return LaunchDescription([
        robot_state_publisher_node,
        joint state publisher node,
        rviz_node
```

Figure 2: Structure of the armando_display.launch file.

As shown in the following figure, the launch file initializes three essential ROS 2 nodes: the robot_state_publisher, the joint_state_publisher, and the rviz2 node.

The robot_state_publisher node is responsible for broadcasting the transformations between the robot's links based on the URDF description. The joint_state_publisher node publishes the current joint positions, either manually specified or read from hardware interfaces, while rviz2 provides the visualization environment.

To correctly visualize the robot model in RViz, we configured the display by setting the **Fixed Frame** parameter to the robot's reference frame and by adding a **Robot Model** display to render the URDF description. This ensures that all subsequent transformations and sensor data are aligned with the correct reference frame.

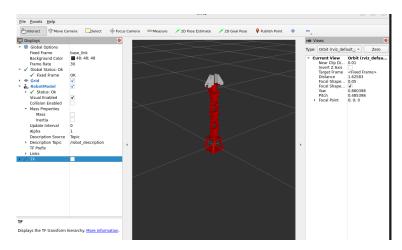


Figure 3: Visualization of the Armando robot model in RViz after configuring the Robot Model display.

(b) RViz Configuration File

Inside the config directory of the armando_description package, we added a configuration file named config.rviz. This file stores the customized RViz layout, including the loaded displays, visual parameters, and the selected fixed frame.

```
# Nodo rviz2 con configurazione rviz
rviz_node = Node(
   package="rviz2",
   executable="rviz2",
   name="rviz2",
   output="screen",
   arguments=["-d", rviz_config]
)
```

Figure 4: RViz node configuration for automatic robot model visualization.

(c) Simplification of Collision Models

To improve simulation performance and stability, we replaced the detailed collision meshes in the URDF with simplified *primitive geometries*. In particular, we used box-shaped elements as approximations of the original link volumes. This approach maintains reasonable physical accuracy while significantly reducing computational cost during collision detection.

The collision properties for each link are defined by the box size attribute in the URDF file. An example of one link's collision box definition is shown below, but the same procedure was iteratively applied to every joint and link of the robot model.

Figure 5: Example of a collision box definition within the URDF file.

The resulting model, shown in the following figure, demonstrates the simplified collision geometry of the robot. This representation enables efficient collision checking while preserving the robot's kinematic structure for both visualization and physical simulation purposes.

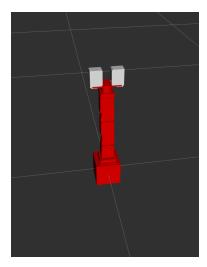


Figure 6: Final simplified collision model of the Armando robot.

2 Setting Up the Gazebo Simulation and Hardware Interface

(a) Creating a package using the terminal by using the following command line:

```
ros2 pkg create --build-type ament_cmake armando_gazebo
```

Once created, since the ros2 pkg create command do not create all the folders we need, we also made sure to add the launch directory (inside the package that we jsut created) with the following command line:

mkdir launch

Once done the previous steps, our package will have the following stuff inside:

```
user@ivano-Nitro-AN515-55:~/ros2_ws/src/armando_gazebo$ ls
CMakeLists.txt README.txt launch package.xml urdf
```

Figure 7: Structure of the armando_gazebo package with the launch folder added.

The armando_world.launch.py file is included inside the launch directory and it's filled with commands to load the URDF file into the /robot_description topic and spawn the robot using the create node in the ros_gz_sim package:

```
user@ivano-Nitro-AN515-55:~/ros2_ws/src/armando_gazebo$ cd launch user@ivano-Nitro-AN515-55:~/ros2_ws/src/armando_gazebo/launch$ ls armando_world.launch.py user@ivano-Nitro-AN515-55:~/ros2_ws/src/armando_gazebo/launch$
```

Figure 8: Launch file for loading the robot model and spawning it in Gazebo.

The robot gets spawned thanks to the following code line:

Figure 9: Spawning of the Robot code - 1

Figure 10: Spawning of the Robot code - 2

```
joint_state_broadcaster_spawner = Node(
package="controller_manager",
executable="spawner",
arguments=["joint_state_broadcaster", "--controller-manager", "/controller_manager"],
position_controller_spawner = Node(
package="controller_manager",
executable="spawner",
arguments=["position_controller", "--controller-manager", "/controller_manager"],
condition=IfCondition(PythonExpression([choice_controll, ' == 0'])),
delay_joint_pos_controller = (
     RegisterEventHandler(
         event_handler=OnProcessExit(
              target_action=urdf_spawner_node,
              on_exit=[
                  position_controller_spawner,
delay_joint_state_broadcaster = (
     RegisterEventHandler(
         event handler=OnProcessExit(
              target_action=urdf_spawner_node,
              on_exit=[joint_state_broadcaster_spawner],
```

Figure 11: Spawning of the Robot code - 3

(b) To enable position control of the robot's joints in simulation, we added a PositionJointInterface named HardwareInterface_Ignition, implemented using the ros2_control framework. This interface allows the controllers to send and receive commands corresponding to the robot's joint positions, bridging the gap between the simulated hardware (in Gazebo) and the ROS 2 control nodes.

Figure 12: Definition of the PositionJointInterface within the ros2_control framework.

The hardware interface is defined inside a dedicated file named armando_hardware_interface.xacro, located in the armando_description/urdf directory. This file contains a xacro:macro definition that describes how the robot's joints are mapped to the ROS 2 control interfaces, specifying which joints are actuated and how they interact with the simulation backend.

Figure 13: Excerpt from the armando_hardware_interface.xacro file showing the macro definition.

The hardware interface macro is then included within the main armando.urdf.xacro file (previously renamed from armando.urdf) using the xacro:include directive. This inclusion makes the hardware interface part of the robot's unified URDF structure, allowing the controller manager to load and initialize the correct control resources during simulation startup.

```
<robot name="armando" xmlns:xacro="http://www.ros.org/wiki/xacro">
    <xacro:include filename="$(find armando_description)/urdf/armando_hardware_interface.xacro"/>
```

Figure 14: Inclusion of the hardware interface macro inside the main URDF description.

(c) In the main armando.urdf.xacro file, the Gazebo ROS 2 Control plugin is included to load and manage the joint position controllers.

Figure 15: Inclusion of the controller configuration YAML file in the URDF.

The YAML file defines the parameters and interfaces for both the joint_state_broadcaster and the position_controller.

Figure 16: YAML configuration defining the robot controllers.

The controllers are spawned in the armando_world.launch.py file inside the armando_gazebo/launch directory.

```
joint_state_broadcaster_spawner = Node(
package="controller_manager",
executable="spawner",
arguments=["joint_state_broadcaster", "--controller-manager", "/controller_manager"],
)

position_controller_spawner = Node(
package="controller_manager",
executable="spawner",
arguments=["position_controller", "--controller-manager", "/controller_manager"],
condition=IfCondition(PythonExpression([choice_controll, ' == 0'])),
)
```

Figure 17: Commands for spawning the joint state broadcaster and position controllers.

The Gazebo simulation is launched with:

ros2 launch armando_gazebo armando_world.launch.py

When started, the terminal confirms that the hardware interface and controllers are correctly loaded.



Figure 18: Verification of the controllers successfully loaded in simulation.

3 Camera Setup and Visualization in Gazebo

(a) Adding a carmera_link and a camera_joint of fixed type in order to define the link and the join used to setup the camera for the Gazebo environment:

Figure 19: Camera Code

The camera_link and the camera_joint are both included inside the armando.urdf.xacro file. The values for size and position have been chosen in orded to let the camera be visible in the simulation environment, while the rpy axis have been chosen in order to let our camera be oriented from the bottom to the top.

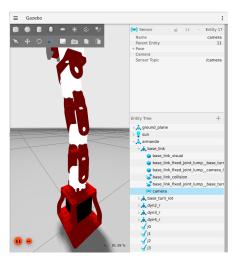


Figure 20: Camera in the Robot

(b) The armando_camera.xacro file was created inside the armando_gazebo/urdf folder.



Figure 21: Location of the armando_camera.xacro file in the package structure.

This file defines the camera sensor using a xacro:macro and includes the necessary Gazebo plugins for image publishing.

Figure 22: Macro definition and plugin configuration inside armando_camera.xacro.

The macro is included in the main armando.urdf.xacro file using the xacro:include directive.

```
<xacro:include filename="$(find armando_gazebo)/urdf/armando_camera.xacro"/>
```

Figure 23: Inclusion of the camera macro in the main URDF description.

(c) By using the command line ros2 run rqt_image_view rqt_image_view it's possible to see that the topic is correctly published, in fact the camera also shows what it's pointing to:

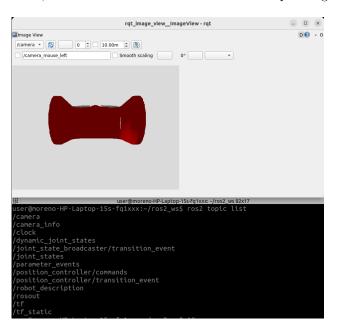


Figure 24: Point of view of the Camera

The brige used to link the camera is given by the following code:

```
bridge_camera = Node(
package='ros_ign_bridge',
executable='parameter_bridge',
arguments=[
    '/camera@sensor_msgs/msg/Image@ignition.msgs.Image',
    '/camera_info@sensor_msgs/msg/CameraInfo@ignition.msgs.CameraInfo',
],
output='screen'
)
```

Figure 25: Bridge to link the camera

4 Design and Implementation of the ROS 2 Control Node

(a) Creating the armando_controller package with the specifications given by the homework using the proper command on the terminal:

```
ros2 pkg create --build-type ament-cmake --node-name arm_controler_node --dependencies rclcpp sensor_msgs std_msgs
```

Once done, we modified the CMakeLists.txt and the package.xml files in order to compile the node:

```
cmake_minimum_required(VERSION 3.8)
project(armando_controller)

if(CMAKE_COMPILER_IS_GNUCXX OR CMAKE_CXX_COMPILER_ID MATCHES "Clang")
   add_compile_options(-Wall -Wextra -Wpedantic)
endif()

# find dependencies
find_package(sement_cmake REQUIRED)
find_package(rclcpp REQUIRED)
find_package(sensor_msgs REQUIRED)
find_package(std_msgs REQUIRED)

set(dependencies
   rclcpp
   std_msgs
   sensor_msgs
)

add_executable(arm_controller_node src/arm_controller_node.cpp)
ament_target_dependencies(arm_controller_node rclcpp sensor_msgs std_msgs)
install(TARGETS
   arm_controller_node
   DESTINATION lib/${PROJECT_NAME}
)
ament_package()
```

(b) We created a subscriber to the topic joint_states using the message type sensor_msgs/msg/JointState. This subscriber is responsible for receiving the current joint positions of the robot and printing them in the terminal each time a new message is published on the topic.

The subscriber was defined as follows:

```
joint_state_sub_ = this->create_subscription<sensor_msgs::msg::JointState>(
```

```
"joint_states",
10,
std::bind(&ArmControllerNode::jointStateCallback, this, _1));
```

The associated callback function, jointStateCallback(), iterates through all joint positions and prints their values:

```
for (size_t i = 0; i < msg->position.size(); ++i) {
  RCLCPP_INFO(this->get_logger(), " joint[%zu]: %.3f", i, msg->position[i]);
}
```

In this way, every time a new joint state message is received, the current position of each joint is displayed in the console, allowing real-time monitoring of the robot's motion state.

(c) We defined a publisher named position_comm_pub that publishes sequential joint position commands to the topic /position_controller/commands. This topic uses the message type std_msgs/msg/Float64MultiArray, which allows sending an array of target joint positions to the robot's position controller.

The publisher was created as follows:

```
position_comm_pub_ = this->create_publisher<std_msgs::msg::Float64MultiArray>(
    "/position_controller/commands",
    10);
```

The predefined sequence of commands was defined in a vector structure:

```
command_sequence_ = {
     {0.0, 0.0, 0.2, 0.0},
     {0.0, 0.3, 0.2, 0.0},
     {0.0, 0.0, 0.0, 0.0},
     {0.0, 0.0, -0.2, 0.0}
};
```

Each command is published through the function publishCommand(), which sends the next element of the sequence to the controller:

```
std_msgs::msg::Float64MultiArray msg;
msg.data = command_sequence_[command_index_];
position_comm_pub_->publish(msg);
```

(d) At first, let's modify armando_controller.cpp in order to allow the node to publish on the right topic and with the corresponding type of data according to the user's controller choice.

```
void publishCommand()
        std_msgs::msg::Float64MultiArray msg;
        msg.data = command_sequence_[command_index_];
       position_comm_pub_->publish(msg);
       RCLCPP INFO(this->get_logger(),
                "Published command #%zu: [%.2f, %.2f, %.2f, %.2f]", command_index_ + 1,
                msg.data[0], msg.data[1], msg.data[2], msg.data[3]);
        trajectory_msgs::msg::JointTrajectory msg1;
   msgl.joint_names = {"j0", "j1", "j2", "j3"};
   trajectory_msgs::msg::JointTrajectoryPoint point;
   point.positions = command sequence [command index ];
   point.velocities = command sequence vel [command index ];
   point.time from start = rclcpp::Duration::from seconds(2.0); // esempio: 2 secondi per raggiungere la posizione
   msgl.points.push_back(point);
    trajectory_comm_pub_->publish(msg1);
   RCLCPP_INFO(this->get_logger(),
                command_index_ + 1,
                \begin{array}{ll} - & - \\ - & - \\ - & - \\ \end{array}
                point.velocities[0], point.velocities[1], point.velocities[2], point.velocities[3]);
std::string choice_controll_;
rclcpp::Subscription<sensor_msgs::msg::JointState>::SharedPtr joint_state_sub_;
rclcpp::Publisher<std_msgs::msg::Float64MultiArray>::SharedPtr position_comm_pub_;
rclcpp::Publisher<trajectory_msgs::msg::JointTrajectory>::SharedPtr trajectory_comm_pub_;
std::vector<std::vector<double>> command_sequence_;
std::vector<std::vector<double>> command sequence vel ;
size t command index ;
rclcpp::TimerBase::SharedPtr timer ;
bool goal reached;
```

Figure 26: Structure of the publishCommand after modification.

Figure 27: ArmControllerNode constructor editings

In order to use the joint_trajectory_controller, it must be loaded and configured in armando_world.launch.py, and its configuration must be added in armando_controllers.yaml.

```
armando_description > config > ! armando_controllers.yaml
             type: position controllers/JointGroupPositionController
           state publish rate: 200.0
           action monitor rate: 20.0
             stopped velocity tolerance: 0.01
             goal time: 0.0
         ros parameters:
```

Figure 28: armando_controllers.yaml after joint_trajectory_controller configuration adding

```
position_controller_spawner = Node(
  package="controller_manager",
  executable="spawner",
  arguments=["position_controller", "--controller-manager", "/controller_manager"],
  condition=IfCondition(PythonExpression([choice_controll, ' == 0'])),
)

joint_trajectory_controller_spawner = Node(
  package="controller_manager",
  executable="spawner",
  arguments=["joint_trajectory_controller", "--controller-manager", "/controller_manager"],
  condition=IfCondition(PythonExpression([choice_controll, ' == 1'])),
)
```

Figure 29: editings in the controllers loadings to add joint_trajectory_controller and make they depende on choice_control parameter in armando_world.launch.py.

In the

As with the other two controllers, the joint_trajectory_controller also waits for the robot to spawn in Gazebo in the same fashion. Below is the definition of the argument choice_control_arg, which allows the user to choose the controller from the command line.

```
choice_controll_arg = DeclareLaunchArgument(
name='choice_controll',
default_value='0',
description='Choose which controller to use (0=position, 1=trajectory)'
)
choice_controll = LaunchConfiguration('choice_controll')
```

Figure 30: Definition of the argument choice_control_arg in armando_world.launch.py.

Always in armando_world.launch.py, the armando_controller.cpp is launched by the same delay function as the other controllers, of course after them, passing to it the choice_control argument.

Figure 31: armando_controller.cpp launch

If the user selects choice_control as 0, the position_controller_spawner will be launched; if it is 1, the joint_trajectory_controller_spawner will be launched.

```
user@moreno-HP-Laptop-15s-fq1xxx:~/ros2_ws$ ros2 launch armando_gazebo armando_world.launch
.py choice_controll:=0
```



user@moreno-HP-Laptop-15s-fq1xxx:~/ros2_ws\$ ros2 launch armando_gazebo armando_world.launch .py choice_controll:=1

