

# PLANNING AND UAV MISSION EVALUATION FOR INTRALOGISTICS PROBLEM

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**Resumo**— Este artigo apresenta o desenvolvimento de planejadores de missão na intralogística para um veículo aéreo não tripulado comercial, equipado com uma garra robótica, em um ambiente industrial onde há almoxarifado de insumos, linhas de produção e depósito de produtos. Neste trabalho, o planejador gera comandos necessários para realizar uma missão a qual compreende desde a entrega de insumos trazidos do almoxarifado à linha de produção, até a entrega do produto final ao cliente. Foram desenvolvidas duas abordagens diferentes para planejamento de missão: na primeira abordagem, utilizou-se uma simples heurística que resolve o problema; já na segunda abordagem, utilizou-se uma técnica com escalonamento de tarefas (processo de produção). Estas abordagens seguem algumas regras de produção que serão apresentadas ao longo deste trabalho. Foi realizada uma avaliação dos planejadores de missão desenvolvidos, verificando o custo de ambos, realizando algumas medidas de tempo de execução, bem como comparando estes resultados com o custo ótimo obtido com a ferramenta de otimização CPLEX.

**Palavras-chave**— Planejamento de Missão, Sistemas de Manufatura.

**Abstract**— This paper presents the development of mission planners in intralogistics for a commercial unmanned aerial vehicle equipped with a robotic gripper in an industrial environment where there are a warehouse of inputs, production lines and a product warehouse. In this work, the planner generates the necessary commands to carry out a mission that includes everything from the delivery of inputs brought from the warehouse of inputs to the production line until the final product is delivered to the customer (product warehouse). Two different approaches were developed for mission planning: in the first approach, a simple heuristic was used to solve the problem; in the second approach, a technique with task scheduling (production process) was used. These approaches follow some production rules that will be presented throughout this work. An evaluation of the mission planners developed was performed, verifying the cost of both, performing some measures of execution time, as well as comparing these results with the optimum cost obtained with the IBM ILOG CPLEX optimizer.

**Keywords**— Mission Planning, Manufacturing Systems.

## 1 Introduction

Logistics has become a competitive and fundamental factor for organizations, involving the management, conservation and supervision of freight transport. In addition, excellent logistics means customer satisfaction, so speed is still an important factor in a successful logistics process (Service-drone, 2014). Currently, one of the solutions to this type of problem is the use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs). Nowadays, UAVs are mostly remotely piloted vehicles (RPV), since their operations are carried out by ground operators. If the tasks performed by a UAV were performed autonomously, it would relieve the work of these operators, since they perform tedious and repetitive tasks (Pascarella et al., 2013).

A probable improvement of these logistics systems is the increase of the automation of the UAVs, what results in minimization of the costs, e.g. in terms of time. Consequently, investments and studies related to stand-alone UAVs are important to the development of smart factories (Hern, 2014). However, one of the main problems with the use of autonomous UAVs is the reliability and intelligence of the system. Thus, increased employment of autonomous UAVs requires the development of devices that are capa-

ble of performing tasks and interacting with the environment intelligently and reliably.

Autonomous UAVs need to know what will happen in a future instant and what is the best decision to make at the present time, and therefore require strategies not only to decompose their missions into meaningful sub-tasks but also to track progress toward mission goals and the evolution of these tasks relative to the capabilities of autonomous UAVs (Finn and Scheduling, 2012). As a consequence, in order to perform a mission successfully, it is recommended to make a plan to the task (Garecht, 2010). Mission planning problems consist of planning events to meet certain requirements associated with the plan and improving mission objectives (Krozel, 1988). Therefore, this is one of the main challenges faced in solving this type of problem.

Some researches about evaluation and optimization of mission planning have been done in the last years. Schwarz and Sauer (2012) have used ant colony to optimize missions for an automated guided vehicle (AVG). Another paper investigates energy consumption for a factory and evaluate the logistic planning processes using a metric of evaluation (Müller et al., 2012).

This paper presents a methodology that evalu-

ate the cost of mission planners for a commercial UAV. We developed a evaluation metric that evaluate the relative cost of a planning strategy related with the optimal cost generated by the CPLEX optimizer.

Summarizing, the main contributions of this work are:

- planner evaluation metric;
- use of a commercial UAV in intralogistics.

The remaining of this work is organized as follows: Section 2 presents some previous works related to mission planning, optimization and evaluation, Section 3 provides the fundamentals of mission planning and optimization problems, Section 5 explains the proposed evaluation methodology in details, Section 6 shows the experimental procedures and results in order to explore and demonstrate the potential of methodology, and, finally, Section 7 concludes the work.

## 2 Related works

In the literature, there are some attempts to implement UAV guidance systems that perform mission planning. Doherty et al. (2009) presented an architecture of a framework for mission planning and execution tracking applied to an unmanned helicopter. During the execution of the mission, knowledge was acquired through sensors which was used to create state structures. These structures will allow the construction of a logical model, representing the real development of the system and its environment over time. Then, the planning and monitoring modules use temporal action logic (TAL) to reason about actions and changes. The NASA/U.S. Army autonomous helicopter project has developed a guidance system for the autonomous surveillance planning problem for multiple and different targets (Whalley et al., 2005), which generates mission plans using a theoretical approach to decision making. A high-level standalone control is provided by the framework Apex (Baer-Riedhart, 1998), a reactive procedure-based scheduler/planner used to perform mission-level tasks. Apex synthesizes a course of action primarily by linking elemental procedures expressed in procedural definition language (PDL), a notation developed specifically for the Apex reactive planner. This guidance system was integrated into a robotic helicopter and tested in more than 240 scenarios.

A similar project, called Ressac (Research and Rescue by Cooperative Autonomous System), was conducted by the French Aerospace Laboratory (ONERA) for a search and rescue scenario (Fabiani et al., 2007). This architecture for an exploration mission was developed based on the idea of decomposing the mission into

a sequence of tasks or macro-actions associated with rewards. The problem was modeled using a Markov decision process framework (MDP) and dynamic programming algorithms for mission planning. Konigsbuch (Teichteil-Königsbuch and Fabiani, 2007) extends the guidance system and integrates with a robotic helicopter.

Finally, the German Aerospace Center (DLR) has also developed a mission management system based on the behavior paradigm (Adolf and Andert, 2010), which has been integrated with the ARTIS helicopter and validated in different scenarios, including follower of waypoints and search and tracking mission.

## 3 Background

### 3.1 Mission Planning

Firstly, a mission can be defined as a goal that need to be completed. In the context of this work, the mission of the UAV is delivery of packages according to a set of well defined rules. A definition to mission planning for UAV is the process of planning the locations to visit (waypoints) and the actions that the vehicles can perform (loading/dropping a load, taking videos/pictures, etc.), typically over a time period (Ramirez-Atencia et al., 2014). An important term in this work is the concept of planner which is the agent (software implementation) that generate a mission. Functionally, mission planning lies above the trajectory planning process, where the mission planner generates a desired mission plan, and then the trajectory planner generates the flight plan (trajectories) between the waypoints.

### 3.2 Optimization Problems

An optimization problem is about finding the best solution (relative to a certain criterion) among a set of available alternatives. For example, the popular bin packaging problem that aims to find the number of boxes of a certain size to store a set of objects of indicated sizes; optimization involves, for example, finding the least amount of boxes. An optimization problem is usually represented as follows:

$$\begin{array}{ll} \min & f(\mathbf{x}), \\ \text{s.t.} & \mathbf{x} \in \Omega. \end{array} \quad (1)$$

[IB: Todo esse texto sobre otimização era desnecessário. Sugiro resumir todo esse texto comentado em um único breve parágrafo a ser adicionado aqui. As imagens podem ser deixadas para lá.]

## 4 UAV Movement System

In this section, we first investigate the platform used in this work, verifying the hardware charac-

teristics and how to control it by software. The core hardware of the UAV IRIS+ is the Pixhawk and we can control it using a Python library - dronekit that uses MAVLink<sup>1</sup> protocol. Secondly, we integrate a robot gripper to the UAV to take and leave packages during the mission. After that, we created movement functions to make the UAV movement and control it using some resources of the dronekit API.

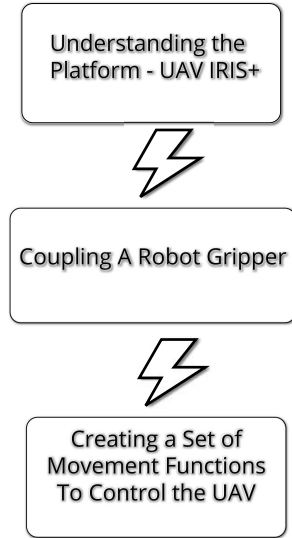


Figure 1: UAV Movement Systems.

[IB: Fale um pouco mais aqui...]

## 5 Methodology of Time Cost Evaluation, UAV use and Mission Planning

[IB: outline here]

### 5.1 Modeling an UAV Intralogistics Mission as an Optimization Problem

It is assumed that the processing time  $p_i$  is the total time of production of  $i$ -th [IB: dizer aqui o significado do índice  $i$ ], that is the time demanded to leave and take [IB: quais produtos??] products, considering the sum of the time that the UAV stays in the stock collecting inputs and the time that demanded for the UAV movement. We also assume that the setup (production) time  $s_i$  is the time required only for the manufacturing of a product, considering that all the required inputs are available in the production line. Therefore, the total time for the production of a given product is the sum of the processing and setup time ( $p_i$  and  $s_i$ ).

The fictive task or dummy of the scheduling,  $j_0$ , with processing time proportional to the time that

the UAV collect the input and leads to the production line.[IB: Reescrever frase anterior] In the literature, production lines are called considered parallel machines [IB: diga o que é isso] for optimization problems of scalable tasks (when there are  $m$  machines in parallel with performances depending on the task to be executed, notation used is  $R$  [IB: explique melhor o que está nesse parêntese e tire do parêntese]) (Du and Brucker, 2008).

- $J = \{j_1, j_2, \dots, j_n\}$  is the set of tasks;
- $M = \{m_1, m_2, \dots, m_n\}$  is the set of machines (production lines);
- $P = \{p_1, p_2, \dots, p_n\}$  is the processing time of each task;
- $S = \{s_1, s_2, \dots, s_n\}$  is the setup time (production time of each production line);
- $R||C_{max}$  (Three-field notation<sup>2</sup> used in the literature to represent a given task scheduling problem, in this case, minimizing the makespan<sup>3</sup> in an unrelated parallel machine environment (Graham et al., 1979).

Model:

#### 1. Choosing the constraints:

The variable  $x_{ij}$  is a binary constraint which takes the value 1 if the task  $j$  is running on the machine  $i$ , and 0 otherwise. The variable  $C_{max}$  is the variable that will be optimized.

$$x_{ij} = \begin{cases} 1, & \text{if the task } j \text{ is running in} \\ & \text{the machine (production line) } i \\ 0, & \text{otherwise} \end{cases} \quad (2)$$

$$C_{max} = \text{makespan (duration of a mission)} \quad (3)$$

#### 2. Elaboration of the objective function:

The objective function is the variable  $C_{max}$  (total process execution time) that needs to be minimized.

$$\text{Minimize } C_{max} \quad (4)$$

$C_{max}$  is the variable that need to be minimized (optimized).

#### 3. Restrictions:

- Each task must be executed/processed in an unique machine (production line)

<sup>1</sup>MAVLink or Micro Air Vehicle Link is a protocol for communicating with small unmanned vehicle. It is designed as a header-only message marshalling library

<sup>2</sup>Notation  $\alpha|\beta|\gamma$ , where  $\alpha$ : processing environment,  $\beta$ : problem constraints and  $\gamma$ : optimization criterion.

<sup>3</sup>Makespan is the termination time of the most loaded processor.

$$\sum_{\substack{i \in M \\ \forall j \in J}} x_{ij} = 1 \quad (5)$$

For a better understanding what the summation means, let's suppose that there are two production lines and tree products to be produced (tasks), therefore,  $x_{00} + x_{10} + x_{20} = 1$ ,  $x_{01} + x_{11} + x_{21} = 1$  and  $x_{02} + x_{12} + x_{22} = 1$ , so, it can be verified that those restrictions are set, there will be only one task running in a machine.

• **Time execution of the tasks in each machine**

$$\sum_{\substack{j \in J \\ \forall i \in M}} (p_j + s_j)x_{ij} \leq C_{max} \quad (6)$$

For a better understanding what the summation means, let's suppose that there are two machines and two tasks, and the time of processing and setup of each task are  $p_0 = 100$ ,  $p_1 = 100$  and  $s_0 = 12$ ,  $s_1 = 18$  respectively. Therefore, the production time of the product 0 in the production line 0 is  $p_0 + s_0$  and so on.

4. **Completeness and non-negativity:**

$$x_{ij} \in \{0, 1\} \quad \forall i = 1, 2, \dots, M \text{ and} \\ \forall j = 0(dummy), 1, 2, 3, \dots, N \quad (7)$$

5. **Full model:**

$$\begin{aligned} &\text{Minimize} \quad C_{max} \\ &\text{Subject to} \quad \sum_{\substack{i \in M \\ \forall j \in J}} x_{ij} = 1 \\ &\quad \sum_{\substack{j \in J \\ \forall i \in M}} (p_j + s_j)x_{ij} \leq C_{max} \\ &\quad x_{ij} \in \{0, 1\} \quad \forall i = 1, 2, \dots, M \text{ e } \forall \\ &\quad j = 0(dummy), 1, 2, 3, \dots, N \end{aligned}$$

5.2 *Planner Evaluation Methodology*

In order to evaluate the cost of the two solutions implemented in this work, a generalized evaluation metric was developed, as shown below.

The cost function evaluated in this work is the time spent for the execution of the mission. The evaluation metric compares the cost of the strategies developed with the cost of a solution generated by a solver.

Firstly, the optimal cost of the problem is obtained through the CPLEX solver, which returns the optimum value (minimum mission execution time). The implementation of the modelling optimization problem is done in C++ with the help of the CPLEX solver.

Considering,

- $c_o$  - it is the optimal cost obtained by the CPLEX solver;
- $c_X$  - it is the cost of the solution generated by planner X;
- $Crel_X$  - it is the relative cost of the solution generated by planner X.

The evaluation of each mission planner will be made relative to the optimal cost, therefore:

$$Crel_X = \frac{c_o}{c_X} \quad (8)$$

Where  $0 \leq Crel_X \leq 1$ , it can be verified that as close of 1 the  $Crel_X$  is, the solution cost is smaller.

5.3 *Mission Planners Cost Evaluation Metrics*

To evaluate the cost of mission planner solutions implemented, a generalized evaluation metric was developed, as shown below.

The evaluation function in this work is the execution time of the mission. The evaluation metric compares the cost of the strategies developed with the cost of a solution generated by a solver.

Firstly, the optimal cost of the problem is obtained through the CPLEX solver, which returns the optimal value (minimum mission execution time) under the same circumstances. The implementation of the optimization problem modeled in the subsection 5.1 is implemented in C++ using the CPLEX solver.

Knowing that:

- $c_o$  - it's the optimal cost obtained by the CPLEX solver;
- $c_X$  - it's the cost of the solution generated by planner X;
- $Crel_X$  - it's the relative cost of the solution generated by planner X.

The evaluation of each planner will be made relative to the optimal cost, therefore:

$$Crel_X = \frac{c_o}{c_X} \quad (9)$$

As we know  $0 \leq Crel_X \leq 1$ , we can verify that the closer to 1 the  $Crel_X$  is, the less the cost of the solution.

## 6 Experimental Evaluation

### 6.1 Case Study

To perform the analysis of the techniques used and to evaluate the cost of the solutions addressed, the following case study was used:

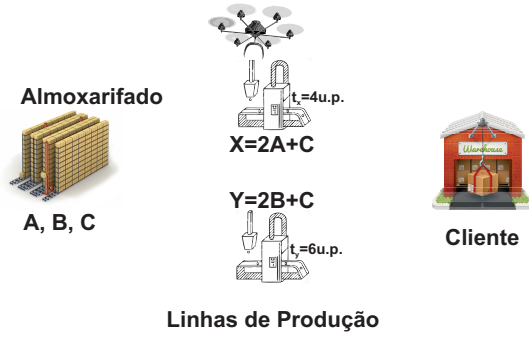


Figure 2: Case Study Representation.

In the Figure 2, we can see that there are inputs in the warehouse of type A, B and C and two production lines that produce products of type X and Y.

Each production line produces only one type of product and has a characteristic production time, as shown in Figure 2. In this case, to produce a product of type X, two inputs of type A and one input of type C are required. In order to produce a product of type Y, two inputs of type B and one input of type C are required. The production time of a X product is  $4p.u.$  and the time of production of product Y is  $6p.u.$ . A production unit ( $1u.p.$ ) was considered to be a GoTo command performed by the UAV.

The task to be performed is the production of the customer order, where the UAV will collect supplies from the warehouse, take to the production line and once the production of a certain product is finished, it will lead to the customer.

## 6.2 Mission Planners

In the context of this work, mission planner is a software developed with the purpose of generating a production mission given the warehouse and customer request. This program generates a *.mission* extension file containing a set of mission commands, as shown in the ?? subsection.

### 6.2.1 Planner A

In this strategy, the UAV starts moving toward the warehouse, takes two inputs of type A to produce a product X, then takes the type C input, waits on the production line for the product X to be produced. After being produced, it leads to the customer. If there is more products of type X to be produced, it goes to the warehouse and carries out the whole process again.

After all the X products are produced and taken to the customer, the UAV will go to the warehouse and take the two type B inputs and then the type C input, wait for the first product Y to be produced and then take it to the customer. If you need to produce more Y products, the process is the same.

The pseudo code of this algorithm is shown in the Algorithm 1:

---

#### Algorithm 1 Planner A

---

```

Input: warehouse
Input: order
Output: mission file .mission
begin
    check the order;
    repeat
        go to the warehouse
    until production of all X elements finish;
    ;
    repeat
        get input A;
        bring to the production line X;
    until until bring 2 A elements;
    go to the warehouse;
    get the input C;
    bring to the production line X;
    wait X to be produced;
    bring X to the client;
    repeat
        go to the warehouse;
        repeat
            get input B;
            bring to the production line Y;
        until until bring 2 B elements;
        go to the warehouse;
        get the input C;
        bring to the production line Y;
        wait Y to be produced;
        bring Y to the client;
    until production of all Y elements finish;
end

```

---

### 6.2.2 Planner B

In planner B, unlike planner A where the UAV is idle waiting for each product to be produced and only then takes the customer, the UAV continues the production process while the output of the products does not end. Once the production of each product is finished, the VANT for the task that was running and goes to the production line of that particular product, performs the collection and takes it to the customer. It then returns the task it was previously running, performing a scheduling of tasks.

The pseudo code of this algorithm is shown in the Algorithm 2:

---

**Algorithm 2** Planner B

---

**Input:** warehouse  
**Input:** order  
**Output:** mission file *.mission*  
**begin**  
    initialize  $t_x$ ;  
    initialize  $t_y$ ;  
    check the order;  
    **repeat**  
        **if** *the counter of that X is not  $t_x$*   
        **then**  
            go to the warehouse;  
            **repeat**  
                get the input A;  
                bring to the production line X;  
            **until** *until bring 2 A elements*;  
            go to the warehouse;  
            get the input C;  
            bring to the production line X;  
            start the counter of this X (production time);  
            keep producing;  
        **else**  
            go back to the production line X;  
            bring X to the client;  
            go back to producing;  
        **end**  
    **until** *production of all X elements finish*;  
    **repeat**  
        **if** *the counter of that X is not  $t_y$*   
        **then**  
            go to the warehouse;  
            **repeat**  
                get the input B;  
                bring to the production line Y;  
            **until** *until bring 2 B elements*;  
            go to the warehouse;  
            get the input C;  
            bring to the production line Y;  
            start the counter of this Y (production time);  
            keep producing;  
        **else**  
            go back to the production line Y;  
            bring X to the client;  
            go back to producing;  
        **end**  
    **until** *production of all X elements finish*;  
**end**

---

### 6.3 Evaluation Cost

After the implementation of the algorithm of planners A and B, the metric shown in this work was used to evaluate the cost of the algorithms. The results of the proposed mission planning methods in this work were compared to the optimal solution obtained with the branch-and-cut algorithm of the IBM/ILOG CPLEX 12.4 tool developed in C++.

In order to obtain better results in the comparison, it was considered only the time in which the UAV takes to finish the production of a product, excluding the time in which it leaves its initial position and moves to the warehouse, the time in which it Moves from the customer to the warehouse and the time it takes to go to the end point and land. This was done due to the greater practicality of implementing the problem in the CPLEX solver. The problem was modelled considering the total processing time, that is, only the processing time of the task (production) and the time of set-up (time of production of the line). Thus, the execution time of each mission was measured and compared to the value obtained by the CPLEX solver (optimal time), as shown in Table 1.

	<b>Time (s)</b>
<b>Planner A</b>	420
<b>Planner B</b>	404
<b>CPLEX</b>	134

Table 1: Time execution for comparison with the optimal solution time

The Table 1 shows the mission execution times obtained using the scheduler algorithm A, the scheduler algorithm B, and the minimum value given by the solver.

Using the metric shown in the section 5.3, then:

$$C_{real_A} = \frac{134}{420} = 0,319 \quad (10)$$

$$C_{real_B} = \frac{134}{408} = 0,328 \quad (11)$$

It can be seen in the Equation 11 that planner B performs the mission more quickly and has a lower cost than planner A, according to the metric used.

### 6.4 Practical Results

To verify the practical results, as well as a cost comparison between the different approaches of mission planners developed in this work, the flight time measurement was performed using the two mission planning algorithms developed, using the case study shown in 6.1.

Below, we can verify the two mission files generated by the two strategies developed in this work:

The following is data about the mission being executed in the simulator SITL <sup>4</sup>. The table below shows the performances of both schedulers relative to flight time.

	Planner A	Planner B
Testes	<i>Flight Time (s)</i>	<i>Flight Time (s)</i>
1	460,405	430,830
2	460,693	436,885
3	462,080	441,681
4	457,719	441,277
5	461,227	451,865

Table 2: Mission Planners Flight Time - Simulator.

In the Table 2, it can be verified that the mission time executed by planner B presented less time compared to planner A in all five tests.

In Figure 3 is shown a graph of the flight times of both planners in the five tests done in the simulation environment.

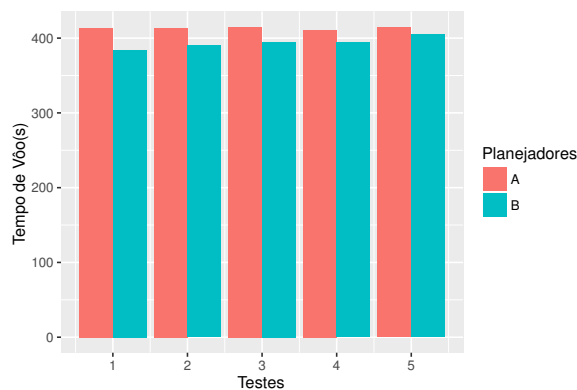


Figure 3: Flight Time Graph of Mission Planners Relative to 5 Tests in Simulator.

Next, you can see the results for the tests performed in real environment used by both planners.

In Figure 4 the map where the tests were performed is shown on the map at the Faculty of Physical Education and Physiotherapy of Federal University of Amazonas.



Figure 4: Warehouse, Production Line X, Production Line Y and Costumer in the Map.

In Table 3, it can be seen that the mission time executed by planner B in real environment also showed a shorter time compared to planner A in the five tests:

	Planner A	Planner B
Testes	<i>Flight Time (s)</i>	<i>Flight Time (s)</i>
1	455,12	441,72
2	456,93	440,18
3	457,19	447,51
4	460,25	438,19
5	459,47	445,85

Table 3: Mission Planners Flight Time - Real.

In Figure 5 is shown a graph of the flight times of both planners in the five tests done in real environment.

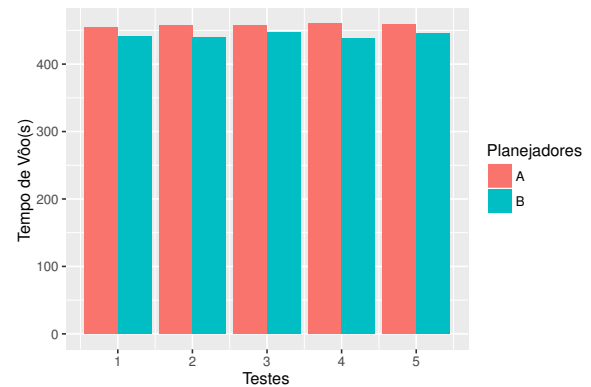


Figure 5: Flight Time Graph of Mission Planners Relative to 5 Tests in a Real Environment.

As shown in the section 6.3, planner B was faster than planner A. This can also be verified in real environment, as shown in tables 2 and 3 of mission execution time in simulated and real environment.

## 7 Conclusions

In this work, a common application of intra logistics performed by a VANT was developed, as

<sup>4</sup>Simulator that allows executing a Plane, Copter or Rover without the need of a hardware)



well as the implementation of two mission planning strategies, as well as the cost evaluation of the same, compared to the optimal cost obtained by the CPLEX optimizer.

It is understood that some contributions were made with the conclusion of this work, such as:

In the manipulation and control of a commercial UAV, the ways of manipulating and controlling the 3DR IRIS + UAV of the UFAM Robotics Laboratory were investigated for future uses in undergraduate and postgraduate university projects.

Another important contribution was the creation of a methodology for evaluating the cost of mission planners, since it allows to verify their effectiveness against optimal values obtained by an optimizer.

Finally, it was possible to say that the manipulation and control of the 3DR IRIS+ UAV, as well as the creation of the cost evaluation methodology were successfully applied in simulated and real environments, thus validating the theory shown in the work.

Further works includes the use of computational vision for the recognition of inputs, improve the modeling of the optimization problem for better results in cost evaluation, and use a solver to directly generate an optimized mission.

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