

6.3 Space Discretization - Avoidance Grid

Operation Space: The *Operation Space* is a space where UAS can effectively surveil-
lance its surroundings, and it has the capability to act.

A Motivation for Discretization: The UAS surroundings needs to be represented
in an *avoidance-friendly manner*, following principles matters:

1. *Discrete representation* - the space around UAS should be segmented into finite
and exclusive portions which are considered as one point of the grid. This enables
fast situation assessment.
2. *Threat proximity* - any form of threat gets more important with decreasing distance
to UAS.
3. *LiDAR swipe density* - one LiDAR swipe scans many points; the grid needs to be
customized to swipe characteristics.

The *Main Sensor* is *LiDAR* (problems ??-??). The *effective occupancy computation*
needs to be done for all problems; the inspiration is taken from [1]. The *effective occupancy*
computation is done in *LiDAR* scan portioned into *polar coordinates grid*. The *operation*
space is abstracted as a *grid* where *space portions* are representing the points in the grid.
Note. Each member of the grid is a cell, represented as a point with properties, like threat
level, visibility.

The *Discrete Situation Evaluation* is executed for a *UAS* local coordinate frame in
fixed *time*. The goal is to enable *fast discrete situation assessment*.

LiDAR Swipe: The *point* scanned by *LiDAR*, where the *UAS position* is center of the
local coordinate frame, and *UAS heading* is defining the *main axes* is given as:

$$point = [distance, horizontal^\circ, vertical^\circ]. \quad (6.1)$$

Note. For polar/Euclidean transformations and local/global coordinate frames refer to
background theory (app. ??).

The *right side* of UAS $horizontal^\circ \in] - \pi, 0[$, the *left-side* of UAS $horizontal^\circ \in [0, \pi]$,
the *down-side* of UAS $vertical^\circ \in] - \pi, 0[$, the *top side* of UAS $vertical^\circ \in [0, \pi]$

LiDAR Swipe Portioning: The *polar coordinate space* can be portioned into distinc-
tive cells. Each cell then represents one point in the grid.

The *reason* for this swipe portioning is *LiDAR* scanning density¹, which is extremely
dense. The *threat* state in the cell can be assessed with linear complexity.

¹Example rotary LiDAR Velodyne VL-16 specs: https://www.cadden.fr/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Velodyne_VLP-16-Puck.pdf

The *polar* \rightarrow *euclidean* coordinate frame transformation is not amenable for LiDAR swipe. The *threat* assessment based on *LiDAR swipe* in *planar space portions* has minimal complexity, and it is cost effective. [2].

Cell: To discretize operational space into a grid of points there is a need to define cell space, which bounds the portion of the *local planar coordinate frame*. The point (eq. 6.1) is defined by distance, horizontal^o offset angle, and vertical^o offset angle. The cell is a closed compact set of such points. The boundary can be defined like follow:

Definition 1. Cell

The cell bounds a portion of space in UAS local polar coordinate frame, defined by boundary ranges:

1. Distance Range - starts and ends: $distance_{start} < distance_{end}$ in \mathbb{R}^+ .
2. Horizontal Range - starts and ends: $horizontal_{start}^o < horizontal_{end}^o \in] - \pi, \pi]$.
3. Vertical Range - starts and ends: $vertical_{start}^o < vertical_{end}^o \in] - \pi, \pi]$.

The space portion belonging to the cell is given by function as:

$$cell.spacePortion = \dots \left\{ \begin{array}{l} point \in \mathbb{R}^3 \text{ where :} \\ \left(\begin{array}{l} cell.distance_{start} < point.distance \leq cell.distance_{end}, \\ cell.horizontal_{start}^o < point.horizontal^o \leq cell.horizontal_{end}^o, \\ cell.vertical_{start}^o < point.vertical^o \leq cell.vertical_{end}^o \end{array} \right) \end{array} \right\} \quad (6.2)$$

To evaluate a static obstacle threat, it is necessary to know how many LiDAR hits landed in the cell space portion. For one LiDAR Scan the hits set is given a set of all points which lands into cell space portion:

$$cell.LiDARHits = \{point \in LidarScan : point \in cell.spacePortion\} \quad (6.3)$$

Note. The *cell* space portion volume is increasing with the distance. This satisfies the requirement for threat-distance importance.

Effective Operation Space: The goal is to determine which of the operation space is going to be considered in our avoidance grid. The effective operation space determination according to [3] is influenced by the following factors:

1. *Sensors ranges* - there is no reason to assess the situation over effective *sensor range*.

2. *Information sources impact* - there is no real impact on *effective space boundary*, the information search and intersection algorithms are only of the importance.
3. *UAS maneuverability* - the space where UAS can maneuver, bounded by space-time (reach set boundary).
4. *Computation power* - the situation evaluation and threat assessment capabilities of the onboard computer.
5. *Airworthiness requirements* - the *regulations* can impose some minimal requirements on *effective operation space boundary*.

Let show an example of an *effective operation space* for the UAS (fig. 6.1). The *full LiDAR Swipe* (cyan and red lines) of *UAS* (blue plane) has a *shape* of the conical cylinder.

Note. Under *ideal circumstances*, the *LiDAR swipe* would have a *ball shape*, but in real cases the *UAS body portion* where *LiDAR* is mounted is unused.

The *frontal portion* (red line) is a set of cells where *UAS* can make maneuvers. According to the *previous conditions*, there is no reason to consider a space portion out of this area.

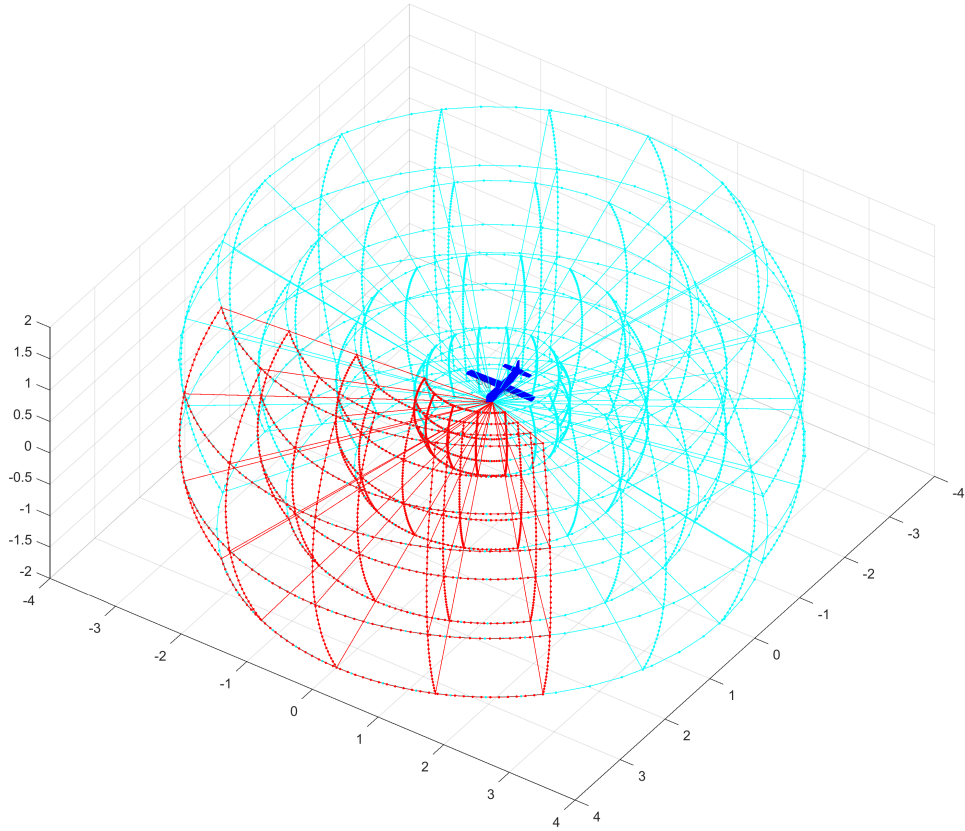


Figure 6.1: Example: The *LiDAR* reading portioning - cells.

Avoidance Grid Definition: The *effective operation space* is going to be portioned into cells.

Note. The avoidance grid is a set of cells from the full LiDAR swipe, that are reachable in limited number of movements by given control (sec. ??).

Definition 2. *Avoidance Grid*

The effective space portion (fig. 6.1 red lines) given by a portion of space in UAS local polar coordinate frame, bounded by:

1. Distance Range - in range $distance_{start} < distance_{end}$ in \mathbb{R}^+ .
2. Horizontal Range - in range by $horizontal_{start}^\circ < horizontal_{end}^\circ \in]-\pi, \pi]$.
3. Vertical Range - in range $vertical_{start}^\circ < vertical_{end}^\circ \in]-\pi, \pi]$.

The goal is to separate the effective operation space into cells (def. 1). The idea is to split distance range into multiple distinctive distance ranges with count $layerCount \in \mathbb{N}^+$. The ranges for distance layers are given as follow:

$$\begin{aligned} layer_{start}^i &= (i-1) \times \frac{distance_{end} - distance_{start}}{layerCount} \\ layer_{end}^i &= i \times \frac{distance_{end} - distance_{start}}{layerCount} \end{aligned} ; \quad i \in 1 \dots layerCount \quad (6.4)$$

The same separation Layer horizontal/vertical separations defined by $horizontalCount \in \mathbb{N}^+$ / $verticalCount \in \mathbb{N}^+$:

$$\begin{aligned} horizontal_{start}^j &= (j-1) \times \frac{horizontal_{end}^\circ - horizontal_{start}^\circ}{horizontalCount} \\ horizontal_{end}^j &= j \times \frac{horizontal_{end}^\circ - horizontal_{start}^\circ}{horizontalCount} \end{aligned} ; \quad j \in 1 \dots horizontalCount \quad (6.5)$$

$$\begin{aligned} vertical_{start}^k &= (k-1) \times \frac{vertical_{end}^\circ - vertical_{start}^\circ}{verticalCount} \\ vertical_{end}^k &= k \times \frac{vertical_{end}^\circ - vertical_{start}^\circ}{verticalCount} \end{aligned} ; \quad k \in 1 \dots verticalCount \quad (6.6)$$

Then $cell_{i,j,k}$ space portion by (def. 1) has the following ranges:

1. Cell Distance Range (eq. 6.4) depending on layer index i .
2. Cell Horizontal Angle Range (eq. 6.5) depending on horizontal angle index j .
3. Cell Vertical Angle Range (eq. 6.6) depending on vertical index k .

Note. The example of *Avoidance Grid Cells* is given in (fig. 6.1 red boundary).

The Avoidance Grid is the set of cells:

$$AvoidanceGrid = \left\{ \begin{array}{l} i \in 1 \dots layerCount \\ cell_{i,j,k} : j \in 1 \dots horizontalCount \\ k \in 1 \dots verticalCount \end{array} \right\} \quad (6.7)$$

Note. For any distinctive cells $cell_{i,j,k}$, $cell_{m,n,o}$ their *space portion intersection* is empty set:

$$\forall cell_{i,j,k}, cell_{m,n,o} : cell_{i,j,k} \cap cell_{m,n,o} = \emptyset, i \neq o \vee j \neq n \vee k \neq o \quad (6.8)$$

Grid Sizing Approach: The sizing approach used in this work is outlined in (app. ??).

Cell in Avoidance Grid Properties: For each cell in the Avoidance Grid there are properties to be checked:

1. *Is there visibility to the cell?* - how good is an observation of the cell by Sensor Field.
2. *Is there threat present?* - how sure the data fusion is that there is eminent threat in the cell.
3. *Is the cell reachable?* - if there is any trajectory which can get UAS to that cell without too much threat along the way.

The answers to these questions are given later in *data fusion procedure* outline (tab. ??).

Bibliography

- [1] Florian Homm, Nico Kaempchen, Jeff Ota, and Darius Burschka. Efficient occupancy grid computation on the gpu with lidar and radar for road boundary detection. In *Intelligent Vehicles Symposium (IV), 2010 IEEE*, pages 1006–1013. IEEE, 2010.
- [2] Sandeep Gupta, Holger Weinacker, and Barbara Koch. Comparative analysis of clustering-based approaches for 3-d single tree detection using airborne fullwave lidar data. *Remote Sensing*, 2(4):968–989, 2010.
- [3] Osmar R Zaiane and Chi-Hoon Lee. Clustering spatial data when facing physical constraints. In *Data Mining, 2002. ICDM 2003. Proceedings. 2002 IEEE International Conference on*, pages 737–740. IEEE, 2002.