

Masterarbeit

Exploiting Knowledge of Room Occupation for the Scheduling of Navigation Tasks of a Fleet of Robots in Office Environments

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30. September 2020

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Zeitraum: 1.May 2020 - 1.October 2020

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Abstract

The function of the abstract is to summarize, in one or two paragraphs, the major aspects of the entire bachelor or master thesis. It is usually written after writing most of the chapters.

It should include the following:

- Definition of the problem (the question(s) that you want to answer) and its purpose (Introduction).
- Methods used and experiments designed to solve it. Try to describe it basically, without covering too many details.
- Quantitative results or conclusions. Talk about the final results in a general way and how they can solve the problem (how they answer the question(s)).

Even if the Title can be a reference of the work's meaning, the Abstract should help the reader to understand in a quick view, the full meaning of the work. The abstract length should be around 300 words.

Abstracts are protected under copyright law just as any other form of written speech is protected. However, publishers of scientific articles invariably make abstracts publicly available, even when the article itself is protected by a toll barrier. For example, articles in the biomedical literature are available publicly from MEDLINE which is accessible through PubMed. It is a common misconception that the abstracts in MEDLINE provide sufficient information for medical practitioners, students, scholars and patients[citation needed]. The abstract can convey the main results and conclusions of a scientific article but the full text article must be consulted for details of the methodology, the full experimental results, and a critical discussion of the interpretations and conclusions. Consulting the abstract alone is inadequate for scholarship and may lead to inappropriate medical decisions[2].

An abstract[IGM97, ?, MAdR02, Sal89] allows one to sift through copious amounts of papers for ones in which the researcher can have more confidence that they will be relevant to his research. Once papers are chosen based on the abstract, they must be read carefully to be evaluated for relevance. It is commonly surmised that one must not base reference citations on the abstract alone, but the entire merits of a paper.

Chapter 1

Introduction

[You should answer the question: What is the problem?]

This paragraph should establish the context of the reported work. To do that, authors discuss over related literature (with citations¹) and summarize the knowledge of the author in the investigated problem.

ToDo: how to make citations

An introduction should answer (most of) the following questions:

- What is the problem that I want to solve?
- Why is it a relevant question?
- What is known before the study?
- How can the study improve the current solutions?

To write it, use if possible active voice:

- We are going to watch a film tonight (Active voice).
- A film is going to be watched by us tonight (Passive voice).

The use of the first person is accepted.

1.1 Motivation

A good introduction usually starts presenting a general view of the topic and continues focusing on the problem studied. Begin it clarifying the subject area of interest and establishing the context (remember to support it with related bibliography).

¹To cite a work in latex

1.2 Problem definition

Additionally, focuses the text on the relevant points of your investigation and problems that you want to solve, relating them with the first part.

1.3 Thesis/Diplom/Bachelor/Master Structure

Present your work to the reader giving a brief overview of what is going to cover every chapter. Write only general concepts, no more than one or two sentences per chapter should be necessary.

Chapter 2

Materials and Methods

This section is to clarify the pre-existing tools, defining what was developed in this field until now, and why this tool was used instead of others.

The general structure is the following:

- Definition of the specific tool(s) studied (robots, sensor nodes, smart-phones).
When relevant, pre-existing experiments.
- Definition of the context of use (indoor/outdoor, humans/animals/robots, with/without connection).
- Definition of used protocols (How the data are collected, when, etc.)

Chapter 3

Approach

In our system there are multiple robots that must handle various tasks. For example, visiting given rooms. To tackle this problem, a communication efficient task scheduling system is designed. This system allocate task according to system resources, including environment factors, robot status and task specifications. Once this information is attained, the task scheduling system assign robot a set of task.

- *Robot*. Each robot is responsible for moving in 2-dimensional physical space as well as gathering measurement result from sensors. It has a rechargeable battery, and its level drops as robot moves and rotates.
- *Tasks*. Each task requires one or more robots to traverse a path in the workspace and carry out certain actions[IGS17].
- *Environment*. In this project, all robots are considered moving in an office environment that contains a corridor along the central x-axis and 16 rooms located around the corridor. The environment factors, such as room locations and occupancy possibilities help task allocation.

3.1 Architecture Design

The architecture of the system consist of several parts: centralized pool, robot controller, navigation stack, charging station and system environment(Figure 3.1).

- *Centralized Pool*. A centralized pool consist of several modules: multi-robot task allocation module, map information, database, execution and monitoring. The database contains most of the environment information(Figure 4.2). The multi-robot task allocation module allocate tasks to robots once requested.
- *Robot Controller*. A robot controller contains several modules: local task queue, execution and robot action. The execution module receives commands from centralized pool and decides when and which task the robot should perform.

- *Navigation stack.* The move_base node provides a ROS interface for configuring, running, and interacting with the navigation stack on a robot. It makes robot move to desired positions using the navigation stack. Its advantages include optionally performing recovery behaviors when the robot perceives itself as stuck[mov].

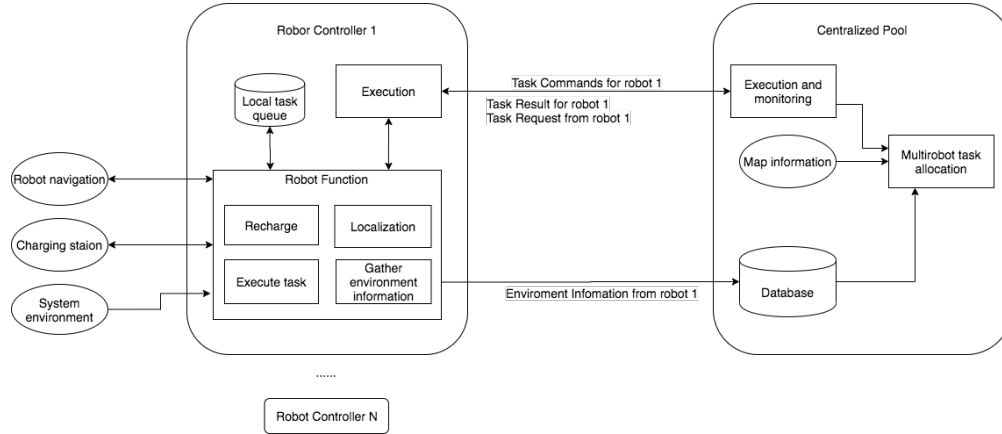


Figure 3.1: System Architecture

3.2 System Environment

As is discussed in the previous section, the system environment is an office environment. The SLAM (Simultaneous Localization and Mapping) is a technique to draw a map by estimating current location in an arbitrary space [sla]. Map (Figure 3.2) is created by SLAM.

There are following important areas and coordinates:

- *Rooms.* The rectangle areas (Figure 3.2) are used to represent Rooms. Each rectangle has its upper and lower limit in x and y coordinates. The system uses those limits to determine a position in which room.
- *Doors.* The positions of doors (Figure 3.3) are stored in database. There are used by a ROS door simulator node, which broadcasts positions and door status periodically. The broadcast messages are received and filtered by robots.
- *Charging Stations.* The positions of charging stations are used by ROS charging station nodes. For details please refer to Section 4.3.3.

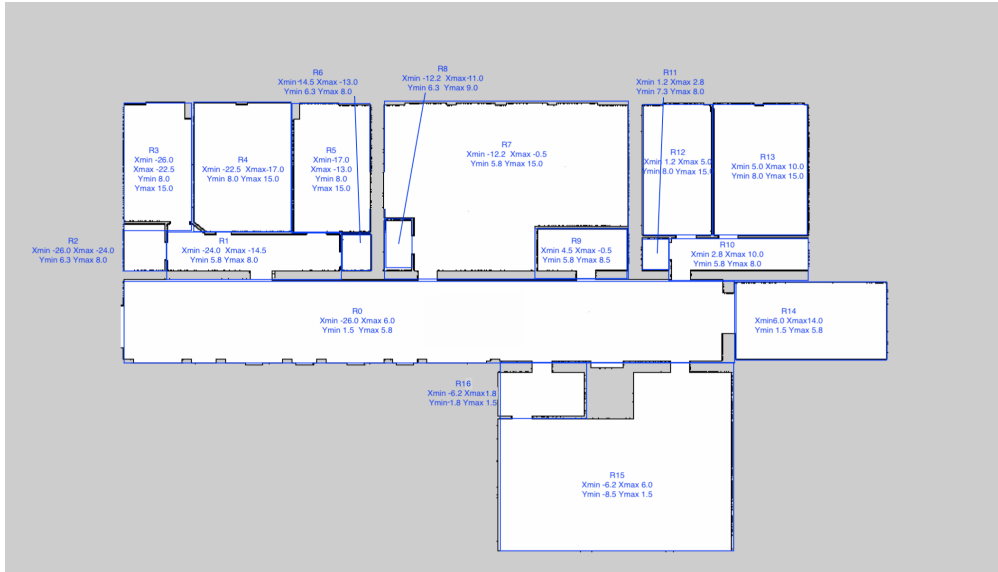


Figure 3.2: Room division

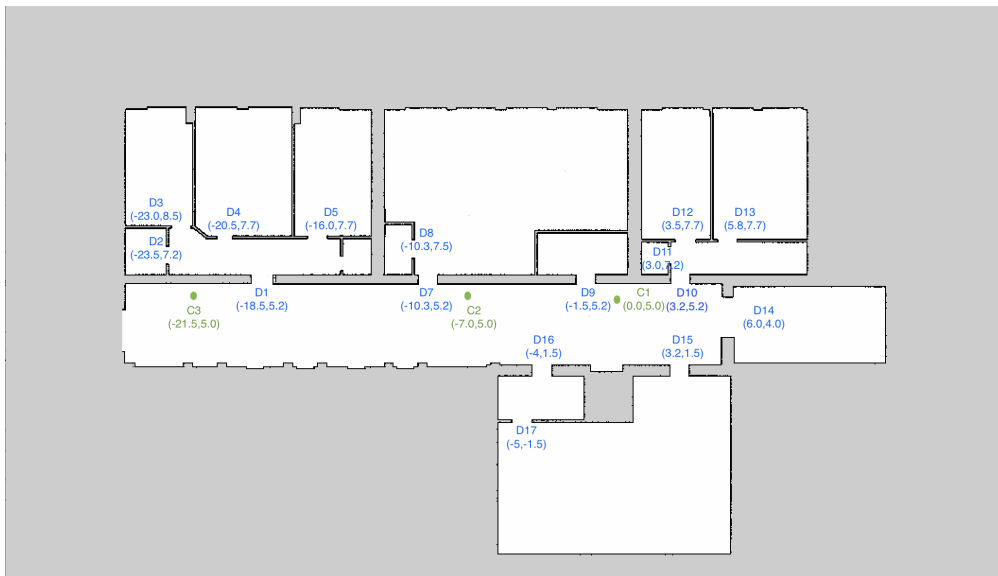


Figure 3.3: Doors and Charging Stations

3.3 Task Allocation

3.3.1 Task Specifications

On one hand, recharging is necessary for robots to work long hours. On the other hand, a robot should gather environment information as much as possible, which centralized pool would learn from and make better decision. Therefore, three types of task are defined. Table (Table 3.1 list task specifications. In addition, each task has a “start time” when the robot receives the task and a “finish time”, which robot the sends result) A task can be classified into small task and large task. One robot can carry either small task, which make robot move to one position, or large task, which consist of multiple small task.

- **Small Task.** A small task contains only one goal. When a robot receives a small task, it moves to the only goal.
- **Large Task.** A large task contains several small tasks, and each small tasks contains a goal. Those small tasks form a dependency chain. When a robot gets a large task, it moves continuously to those goals. The centralized pool can query “small execute tasks” and use them to form a “large execute tasks”.

Task Specifications	Target	Dependency	Priority	Generator	Task Size
Task type					
Gather environment information task	Door	No	1	Centralized pool	Small task
Execute task	Any point	Dependent on “execute task”	2,3,4	User	Small task (in database) or large task (in centralized pool)
Charging Task	Charging station	No	5	Centralized Pool	Small task

Table 3.1: Task Specifications

Task ID	Task Type	Start Time	Target ID	Robot ID	Priority	Status	dependency	Finish Time	Description
1	Charging task	2020-06-01 9:00:00	18	1	5	RanToCompletion	0	2020-06-01 9:00:20	Succeeded
2	Execute task	2020-06-01 9:00:50	22	2	2	RanToCompletion	0	2020-06-01 9:01:20	Succeeded
3	Gather environment information task	2020-06-01 9:02:00	2	2	1	Running	0	2020-06-01 9:02:40	Succeeded

Table 3.2: Task Table in Database

- **Target.** Targets include doors, points and charging stations. When a robot run a “gather environment information task”, it moves to the front of a door and interact with a sensor in the door position without entering the door. When robot run an “execute task”, the robot moves to a given point either in corridor or in the room. When robot run a “charging task”, the robot moves to a charging station and interact with this charging station.

3.3.2 Execute Task Allocation

With robot status such as positions and available battery provided by robot, the multi-robot task allocation module in the architecture should perform multi-robot task allocation. When the centralized pool receives a task request (Table 4.2) from robot, the

multi-robot task allocation module in the architecture. The implementation of task allocation is shown in Figure 4.3.

1. When the battery of robot belows 10%, the centralized pool will create a charging task to the charging staion with the lowest cost.
2. When the battery of robot aboves 10%, the centralized pool will load all “execute tasks” in database and combine small tasks with dependencies into large tasks(Section 3.3.1), finally calculate task costs and select one large task with the lowest cost.
3. If there are no suitable tasks, a “gather environment task” to the door with the lowest cost is generated.
4. The output of the task allocation includes: task ID, goal coodinates, timestamp and selected robot ID. The task is sent to the selected robot, and the robot performs the tasks.

Decision variables To select an “execute task”, the following decision variables are considered.

- *Task Priority.* Task Priority. Task priority is an important factor that describes task emergency level. The “charging task” has the highest priority of 5. The “gather environment information” task has the lowest priority of 1. The “execute task” is determined by users but must be in the range of [2,4].
- *Product of Door Open Possibility.* Because of the limitation of simulation, the door open possibilities are used to represent room occupancies. A door open possibility is based on the statistic of door measurement results in a specific time period of a working day. The doors on trajectory (doors that the robot may pass through) can be obtained from the map information module. An example of “measurement result” table is shown in Table 4.8, an example of “open possibility” table is shown in Table 4.9.
- *Waiting Time.* The waiting time is the difference between the current simulation time and start time of the first task to be executed. $T_{waiting} = T_{first_task} - T_{now}$
- *Battery Consumption.* The Battery Consumption is related to robot trajectory. For a Large “execute task” that contains n small task, Equation 3.1 can be used to calculate battery consumption. The centralized pool will send the task with the lowest cost to this robot.

Equation 3.2 shows how these decition variables are used to calculate the cost of a large “execute task”.

ToDo:

Database
Table

B: Battery consumption

W: Weight

m: Number of waypoint

n: Number of task

$$\begin{aligned}
 B_{\text{large task}} &= \sum_{\text{task}_1}^{\text{task}_n} B_{\text{trajectory}} \\
 &= \sum_{t=\text{task}_1}^{\text{task}_n} \sum_{\text{waypoint}_1}^{\text{waypoint}_m} [W_{\text{position}} \times \text{position variation} + W_{\text{angle}} \times \text{angle variation}] \\
 &= \sum_{t=\text{task}_1}^{\text{task}_n} \sum_{p=\text{waypoint}_1}^{\text{waypoint}_m} [W_{\text{position}} \times \sqrt{(x_p - x_{p-1})^2 + (y_p - y_{p-1})^2} \\
 &\quad + W_{\text{angle}} \times 2 \times \arccos(w_p)]
 \end{aligned} \tag{3.1}$$

W: Weight

n: Number of doors

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Cost}_{\text{Large execute task}} &= \frac{W_{\text{battery}} \times \text{Battery consumption}}{n} + W_{\text{waiting}} \times \text{waiting time} \\
 &\quad + W_{\text{possibility}} \times \prod_{i=1}^n \text{Door open possibility} + W_{\text{priority}} \times \text{Priority}
 \end{aligned} \tag{3.2}$$

3.3.3 Environment Task Allocation

As is discussed in section 3.3.2, once there are no suitable tasks in centralized pool, the task allocation module should create a “gather environment information task”, in order to gather more measurement result and further more improve the accuracy of “open possibilities” table. To create a “gather environment information task”, which door should the requesting robot visit must be considered. The following decision factors help task allocation module to select the door.

Decision variables

- *Door Last Update Time.* The latest timestamp when the door is measured.

- *Battery Consumption.* Similar to “execute task” allocation, the battery consumption is related to the trajectory from robot to the door. Equation 3.1 can be used to calculate battery consumption.
- *Whether door is used.* If another robot is going to this door, the value is 0, otherwise the value is 1.

W: Weight

n: Number of doors on trajectory

$$\text{Cost}_{\text{door}} = \frac{W_{\text{battery}} \times \text{Battery consumption}}{n} + W_{\text{time}} \times (T_{\text{last update}} - T_{\text{now}}) \quad (3.3)$$

$$+ W_{\text{possibility}} \times \prod_{i=1}^n \text{Door open possibility}$$

3.3.4 Charging Task Allocation

As is discussed in section 3.3.2, once a robot sends task request to the centralized pool, the centralized pool should figure out whether this robot need charging, if yes it should create a “charging task” for requesting robot. Since there are multiple charging station in the system environment (Figure 3.3), the centralized pool selects a charging station for this robot using the following decision variables.

Decision variables

- *Remain Time.* It describes how long will a charging station be free.
- *Battery Consumption.* Similar to “execute task” allocation, the battery consumption is related to the trajectory from robot to the charging station. Equation 3.1 can be used to calculate battery consumption.

In conclusion, equation 3.4 can be used to calculate the cost of a charging station. The centralized pool will generate a “charging task” for requesting robot to charging station with the lowest cost.

W: Weight

$$\text{Cost}_{\text{charging station}} = \frac{W_{\text{battery}} \times \text{battery consumption}}{n} + W_{\text{time}} \times T_{\text{remain}} \quad (3.4)$$

Chapter 4

Implementation

4.1 Communication Protocols

Centralized pool, robots, charging stations and sensors need to share information with each other. To improve the communication efficiency, communication protocols are designed.

4.1.1 Message about Measurement

When a robot passes by a door, it should receive messages from a sensor. In this project, we use a ROS node "sensor simulator" to simulate door sensors (Section 4.3.4) to publish instant measurement result (Table 4.1).

Door ID	Position	Timestamp	Measurement Result
1	(-18.5,5.2)	2020-06-01 9:00:02	Door opened

Table 4.1: Measurement Message Format and Example

4.1.2 Message about Task

There are some basic requirements for communication between robot and centralized pool: firstly, robot should initiate the communication once it has finished all task in task queue and get free. Secondly, robot should forward sensor data to centralized pool while processing a task. These Communication protocols save unnecessary communication cost by avoiding keep tracking the current position, availability and states of all robots (Figure 4.1). Four types of message are defined: (1) Task request message (Table 4.2); (2) Task goal messages (Table 4.3); (3) Task feedback message (Table 4.4); (4) Task result message (Table 4.5).

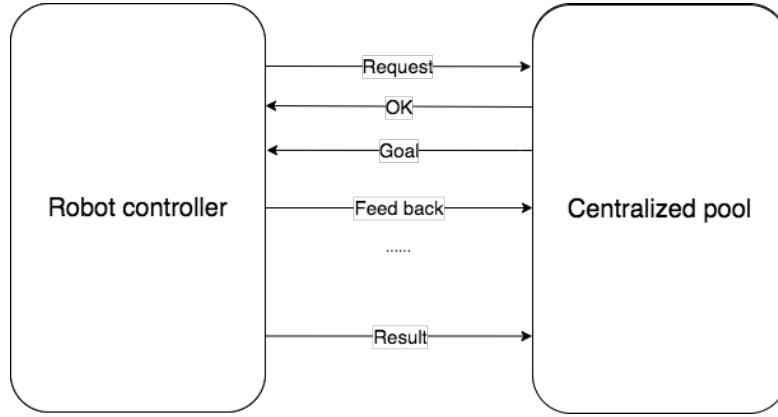


Figure 4.1: Communication between Robot and Centralized Pool

Battery Level	Position	Robot ID
93	(2,4)	1

Table 4.2: Request Message Format and Example

4.1.3 Message about Charging

When a robot arrives charging station’s position, it sends a message to Charging station(Figure 4.6). The details of charging station is discussed in Section 4.3.3.

4.2 Database

The centralized pool keep environment information in database to make decisions. The structure of database is shown in Figure 4.2. Following are explanations of some tables.

- *Table measurements* Table “measurements” (Figure 4.8) stores measurement result.
- *Table doors*. Table “doors” stores environment information. In table “doors”, the “is used” column will be updated when the centralized pool gives a robot a task

Task ID-[]	Task type	Target ID	Goal[]
1	Gather Environment Info	9	(-1.5,5.2) 2020-06-01 9:00:00
[3,4]	Execute task	21, 22	(-24.0,12.0), 2020-06-01 9:02:00 (-21.0,12.0) 2020-06-01 9:02:00
5	Charging	17	(0.0,5.0), 2020-06-01 9:04:00

Table 4.3: Action Goal Message Format and Example

Robot ID	Door ID	Measurement time	Measurement result
1	3	2020-06-01 9:00:03	Door open

Table 4.4: Action Feedback Message Format and Example

Task ID	Task type	Result
1	Gather Environment Info	Success

Table 4.5: Action Result Message Format and Example

to the corresponding door. The “last update” column will be updated when the centralized pool receives a new measurement result of the corresponding door.

- *Table open_ossibilities.* Table “open possibilities” (Figure 4.9) is based on the statistic of measurement result in “measurement” table in a specific time period of each working day. These two table will be updated when centralized pool receive a new measurement result.
- *Table exe_rs.* Table “exe rs” stores experiment result while table “exe weight”, table “door weight” and table “charging station weight” store weight values for experiment. Chapter 5 introduces the details of experiment.
- *Table costum_points.* When a task is created, the target point of this task will be stored in “position” table, and a “target ID” will be generated. This “target ID” will be stored in “custom points” table. Additionally, with the information in “room range” table, the system will recognize which room does the point belong to and write “room ID” column in “custom points” table.

4.3 Procedure

As stated in the Chapter 3, the goal of task scheduling is finishing all tasks as soon as possible while keep the cost as low as possible. The task assignment and execution has at two level. [IGS17] the task and the path planner solves a planning problem. It takes and occupancy grid, a specific robot and a set of task specifications, and generates trajectories for each task. According to those trajectories and task specifications, the

Robot ID	Battery Level
1	93

Table 4.6: Message to Charging Station

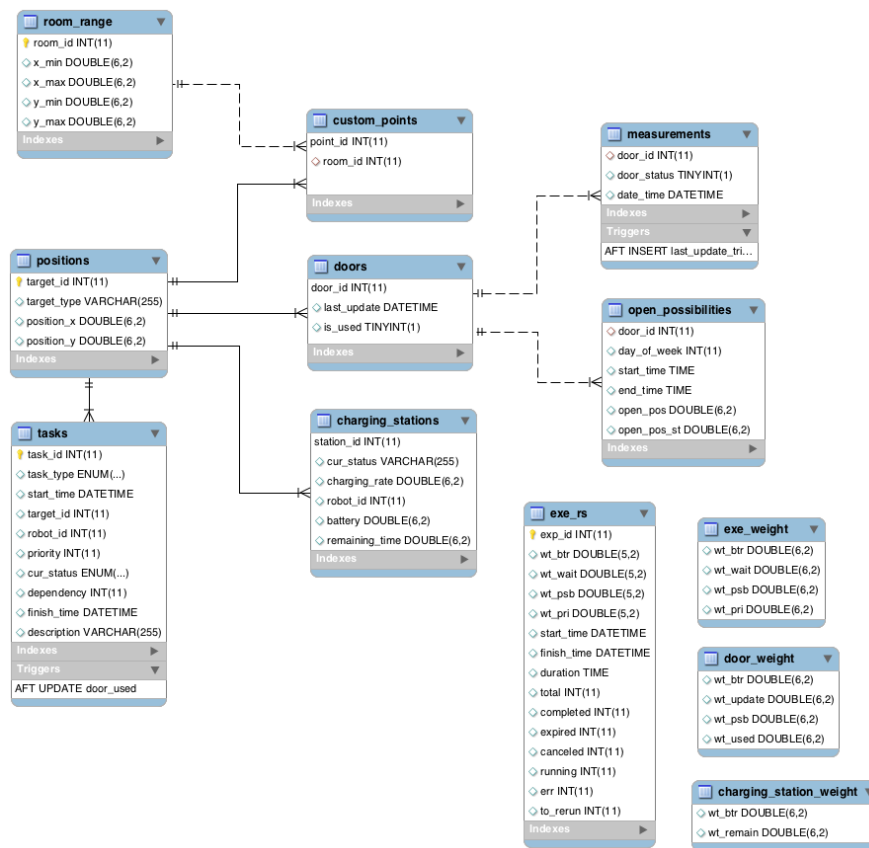


Figure 4.2: Database Entity Relationship Diagram

Table Name	Column Name	Explanation
Measurements	door ID	door ID
	door status	measurement "door opened" or "door close"
	date time	measurement timestamp

Table 4.7:

Door ID	Door Status	Date Time
1	1	2020-06-01 09:00:01

Table 4.8: Measurement Result

task with the lowest cost is assigned to robot. At the dynamic level, after each robot receive a task, it runs a navigation stack to execute this task stepwise. Each robot computes a local trajectory but takes into account dynamic obstacles. The process of the robot task allocation system is as follows.

4.3.1 Centralized Pool

Task Allocation The task allocation algorithm is discussed in Section 3.3.2. The process of task allocation is shown in Figure 4.3.

Handle Task Feedback. When the centralized pool receives a task feedback (Table 4.4) that contains a new measurement result from robot, it will add a record in measurement table and update "open possibilities" table in database.

Handle Task Result. When the centralized pool receives a task result (Table 4.5), it updates "tasks" table. The failed "execute tasks" will be reused while others will be marked as "Cancel" or "Error" (Figure 4.4).

Door id	Day Of Week	Start Time	End Time	Initialized Open Possibility	Open Possibility Statistic
1	2	10:00:00	10:59:59	0.80	0.80
1	2	11:00:00	11:59:59	0.20	0.18
2	2	10:00:00	10:59:59	0.80	0.82

Table 4.9: Door Open Possibility

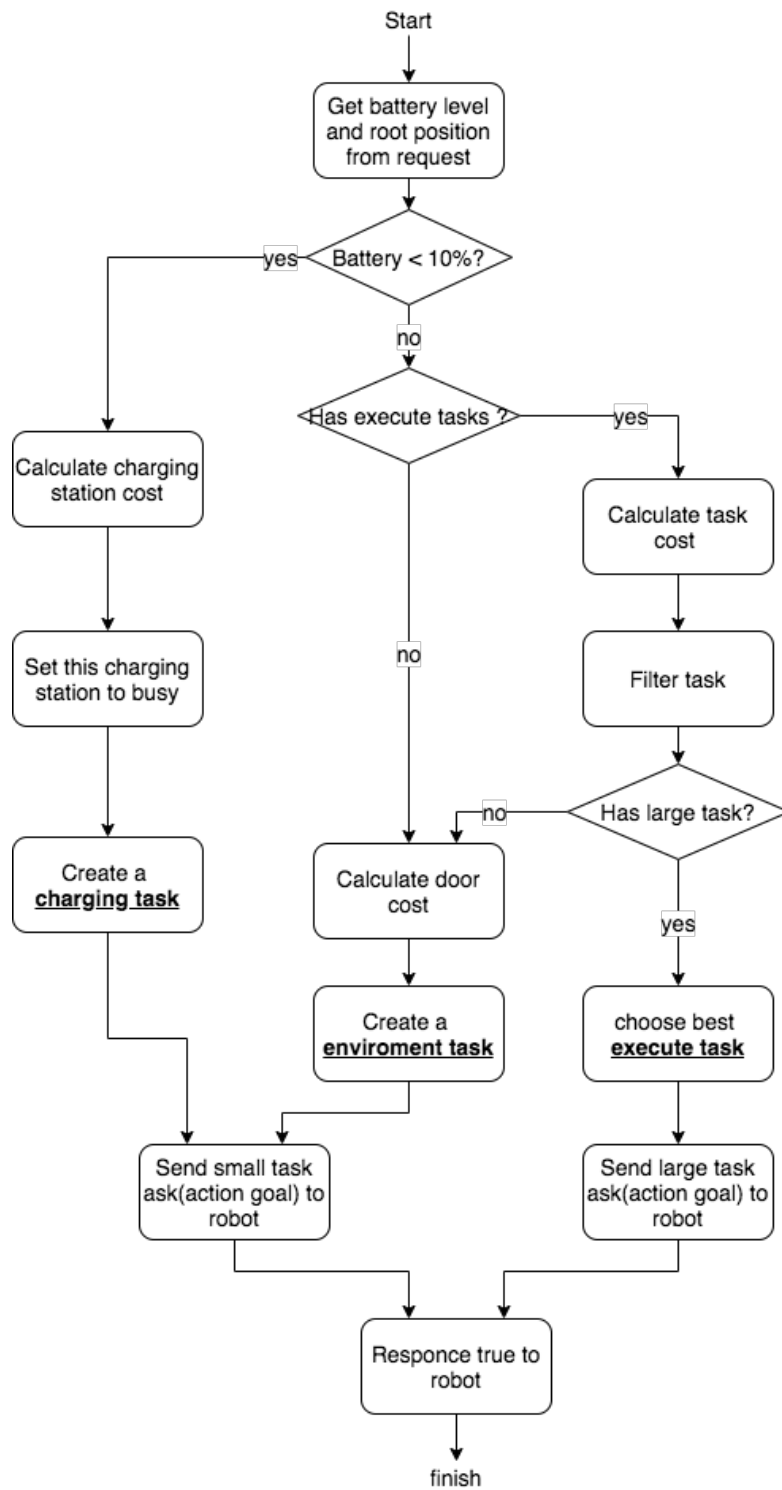


Figure 4.3: Centralized Pool Task Allocation

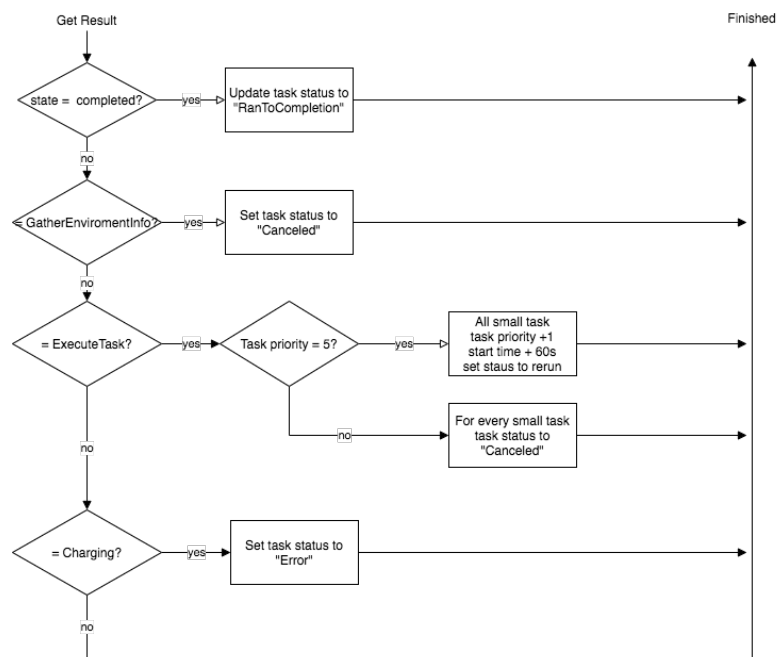


Figure 4.4: Centralized Pool Handle Task Result

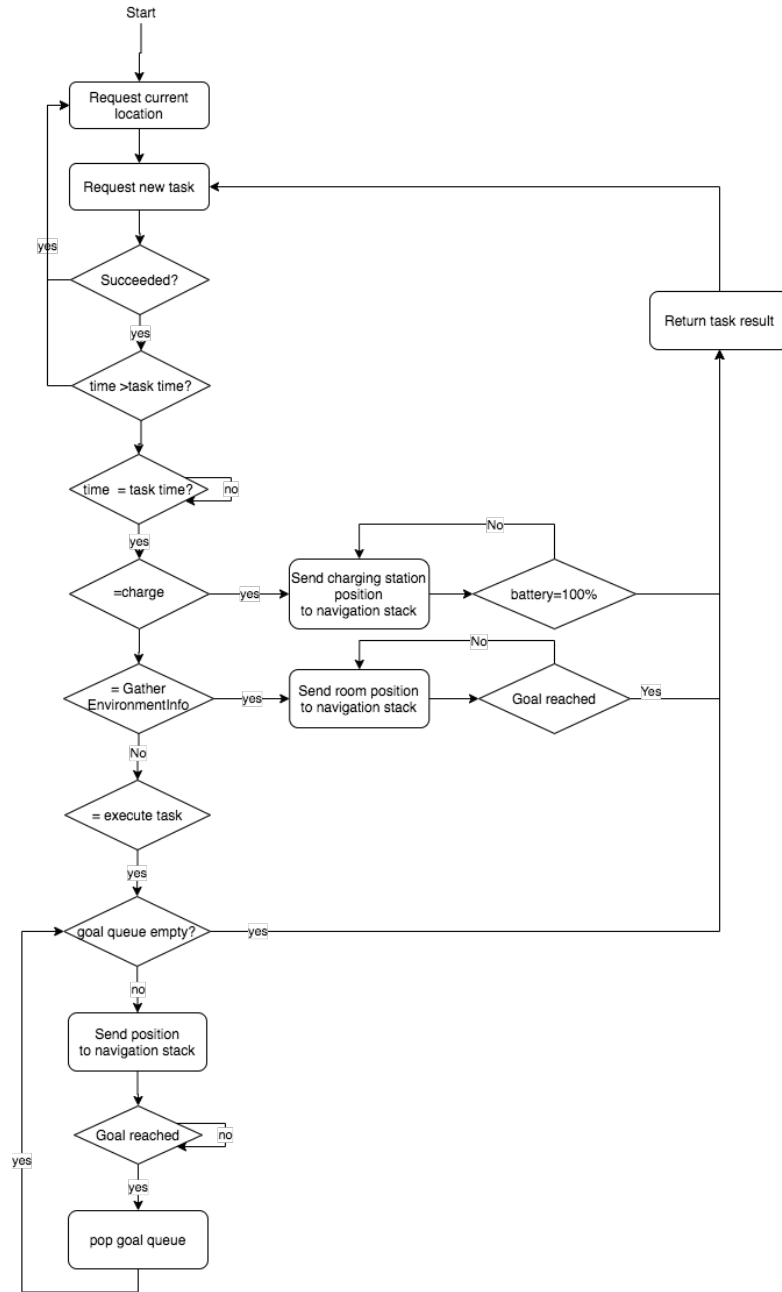


Figure 4.5: Robot Process Task

4.3.2 Robot

Robot Process Tasks When the task queue(Figure 3.1) in a robot is empty, the robot requests a new task. If the robot gets a “charging task”, it will move to the position of charging station(Figure 3.3) and interact with charging station node (Section 4.3.3). When a robot gets an “execute task” which is a large task, it will move to all goals in order. When a robot gets a “gather environment information” task, it will move to the door’s position. During task processing, the timer checks periodically the status of navigation stack. If any errors occurs, the robot send a “failed” result with description to the centralized pool. When all tasks are completed without error, the robot will send “Succeeded” result to the centralized pool.

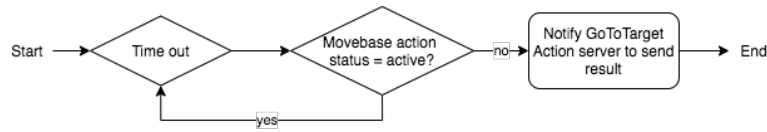


Figure 4.6: Robot Timer

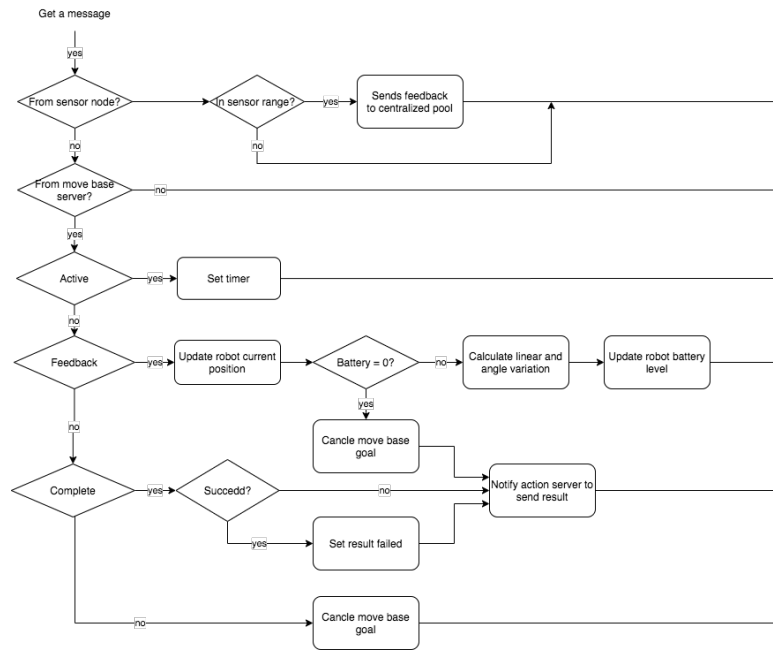


Figure 4.7: Robot Handle Message

Robot Handle Messages While a robot is processing a task, it listens to door sensors and forwards measurement result to the centralized pool. Besides messages from sensor,

it also receives messages from “move_base” node. The details of robot message handling is shown in Figure 4.7.

4.3.3 Charging Station

The charging station consists of a charging station node and “charging station” table in database (Table 4.2). When a robot arrives the position of charging station, it will start interacting with charging station node. Once the charging station receives robot information(Figure 4.10), its state will be changed to “charging”(Figure 4.8) and its “battery level” will be increased and its “remaining time” will be decreased(Figure 4.9). Once finishing charging, its status will be set “charging finish”. When robot leaves charging station, its status will be set to “free”.

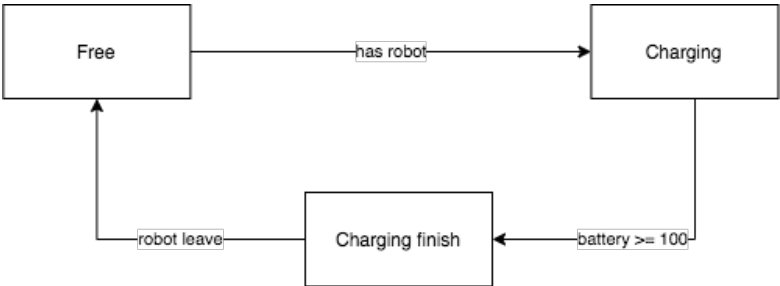


Figure 4.8: Charging Station State Machine

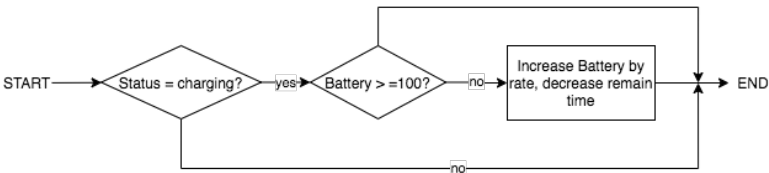


Figure 4.9: Charging Station Scheduled Charging Event

4.3.4 Sensor Simulator

ToDo: sensor simulator The simulator

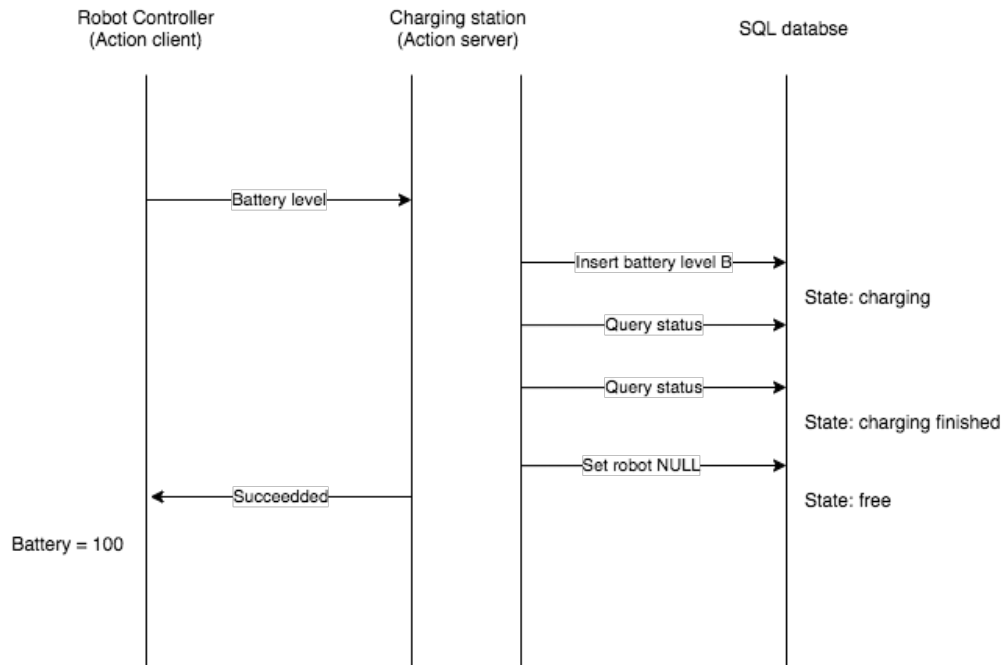


Figure 4.10: Charging Station Message

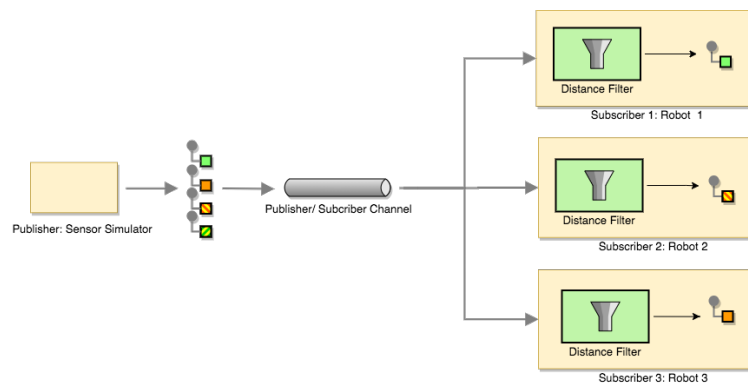


Figure 4.11: Sensor Simulator

Chapter 5

Evaluation

Simulation experiment were conducted using a multirobot simulation enviroment(Figure 5.1) Gazebo. As discussed in section 3.2, the map (Figure 5.2) is greated by SLAM [sla]. The are important coordinates: D1-D17 represent doors; C1-C3 represent charging stations; P1-P10 represent points used as goal positions in experiments. Followings are goals of experiments:

- Evaluate the need of decition variables.
- Find the best weight combinations in cost functions.

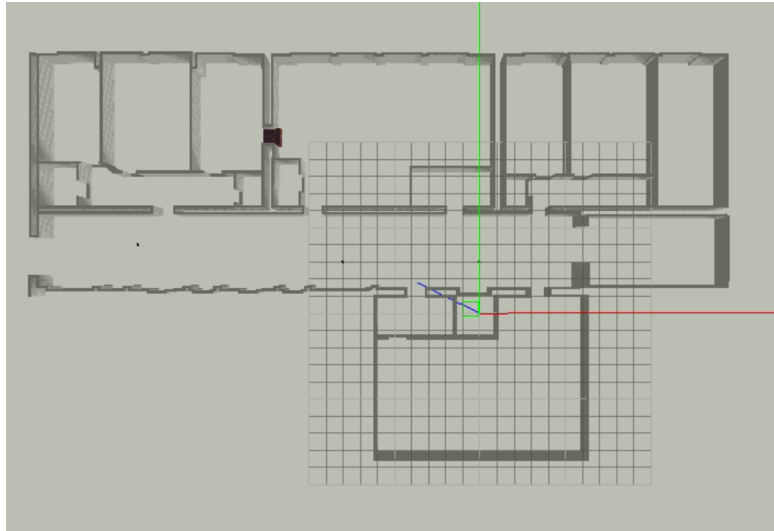


Figure 5.1: Gazebo Simulation

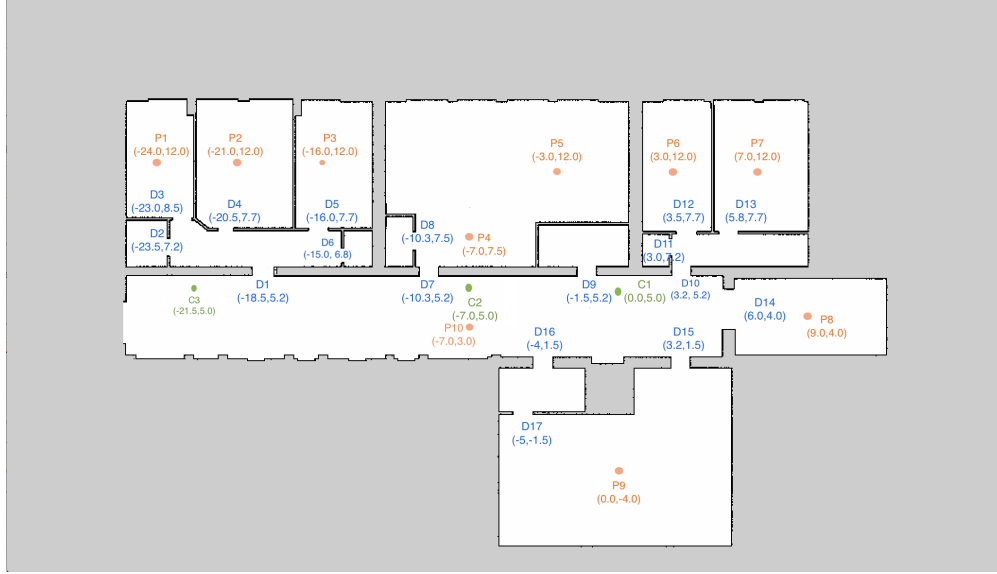


Figure 5.2: Experiment Map

5.1 Execute Task Evaluation

Experiment precondition There are some preconditions for every experiment. When simulation started, robots moved to corresponding charging station and started charging. For example, robot 1 charged at charging station 1, robot 2 charged at charging station 2, robot 3 charged at charging station 3 (Figure 5.3). Once robot fully charged, the next experiment started, and 15 execute tasks are created. Especially, for each experiment, tasks with the same ID have the same start time and the same goal position. When all robots finished tasks, the experiment finished. These rules ensure that robots would not only start at the same initial points but also process the same task and not shut down because of power exhaustion.

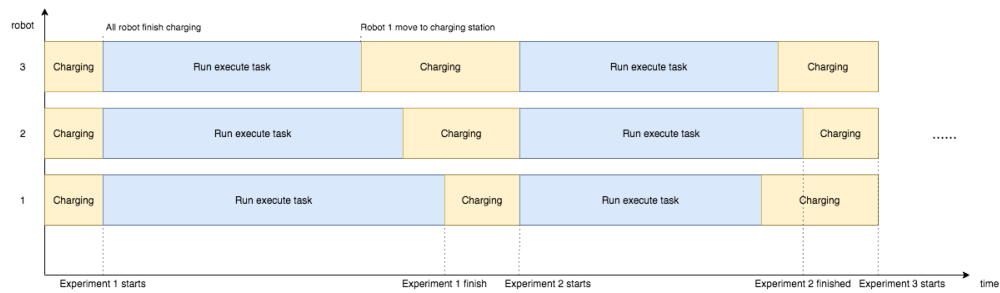


Figure 5.3: Execute Task Experiment Timeline

5.1.1 Experiment: Need of decision variables

As discussed in Section 3.3.2, there are four decision variables: battery consumption, waiting time, product of door open possibility and priority. The first set of experiments evaluated the need of decision variables in cost function. The experiment result (Table 5.1) shows that the experiment 1 used the minimum time and all 15 task are completed. The experiment with decision variables cost function with multiple decision variables has better performance than a cost function with single decision variable.

Experiment ID	Weight Combination				Experiment Duration	Task Statistic		
	Battery Consumption	Waiting Time	Door Open Possibility	Priority		Total	Completed	Expired
1	1.00	1.00	-1.00	-1.00	00:18:23	15	15	0
2	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	00:17:23	15	7	8
3	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	00:18:56	15	15	0
4	0.00	0.00	-1.00	0.00	00:18:41	15	5	10
5	0.00	0.00	0.00	-1.00	00:17:21	15	3	12

Table 5.1: Runing execute task with single decision variable and multiple decision variables

5.1.2 Experiment: Find the best weight combinations

The

Chapter 6

Discussion

The meaning of this paragraph is to interpret the results of the performed work. It will always connect the introduction, the postulated hypothesis and the results of the thesis/bachelor/master.

It should answer the following questions:

- Could your results answer your initial questions?
- Did your results agree with your initial hypothesis?
- Did you close your problem, or there are still things to be solved? If yes, what will you do to solve them?

write about limitations on sensor simulator: sensor send a table of measurement results.

Chapter 7

Acknowledgements

(This part is optional, and it could be completely excluded by deleting
`\include {content/chapters/chapter7}`
from the `Firstname_Lastname_Diplom_Master_arbeit.tex` file)

This paragraph could mention people or institutions that supported you to some extent
with your work or friends and relatives that supported you during your study period.

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I hereby declare that I have written this Bachelor (Master) thesis - except for the guidance of the supervisor - independently, using no other than the specified sources and resources, and that all quotations have been indicated. I declare that I have reported to the best of my knowledge all the relevant information, that it is true and that I concealed nothing. I am aware that a false declaration will be punished according to §156 and §163 par. 1 of the criminal code with a prison sentence or a monetary penalty.

Essen, September 30, 2020
(Ort, Datum)

Xuanjiao Zhu