# ICINCO 2015

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Colmar, Alsace, France 21 - 23 July, 2015

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# ICINCO 2015

# Proceedings of the 12th International Conference on Informatics in Control, Automation and Robotics

Volume 2

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# 21 - 23 July, 2015

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# **BRIEF CONTENTS**

| INVITED SPEAKERS IV                  |
|--------------------------------------|
| ORGANIZING AND STEERING COMMITTEES V |
| PROGRAM COMMITTEE                    |
| AUXILIARY REVIEWERSXI                |
| Selected Papers BookXI               |
| ForewordXIII                         |
| Contents                             |

# **INVITED SPEAKERS**

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# SELECTED PAPERS BOOK

A number of selected papers presented at ICINCO 2015 will be published by Springer-Verlag in a LNEE Series book. This selection will be done by the Conference Co-chairs and Program Co-chairs, among the papers actually presented at the conference, based on a rigorous review by the ICINCO 2015 Program Committee members.

This book contains the proceedings of the 12th International Conference on Informatics in Control, Automation and Robotics (ICINCO 2015) which is sponsored by the Institute for Systems and Technologies of Information, Control and Communication (INSTICC) and coorganized by the University of Haute Alsace. ICINCO is held in cooperation with the ACM Special Interest Group on Artificial Intelligence (ACM SIGAI), EUROMICRO, Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AAAI), Associação Portuguesa de Controlo Automático (APCA), The International Neural Network Society (INNS), Asia Pacific Neural Network Assembly (APNNA) and euRobotics AISBL (Association Internationale Sans But Lucratif). ICINCO is also technically co-sponsored by IEEE Control Systems Society (CSS) and IEEE Robotics & Automation Society and co-sponsored by International Federation of Automátic Control (IFAC).

The ICINCO Conference Series has now become a major forum to debate technical and scientific advances presented by researchers and developers both from academia and industry, working in areas related to Control, Automation and Robotics that benefit from Information Technology.

The high quality of the ICINCO 2015 program is enhanced by the four keynote lectures, given by internationally recognized researchers, namely: Krzysztof Kozlowski (Poznan University of Technology, Poland), Gerhard Schweitzer (ETH Zurich, Switzerland), Oliver Brock (TU Berlin, Germany) and Faïz Ben Amar (Université Pierre et Marie Curie, Institut Systèmes Intelligents et de Robotique, France).

The meeting is complemented with the Special Session on Artificial Neural Networks and Intelligent Information Processing (ANNIIP).

ICINCO 2015 received 214 paper submissions, including special sessions, from 42 countries in all continents, of which 44% were orally presented (14% as full papers). In order to evaluate each submission, a double blind paper review was performed by the Program Committee. As in previous editions of the Conference, based on the reviewer's evaluations and the presentations, a short list of authors will be invited to submit extended versions of their papers for a book that will be published by Springer with the best papers of ICINCO 2015.

Conferences are also meeting places where collaboration projects can emerge from social contacts amongst the participants. Therefore, in order to promote the development of research and professional networks, the Conference includes in its social program a Social Event & Banquet for the evening of July 22nd (Wednesday).

We would like to express our thanks and appreciations to all participants. First of all, to the authors, whose quality work is the essence of this conference. Second, to all the members of the Program Committee and all reviewers, who helped us with their expertise and valuable time they have invested in reviewing submitted papers. We would also like

to deeply thank the invited speakers for their excellent contributions and sharing their knowledge and vision. Finally, a word of appreciation for the hard work of the INSTICC team; organizing a conference of this level is a task that can only be achieved by the collaborative effort of a dedicated and highly capable team.

We hope that you will enjoy the program and your stay in the beautiful city of Colmar. We also hope to see you again next year at ICINCO 2016 in Lisbon, Portugal.

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# **INVITED SPEAKERS**

# **KEYNOTE SPEAKERS**

| Formation Control and Vision based Localization of System of Mobile Robots<br>Krzysztof Kozlowski | IS-5  |
|---|-------|
| Controlled Magnetic Bearings for Smart Machines<br>Gerhard Schweitzer                             | IS-7  |
| Mobile Manipulation - Why Are Humans so Much Better? And How Can We Change That? Oliver Brock     | IS-9  |
| Rough Terrain Mobile Robotics - From Design to Motion Control and Planning $Faïz Ben Amar$        | IS-11 |

# **ROBOTICS AND AUTOMATION**

# FULL PAPERS

| 3D Positioning Algorithm for Low Cost Mobile Robots<br>Rafael Socas, Sebastian Dormido, Raquel Dormido and Ernesto Fabregas   | 5  |
|---|----|
| Safe Predictive Mobile Robot Navigation in Aware Environments<br>Michael Arndt and Karsten Berns  | 15 |
| Kinematic Analysis and Simulation of a Hybrid Biped Climbing Robot<br>Adrian Peidro, Arturo Gil, Jose Maria Marin, Yerai Berenguer and Oscar Reinoso  | 24 |
| Assistive Robot for Standing with Physical Activity Estimation based on Muscle Arrangements of<br>Human Legs<br>Daisuke Chugo, Takahiro Yamada, Satoshi Muramatsu, Sho Yokota and Hiroshi Hashimoto | 35 |
| Visual Servoing-based Registration of Multimodal Images<br>M. Ourak, B. Tamadazte, N. Andreff and E. Marchand   | 44 |
| Guaranteed Control of a Robotic Excavator During Digging Process<br>Alexander Gurko, Oleg Sergiyenko, Juan Ivan Nieto Hipólito, Igor Kirichenko, Vera Tyrsa and<br>Juan de Dios Sanchez Lopez       | 52 |
| Analysis of Shapes to Measure Surfaces - An Approach for Detection of Deformations<br>C. M. Mateo, P. Gil, D. Mira and F. Torres  | 60 |
| RCON: Dynamic Mobile Interfaces for Command and Control of ROS-enabled Robots<br>Robert Codd-Downey and Michael Jenkin  | 66 |
| A Taxonomy of Distribution for Cooperative Mobile Manipulators<br>Andreas Schierl, Andreas Angerer, Alwin Hoffmann, Michael Vistein and Wolfgang Reif   | 74 |
| A Robust Temperature Controller Design for an Innovative Hyperthermic Intraperitoneal<br>Chemotherapy Equipment<br>Iulia Clitan, Corneliu Lungoci, Vlad Muresan, Daniel Moga and Valentin Sita      | 84 |
| Using Tablets in the Vision-based Control of a Ball and Beam Test-bed<br>Jared A. Frank, José Antonio De Gracia Gómez and Vikram Kapila   | 92 |

| A Depth-based Approach for 3D Dynamic Gesture Recognition<br>Hajar Hiyadi, Fakhreddine Ababsa, Christophe Montagne, El Houssine Bouyakhf and Fakhita Regragui  | 103 |
|--|-----|
| Robots Avoid Potential Failures through Experience-based Probabilistic Planning<br>Melis Kapotoglu, Cagatay Koc and Sanem Sariel   | 111 |
| Continuous Pre-Calculation of Human Tracking with Time-delayed Ground-truth - A Hybrid Approach to Minimizing Tracking Latency by Combination of Different 3D Cameras <i>Philip Nicolai, Jörg Raczkowsky and Heinz Wörn</i>        | 121 |
| Fast and Robust Keypoint Detection in Unstructured 3-D Point Clouds<br>Jens Garstka and Gabriele Peters  | 131 |
| Toward a Human-like Locomotion: Modelling Dynamically Stable Locomotion of an<br>Anthropomorphic Robot in Simulink Environment<br>Ramil Khusainov, Ilya Shimchik, Ilya Afanasyev and Evgeni Magid                                  | 141 |
| SHORT PAPERS   |     |
| A Model Predictive Sliding Mode Control with Integral Action for Slip Suppression of Electric Vehicles <i>Tohru Kawabe</i>   | 151 |
| Data Fusion Between a 2D Laser Profile Sensor and a Camera<br>M. Wagner, P. Heβ, S. Reitelshöfer and J. Franke   | 159 |
| A Complete Sensor-based System to Navigate Through a Cluttered Environment<br>A. Durand-Petiteville, V. Cadenat and N. Ouadah  | 166 |
| Flatness based Feed-forward Control of a Flexible Robot Arm under Gravity and Joint Friction <i>Elisha Didam Markus</i>  | 174 |
| Filling Accuracy Analysis of the Rocket Propellant based on the Flowmeter Measuring Model <i>Xiang Youhuan, Zhang Ping, Liu Weidong and Cui Benting</i>  | 181 |
| Comparison of Controllable Transmission Ratio Type Variable Stiffness Actuator with Antagonistic<br>and Pre-tension Type Actuators for the Joints Exoskeleton Robots<br>Hasbi Kizilhan, Ozgur Baser, Ergin Kilic and Necati Ulusoy | 188 |
| Feasibility Study of a Pair of 2-DOF Step-climbing Units for a Manual Wheelchair User Yoshikazu Mori, Kaoru Katsumura and Katsuya Nagase   | 196 |
| Relative Height Estimation using Omnidirectional Images and a Global Appearance Approach<br>Yerai Berenguer, Luis Payá, Adrian Peidro and Oscar Reinoso  | 202 |
| Rotation-Invariant Image Description from Independent Component Analysis for Classification<br>Purposes<br>Rodrigo D. C. da Silva, George A. P. Thé and Fátima N. S. de Medeiros   | 210 |
| New Approach to the Artificial Force Concept for Skid-steering Mobile Platform Alicja Mazur, Wojciech Domski, Mirela Kaczmarek and Mateusz Cholewinski   | 217 |
| Detection and Implementation Autonomous Target Tracking with a Quadrotor AR.Drone K. Boudjit and C. Larbes   | 223 |
| Next Generation Networks for Telecommunications Operators Providing Services to Transnational<br>Smart Grid Operators<br><i>Gurkan Tuna, George C. Kiokes, Erietta I. Zountouridou and V. Cagri Gungor</i>                         | 231 |

| An Adaptive Sliding Mode Controller for Synchronized Joint Position Tracking Control of Robot<br>Manipulators<br>Youmin Hu, Jie Liu, Bo Wu, Kaibo Zhou and Mingfeng Ge                              | 239 |
|---|-----|
| Feature and Decision Level Audio-visual Data Fusion in Emotion Recognition Problem<br>Maxim Sidorov, Evgenii Sopov, Ilia Ivanov and Wolfgang Minker   | 246 |
| Design of Mobile Microrobots with Thermomechanical Actuators<br>N. N. Bolotnik, V. G. Chashchukhin, V. G. Gradetsky, D. V. Kozlov, I. P. Smirnov, A. N. Sukhanov and<br>A. A. Zhukov                | 252 |
| A Physics-based Optimization Approach for Path Planning on Rough Terrains<br>Diogo Amorim and Rodrigo Ventura   | 259 |
| HybridSLAM: A Robust Algorithm for Simultaneous Localization and Mapping<br>Amir Hossein Monjazeb, Jurek Sasiadek and Dan Necsulescu  | 267 |
| A Formation Control Algorithm by Modified Next-state Approximation to Reduce Communication<br>Requirements in Multirobot Systems<br>Roshin Jacob Johnson and Asokan Thondiyath                      | 275 |
| Control Algorithm for a Cooperative Robotic System in Fault Conditions<br>Viorel Stoian and Eugen Bobasu  | 281 |
| Socio-cyberphysical System for Proactive Driver Support - Approach and Case Study Alexander Smirnov, Nikolay Shilov and Oleg Gusikhin   | 289 |
| Fast Moving Object Detection from Overlapping Cameras<br>Mikaël A. Mousse, Cina Motamed and Eugène C. Ezin  | 296 |
| Human-like Humanoid Robot Posture Control<br>M. Zebenay, V. Lippi and T. Mergener   | 304 |
| A Relative Measurement based Leader-follower Formation Control of Mobile Robots<br>Yu. N. Zolotukhin, K. Yu. Kotov, A. S. Maltsev, A. A. Nesterov, M. A. Sobolev and M. N. Filippov                 | 310 |
| A Vision-based Line Following Strategy for an Autonomous UAV<br>Alexandre Brandão, Felipe Martins and Higor Soneguetti  | 314 |
| Y-Pod Formation of Swarm Robots using Amber Force Fields<br>Purushotham Muniganti and Albert Oller Pujol  | 320 |
| Exploring the Role of a Smartphone as a Motion Sensing and Control Device in the Wireless<br>Networked Control of a Motor Test-bed<br>Jared A. Frank, Anthony Brill, Jonghyun Bae and Vikram Kapila | 328 |
| Bio-inspired Morphing Caudal Fin using Shape Memory Alloy Composites for a Fish-like Robot - Design, Fabrication and Analysis William Coral, Claudio Rossi and Irene Perrino Martin                 | 336 |
| Comparison of Robust Control Techniques for Use in Flight Simulator Motion Bases<br>Mauricio Becerra-Vargas   | 344 |
| Three-Layered Software Architecture and Its Variability for Teleoperated System<br>Yasuharu Kunii, Yoshiki Matsui and Masaru Furukawa   | 349 |
| Comparative Analysis of Methods for the Log Boundaries Isolation<br>Artem Kruglov and Yuriy V. Chiryshev  | 357 |

| Progressive Co-adaptation in Human-Machine Interaction<br>Paolo Gallina, Nicola Bellotto and Massimiliano Di Luca   | 362 |
|---|-----|
| A Tactile-based Grasping Strategy for Deformable Objects' Manipulation and Deformability Estimation<br>A. Delgado, C. A. Jara, D. Mira and F. Torres  | 369 |
| A Trajectory Tracking Control of a Skid Steered Mobile Cleaning Robot<br>Seungwoo Jeon Jeon, Wootae Jeong, Soon-Bark Kwon, Cheulkyu Lee and Duckshin Park   | 375 |
| Adaptive 3-D Object Classification with Reinforcement Learning<br>Jens Garstka and Gabriele Peters  | 381 |
| Impedance Control based Force-tracking Algorithm for Interaction Robotics Tasks: An Analytically<br>Force Overshoots-free Approach<br>Loris Roveda, Federico Vicentini, Nicola Pedrocchi and Lorenzo Molinari Tosatti | 386 |
| Human Motion Tracking Control for Humanoid Robot based on the Optimized Motion Retargeting<br>Wenjie Wang, Weiwei Yu, Xiansheng Qin, Hongbo Wang, Jie Hong and Yangyang Feng  | 392 |
| Issues and Challenges in Robotic Trimming of CFRP<br>Mohamed Slamani and Jean Francois Chatelain  | 400 |
| Motion Curved Surface Analysis and Composite for Skill Succession using RGBD Camera Kaoru Mitsuhashi, Hiroshi Hashimoto and Yasuhiro Ohyama   | 406 |
| Dynamic Obstacle Avoidance using Online Trajectory Time-scaling and Local Replanning Ran Zhao and Daniel Sidobre  | 414 |
| Visual based Navigation of a Free Floating Robot by Means of a Lab Star Tracker <i>Marco Sabatini, Giovanni B. Palmerini and Paolo Gasbarri</i>   | 422 |
| Salient Foreground Object Detection based on Sparse Reconstruction for Artificial Awareness Jingyu Wang, Ke Zhang, Kurosh Madani, Christophe Sabourin and Jing Zhang  | 430 |
| Towards Multi-functional Robot-based Automation Systems<br>Andreas Angerer, Michael Vistein, Alwin Hoffmann, Wolfgang Reif, Florian Krebs and Manfred Schönheits  | 438 |
| Range Data Fusion for Accurate Surface Generation from Heterogeneous Range Scanners<br>Mahesh Kr. Singh, K. S. Venkatesh and Ashish Dutta   | 444 |
| Reactive Planning on a Collaborative Robot for Industrial Applications<br>Gautier Dumonteil, Guido Manfredi, Michel Devy, Ambroise Confetti and Daniel Sidobre  | 450 |

# INDUSTRIAL INFORMATICS

# SHORT PAPERS

| Geographic Information Science and Technology as Key Approach to unveil the Potential of<br>Industry 4.0 - How Location and Time Can Support Smart Manufacturing<br>Stefan Schabus and Johannes Scholz |     |  |
|--|-----|--|
| Towards the Quality Evaluation of Software of Control Systems of Nuclear Power Plants: Theoretical Grounds, Main Trends and Problems <i>Elena Jharko</i>   | 471 |  |
| Analysis of Thermographic Patterns using Open CV - Case Study: A Clinker Kiln<br>Villie Morocho, Eliezer Colina, Sebastian Bautista, Alfredo Mora and Mara Falconi                                     | 479 |  |

| Taguchi Method or Compromise Programming as Robust Design Optimization Tool: The Case of a Flexible Manufacturing System<br>Wa-Muzemba Tshibangu     | 485 |
|--|-----|
| Development of the Visualization Tool for the VMS Emulator System<br>Jung-Sook Kim   | 493 |
| Order-up-to Networked Policy for Periodic-Review Goods Distribution Systems with Delay <i>Przemyslaw Ignaciuk</i>                                    | 498 |
| FPGA-SOPC based Motion Controller with ACC/DEC using Digital Convolution <i>Haiming Huang, Guangsheng Li and Wusheng Chou</i>                        | 504 |
| Design of i-Fields System Component: Computer Model of Oil-Recovery by Polymer Flooding D. Zh. Ahmed-Zaki, S. T. Mukhambetzhanov and T. S. Imankulov | 510 |
| Library for Simplified Timer Implementation using Standard C++<br>Sérgio F. Lopes, Paulo Vicente and Ricardo Gomes                                   | 517 |
|  |     |

AUTHOR INDEX

525

# Kinematic Analysis and Simulation of a Hybrid Biped Climbing Robot

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Abstract: This paper presents a novel climbing robot that explores 3-D truss structures for maintenance and inspection tasks. The robot is biped and has a hybrid serial-parallel architecture since each leg is composed of two parallel mechanisms connected in series. First, the forward kinematic problem of the complete robot is solved, obtaining the relative position and orientation between the feet in terms of the ten joint coordinates of the robot. The inverse kinematics is more complex due to the redundancy of the robot. Hence, a simplified inverse kinematic problem that assumes planar and symmetric movements is analyzed. Then, a tool to simulate the kinematics of the robot is presented, and it is used to demonstrate that the robot can completely explore 3-D structures, even when some movements are restricted to be planar and symmetric.

# **1 INTRODUCTION**

Vertical structures such as buildings, bridges, silos, or towers require periodic maintenance and inspection operations. For example, the glass facades of skyscrapers must be cleaned, and the welded unions in the metallic skeletons of the buildings must be examined. Tasks like these are very dangerous for human operators, who must work in environments often difficult to access and are exposed to many risks such as falling from height, contamination (e.g. inspections in nuclear or chemical facilities) or electrocution (e.g. maintenance of power transmission lines). To eliminate these risks, during the last two decades many researchers have been investigating the possibility of automating the execution of these tasks using climbing robots. (Schmidt and Berns, 2013) present an exhaustive analysis of the applications and design criteria of climbing robots, as well as a comprehensive review of the main locomotion and adhesion technologies.

Three-dimensional truss structures are present in many vertical structures such as bridges, towers and skeletons of buildings. These structures are typically constituted by a network of beams connected at structural nodes, and a high degree of mobility is often required to explore them. Climbing robots for 3-D trusses can be classified into two main types (Tavakoli et al., 2011): continuous-motion and step-by-step robots. Continuous-motion robots are faster, use wheels, and employ magnetism or friction to adhere to the structure (Baghani et al., 2005; Tavakoli et al., 2013). However, they usually have more difficulties to negotiate obstacles and their wheels may slip. Step-by-step robots have two grippers connected by a kinematic chain which has some degrees of freedom (DOF). Their name reflects their locomotion method: in each motion cycle, one gripper is fixed to the structure, whereas the kinematic chain moves the other gripper to the next attachment point of the structure, where it will be fixed. Then, the previously fixed gripper is released and a new motion cycle begins. During each motion cycle, these robots are equivalent to typical robot manipulators. Hence, they have a higher mobility that facilitates the avoidance of obstacles, but they are heavier, slower, and more complex.

The architecture of the kinematic chain of stepby-step robots can be serial, parallel, or hybrid. Serial architectures have larger workspaces than parallel ones, but they are less rigid and have a limited load capacity. The serial architectures have been the most explored ones in step-by-step climbing robots, with many different designs proposed by different authors. For example, (Balaguer et al., 2000) present a 6-DOF robot to explore 3-D metallic structures. Since the robot is powered by a battery, the movements are optimized to reduce the energy consumption and increase its autonomy. Another 4-DOF serial climbing robot is presented in (Tavakoli et al., 2011). Other authors propose serial architectures inspired by inchworms, with 5 and 8 DOF (Guan et al., 2011; Shvalb et al., 2013). (Mampel et al., 2009) propose a similar modular robot whose number of DOF can be increased connecting more modules in series. Finally, (Yoon and Rus, 2007) present 3-DOF robots that can individually explore 3-D trusses or can be combined with other robots to form more complex kinematic chains with higher maneuverability.

Parallel climbing robots are less common, but they have also been studied. These architectures offer a higher payload-to-weight ratio than serial robots, but their workspace is more limited. (Aracil et al., 2006) propose using a Gough-Stewart platform as the main body of a robot for climbing truss structures, pipelines and palm trees. The robot remains fixed to the structure using grippers or embracing it with its annular platforms.

Finally, hybrid climbing robots are composed of some serially connected parallel mechanisms, and they have the advantages of both architectures: high maneuverability, rigidity and load capacity. A hybrid robot for climbing 3-D structures is proposed by (Tavakoli et al., 2005), who combine a 3-RPR parallel robot with a rotation module connected in series. Another hybrid robot is proposed in (Figliolini et al., 2010). In this case, the robot is biped and each leg is the serial combination of two 3-RPS parallel robots. Hence, the complete robot has 12 DOF.

In this paper, we present a novel 10-DOF redundant hybrid robot for climbing 3-D truss structures. The robot is biped and its legs are connected to a hip through revolute joints. Each leg is the serial combination of two parallel mechanisms that possess linear hydraulic actuators, which provide a high load capacity and stiffness. The design of the robot makes it specially suitable to maneuver in 3-D truss structures and perform transitions between planes with different orientations. In this paper, we focus on the forward and inverse kinematic problems of the robot, which are necessary to plan trajectories in 3-D structures. We also present a Java simulation tool that allows us to verify the kinematic models obtained in this paper and demonstrate the ability of the robot to explore 3-D trusses.

This paper is organized as follows. The architecture of the robot is described in detail in Section 2. Next, the forward kinematic problem of the complete robot when one foot remains fixed is solved in Section 3. In Section 4, a simplified yet useful version of the inverse kinematic problem is solved. Then, Section 5 presents a tool that simulates the forward kinematics of the robot. This tool is used to demonstrate the execution of some example trajectories by the robot in a 3-D structure. Finally, the conclusions and future work are exposed in Section 6.

# **2** DESCRIPTION OF THE ROBOT

Figure 1a shows a 3-D model of the biped climbing robot. The robot has two identical legs (*A* and *B*) connected to the hip through revolute joints driven by motors (angles  $\theta_A$  and  $\theta_B$ ). Each leg has three links: a core link and two platforms. The lower platform is the foot of the leg and carries the gripper that fixes the robot to the structure (the grippers are not considered in the kinematic analysis presented in this paper). The upper platform is connected to the hip through the aforementioned revolute joint. Each platform is connected to the core link by means of two prismatic actuators and a passive slider.

The mechanism composed of the core link, one platform, and the two prismatic actuators that connect these two elements, is a closed-loop linkage that will be called hereafter "parallel module". The parallel modules are planar mechanisms that can be represented schematically as shown in Figure 1b. Hence, each leg is the serial combination of the parallel modules 1 (which is connected to the foot) and 2 (which is connected to the hip). The prismatic actuators of each parallel module lie in opposite sides of the plane  $\Pi_j$ , which is one of the planes of symmetry of the core link of the leg *j* (see the side view in Figure 1a). This is indicated with dashed lines in Figure 2.

Figure 1a also shows some reference frames attached to different parts of the robot. In this paper, the *X*, *Y*, and *Z* axes of reference frames will be represented in red, green, and blue colors, respectively. The frames  $H_A$  and  $H_B$  are fixed to the hip of the robot, whereas the frames *A* and *B* are respectively attached to the feet of the legs *A* and *B*.

The robot has 10 DOF: the rotation angles  $\theta_A$  and  $\theta_B$ , and the four prismatic actuators of each leg. In the next sections, the forward and inverse kinematic problems of the robot will be analyzed. After that, we will simulate the forward kinematics to demonstrate its ability to explore 3-D structures.

# **3 FORWARD KINEMATICS**

In this section, the forward kinematic problem (FKP) of the robot is solved. The problem considered here consists in calculating the position and orientation of one foot with respect to the other foot when the joint coordinates are known: the angles  $\theta_A$  and  $\theta_B$  and the lengths  $(l_{ij}, r_{ij})$  of the linear actuators of the parallel modules  $(i \in \{1,2\}, j \in \{A,B\})$ . First, the forward kinematics of the parallel modules is analyzed.



Figure 1: (a) 3-D model of the climbing robot. (b) A schematic diagram of a parallel module.

# 3.1 FKP of the Parallel Modules

Figure 1b shows the *i*-th parallel module of the leg j ( $i \in \{1,2\}, j \in \{A,B\}$ ). A parallel module is a closed-loop planar mechanism composed of a mobile platform connected to a base through two prismatic actuators with lengths  $l_{ij}$  and  $r_{ij}$ . The platform is constrained to only translate vertically and rotate. The forward kinematics consists in calculating the position  $y_{ij}$  and the orientation  $\varphi_{ij}$  of the mobile platform in terms of  $l_{ij}$  and  $r_{ij}$ . According to Figure 1b, the relationship between  $(l_{ij}, r_{ij})$  and  $(y_{ij}, \varphi_{ij})$  is:

$$(p\cos\varphi_{ij} - b)^2 + (y_{ij} + p\sin\varphi_{ij})^2 = r_{ij}^2 \qquad (1)$$

$$(p\cos\varphi_{ij} - b)^2 + (y_{ij} - p\sin\varphi_{ij})^2 = l_{ij}^2 \qquad (2)$$

These equations can be combined to obtain an equivalent system. Adding together Eqs. (1) and (2) yields Eq. (3), whereas subtracting Eq. (2) from Eq. (1) results in Eq. (4):

$$4bp\cos\varphi_{ij} = 2y_{ij}^2 + 2b^2 + 2p^2 - l_{ij}^2 - r_{ij}^2 \qquad (3)$$

$$4y_{ij}p\sin\phi_{ij} = r_{ij}^2 - l_{ij}^2$$
 (4)

Solving  $\cos \varphi_{ij}$  from Eq. (3) gives:

$$\cos\varphi_{ij} = \frac{2y_{ij}^2 + 2b^2 + 2p^2 - l_{ij}^2 - r_{ij}^2}{4bp}$$
(5)

Squaring Eq. (4):

$$16y_{ij}^2p^2(1-\cos^2\varphi_{ij}) = (r_{ij}^2 - l_{ij}^2)^2$$
(6)

Finally, substituting Eq. (5) into Eq. (6) yields a cubic equation in  $\Upsilon_{ii} = y_{ii}^2$ :

$$\Upsilon_{ij}^{3} + k_{2}^{ij}\Upsilon_{ij}^{2} + k_{1}^{ij}\Upsilon_{ij} + k_{0}^{ij} = 0$$
 (7)

where:

$$k_2^{ij} = 2b^2 + 2p^2 - l_{ij}^2 - r_{ij}^2$$
(8)

$$k_{1}^{ij} = \left[ (b+p)^{2} - \frac{l_{ij}^{2} + r_{ij}^{2}}{2} \right] \left[ (b-p)^{2} - \frac{l_{ij}^{2} + r_{ij}^{2}}{2} \right]$$
(9)

$$k_0^{ij} = b^2 (l_{ij} + r_{ij})^2 (l_{ij} - r_{ij})^2 / 4$$
(10)

Equation (7) always has three roots, two of which may be complex. For a given strictly positive root  $\Upsilon_{ij}$  of Eq. (7), two solutions are obtained for  $y_{ij} = \pm \sqrt{\Upsilon_{ij}}$ . For each of these two values of  $y_{ij}$ ,  $\cos \varphi_{ij}$  is calculated from Eq. (5), whereas  $\sin \varphi_{ij}$  is obtained from Eq. (4):

$$\sin \varphi_{ij} = \frac{r_{ij}^2 - l_{ij}^2}{4y_{ii}p}$$
(11)

Once  $\cos \varphi_{ij}$  and  $\sin \varphi_{ij}$  are known,  $\varphi_{ij}$  is unequivocally determined in  $(-\pi, \pi]$ . If  $\Upsilon_{ij} = 0$ , then  $y_{ij} = 0$  and  $\cos \varphi_{ij}$  is calculated using Eq. (5). However,  $\sin \varphi_{ij}$ cannot be calculated from Eq. (11) since  $y_{ij} = 0$ . Instead,  $\sin \varphi_{ij}$  is calculated as follows:

$$\sin \varphi_{ij} = \pm \sqrt{1 - \cos^2 \varphi_{ij}} \tag{12}$$

obtaining two solutions. It is shown in (Kong and Gosselin, 2002), using Sturm's Theorem, that Eq. (7)

cannot have more than two non-negative roots. Since each non-negative root of Eq. (7) yields two different pairs  $(y_{ij}, \varphi_{ij})$ , the FKP of each parallel module has four solutions at most.

Note that swapping the values of  $r_{ij}$  and  $l_{ij}$  neither affects Eq. (7) nor Eq. (5), but it changes the sign of  $\sin \varphi_{ij}$  in Eq. (11). Hence, swapping  $r_{ij}$  and  $l_{ij}$  changes the sign of  $\varphi_{ij}$ , leaving  $y_{ij}$  unchanged. This can be observed in Figure 1b, where swapping  $r_{ij}$  and  $l_{ij}$  is equivalent to rotating the figure  $\pi$  rad about the vertical Y axis. This fact will be exploited in Section 4 to analyze the inverse kinematics of the robot.

### **3.2 FKP of the Complete Robot**

The forward kinematics of the complete robot consists in calculating the position and orientation of one foot with respect to the other foot when the ten joint coordinates are known. The problem will be solved using Homogeneous Transformation Matrices (HTMs). An HTM has the following form (Bajd et al., 2013):

$$\mathbf{T}_{m/n} = \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{R}_{m/n} & \mathbf{t}_{m/n} \\ \mathbf{0}_{1\times 3} & 1 \end{bmatrix}$$
(13)

where  $\mathbf{0}_{1\times 3} = [0,0,0]$ . The matrix  $\mathbf{T}_{m/n}$  encodes the position and orientation of a frame *m* with respect to another frame *n*. Indeed,  $\mathbf{R}_{m/n} \in \mathbb{R}^{3\times 3}$  is a rotation matrix whose columns are the vectors of the frame *m* expressed in the basis formed by the vectors of the frame *n*, whereas  $\mathbf{t}_{m/n} \in \mathbb{R}^{3\times 1}$  is the position of the origin of the frame *m* in coordinates of the frame *n*.



Figure 2: Kinematics of a generic leg  $j \in \{A, B\}$ .

The forward kinematics of one leg can be easily solved using HTMs. Figure 2 represents schematically a generic leg  $j \in \{A, B\}$ . Each leg has two parallel modules whose bases are attached to the core link. The platform of the parallel module 1 is the foot of the leg, whereas the platform of the parallel module 2 is connected to the hip of the robot by means of a revolute joint. The variables  $(y_{1j}, \varphi_{1j}, y_{2j}, \varphi_{2j})$  are obtained from  $(l_{1j}, r_{1j}, l_{2j}, r_{2j})$  as explained in Section 3.1. All the reference frames of Figure 2 are contained in the plane  $\Pi_j$ , which is one of the planes of symmetry of the core link of the leg *j* (see Figure 1a). The transformation between the frame *j* (fixed to the foot) and the frame  $F_j$  (fixed to the core link) is:

$$\mathbf{T}_{F_j/j} = \begin{bmatrix} \cos \varphi_{1j} & \sin \varphi_{1j} & 0 & y_{1j} \sin \varphi_{1j} \\ -\sin \varphi_{1j} & \cos \varphi_{1j} & 0 & y_{1j} \cos \varphi_{1j} \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix}$$
(14)

Similarly, the transformation between the frame  $G_j$  (attached to the platform of the parallel module 2) and the frame  $F_j$  is:

$$\mathbf{T}_{G_j/F_j} = \begin{bmatrix} \cos \varphi_{2j} & -\sin \varphi_{2j} & 0 & 0\\ \sin \varphi_{2j} & \cos \varphi_{2j} & 0 & y_{2j} - h\\ 0 & 0 & 1 & 0\\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix}$$
(15)

where *h* is a geometric constant. Finally, a rotation  $\theta_j$  about the *Y* axis of the frame  $G_j$  transforms it into the frame  $H_j$ , which is attached to the hip of the robot:

$$\mathbf{\Gamma}_{H_j/G_j} = \begin{bmatrix} \cos \theta_j & 0 & \sin \theta_j & 0\\ 0 & 1 & 0 & 0\\ -\sin \theta_j & 0 & \cos \theta_j & 0\\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix}$$
(16)

The position and orientation of the frame  $H_j$  with respect to the frame *j* is obtained as follows:

$$\mathbf{T}_{H_j/j} = \mathbf{T}_{F_j/j} \mathbf{T}_{G_j/F_j} \mathbf{T}_{H_j/G_j}$$
(17)

which completes the FKP of any generic leg *j*. Once the forward kinematics of each leg is solved, it is straightforward to calculate the position and orientation of the foot of one leg  $k \in \{A, B\} \setminus \{j\}$  with respect to the foot of the other leg *j*:

$$\mathbf{T}_{k/j} = \mathbf{T}_{H_j/j} \mathbf{T}_{H_k/H_j} \mathbf{T}_{k/H_k}$$
(18)

where  $\mathbf{T}_{k/H_k} = (\mathbf{T}_{H_k/k})^{-1}$  and  $\mathbf{T}_{H_k/H_j}$  is the HTM that encodes the position and orientation of the frame  $H_k$  with respect to the frame  $H_j$ :

$$\mathbf{T}_{H_k/H_j} = \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{I} & \mathbf{t}_{H_k/H_j} \\ \mathbf{0}_{1\times 3} & 1 \end{bmatrix}$$
(19)

which is constant because both frames are attached to the same rigid body (the hip). I is the 3 × 3 identity matrix. Moreover, according to Figure 1a:  $\mathbf{t}_{H_B/H_A} = [t, 0, 0]^T = -\mathbf{t}_{H_A/H_B}$ , where *t* is the distance between the parallel axes of the revolute actuators.

Note that, in theory, there are  $4^4 = 256$  different solutions to the FKP of the complete robot. This is because the kinematic chain between the feet has four parallel modules connected in series and the FKP of each module has four real solutions at most.

# **4** INVERSE KINEMATICS

The inverse kinematic problem (IKP) consists in calculating the values of the joint coordinates necessary to attain a desired relative position and orientation between the feet of the robot, and it is necessary for planning trajectories. In this robot, ten joint coordinates are used to place and orient one foot with respect to the other foot, which makes it redundant. Hence, the IKP is underconstrained and one should expect infinitely many solutions. This redundancy makes it difficult to solve the general IKP of this robot. Fortunately, many important movements necessary to explore a 3-D structure (e.g., walking in one dimension, changing between planes, etc) can be executed using the configuration analyzed in this section, which reduces the number of variables and simplifies remarkably the IKP.



Figure 3: The Planar Symmetric Inverse Kinematic (PSIK) problem.

The configuration considered in this section is depicted in Figure 3, where the foot *j* is fixed to the structure and the foot *k* is mobile  $(j, k \in \{A, B\}, j \neq k)$ . It is assumed that the *Z* axes of the frames attached to the feet are parallel and point in the same direction. Hence, any variation in the length of the prismatic actuators of the parallel modules only produces planar motions of the frame *k* in the *XY* plane of the frame *j*. In this case, the position and orientation of the frame *k* relative to the frame *j* can be calculated as follows:

$$\mathbf{T}_{k/j} = \mathbf{T}_{G_j/j} \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{I} & [t,0,0]^T \\ \mathbf{0}_{1\times 3} & 1 \end{bmatrix} (\mathbf{T}_{G_k/k})^{-1} \quad (20)$$

where  $\mathbf{T}_{G_j/j} = \mathbf{T}_{F_j/j} \mathbf{T}_{G_j/F_j}$ . Moreover, it is assumed that the joint coordinates of the parallel modules of the two legs are related as follows:

$$l_{ik} = r_{ij}, \quad r_{ik} = l_{ij} \quad (i = 1, 2)$$
 (21)

This means that the joint coordinates of the parallel module i of the legs k and j are swapped. According to Section 3.1, this translates into:

$$v_{ik} = y_{ij}, \quad \varphi_{ik} = -\varphi_{ij} \quad (i = 1, 2)$$
 (22)

It can be graphically checked that Eq. (22) implies that the legs *k* and *j* are symmetric with respect to the line *L*, which is the axis of symmetry of the hip of the robot. Substituting Eq. (22) into Eq. (20), the matrix  $\mathbf{T}_{k/j}$  can be written only in terms of the variables of the leg *j* and has the following expression:

$$\mathbf{T}_{k/j} = \begin{bmatrix} -c(2\omega) & -s(2\omega) & 0 & \mu(1-c(2\omega)) \\ s(2\omega) & -c(2\omega) & 0 & \mu \cdot s(2\omega) \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix}$$
(23)

where  $s(x) = \sin x$ ,  $c(x) = \cos x$  and:

$$\mu = \frac{t - 2(h - y_{1j} - y_{2j})\sin\varphi_{2j}}{2\cos(\varphi_{1j} - \varphi_{2j})}$$
(24)

$$\boldsymbol{\omega} = \boldsymbol{\varphi}_{1j} - \boldsymbol{\varphi}_{2j} + \pi/2 \tag{25}$$

Thus, under the condition of planar and symmetric motion, the position and orientation of the foot k relative to the foot j can be defined by two parameters ( $\mu, \omega$ ), which are indicated in Figure 3. We define the Planar Symmetric Inverse Kinematic (PSIK) problem, which consists in calculating the joint coordinates ( $l_{1j}, r_{1j}, l_{2j}, r_{2j}$ ) needed to achieve a desired position and orientation ( $\mu, \omega$ ). Since the joint coordinates do not appear explicitly in Eqs. (24)-(25), the kinematic equations of the parallel modules of the leg j must be included:

$$(p\cos\varphi_{1j} - b)^2 + (y_{1j} + p\sin\varphi_{1j})^2 = r_{1j}^2 \qquad (26)$$

$$(p\cos\varphi_{1j} - b)^2 + (y_{1j} - p\sin\varphi_{1j})^2 = l_{1j}^2 \qquad (27)$$

$$(p\cos\varphi_{2j} - b)^2 + (y_{2j} + p\sin\varphi_{2j})^2 = r_{2j}^2$$
(28)

$$(p\cos\varphi_{2j} - b)^2 + (y_{2j} - p\sin\varphi_{2j})^2 = l_{2j}^2 \qquad (29)$$

Hence, the PSIK problem requires calculating  $(l_{1j}, r_{1j}, l_{2j}, r_{2j}, y_{1j}, \varphi_{1j}, y_{2j}, \varphi_{2j})$  from Eqs. (24)-(29). Like the general inverse kinematic problem, the PSIK problem is underconstrained since eight unknowns must be obtained from six equations. However, the PSIK problem involves less variables and simpler equations. In the following section, we will show that some postures necessary to negotiate obstacles in a 3-D structure can be analyzed solving the PSIK problem. Also, we will describe a method to choose appropriate solutions to the PSIK problem assuming that the lengths of the prismatic actuators of the parallel modules have upper and lower limits.



Figure 4: Interface of the tool developed to simulate the forward kinematics of the robot.

# 5 SIMULATION

In this section, we will simulate the movements of the complete robot in an example 3-D structure to validate the kinematic analyses of Sections 3 and 4, and demonstrate the ability of the robot to explore the structure. More specifically, we will show how the robot can walk on a beam, perform transitions between different faces of the beams, and negotiate structural nodes.

To demonstrate these movements, we have developed a Java simulation tool that can be downloaded from http://arvc.umh.es/parola/climber.html (the latest version of Java may be required). The simulator implements the equations derived in Section 3 to solve the forward kinematics. As shown in Figure 4, the simulator has a graphical window that shows the robot in the 3-D test structure. The tool also has a window with a control panel where the user can modify the values of the ten joint coordinates, change the foot that is attached to the structure, or reset the simulation. It is important to remark that the simulation tool only implements the kinematic equations, without considering the dynamics of the robot (gravity is neglected) or the collisions between the robot and the structure. These advanced topics will be analyzed in the future.

Three reference frames are shown in the graphical window of the simulator: the world frame W (which is attached to one of the corners of the beam  $b_1$  of the structure) and the frames A and B (which are attached to the feet of the legs). The fixed foot is indicated in orange color. When the user modifies the value of a joint coordinate, the forward kinematics is solved

and the position and orientation of the free foot with respect to the frame *W* is calculated as follows:

$$\mathbf{T}_{k/W} = \mathbf{T}_{j/W} \mathbf{T}_{k/j} \tag{30}$$

where the matrix  $\mathbf{T}_{k/j}$  is defined in Section 3.2, j denotes the fixed leg, and k denotes the mobile leg  $(j,k \in \{A,B\}, j \neq k)$ . As shown in Figure 4, the translation and rotation submatrices of  $\mathbf{T}_{A/W}$  and  $\mathbf{T}_{B/W}$  are indicated to the user in an output window of the simulator. According to Section 3.2, there are 256 solutions to the forward kinematics of the complete robot since each parallel module can have up to four different solutions. However, it will be shown next that only one solution is valid.

For the following simulations, we will assume that b = p = 4 cm, and that the prismatic actuators are constrained so that  $r_{ij}, l_{ij} \in [19, 25]$  cm. Solving the forward kinematics of a parallel module for these ranges of the joint coordinates, and plotting the solution  $y_{ij}$  versus  $r_{ij}$  and  $l_{ij}$ , results in the four surfaces shown in Figure 5. Each surface is associated with one of the configurations labeled as follows:  $H^+, X^+$ ,  $H^-$ , and  $X^-$ . The solutions  $H^+$  and  $X^+$  are indicated in Figure 5; the solutions  $H^-$  and  $X^-$  are their respective mirror images with respect to the base of the parallel module. According to the design of the robot (see Section 2), the only valid solution is  $H^+$ , since the other solutions are impossible due to mechanical interferences between different links of the legs. Moreover, Figure 5 also provides a criterion for selecting the valid solution: the solution  $H^+$  always has the highest  $y_{ii}$  coordinate.

Once the only valid solution to forward kinematics has been characterized, we will simulate the execution of an example trajectory in the structure, which is



Figure 5: Solution surfaces of the FKP of a parallel module for b = p = 4 cm. The surfaces  $H^+$  and  $H^-$  are almost parallel to the surfaces  $X^+$  and  $X^-$ , respectively.

composed of the three beams  $b_1$ ,  $b_2$ , and  $b_3$  indicated in Figure 4. At the beginning of the trajectory, the robot lies on the face  $f_1$  of the beam  $b_1$ , and the objective is to move the robot to the face  $f_4$  of the beam  $b_3$ , negotiating the structural node where the three beams intersect. Next, we will show that such a trajectory can be executed by a sequence of basic movements that can be used to reach any other point of the structure. The values of the remaining geometric parameters of the robot are: t = 15.6 cm, h = 16 cm. Moreover, the side of the square cross section of the beams measures 12 cm, and the distance between the face  $f_2$ of the beam  $b_2$  and the origin of the frame W is 88 cm.

### 5.1 Phase 1: Walking Along a Beam

At the beginning of the trajectory (see Figure 6a), the foot A is attached to the face  $f_1$  of the beam  $b_1$ , and the frame A has the following position and orientation:

$$\mathbf{t}_{A/W} = \begin{bmatrix} 6\\ -40\\ 5 \end{bmatrix} \text{cm}, \mathbf{R}_{A/W} = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 0 & 1\\ 1 & 0 & 0\\ 0 & 1 & 0 \end{bmatrix}$$
(31)

The number "6" in  $\mathbf{t}_{A/W}$  means that the frame *A* is centered in the beam, whereas the number "5" is a geometric constant of the feet of the robot. Initially, the joint coordinates have the following values:  $\theta_A = \theta_B = 0$ ,  $r_{ij} = l_{ij} = 21$  cm ( $i \in \{1,2\}, j \in \{A,B\}$ ). Starting from this configuration, Table 1 describes a simple sequence of movements that allows the robot to reach the vertical beam  $b_2$ . In each step of the given sequence, we indicate only the joint coordinates that change with respect to the previous step.

### 5.2 Phase 2: Concave Change of Plane

Once the beam  $b_2$  has been reached, it can be climbed to negotiate the structural node defined by the intersection of the three beams. The next objective is to perform a concave transition between the faces  $f_1$  and  $f_2$ . Note that at the end of the previous phase (Figure 6f), the Z axes of the frames attached to the two feet point in the same direction. Hence, the postures needed to change between these faces can be obtained solving the PSIK problem defined in Section 4.

Figure 7a indicates the input parameters needed to solve the PSIK problem:  $\mu = 27.4$  cm,  $\omega = \pi/4$  rad, and j = B. Substituting these values and the geometric parameters of the robot into Eqs. (24)-(29) yields:

$$\frac{15.6 - 2(16 - y_{1B} - y_{2B})\sin\varphi_{2B}}{2\cos(\varphi_{1B} - \varphi_{2B})} = 27.4 \quad (32)$$

$$\varphi_{2B} - \pi/4 = \varphi_{1B} \qquad (33)$$

$$(4\cos\varphi_{1B}-4)^2 + (y_{1B}+4\sin\varphi_{1B})^2 = r_{1B}^2 \qquad (34)$$

$$(4\cos\varphi_{1B} - 4)^2 + (y_{1B} - 4\sin\varphi_{1B})^2 = l_{1B}^2 \qquad (35)$$

$$(4\cos\varphi_{2B}-4)^2 + (y_{2B}+4\sin\varphi_{2B})^2 = r_{2B}^2 \qquad (36)$$

$$(4\cos\varphi_{2B}-4)^2 + (y_{2B}-4\sin\varphi_{2B})^2 = l_{2B}^2 \qquad (37)$$

As discussed in Section 4, infinitely many solutions exist since there are eight variables to be solved from six equations. Next, we describe a way of choosing a proper solution to this underconstrained problem. First, Eq. (33) is used to eliminate  $\varphi_{1B}$  from Eq. (32). Then,  $\varphi_{2B}$  is solved from the resulting equation:

$$\varphi_{2B} = \sin^{-1} \left( \frac{13.7\sqrt{2} - 7.8}{y_{1B} + y_{2B} - 16} \right)$$
(38)

This solution can be substituted into Eqs. (33)-(37) to express the joint coordinates  $\{l_{1B}, r_{1B}, l_{2B}, r_{2B}\}$  in terms of  $\{y_{1B}, y_{2B}\}$ , which can be chosen so that  $l_{iB}, r_{iB} \in [19, 25]$  (i = 1, 2). Figure 8 represents the curves of the  $(y_{1B}, y_{2B})$  plane in which each joint coordinate equals 19 or 25; any point inside the shaded region R enclosed by these curves is a valid solution to the PSIK problem. For example, the solution  $y_{1B} = y_{2B} = 22$  cm yields:  $r_{1B} \approx 20.59536194$ ,  $l_{1B} \approx 23.40761347$ ,  $r_{2B} \approx 23.65623783$ , and  $l_{2B} \approx$ 20.34961301, all in cm (these accurate values are valid only for the simulation; in a real implementation we will have to deal with the finite precision of the sensors). This solution is used to perform a transition between the faces  $f_1$  and  $f_2$  (see Figure 7a). After performing this transition, the foot A is attached to the beam  $b_2$ , and the sequence of movements described in Table 2 is used to complete this phase.



Figure 6: Example trajectory where the robot moves along a beam of the structure.

Table 1: Sequence of movements in the first phase of the simulated trajectory.

| Step | Joint coordinates                 | Description of the movements in each step   |
|------|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1    | $r_{1B} = l_{1B} = 19 \text{ cm}$ | Retract the actuators connected to the foot <i>B</i> to lift it (Figure 6b).      |
| 2    | $\theta_A = \pi$ rad              | Rotate the robot about the leg A (Figure 6c).                                     |
| 3    | $r_{1B} = l_{1B} = 21 \text{ cm}$ | Extend the actuators connected to the foot $B$ until it touches the beam $b_1$    |
|      |                                   | (Figure 6d).  |
| 4    | $r_{\rm ev} = l_{\rm ev} = 10$ cm | Attach the foot <i>B</i> to the face $f_1$ .                                      |
|      | $r_{1A} = t_{1A} = 19$ cm         | Release and lift the foot A retracting the actuators connected to it (Figure 6e). |
| 5    | $\theta_B = \pi$ rad              | Rotate the robot about the leg <i>B</i> (Figure 6f).                              |

Table 2: Sequence of movements in the second phase of the simulated trajectory.

| Step | Joint coordinates   | Description of the movements in each step  |
|------|---|--|
| 1    | $l_{iA} = r_{iA} = 21 \text{ cm}$<br>$l_{2B} = r_{2B} = 21 \text{ cm}$<br>$l_{1B} = r_{1B} = 19 \text{ cm}$ | Lift the foot <i>B</i> and place both legs perpendicular to the face $f_2$ , leaving some distance between the foot <i>B</i> and the face $f_2$ (Figure 7b). |
| 2    | $\theta_B = \pi/2$ rad  | Rotate the leg <i>B</i> about its own axis (Figure 7c).  |
| 3    | $r_{1B} = l_{1B} = 21 \text{ cm}$   | Extend the actuators connected to the foot <i>B</i> until it touches the face $f_2$ (Figure 7d).   |
| 4    | $r_{1A} = l_{1A} = 19 \text{ cm}$   | Attach the foot <i>B</i> to the face $f_2$ .<br>Release and lift the foot <i>A</i> retracting the actuators connected to it (Figure 7e).                     |
| 5    | $\theta_B = \pi$ rad  | Rotate the robot about the leg <i>B</i> (Figure 7f).   |



Figure 7: A trajectory that includes a concave transition between different planes.



Figure 8: Region of valid solutions to the PSIK problem.

## 5.3 Phase 3: Convex Change of Plane

At the end of phase 2, the Z axes of the frames attached to the feet are parallel to the beam  $b_2$  and point in the same direction. Hence, the PSIK problem can be solved to determine the joint coordinates that permit performing a convex transition from the face  $f_2$  to the face  $f_3$  (the face  $f_3$  is defined in Figure 9). Substituting  $\mu = 11$  cm,  $\omega = 3\pi/4$  rad, and j = B in Eqs. (24)-(29), and following the procedure detailed in Section 5.2, we can obtain the region of the  $(y_{1B}, y_{2B})$  plane where  $l_{iB}, r_{iB} \in [19, 25]$  cm (i = 1, 2). It can be checked that the solution adopted in the previous section  $(y_{1B} = y_{2B} = 22 \text{ cm})$  is also valid here, obtaining in this case:  $r_{1B} \approx 24.85374622$ ,  $l_{1B} \approx 19.20940403$ ,  $r_{2B} \approx 21.99688208$ , and  $l_{2B} \approx 22.00311791$  (all in cm). For these values of the joint coordinates, the robot can perform a transition between the faces  $f_2$  and  $f_3$  (see Figure 9a). After that, the foot A can be attached to the face  $f_3$ .

After attaching the foot *A* to the face  $f_3$ , the sequence of movements described in Table 3 is executed. After executing this sequence, solving exactly the same PSIK problem as in Section 5.2 permits the foot *A* of the robot to be attached to the face  $f_4$  of the beam  $b_3$ , which completes the trajectory.

# **6** CONCLUSIONS

This paper has presented the kinematic analysis of a novel biped climbing robot with a hybrid serialparallel architecture. The forward kinematic problem was solved, obtaining the relative position and orientation between the feet in terms of the joint coordi-

| Step | Joint coordinates   | Description of the movements in each step  |
|------|---|--|
| 1    | $l_{iA} = r_{iA} = 21 \text{ cm}$<br>$l_{2B} = r_{2B} = 21 \text{ cm}$<br>$l_{1B} = r_{1B} = 19 \text{ cm}$ | Place both legs perpendicular to the face $f_3$ , leaving some distance between the foot <i>B</i> and the face $f_3$ (Figure 9b).        |
| 2    | $\theta_A = 3\pi/2$ rad   | Rotate the robot about the leg A (Figure 9c).  |
| 3    | $r_{1B} = l_{1B} = 21 \text{ cm}$   | Extend the actuators connected to the foot <i>B</i> until it touches the face $f_3$ (Figure 9d).   |
| 4    | $r_{1A} = l_{1A} = 19 \text{ cm}$   | Attach the foot <i>B</i> to the face $f_3$ .<br>Release and lift the foot <i>A</i> retracting the actuators connected to it (Figure 9e). |
| 5    | $\theta_A = \pi$ rad  | Rotate the leg A about its own axis (Figure 9f).   |

Table 3: Sequence of movements in the third phase of the simulated trajectory.



Figure 9: A trajectory that includes a convex transition between different planes.

nates. The inverse problem is more difficult due to the redundancy of the robot. Hence, a simplified inverse problem was analyzed. It was shown that the simplified problem is sufficient to perform some important trajectories which are necessary to explore 3-D structures. This was shown using a tool that simulates the kinematics of the robot and demonstrates its ability to explore 3-D trusses.

To exploit all the possibilities offered by the proposed kinematic architecture, the general inverse kinematic problem of the robot will be solved in the future. Other problems that will need to be addressed include the determination of the workspace (positions and orientations that are attainable from a given attachment point), the dynamic modeling of the robot, and the planning of trajectories avoiding collisions. Also, the performance of the robot will be studied in more complex structures (with beams having arbitrary orientation, not just orthogonal frames), and a real prototype of the robot is currently being developed to test it in a real structure.

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