

Deep reinforcement learning for the control of robotic manipulation: a focussed mini-review

Rongrong Liu, Florent Nageotte, Philippe Zanne, Michel de Mathelin, Birgitta

Dresp

► To cite this version:

Rongrong Liu, Florent Nageotte, Philippe Zanne, Michel de Mathelin, Birgitta Dresp. Deep reinforcement learning for the control of robotic manipulation: a focussed mini-review. Robotics, 2021, 10 (1), pp.22. 10.3390/robotics10010022 . hal-03140078

HAL Id: hal-03140078 https://hal.science/hal-03140078v1

Submitted on 31 May 2021

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers. L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.



Article

Deep reinforcement learning for the control of robotic manipulation: a focussed mini-review

Rongrong Liu ^{1,*}, Florent Nageotte ¹, Philippe Zanne ¹ Michel de Mathelin ¹ and Birgitta Dresp-Langley ^{2,*}

- ¹ ICube Lab Robotics Department Strasbourg University UMR 7357 CNRS; rong.rong.liu@unistra.fr; Nageotte@unistra.fr; zanne.philippe@unistra.fr; demathelin@unistra.fr
- ² ICube Lab UMR 7357 Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique CNRS; birgitta.dresp@unistra.fr
- * Correspondence: birgitta.dresp@unistra.fr; rong.rong.liu@unistra.fr

Version January 18, 2021 submitted to Robotics

- Abstract: Deep learning has provided new ways of manipulating, processing and analyzing data.
- ² It sometimes may achieve results comparable to, or surpassing human expert performance, and
- has become a source of inspiration in the era of artificial intelligence. Another subfield of machine
- learning named reinforcement learning, tries to find an optimal behavior strategy through interactions
- s with the environment. Combining deep learning and reinforcement learning permits resolving critical
- issues relative to the dimensionality and scalability of data in tasks with sparse reward signals, such
- ⁷ as robotic manipulation and control tasks, that neither method permits resolving when applied on its
- own. In this paper, we present recent significant progress of deep reinforcement learning algorithms,
- which try to tackle the problems for the application in the domain of robotic manipulation control,
- such as sample efficiency and generalization. Despite of these continuous improvements, currently
- the challenges of learning robust and versatile manipulation skills for robots with deep reinforcement
- 12 learning are still far from being resolved for real world applications.

Keywords: Deep learning; Artificial intelligence; Machine learning; Reinforcement learning; Deep
 reinforcement learning; Robotic manipulation control; Sample efficiency; Generalization

15 1. Introduction

Robots are originally designed to assist or replace humans by performing repetitive and/or 16 dangerous tasks which humans prefer not to do, or are unable to do because of physical limitations 17 imposed by extreme environments. Such would include the limited accessibility of narrow, long pipes 18 underground, anatomical locations in specific minimally invasive surgery procedure, objects at the 19 bottom of the sea, for example. With the continuous developments in mechanics, sensing technology 20 [1], intelligent control and other modern technologies, robots have improved autonomy capabilities 21 and are more dexterous. Nowadays, commercial and industrial robots are in widespread use with 22 lower long-term cost and greater accuracy and reliability, in the fields like manufacturing, assembly, 23 packing, transport, surgery, earth and space exploration, etc. 24 There are a variety of different types of robots available, which can be grouped into several 25 categories depending on their movement, Degrees of Freedom (DoF), and function. Articulated robots, 26

are among the most common robots used today. They look like a human arm and that is why they are
also called robotic arm or manipulator arm [2]. In some context, a robotic arm may also refer to a part

of a more complex robot. A robotic arm can be described as a chain of links that are moved by joints

- which are actuated by motors. We will start from a brief explanation of these mechanical components
- of a typical robotic manipulator [3] [4]. Figure 1 shows the schematic diagram of a simple two-joint
- ³² robotic arm mounted on a stationary base on the floor .

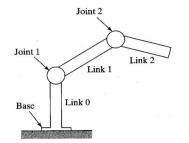


Figure 1. Simplified schematic diagram of mechanical components of a two-joint robotic arm

Joints are similar to joints in the human body, which provide relative motion between two parts of the body. In robotic field, each joint is a different axis and provides an additional DoF of controlled relative motion between adjacent links, as shown in Figure 1. In nearly all cases, the number of degrees of freedom is equal to the number of joints [5].

An end-effector, as the name suggests, is an accessory device or tool which is attached at the
end of the chain, and actually accomplishes the intended task. The simplest end-effector is the
gripper, which is capable of opening and closing for gripping objects, but it can also be designed
as a screw driver, a brush, a water jet, a thruster, or any mechanical device, according to different
applications. An end-effector can also be called a robotic hand.

Links are the rigid or nearly rigid components that connect either the base, joints or end effector,
 and bear the load of the chain.

• An actuator is a device that converts electrical, hydraulic, or pneumatic energy into robot motion.

Currently the control sequence of a robotic manipulator is mainly achieved by solving inverse 45 kinematic equations to move or position the end effector with respect to the fixed frame of reference [6] [7]. The information is stored in memory by a programmable logic controller for fixed robotic tasks [8]. 47 Robots can be controlled in open-loop or with an exteroceptive feedback. The open-loop control does 48 not have external sensors or environment sensing capability, but heavily relies on highly structured 49 environments that are very sensitively calibrated. If a component is slightly shifted, the control system 50 may have to stop and to be recalibrated. Under this strategy, the robot arm performs by following a series of positions in memory, and moving to them at various times in their programming sequence. 52 In some more advanced robotic systems, exteroceptive feedback control is employed, through the 53 use of monitoring sensors, force sensors, even vision or depth sensors, that continually monitor the 54 robot's axes or end-effector, and associated components for position and velocity. The feedback is then 55 compared to information stored to update the actuator command so as to achieve the desired robot 56 behavior. Either auxiliary computers or embedded microprocessors are needed to perform interface 57 with these associated sensors and the required computational functions. These two traditional control 58 scenarios are both heavily dependent on hardware-based solutions. For example, conveyor belts and 59 shaker tables, are commonly used in order to constrain the situation physically. 60 With the advancements in modern technologies in artificial intelligence, such as deep learning, 61 and recent developments in robotics and mechanics, both the research and industrial communities 62 have been seeking more software based control solutions using low-cost sensors, which has less 63 requirements for the operating environment and calibration. The key is to make minimal but effective 64 hardware choices and focus on robust algorithms and software. Instead of hard-coding directions 65 to coordinate all the joints, the control policy could be obtained by learning and then be updated 66 accordingly. Deep Reinforcement Learning (DRL) is among the most promising algorithms for this 67 purpose because no predefined training dataset is required, which ideally suits robotic manipulation 68

and control tasks, as illustrated in Table 1. A reinforcement learning approach might use input from a
 robotic arm experiment, with different sequences of movements, or input from simulation models.

⁷¹ Either type of dynamically generated experiential data can be collected, and used to train a Deep

72 Neural Network (DNN) by iteratively updating specific policy parameters of a control policy network.

	traditional control	DRL based control expectation
control solution	hardware based	software based
monitoring sensor	expensive	low-cost
environment requirement	structured	unstructured situations
hardware calibration	sensitive to calibration	tolerate to calibration
control algorithm	hand coding required	data driven

Table 1. Comparison between traditional control and DRL based control expectation

This review paper tries to provide a brief and self-contained review of DRL in the research of 73 robotic manipulation control. We will start with a brief introduction of deep learning, reinforcement 74 learning, and DRL in the second section. The recent progress of robotic manipulation control with the 75 DRL based methods will be then discussed in the third section. What need to mention here is that, 76 we can not cover all the brilliant algorithms in detail in a short paper. For the algorithms mentioned 77 here, one still need to refer to those original papers for the detailed information. Finally, we follow the 78 discussion and present other real-world challenges of utilizing DRL in robotic manipulation control in 79 forth section, with a conclusion of our work in the last section. 80

81 2. Deep reinforcement learning

In this part, we will start from deep learning and reinforcement learning, to better illustrate their combination version, DRL.

84 2.1. Deep learning

Deep learning is quite popular in the family of machine learning, with its outstanding performance 85 in a variety of domains, not only in classical computer vision tasks, but also in in many other 86 practical applications, to just name a few, natural language processing, social network filtering, 87 machine translation, bioinformatics, material inspection and board games, where these deep-learning 88 based methods have produced results comparable to, and in some cases surpassing human expert 89 performance. Deep learning has changed the way we process, analyze and manipulate data. 90 The adjective "deep" in deep learning comes from the use of multiple layers in the network. Figure 91 2 demonstrates a simple deep learning architecture with basic fully connected strategy. A general 92

³² comparison is conducted in Table 2 between deep learning and traditional machine learning. With

deep learning, the raw data like images are directly fed into a deep neural network multiple layers

that progressively extract higher-level features, while with traditional machine learning, the relevant

⁹⁶ features of input data are manually extracted by experts. Besides, deep learning often requires a large

amount of data to reach optimal results, thus it's also computationally intensive, accordingly.

Table 2. Comparison	n between tradition	al machine l	earning and	deep learning

	traditional machine learning	deep learning	
dataset requirement	performs well with small dataset	requires large dataset	
accuracy	accuracy plateaus	excellent performance potential	
feature extraction	selected manually	learned automatically	
algorithm structure	simple model	multi-layer model	
model training time	quick to train a model	computationally intensive	
hardware requirement	works with not powerful hardware	high-performance computer	

Deep models can be interpreted as artificial neural networks with deep structures. The idea of artificial neural networks is not something new, which can date back to 1940s [9]. In the following years, the research community witnessed many important milestones with perceptrons [10], backpropagation algorithm [11] [12], Rectified Linear Unit, or ReLU [13], Max-pooling [14], dropout [15], batch normalization [16], etc. It is all these continuous algorithmic improvements, together with the emergence of large-scale training data and the fast development of high performance parallel

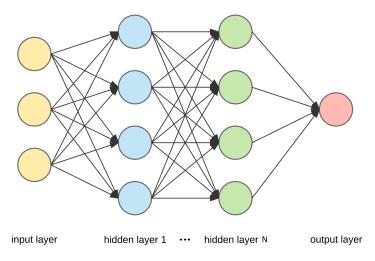


Figure 2. A simple deep learning architecture

computing systems, such as Graphics Processing Units (GPUs) that allow deep learning to prosper
 nowadays [17].

The first great success for deep learning is based on convolutional neural network for classification 106 in 2012 [18]. It applies hundreds of thousands data-label pairs iteratively to train the parameters with 107 loss computation and backpropagation. Although this technique has been improved continuously 108 and rapidly since it took off, and is now one of the most popular deep learning structures, it is not 109 quite suitable for robotic manipulation control, as it is too time-consuming to obtain large number of 110 images of joints angles with labeled data to train the model. Indeed, there are some researches using 111 convolutional neural network to learn the motor torques needed to control the robot with raw RGB 112 video images [19]. However, a more promising and interesting idea is using DRL, as we will discuss 113 hereafter. 114

115 2.2. Reinforcement learning

Reinforcement learning [20] is a subfield of machine learning, concerned with how to find an optimal behavior strategy to maximize the outcome though trial and error dynamically and autonomously, which is quite similar with the intelligence of human and animals, as the general definition of intelligence is the ability to perceive or infer information, and to retain it as knowledge to be applied towards adaptive behaviors in the environment. This autonomous self-teaching methodology is actively studied in many domains, like game theory, control theory, operations research, information theory, system optimization, recommendation system and statistics [21].

Figure 3 illustrates the universal model of reinforcement learning, which is biologically plausible, as it is inspired by human learning through punishment or reward due to state changes in the environment, which are either favorable (reinforcing) to certain behaviors/actions, or unfavourable (suppressing). Natural reinforcement learning is driven by the evolutionary pressure of optimal behavioral adaptation to environmental constraints.

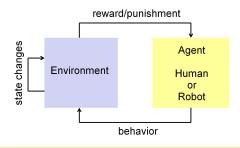


Figure 3. Universal model of reinforcement learning

128

129

131

When an agent is in a state, it chooses an action according to its current policy and then it receives a reward from the environment for executing that action. By learning from this reward, it transitions to a new state, chooses a new action and then iterates through this process. In order to make it even easier to understand, one can compare reinforcement learning to the structure of how we play a video

game, in which the character, namely the agent, engages in a series of trials, or actions, to obtain the 132 highest score, which is reward. 133

Reinforcement learning is different from supervised learning, where a training set of labeled 134 examples is available. In interactive problems like robot control domain using reinforcement learning, it is often impractical to obtain examples of desired behavior that are both correct and representative 136 of all the situations in which the agent has to act. Instead of labels, we get rewards which in general 137 are weaker signals. Reinforcement learning is not a kind of unsupervised learning, which is typically 138 about finding structure hidden in collections of unlabeled data. In reinforcement learning the agent has 139 to learn to behave in the environment based only on those sparse and time-delayed rewards, instead 140 of trying to find hidden structure. Therefore, reinforcement learning can be considered as a third 141 machine learning paradigm, alongside supervised learning and unsupervised learning and perhaps 142 other future paradigms as well [22]. 143

2.3. Deep reinforcement learning 144

As the name suggests, DRL emerges from reinforcement learning and deep learning, and can 145 be regarded as the bridge between conventional machine learning and true artificial intelligence, 146 as illustrated in Figure 4. It combines both the technique of giving rewards based on actions from 147 reinforcement learning, and the idea of using a neural network for learning feature representations 148 from deep learning. Traditional reinforcement learning is limited to domains with simple state representations, while DRL makes it possible for agents to make decisions from high-dimensional 150 and unstructured input data [23] using neural networks to represent policies. In the past few years, 151 research in DRL has been highly active with a significant amount of progress, along with the rising 152 interest in deep learning. 153

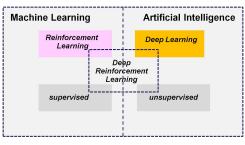


Figure 4. Deep reinforcement learning

Firstly, DRL has gained a lot of attraction, especially due to its well-known achievement in games. 154 Beginning around 2013, DeepMind showed impressive learning results in Atari video games at human 155 level proficiency with no hand coded features using unprocessed pixels for input [24] [25], which can 156 be regarded as the creation of this subfield. Another milestone was in 2016 when AlphaGo [26] first 157 beat a human professional player of Go, which is a game from ancient China. This computer program 158 was improved by AlphaZero [27] in 2017, together with its efficiency also in chess and shogi. In 2019, 159 Pluribus [28] showed its success over top human professionals in multiplayer poker, and OpenAI Five 160 [29] beat the previous world champions in a Dota 2 demonstration match. 161

Apart from the field of games, it has large potential in other domains, including but not limited 162 to, robotics [30], natural language processing [31], computer vision [32], transportation [33], finance 163 [34] and healthcare [35]. Many exciting breakthroughs of this research have been published by both of as in Berkeley, Stanford and Carnegie Mellon University, together with some independent non-profit
 research organizations like openAI and some other industrially focused companies.

The most commonly used DRL algorithms can be categorized in value-based methods, policy gradient methods and model-based methods. The value-based methods construct a value function for defining a policy, which is based on the Q-learning algorithm [36] using the Bellman equation [37] and its variant, the fitted Q-learning [38] [39]. The Deep Q-Network (DQN) algorithm used with great success in [25] is the representative of this class, followed by various extensions, such as double DQN [40], Distributional DQN [41] [42], etc. A combination of these improvements has been studied in [43] with a state-of-the-art performance on the Atari 2600 benchmark, both in terms of data efficiency and final performance.

However, the DQN-based approaches are limited to problems with discrete and low-dimensional 176 action spaces, and deterministic policies, while policy gradient methods are able to work with 177 continuous action spaces and can also represent stochastic policies. Thanks to variants of stochastic 178 gradient ascent with respect to the policy parameters, policy gradient methods are developed to 179 find a neural network parameterized policy to maximize the expected cumulative reward [44]. Like 180 other policy-based methods, policy gradient methods typically require an estimate of a value function 181 for the current policy and a sample efficient approach is to use an actor-critic architecture that can 182 work with off-policy data. The Deep Deterministic Policy Gradient (DDPG) algorithm [45] [46] is a 183 representation of this type of methods. There are also some researchers working on combining policy gradient methods with Q-learning [47]. 185

Both value-based and policy-based methods do not make use of any model of the environment and are also called model-free methods, which limits their sample efficiency. On the contrary, in the model-based methods, a model of the environment is either explicitly given or learned from experience by the function approximators [48] [49] in conjunction with a planning algorithm. In order to obtain advantages from both sides, there are many researches available integrating model-free and model-based elements [50] [51] [52], which are among the key areas for the future development of DRL algorithms [53].

¹⁹³ 3. Deep reinforcement learning in robotic manipulation control

In this section, the recent progress of DRL in the domain of robotic manipulation control will be 194 discussed. Two of the most important challenges here concern sample efficiency and generalization. 195 The goal of DRL in the context of robotic manipulation control is to train a deep policy neural network, 196 like in Figure 2, to detect the optimal sequence of commands for accomplishing the task. As illustrated 197 in Figure 5, the input is the current state, which can include the angles of joints of the manipulator, 198 position of the end effector, and their derivative information, like velocity and acceleration. Moreover, 199 the current pose of target objects can also be counted in the current state, together with the state 200 of corresponding sensors if there are some equipped in the environment. The output of this policy 201 network is an action indicating control commands to be implemented to each actuator, such as torques 202 or velocity commands. When the robotic manipulator accomplishes a task, a positive reward will be generated. With these delayed and weak signals, the algorithm is expected to find out the most 204 successful control strategy for the robotic manipulation. 205

206 3.1. Sample efficiency

As we know, in supervised deep learning, a training set of input-output pairs are fed to neutral networks to construct an approximation that maps an input to an output [54] [55]. This learned target function can then be used for labeling new examples when a test set is given. The study of sample efficiency for supervised deep learning tries to answer the question of how large a training set is required in order to learn a good approximation to the target concept [56]. Accordingly, for DRL in robotic manipulation control, the study of sample efficiency discusses how much data need to be collected in order to build an optimal policy to accomplish the designed task.

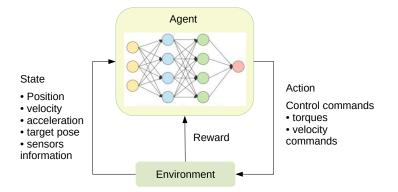


Figure 5. A schematic diagram of robotic manipulation control using DRL

The sample efficiency for DRL is considerably more challenging than that for supervised learning for various reasons [57]. First, the agent can not receive a training set provided by the environment unilaterally, but information which is determined by both the actions it takes and dynamics of the environment. Second, although the agent desires to maximize the long-term reward, the agent can only observe the immediate reward. Additionally, there is no clear boundary between training and test phases. The time the agent spends trying to improve the policy often comes at the expense of utilizing this policy, which is often referred to as the exploration-exploitation trade-off [53].

Since gathering experiences by interacting with the environment for robots is relatively expensive, 221 a number of approaches have been proposed in the literature to address sample efficient learning. For 222 example, in [58], which is the first demonstration of using DRL on a robot, trajectory optimization 223 techniques and policy search methods with neural networks were applied to achieve reasonable sample efficient learning. A range of dynamic manipulation behaviors were learned, such as stacking large 225 Lego blocks at a range of locations, threading wooden rings onto a tight-fitting peg, screwing caps 226 onto different bottles, assembling a toy airplane by inserting the wheels into a slot. Videos and other 227 supplementary materials can be found at *http*://rll.berkeley.edu/icra2015gps/index.htm. Millimeter 228 level precision can be achieved with dozens of examples by this algorithm, but the knowledge of the explicit state of the world at training time is required to enable sample efficiency. 230

In [59], a novel technique called Hindsight Experience Replay (HER) was proposed. Each episode was replayed but with a different goal than the one the agent was trying to achieve. With this clever strategy for augmenting samples, the policy for the pick-and-place task, which was learned using only sparse binary rewards, performed well on the physical robot without any finetuning. The video presenting their experiments is available at https : //goo.gl/SMrQnI. But this algorithm relies on special value function approximators, which might not be trivially applicable to every problem. Besides, this technique can not be extended well with the use of reward shaping.

Some other researchers try to achieve sample efficient learning through demonstrations in 238 imitation learning [60] [61], where a mentor provides demonstrations to replace the random neural 239 network initialization. [62] was an extension of DDPG algorithm [46] for tasks with sparse rewards, 240 where both demonstrations and actual interactions were used to fill a replay buffer. Experiments of four 241 simulation tasks and a real robot clip insertion problem were conducted. A video demonstrating the 242 performance can be viewed at *https://www.youtube.com/watch?v = WGJwLfeVN9w*. However, 243 the object location and the explicit states of joints, such as position and velocity, must be provided to 244 move from simulation to real world, which limits its application to high-dimensional data. 245

Based on the work of generative adversarial imitation learning in [63], [64] used Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs) [65] to generate an additional training data to solve sample complexity problem, by proposing a multi-modal imitation learning framework that was able to handle unstructured demonstrations of different skills. The performance of this framework was evaluated in simulation for several tasks, such as reacher and gripper-pusher. The video of simulated experiments is available at *http*://sites.google.com/view/nips17intentiongan. Like most GANs techniques, it is
quite difficult to train and many samples are required.

253 3.2. Generalization

Generalization, refers to the capacity to use previous knowledge from a source environment to achieve a good performance in a target environment. It is widely seen as a step necessary to produce artificial intelligence that behaves similarly to humans. Generalization may improve the characteristics of learning the target task by increasing the starting reward on the target domain, the rate of learning for the target task, and the maximum reward achievable [66].

In [67], Google proposed a method to learn hand-eye coordination for robot grasp task. In the 259 experiment phrase, they collected about 800,000 grasp attempts over two months from multiple robots 260 operating simultaneously, and then used these data to train a controller that work across robots. These 261 identical uncalibrated robots had differences in camera placement, gripper wear or tear. Besides, a 262 second robotic platform with eight robots collected a dataset consisting of over 900,000 grasp attempts, 263 which was used to test transfer between robots. The results of transfer experiment illustrated that 264 data from different robots can be combined to learn more reliable and effective grasping. One can 265 refer to the video at *https* : //youtu.be/cXaick80uM for supplementary results. In contrast to many prior methods, there is no simulation data or explicit representation, but an end-to-end training 267 directly from image pixels to gripper motion in task space by learning just from this high-dimensional 268 representation. Despite of its attractive success, this method still can not obtain satisfactory accuracy 269 for real application, let alone it is very hardware and data intensive. 270

To develop generalization capacities, some researchers turn to meta learning [68], which is also 271 known as learning to learn. The goal of meta learning is to train a model on a variety of learning tasks, 272 such that it can solve new learning tasks using only a small number of training samples [69]. In [70], 273 meta learning was combined with aforementioned imitation learning in order to learn to perform tasks 274 quickly and efficiently in complex unstructured environments. The approach was evaluated on planar 275 reaching and pushing tasks in simulation, and visual placing tasks on a real robot, where the goal is 276 to learn to place a new object into a new container from a single demonstration. The video results 277 are available at https://sites.google.com/view/one - shot - imitation. The proposed meta-imitation 278 learning method allows a robot to acquire new skills from just a single visual demonstration, but the 279 accuracy needs to be further improved. 280

There are also many other researches available to tackle other challenges in this domain. For example, no matter whether a control policy is learned directly for a specific task, or transferred from previous tasks, another important but understudied question is how well will the policy performs, namely policy evaluation problem. A behavior policy search algorithm was proposed in [71] for more efficiently estimating the performance of learned policies.

286 4. Discussion

Although algorithms of robotic manipulation control using DRL have been emerging in large numbers in the past few years, some even with demonstration videos showing how an experimental robotic manipulator accomplishes a task with the policy learned, as we have illustrated above, the challenges of learning robust and versatile manipulation skills for robots with DRL are still far from being resolved satisfactorily for real world application.

Currently, robotic manipulation control with DRL may be suited to fault tolerant tasks, like picking up and placing objects, where a disaster will not be caused if the operation fails occasionally. It is quite attractive in situations, where there is enough variation that the explicit modeling algorithm does not work. Potential applications can be found in warehouse automation to replace human pickers for objects of different size and shape, clothes and textiles manufacturing, where cloth is difficult to manipulate by nature, and food preparation industry, where, for example, every chicken nugget looks different, and it is not going to matter terribly if a single chicken nugget is destroyed.

However, even in this kind of applications, DRL based methods are not widely used in real world 299 robotic manipulation. The reasons are multiple, including the two concerns we have discussed in 300 the previous section, sample efficiency and generation, where more progress is still required, as both gathering experiences by interacting with the environment and collecting expert demonstrations for 302 imitation learning are expensive procedures, especially in situations where robots are heavy, rigid and 303 brittle, and it will cost too much if the robot is damaged in exploration. Another very important issue 304 is safety guarantee. Not like simulation tasks, we need to be very careful that learning algorithms are 305 safe, reliable and predictable in real scenarios, especially if we move to other applications that require safe and correct behaviors with high confidence, such as surgery or household robots taking care of 307 the elder or the disabled. There are also other challenges including but not limited to the algorithm 308 explainability, the learning speed, high-performance computational equipment requirements. 309

310 5. Conclusions

The scalability of DRL, discussed and illustrated here, is well-suited for high-dimensional data problems in a variety of domains. In this paper, we have presented a brief review of the potential of DRL for policy detection in robotic manipulation control and discussed the current research and development status of real world applications. Through a joint development of deep learning and reinforcement learning, with inspiration from other machine learning methods like imitation learning, GANs, or meta learning, new algorithmic solutions can emerge, and are still needed, to meet challenges in robotic manipulation control for practical applications.

Author Contributions: conceptualization, R.L. and B.D.-L.; methodology, R.L. and B.D.-L.; investigation, R.L.,
 F.N., P.Z. and B.D.-L.; resources, R.L., F.N., P.Z. and B.D.-L.; writing–original draft preparation, R.L.; writing–review
 and editing, F.N., P.Z. and B.D.-L.; supervision, B.D.-L.; project administration, B.D.-L. and M.d.M.; funding
 acquisition, B.D.-L. and M.d.M.

Funding: This research work is part of a project funded by the University of Strasbourg's Initiative D'EXellence(IDEX).

324 Acknowledgments: The support of the CNRS is gratefully acknowledged.

325 **Conflicts of Interest:** The authors declare no conflict of interest.

326 Abbreviations

- 327 The following abbreviations are used in this manuscript:
 - DoF Degrees of Freedom
 - DRL Deep Reinforcement Learning
 - DNN Deep Neural Network
- 328 DQN Deep Q-Network
 - DDPG Deep Deterministic Policy Gradient
 - HER Hindsight Experience Replay
 - GANs Generative Adversarial Networks

329 References

- Dresp-Langley B, Nageotte F, Zanne P, et al. Correlating grip force signals from multiple sensors highlights
 prehensile control strategies in a complex task-user system. *Bioengineering*. 2020, 7(4): 143.
- 2. Eranki V K P, Reddy Gurudu R. Design and Structural Analysis of a Robotic Arm. 2017.
- 333 3. Christ R D, Wernli R L. Manipulators. *The ROV Manual*. 2014, 503–534.
- 4. Ivanescu M. Control. *Mechanical Engineer's Handbook*. **2001**, 611–714.
- Savatekar R D, Dum A A. Design of control system for articulated robot using leap motion sensor. *Int Res J Eng Technol (IRJET)*. 2016, *3*, 1407–1417.
- 337 6. Wei H, Bu Y, Zhu Z. Robotic arm controlling based on a spiking neural circuit and synaptic plasticity.
- Biomedical Signal Processing and Control. **2020**, 55, 101640.

- Božek P, Al Akkad M A, Blištan P, et al. Navigation control and stability investigation of a mobile robot
 based on a hexacopter equipped with an integrated manipulator. *International Journal of Advanced Robotic Systems*. 2017, 14(6).
- 8. Safdar B. Theory of Robotics Arm Control with PLC. Saimaa University of Applied Sciences. 2015.
- 9. Pitts W, McCulloch W S. How we know universals the perception of auditory and visual forms. *The Bulletin* of mathematical biophysics. 1947, 9(3), 127–147.
- 10. Rosenblatt F. Perceptron simulation experiments. *Proceedings of the IRE*. **1960**, *48*(3), 301–309.
- Rumelhart D E, Hinton G E, Williams R J. Learning internal representations by error propagation. *California Univ San Diego La Jolla Inst for Cognitive Science*. 1985.
- LeCun Y, Boser B, Denker J S, et al. Backpropagation applied to handwritten zip code recognition. *Neural computation*. 1989, 1(4), 541–551.
- Jarrett K, Kavukcuoglu K, Ranzato M A, et al. What is the best multi-stage architecture for object recognition.
 IEEE 12th international conference on computer vision. 2009, 2146–2153.
- Ciresan D C, Meier U, Masci J, et al. Flexible, high performance convolutional neural networks for image
 classification. *Twenty-second international joint conference on artificial intelligence*. 2011.
- Hinton G E, Srivastava N, Krizhevsky A, et al. Improving neural networks by preventing co-adaptation of
 feature detectors. *arXiv preprint*. 2012, arXiv:1207.0580.
- 16. Ioffe S, Szegedy C. Batch normalization: Accelerating deep network training by reducing internal covariate
 shift. *arXiv preprint*. 2015, arXiv:1502.03167.
- Liu R. Multispectral images-based background subtraction using Codebook and deep learning approaches.
 Université Bourgogne Franche-Comté. 2020.
- 18. Krizhevsky A, Sutskever I, Hinton G E. Imagenet classification with deep convolutional neural networks.
 Advances in neural information processing systems. 2012, 1097–1105.
- Levine S, Finn C, Darrell T, et al. End-to-end training of deep visuomotor policies. *The Journal of Machine Learning Research*. 2016, 1334–1373.
- Kaelbling L P, Littman M L, Moore A W. Reinforcement learning: A survey. *Journal of artificial intelligence research*. 1996, 4, 237–285.
- 21. Kober J, Bagnell J A, Peters J. Reinforcement learning in robotics: A survey. *The International Journal of Robotics Research*. 2013, 32(11), 1238–1274.
- 22. Sutton R S, Barto A G. Reinforcement learning: An introduction. *MIT press*. 2018.
- Dresp-Langley B, Ekseth O K, Fesl J, et al. Occam's Razor for Big Data? On detecting quality in large
 unstructured datasets. *Applied Sciences*. 2019, 9(15), 3065.
- Mnih V, Kavukcuoglu K, Silver D, et al. Playing atari with deep reinforcement learning. *arXiv preprint*. 2013, arXiv:1312.5602.
- 25. Mnih V, Kavukcuoglu K, Silver D, et al. Human-level control through deep reinforcement learning. *nature*.
 2015, *518*(7540), 529–533.
- Silver D, Huang A, Maddison C J, et al. Mastering the game of Go with deep neural networks and tree
 search. *nature*. 2016, 529(7587), 484–489.
- Silver D, Hubert T, Schrittwieser J, et al. Mastering chess and shogi by self-play with a general reinforcement
 learning algorithm. *arXiv preprint*. 2017, arXiv:1712.01815.
- 28. Brown N, Sandholm T. Superhuman AI for multiplayer poker. Science 2019, 365(6456), 885–890.
- Berner C, Brockman G, Chan B, et al. Dota 2 with large scale deep reinforcement learning. *arXiv preprint* 2019, arXiv:1912.06680.
- 382 30. Gu S, Holly E, Lillicrap T, et al. Deep reinforcement learning for robotic manipulation with asynchronous
 off-policy updates. *IEEE international conference on robotics and automation (ICRA)*. 2017, 3389–3396.
- 384 31. Sharma A R, Kaushik P. Literature survey of statistical, deep and reinforcement learning in natural language
 processing. *International Conference on Computing, Communication and Automation (ICCCA)*. 2017, 350–354.
- Yun S, Choi J, Yoo Y, et al. Action-decision networks for visual tracking with deep reinforcement learning.
 Proceedings of the IEEE conference on computer vision and pattern recognition. 2017, 2711–2720.
- 338 33. Farazi N P, Ahamed T, Barua L, et al. Deep Reinforcement Learning and Transportation Research: A
 Comprehensive Review. *arXiv preprint*. 2015, arXiv:2010.06187.
- 300 34. Mosavi A, Ghamisi P, Faghan Y, et al. Comprehensive Review of Deep Reinforcement Learning Methods
- and Applications in Economics. *arXiv preprint*. **2015**, arXiv:2004.01509.

- 392 35. Liu Y, Logan B, Liu N, et al. Deep reinforcement learning for dynamic treatment regimes on medical registry
 data. *IEEE International Conference on Healthcare Informatics (ICHI)*. 2017, 380–385.
- 394 36. Watkins C J C H, Dayan P. Q-learning. *Machine learning*. 1992, 8(3-4), 279–292.
- 395 37. Bellman R E, Dreyfus S E. Applied dynamic programming. *Princeton university press.* 2015.
- 396 38. Gordon G J. Stable fitted reinforcement learning. Advances in neural information processing systems. 1995, 8,
 397 1052–1058.
- Riedmiller M. Neural fitted Q iteration-first experiences with a data efficient neural reinforcement learning
 method. *European Conference on Machine Learning*. 2005, 317–328.
- 400 40. Hasselt H, Guez A, Silver D. Deep reinforcement learning with double Q-Learning. *Proceedings of the Thirtieth* 401 AAAI Conference on Artificial Intelligence. 2016, 2094–2100.
- 402 41. Bellemare M G, Dabney W, Munos R. A distributional perspective on reinforcement learning. *Proceedings of* 403 *the 34th International Conference on Machine Learning*. 2017, 449–458.
- 404 42. Dabney W, Rowland M, Bellemare M G, et al. Distributional reinforcement learning with quantile regression.
 405 In Proceedings of the 32th AAAI Conference on Artificial Intelligence. 2018.
- 406 43. Hessel M, Modayil J, Van Hasselt H, et al. Rainbow: Combining improvements in deep reinforcement
 407 learning. *arXiv preprint*. 2017, arXiv:1710.02298.
- 408 44. Salimans T, Ho J, Chen X, et al. Evolution strategies as a scalable alternative to reinforcement learning. *arXiv* 409 *preprint*. 2017, arXiv:1703.03864.
- 410 45. Silver D, Lever G, Heess N, et al. Deterministic policy gradient algorithms. *In Proceedings of the 31st* 411 *International Conference on International Conference on Machine Learning*. 2014, 387–395.
- 412 46. Lillicrap T P, Hunt J J, Pritzel A, et al. Continuous control with deep reinforcement learning. *arXiv preprint*.
 413 2015, arXiv:1509.02971.
- 414 47. O'Donoghue B, Munos R, Kavukcuoglu K, et al. Combining policy gradient and Q-learning. *arXiv preprint*415 2016, arXiv:1611.01626.
- 416 48. Oh J, Guo X, Lee H, et al. Action-conditional video prediction using deep networks in atari games. *Advances* 417 *in neural information processing systems*. 2015, 2863–2871.
- 418 49. Nagabandi A, Kahn G, Fearing R S, et al. Neural network dynamics for model-based deep reinforcement
 learning with model-free fine-tuning. *IEEE International Conference on Robotics and Automation (ICRA)*. 2018,
 7559–7566.
- Silver D, Hasselt H, Hessel M, et al. The predictron: End-to-end learning and planning. *International Conference on Machine Learning*. 2017, 3191–3199.
- Tamar A, Wu Y, Thomas G, et al. Value iteration networks. *Advances in neural information processing systems*.
 2016, 2154–2162.
- François-Lavet V, Bengio Y, Precup D, et al. Combined reinforcement learning via abstract representations.
 Proceedings of the AAAI Conference on Artificial Intelligence. 2019, 3582–3589.
- François-Lavet V, Henderson P, Islam R, et al. An introduction to deep reinforcement learning. *arXiv preprint*. **2018**, arXiv:1811.12560.
- 429 54. Wandeto J M, Dresp-Langley B. The quantization error in a Self-Organizing Map as a contrast and colour
 430 specific indicator of single-pixel change in large random patterns. *Neural Networks*. 2019, 119, 273–285.
- 431 55. Dresp-Langley B, Wandeto J M. Pixel precise unsupervised detection of viral particle proliferation in cellular
 432 imaging data. *Informatics in medicine unlocked*. 2020, 20: 100433.
- 433 56. Anthony M, Bartlett P L. Neural network learning: Theoretical foundations. *cambridge university press*. 2009.
- 434 57. Kakade S M. On the sample complexity of reinforcement learning. University of London. 2003.
- 435 58. Sergey L, Wagener N, Abbeel P. Learning contact-rich manipulation skills with guided policy search.
 436 Proceedings of the 2015 IEEE International Conference on Robotics and Automation (ICRA). 2015, 26–30.
- 437 59. Andrychowicz M, Wolski F, Ray A, et al. Hindsight experience replay. *Advances in neural information* 438 processing systems. 2017, 30, 5048–5058.
- 60. Tai L, Zhang J, Liu M, et al. A survey of deep network solutions for learning control in robotics: From
 reinforcement to imitation. *arXiv preprint*. 2016, arXiv:1612.07139.
- Andrew J. Bagnell. An invitation to imitation. Technical report, Robotics Institute, *Carnegie Mellon University*.
 2015.
- 443 62. Vecerik M, Hester T, Scholz J, et al. Leveraging demonstrations for deep reinforcement learning on robotics
 444 problems with sparse rewards. *arXiv preprint*. 2017, arXiv:1707.08817.

- 63. Ho J, Ermon S. Generative adversarial imitation learning. *Advances in neural information processing systems*.
 2016, 4565–4573.
- Hausman K, Chebotar Y, Schaal S, et al. Multi-modal imitation learning from unstructured demonstrations
 using generative adversarial nets. *Advances in Neural Information Processing Systems*. 2017, 1235–1245.
- 65. Goodfellow I, Pouget-Abadie J, Mirza M, et al. Generative adversarial nets. *Advances in neural information processing systems.* 2014, 2672–2680.
- 451 66. Spector B, Belongie S. Sample-efficient reinforcement learning through transfer and architectural priors.
 452 arXiv preprint. 2018, arXiv:1801.02268.
- 453 67. Levine S, Pastor P, Krizhevsky A, et al. Learning hand-eye coordination for robotic grasping with deep
 454 learning and large-scale data collection. *The International Journal of Robotics Research.* 2018, 37(4-5), 421–436.
- 455 68. Thrun S, Pratt L. Learning to learn. Springer Science & Business Media. 2012.
- Finn C, Abbeel P, Levine S. Model-agnostic meta-learning for fast adaptation of deep networks. *arXiv preprint*.
 2017, arXiv:1703.03400.
- Finn C, Yu T, Zhang T, et al. One-shot visual imitation learning via meta-learning. *arXiv preprint*. 2017, arXiv:1709.04905.
- 460 71. Hanna J P, Thomas P S, Stone P, et al. Data-efficient policy evaluation through behavior policy search. *arXiv* 461 *preprint*. 2017, arXiv:1706.03469.
- 462 © 2021 by the authors. Submitted to *Robotics* for possible open access publication under the terms and conditions
- of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).