

Convex approximations for multistage stochastic mixed-integer programs

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Joint work with Jinting Lin, Niels van der Laan, and Ruben van Beesten

MIP Workshop 2025

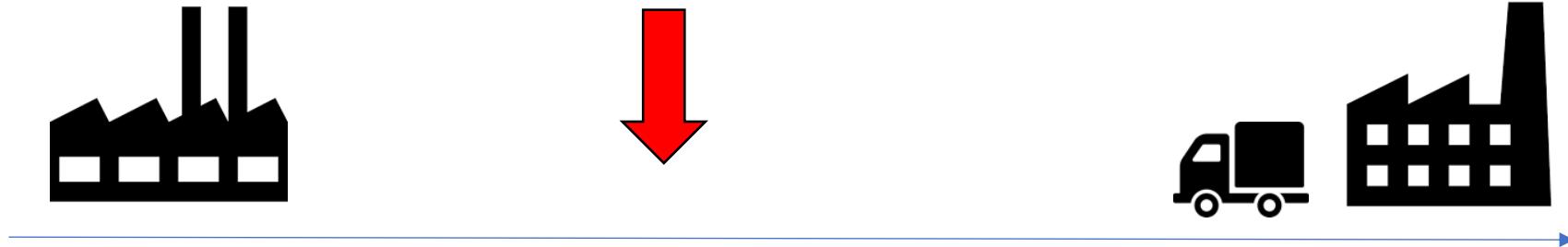
June 3, 2025

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Production planning example

- Timeline:

Observe demand ω



Produce $x \in \mathbb{R}_+$

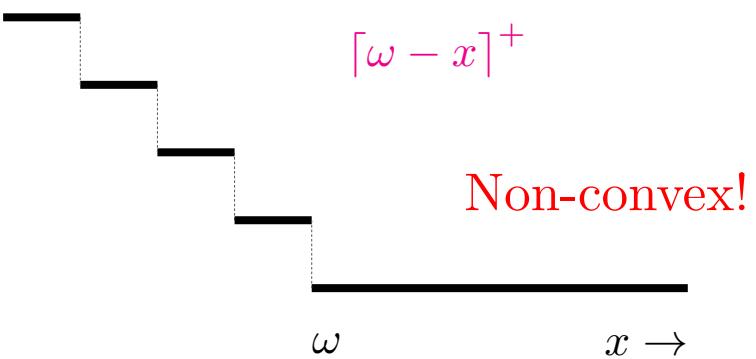
If $\omega > x$, then buy $y \in \mathbb{Z}_+$
from competitor in batches of size 1

- Minimize total expected costs:

$$\min_{x \geq 0} cx + q \mathbb{E}_{\omega} [\lceil \omega - x \rceil^+]$$

↑
production costs $y = \max\{\lceil \omega - x \rceil, 0\}$
expected future purchasing costs

- For fixed demand ω :



Non-convex objective function?

- Minimize total **expected** costs:

$$\min_{x \geq 0} cx + q \mathbb{E}_{\omega} \left[[\omega - x]^+ \right]$$

$\underbrace{\hspace{10em}}$
 $Q(x)$

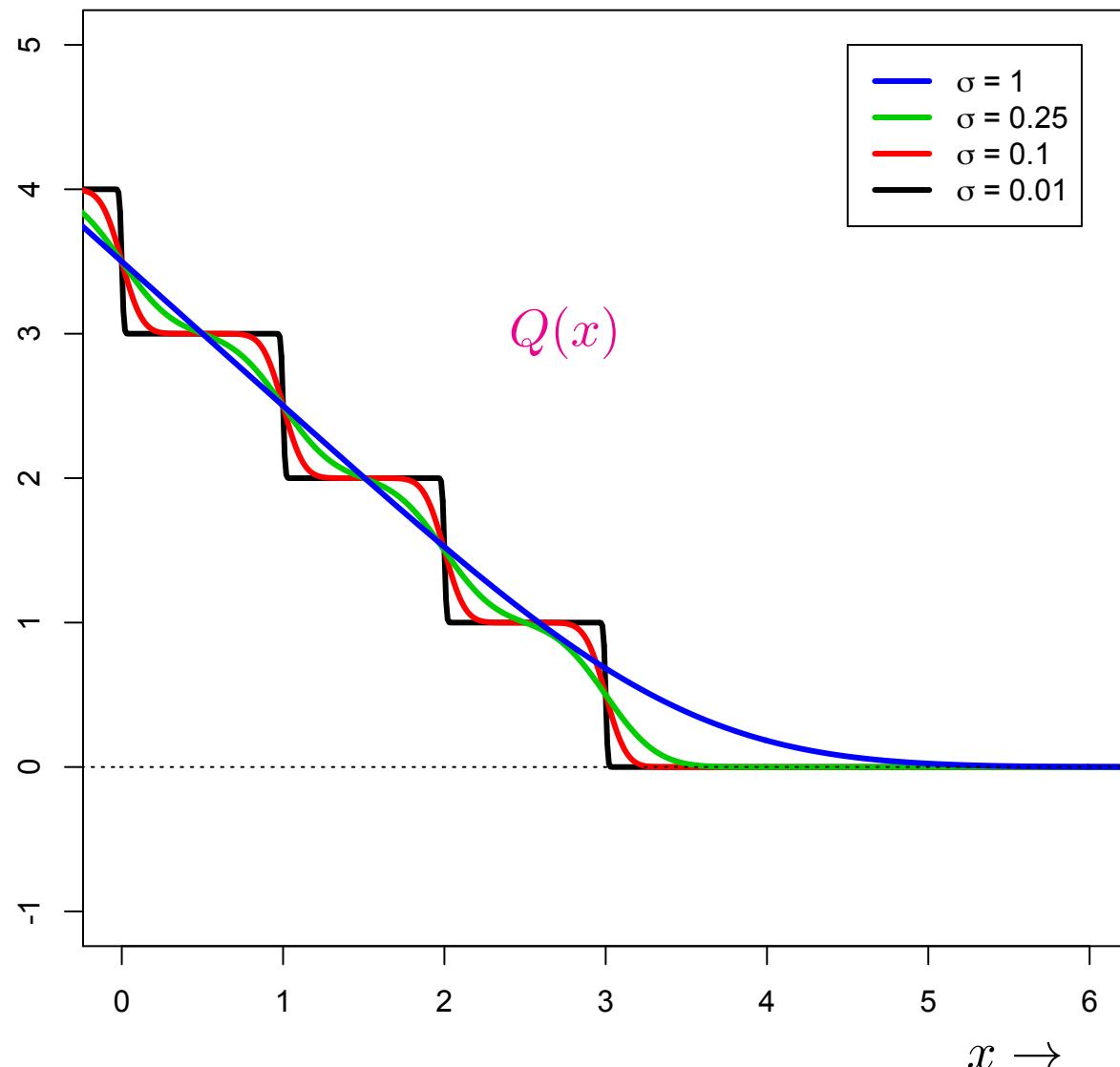
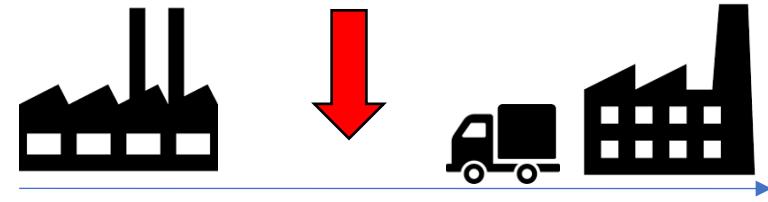
- Numerical example:

$$\omega \sim N(\mu, \sigma^2)$$

$$\mu = 3$$

$$q = 1$$

Observation: Q “convexer”
if σ increases



Bounds on the expectation of periodic functions

- Convex approximation \hat{Q}

$$\hat{Q}(x) = \mathbb{E}_\omega \left[(\omega + 1/2 - x)^+ \right]$$

- Approximation error

$$\hat{Q}(x) - Q(x) = \mathbb{E}_\omega [\varphi_x(\omega)]$$

- Error bound

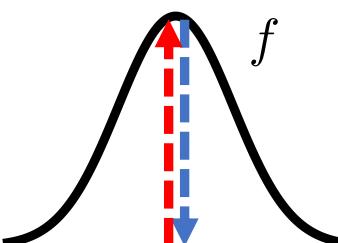
For any $\varphi : \mathbb{R} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ and random variable ω with pdf f

$$\left| \mathbb{E}_\omega [\varphi(\omega)] \right| \leq \frac{|\Delta|f}{2} \sup_{s \leq t} \left| \int_s^t \varphi(u) du \right|$$

with $|\Delta|f$ denoting the total variation of f

- Total variation

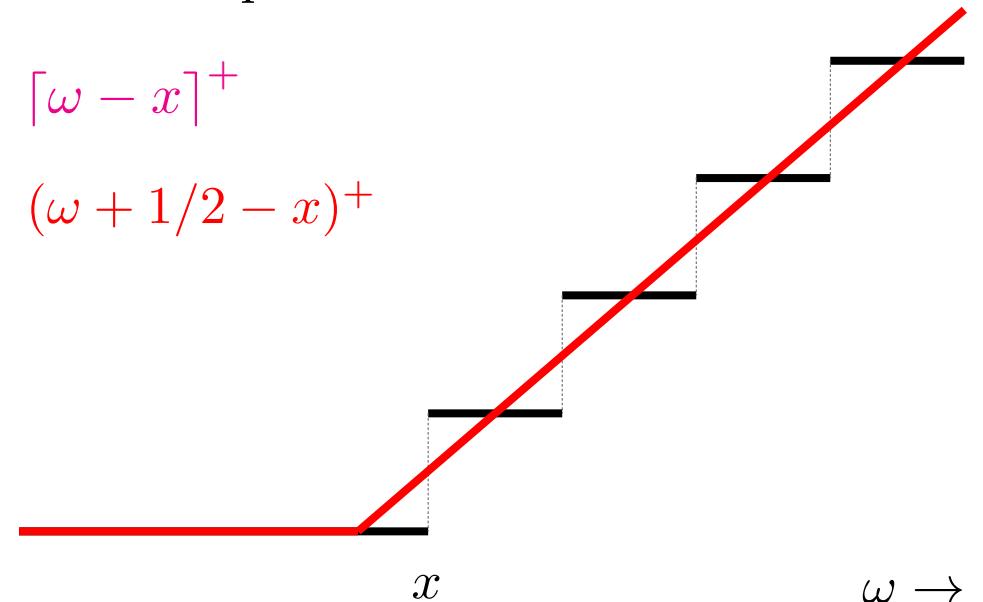
$$|\Delta|f = \text{total increase} + \text{total decrease}$$



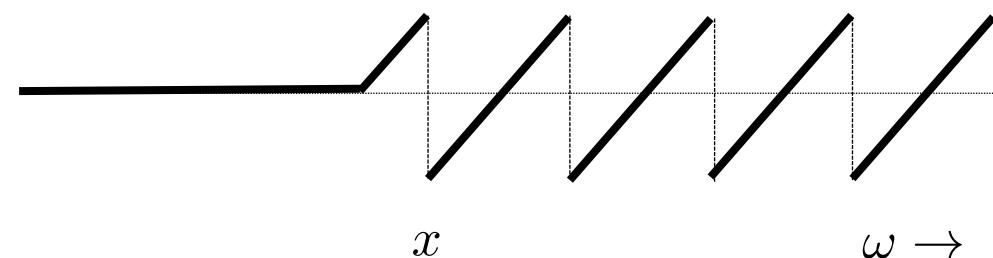
- For a fixed production level x :

$$[\omega - x]^+$$

$$(\omega + 1/2 - x)^+$$



- Periodic difference function $\varphi_x(\omega)$



Bounds on the expectation of periodic functions

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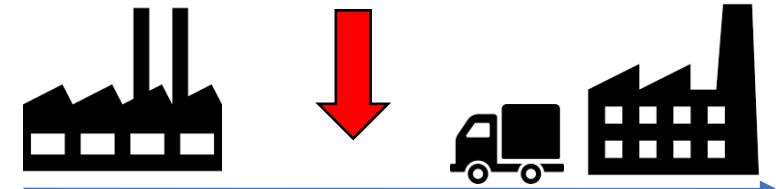
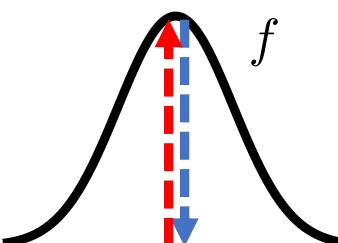
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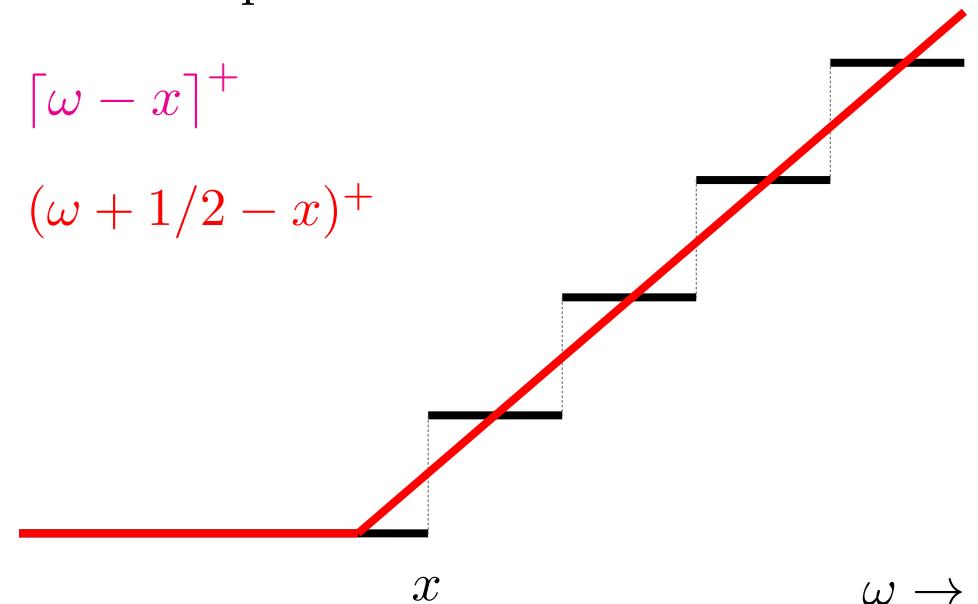
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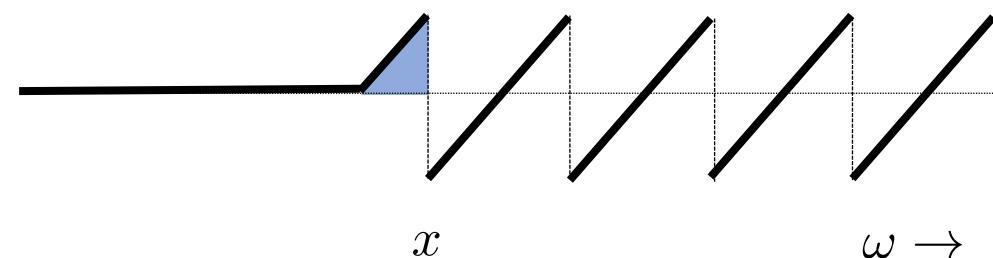
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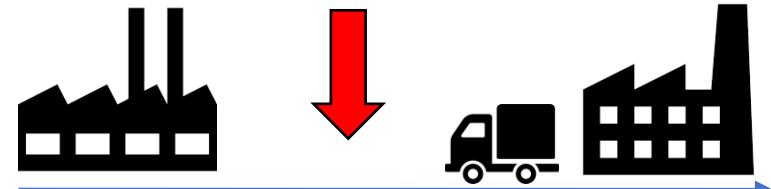
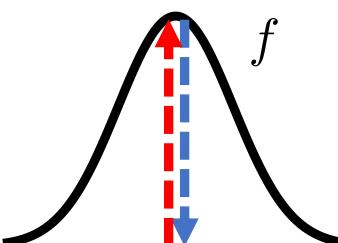
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- Total variation

$$|\Delta|f = \text{total increase} + \text{total decrease}$$



Goal

- Production planning example is a stochastic MIP
- Prove asymptotic convexity for multistage stochastic MIPs

Convex approximations for multistage stochastic mixed-integer programs

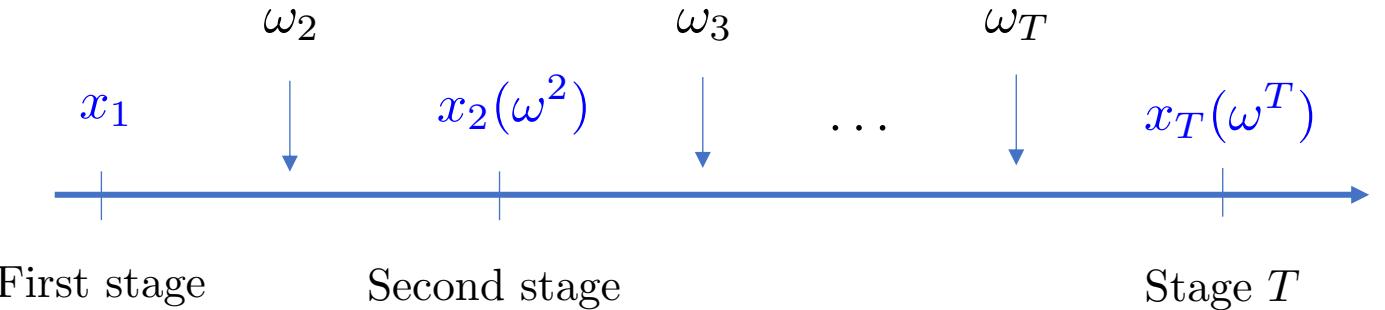
Outline

- Definition multistage stochastic mixed-integer programs (M-SMIPs)
 - Nested formulation
 - Known results for two-stage SMIPs
- Asymptotic periodicity for mixed-integer value functions
- Construction convex approximations for M-SMIPs
- Asymptotic total variation error bound

Multistage stochastic mixed-integer programs (M-SMIPs)

- Notation:

- Time horizon $t = 1, \dots, T$
- Decision variables $x_t(\omega^t)$
- Random parameters ω_t
with history $\omega^t := (\omega_1, \dots, \omega_t)$



- Nested formulation:

$$\eta := \min_{x_1 \in X_1} \left\{ c_1^\top x_1 + \underbrace{Q_1(x_1)}_{\substack{\downarrow \\ Q_t(x_t) = \mathbb{E}_{\omega_{t+1}} \left[v_{t+1}(\omega_{t+1}, x_t) \right], \\ t = 1, \dots, T-1 \quad \text{with } Q_T \equiv 0}} : W_1 x_1 = \omega_1 \right\}$$

Fixed

↑

$v_t(\omega_t, x_{t-1}) = \min_{x_t \in X_t} \left\{ c_t^\top x_t + Q_t(x_t) : T_t x_{t-1} + W_t x_t = \omega_t \right\}$

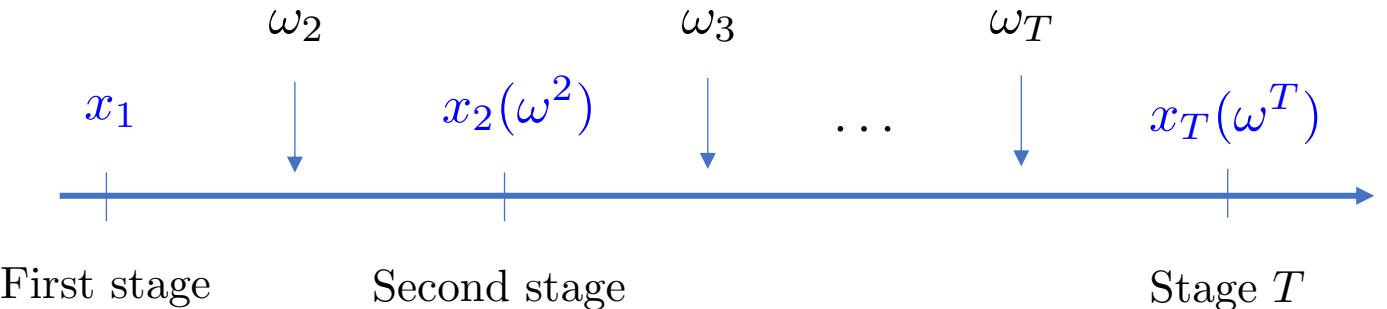
↓

Integrality restrictions

Multistage stochastic mixed-integer programs (M-SMIPs)

- Assumptions:

- Sufficiently expensive and complete recourse
→ v_t is always finite
- Stagewise independent ω_t
- $\mathbb{E}_{\omega_t} \|\omega_t\| < +\infty \rightarrow Q_t$ is finite
- The matrix of coefficients W_t is integer



- Nested formulation:

$$\eta := \min_{x_1 \in X_1} \left\{ c_1^\top x_1 + \underbrace{Q_1(x_1)}_{\text{Fixed}} : W_1 x_1 = \omega_1 \right\}$$

↑

$$Q_t(x_t) = \mathbb{E}_{\omega_{t+1}} \left[v_{t+1}(\omega_{t+1}, x_t) \right], \quad t = 1, \dots, T-1 \quad \text{with } Q_T \equiv 0$$

↓

$$v_t(\omega_t, x_{t-1}) = \min_{x_t \in X_t} \left\{ c_t^\top x_t + Q_t(x_t) : T_t x_{t-1} + W_t x_t = \omega_t \right\}$$

↓

Integrality restrictions

Two-stage stochastic MIPs

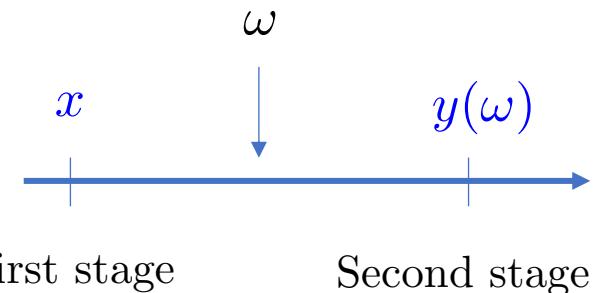
- Stage- t value function

$$v_t(\omega_t, x_{t-1}) = \min_{x_t \in X_t} \left\{ c_t^\top x_t + Q_t(x_t) : T_t x_{t-1} + W_t x_t = \omega_t \right\}$$

- Second-stage value function:

$$v(\omega, x) = \min_y \left\{ q^\top y : W y = \omega - T x, y \in \underbrace{\mathbb{Z}_+^{n_2} \times \mathbb{R}_+^{n_3}}_{\text{2nd-stage feasible region}} \right\}$$

↑ ↑
 1st-stage variables 2nd-stage variables



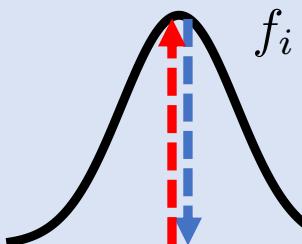
- First-stage expected value function:

$$Q(x) = \mathbb{E}_\omega[v(\omega, x)]$$

- Theorem (R., Schultz, van der Vlerk and Klein Haneveld, 2016)

- There exists a convex approximation $\hat{Q}(x) = \mathbb{E}_\omega[\hat{v}(\omega, x)]$ of $Q(x)$ and a constant C such that for all independent random vectors ω with marginal density functions f_i

$$\|Q - \hat{Q}\|_\infty \leq C \sum_{i=1}^m |\Delta| f_i$$



Generic continuous value function

- Second-stage value function:

$$v(\omega, x) = \min_y \left\{ q^\top y : Wy = \omega - Tx, y \in \mathbb{Z}_+^{n_2} \times \mathbb{R}_+^{n_3} \right\}$$

- LP-relaxation:

$$v_{LP}(\omega, x) = \min_y \left\{ q^\top y : Wy = \omega - Tx, y \geq 0 \right\}$$

- For any basis matrix B :

$$v_{LP}(\omega, x) = \min_{y_B, y_N} \left\{ q_B^\top y_B + q_N^\top y_N : By_B + Ny_N = \omega - Tx, y_B \geq 0, y_N \geq 0 \right\}$$

- Substituting $y_B = B^{-1}(\omega - Tx) - B^{-1}Ny_N$:

$$\begin{aligned} v_{LP}(\omega, x) &= q_B^\top B^{-1}(\omega - Tx) + \min_{y_N} \bar{q}_N^\top y_N \\ \text{s.t. } &B^{-1}(\omega - Tx) - B^{-1}Ny_N \geq 0 \\ &y_N \geq 0 \end{aligned}$$

- with reduced costs $\bar{q}_N^\top := q_B^\top - q_N^\top B^{-1}N \geq 0$

Generic continuous value function

$$v_{LP}(\omega, x) = q_B^\top B^{-1}(\omega - Tx) + \min_{y_N} \bar{q}_N^\top y_N$$

s.t. $B^{-1}(\omega - Tx) - B^{-1}Ny_N \geq 0$

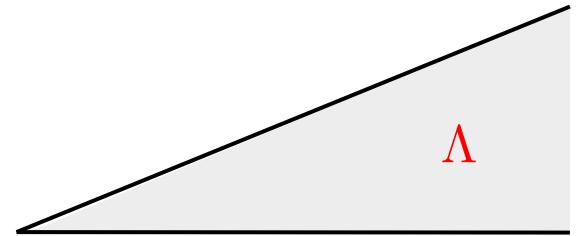
$y_N \geq 0$

with reduced costs $\bar{q}_N^\top := q_B^\top - q_N^\top B^{-1} N \geq 0$

- Observation:

$$y_N^*(\omega, x) = 0 \text{ if } \underbrace{B^{-1}(\omega - Tx) \geq 0}_{\omega - Tx \in \Lambda := \left\{ s \in \mathbb{R}^m : B^{-1}s \geq 0 \right\}}$$

↳ $\omega - Tx \in \Lambda := \left\{ s \in \mathbb{R}^m : B^{-1}s \geq 0 \right\}$
 ↑
 closed convex cone



- Holds for all basis matrices B with reduced costs $\bar{q}_N^\top \geq 0$

→ Basis Decomposition Theorem

Basis decomposition theorem

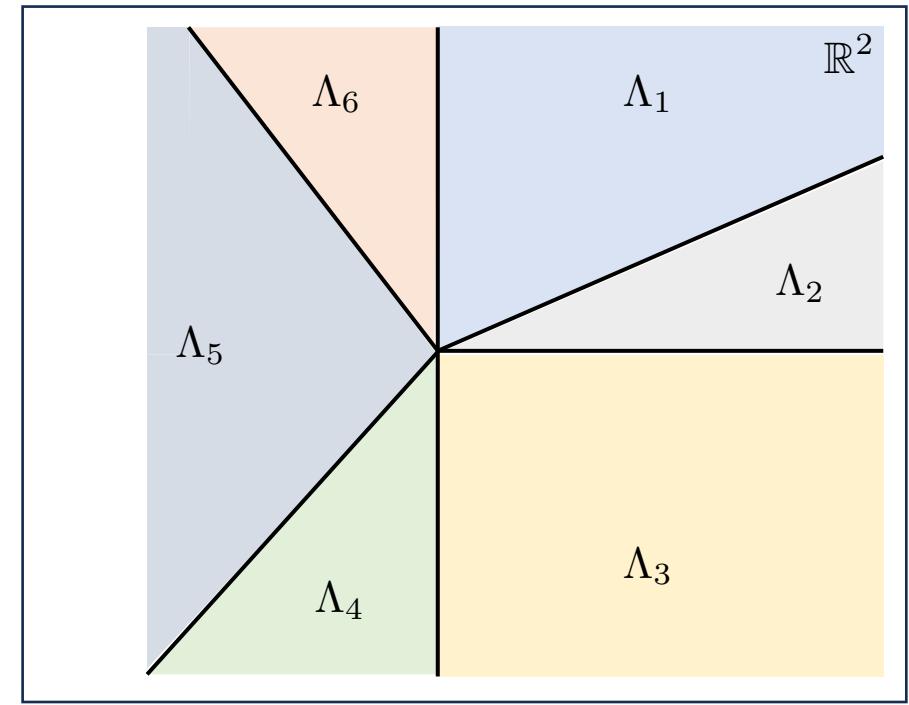
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with reduced costs $\bar{q}_N^\top := q_B^\top - q_N^\top B^{-1}N \geq 0$

- Walkup and Wets (1969)

- There exist
 - dual feasible **basis matrices** B^k
 - corresponding closed convex **cones** Λ_k
- such that

$$v_{LP}(\omega, x) = \underbrace{q_{B^k}^\top (B^k)^{-1}(\omega - Tx)}_{\text{affine}} \quad \text{if } \omega - Tx \in \Lambda_k$$



Mixed-integer value function

$$v(\omega, x) = q_B^\top B^{-1}(\omega - Tx) + \min_{y_N} \bar{q}_N^\top y_N$$

s.t. $B^{-1}(\omega - Tx) - B^{-1}Ny_N \in \mathbb{Z}_+^{n_B} \times \mathbb{R}_+^{m-n_B}$

$$y_N \in \mathbb{Z}_+^{n_N} \times \mathbb{R}_+^{n-n_N}$$

with reduced costs $\bar{q}_N^\top := q_B^\top - q_N^\top B^{-1}N \geq 0$

- Gomory (1969) and R. et al. (2016)

- There exist

- dual feasible **basis matrices** B^k
- corresponding closed convex **cones** Λ_k
- distances** d_k
- periodic functions** ψ_k

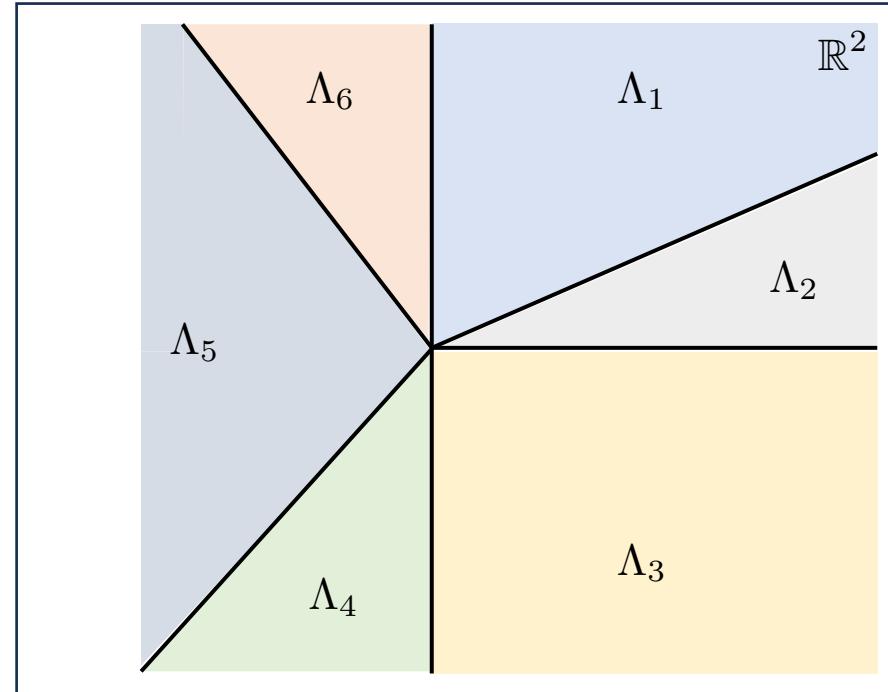
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with $\bigcup_{k=1}^K \Lambda_k = \mathbb{R}^m$ and $\text{int}(\Lambda_i) \cap \text{int}(\Lambda_j) = \emptyset$

Points in Λ_k with at least distance d_k to the boundary of Λ_k

if $\omega - Tx \in \Lambda_k(d_k)$



Mixed-integer value function

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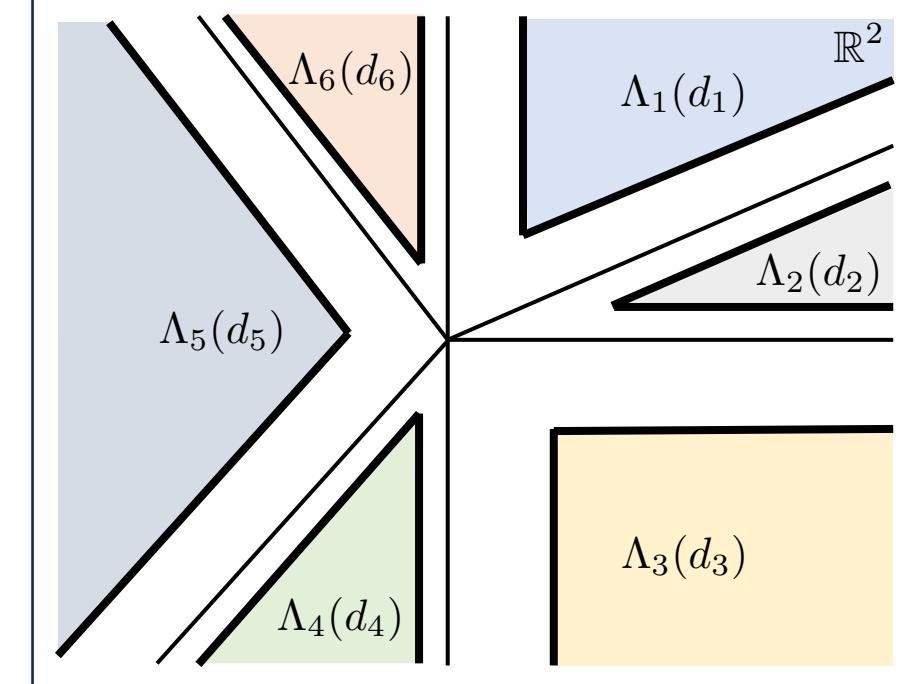
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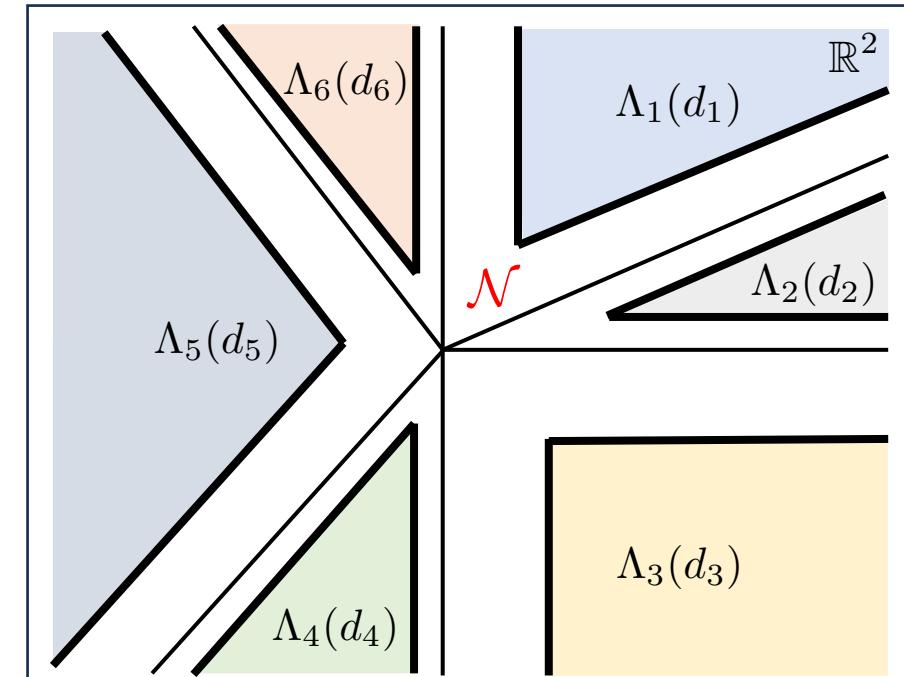
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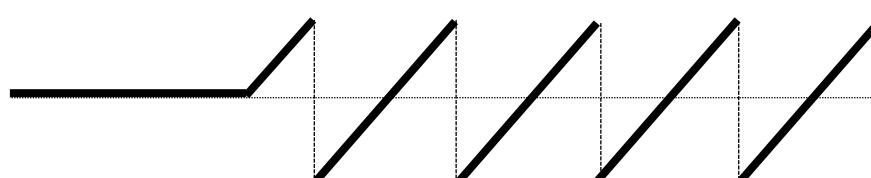
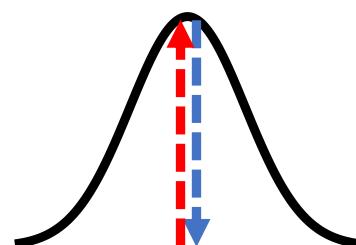


- Intuition asymptotic convexity Q

- Area $\mathcal{N} := \bigcup_{k=1}^K (\Lambda_k \setminus \Lambda_k(d_k))$ is “small”

- For every $\Lambda_k(d_k)$:

- Total variation error bound for periodic functions

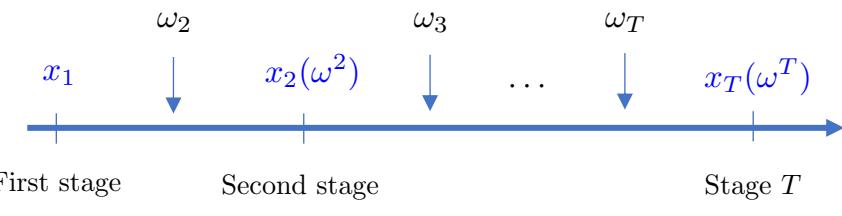


Multistage SMIPs

- Generic value function:

$$v(\omega, x) = \min_y \left\{ q^\top y + \underbrace{Q(y)}_{\substack{\text{1st-stage variables} \\ \text{2nd-stage variables}}} : W y = \omega - T x, y \in \underbrace{\mathbb{Z}_+^{n_2} \times \mathbb{R}_+^{n_3}}_{\text{2nd-stage feasible region}} \right\}$$

Expected cost-to-go function

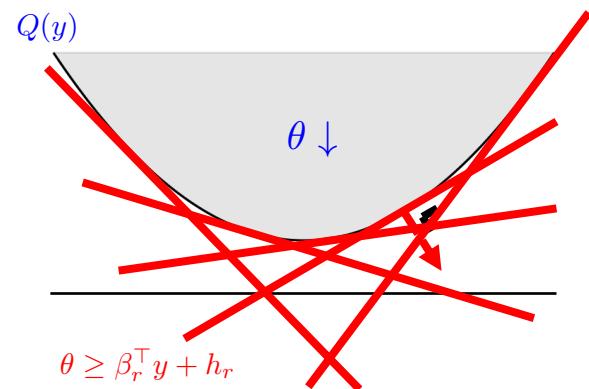


- Assumption:

- Expected cost to-go-function Q is convex polyhedral
 - Holds if x_τ is continuous and ω_τ discrete for $\tau = t + 1, \dots, T$
 - Holds if Q can be approximated well by a convex approximation \hat{Q}

$$\rightarrow Q(y) = \min_{\theta} \theta \quad \downarrow \quad \text{does not depend on } \omega \text{ and } x$$

s.t. $\theta \geq \beta_r^\top y + h_r \quad \forall r = 1, \dots, R$



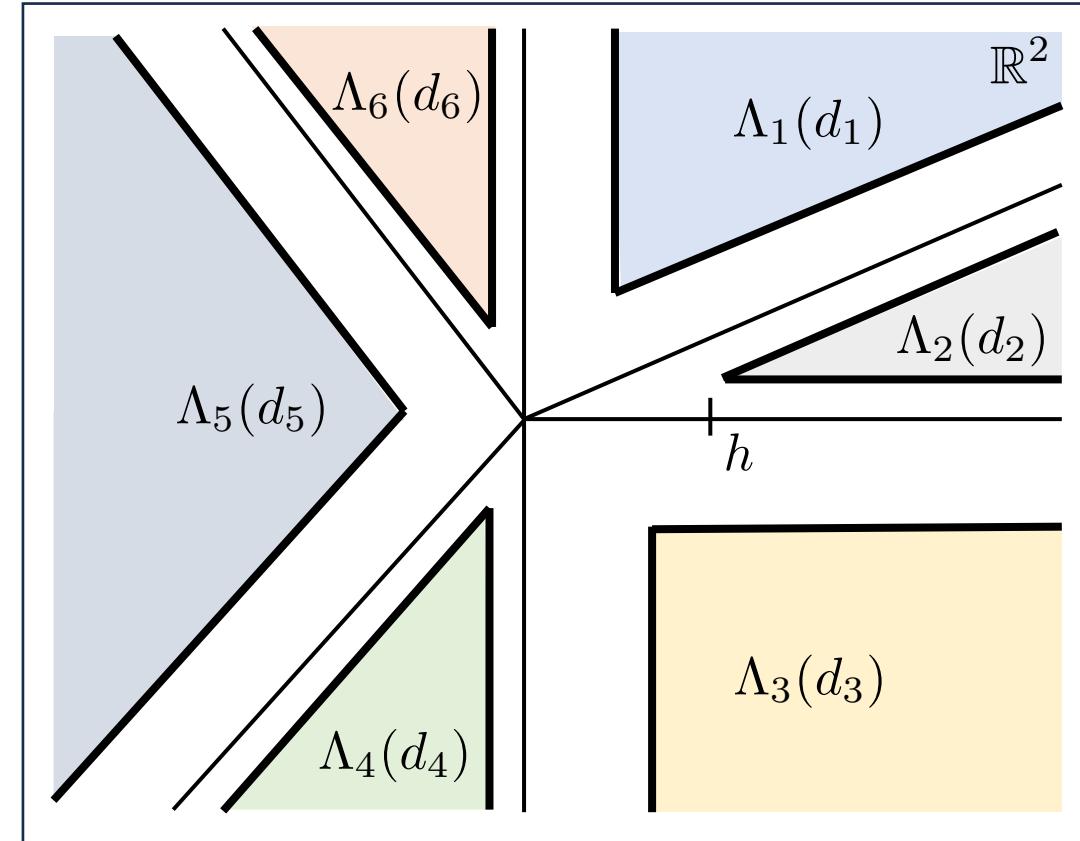
- Generic mixed-integer value function:

$$v(\omega, x) = \min_y \left\{ q^\top y : W y = \begin{pmatrix} h \\ \omega - T x \end{pmatrix}, y \in \mathbb{Z}_+^{n_2} \times \mathbb{R}_+^{n_3} \right\}$$

Generic mixed-integer value function

- Definition:

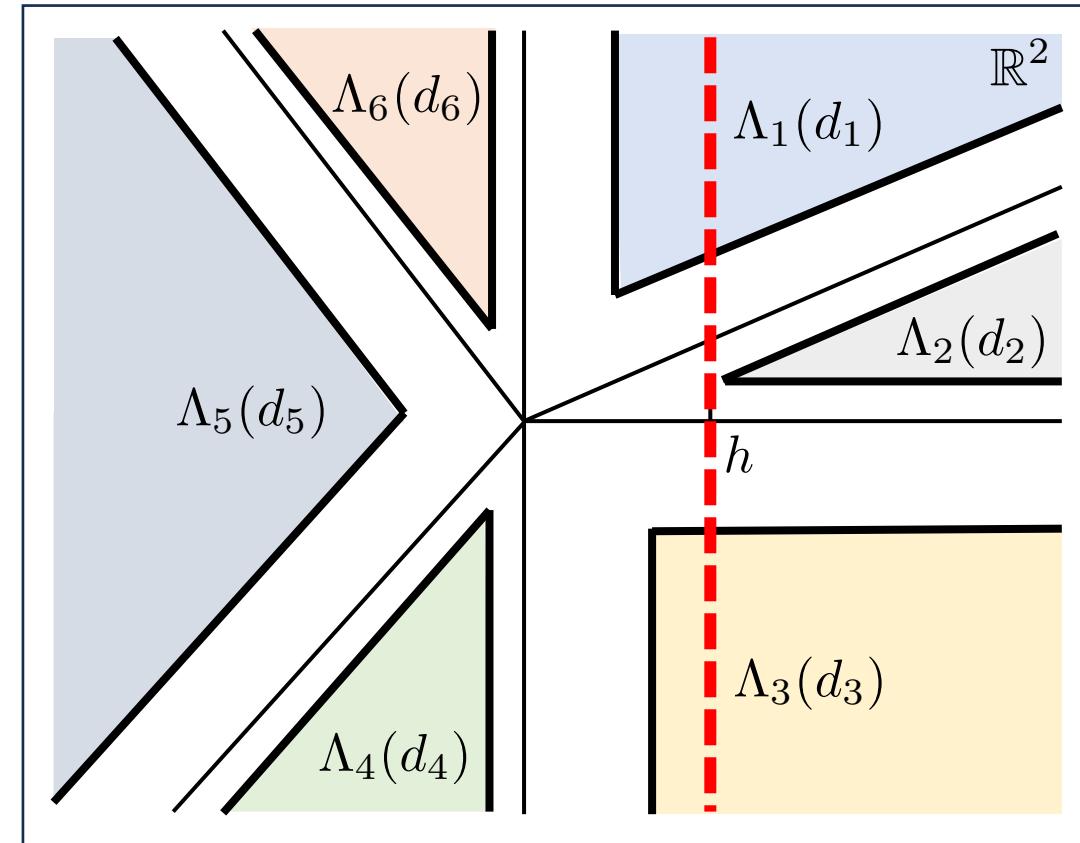
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For fixed x and h

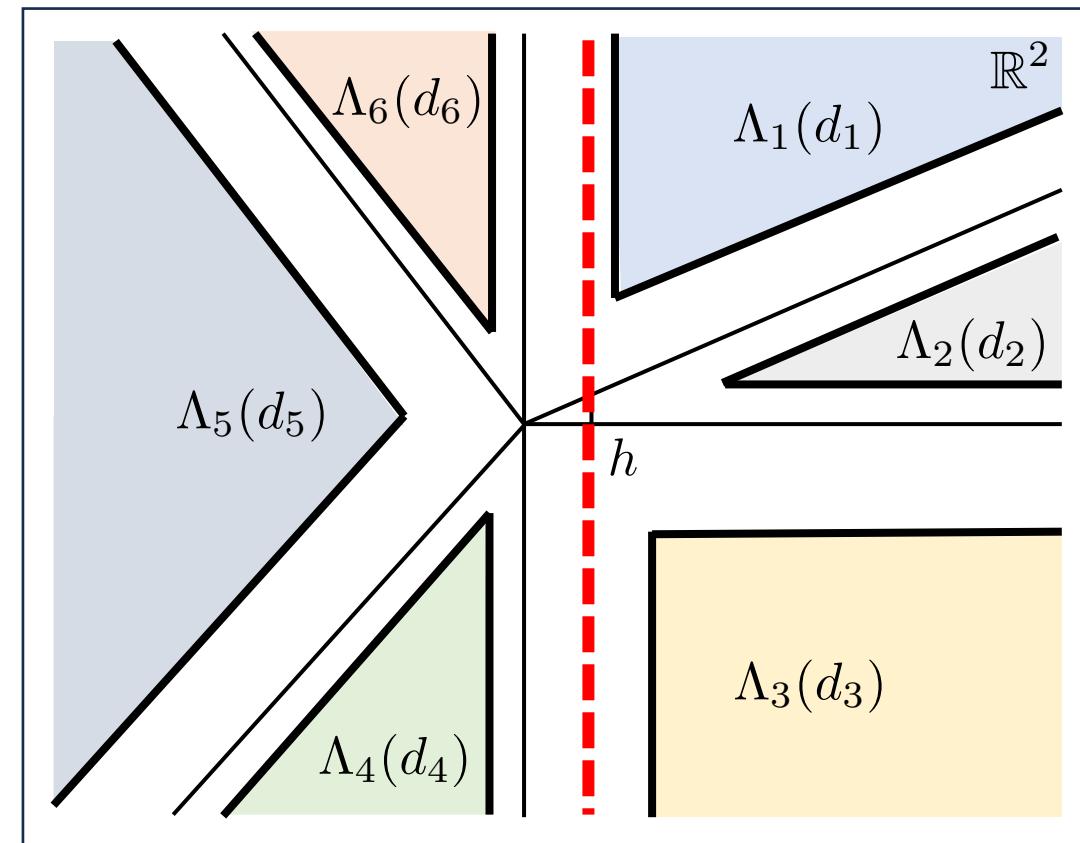
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- Observations:

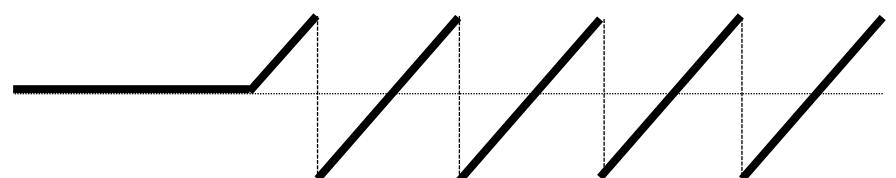
- Need to derive additional properties of $v(\omega, x)$ when right-hand side is partially uncertain



For fixed x and h

- Next steps:

- Prove asymptotic periodicity for $v(\omega, x)$ with partial r.h.s. uncertainty
 - Requires new Adapted Gomory relaxation



Gomory relaxation

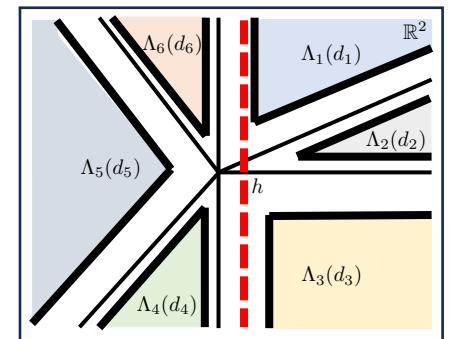
$$\begin{aligned}
 v(\omega, x) = q_B^\top B^{-1} \begin{pmatrix} h \\ \omega - Tx \end{pmatrix} + \min_{y_N} \quad & \bar{q}_N^\top y_N \\
 \text{s.t.} \quad & B^{-1} \begin{pmatrix} h \\ \omega - Tx \end{pmatrix} - B^{-1} N y_N \in \mathbb{Z}_+^{n_B} \times \mathbb{R}_+^{m-n_B} \\
 & y_N \in \mathbb{Z}_+^{n_N} \times \mathbb{R}_+^{n-n_N}
 \end{aligned}$$

- Identify critical basic variables $(y_B)_i$:

- Write $B^{-1} = (B_h^{-1} \quad B_\omega^{-1}) \rightarrow y_B = B_h^{-1}h + B_\omega^{-1}(\omega - Tx) - B^{-1}Ny_N$
- Define $i \in I \Leftrightarrow (B_\omega^{-1})_i = 0$

- Adapted Gomory relaxation $v_B(\omega, x)$:

- Relax non-negativity of $(y_B)_i$ if $i \notin I$



$$\begin{aligned}
 v_B(\omega, x) = q_B^\top B^{-1} \begin{pmatrix} h \\ \omega - Tx \end{pmatrix} + \min_{y_N} \quad & \bar{q}_N^\top y_N \\
 \text{s.t.} \quad & B^{-1} \begin{pmatrix} h \\ \omega - Tx \end{pmatrix} - B^{-1} N y_N \in \mathbb{Z}^{n_B} \times \mathbb{R}^{m-n_B} \\
 & e_i^\top B_h^{-1} h - e_i^\top B^{-1} N y_N \geq 0 \quad \forall i \in I \\
 & y_N \in \mathbb{Z}_+^{n_N} \times \mathbb{R}_+^{n-n_N}
 \end{aligned}$$

i -th unit vector $\xrightarrow{\hspace{1cm}}$

Adapted Gomory relaxation

- Adapted Gomory relaxation:

$$\begin{aligned} v_B(\omega, x) &= q_B^\top B^{-1} \begin{pmatrix} h \\ \omega - Tx \end{pmatrix} + \min_{y_N} \bar{q}_N^\top y_N \\ \text{s.t. } &B^{-1} \begin{pmatrix} h \\ \omega - Tx \end{pmatrix} - B^{-1} N y_N \in \mathbb{Z}^{n_B} \times \mathbb{R}^{m-n_B} \\ &e_i^\top B_h^{-1} h - e_i^\top B^{-1} N y_N \geq 0 \quad \forall i \in I \\ &y_N \in \mathbb{Z}_+^{n_N} \times \mathbb{R}_+^{n-n_N} \end{aligned}$$

- Properties of optimal solutions $y_N^*(\omega, x)$:

- For every x :
 - $|\det B|$ -periodic in ω
 - uniformly bounded
 - Optimal for $v(\omega, x)$ if $(y_B^*(\omega, x))_i \geq 0$ for all $i \notin I$

Periodicity of $y_N^*(\omega, x)$

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 \end{aligned}$$

- Definition

- A function $\varphi : \mathbb{R}^m \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^n$ is called **p -periodic** for some $p \in \mathbb{R}$ if and only if

$$\varphi(s + pl) = \varphi(s) \text{ for all } s \in \mathbb{R}^m \text{ and } l \in \mathbb{Z}^m$$

- $|\det B|$ -periodicity of $y_N^*(\omega, x)$ in ω :

- Let $\omega' = \omega + |\det B|l$ with $l \in \mathbb{Z}^m$

$$\rightarrow B^{-1} \begin{pmatrix} h \\ \omega' - Tx \end{pmatrix} = B^{-1} \begin{pmatrix} h \\ \omega - Tx \end{pmatrix} + \overbrace{B^{-1} \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ |\det B|l \end{pmatrix}}$$

Since W is integer

$$\frac{1}{\det B} \text{adj}(B) \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ |\det B|l \end{pmatrix} \in \mathbb{Z}^m$$

- Fractional values of $B^{-1} \begin{pmatrix} h \\ \omega - Tx \end{pmatrix}$ and $B^{-1} \begin{pmatrix} h \\ \omega' - Tx \end{pmatrix}$ are the same

- Thus, $y_N^*(\omega, x) = y_N^*(\omega + pl, x)$ for $p = |\det B|$ and for all $l \in \mathbb{Z}^m$

Boundedness of $y_N^*(\omega, x)$

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- Observations:

- $\bar{q}_N^\top \geq 0$

- For the LP-relaxation: $y_N^*(\omega, x) = 0 \quad \text{if } e_i^\top B_h^{-1} h \geq 0 \quad \forall i \in I$
 $\longrightarrow y_N^*(\omega, x) = 0 \text{ is feasible}$

- Theorem (e.g., Schrijver Thm 17.2 adapted to MIP):

- Optimal solutions of MIPs and LP-relaxations are “close”
- There exists a constant $D > 0$ such that for all ω and x : $\|y_N^*(\omega, x)\| \leq D$

Relation between $v(\omega, x)$ and $v_B(\omega, x)$

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- Optimality condition:

- If $\underbrace{e_i^\top B_h^{-1} h + e_i^\top B_\omega^{-1} (\omega - Tx) - e_i^\top B^{-1} N y_N^*(\omega, x)}_{(y_B^*(\omega, x))_i} \geq 0$ for all $i \notin I$

then $y_N^*(\omega, x)$ is optimal for $v(\omega, x)$

- Sufficient condition:

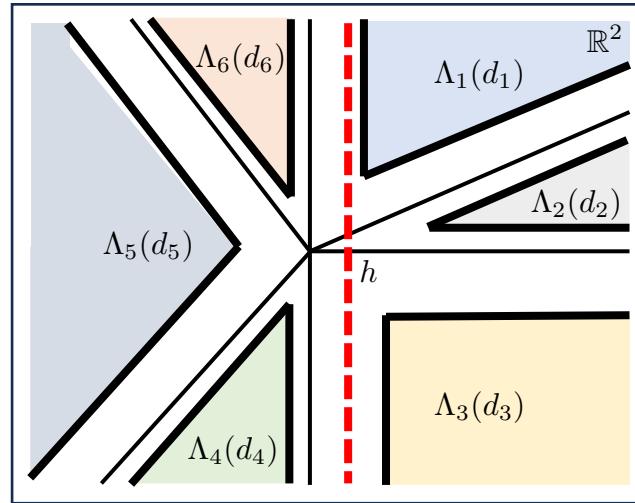
- Use boundedness of $y_N^*(\omega, x)$
- If $\omega - Tx \in \mathcal{H}_i(\hat{h}_i)$ for all $i \notin I$ with $\mathcal{H}_i(\hat{h}_i) := \left\{ s \in \mathbb{R}^m : e_i^\top B_\omega^{-1} s \geq \hat{h}_i \right\}$

$$\hat{h}_i := \max_{\|y_N\| \leq D} e_i^\top B^{-1} N y_N - e_i^\top B_h^{-1} h$$

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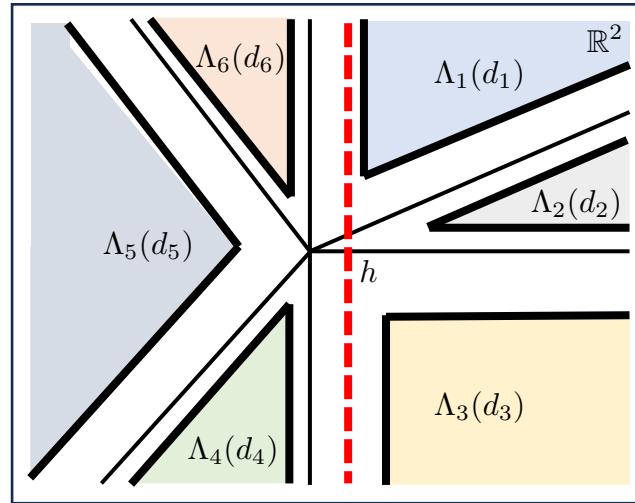
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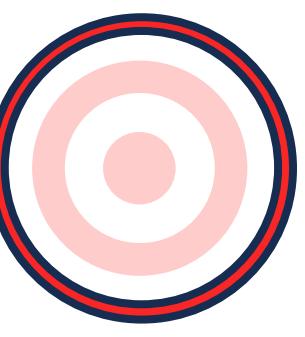


- There exist $\tilde{\Lambda}_k(\tilde{d}_k) \subset \mathbb{R}^m$ such that

$$v(\omega, x) = \underbrace{q_{B_k}^\top B_k^{-1} \begin{pmatrix} h \\ \omega - Tx \end{pmatrix}}_{\text{affine}} + \underbrace{\bar{q}_{N_k}^\top y_{N_k}^*(\omega, x)}_{\text{periodic}} \quad \text{if } \omega - Tx \in \tilde{\Lambda}_k(\tilde{d}_k)$$

- Define $\psi_k(\omega, x) := \bar{q}_{N_k}^\top y_{N_k}^*(\omega, x)$

Convex approximation

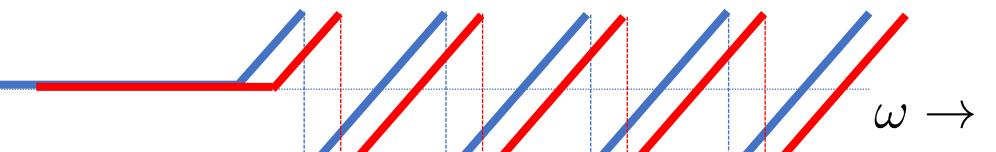


- Idea of convex approximation

$$v(\omega, x) = q_{B_k}^\top B_k^{-1} \begin{pmatrix} h \\ \omega - Tx \end{pmatrix} + \psi_k(\omega, x) \quad \text{if } \omega - Tx \in \tilde{\Lambda}_k(\tilde{d}_k)$$

- Replace x in $\psi_k(\omega, x)$ by a constant α

$\rightarrow \psi_k(\omega, x) - \psi_k(\omega, \alpha)$ is periodic



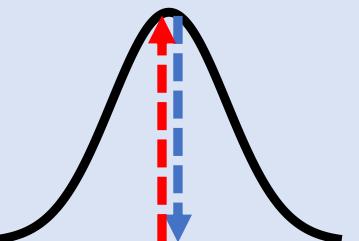
- Definition convex approximation \hat{v}

$$\hat{v}(\omega, x) = \max_{k=1, \dots, K} \left\{ q_{B^k}^\top (B^k)^{-1} \begin{pmatrix} h \\ \omega - Tx \end{pmatrix} + \psi_k(\omega, \alpha) \right\}$$

- Error bound (Independent case)

- There exists a constant $C > 0$ such that
for all independent random vectors ω with marginal density functions f_i

$$\|Q - \hat{Q}\|_\infty \leq C \sum_{i=1}^m |\Delta| f_i$$



Conclusion

- We derive a **convex approximation** and **error bound** for **two-stage SMIP** with partially uncertain right-hand side
- Can be applied to **expected cost-to-go functions** of M-SMIPs
 - By using induction over time stages
- Future research direction:
 - Construct **SDDP-like algorithms** based on convex approximation