Lecture 16 MIP Solvers

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ChE 597: Computational Optimization Purdue University

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History of MIP solvers

- The CPLEX Optimizer was named for the simplex method implemented in the C programming language. It was originally developed by Robert Bixby and sold commercially from 1988 by CPLEX Optimization Inc. This was acquired by ILOG in 1997 and ILOG was subsequently acquired by IBM in January 2009.
- Zonghao Gu, Edward Rothberg, and Robert Bixby left CPLEX and founded Gurobi in 2008. Gurobi is similar to CPLEX by design. It was the best-performing MILP solver in the Mittelmann benchmark. Now it has stopped participating in the Mittelmann benchmark.
- Gurobi can now solve nonconvex MIQCQP. Starting from Gurobi 11, simple MINLP capability is added. Starting with Gurobi 12, general MINLP is added.

What's inside the box?

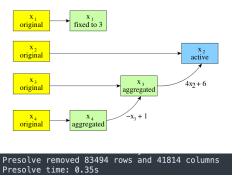
- Preprocessing
- Cuts
- Heuristics
- Branch and bound
- Callbacks

There are hundreds of parameters in $\mathsf{CPLEX}/\mathsf{Gurobi}$ that control these procedures.

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Preprocessing/presolve

Preprocessing routines can be run before the solving starts (usually several, sequentially), to simplify and / or tighten the problem formulation.



One can control how much time/rounds to devote to preprocessing by changing the parameters. https://www.gurobi.com/documentation/current/refman/presolve.html to change a parameter in pyomo.

Cutting planes

Tighten the LP relaxation

- Boolean Quadric Polytope (BQP) cuts
- Clique cuts
- Cover cuts
- Disjunctive cuts
- Flow cover cuts
- Flow path cuts
- Gomory fractional cuts
- Zero-half cuts

- Generalized upper bound (GUB) cover cuts
- Implied bound cuts: global and local
- Lift-and-project cuts
- Mixed integer rounding (MIR) cuts
- Multi-commodity flow (MCF) cuts
- Reformulation Linearization Technique (RLT) cuts

There are parameters in CPLEX/Gurobi to control how "aggressive" you want to generate the cuts.

https://docs.gurobi.com/projects/optimizer/en/current/reference/parameters.html#cuts

Heuristics

Heuristics are to find good feasible solutions (upper bounds) quickly.

- Neighborhood search
- Local branching
- Relaxation induced neighborhood search (RINS)
- Solution polishing
- Feasibility pump

Parameter to control how much time to spend on heuristics https://www.gurobi.com/documentation/current/refman/heuristics.html

Neighborhood search

Let x^* be the solution to the LP relaxation. Explore neighborhoods defined by $\lfloor x_i^* \rfloor \leq x_i \leq \lceil x_i^* \rceil$, $i \in I$, i.e., add these bound constraints to the MILP and solve the subMIP in the neighborhood of the LP solution. This only applies when x is has general integer variables. For binary variables, one can just do a simple rounding heuristic.

 The search within the subMIP is truncated by limiting the number of nodes explored.

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Local Branching

- Assume we have a feasible solution \(\hat{x}\), the so-called reference solution, and let \(S := \{j \in I \ | \hat{x}_j = 1 \}\) denote the binary support of \(\hat{x}\).
 For a given positive integer parameter \(k\), we define the \(k\)-OPT
- For a given positive integer parameter k, we define the k-OPT neighborhood $\mathcal{N}(\hat{x}, k)$ of \hat{x} as the set of the feasible solutions satisfying

$$\Delta(x,\hat{x}) := \sum_{j \in S} (1 - x_j) + \sum_{j \in I \setminus S} x_j \le k, \tag{1}$$

known as the local branching constraint.

- This constraint requires at most k variables have values different from \hat{x} .
- Constraint (1) can also be used to branch within a branch and bound:

$$\Delta(x,\hat{x}) \leq k$$
 (left branch) or $\Delta(x,\hat{x}) \geq k+1$ (right branch)

Relaxation Induced Neighborhood Search

- A similar concept of neighborhood takes into account simultaneously both
 - the incumbent solution \bar{x} , and
 - the solution of the continuous relaxation \tilde{x} ,

at a given node of the branch-and-bound tree.

- \bar{x} and \tilde{x} are compared and all the binary variables that assume the same value are **hard-fixed** in an associated MILP.
- This associated MILP is then solved by using the MILP solver as a black-box.
- In case the incumbent solution is improved, \bar{x} is updated in the rest of the tree.
- This method turns out to give very competitive results on general MILPs.

RINS Formulation

RINS: Let \tilde{x} be a known feasible solution and let \hat{x} be an LP-solution at some node in the search tree. We create a new MILP (Danna et al., 2005):

minimize
$$z=cx$$
 s.t.
$$Ax \leq b, \\ x_i = \tilde{x}_i \quad \forall i \quad \text{s.t. } \tilde{x}_i = \hat{x}_i \\ x \in \mathbb{Z}^r \times \mathbb{R}^{n-r}.$$

Solution Polishing

- Idea: Solution polishing can yield better solutions in situations where good solutions are otherwise hard to find. More time-intensive than other heuristics, solution polishing is actually a variety of branch and cut that works after an initial solution is available. In fact, it requires a solution to be available for polishing, either a solution produced by branch and cut, or a MIP start supplied by a user.
- Rothberg, 2007 developed an evolutionary algorithm for polishing MIP solutions. It can be seen as a combination of genetic algorithm (mutating, combining solutions from different MIPs). It requires solving sub MIPs.

Feasibility Pump: The Basic Scheme

- We start from any $x^0 \in P$ where P denotes the LP relaxation, and round to obtain \hat{x}^0 .
- We look for a point $\hat{x}^1 \in P$ which is as close as possible to \hat{x}^0 by solving the problem:

$$\min\{\underbrace{\Delta(x,\hat{x})\mid x\in P}_{\text{distance metric}}$$

- If we choose the measure $\Delta(x, \hat{x})$ properly, this problem is easily solvable.
- If \hat{x}^1 satisfies the integrality constraints, we are done.
- Otherwise, we obtain \hat{x}^1 by rounding \tilde{x}^1 , and repeat.
- From a geometric point of view, this is like an <u>"alternating</u> projection" algorithm (project to the polyhedron and project to the integer set).
- These satisfy feasibility in a complementary but partial way:
 - 1. \tilde{x}^i , satisfies the linear constraints,
 - 2. \hat{x}^i , the integrality requirements.

Branching Priority

- Affects the order of branching.
- For example, in scheduling problem, first branch on the assignment of jobs to machines, then branch on the sequence of the jobs.

https://www.gurobi.com/documentation/current/refman/branchpriority.html

Solution Pool

Goal: find multiple solutions in an MILP. https://www.gurobi.com/documentation/current/refman/poolsearchmode.html

Multi-objective

If you have multiple objectives $c_1^T x$, $c_2^T x$, ..., $c_n^T x$, you can solve the problem

$$\min_{x} \sum_{i=1}^{n} \lambda_{i} c_{i}^{T} x$$

where $\lambda_i \geq 0$, $\forall i$, $\sum_{i=1}^n \lambda_i = 1$.

By changing the values of λ , we obtain the "Pareto front" of the multi-objective optimization problem where we cannot improve any objective without sacrificing others. https://www.gurobi.com/documentation/current/refman/multiple_objectives.html

LP algorithms

- Primal simplex
- Dual simplex
- Barrier with crossover
- Barrier without crossover

LP method https://www.gurobi.com/documentation/current/refman/method.html
Crossover https://www.gurobi.com/documentation/current/

refman/crossover.html

- Takeaway: if you are solving an LP and doesn't care whether you get an extreme point or not, use "barrier without crossover" is fastest.
- If you are solving an MILP, the root relaxation has to return an extreme point. The reason is to use dual simplex to solve the node relaxations after branching starts. The dual feasible solution remain feasible after branching, which provides a good warmstart.

Parallel Computing

- By default, MIP solvers use all the threads on your computer/server. Branch and bound can be easily parallelized
- However, empirical results show it is best to use 6-8 threads.
 Having more threads may be counter-productive

https://www.gurobi.com/documentation/current/refman/threads.html Change the number of threads

Solver APIs

 The MIP solvers are usually written in C. But it has APIs in C, C++, Java, Python, Matlab, R. All these APIs are solver-dependent.

How does Pyomo work?

- Pyomo is designed to be a solver-independent algebraic modeling language.
- Pyomo can "talk" to different solvers. However, there are different ways to send your model data to the solvers.
 - LP file. write you model as a (.lp) file on your hard-drive.
 Then, the solver reads the LP file. This approach does not need to use the solver's python API.
 - Pyomo persistent solvers: communicate with the solver through the their python API.

Gurobi persistent solver:

https://github.com/Pyomo/pyomo/blob/main/pyomo/solvers/plugins/solvers/gurobi_persistent.py

Lazy Constraints/Callback

- Lazy constraints are useful when the full set of constraints is too large to explicitly include in the initial formulation. When a MIP solver reaches a new solution, for example with a heuristic or by solving a problem at a node in the branch-and-bound tree, it will give the user the chance to provide constraints that would make the current solution infeasible.
- An example is the subtour elimination constraints.
- Lazy callbacks give more flexibility of what to implement when an integer feasible solution is found. This used in the implementation of single-tree Benders decomposition, single tree OA (QG).
- example
 https://stackoverflow.com/questions/58200552/
 pyomo-and-gurobi-does-pyomo-support-solver-callbacks-t

User cut callback

 User cuts provide a way for the user to tighten the LP relaxation using problem-specific knowledge that the solver cannot or is unable to infer from the model. Just like with lazy constraints, when a MIP solver reaches a new node in the branch-and-bound tree, it will give the user the chance to provide cuts to make the current relaxed (fractional) solution infeasible in the hopes of obtaining an integer solution.

More on callbacks https://www.gurobi.com/documentation/current/refman/cb_codes.html

 Key take-away: Lazy constraints are necessary to get the optimal (feasible) solution. User cuts are not necessary (it only helps to solve the problem faster).

Solver log file

- Read this carefully every time you solve a nontrival optimization model!
- Check matrix, rhs range. root node relaxation. root node bound after adding cuts.
- Easy problem can be solved fast, without doing much branch and bound.
- Hard problem takes exponentially many branch and bound nodes. Large memory consumption. Check your memory consumption from time to time or set an upper limit.
- Diagnose why it is slow: difficult to find good feasible solutions or closing the gap.

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CPU model: AMD EPYC 7643 48-Core Processor, instruction set [SSE2|AVX|AVX2] Thread count: 48 physical cores, 96 logical processors, using up to 8 threads

Root barrier log...

Ordering time: 0.01s

Barrier statistics: AA' NZ : 8.906e+04

Factor NZ : 3.210e+05 (roughly 10 MB of memory)

Factor Ops: 1.805e+07 (less than 1 second per iteration)

Threads : 8

	0bje	Resid	dual			
Iter	Primal	Dual	Primal	Dual	Compl	Time
0	-8.75349353e+10	3.16759838e+11	3.51e+04	3.61e+03	2.85e+07	0s
1	-5.65473859e+10	4.49136693e+09	4.93e+03	9.37e-11	4.19e+06	0s
2	-4.66624680e+09	2.12223081e+09	4.31e+02	9.91e-11	4.16e+05	0s
3	-5.93650592e+08	5.33710820e+08	5.43e+01	1.23e-10	6.09e+04	0s
4	-1.41554632e+08	1.48462275e+08	1.28e+01	9.00e-11	1.46e+04	0s
5	-6.17438000e+07	5.76147676e+07	5.54e+00	5.02e-11	5.82e+03	0s
6	-2.17774077e+07	1.42426566e+07	1.94e+00	3.62e-11	1.71e+03	0s
7	-8.40739562e+06	4.59748907e+06	7.39e-01	1.43e-11	6.06e+02	0s
8	-6.47436121e+06	3.03782035e+06		1.36e-11	4.41e+02	0s
9	-4.47422322e+06	2.35107115e+06	3.96e-01	9.09e-12	3.16e+02	0s
10	-3.05997438e+06	1.42584289e+06	2.75e-01	7.15e-12	2.07e+02	0s
11	-2.41341865e+06	1.28100790e+06		6.84e-12	1.70e+02	0s
12	-2.20664641e+06	1.18989676e+06	2.02e-01	8.35e-12	1.57e+02	0s
13	-1.98828288e+06	1.17144512e+06	1.84e-01	8.32e-12	1.46e+02	0s
14	-1.54978590e+06	8.44878454e+05	1.47e-01	5.74e-12	1.10e+02	0s
15	-1.07826885e+06	6.08789586e+05	1.05e-01	5.13e-12	7.78e+01	0s
16	-5.82641701e+05	3.53376691e+05	6.21e-02	4.97e-12	4.31e+01	0s
17	-3.62968591e+05	1.97842701e+05	4.05e-02	2.79e-12	2.59e+01	0s
18	-1.95442249e+05	1.13637501e+05		3.14e-12	1.43e+01	1 s
19	-7.15981068e+04	6.24467786e+04		1.81e-12	6.19e+00	1 s
20	6.33863689e+03	4.23819434e+04		2.93e-12	1.66e+00	1 s
21	1.05186928e+04	2.81456352e+04		2.18e-12	8.12e-01	1 s
22	1.51678553e+04	2.35368659e+04		1.96e-12	3.84e-01	1 s
23	1.66147354e+04	1.99499477e+04		1.17e-12	1.53e-01	1 s
24	1.69590686e+04	1.90483655e+04		1.18e-12	9.61e-02	1 s
25	1.72897664e+04	1.81986844e+04	7.65e-05	1.05e-12	4.20e-02	1 s
26	1.75170934e+04	1.79693432e+04	3.80e-05		2.09e-02	1 s
27	1.76892413e+04	1.77892494e+04		1.76e-12	4.62e-03	1 s
28	1.77322731e+04	1.77461969e+04		1.82e-12	6.44e-04	1 s
29	1.77401344e+04	1.77408199e+04		2.73e-12	3.12e-05	1 s
30	1.77401610e+04	1.77401729e+04		2.73e-12	5.44e-07	1 s
31	1.77401626e+04	1.77401627e+04	1.14e-10	2.73e-12	2.03e-09	1 s

Barrier solved model in 31 iterations and 0.58 seconds (0.58 work units)

Root relaxation: objective 1.774016e+04, 6363 iterations, 0.32 seconds (0.30 work units)

	Noc	les	Curren	t Nod	e I Ohie	ctive Bounds	. 1	Wor	k
	Expl L		Obj Dep				Gap	It/Node	
			1 3 1						-
	0	0	17740.1626	0	581 -814887.00	17740.1626	102%	-	2s
H	H 0	0			-96621.07624		118%	-	2s
	0	0	17707.4841	0	624 -96621.076		118%	-	3s
	0		17704.5241	0	630 -96621.076		118%	-	3s
	0		17660.0868	0	588 -96621.076		118%	-	3s
	0	0	17660.0868	0	586 -96621.076		118%	-	3s
F		0		_	-29247.14276		160%	-	6s
	. 0	0	17660.0868	0	123 -29247.143		160%	-	6s
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tind 6	. 0		17660.0868	0	196 -14563.650		221%	-	7s
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	0		17660.0868	0	188 -14563.650		221%	_	7s
	Õ		17660.0868	0	151 -14563.650		221%	_	7s
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	0		17660.0868	0	164 -14563.650		221%	_	7s
	0		17660.0868	0	169 -14563.650		221%	-	8s
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H	1 0	0			-7148,918660	77660.0868	347%		9s
	0	2	17660.0868	0	69 -7148.9187	17660.0868	347%	-	9s
	3	8	17660.0868	2	143 -7148.9187	17660.0868	347%	1127	10s
	H 32	40			-1440.475097		1316%		10s
H		40			1318.5313397		1228%		10s
H		62			3330.7868465		426%		11s
H		62			4276.5071333		309%		11s
H		107			4276.5071340		309%		12s
H		195			4276.5073972		309%		13s
ŀ		230			4789.4576283		266%		14s
F		230	10007 4504	20	5845.1096079		200%		14s
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	H 725	448 448			9351.5655274 11089.017488		87.2% 57.9%		22s 22s
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	1231		11731.0990	59	72 11089.0183		49.7%		25s
	1507	738	11731.0330	33	11345.897832		46.3%		29s
	1508		11596.0990	45	86 11345.8978		46.3%		30s
	1516		11774.9584	71	116 11345.8978		46.3%		36s
	1717		13460.5704	28	88 11345.8978		46.3%		40s
H	1913	746			11345.898980		46.3%		42s
	2238	844	12517.9584	32	68 11345.8990	16596.9487	46.3%		45s
H	1 2469	839			11761.920659		41.1%		46s
	3079		12020.3437	109	106 11761.9207		41.1%		54s
H	H 3082	1019			11761.921451	16596.9487	41.1%		54s
	3092		infeasible	110		16596.9487	41.1%		55s
H	H 3094	810			11774.958412		41.0%		55s
	4236		11868.5460	247	101 11774.9584		41.0%		60s
ŀ	H 4304	1639			11774.959215		41.0%		60s
	5530		12071.6251	35	104 11774.9592		36.4%		65s
	6796		11909.9584	47	100 11774.9592		31.9%		70s
F	H 6903	715			12071.625079	15531.8030	28.7%	174	70s

11 0102	587			4.	2071.627454	1400E 401E	22 20/	160	720
H 8102		10100 0507	0.0				23.3%	163	73s
8501		12198.6527	36		12071.6275		17.9%	161	75s
9402		12821.8972	83		12071.6275		12.4%	164	80s
10476		12821.8972	58	91	12071.6275		6.24%	168	86s
11568	2273	infeasible	234			12824.4084	6.24%	172	91s
12694	2779	12574.1774	50	122	12071.6275	12824.4084	6.24%	179	97s
14132	3863	12595.1316	146	79	12071.6275	12824.4084	6.24%	178	102s
14684		12087.5381	225		12071.6275		6.24%	176	105s
16345		12821.8972	90		12071.6275		6.24%	175	110s
17768		12263.9173	90		12071.6275		6.24%	175	115s
19614	7623	cutoff	58	J- 1		12824.4084	6.24%	173	122s
				110					
20605		12294.5174	221		12071.6275		6.24%	172	125s
21573		12821.8972	55		12071.6275		6.24%	173	130s
22590		12222.1346	146		12071.6275		6.24%	172	137s
		12821.8972	89		12071.6275		6.24%	172	141s
		12821.8972	122		12071.6275		6.24%	172	145s
		12558.4932	97		12071.6275		6.24%	173	153s
28404	13642	12481.7713	108		12071.6275		6.24%	171	157s
29823	14798	12807.5866	77		12071.6275		6.24%	172	207s
31514	15733	12821.8972	134	61	12071.6275	12824.4084	6.24%	171	211s
*32476	15441		268	12	2074.383586	12824.4084	6.21%	169	211s
32750	16295	12081.3655	351	78	12074.3836	12824.4084	6.21%	169	215s
H34111					2101.373966		5.97%	169	218s
H34454	1258				2821.897187		0.02%	169	218s
35062	843	cutoff	99			12824.4084	0.02%	169	222s
H35069	843	Cacori	33	11	2821.898429		0.02%	169	222s
H35217	843				2821.899229		0.02%	169	222s
		infoscible	70	14		12824.4084			226s
35714		infeasible	79	100			0.02%	170	
36432		12824.4084	92	109	12821.8992		0.02%	173	230s
37040		infeasible	81			12824.4084	0.02%	175	235s
38605	305	12824.4084	96	96	12821.8992		0.02%	180	244s
39219	229	cutoff	90		12821.8992		0.02%	183	249s
39947		infeasible	49		12821.8992		0.02%	185	253s
40719		12824.4084	69	99	12821.8992		0.02%	187	258s
41505	310	infeasible	59		12821.8992	12824.4084	0.02%	188	262s
42399	490	infeasible	96		12821.8992	12824.4084	0.02%	190	267s
43465	584	12824.4084	69	95	12821.8992	12824.4084	0.02%	192	273s
H43852	584			12	2821.900927	12824.4084	0.02%	192	273s
44046	678	infeasible	77		12821.9009	12824.4084	0.02%	193	279s
45186		12824.4084	79	96	12821.9009	12824.4084	0.02%	195	284s
46149	1010	cutoff	86		12821.9009		0.02%	197	291s
47374		12824.4084	70	75	12821.9009		0.02%	200	298s
48794		12824.4084	68		12821.9009		0.02%	202	305s
50126		12824.4084	83		12821.9009		0.02%	204	312s
51105	1476	cutoff	71	107		12824.4084	0.02%	204	320s
				100	12821.9009				
52398		12824.4084	77 66				0.02%	208	327s
53623		12824.4084	66		12821.9009		0.02%	211	335s
54938		12824.4084	90	68	12821.9009		0.02%	213	344s
56249	1057	cutoff	93			12824.4084	0.02%	215	353s
57566		12824.4084	81	120	12821.9009		0.02%	218	361s
58936		infeasible	76			12824.4084	0.02%	219	371s
60407	532	cutoff	89		12821.9009	12824.4084	0.02%	221	379s
61744		12824.4084	108	123	12821.9009	12824.4084	0.02%	223	387s
62935	320	cutoff	93		12821.9009	12824.4084	0.02%	224	394s
63996	276	12824.4084	103	109	12821.9009	12824.4084	0.02%	224	401s
64860	200	cutoff	97		12821.9009		0.02%	225	407s
65647	190	cutoff	65			12824.4084	0.02%	226	412s
66448		12824.4084	72	85	12821.9009		0.02%	227	417s
67059		12824.4084	84		12821.9009		0.02%	227	423s
67792		12824.4084	88		12821.9009		0.02%	228	428s
68370	16	cutoff	106			12824.4084	0.02%	228	432s
		0					/ 0		

Cutting planes: Gomory: 4 Projected implied bound: 3

MIR: 85

Flow cover: 8

RLT: 1

Explored 68724 nodes (15775565 simplex iterations) in 434.82 seconds (799.87

work units)

Thread count was 8 (of 96 available processors)

Solution count 10: 12821.9 12821.9 12821.9 ... 11775

Optimal solution found (tolerance 1.00e-04)
Best objective 1.282190092696e+04, best bound 1.282190092696e+04, gap 0.0000%

Typical causes of numerical issues

 Scale: too large of a range of numerical coefficients. Setting parameter NumericFocus can help but should be avoided. Ideally, this model should be reformulated.

```
Matrix range [9e-06, 6e+01]
Objective range [1e+00, 1e+00]
Bounds range [1e-06, 1e+03]
RHS range [0e+00, 0e+00]
```

- Rounding of numerical coefficients: Ex: Don't write 1/3 as 0.333, if possible multiply constraint with 3
- wrong answer with big-M

```
y ≤ 1000000 x
x binary
y ≥ 0
```

- With default value of IntFeasTol (1e-5):
 - x = 0.0000099999, y = 9.9999 is integer feasible!
 - y can be positive without forcing x to 1

Check log file for warnings

Warning during optimization

Warning: 1 variable dropped from basis
Warning: switch to quad precision
Warning: Markowitz tolerance tightened to 0.0625

Warnings after optimization is finished

Warning: max integrality violation (5.0000e-05) exceeds tolerance

Warning: max SOS violation (9.9353e-05) exceeds tolerance
Warning: max constraint violation (2.5435e-05) exceeds
tolerance

Warning: max bound violation (2.5435e-05) exceeds tolerance (possibly due to large matrix coefficient range)

Numerical trouble encountered

References

- CPLEX user manual https://www.ibm.com/docs/en/ icos/22.1.1?topic=optimizers-users-manual-cplex
- Gurobi Documentation: https://www.gurobi.com/documentation/
- Gurobi Youtube channel https://www.youtube.com/@GurobiVideos/featured
- Paul Rubin, User Cuts versus Lazy Constraints https://orinanobworld.blogspot.com/2012/08/ user-cuts-versus-lazy-constraints.html
- Sonja Mars, Modeling: Best Practices & Techniques. https://assets.gurobi.com/pdfs/user-events/ 2016-frankfurt/Best-Practices.pdf