# 15.093 Optimization Methods

Lecture 17: Applications of Nonlinear Optimization

## 1 Lecture Outline

- History of Nonlinear Optimization
- Where do NLPs Arise?
- Portfolio Optimization
- Traffic Assignment
- The general problem
- The role of convexity
- Convex optimization
- Examples of convex optimization problems

## 2 History of Optimization

Fermat, 1638; Newton, 1670

min 
$$f(x)$$
 x: scalar  
$$\frac{df(x)}{dx} = 0$$

Euler, 1755

$$\min f(x_1, \dots, x_n)$$
$$\nabla f(\boldsymbol{x}) = 0$$

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Lagrange, 1797

$$\min f(x_1, \dots, x_n)$$
  
s.t.  $g_k(x_1, \dots, x_n) = 0$   $k = 1, \dots, m$ 

Euler, Lagrange Problems in infinite dimensions, calculus of variations.

Kuhn and Tucker, 1950s Optimality conditions.

1950s Applications.

1960s Large Scale Optimization.

Karmakar, 1984 Interior point algorithms.

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## 3 Where do NLPs Arise?

## 3.1 Wide Applicability

• Transportation	
Traffic management, Traffic equilibrium	
Revenue management and Pricing	
• Finance - Portfolio Management	
• Equilibrium Problems	
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• Engineering	
Data Networks and Routing	

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• Manufacturing

Resource Allocation Production Planning

Pattern Classification

## 4 A Simple Portfolio Selection Problem

### 4.1 Data

- $x_i$ : decision variable on amount to invest in stock i = 1, 2
- r<sub>i</sub>: reward from stock i = 1, 2 (random variable)
   Data:
- $\mu_i = E(r_i)$ : expected reward from stock i = 1, 2
- $Var(r_i)$ : variance in reward from stock i = 1, 2
- $\sigma_{ij} = E[(r_j \mu_j)(r_i \mu_i)] = Cov(r_i, r_j)$
- Budget B, target  $\beta$  on expected portfolio reward

## 5 A Simple Portfolio Selection Problem

#### 5.1 The Problem

**Objective:** Minimize total portfolio variance so that:

- Expected reward of total portfolio is above target  $\beta$
- Total amount invested stay within our budget
- No short sales

min  $f(x) = x_1^2 Var(r_1) + x_2^2 Var(r_2) + 2x_1 x_2 \sigma_{12}$ 

subject to

$$\sum_{i} x_i \le B$$

$$E[\sum_{i} r_{i}x_{i}] = \sum_{i} \mu_{i}x_{i} \ge \beta$$
, (exp reward of portf.)  
 $x_{i} > 0, i = 1, 2$ 

(Linearly constrained NLP)

## 6 A Real Portfolio Optimization Problem

### 6.1 Data

- We currently own  $z_i$  shares from stock  $i, i \in S$
- $P_i$ : current price of stock i
- We consider buying and selling stocks in S, and consider buying new stocks from a set B  $(B \cap S = \emptyset)$
- Set of stocks  $B \cup S = \{1, \ldots, n\}$
- Data: Forecasted prices next period (say next month) and their correlations:

$$E[P_i] = \mu_i$$

$$Cov(\hat{P}_i, \hat{P}_j) = E[(\hat{P}_i - \mu_i)(\hat{P}_j - \mu_j)] = \sigma_{ij}$$

$$\boldsymbol{\mu} = (\mu_1, \dots, \mu_n)', \qquad \boldsymbol{\Sigma} = \sigma_{ij}$$

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## 6.2 Issues and Objectives

- Mutual funds regulations: we cannot sell a stock if we do not own it
- Transaction costs
- Turnover
- Liquidity
- Volatility
- Objective: Maximize expected wealth next period minus transaction costs

## 6.3 Decision variables

 $x_i = \left\{ \begin{array}{ll} \# \text{ shares bought or sold} & \text{if } i \in S \\ \# \text{ shares bought} & \text{if } i \in B \end{array} \right.$ 

By convention:

$$\begin{array}{ll} x_i \ge 0 & \quad \text{buy} \\ x_i < 0 & \quad \text{sell} \end{array}$$

## 6.4 Transaction costs

- Small investors only pay commision cost:  $a_i$  \$/share traded
- Transaction cost:  $a_i |x_i|$
- Large investors (like portfolio managers of large funds) may affect price: price becomes  $P_i + b_i x_i$
- Price impact cost:  $(P_i + b_i x_i) x_i P_i x_i = b_i x_i^2$
- Total cost model:

$$c_i(x_i) = a_i |x_i| + b_i x_i^2$$

### 6.5 Liquidity

- Suppose you own 50% of all outstanding stock of a company
- How difficult is to sell it?
- Reasonable to bound the percentage of ownership on a particular stock
- Thus, for **liquidity** reasons  $\frac{z_i + x_i}{z_i^{total}} \leq \gamma_i$
- $z_i^{total} = \#$  outstanding shares of stock i
- $\gamma_i$  maximum allowable percentage of ownership

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#### 6.6 Turnover

• Because of transaction costs:  $|x_i|$  should be small

$$|x_i| \le \delta_i \quad \Rightarrow \quad -\delta_i \le x_i \le \delta_i$$

• Alternatively, we might want to bound turnover:

$$\sum_{i=1}^{n} P_i |x_i| \le t$$

#### **Balanced** portfolios 6.7

• Need the value of stocks we buy and sell to balance out:

$$\left|\sum_{i=1}^{n} P_{i} x_{i}\right| \leq L \quad \Rightarrow \quad -L \leq \sum_{i=1}^{n} P_{i} x_{i} \leq L$$

• No short sales:

$$z_i + x_i \ge 0, \qquad i \in B \cup S$$

#### 6.8 Expected value and Volatility

• Expected value of portfolio:

$$E\left[\sum_{i=1}^{n} \hat{P}_i(z_i + x_i)\right] = \sum_{i=1}^{n} \mu_i(z_i + x_i)$$

• Variance of the value of the portfolio:

$$Var\left[\sum_{i=1}^{n} \hat{P}_{i}(z_{i}+x_{i})\right] = (\boldsymbol{z}+\boldsymbol{x})'\boldsymbol{\Sigma}(\boldsymbol{z}+\boldsymbol{x})$$

#### 6.9 **Overall formulation**

$$\begin{aligned} \max & \sum_{i=1}^{n} \mu_i (z_i + x_i) - \sum_{i=1}^{n} (a_i |x_i| + b_i x_i^2) \\ \text{s.t.} & (\boldsymbol{z} + \boldsymbol{x})' \boldsymbol{\Sigma} (\boldsymbol{z} + \boldsymbol{x}) \leq \sigma^2 \\ & z_i + x_i \leq \gamma_i z_i^{total} \\ & -\delta_i \leq x_i \leq \delta_i \\ & -L \leq \sum_{i=1}^{n} P_i x_i \leq L \\ & \sum_{i=1}^{n} P_i |x_i| \leq t \\ & z_i + x_i \geq 0 \end{aligned}$$

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## 7 The general problem

## $f(\boldsymbol{x}) \colon \, \Re^n \mapsto \Re$ $g_i(\boldsymbol{x}) \colon \, \Re^n \mapsto \Re, i = 1, \dots, m$

NLP:	min s.t.	$f(oldsymbol{x})\ g_1(oldsymbol{x})$	$\leq$	0
		$\vdots$ $g_m(oldsymbol{x})$	$\leq$	0

### 7.1 Is Portfolio Optimization an NLP?

 $\max \sum_{\substack{i=1\\i=1}}^{n} \mu_i (z_i + x_i) - \sum_{\substack{i=1\\i=1}}^{n} (a_i |x_i| + b_i x_i^2)$ s.t.  $(\boldsymbol{z} + \boldsymbol{x})' \boldsymbol{\Sigma} (\boldsymbol{z} + \boldsymbol{x}) \leq \sigma^2$  $z_i + x_i \leq \gamma_i z_i^{total}$  $-\delta_i \leq x_i \leq \delta_i$  $-L \leq \sum_{\substack{i=1\\i=1}}^{n} P_i x_i \leq L$  $\sum_{\substack{i=1\\i=1}}^{n} P_i |x_i| \leq t$  $z_i + x_i \geq 0$ 

## 8 Geometry Problems

### 8.1 Fermat-Weber Problem

Given m points  $c_1, \ldots, c_m \in \Re^n$  (locations of retail outlets) and weights  $w_1, \ldots, w_m \in \Re$ . Choose the location of a distribution center.

That is, the point  $x \in \Re^n$  to minimize the sum of the weighted distances from x to each of the points  $c_1, \ldots, c_m \in \Re^n$  (minimize total daily distance traveled).

$$\min \quad \sum_{i=1}^{m} \boldsymbol{w}_i || \boldsymbol{x} - \boldsymbol{c}_i |$$
  
s.t.  $\boldsymbol{x} \in \Re^n$ 

or

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$$\begin{array}{ll} \min & \sum\limits_{i=1}^{m} \boldsymbol{w}_{i} || \boldsymbol{x} - \boldsymbol{c}_{i} || \\ \text{s.t.} & \boldsymbol{x} \geq 0 \\ & A \boldsymbol{x} \leq b, \text{ feasible sites} \end{array}$$

(Linearly constrained NLP)

## 8.2 The Ball Circumscription Problem

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Given *m* points  $c_1, \ldots, c_m \in \mathbb{R}^n$ , locate a distribution center at point  $x \in \mathbb{R}^n$  to minimize the maximum distance from x to any of the points  $c_1, \ldots, c_m \in \mathbb{R}^n$ .

 $\begin{array}{ll} \min & \delta \\ \text{s.t.} & || \boldsymbol{x} - \boldsymbol{c}_i || \leq \delta, \\ \end{array} \quad i = 1, \dots, m$ 

## 9 Transportation

### 9.1 Traffic Assignment

• OD w, paths  $p \in P_w$ , demand  $d_w$ ,  $x_p$ : flow of p $c_{ij}(\sum_{p:\ crossing\ (i,j)} x_p)$ : travel cost of link (i, j).  $c_p(x)$  is the travel cost of path p and

$$c_p(x) = \sum_{(i,j) \text{ on } p} c_{ij}(x_{ij}), \quad \forall p \in P_w, \quad \forall w \in W.$$

**System – optimization principle**: Assign flow on each path to satisfy total demand and so that the total network cost is minimized.

$$Min \ C(x) = \sum_{p} c_{p}(x)x_{p}$$
  
s.t.  $x_{p} \ge 0$ ,  $\sum_{p \in P_{w}} x_{p} = d_{w}$ ,  $\forall w$ 

#### 9.2 Example

Consider a three path network,  $d_w = 10$ . With travel costs  $c_{p_1}(x) = 2x_{p_1} + x_{p_2} + 15$ ,  $c_{p_2}(x) = 3x_{p_2} + x_{p_1} + 11$   $c_{p_3}(x) = x_{p_3} + 48$  $C(x) = c_{p_1}(x)x_{p_1} + c_{p_2}(x)x_{p_2} + c_{p_3}(x)x_{p_3} =$ 

$$2x_{p1}^{2} + 3x_{p2}^{2} + x_{p3}^{2} + 2x_{p1}x_{p2} + 15x_{p1} + 11x_{p2} + 38x_{p3}$$
$$x_{p1}^{*} = 6, \quad x_{p2}^{*} = 4, \quad x_{p3}^{*} = 0$$

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User - optimization principle: Each user of the network chooses, among all paths, a path requiring minimum travel cost, i.e., for all w ∈ W and p ∈ P<sub>w</sub>,

 $x_p^* > 0 : \longrightarrow c_p(x^*) \le c_{p'}(x^*) \quad \forall p' \in P_w, \quad \forall w \in W$ 

where  $c_{p}(x)$  is the travel time of path p and

$$c_{p}(x) = \sum_{(i,j) \text{ on } p} c_{ij}(x_{ij}), \quad \forall p \in P_{w}, \quad \forall w \in W$$

## 10 Optimal Routing

• Given a data net and a set W of OD pairs w=(i,j)each OD pairw has input traffic  $d_w$ 

• Optimal routing problem:

$$Min \quad C(x) = \sum_{i,j} C_{i,j} \left( \sum_{p: (i,j) \in p} x_p \right)$$
$$s.t. \quad \sum_{p \in P_w} x_p = d_w, \quad \forall w \in W$$
$$x_p \ge 0, \quad \forall p \in P_w, \quad w \in W$$

## 11 The general problem again

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is a continuous (usually differentiable) function of n variables

$$g_i(\boldsymbol{x}) \colon \mathfrak{R}^n \mapsto \mathfrak{R}, i = 1, \dots, m,$$
  
 $h_j(\boldsymbol{x}) \colon \mathfrak{R}^n \mapsto \mathfrak{R}, j = 1, \dots, l$ 

 $f(\boldsymbol{x}) \colon \Re^n \mapsto \Re$ 

NLP:	min	$f(oldsymbol{x})$		
	s.t.	$g_1(oldsymbol{x})$	$\leq$	0
		:		
		$a_m(\boldsymbol{x})$	<	0
		$h_1(x)$		0
		•		-
		:		0
		$h_l(oldsymbol{x})$	=	U

### 11.1 Definitions

• The feasible region of *NLOP* is the set:

## 11.2 Where do optimal solutions lie?

#### Example:

min 
$$f(x, y) = (x - a)^2 + (y - b)^2$$

Subject to

$$(x-8)^2 + (y-9)^2 \le 49$$
  
 $2 \le x \le 13$   
 $x+y \le 24$ 

Optimal solution(s) do not necessarily lie at an extreme point! Depends on (a, b).

(a,b) = (16,14) then solution lies at a corner (a,b) = (11,10) then solution lies in interior (a,b) = (14,14) then solution lies on the boundary (not necessarily corner)

#### 11.3 Local vs Global Minima

• The ball centered at  $\bar{x}$  with radius  $\epsilon$  is the set:

$$B(\bar{\boldsymbol{x}}, \epsilon) := \{\boldsymbol{x} | || \boldsymbol{x} - \bar{\boldsymbol{x}} || \le \epsilon \}$$

- $x \in \mathcal{F}$  is a *local minimum* of *NLOP* if there exists  $\epsilon > 0$  such that  $f(x) \leq f(y)$  for all  $y \in B(x, \epsilon) \cap \mathcal{F}$
- $x \in \mathcal{F}$  is a global minimum of NLOP if  $f(x) \leq f(y)$  for all  $y \in \mathcal{F}$

## 12 Convex Sets

• A subset  $S \subset \Re^n$  is a *convex set* if

$$\boldsymbol{x}, \boldsymbol{y} \in S \Rightarrow \lambda \boldsymbol{x} + (1 - \lambda) \boldsymbol{y} \in S \qquad \forall \lambda \in [0, 1]$$

- If S, T are convex sets, then  $S \cap T$  is a convex set
- Implication: The intersection of any collection of convex sets is a convex set

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#### **Convex Functions** 13

• A function f(x) is a convex function if

$$f(\lambda \boldsymbol{x} + (1 - \lambda)\boldsymbol{y}) \leq \lambda f(\boldsymbol{x}) + (1 - \lambda)f(\boldsymbol{y})$$
$$\forall \boldsymbol{x}, \, \boldsymbol{y} \qquad \forall \lambda \in [0, 1]$$

• A function f(x) is a concave function if

$$\begin{split} f(\lambda \boldsymbol{x} + (1 - \lambda) \boldsymbol{y}) &\geq \lambda f(\boldsymbol{x}) + (1 - \lambda) f(\boldsymbol{y}) \\ &\forall \boldsymbol{x}, \, \boldsymbol{y} \quad \forall \lambda \in [0, 1] \end{split}$$

#### Examples in one dimension 13.1

## • f(x) = ax + b

- $f(x) = x^2 + bx + c$
- f(x) = |x|
- $f(x) = -\ln(x)$  for x > 0
- $f(x) = \frac{1}{x}$  for x > 0
- $f(x) = e^x$

#### 13.2 Properties

- SLIDE 34 • If  $f_1(x)$  and  $f_2(x)$  are convex functions, and  $a, b \ge 0$ , then f(x) := $af_1(\mathbf{x}) + bf_2(\mathbf{x})$  is a convex function
- If f(x) is a convex function and x = Ay + b, then g(y) := f(Ay + b) is a convex function

#### **Recognition of a Convex Function** 13.3

A function  $f(\mathbf{x})$  is twice differentiable at  $\bar{\mathbf{x}}$  if there exists a vector  $\nabla f(\bar{\mathbf{x}})$  (called the gradient of  $f(\cdot)$  and a symmetric matrix  $H(\bar{x})$  (called the Hessian of  $f(\cdot)$ ) for which:

$$f(x) = f(\bar{x}) + \nabla f(\bar{x})'(x - \bar{x}) + \frac{1}{2}(x - \bar{x})'H(\bar{x})(x - \bar{x}) + R(x)||x - \bar{x}||^2$$

where  $R(\boldsymbol{x}) \to 0$  as  $\boldsymbol{x} \to \bar{\boldsymbol{x}}$  SLIDE 36

The gradient vector is the vector of partial derivatives:  

$$(2f(z)) = 2f(z))'$$

$$abla f(ar{x}) = \left( \frac{\partial f(x)}{\partial x_1}, \dots, \frac{\partial f(x)}{\partial x_n} \right)$$

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The Hessian matrix is the matrix of second partial derivatives:

$$H(\bar{\boldsymbol{x}})_{ij} = \frac{\partial^2 f(\bar{\boldsymbol{x}})}{\partial x_i \partial x_j}$$

#### 13.4 Examples

• For LP, f(x) = c'x,  $\nabla f(\bar{x}) = c$ • For NLP,  $f(x) = 8x_1^2 - x_1x_2 + x_2^2 + 8x_1$ , at  $\bar{x} = (1,0)$ ,  $f(\bar{x}) = 16$  and  $\nabla f(\bar{x})' = (16\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2 + 8, -\bar{x}_1 + 2\bar{x}_2) = (24, -1)$ .  $H(\bar{x}) = \begin{bmatrix} 16 & -1 \\ -1 & 2 \end{bmatrix}$  SLIDE 38 Property: f(x) is a convex function if and only if H(x) is positive semi-definite (PSD) for all x

Recall that  $\boldsymbol{A}$  is PSD if  $\boldsymbol{u'Au} \ge 0$ ,  $\forall u$ 

Property: If  $H(\mathbf{x})$  is PD for all  $\mathbf{x}$ , then  $f(\mathbf{x})$  is a strictly convex function

### 13.5 Examples in n Dimensions

# • f(x) = a'x + b• $f(x) = \frac{1}{2}x'Mx - c'x$ where M is PSD

- $f(\mathbf{x}) = ||\mathbf{x}||$  for any norm  $||\cdot||$
- $f(x) = \sum_{i=1}^m -\ln(b_i a'_i x)$  for x satisfying Ax < b

## 14 Convex Optimization

#### 14.1 Convexity and Minima

$$\begin{array}{ll} \min & f(\boldsymbol{x}) \\ \text{s.t.} & \boldsymbol{x} \in \mathcal{F} \end{array}$$

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<u>Theorem:</u> Suppose that  $\mathcal{F}$  is a convex set,  $f : \mathcal{F} \to \Re$  is a convex function, and  $x^*$  is a local minimum of P. Then  $x^*$  is a global minimum of f over  $\mathcal{F}$ .

#### 14.1.1 Proof

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Assume that  $x^*$  is not the global minimum. Let y be the global minimum. From the convexity of  $f(\cdot)$ ,

$$\begin{aligned} f(\boldsymbol{y}(\lambda)) &= f(\lambda \boldsymbol{x}^* + (1-\lambda)\boldsymbol{y}) \leq \lambda f(\boldsymbol{x}^*) + (1-\lambda)f(\boldsymbol{y}) \\ &< \lambda f(\boldsymbol{x}^*) + (1-\lambda)f(\boldsymbol{x}^*) = f(\boldsymbol{x}^*) \end{aligned}$$

for all  $\lambda \in (0, 1)$ .

Therefore,  $f(\boldsymbol{y}(\lambda)) < f(\boldsymbol{x}^*)$  for all  $\lambda \in (0, 1)$ , and so  $\boldsymbol{x}^*$  is not a local minimum, resulting in a contradiction

## 14.2 COP

$$COP$$
: min  $f(\boldsymbol{x})$   
s.t.  $g_1(\boldsymbol{x}) \leq 0$   
 $\vdots$   
 $g_m(\boldsymbol{x}) \leq 0$   
 $A\boldsymbol{x} = \boldsymbol{b}$ 

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COP is called a *convex optimization problem* if  $f(\boldsymbol{x}), g_1(\boldsymbol{x}), \ldots, g_m(\boldsymbol{x})$  are convex functions

Note that this implies that the feasible region  $\mathcal{F}$  is a convex set

In COP we are minimizing a convex function over a convex set

Implication: If COP is a convex optimization problem, then any local minimum will be a global minimum.

## 15 Examples of COPs

The Fermat-Weber Problem - COP

$$\min \quad \sum_{i=1}^{m} \boldsymbol{w}_{i} || \boldsymbol{x} - \boldsymbol{c}_{i} ||$$
  
s.t.  $\boldsymbol{x} \in P$ 

The Ball Circumscription Problem - COP

$$\begin{array}{ll} \min & \delta \\ \text{s.t.} & || \boldsymbol{x} - \boldsymbol{c}_i || \leq \delta, \end{array} \quad i = 1, \ldots, m \\ \end{array}$$

15.1 Is Portfolio Optimization a COP?

$$\max \sum_{\substack{i=1\\i=1}}^{n} \mu_i (z_i + x_i) - \sum_{\substack{i=1\\i=1}}^{n} (a_i |x_i| + b_i x_i^2)$$
  
s.t.  $(\boldsymbol{z} + \boldsymbol{x})' \boldsymbol{\Sigma} (\boldsymbol{z} + \boldsymbol{x}) \leq \sigma^2$   
 $z_i + x_i \leq \gamma_i z_i^{total}$   
 $-\delta_i \leq x_i \leq \delta_i$   
 $-L \leq \sum_{i=1}^{n} P_i x_i \leq L$   
 $\sum_{\substack{i=1\\i=1}}^{n} P_i |x_i| \leq t$   
 $z_i + x_i \geq 0$ 

## 15.2 Quadratically Constrained Problems min $(A_0x + b_0)'(A_0x + b_0) - c'_0x - d_0$ s.t. $(A_ix + b_i)'(A_ix + b_i) - c'_ix - d_i \le 0$ $i = 1, \dots, m$

This is a COP

## 16 Classification of NLPs

- Linear:  $f(x) = c^t x, g_i(x) = A_i^t x b_i, i = 1, ..., m$
- **Unconstrained**: f(x),  $\Re^n$
- Quadratic:  $f(x) = c^t x + x^t Q x$ ,  $g_i(x) = A_i^t x b_i$
- Linearly Constrained:  $g_i(x) = A_i^t x b_i$
- Quadratically Constrained:  $g_i(x) = (A_i x + b_i)'(A_i x + b_i) c'_i x d_i \le 0,$  $i = 1, \dots, m$
- Separable:  $f(x) = \sum_j f_j(x_j), g_i(x) = \sum_j g_{ij}(x_j)$

## 17 Two Main Issues

• Characterization of minima

Necessary — Sufficient Conditions Lagrange Multiplier and KKT Theory SLIDE 48

• Computation of minima via iterative algorithms

Iterative descent Methods Interior Point Methods

## 18 Summary

- Convex optimization is a powerful modeling framework
- Main message: convex optimization can be solved efficiently

15.093J / 6.255J Optimization Methods Fall 2009

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