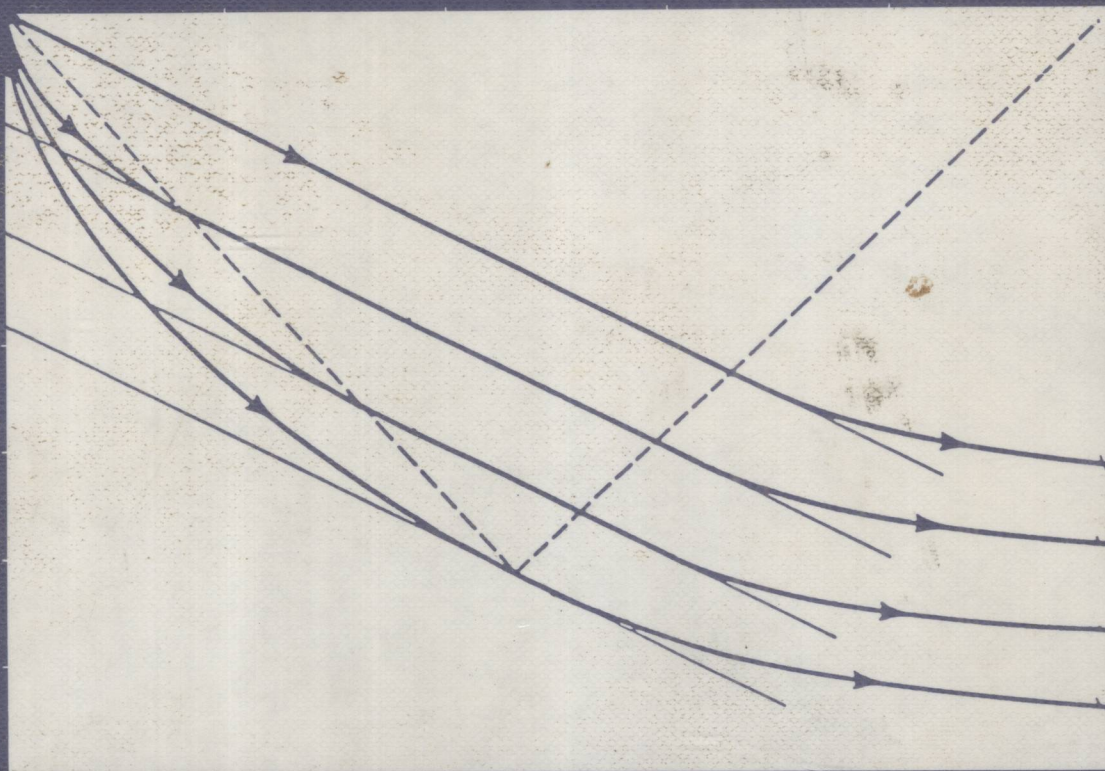


# OPTIMIZATION

## TECHNIQUES AND APPLICATIONS



*Edited by*

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TP273-53  
062  
1987

8862109

**The Proceedings  
of  
International Conference on  
Optimization: Techniques and Applications**

**ICOTA**

8 — 10 APRIL, 1987



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ISBN 9971-62-129-0

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# Preface

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Optimization is concerned with the most efficient allocation of scarce resources among competing needs for them, and generally leads to a best plan, design, or operational procedure. Optimization techniques are employed in solving a broad range of management, engineering, industrial, military, government, and socio-economic problems. Some of the commonly used optimization techniques are linear programming, integer programming, nonlinear programming, dynamic programming, network optimization methods, and optimal control.

A large number of application software packages are now available for solving various real-world optimization problems encountered in industry, business and government projects. For instance, the petroleum industry makes extensive use of linear programming techniques in scheduling, distribution and product blending whilst integer programming is being increasingly applied to complex problems of scheduling operations. Dynamic programming has proved its worth in solving complex replacement and maintenance problems, and optimal control has proven applications in solving many management and engineering problems such as optimal advertising policy, minimizing production cost, maximizing profit, or moving the arm of a robot from one point to another point in minimum time.

With a view to bringing together researchers and practitioners and to provide a platform for the interchange of information on the multidisciplinary approaches to optimization, ten academic departments/schools of the National University of Singapore have jointly organised this International Conference on Optimization Techniques and Applications (ICOTA). It covers all aspects of optimization, and it is the first such conference in the South East Asian region.

There were some 160 participants from 28 countries. 114 papers were presented at the Conference. This book contains all the presented papers. This proceedings is divided into the following sections:

- |                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| • Invited Lectures             | • Integer Programming                      |
| • General Lectures             | • Manufacturing Systems                    |
| • Computer Science             | • Multicriteria Optimization               |
| • Communication Engineering    | • Management                               |
| • Construction Engineering     | • Nonlinear Mathematical Programming       |
| • Control and Systems          | • Optimal Control                          |
| • Engineering Design           | • Structural Optimization                  |
| • Electrical and Power Systems | • Transportation and Production Scheduling |
| • Graphs and Networks          | • Water Resources                          |
| • Industrial Engineering       |  |

It is hoped that the papers will be of interest to researchers and practitioners in the area of optimization and that these will provide some useful information on recent developments in the area.

In editing these proceedings, we have been assisted by the ICOTA Committee members. Financial support from the National University of Singapore, Singapore Turf Club and Lee Foundation Singapore, in organizing the Conference are gratefully acknowledged. We would also like to thank all those who have in one way or another contributed towards the success of the Conference. Finally, special thanks are due to Professor H. H. Huang, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, National University of Singapore for his help in making the Conference a success.

The Editors



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
<b>Invited Lectures</b>	
Algorithms for Large Scale Set Covering Problems <i>N. Christofides</i>	2
Practice of Optimization in China <i>X.Y. Gui</i>	36
Optimization in Environmental Problems <i>J. Kondo</i>	43
Primal-Dual Sequential Gradient-Restoration Algorithms for Optimal Control Problems and their Application to Flight in a Windshear <i>A. Miele</i>	53
Gradient Based Unconstrained Optimization Methods <i>D.F. Shanno</i>	95
<b>General Lectures</b>	
Discontinuous Optimal Solutions and Applications <i>L. Cesari</i>	107
Optimum Shapes for Given Torsional and Bending Rigidity <i>B.L. Karihaloo</i>	122
Optimal Layout Theory: Multiconstraint Elastic Design <i>G.I.N. Rozvany, W. Booz, T.G. Ong</i>	138
<b>Computer Science</b>	
A Global Optimization Algorithm for Parallel Machines <i>M. Bertocchi, W. Krafft</i>	153
Scheduling Multiprocessor Tasks under Unit Resource Constraints <i>J. Blazewicz, K. Ecker</i>	161
A Sensitivity Approach to the Choice of Optimal Block Sizes for Magnetic Tape Files <i>Foo Y.K.</i>	170
<b>Communication Engineering</b>	
A Class of Optimization Problems with Linear and Quadratic Constraints <i>M.H. Er</i>	181
FIR Digital Filters without Multipliers <i>Y.C. Lim, C.C. Ko</i>	191
Constrained Minimax and Least Squares Problems in Antenna Array Pattern Synthesis <i>J.C. Mason, S.J. Wilde, G. Opfer</i>	197
An Optimization Process for PCC Detection of Weak Signals with Duty Cycle <i>A.Q.K. Rajput</i>	207
<b>Construction Engineering</b>	
Overlapping Activities, Network Compression and Linear Programming <i>M.A. Baki, D.G. Carmichael</i>	216
Optimization of Construction Cost by Linear Programming <i>N.C. Das Gupta, R.V. Subrahmanyam</i>	226
On Optimum Vertical Alignment in Highway Construction <i>C.J. Goh, T.F. Fwa, K.K. Tan</i>	232
Material Requirement Planning for a Workshop of Construction Company <i>I.Y. Lu, H. Lee</i>	242
Optimal Inventories: Their Applicability in the Construction Industry <i>S.Y. Wu, D.G. Carmichael</i>	252
<b>Control and Systems</b>	
Analysis of Production as a Control Problem <i>K.H. Han</i>	263
The Chaotic Behaviour of Growth Processes <i>T. Kinnunen, H. Pastijn</i>	270
A Computational Method for Computing Constrained Optimal Output Feedback Gains <i>C.C. Lim, K.L. Teo</i>	284
An Optimum Choice of Estimator Gain for Robust Self Tuning Control <i>K.W. Lim</i>	290
A Homotopy Method for Solving Algebraic Riccati Equations <i>C.T. Pan, S.S. Wang</i>	296
Optimal Reduced-Order Models via Nonlinear Goal Programming <i>P.V. Rao, S.S. Fung</i>	306
Singular Control in a Multidimensional Space with Control Costs Proportional to Displacement <i>M. Taksar</i>	314

## **Electrical Machines and Power Systems**

Long-term Planning of Hydro-Thermal Power Systems <i>B.W. Ang, C.J. Goh, H.R. Sirisena, K.L. Teo</i>	325
Power System Unit Commitment Problem using Lagrangian Relaxation and Nondifferentiable Optimization Method <i>K. Aoki, M. Itoh, T. Satoh, T. Ichimori</i>	335
Optimal Load Allocation in Power Distribution Systems <i>K. Aoki, T. Satoh, T. Ichimori, H. Kuwabara</i>	345
An Effective Method for Optimal Power Flow using Quadratic Approximation <i>K. Aoki, M. Kanezashi</i>	355
Evaluation of Decomposition Methods in Optimal Electric Power System Expansion Planning <i>A.K. David</i>	365
Optimal Consumer Response for Electricity Spot Pricing <i>A.K. David</i>	376
Optimal Design of Shaded Pole Motors <i>K.S. Lock, S. Chan, K. L. Teo</i>	386
Optimum Design of RC Snubbers for Isolated Cuk Converters <i>C.T. Pan, C.C. Wen</i>	396

## **Engineering Design**

Parameter Estimation by Constrained Minimization <i>V.M.H. Govindarao</i>	408
Optimal Design of Linkage in Consideration of Structural Error, Manufacturing Error, and Flexibility <i>H.R. Kim</i>	416
Optimal Design of an Industrial Refrigeration System <i>H. Paul, A.O. Tay</i>	427
Multiple Minima in Chemical Engineering Applications of Optimization <i>G.P. Rangaiah, P.R. Krishnaswamy</i>	436
Optimal Insulation for Sulfur Dioxide Converter <i>G.P. Rangaiah, C.S. Wong</i>	443

## **Graphs and Networks**

A Characterization of Bipartite Dilworth Posets <i>M. M. Syslo, K.M. Koh, W.L. Chia</i>	451
The Use of Dynamic Programming for Engineering Network Optimization <i>R. Tsal, R. Poulter, J. LaRosa, K. Hathaitham</i>	460
A Pruning Algorithm for Finding Optimal Decision Diagrams <i>W.W. Tsang, V.V. Findler, L.H. Ihrig</i>	470
Bottlenecks Subject to Constraints in Networks <i>P. C.T. Tung</i>	480
A Dynamic Programming Approach to The Optimal Design of Tree-like Networks <i>G.A. Walters</i>	487

## **Industrial Engineering**

The Economic Design of Control Charts: a Renewal Theory Approach <i>P.K. Banerjee, M.A. Rahim</i>	498
Aggregate MRP/MPS Optimization Modeling <i>S. C.K. Chu</i>	507
Optimal Redundancy in a Two-terminal Network Subject to Two Failure Modes <i>M.E. Dyer, J. Walker</i>	517
A New Heuristic Algorithm for the Permutation Flowshop Problem <i>M.K. Goldberg, E.J. Lee, P.B. Mirchandani</i>	525
Minisum Facility Location with Directional Distances <i>D.K. Kulshrestha, M. Kaykobad</i>	532
Masterscheduling as Multicriteria Problem <i>A. Lehtimaeki</i>	541
Examination Scheduling: a Quadratic Assignment Perspective <i>T.Y. Leong, W.Y. Yeong</i>	550
A Heuristic Algorithm for nxm Flow-shop Problem <i>M. Rajbongshi</i>	559
Simulation Study of a Two Echelon Inventory Control Sub-System in After Sales Service <i>S. Ramani, V. Jayasankar</i>	572
Sealed Bids Selection Model <i>E.A. Del Rosario</i>	582
A Simple Inventory Policy under Technological Improvement <i>H.M.M. Wee</i>	589

## **Integer Programming**

Random Search Method for Integer Programming <i>H.N. Huynh, S. Kumar, H.J. Connell</i>	601
Optimized Selection by Discrete Programming <i>D.B.C. Richards</i>	611
Computational Experiments with a Binary Programming Code <i>H.P. Ta, S.C. Chuong</i>	621

## **Management**

A Goal Programming Model for Working Capital Management <i>J.D. Agarwal</i>	632
A Unifying Approach to Simple Heuristics for Dynamic Lot Size Problems <i>G.H. Chan, E.U. Choo</i>	643
Gains from International Diversification across U.S. and Asia-Pacific Equity Markets <i>K.C. Kwan, T.K. Hui, Y.S. Ngooi</i>	650
Taxation and Optimal Dividend Policy <i>K.G. Lim</i>	658
The Lagrangian Relaxation Method for Solving Power Generation Unit Commitment Problem <i>S.K. Mukherjee</i>	664
On the Evaluation of Workers Using the Work Achievement Quotient <i>S. Nakayama</i>	674
An Application of Integer Programming Model to Investment Project Analysis <i>H. Özgen</i>	680
The Development of a Mathematical Cost Function to Incorporate Human Factors Aspects <i>I.Z. Satalaksana</i>	689
Normative Forecasting Model for Promoting National Shipping in The Developing Countries <i>K. Taguchi, M. Kishi</i>	700
Scheduling Shift Work <i>P.K.K. Tan</i>	710
A DSS For Class Scheduling <i>A. Tripathy</i>	714
The Input Decision of the Competitive Firm Under Price Uncertainty <i>T.C. Tseng, C.C. Yang</i>	721
On the Long-Term Stability and Cross-Country Invariance of Financial Ratio Patterns <i>P. Yli-Olli, I. Virtanen</i>	731

## **Manufacturing Systems**

Computer Optimization of Metal Cutting Processes <i>A.M. Abuelnaga</i>	754
Process Optimization at the Production Floor Level <i>T.N. Goh</i>	763
The Economic Evaluation of Flexible Manufacturing System <i>I.Y. Lu, K.K. Boon</i>	773
Application of Decision Theory in Thick Film Manufacturing <i>P. Yong, W.H. Siew, Y.S. Lau</i>	781

## **Multicriteria Optimization**

Sensitivity in Multicriteria Optimization <i>B.D. Craven</i>	790
IMOLP-PC: A Multiobjective Optimization Method on Microcomputer <i>M.A. Quaddus, K.L. Poh</i>	798
Sharing Problem with Bi-Criteria <i>M. Tada, H. Ishii, T. Masuda, T. Nishida</i>	808
Matter Elements Analysis for Multiple Objective Mathematical Programming Problems <i>H.M. Xing, X.R. Huang</i>	814

## **Nonlinear Mathematical Programming**

Information Theoretic Clustering Analysis and Industrial Applications <i>N.L. Aggarwal</i>	826
Stochastic Analysis of Optimal Land Development Timing: An Exposition <i>H.R. Clarke</i>	832
Constrained Nonlinear Optimization with Factorable Programming <i>F. Ghotb</i>	842
The Research of Heuristic Optimization Technique in Industrial Engineering <i>L.H. Su, I.Y. Lu</i>	858
An Approach to the Infeasibility for a Stochastic Programming Problem using a Distance Function <i>H. Morita, H. Ishii, T. Nishida</i>	865
Tracking Approach of Hierarchical Optimization Problems <i>P. Noyer, Z. Binder, R. Perret, C. Yousfi</i>	872
An Empirical Study of Some Direct Search Algorithms for Unconstrained Nonlinear Optimization <i>K.H. Phua</i>	882
Computation and Optimization of Physical Fields <i>Y.L. Rvachov, Y.G. Stoyan, V.P. Putyatin</i>	895
A Random Search Technique for the Global Minima of Constrained Nonlinear Optimization Problems <i>K. Shanker, C. Mohan</i>	905
Entropy Maximization Methods in Constrained Non-Linear Programming <i>A.B. Templeman, X.S. Li</i>	919
An Algorithm for Semi-Infinite Optimization Problems Arising in Engineering Design <i>A.L. Tits, E.R. Panier</i>	932
Positive Real Rational Function Curve Fitting <i>M.K.R. Walker, H.R. Sirisena</i>	938



## ***Optimal Control***

- Error Bounds for Spline Approximations to the Linear Quadratic Problem  
*F.S. Chou* 949
- On Numerical Solution of Combined Optimal Parameter Selection and Optimal Control Problems with General Constraints  
*C.J. Goh, K.L. Teo* 959
- A Computational Algorithm for a Class of Nonlinear Time-lag Control Problems with Control and Terminal Inequality Constraints  
*K.H. Wong, K.L. Teo* 969

## ***Structural Optimization***

- Optimum I-Girders for Short Span Composite Girder-Slab Bridges  
*A.K. Azad, M.H. Baluch* 980
- Optimal Layouts of Complex Structures by Means of Multicriteria Optimization Techniques  
*H.A. Eschenauer* 988
- Multicriteria Optimization in Civil Engineering Design  
*S. Jendo, W. Marks* 998
- Optimal Design of Bars subjected to Multiple Eigenvalue Constraints  
*R.D. Parbery* 1007
- Optimum Shape of Arch Dams  
*M.S. Samy, S.A. Rahim, M. Wieland,* 1023
- Applications of Models for Cost Optimisation of Structural Systems in Commercial High Rise Buildings  
*S. Singh, C.K. Murthy* 1033
- Optimum Natural Frequencies of Beams and Circular Plates  
*D.P. Thambiratnam, V. Thevendran* 1043
- Optimal Design of Multispan Cables  
*C.M. Wang, C.J. Goh* 1053
- Equi-Strength Annular Plates  
*K.Y. Yeh, H.R. Yu, X. Liu* 1062
- Optimal Design of Statically Indeterminate Elastic Beams under Strength and Deflection Constraints  
*K.Y. Yeh, X. Tang* 1071
- Application of Geometric Programming to Structural Design  
*C.H. Yu, N.C. Das Gupta, H. Paul* 1078
- Optimal Design of Minimax Deflection of an Annular Plate  
*H.R. Yu, K.Y. Yeh* 1087

## ***Transportation and Production Scheduling***

- Practical Network Methods to Solve TSP  
*G. Finke* 1097
- Generalized Common due Date Assignment for the One Machine Scheduling Problem  
*T. Matsutomi, H. Ishii, T. Nishida* 1104
- Scheduling of Operations on a Flexible Manufacturing System  
*H. Paul, S.K. Tay* 1108
- Vehicle Scheduling Approaches for Mail Distribution System  
*A. Tripathy* 1116

## ***Water Resources***

- On Optimal Pumping Policies for Ground Water  
*T. Odanaka* 1126
- A Multilevel Optimization Technique for Managing Large Surface-Ground Water Systems  
*G.N. Paudyal, A. Das Gupta* 1134

## ***Appendix***

- Uniform Convergence of Optimization Problems  
*P. Kannappan* 1144

## **Invited Lectures**

## ALGORITHMS FOR LARGE SCALE SET COVERING PROBLEMS

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**ABSTRACT.** This paper is concerned with the set covering problem (SCP), and in particular with the development of a new algorithm capable of solving large-scale SCP's of the size found in real life situations.

The set covering problem has a wide variety of practical applications such as crew scheduling, vehicle dispatching, facility location, information retrieval, political districting, design of switching circuits and others. A common feature of most of these applications is that they yield large and sparse SCPs normally with hundreds of rows and thousands of columns. In this paper we present an algorithm capable of solving problems of this size and test problems up to 400 rows and 4000 columns are solved and results reported. This is by far the largest size SCP reported solved in the literature.

The method developed in this paper consists of a combination of decomposition and state space relaxation which is a technique recently developed for obtaining lower bounds on the dynamic program associated with a combinatorial optimization problem. The large size SCP's are decomposed into many smaller SCP's which are then solved or bounded by state space relaxation (SSR). Before using the decomposition and SSR, reductions both in the number of columns and the number of rows of the problem are made by applying lagrangean relaxation, linear programming and heuristic methods.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Manuscripts

The set covering problem is a well-known combinatorial optimization problem consisting of finding a subset of columns of a zero-one  $m \times n$  matrix such that it covers the rows of the matrix, at a minimum cost. The problem is formally stated as the integer program:

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{(SCP)} \quad & \min \sum_{j=1}^n c_j x_j \\
 & \text{st. } \sum_{j=1}^n a_{ij} x_j \geq 1 \quad (i=1, \dots, m) \\
 & \quad x_j \in \{0, 1\} \quad (j=1, \dots, n)
 \end{aligned}$$

where  $c_j > 0$  is the cost of column  $j$  and  $A=[a_{ij}]$  is the  $m \times n$  zero-one matrix.

Let  $a_i$  and  $a^j$  denote respectively the  $i$ -th row and the  $j$ -th column of  $A$ , and let  $M=\{1, 2, \dots, m\}$  and  $N=\{1, 2, \dots, n\}$ . We denote  $M_j = \{i \in M : a_{ij}=1\}$  and  $N_i = \{j \in N : a_{ij}=1\}$ .



The SCP and related problems, have a wide field of applications such as crew scheduling ([1], [2], [9], [27], [32], [35], [37]) vehicle dispatching ([11]), facility location ([8], [10], [14], [26], [36], [39]), information retrieval ([17]), political and health districting ([16], [21], [23]), assembly line balancing ([38]), minimisation of boolean expressions ([24], [40]), and others ([7]). See [12] for a computational study of the SCP and [20] and [5] for detailed surveys.

The SCP also has particularly strong links with other combinatorial optimization problems, especially graph theoretic problems ([34]).

Several algorithms have been proposed for the SCP and can be found in [3], [4], [6], [12], [19], [30]. In this paper, we present and apply an algorithm for larger size SCP's consisting of a combination of some of the methods used before for solving the problem, with decomposition and state space relaxation - which is a technique recently developed for obtaining lower bounds on dynamic programs ([13], [34]).

In section 2, a procedure to perform reductions on the dimension of the problem is presented and computationally tested for large size SCP's. The method consists of a combined utilisation of lagrangean relaxation, linear programming and heuristics. In section 3, state space relaxation is applied to the computation of lower bounds for the SCP and these values are compared with the LP bounds for different types of test problems. In section 4, we develop a decomposition technique for large size SCP's which is combined with state space relaxation obtaining bounds on the optimal value to the SCP. Computational results are also shown for large scale problems and for unicast (all  $c_j=1$ ) SCP's. Finally, in section 5, we present a tree-search algorithm making use of the techniques described in the previous sections and full computational results for problems with up to 400 rows and 4000 columns are given.

## 2. REDUCTIONS FOR LARGE SIZE SET COVERING PROBLEMS

In this section, a procedure to perform reductions on the number of columns and rows of large size SCP's is presented, and computational results are shown for three different classes of test problems.

### 2.1 Preliminary Reductions

Before using an algorithm for solving the SCP a number of preliminary reductions can be made both on the columns and rows of the problem. These are well known in the literature and include simple row and column dominance tests [20].

Some of these reductions are unlikely to be useful for a practical SCP, but if the problem occurs as a sub-problem of some other SCP, namely in a tree-search procedure or using any sort of relaxation, then they can be very effective. The row dominance test may also be useful for randomly generated problems in which the coefficients  $a_{ij}$  are independent random variables with a fixed probability that  $a_{ij}=1$ . The column dominance although useful for several practical examples implies an expensive computational effort in terms of time for large scale SCP's. Note that most of the preliminary reductions mentioned in [20] are not useful for unicast SCP's or when  $c_j$  is proportional to the number of 1's in column  $j$ .

## 2.2 Linear Programming Relaxation

The linear programming relaxation of the SCP is:

$$\begin{aligned}
 (\text{LP}) \quad & \min \sum_{j \in N} c_j x_j \\
 & \text{st. } \sum_{j \in N_i} x_j \geq 1 \quad i \in M \\
 & \quad x_j \geq 0 \quad (j \in N)
 \end{aligned}$$

If  $v(\text{LP})$  and  $v(\text{SCP})$  are the optimum values of LP and SCP respectively then  $v(\text{LP}) \leq v(\text{SCP})$  and if the LP solution is integer then it is the optimal solution to the SCP.

The dual linear relaxation of the SCP is then:

$$\begin{aligned}
 (\text{DLP}) \quad & \max \sum_{i \in M} u_i \\
 & \text{st. } \sum_{i \in M_j} u_i \leq c_j \quad (j \in N) \\
 & \quad u_i \geq 0 \quad (i \in M)
 \end{aligned}$$

If DLP is the dual problem to LP and  $u_i$  are the dual variables then reduced costs for the variables  $x_j$  are given by:

$$s_j = c_j - \sum_{i \in M_j} u_i \quad (2.1)$$

and the variable  $x_j$  can be removed from the SCP if

$$s_j + \sum_{i \in M} u_i \geq z_u \quad (2.2)$$

with  $z_u$  a known upper bound on  $v(\text{SCP})$ .

## 2.3 Heuristics

Heuristic algorithms can be used to obtain both upper and lower bounds on  $v(\text{SCP})$ . Tight upper bounds are important in removing variables from reduced cost analysis and also in fathoming tests when a tree-search procedure is being used to solve the problem. Greedy heuristics to obtain upper bounds to the SCP have been studied in detail in [4] whose main conclusions were adopted in the algorithm used in this paper. Although these greedy-type heuristics have a theoretically poor worst case performance ([15], [28]) they have proved reasonably good for many test problems. If reduced costs  $s_j$  for the variables are available, then the greedy heuristics can be applied on the basis of  $s_j$  instead of  $c_j$ . In [4] this technique is reported as having consistently improved the original "greedy" upper bounds. As will be seen later in this section, our computational experience confirms that result.

Later on in this paper, we present a heuristic based on the decomposition of large size SCP's, which yield, in many cases, an improvement on the upper bounds mentioned above.

## 2.4 Lagrangean Relaxation

If all the constraints of a SCP are relaxed in a normal lagrangean relaxation fashion ([22]), one obtains the problem

$$\begin{aligned} (\text{LSCP}_\lambda) \quad \min \quad & \sum_{j \in N} (c_j - \sum_{i \in M_j} \lambda_i) x_j + \sum_{i \in M} \lambda_i \\ & x_j \in \{0,1\} \quad (j \in N) \end{aligned}$$

where  $\lambda_i \geq 0$  is the multiplier associated with row  $i$ .

The optimal solution for  $\text{LSCP}_\lambda$  is

$$x_j = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } c_j - \sum_{i \in M_j} \lambda_i < 0 \\ 0 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases} \quad (2.3)$$

and  $v(\text{LSCP}_\lambda)$  is a lower bound on  $v(\text{SCP})$ . Subgradient optimization can be used to modify the multipliers  $\lambda_i$  in order to improve the lagrangean lower bound, the best such bound being given by

$$(\text{DLSCP}) \quad \max_{\lambda \geq 0} v(\text{LSCP}_\lambda)$$

It is well known that the optimal multipliers for DLSCP are equal to the optimal solution for DLP and  $v(\text{DLSCP}) = v(\text{DLP})$ .

If for a particular set of multipliers  $(\lambda_i)$  expression (2.1) is used replacing  $u_i$  by the corresponding  $\lambda_i$ , then a reduced cost is obtained for the variable  $x_j$  and it can be dropped from the SCP if

$$s_j + v(\text{LSCP}_\lambda) > z_u \quad (2.4)$$

## 2.5 Combining LP and Lagrangean Relaxation

Suppose that a number of subgradient optimization iterations are performed and that at each iteration we do:

- (i) Remove any variable satisfying (2.4);
- (ii) Starting with  $N_0 = \emptyset$  add to  $N_0$  any variable for which the reduced cost became negative at any stage of the subgradient iterations.
- (iii) Include in  $N_0$  the variables in the best available feasible solution.

The set  $N_0$  is then a "good" candidate subset of columns amongst which we will look for the solution to the SCP and will be used instead of the complete set  $N$ , for the LP relaxation of the SCP. Then, the restricted linear program which we denote by  $\text{LP}_0$  gives a value  $v(\text{LP}_0)$  greater than or equal to  $v(\text{LP})$  (and could also be greater than  $v(\text{SCP})$ ). Nevertheless, if  $v(\text{LP}_0)$  is close to  $v(\text{LP})$  then the optimal dual variable to  $\text{LP}_0$  can be used as a good approximation of the optimal dual variables to  $\text{LP}$ . Hence, the lagrangean multipliers in  $\text{LSCP}_\lambda$  may be initialised to those values and the lagrangean lower bound improved to a value close to  $v(\text{DLP})$ . The



relation between  $v(LP_0)$  is stated in the following proposition where  $DLP_0$  designates the dual linear problem of  $LP_0$ .

**Proposition 2.1:**

If  $u^0 = (u_i^0)_{i \in M}$  is an optimal solution to  $DLP_0$ , then:

$$v(DLP_0) + \Delta_0 \leq v(LP) \leq v(LP_0) \quad (2.5)$$

where  $\Delta_0 = \sum_{j \in N-N_0} \min(0, c_j - \sum_{i \in M_j} u_i^0)$

The proof for this proposition follows easily from setting  $\lambda_i = u_i^0$  in  $LSCP_\lambda$  ([34]).

## 2.6 Computational Results of Reductions

The above procedure was computationally tested for three different class of problems depending on their cost function.

(I) costs  $c_j$  randomly generated from the interval  $[1, 99]$

(II) costs  $c_j = 1$

(III) costs  $c_j$  proportional to the cardinality of  $M_j$ :

i)  $c_j = |M_j|$

ii)  $c_j = 3.0 + |M_j|$

In class (I), two sets of test problems were considered:

(I.1) number of rows  $m=200$ ; number of columns  $n=2000$ ; density  $d=5\%$

(I.2) number of rows  $m=300$ ; number of columns  $n=3000$ ; density  $d=2\%$

For classes (II) and (III) the same set of problems was tested differing only in the costs. These problems were of size  $m=50$ ,  $n=500$ ,  $d=20\%$ .

Table 1 summarises the computational results for the test problems in class (I). These are identified in column (1) by a general designation  $Tmxk$  where  $m$  is the number of rows and  $k$  is the number given to the test problem. The initial dimensions of the problem are shown in columns (2) and (3). Columns (4) and (5) in Table 1 give the dimensions of the test problem after doing the preliminary reductions. As expected for problems with random costs, the reduction on the number of variables is very significant mainly due to column dominance tests. For all test problems in Table 1 the number of variables was reduced by more than 80%. However, the resulting reduced problem is now a hard problem with the range of the costs much tighter.

Column (6) in Table 1 shows the values of the greedy heuristic upper bound. The bounds are reductions related to the first set of iterations for the Lagrangean relaxation as shown in columns (7) to (10). The upper bound (column 7) was improved for six of the test problems in Table 1. The lower bound is given in column (8), but its use did not imply any significant reduction in the dimensions of the problem as can be seen in columns (9) and (10).

Column (11) to (14) in Table 1 are related to the restricted linear program  $LP_0$ . The value  $v(LP_0)$  is shown in column (12) while the corresponding lower bound to the SCP,  $v(LP_0) + \Delta_0$ , is given in column (12). This lower bound is for all test problems better than the previous value (column 8), and further reduction in the dimensions is achieved for most of the problems using reduced cost analysis. It is worthwhile to note here that the size of  $N_0$  was between  $1/3$  and  $1/2$  the size of  $N$ .

Finally, columns (15) to (18) show the outcome of the second phase application of lagrangean relaxation using as starting values of  $\lambda_i$  the optimal duals for  $LP_0$ . The lower bound (column 16) improves even further for all problems and an improvement on the upper bound over the value derived from greedy for almost all test problems. As a result the dimension of the problems is reduced even further and for test problem T300x1 the optimal value is obtained. It has been noted that the reduced size test problems still have approximately the same density as the original problem.

Table 2 shows the computational times of each step of the procedure for the test problems. The LP was solved using the XMP code developed by Marsten ([31]).

The computational results relative to the test problems of classes II and III are presented in Table 3 which has the same column designation as Table 1. We only show the computational results for a small set of test problems since the performance of the techniques described above is very similar for the different problems generated in those classes. As expected the preliminary reductions are not efficient for this type of problem and the other methods applied do not perform well either. For the proportional cost problems the LP procedure took too long (a limit of 100 seconds in the CDC 6500 was used) and, hence, the procedure is not completed for those problems.

## 2.7 Conclusion

In this section we presented a procedure to perform reductions in the dimensions of large size random SCP's. The conclusions are as follows:

- i) For unicast and proportional-cost SCP's no significant reduction in the dimensions of the problems could be achieved;
- ii) For random-cost SCP's, large problems (with  $n \times 10 \times m$ ) are reduced to problems with  $n \approx m$  of the same density as the original ones, and lower and upper bounds are obtained with a gap of less than 6% between them.

## 3. STATE SPACE RELAXATION FOR THE SCP

Dynamic programming can be used to solve the SCP but this requires, even for small size problems, too much storage and time to be useful in practice. One way of reducing the dimension of the state space of a dynamic program associated with the SCP, is presented in this section. Instead of obtaining an optimal solution to the problem, a lower bound is computed by solving dynamic programming recursions in a smaller state space. This corresponds to an idea developed and called state space relaxation (SSR) in [13] where it is used for the vehicle routing problem.

TABLE 1

Bounds and reductions produced by the procedure for large scale SCP's

PROBLEM	INITIAL DIMENSIONS		PRELIMINARY REDUCTIONS		GREEDY HEURISTICS $z_u$	LAGRANGEAN RELAXATION (I)				LINEAR PROGRAMMING (RESTRICTED)				LAGRANGEAN RELAXATION (II)			
	m	n	m	n		$z_u$	$z_\ell$	m	n	$\bar{z}_p$	$z_\ell$	m	n	$z_u$	$z_\ell$	m	n
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)
T200X1	200	2000	200	349	96.0	94.0	65.67	200	344	87.60	86.84	200	154	92.0	87.12	200	146
T200X2	200	2000	200	263	77.0	77.0	53.07	200	263	67.47	64.35	200	245	74.0	66.35	199	178
T200X3	200	2000	200	381	104.0	103.0	78.53	200	380	91.66	87.84	200	354	96.0	90.72	200	176
T200X4	200	2000	200	290	74.0	74.0	54.73	200	290	69.85	69.19	200	155	74.0	69.35	199	150
T200X5	200	2000	200	281	60.0	60.0	43.19	200	279	58.25	44.53	180	278	60.0	56.16	186	125
T300X1	300	3000	300	325	227.0	227.0	188.08	299	325	215.0	214.0	299	111	215.0	215.0	-	-
T300X2	300	3000	300	307	152.0	150.0	115.05	300	307	140.3	136.79	300	306	147.0	138.4	300	287
T300X3	300	3000	300	348	228.0	223.0	200.34	300	348	217.0	184.53	300	346	223.0	211.8	300	333
T300X4	300	3000	300	482	277.0	263.0	209.50	300	482	245.5	238.8	300	477	258.0	243.0	300	444
T300 5	300	3000	300	324	203.0	199.0	161.61	291	323	192.0	184.6	291	292	192.0	187.7	250	224



TABLE 2

Computing times for the procedure  
(CDC 7600 seconds; FTN compiler)

PROBLEM (1)	PRELIMINARY REDUCTIONS (2)	GREEDY HEURISTIC (3)	LAGRANGEAN RELAXATION (4)	LINEAR PROGRAMMING (5)	LAGRANGEAN RELAXATION (6)	TOTAL (7)
T200X1	.49	.35	.94	4.22	.81	6.81
T200X2	.48	.33	1.04	4.30	.93	7.08
T200X3	.48	.36	1.05	5.40	.99	8.28
T200X4	.48	.33	1.91	3.17	.71	6.60
T200X5	.49	.31	.86	2.87	.75	5.28
T300X1	.45	.59	1.42	7.08	.52	10.06
T300X2	.45	.48	1.34	6.33	1.03	9.63
T300X3	.45	.50	1.52	6.90	1.50	10.87
T300X4	.45	.40	1.39	10.16	1.27	13.67
T300X5	.45	.54	1.29	4.20	1.05	7.53