LECTURES ON STOCHASTIC PROGRAMMING Modeling and Theory

Alexander Shapiro Darinka Dentcheva Andrzej Ruszczyński

MPS-SIAM Series on Optimization

LECTURES ON STOCHASTIC PROGRAMMING MODELING AND THEORY

Alexander Shapiro
Georgia Institute of Technology
Atlanta, Georgia

Darinka Dentcheva
Stevens Institute of Technology
Hoboken, New Jersey

Andrzej Ruszczyński Rutgers University New Brunswick, New Jersey



Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics Philadelphia



Mathematical Programming Society Philadelphia Copyright © 2009 by the Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics and the Mathematical Programming Society

10987654321

All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored, or transmitted in any manner without the written permission of the publisher. For information, write to the Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics, 3600 Market Street, 6th Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19104-2688 USA.

Trademarked names may be used in this book without the inclusion of a trademark symbol. These names are used in an editorial context only; no infringement of trademark is intended.

Cover image appears courtesy of Julia Shapiro.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Shapiro, Alexander, 1949-

Lectures on stochastic programming: modeling and theory / Alexander Shapiro, Darinka Dentcheva, Andrzej Ruszczyński.

p. cm. - (MPS-SIAM series on optimization; 9)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-898716-87-0

1. Stochastic programming. I. Dentcheva, Darinka. II. Ruszczyński, Andrzej P. III. Title. T57.79.S54 2009 519.7-dc22

2009022942





LECTURES ON STOCHASTIC PROGRAMMING

MPS-SIAM Series on Optimization

This series is published jointly by the Mathematical Programming Society and the Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics. It includes research monographs, books on applications, textbooks at all levels, and tutorials. Besides being of high scientific quality, books in the series must advance the understanding and practice of optimization. They must also be written clearly and at an appropriate level.

Editor-in-Chief

Philippe Toint, University of Namur (FUNDP)

Editorial Board

Oktay Gunluk, IBM T.J. Watson Research Center Matthias Heinkenschloss, Rice University C.T. Kelley, North Carolina State University Adrian S. Lewis, Cornell University Pablo Parrilo, Massachusetts Institute of Technology Daniel Ralph, University of Cambridge Mike Todd, Cornell University Laurence Wolsey, Université Catholique de Louvain Yinyu Ye, Stanford University

Series Volumes

Shapiro, Alexander, Dentcheva, Darinka, and Ruszczyński, Andrzej, Lectures on Stochastic Programming: Modeling and Theory

Conn, Andrew R., Scheinberg, Katya, and Vicente, Luis N., *Introduction to Derivative-Free Optimization*

Ferris, Michael C., Mangasarian, Olvi L., and Wright, Stephen J., *Linear Programming with MATLAB*

Attouch, Hedy, Buttazzo, Giuseppe, and Michaille, Gérard, Variational Analysis in Sobolev and BV Spaces: Applications to PDEs and Optimization

Wallace, Stein W. and Ziemba, William T., editors, Applications of Stochastic Programming Grötschel, Martin, editor, The Sharpest Cut: The Impact of Manfred Padberg and His Work Renegar, James, A Mathematical View of Interior-Point Methods in Convex Optimization Ben-Tal, Aharon and Nemirovski, Arkadi, Lectures on Modern Convex Optimization: Analysis, Algorithms, and Engineering Applications

Conn, Andrew R., Gould, Nicholas I. M., and Toint, Phillippe L., Trust-Region Methods

To Julia, Benjamin, Daniel, Natan, and Yael;

to Tsonka, Konstatin, and Marek;

and to the memory of Feliks, Maria, and Dentcho



List of Notations

:=, equal by definition, 333 A^{T} , transpose of matrix (vector) A , 333 $C(X)$, space of continuous functions, 165 C^* , polar of cone C , 337 $C^{T}(V, \mathbb{R}^n)$, space of continuously differentiable mappings, 176 $IF_{\mathfrak{F}}$, influence function, 304 L^{\perp} , orthogonal of (linear) space L , 41 $O(1)$, generic constant, 188 $O_p(\cdot)$, term, 382 S^{ε} , the set of ε -optimal solutions of the true problem, 181 $V_d(A)$, Lebesgue measure of set $A \subset \mathbb{R}^d$, 195 $W^{L,\infty}(U)$, space of Lipschitz continuous functions, 166, 353 $[a]_+ = \max\{a, 0\}$, 2 $\mathbb{I}_A(\cdot)$, indicator function of set A , 334 $\mathcal{L}_p(\Omega, \mathcal{F}, P)$, space, 399 $\Lambda(\bar{x})$, set of Lagrange multipliers vectors, 348 $\mathcal{N}(\mu, \Sigma)$, normal distribution, 16 \mathcal{N}_C , normal cone to set C , 337 $\Phi(z)$, cdf of standard normal distribution, 16 Π_X , metric projection onto set X , 231 $\stackrel{\mathcal{D}}{\to}$, convergence in distribution, 163 $\mathcal{T}_X^2(x, h)$, second order tangent set, 348 $AV \otimes R$, Average Value-at-Risk, 258	\mathbb{R}^n , n -dimensional space, 333 \mathfrak{A} , domain of the conjugate of risk measure ρ , 262 \mathfrak{C}_n , the space of nonempty compact subsets of \mathbb{R}^n , 379 \mathfrak{B} , set of probability density functions, 263 \mathfrak{S}_z , set of contact points, 399 $\mathfrak{b}(k;\alpha,N)$, cdf of binomial distribution, 214 \mathfrak{d} , distance generating function, 236 $\mathfrak{g}^+(x)$, right-hand-side derivative, 297 $\mathfrak{cl}(A)$, topological closure of set A , 334 $\mathfrak{conv}(C)$, convex hull of set C , 337 $\mathbb{C}\mathfrak{orr}(X,Y)$, covariance of X and Y , 200 $\mathbb{C}\mathfrak{ov}(X,Y)$, covariance of X and X , 180 $\mathbb{C}\mathfrak{g}_\alpha$, weighted mean deviation, 256 $\mathfrak{s}_C(\cdot)$, support function of set X , 337 $\mathbb{C}\mathfrak{orr}(X,X)$, distance from point X to set X , 334 $\mathbb{C}\mathfrak{orr}(X,X)$, distance from point X to set X , 334 $\mathbb{C}\mathfrak{orr}(X,X)$, domain of function X , 333 $\mathbb{C}\mathfrak{orr}(X,X)$, epigraph of function X , 333 $\mathbb{C}\mathfrak{orr}(X,X)$, epigraph of function X , 333 $\mathbb{C}\mathfrak{orr}(X,X)$, the set of optimal solutions of the SAA problem, 156 $\mathbb{C}\mathfrak{orr}(X,X)$ and $\mathbb{C}\mathfrak{orr}(X,X)$
AV@R, Average Value-at-Risk, 258 $\bar{\mathfrak{P}}$, set of probability measures, 306 $\mathbb{D}(A, B)$, deviation of set A from set B,	$\hat{S}_{N}^{\varepsilon}$, the set of ε -optimal solutions of the SAA problem, 181 $\hat{\vartheta}_{N}$, optimal value of the SAA problem,
334 D[Z], dispersion measure of random variable Z, 254 E, expectation, 361 H(A, B), Hausdorff distance between sets A and B, 334 N, set of positive integers, 359	156 $\hat{f}_N(x)$, sample average function, 155 $1_A(\cdot)$, characteristic function of set A , 334 int(C), interior of set C , 336 $\lfloor a \rfloor$, integer part of $a \in \mathbb{R}$, 219 lsc f , lower semicontinuous hull of function f , 333

xii List of Notations

 \mathcal{R}_C , radial cone to set C, 337 \mathcal{T}_C , tangent cone to set C, 337 $\nabla^2 f(x)$, Hessian matrix of second order partial derivatives, 179 θ , subdifferential, 338 ∂°, Clarke generalized gradient, 336 ∂_{ε} , epsilon subdifferential, 380 pos W, positive hull of matrix W, 29 Pr(A), probability of event A, 360 ri, relative interior, 337 σ_p^+ , upper semideviation, 255 σ_p^- , lower semideviation, 255 $\sqrt{@R_{\alpha}}$, Value-at-Risk, 256 Var[X], variance of X, 14 ϑ^* , optimal value of the true problem, 156 $\xi_{[t]} = (\xi_1, \dots, \xi_t)$, history of the process, $a \lor b = \max\{a, b\}, 186$ f^* , conjugate of function f, 338 $f^{\circ}(x, d)$, generalized directional derivative, 336 g'(x, h), directional derivative, 334 $o_p(\cdot)$, term, 382 p-efficient point, 116 iid, independently identically distributed,

Preface

The main topic of this book is optimization problems involving uncertain parameters, for which stochastic models are available. Although many ways have been proposed to model uncertain quantities, stochastic models have proved their flexibility and usefulness in diverse areas of science. This is mainly due to solid mathematical foundations and theoretical richness of the theory of probability and stochastic processes, and to sound statistical techniques of using real data.

Optimization problems involving stochastic models occur in almost all areas of science and engineering, from telecommunication and medicine to finance. This stimulates interest in rigorous ways of formulating, analyzing, and solving such problems. Due to the presence of random parameters in the model, the theory combines concepts of the optimization theory, the theory of probability and statistics, and functional analysis. Moreover, in recent years the theory and methods of stochastic programming have undergone major advances. All these factors motivated us to present in an accessible and rigorous form contemporary models and ideas of stochastic programming. We hope that the book will encourage other researchers to apply stochastic programming models and to undertake further studies of this fascinating and rapidly developing area.

We do not try to provide a comprehensive presentation of all aspects of stochastic programming, but we rather concentrate on theoretical foundations and recent advances in selected areas. The book is organized into seven chapters. The first chapter addresses modeling issues. The basic concepts, such as recourse actions, chance (probabilistic) constraints, and the nonanticipativity principle, are introduced in the context of specific models. The discussion is aimed at providing motivation for the theoretical developments in the book, rather than practical recommendations.

Chapters 2 and 3 present detailed development of the theory of two-stage and multistage stochastic programming problems. We analyze properties of the models and develop optimality conditions and duality theory in a rather general setting. Our analysis covers general distributions of uncertain parameters and provides special results for discrete distributions, which are relevant for numerical methods. Due to specific properties of two- and multistage stochastic programming problems, we were able to derive many of these results without resorting to methods of functional analysis.

The basic assumption in the modeling and technical developments is that the probability distribution of the random data is not influenced by our actions (decisions). In some applications, this assumption could be unjustified. However, dependence of probability distribution on decisions typically destroys the convex structure of the optimization problems considered, and our analysis exploits convexity in a significant way.

xiv Preface

Chapter 4 deals with chance (probabilistic) constraints, which appear naturally in many applications. The chapter presents the current state of the theory, focusing on the structure of the problems, optimality theory, and duality. We present generalized convexity of functions and measures, differentiability, and approximations of probability functions. Much attention is devoted to problems with separable chance constraints and problems with discrete distributions. We also analyze problems with first order stochastic dominance constraints, which can be viewed as problems with continuum of probabilistic constraints. Many of the presented results are relatively new and were not previously available in standard textbooks.

Chapter 5 is devoted to statistical inference in stochastic programming. The starting point of the analysis is that the probability distribution of the random data vector is approximated by an empirical probability measure. Consequently, the "true" (expected value) optimization problem is replaced by its sample average approximation (SAA). Origins of this statistical inference are in the classical theory of the maximum likelihood method routinely used in statistics. Our motivation and applications are somewhat different, because we aim at solving stochastic programming problems by Monte Carlo sampling techniques. That is, the sample is generated in the computer and its size is constrained only by the computational resources needed to solve the constructed SAA problem. One of the byproducts of this theory is the complexity analysis of two-stage and multistage stochastic programming. Already in the case of two-stage stochastic programming, the number of scenarios (discretization points) grows exponentially with an increase in the number of random parameters. Furthermore, for multistage problems, the computational complexity also grows exponentially with the increase of the number of stages.

In Chapter 6 we outline the modern theory of risk averse approaches to stochastic programming. We focus on the analysis of the models, optimality theory, and duality. Static and two-stage risk averse models are analyzed in much detail. We also outline a risk averse approach to multistage problems, using conditional risk mappings and the principle of "time consistency."

Chapter 7 contains formulations of technical results used in the other parts of the book. For some of these less-known results we give proofs, while others refer to the literature. The subject index can help the reader quickly find a required definition or formulation of a needed technical result.

Several important aspects of stochastic programming have been left out. We do not discuss numerical methods for solving stochastic programming problems, except in section 5.9, where the stochastic approximation method and its relation to complexity estimates are considered. Of course, numerical methods is an important topic which deserves careful analysis. This, however, is a vast and separate area which should be considered in a more general framework of modern optimization methods and to a large extent would lead outside the scope of this book.

We also decided not to include a thorough discussion of stochastic integer programming. The theory and methods of solving stochastic integer programming problems draw heavily from the theory of general integer programming. Their comprehensive presentation would entail discussion of many concepts and methods of this vast field, which would have little connection with the rest of the book.

At the beginning of each chapter, we indicate the authors who were primarily responsible for writing the material, but the book is the creation of all three of us, and we share equal responsibility for errors and inaccuracies that escaped our attention.

Preface xv

We thank the Stevens Institute of Technology and Rutgers University for granting sabbatical leaves to Darinka Dentcheva and Andrzej Ruszczyński, during which a large portion of this work was written. Andrzej Ruszczyński is also thankful to the Department of Operations Research and Financial Engineering of Princeton University for providing him with excellent conditions for his stay during the sabbatical leave.

Alexander Shapiro, Darinka Dentcheva, and Andrzej Ruszczyński

Contents

List	of Notati	ons		хi
Prefa	ace			xiii
1	Stochastic Programming Models			1
	1.1	Introduction		1
	1.2	Inventory .		1
		1.2.1	The News Vendor Problem	1
		1.2.2	Chance Constraints	5
		1.2.3	Multistage Models	6
	1.3	Multiproduc	t Assembly	9
		1.3.1	Two-Stage Model	9
		1.3.2	Chance Constrained Model	10
		1.3.3	Multistage Model	12
	1.4	Portfolio Se	lection	13
		1.4.1	Static Model	13
		1.4.2	Multistage Portfolio Selection	16
		1.4.3	Decision Rules	21
	1.5	Supply Chai	in Network Design	22
	Exercis			25
2	T C4	Ducklow		27
2	2.1	age Problem	Stage Problems	-
	2.1	2.1.1	Basic Properties	
		2.1.1	The Expected Recourse Cost for Discrete Distributions	
		2.1.2	The Expected Recourse Cost for General Distributions	32
		2.1.3	Optimality Conditions	
	2.2		Two-Stage Problems	
	2.2	2.2.1	General Properties	
			Expected Recourse Cost	
		2.2.2	The state of the s	
	2.2	2.2.3	Optimality Conditions	
	2.3		o-Stage Problems	
		2.3.1	Problem Formulation, Interchangeability	
	2.4	2.3.2	Convex Two-Stage Problems	52

viii Contents

		2.4.1	Scenario Formulation	. 52
		2.4.2	Dualization of Nonanticipativity Constraints	
		2.4.3	Nonanticipativity Duality for General Distributions	
		2.4.4	Value of Perfect Information	. 59
	Exerc	cises		
3	Mult	istage Probl	lems	63
	3.1		Formulation	
		3.1.1	The General Setting	
		3.1.2	The Linear Case	
		3.1.3	Scenario Trees	
		3.1.4	Algebraic Formulation of Nonanticipativity Constraints	. 09 . 71
	3.2		rigoriale Formaliation of Honarice patricky Constraints	
	J.2	3.2.1	Convex Multistage Problems	
		3.2.2		
		3.2.3	Optimality Conditions	. 77
		3.2.3	Dualization of Feasibility Constraints	
	Г		Dualization of Nonanticipativity Constraints	
	Exerc	cises		. 84
4			odels with Probabilistic Constraints	87
	4.1	Introducti	ion	. 87
	4.2	Convexit	y in Probabilistic Optimization	. 94
		4.2.1	Generalized Concavity of Functions and Measures	
		4.2.2	Convexity of Probabilistically Constrained Sets	
		4.2.3	Connectedness of Probabilistically Constrained Sets	
	4.3		Probabilistic Constraints	. 114
		4.3.1	Continuity and Differentiability Properties of	
			Distribution Functions	. 114
		4.3.2	<i>p</i> -Efficient Points	115
		4.3.3	Optimality Conditions and Duality Theory	
	4.4	Optimizat	tion Problems with Nonseparable Probabilistic Constraints	132
		4.4.1	Differentiability of Probability Functions and Optimality	
			Conditions	133
		4.4.2	Approximations of Nonseparable Probabilistic	
			Constraints	136
	4.5	Semi-infin	nite Probabilistic Problems	
	Exerc		.,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,	
5	Statis	tical Infere	nce	155
	5.1			
		5.1.1	Consistency of SAA Estimators	
		5.1.2	Asymptotics of the SAA Optimal Value	162
		5.1.3	Second Order Asymptotics	
		5.1.4		
	5.2		Minimax Stochastic Programs	170
	5.4	5.2.1	Generalized Equations	1/4
		3.2.1	Consistency of Solutions of the SAA Generalized	100
			Equations	1/5

Contents

			· ·	
		5.2.2	Asymptotics of SAA Generalized Equations Estimators	. 177
	5.3	Monte Ca	rlo Sampling Methods	. 180
		5.3.1	Exponential Rates of Convergence and Sample Size	
			Estimates in the Case of a Finite Feasible Set	. 181
		5.3.2	Sample Size Estimates in the General Case	. 185
		5.3.3	Finite Exponential Convergence	. 191
	5.4	Ouasi-Me	onte Carlo Methods	
	5.5	Variance-	Reduction Techniques	. 198
		5.5.1	Latin Hypercube Sampling	. 198
		5.5.2	Linear Control Random Variables Method	. 200
		5.5.3	Importance Sampling and Likelihood Ratio Methods	
	5.6	Validation	n Analysis	
		5.6.1	Estimation of the Optimality Gap	. 202
		5.6.2	Statistical Testing of Optimality Conditions	. 207
	5.7		Constrained Problems	. 210
	5.7	5.7.1	Monte Carlo Sampling Approach	. 210
		5.7.2	Validation of an Optimal Solution	. 216
	5.8		thod Applied to Multistage Stochastic Programming	. 220
	3.0	5.8.1	Statistical Properties of Multistage SAA Estimators	. 221
		5.8.2	Complexity Estimates of Multistage Programs	. 226
	5.9		c Approximation Method	
	3.5	5.9.1	Classical Approach	
		5.9.2	Robust SA Approach	. 233
		5.9.3	Mirror Descent SA Method	. 236
		5.9.4	Accuracy Certificates for Mirror Descent SA Solutions.	. 244
	Exerc			
	Bacic	1303		
6	Risk	Averse Opt	imization	253
	6.1	Introduct	iion	. 253
	6.2	Mean-Ri	isk Models	. 254
		6.2.1	Main Ideas of Mean-Risk Analysis	. 254
		6.2.2	Semideviations	. 255
		6.2.3	Weighted Mean Deviations from Quantiles	. 256
		6.2.4	Average Value-at-Risk	
	6.3	Coherent	Risk Measures	
		6.3.1	Differentiability Properties of Risk Measures	. 265
		6.3.2	Examples of Risk Measures	
		6.3.3	Law Invariant Risk Measures and Stochastic Orders	. 279
		6.3.4	Relation to Ambiguous Chance Constraints	
	6.4	Optimiza	ation of Risk Measures	. 288
		6.4.1	Dualization of Nonanticipativity Constraints	291
		6.4.2	Examples	. 295
	6.5		al Properties of Risk Measures	300
	2.0	6.5.1	Average Value-at-Risk	
		6.5.2	Absolute Semideviation Risk Measure	301
		6.5.3	Von Mises Statistical Functionals	
	6.6		olem of Moments	
	5.0		NUMBER OF THE PROPERTY AND PROPERTY AND THE PROPERTY OF THE PR	

Contents

6.7	Multistage Risk Averse Optimization		
	6.7.1		
	6.7.2		
	6.7.3		
Exercise			
Racker	ound Mater	ial	333
_			334
111	7.1.1		
	7.1.2		
	7.1.3		
	7.1.4		
	7.1.5	•	
	7.1.6		
7.2	Probability	1 0	
	7.2.1	Probability Spaces and Random Variables	
	7.2.2	Conditional Probability and Conditional Expectation	363
	7.2.3	Measurable Multifunctions and Random Functions	365
	7.2.4	Expectation Functions	368
	7.2.5	Uniform Laws of Large Numbers	374
	7.2.6	Law of Large Numbers for Random Sets and	
		Subdifferentials	379
	7.2.7	Delta Method	382
	7.2.8	Exponential Bounds of the Large Deviations Theory	
	7.2.9	Uniform Exponential Bounds	393
7.3	Elements of		
	7.3.1	Conjugate Duality and Differentiability	401
	7.3.2	Lattice Structure	
Exercis	ses		405
Bibliog	graphical Re	marks	407
ography	7		415
x			431
	7.1 7.2 Fibliog	6.7.1 6.7.2 6.7.3 Exercises	6.7.1 Scenario Tree Formulation 6.7.2 Conditional Risk Mappings 6.7.3 Risk Averse Multistage Stochastic Programming Exercises Background Material 7.1 Optimization and Convex Analysis 7.1.1 Directional Differentiability 7.1.2 Elements of Convex Analysis 7.1.3 Optimization and Duality 7.1.4 Optimality Conditions 7.1.5 Perturbation Analysis 7.1.6 Epiconvergence 7.2 Probability 7.2.1 Probability Spaces and Random Variables 7.2.2 Conditional Probability and Conditional Expectation 7.2.3 Measurable Multifunctions and Random Functions 7.2.4 Expectation Functions 7.2.5 Uniform Laws of Large Numbers 7.2.6 Law of Large Numbers for Random Sets and Subdifferentials 7.2.7 Delta Method 7.2.8 Exponential Bounds of the Large Deviations Theory 7.2.9 Uniform Exponential Bounds 7.3.1 Conjugate Duality and Differentiability 7.3.2 Lattice Structure Exercises Bibliographical Remarks

Chapter 1

Stochastic Programming Models

Andrzej Ruszczyński and Alexander Shapiro

1.1 Introduction

Readers familiar with the area of optimization can easily name several classes of optimization problems, for which advanced theoretical results exist and efficient numerical methods have been found. We can mention linear programming, quadratic programming, convex optimization, and nonlinear optimization. *Stochastic programming* sounds similar, but no specific formulation plays the role of the generic stochastic programming problem. The presence of random quantities in the model under consideration opens the door to a wealth of different problem settings, reflecting different aspects of the applied problem at hand. This chapter illustrates the main approaches that can be followed when developing a suitable stochastic optimization model. For the purpose of presentation, these are very simplified versions of problems encountered in practice, but we hope that they help us to convey our main message.

1.2 Inventory

1.2.1 The News Vendor Problem

Suppose that a company has to decide about order quantity x of a certain product to satisfy demand d. The cost of ordering is c > 0 per unit. If the demand d is larger than x, then the company makes an additional order for the unit price $b \ge 0$. The cost of this is equal to b(d-x) if d > x and is 0 otherwise. On the other hand, if d < x, then a holding cost of

 $h(x-d) \ge 0$ is incurred. The total cost is then equal to 1

$$F(x,d) = cx + b[d-x]_{+} + h[x-d]_{+}.$$
(1.1)

We assume that b > c, i.e., the backorder penalty cost is *larger* than the ordering cost.

The objective is to minimize the total cost F(x, d). Here x is the decision variable and the demand d is a parameter. Therefore, if the demand is known, the corresponding optimization problem can be formulated as

$$\min_{x \ge 0} F(x, d).$$
(1.2)

The objective function F(x, d) can be rewritten as

$$F(x,d) = \max\{(c-b)x + bd, (c+h)x - hd\},\tag{1.3}$$

which is a piecewise linear function with a minimum attained at $\bar{x} = d$. That is, if the demand d is known, then (as expected) the best decision is to order exactly the demand quantity d.

Consider now the case when the ordering decision should be made *before* a realization of the demand becomes known. One possible way to proceed in such a situation is to view the demand D as a *random variable*. By capital D, we denote the demand when viewed as a random variable in order to distinguish it from its particular realization d. We assume, further, that the probability distribution of D is *known*. This makes sense in situations where the ordering procedure repeats itself and the distribution of D can be estimated from historical data. Then it makes sense to talk about the expected value, denoted $\mathbb{E}[F(x,D)]$, of the total cost viewed as a function of the order quantity x. Consequently, we can write the corresponding optimization problem

$$\min_{x \ge 0} \left\{ f(x) := \mathbb{E}[F(x, D)] \right\}.$$
(1.4)

The above formulation approaches the problem by optimizing (minimizing) the total cost *on average*. What would be a possible justification of such approach? If the process repeats itself, then by the Law of Large Numbers, for a given (fixed) x, the average of the total cost, over many repetitions, will converge (with probability one) to the expectation $\mathbb{E}[F(x, D)]$, and, indeed, in that case the solution of problem (1.4) will be optimal on average.

The above problem gives a very simple example of a *two-stage problem* or a problem with a *recourse action*. At the first stage, before a realization of the demand D is known, one has to make a decision about the ordering quantity x. At the second stage, after a realization d of demand D becomes known, it may happen that d > x. In that case, the company takes the recourse action of ordering the required quantity d - x at the higher cost of b > c.

The next question is how to solve the expected value problem (1.4). In the present case it can be solved in a closed form. Consider the cumulative distribution function (cdf) $H(x) := \Pr(D \le x)$ of the random variable D. Note that H(x) = 0 for all x < 0, because the demand cannot be negative. The expectation $\mathbb{E}[F(x, D)]$ can be written in the following form:

$$\mathbb{E}[F(x,D)] = b\,\mathbb{E}[D] + (c-b)x + (b+h)\int_0^x H(z)dz. \tag{1.5}$$

For a number $a \in \mathbb{R}$, $[a]_+$ denotes the maximum $\max\{a, 0\}$.