

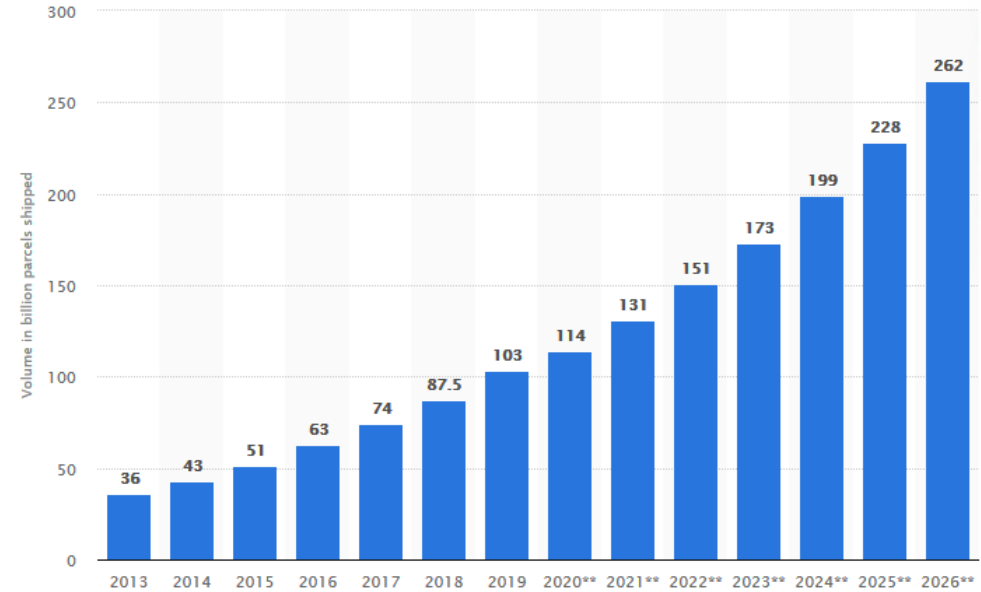
Modeling soft unloading constraints in the multi-drop CLP

Alessio Trivella
ETH Zurich

Joint work with: Guillem Bonet Filella and Francesco Corman

Motivation

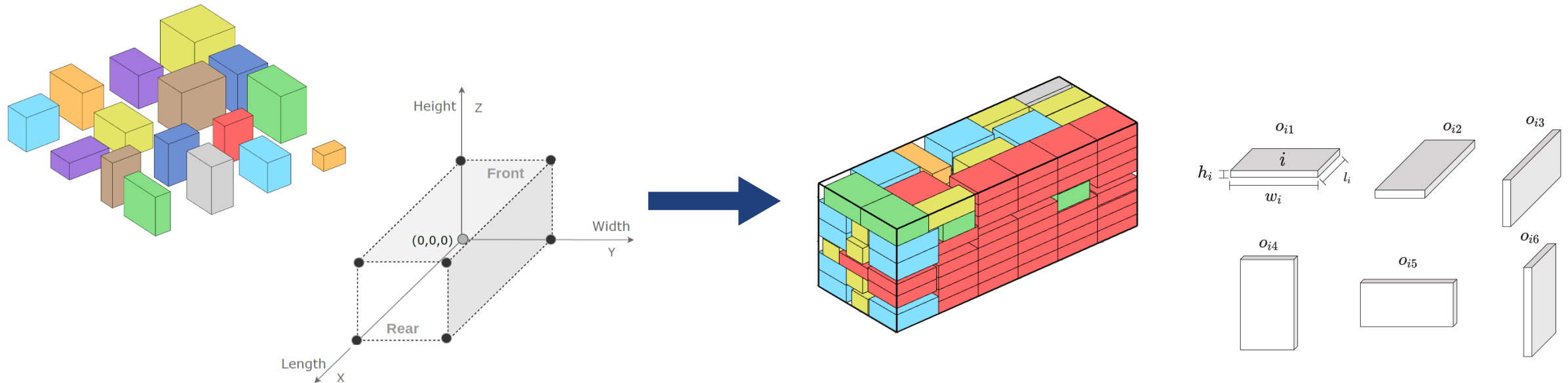
- The logistics sector is growing
- The number of parcels shipped globally is expected to **double** from 2020 (>100 billion) to 2025 (>200 billion)
- **Covid-19** has exacerbated this trend
- This growth is an **opportunity** for logistics operators...
...but also a **challenge**, due to increasing operating costs and environmental concerns
- The **efficient loading of vehicles / containers** plays a key role in turning this opportunity into higher profits / sustainability, but is often a complex task in practice



Global parcel shipping volume (billion parcels); [statista.com](https://www.statista.com) (2020)

Container Loading Problem (CLP)

- Given a set of 3D items (cuboids), each with a value,
- and a larger container,
- load items maximizing value, s.t.: non-overlapping, boundaries, orthogonal placements

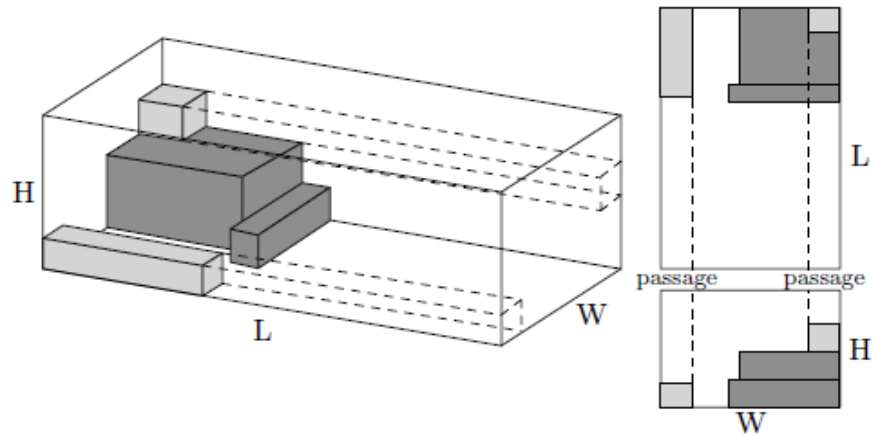


- CLP is well studied, including practical constraints (e.g., [Bortfeldt and Wascher 2013](#), [Silva et al. 2018](#), [Alonso et al. 2019](#), [Gajda et al. 2021](#), [Nascimento et al. 2021](#))

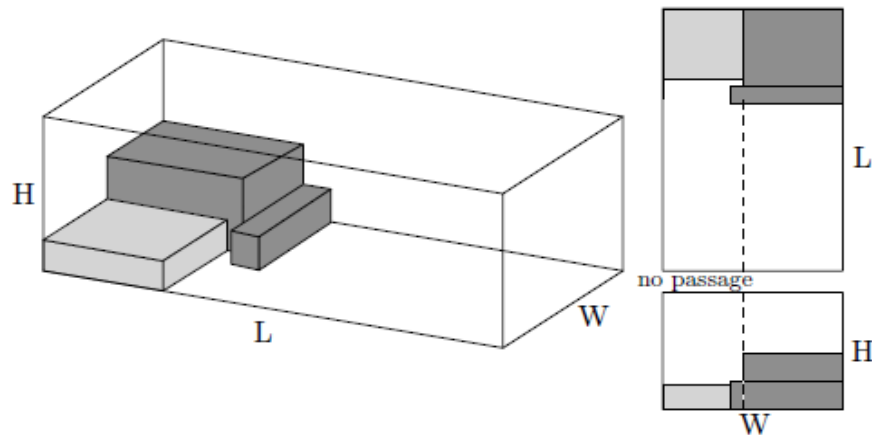
Multi-drop container loading problem (MDCCLP)

- Multiple customers to visit in a predetermined sequence (no routing)
- Account for the unloading sequence to avoid relocating cargo during delivery
- Also well studied but **unloading constraints** treated as **hard constraints** (Gendreau et al. 2006, Iori et al. 2007, Christensen and Rouse 2009, Pan et al. 2009, Fuellerer et al. 2010, Iori and Martello 2010, Liu et al. 2011, Junqueira et al. 2012, de Queiroz and Miyazawa 2013, Martinez et al. 2015, Hokama et al. 2016, Pollaris et al. 2016, Iori et al. 2020, Ferreira et al. 2021, Nascimento et al. 2021)
 - very constrained loading solutions that carry less cargo value
- Our goal: use **soft unloading constraints** to manage the **trade-off between cargo value and penalties** due to constraint violations
- Literature:
 - Gajda et al. (2021): count number of relocations and do not minimize it explicitly in the algorithm
 - Lurkin and Schyns (2015): aircraft loading problem with fixed slots arranged into rows

Visibility and Above constraints



(a) Visible



(b) Not visible

- **Visibility:** item to unload visible from unloading side

Visibility is violated when

$$(c_i < c_j) \wedge (x_j \geq x_i + l_i) \wedge \text{OVERLAP}(i, j, y) \wedge \text{OVERLAP}(i, j, z)$$

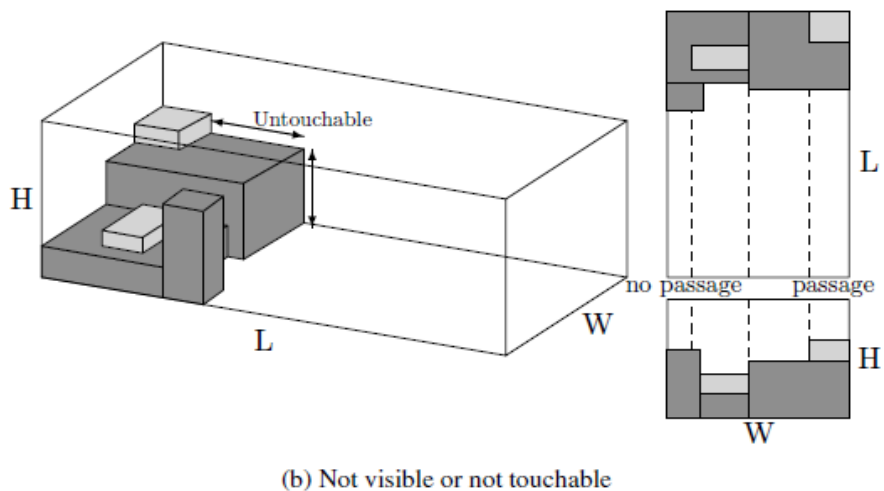
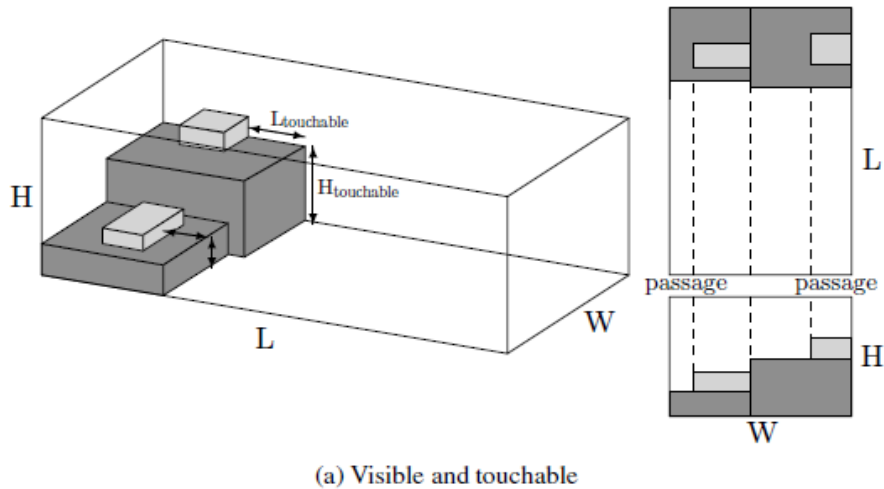
where

$$\text{OVERLAP}(i, j, x) \iff (x_i \leq x_j < x_i + l_i) \vee (x_j \leq x_i < x_j + l_j)$$

We assign a cost / penalty $f_V(q_j, v_j, z_j) \geq 0$

- **Above:** item to unload is not under other items. Similar formulation, penalty $f_A(q_j, v_j, z_j) \geq 0$

Reachability constraints



- Item to unload is unreachable by a human operator (or machine / forklift)
- Distance between item and position the operator can reach is larger than a fixed quantity

$$(c_i < c_j) \wedge (x_j + l_j - (x_i + l_i) \geq \min \{H_{touchable} - z_i, L_{touchable}\})$$

- Penalty for violations $f_R(q_j, v_j, z_j, \delta_{ij})$

MIP formulation (1/2)

- Above + Visibility
- Rotations omitted here for simplicity (full model in appendix)

1 Boundaries

$$\begin{aligned}
 t_i, b_{ij}, f_{ij}, u_{ij} &\in \{0, 1\} \quad \forall i, j \in \mathcal{B}, \\
 x_i &\in [0, L - l_i], \quad \forall i \in \mathcal{B}, \\
 y_i &\in [0, W - w_i], \quad \forall i \in \mathcal{B}, \\
 z_i &\in [0, H - h_i], \quad \forall i \in \mathcal{B}.
 \end{aligned}$$

2 Non-overlapping constraints

$$\begin{aligned}
 b_{ij} + b_{ji} + f_{ij} + f_{ji} + u_{ij} + u_{ji} + (1 - t_i) + (1 - t_j) &\geq 1 && \forall i, j \in \mathcal{B}, i < j, \\
 x_i + l_i &\leq x_j + L(1 - b_{ij}) && \forall i, j \in \mathcal{B}, \\
 y_i + w_i &\leq y_j + W(1 - f_{ij}) && \forall i, j \in \mathcal{B}, \\
 z_i + h_i &\leq z_j + H(1 - u_{ij}) && \forall i, j \in \mathcal{B}.
 \end{aligned}$$

3 Track when items do overlap

$$\begin{aligned}
 x_j &\leq x_i + l_i + L b_{ij} && \forall i, j \in \mathcal{B}, c_i \neq c_j, \\
 y_j &\leq y_i + w_i + W f_{ij} && \forall i, j \in \mathcal{B}, c_i \neq c_j, \\
 z_j &\leq z_i + h_i + H u_{ij} && \forall i, j \in \mathcal{B}, c_i \neq c_j.
 \end{aligned}$$

MIP formulation (2/2)

4 Model joint overlap in two dimensions (requires new binaries and constraints)

$$a_{ij} = 1 \iff \text{OVERLAP}(i, j, x) \wedge \text{OVERLAP}(i, j, y)$$

$$d_{ij} = 1 \iff \text{OVERLAP}(i, j, y) \wedge \text{OVERLAP}(i, j, z)$$

$$b_{ij} + b_{ji} + f_{ij} + f_{ji} \geq 1 - a_{ij}$$

$$b_{ij} + b_{ji} + f_{ij} + f_{ji} \leq 2(1 - a_{ij})$$

$$f_{ij} + f_{ji} + u_{ij} + u_{ji} \geq 1 - d_{ij}$$

$$f_{ij} + f_{ji} + u_{ij} + u_{ji} \leq 2(1 - d_{ij})$$

$$\forall i, j \in \mathcal{B}, c_i < c_j,$$

$$\forall i, j \in \mathcal{B}, c_i < c_j,$$

$$\forall i, j \in \mathcal{B}, c_i < c_j,$$

$$\forall i, j \in \mathcal{B}, c_i < c_j.$$

5 Couple overlapping in two directions with condition on third direction

$$p_{ij} + 1 \geq a_{ij} + u_{ij}$$

$$r_{ij} + 1 \geq d_{ij} + b_{ij}$$

$$\forall i, j \in \mathcal{B}, c_i < c_j,$$

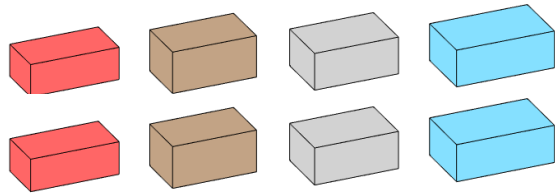
$$\forall i, j \in \mathcal{B}, c_i < c_j.$$

6 Objective:

$$\max \sum_{i \in \mathcal{B}} \pi_i t_i - \sum_{i \in \mathcal{B}} \sum_{j \in \mathcal{B}: c_i < c_j} [p_{ij} \cdot f_A(q_j, v_j, z_j) + r_{ij} \cdot f_V(q_j, v_j, z_j)]$$

Illustrative example: Setting

- Small instance: 4 customers, 8 items, all rotations allowed



| Demand | Length (l_i , cm) | Width (w_i , cm) | Height (h_i , cm) | Volume (v_i , m ³) | Weight (q_i , ton) | Value (π_i) | customer (c_i) |
|--------|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 2 | 95 | 50 | 35 | 0.166 | 0.22 | 0.22 | 1 |
| 2 | 90 | 55 | 45 | 0.223 | 0.24 | 0.24 | 2 |
| 2 | 90 | 60 | 40 | 0.216 | 0.26 | 0.26 | 3 |
| 2 | 105 | 65 | 40 | 0.273 | 0.28 | 0.28 | 4 |

- Linear penalties in volume / weight (i.e., MILP):

$$f_A(q_j, v_j, z_j) := \alpha_A q_j + \beta_A v_j + \gamma_A,$$

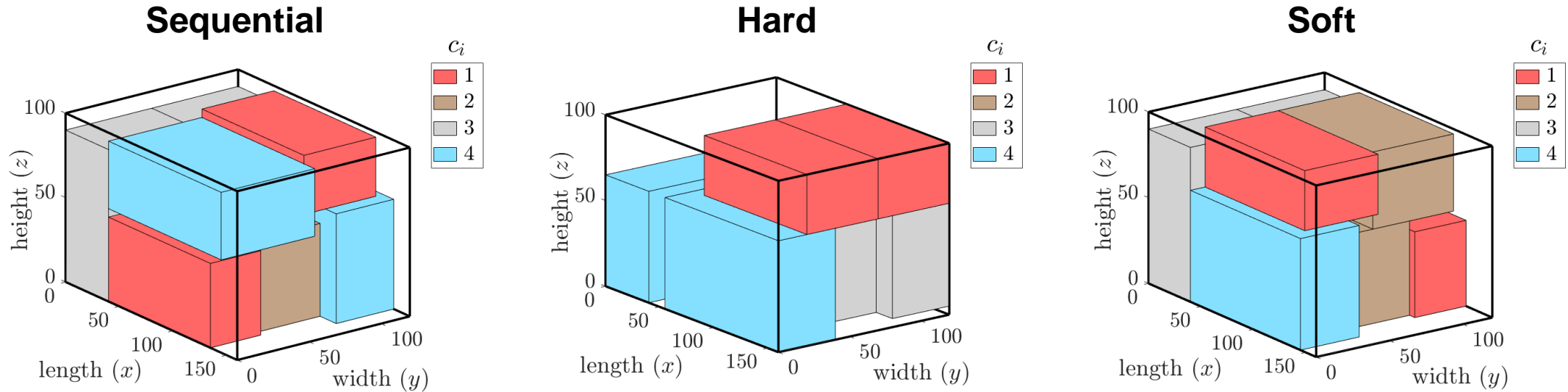
$$f_V(q_j, v_j, z_j) := \alpha_V q_j + \beta_V v_j + \gamma_V,$$
- With coefficients $(\alpha_A, \beta_A, \gamma_A, \alpha_V, \beta_V, \gamma_V) = (0.1, 0.1, 0, 0.1, 0.1, 0)$
- Solution approach / Model:

Sequential strategy

Hard unloading
constraints

Soft unloading
constraints

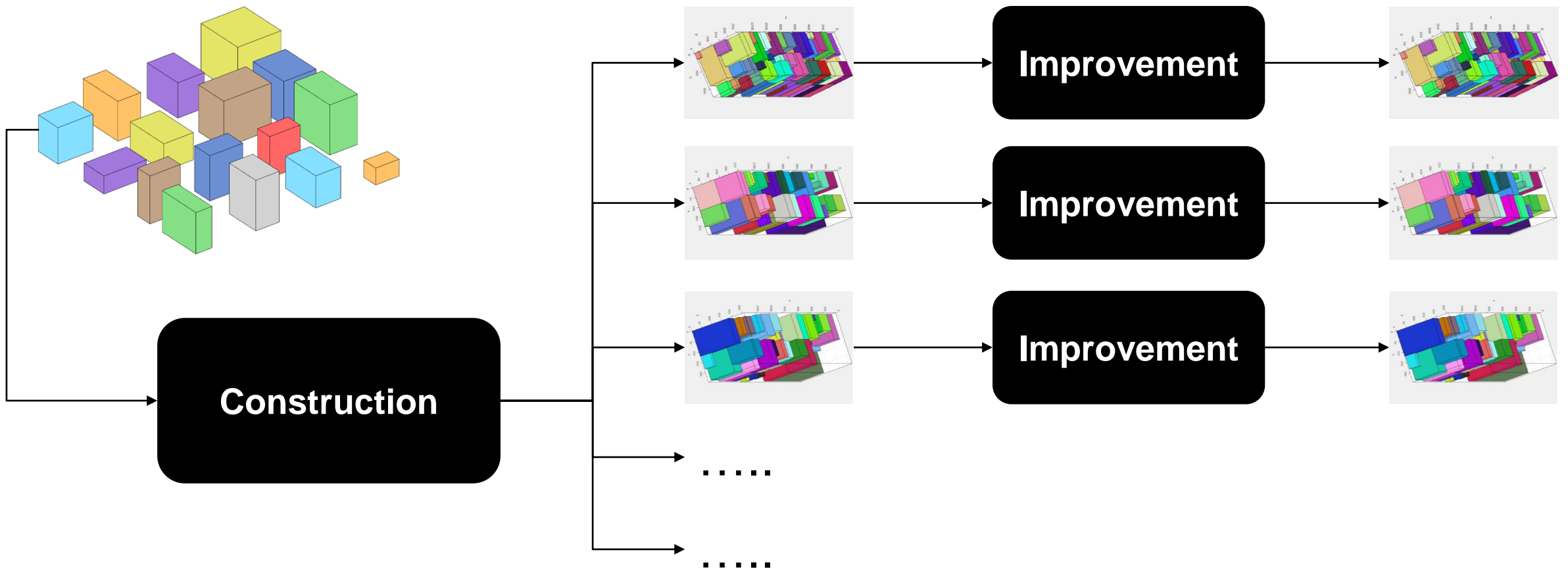
Illustrative example: Results



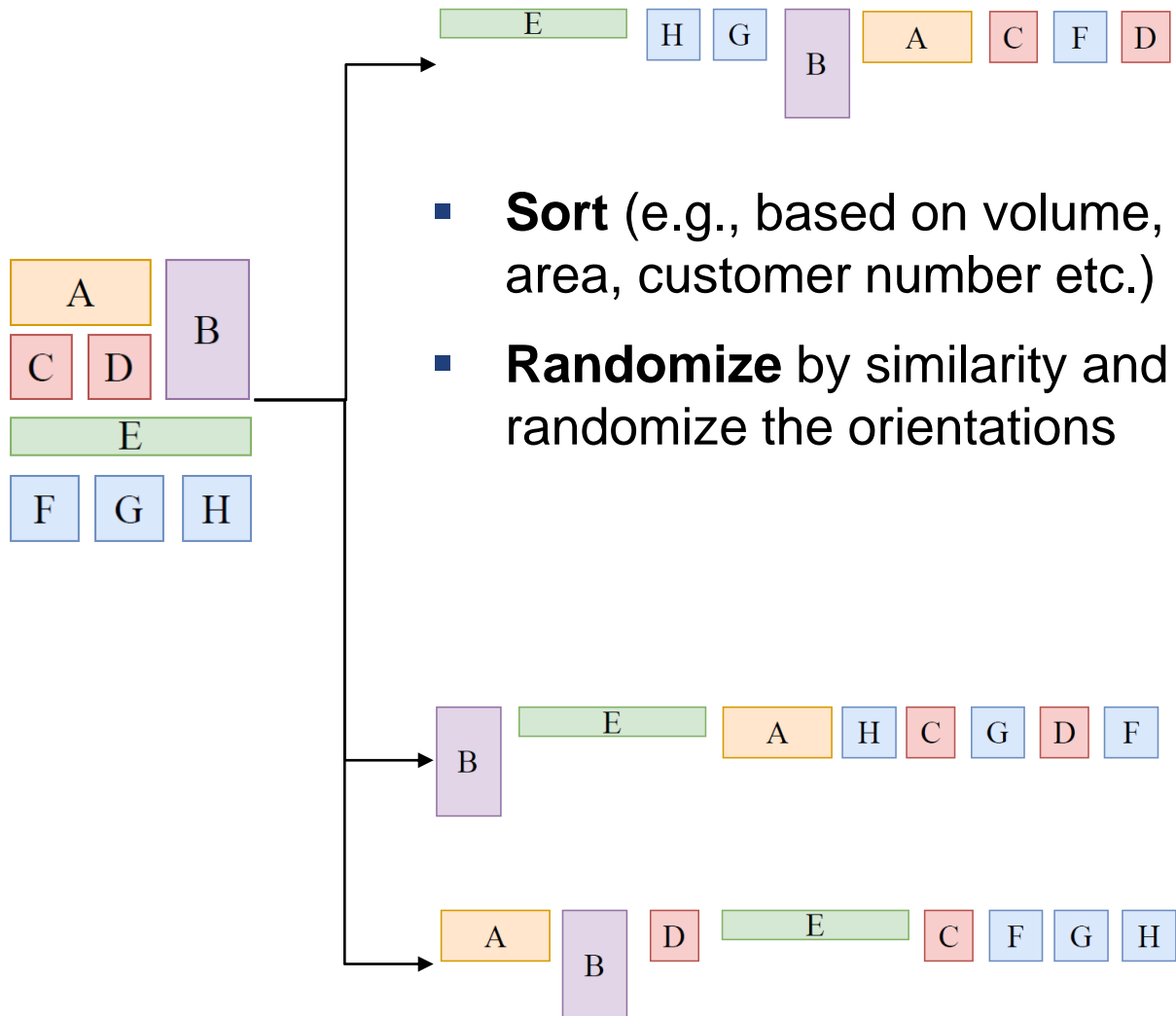
| Strategy | Objective | Cargo | | Penalty | | Runtime (s) |
|------------|-------------|-------------|---------|------------|--------------|-------------|
| | | Value | # items | Amount | # violations | |
| Sequential | 74.2 | 88.0 | 7 | 13.8 | 5 | 0.8 |
| Hard | 76.0 | 76.0 | 6 | 0.0 | 0 | 8.6 |
| Soft | 80.9 | 86.0 | 7 | 5.1 | 2 | 22.1 |

Heuristic framework

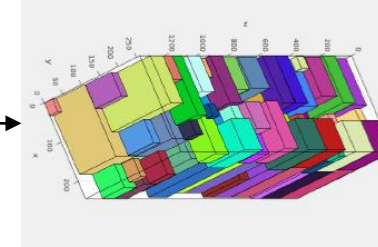
- Motivation: **1** larger instances **2** general penalties **3** reachability constraints



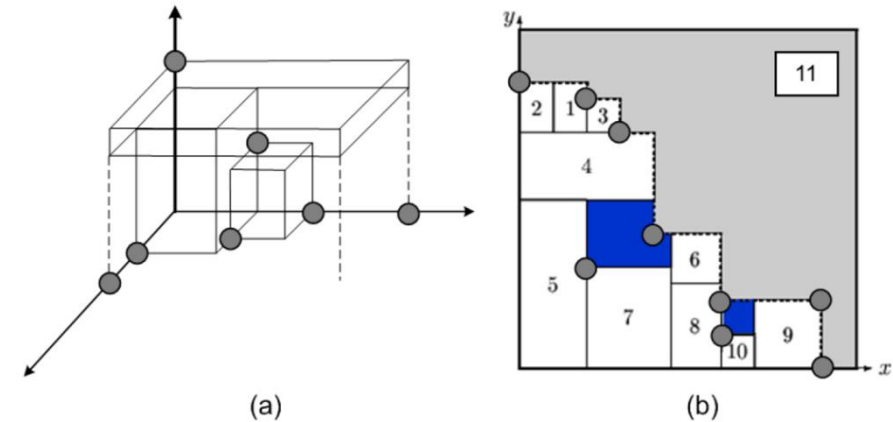
Construction Phase



- **Sort** (e.g., based on volume, area, customer number etc.)
- **Randomize** by similarity and randomize the orientations



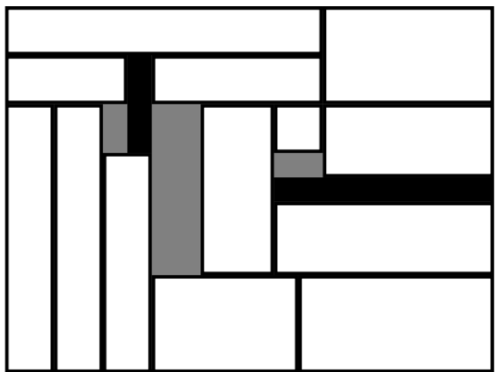
- Fill container with Extreme Points heuristic ([Crainic et al. 2008](#))



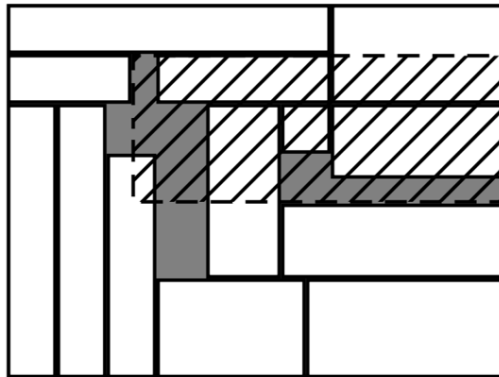
- Re-attempt loading with a retry list

Improvement phase (1/3)

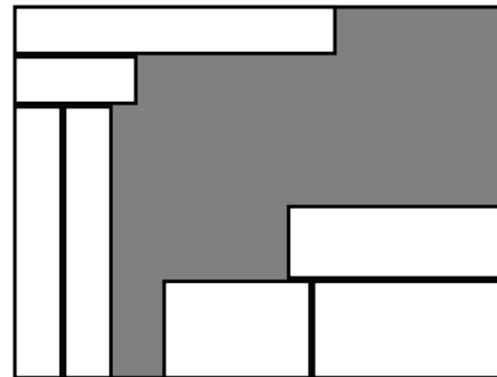
- Unloading constraints are considered only implicitly during construction
- Idea: Improve objective by iteratively emptying and reconstructing regions



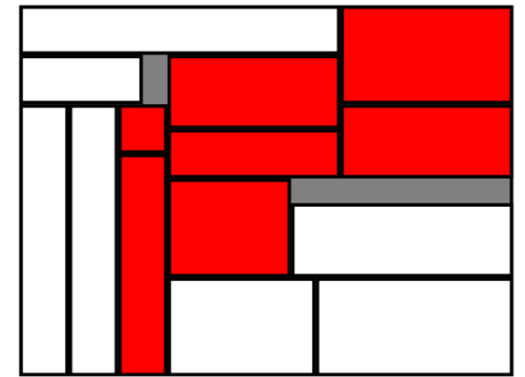
(a) Selecting the spaces



(b) Defining the region



(c) Removing overlapping boxes



(d) Filling

Figure source: [Parreño et al. 2010](#)

Need to specify:

- How to select two items defining the region **(a)** → Use penalty information
- How to refill the region **(d)** → Best cargo value/penalty trade-off

Improvement phase (2/3)

- Choose item pair (and corresponding region) according to three different approaches



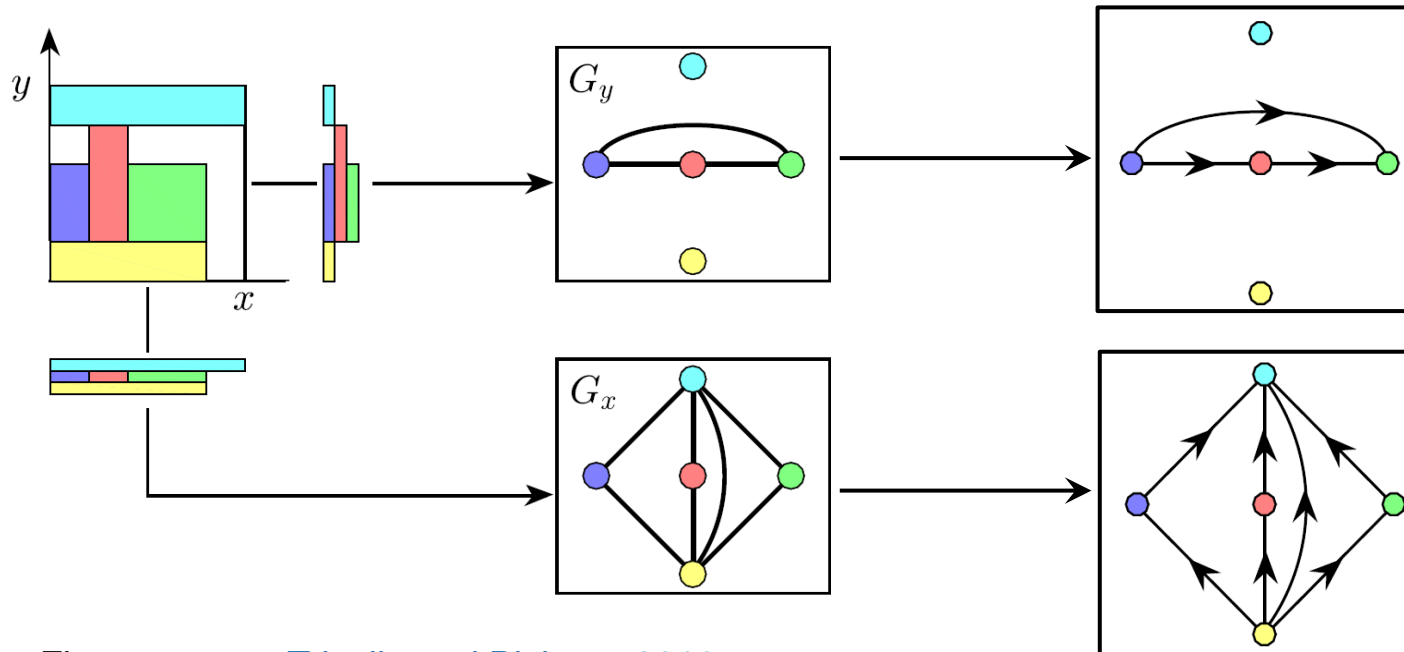
- To fill region, choose item and orientation using best-fit decreasing with merit function

$$m_{io} := \pi_i - \left\{ \sum (C_{ioj} + C_{jio}) : j \in \mathcal{S} \right\}$$

where C_{ioj} is the conflict between item i with orientation o and item j , and \mathcal{S} is the solution

Improvement phase (3/3)

- After re-construction, we:
 - compress the solution into a “gapless” packing
 - and refill the container once more
- We use the interval graphs ([Fekete et al. 2007](#)) to shift items towards lower coordinates



- Pick best solution among:
 - Initial
 - Reconstructed
 - Compressed and refilled

Figure source: [Trivella and Pisinger 2016](#)

Numerical study

- Instances:
 - BR instances from literature ([Bischoff et al. 1995](#), [Davies and Bischoff 1999](#))
 - 1500 instances divided in 15 classes; average of 178 items, maximum of 1961 items
 - We assign weight, value, and divide items among 2 to 8 customers

- Above + Visibility + Reachability:

$$f_A(q_j, v_j, z_j) = (1 + \gamma z_j) \cdot (\alpha q_j + \beta v_j)$$

$$f_V(q_j, v_j, z_j) = (1 + \gamma z_j) \cdot (\alpha q_j + \beta v_j)$$

$$f_R(q_j, v_j, z_j, \delta_{ij}) = (1 + \gamma \delta_{ij}) \cdot (\alpha q_j + \beta v_j)$$

| Set | Penalty level | α | β | γ |
|-----|---------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| P-1 | low | $2.5 \cdot 10^{-3}$ | $5.0 \cdot 10^{-3}$ | $4.5 \cdot 10^{-3}$ |
| P-2 | medium | $7.5 \cdot 10^{-3}$ | $15.0 \cdot 10^{-3}$ | $4.5 \cdot 10^{-3}$ |
| P-3 | high | $12.5 \cdot 10^{-3}$ | $25.0 \cdot 10^{-3}$ | $4.5 \cdot 10^{-3}$ |
| P-4 | very high | $17.5 \cdot 10^{-3}$ | $35.0 \cdot 10^{-3}$ | $4.5 \cdot 10^{-3}$ |

- Solution approach:

Sequential strategy

Only construction phase (30s)

Hard unloading constraints

Modified construction phase (30s)

Soft unloading constraints

Construction (30s) and improvement of 5 solutions (20s each)

Comparison Hard vs. Soft

| Class | Objective value | | | | | Average improvement as percentage | | | |
|-------|-----------------|------|------|------|------|-----------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| | Hard | Soft | | | | Δ (%) | | | |
| | P-* | P-1 | P-2 | P-3 | P-4 | P-1 | P-2 | P-3 | P-4 |
| BR1 | 77.1 | 84.1 | 81.4 | 80.4 | 79.9 | 9.0 | 5.5 | 4.2 | 3.6 |
| BR2 | 76.2 | 83.4 | 80.6 | 79.4 | 78.7 | 9.4 | 5.8 | 4.2 | 3.3 |
| BR3 | 72.8 | 80.9 | 77.0 | 75.3 | 74.5 | 11.2 | 5.8 | 3.5 | 2.4 |
| BR4 | 72.4 | 80.4 | 76.5 | 75.0 | 74.4 | 11.0 | 5.6 | 3.6 | 2.6 |
| BR5 | 72.1 | 79.6 | 75.6 | 74.0 | 73.2 | 10.4 | 4.8 | 2.7 | 1.6 |
| BR6 | 70.7 | 79.0 | 74.6 | 72.8 | 72.0 | 11.7 | 5.5 | 3.0 | 1.8 |
| BR7 | 70.0 | 78.1 | 73.7 | 72.3 | 71.1 | 11.6 | 5.3 | 3.3 | 1.7 |
| BR8 | 69.4 | 77.7 | 73.4 | 71.4 | 70.4 | 12.0 | 5.9 | 3.0 | 1.6 |
| BR9 | 69.4 | 77.0 | 72.7 | 70.9 | 70.0 | 11.0 | 4.7 | 2.2 | 1.0 |
| BR10 | 68.9 | 76.5 | 72.2 | 70.4 | 69.4 | 11.0 | 4.8 | 2.1 | 0.8 |
| BR11 | 69.3 | 76.4 | 72.4 | 70.4 | 69.8 | 10.4 | 4.5 | 1.7 | 0.7 |
| BR12 | 68.4 | 76.1 | 71.4 | 69.6 | 68.8 | 11.2 | 4.4 | 1.6 | 0.6 |
| BR13 | 68.9 | 76.3 | 72.0 | 70.0 | 69.2 | 10.7 | 4.4 | 1.6 | 0.4 |
| BR14 | 68.3 | 75.8 | 71.4 | 69.4 | 68.6 | 11.1 | 4.5 | 1.6 | 0.4 |
| BR15 | 68.7 | 75.9 | 71.4 | 69.6 | 68.9 | 10.5 | 4.0 | 1.3 | 0.3 |
| Mean | 70.8 | 78.5 | 74.4 | 72.7 | 71.9 | 10.8 | 5.0 | 2.6 | 1.5 |

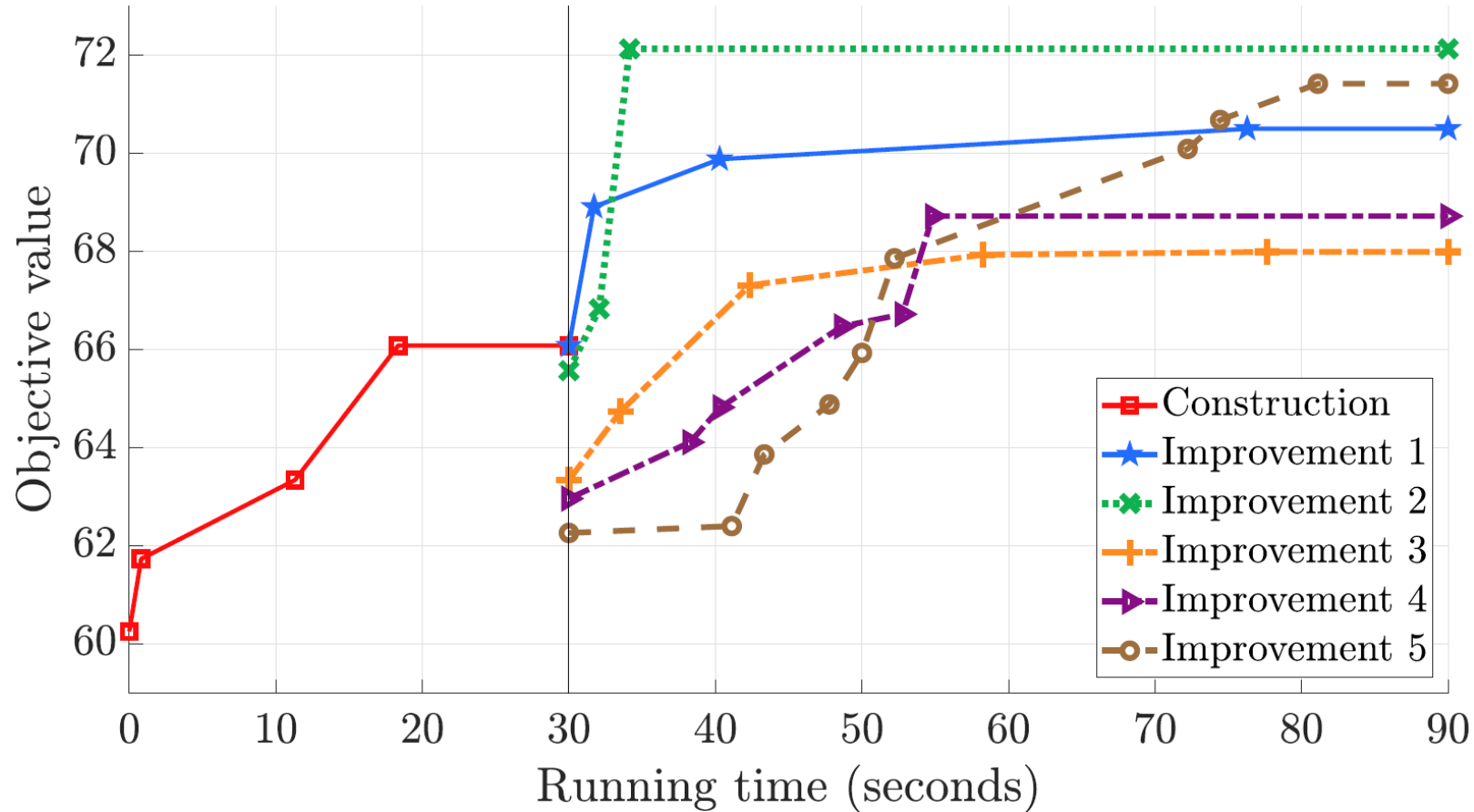
- Improvement ranges in **0-12%**, with an average of **5%**
- **Higher** improvement levels achieved under **lower** penalties
- Exploiting the flexibility of soft unloading constraints is:
 - challenging under high and very high penalties
 - useful in general

Comparison Sequential vs. Soft

| Class | Objective value | | | | Average improvement percentage | | | |
|-------|-----------------|------|------|------|--------------------------------|-----|-----|------|
| | Sequential | | | | Δ (%) | | | |
| | P-1 | P-2 | P-3 | P-4 | P-1 | P-2 | P-3 | P-4 |
| BR1 | 82.0 | 77.1 | 74.1 | 71.5 | 2.5 | 5.6 | 8.4 | 11.7 |
| BR2 | 81.9 | 77.7 | 74.5 | 71.6 | 1.8 | 3.7 | 6.7 | 9.9 |
| BR3 | 79.6 | 73.8 | 69.6 | 65.8 | 1.7 | 4.3 | 8.1 | 13.2 |
| BR4 | 78.7 | 73.4 | 69.8 | 66.6 | 2.1 | 4.2 | 7.4 | 11.7 |
| BR5 | 78.2 | 72.0 | 67.7 | 63.8 | 1.8 | 5.0 | 9.4 | 14.9 |
| BR6 | 77.3 | 71.8 | 67.9 | 64.2 | 2.2 | 3.9 | 7.4 | 12.2 |
| BR7 | 76.3 | 71.1 | 67.1 | 63.5 | 2.3 | 3.7 | 7.6 | 12.0 |
| BR8 | 75.7 | 70.7 | 67.3 | 64.2 | 2.7 | 3.8 | 6.1 | 9.7 |
| BR9 | 75.1 | 70.6 | 67.3 | 64.2 | 2.5 | 3.0 | 5.3 | 9.0 |
| BR10 | 74.4 | 70.2 | 66.9 | 63.8 | 2.7 | 2.9 | 5.2 | 8.8 |
| BR11 | 74.5 | 70.2 | 67.1 | 64.2 | 2.6 | 3.0 | 4.9 | 8.8 |
| BR12 | 74.1 | 69.6 | 66.2 | 62.9 | 2.7 | 2.6 | 5.1 | 9.3 |
| BR13 | 74.4 | 70.4 | 67.3 | 64.3 | 2.6 | 2.3 | 4.1 | 7.6 |
| BR14 | 74.0 | 69.6 | 66.1 | 62.8 | 2.4 | 2.6 | 5.0 | 9.2 |
| BR15 | 73.8 | 69.5 | 66.0 | 62.8 | 2.8 | 2.8 | 5.3 | 9.8 |
| Mean | 76.7 | 71.8 | 68.3 | 65.1 | 2.4 | 3.5 | 6.4 | 10.5 |

- Improvement ranges in **2-15%**, with an average of **6%**
- **Higher** improvement levels achieved under **higher** penalties
- Sequential approach is only subject to penalties
 - Objective decreases faster

Construction vs. Improvement

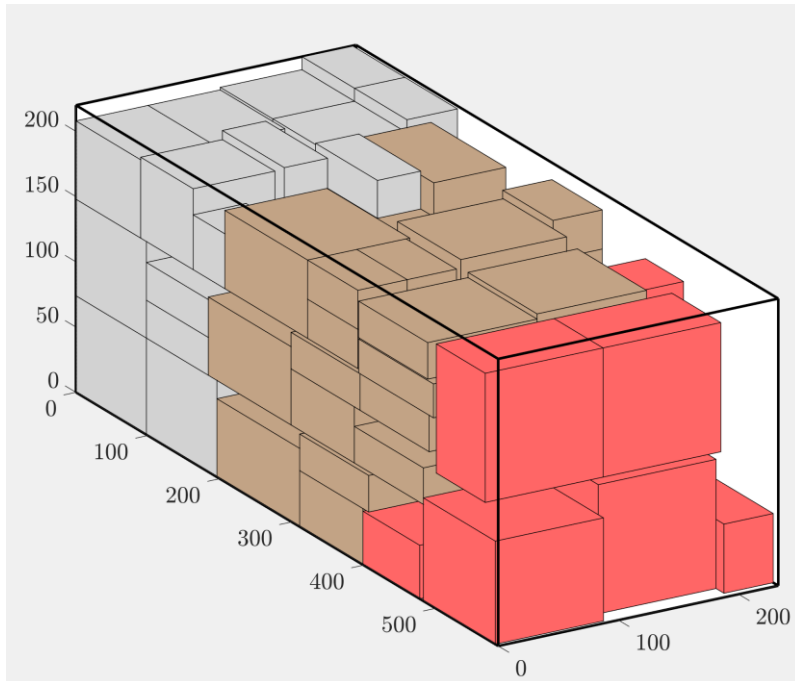


- Both phases are useful
- Construction solutions embed different potential for improvement

Comparison

- 3-customer example (BR7, instance 1)

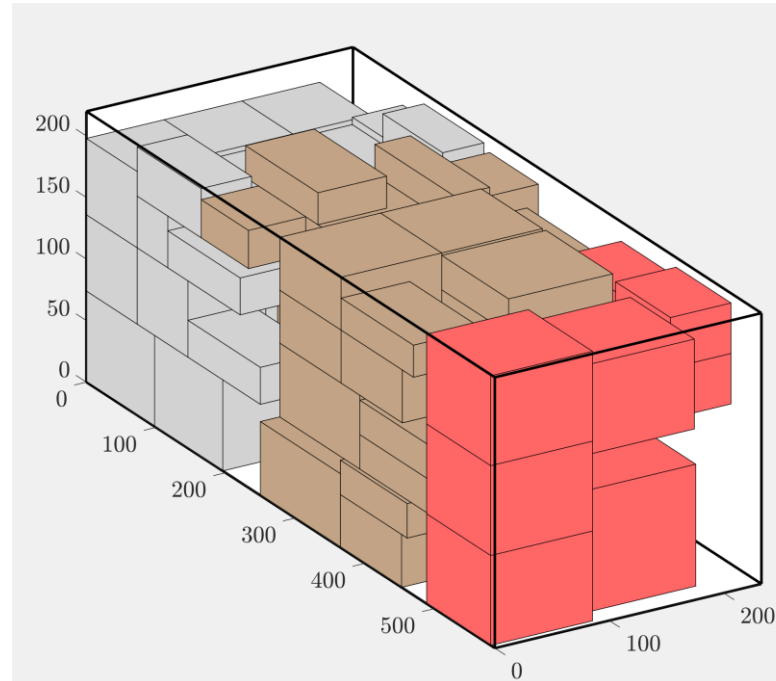
Construction



Objective: 74.6

Loaded items: 90

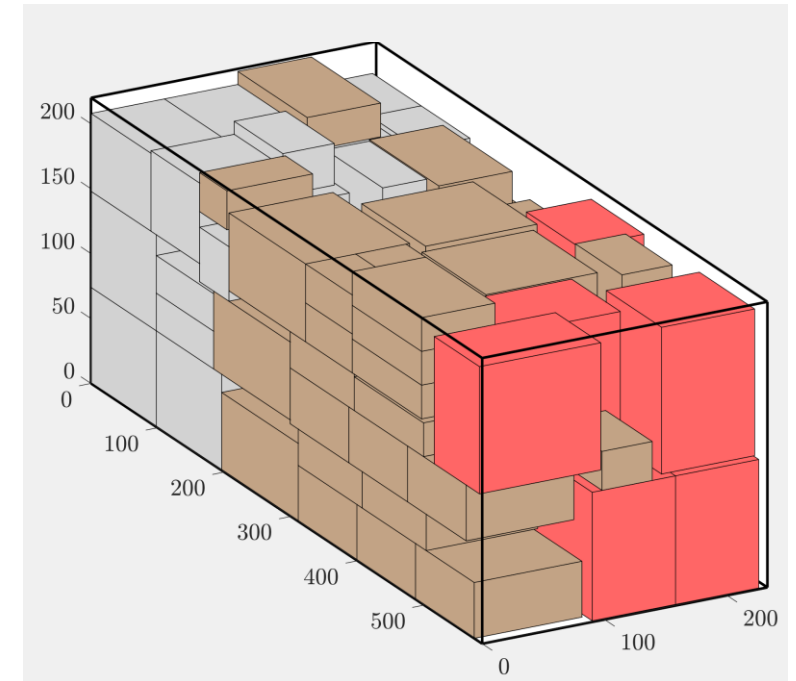
Construction (Hard)



Objective: 72.5

Loaded items: 88

Improved (Soft)



Objective: 81.9

Loaded items: 92

Trade-off cargo value vs. penalties

| | Difference Improvement minus Construction | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------|---|---------|-----------|-------|---------|-----------|-------|---------|-----------|-------|---------|-----------|
| | P1 | | | P2 | | | P3 | | | P4 | | |
| | cargo | penalty | objective | cargo | penalty | objective | cargo | penalty | objective | cargo | penalty | objective |
| BR1 | 1.3 | -0.4 | 1.7 | 1.2 | -1.4 | 2.7 | 0.3 | -3.8 | 4.1 | 0.1 | -6.0 | 6.1 |
| BR2 | 1.1 | -0.2 | 1.3 | 0.7 | -1.3 | 2.0 | -0.4 | -3.4 | 3.0 | -1.6 | -5.9 | 4.3 |
| BR3 | 1.4 | 0.1 | 1.3 | 0.9 | -1.4 | 2.3 | 0.3 | -3.1 | 3.4 | -1.4 | -6.5 | 5.2 |
| BR4 | 1.9 | 0.3 | 1.6 | 1.6 | -0.4 | 2.0 | 0.6 | -2.2 | 2.8 | -1.1 | -5.4 | 4.3 |
| BR5 | 1.4 | 0.0 | 1.4 | 1.7 | -0.9 | 2.6 | -0.1 | -4.0 | 4.0 | -2.1 | -8.0 | 5.9 |
| BR6 | 2.1 | 0.4 | 1.7 | 2.2 | -0.2 | 2.4 | 0.6 | -2.9 | 3.5 | -1.2 | -6.2 | 5.1 |
| BR7 | 2.2 | 0.4 | 1.8 | 1.7 | -0.2 | 1.9 | 0.5 | -2.7 | 3.3 | -1.3 | -5.4 | 4.1 |
| BR8 | 2.4 | 0.4 | 2.0 | 2.5 | 0.2 | 2.4 | 1.3 | -1.6 | 2.9 | -0.4 | -4.0 | 3.6 |
| BR9 | 2.8 | 0.9 | 1.9 | 2.5 | 0.6 | 1.9 | 1.3 | -1.3 | 2.6 | -0.5 | -3.9 | 3.4 |
| BR10 | 2.7 | 0.6 | 2.1 | 2.5 | 0.6 | 1.9 | 1.0 | -1.2 | 2.2 | -0.6 | -3.5 | 2.9 |
| BR11 | 2.2 | 0.3 | 1.9 | 2.8 | 0.9 | 1.9 | 1.2 | -0.7 | 2.0 | -0.5 | -3.0 | 2.5 |
| BR12 | 2.6 | 0.6 | 2.0 | 2.6 | 0.9 | 1.7 | 1.2 | -0.7 | 1.9 | -0.7 | -3.3 | 2.6 |
| BR13 | 3.1 | 1.2 | 1.9 | 2.0 | 0.7 | 1.4 | 0.9 | -0.8 | 1.7 | -0.7 | -2.8 | 2.1 |
| BR14 | 2.6 | 0.7 | 1.8 | 2.3 | 0.8 | 1.6 | 1.0 | -1.0 | 1.9 | -1.0 | -3.3 | 2.3 |
| BR15 | 2.8 | 0.7 | 2.1 | 2.2 | 0.6 | 1.7 | 0.9 | -1.1 | 2.0 | -1.2 | -3.5 | 2.3 |
| Mean | 2.1 | 0.4 | 1.7 | 2.0 | 0.0 | 2.1 | 0.7 | -2.0 | 2.8 | -1.0 | -4.7 | 3.8 |

Region reconstruction method: Objectives

| Class | P-1 | | | P-2 | | | P-3 | | | P-4 | | |
|-------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------|-------------|-------------|------|------|-------------|------|-------------|
| | M-1 | M-2 | M-3 | M-1 | M-2 | M-3 | M-1 | M-2 | M-3 | M-1 | M-2 | M-3 |
| BR1 | 83.7 | 83.6 | 83.8 | 79.8 | 79.3 | 79.9 | 78.2 | 76.2 | 78.1 | 77.6 | 74.4 | 77.6 |
| BR2 | 83.2 | 83.2 | 83.2 | 79.7 | 79.2 | 78.9 | 77.5 | 76.1 | 77.2 | 75.9 | 73.4 | 75.3 |
| BR3 | 80.9 | 81.0 | 80.9 | 76.1 | 75.6 | 75.7 | 73.0 | 71.4 | 72.4 | 71.0 | 68.0 | 70.2 |
| BR4 | 80.3 | 80.4 | 80.2 | 75.4 | 75.1 | 75.0 | 72.6 | 71.6 | 72.5 | 70.9 | 68.3 | 70.4 |
| BR5 | 79.6 | 79.7 | 79.6 | 74.6 | 73.7 | 73.6 | 71.7 | 69.8 | 70.8 | 69.7 | 66.4 | 68.8 |
| BR6 | 79.0 | 78.8 | 78.7 | 74.2 | 73.5 | 73.6 | 71.4 | 69.8 | 70.5 | 69.3 | 67.3 | 68.4 |
| BR7 | 78.1 | 78.0 | 77.7 | 73.0 | 72.7 | 72.4 | 70.4 | 69.0 | 69.4 | 67.6 | 65.5 | 66.9 |
| BR8 | 77.7 | 77.5 | 77.1 | 73.1 | 72.5 | 71.9 | 70.2 | 69.3 | 69.0 | 67.8 | 66.2 | 66.7 |
| BR9 | 77.0 | 76.9 | 76.4 | 72.5 | 72.2 | 71.6 | 69.9 | 68.9 | 68.8 | 67.6 | 66.1 | 66.3 |
| BR10 | 76.5 | 76.2 | 75.7 | 72.1 | 71.7 | 71.0 | 69.1 | 68.4 | 68.2 | 66.7 | 65.3 | 65.7 |
| BR11 | 76.4 | 76.3 | 75.8 | 72.1 | 71.6 | 71.3 | 69.1 | 68.5 | 68.3 | 66.7 | 65.8 | 65.7 |
| BR12 | 76.1 | 75.9 | 75.5 | 71.3 | 70.9 | 70.4 | 68.1 | 67.6 | 67.2 | 65.5 | 64.5 | 64.6 |
| BR13 | 76.3 | 76.1 | 75.5 | 71.8 | 71.7 | 71.1 | 69.0 | 68.4 | 68.1 | 66.4 | 65.4 | 65.6 |
| BR14 | 75.8 | 75.7 | 75.2 | 71.2 | 70.8 | 70.2 | 68.0 | 67.3 | 66.8 | 65.1 | 64.4 | 64.0 |
| BR15 | 75.9 | 75.5 | 74.8 | 71.2 | 70.8 | 70.1 | 68.0 | 67.3 | 66.8 | 65.1 | 64.2 | 64.5 |
| Mean | 78.4 | 78.3 | 78.0 | 73.9 | 73.4 | 73.1 | 71.1 | 70.0 | 70.3 | 68.9 | 67.0 | 68.0 |

- Recall that:
 - **M-1**: Conflicts
 - **M-2**: Penalty densities
 - **M-3**: Penalty densities & empty spaces

- Except for a few cases, M-1 performs the best on average

Region reconstruction method: Wins

| Class | P-1 | | | P-2 | | | P-3 | | | P-4 | | |
|-------|-------------|-----------|------|-------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|-----------|------|-------------|------|-----------|
| | M-1 | M-2 | M-3 | M-1 | M-2 | M-3 | M-1 | M-2 | M-3 | M-1 | M-2 | M-3 |
| BR1 | 30 | 46 | 39 | 39 | 49 | 52 | 49 | 58 | 56 | 53 | 57 | 58 |
| BR2 | 35 | 34 | 34 | 41 | 50 | 29 | 47 | 47 | 41 | 61 | 44 | 51 |
| BR3 | 24 | 46 | 34 | 41 | 43 | 35 | 54 | 44 | 36 | 61 | 38 | 41 |
| BR4 | 32 | 40 | 34 | 40 | 41 | 33 | 45 | 32 | 39 | 56 | 30 | 36 |
| BR5 | 27 | 42 | 31 | 53 | 28 | 25 | 49 | 34 | 31 | 56 | 37 | 35 |
| BR6 | 45 | 40 | 23 | 51 | 29 | 28 | 59 | 28 | 31 | 56 | 28 | 32 |
| BR7 | 44 | 36 | 25 | 40 | 44 | 26 | 53 | 30 | 25 | 55 | 27 | 36 |
| BR8 | 48 | 31 | 21 | 61 | 33 | 20 | 61 | 32 | 24 | 59 | 31 | 33 |
| BR9 | 46 | 34 | 22 | 57 | 38 | 21 | 69 | 29 | 19 | 66 | 31 | 26 |
| BR10 | 47 | 41 | 12 | 63 | 38 | 11 | 62 | 30 | 24 | 66 | 25 | 29 |
| BR11 | 48 | 38 | 16 | 61 | 27 | 22 | 52 | 30 | 26 | 60 | 33 | 25 |
| BR12 | 48 | 40 | 14 | 56 | 36 | 22 | 57 | 44 | 21 | 63 | 26 | 28 |
| BR13 | 43 | 39 | 18 | 44 | 42 | 24 | 58 | 38 | 20 | 61 | 30 | 35 |
| BR14 | 42 | 42 | 20 | 54 | 38 | 17 | 60 | 28 | 22 | 60 | 35 | 19 |
| BR15 | 53 | 37 | 13 | 55 | 35 | 18 | 65 | 34 | 19 | 58 | 29 | 33 |
| Mean | 40.8 | 39.1 | 23.7 | 50.4 | 38.1 | 25.5 | 56.0 | 35.9 | 28.9 | 59.4 | 33.4 | 34.5 |

- More detailed picture at instance level
- M-1 rarely exceeded 55-60% of wins
 - The other methods can still be useful
 - Combine / randomize them?

Conclusion

- We studied a variant of the MDCLP with **soft unloading constraints**, which contrast the hard unloading constraints commonly found in the CLP and VRP literature
- We used **penalty functions** to model the indirect cost/time of relocating items during delivery
 - Activated when above, visibility, and reachability constraints are violated between pairs of boxes belonging to different customers
- We proposed:
 - an **MILP** to tackle small instances to optimality under specific penalties
 - a more general **heuristic framework** made of construction and improvement phases
- Our study shows that incorporating soft unloading constraints can be significantly **more efficient** than both sequential strategy (15%) and hard unloading constraints (12%)

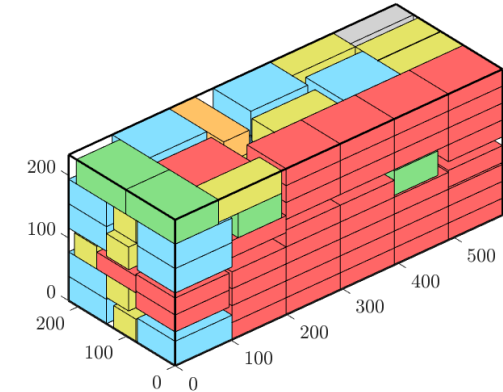
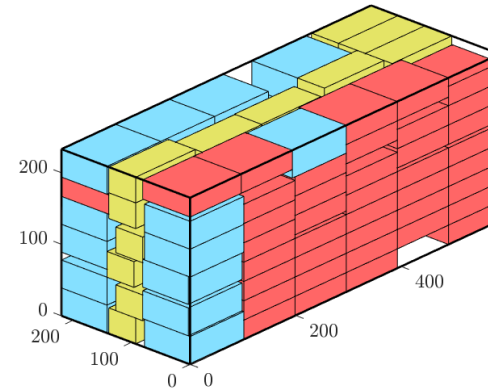
Further work

- **Algorithmic enhancements**

- Add movements to improvement phase (e.g., swapping items; see VNS by [Parreño et al. 2010](#))
- Try alternative merit functions during reconstruction
- Use graph representation ([Fekete et al. 2007](#)) not only to shift boxes but to modify relative position of boxes using transitive orientations ([Trivella and Pisinger 2016](#))

- **Extend to dynamic MDCLP (more complex)**

- Unloading constraints are computed based on a static packing configuration
- The multi-drop process allows repositioning cargo at different locations
- Accounting for extra decisions to where to relocate items adds flexibility



Alessio Trivella

ETH Zurich

alessio.trivella@ivt.baug.ethz.ch

Paper available online → ssrn.com/abstract=3929994

Full MILP formulation

$$\begin{aligned}
 \max \quad & \sum_{i \in \mathcal{B}} \pi_i t_i - \sum_{i \in \mathcal{B}} \sum_{j \in \mathcal{B}: c_i < c_j} [p_{ij} (\alpha_A q_j + \beta_A v_j + \gamma_A) + r_{ij} (\alpha_V q_j + \beta_V v_j + \gamma_V)] \\
 \text{s.t. : } & f_{ij} + f_{ji} + b_{ij} + b_{ji} + u_{ij} + u_{ji} + (1 - t_i) + (1 - t_j) \geq 1 & \forall i, j \in \mathcal{B}, i < j, \\
 & x_i + l_i(o_{i1} + o_{i2}) + w_i(o_{i3} + o_{i4}) + h_i(o_{i5} + o_{i6}) - x_j \leq L(1 - b_{ij}) & \forall i, j \in \mathcal{B}, \\
 & y_i + l_i(o_{i3} + o_{i5}) + w_i(o_{i1} + o_{i6}) + h_i(o_{i2} + o_{i4}) - y_j \leq W(1 - f_{ij}) & \forall i, j \in \mathcal{B}, \\
 & z_i + l_i(o_{i4} + o_{i6}) + w_i(o_{i2} + o_{i5}) + h_i(o_{i1} + o_{i3}) - z_j \leq H(1 - u_{ij}) & \forall i, j \in \mathcal{B}, \\
 & x_i + l_i(o_{i1} + o_{i2}) + w_i(o_{i3} + o_{i4}) + h_i(o_{i5} + o_{i6}) \leq L & \forall i, j \in \mathcal{B}, \\
 & y_i + l_i(o_{i3} + o_{i5}) + w_i(o_{i1} + o_{i6}) + h_i(o_{i2} + o_{i4}) \leq W & \forall i, j \in \mathcal{B}, \\
 & z_i + l_i(o_{i4} + o_{i6}) + w_i(o_{i2} + o_{i5}) + h_i(o_{i1} + o_{i3}) \leq H & \forall i, j \in \mathcal{B}, \\
 & o_{i1} + o_{i2} + o_{i3} + o_{i4} + o_{i5} + o_{i6} = 1 & \forall i, j \in \mathcal{B}, \\
 & x_j \leq x_i + l_i(o_{i1} + o_{i2}) + w_i(o_{i3} + o_{i4}) + h_i(o_{i5} + o_{i6}) + L b_{ij} & \forall i, j \in \mathcal{B}, c_i \neq c_j, \\
 & y_j \leq y_i + l_i(o_{i3} + o_{i5}) + w_i(o_{i1} + o_{i6}) + h_i(o_{i2} + o_{i4}) + W f_{ij} & \forall i, j \in \mathcal{B}, c_i \neq c_j, \\
 & z_j \leq z_i + l_i(o_{i4} + o_{i6}) + w_i(o_{i2} + o_{i5}) + h_i(o_{i1} + o_{i3}) + H u_{ij} & \forall i, j \in \mathcal{B}, c_i \neq c_j, \\
 & b_{ij} + b_{ji} + f_{ij} + f_{ji} \geq 1 - a_{ij} & \forall i, j \in \mathcal{B}, c_i < c_j, \\
 & b_{ij} + b_{ji} + f_{ij} + f_{ji} \leq 2(1 - a_{ij}) & \forall i, j \in \mathcal{B}, c_i < c_j, \\
 & f_{ij} + f_{ji} + u_{ij} + u_{ji} \geq 1 - d_{ij} & \forall i, j \in \mathcal{B}, c_i < c_j, \\
 & f_{ij} + f_{ji} + u_{ij} + u_{ji} \leq 2(1 - d_{ij}) & \forall i, j \in \mathcal{B}, c_i < c_j, \\
 & p_{ij} + 1 \geq a_{ij} + u_{ij} & \forall i, j \in \mathcal{B}, c_i < c_j, \\
 & r_{ij} + 1 \geq d_{ij} + b_{ij} & \forall i, j \in \mathcal{B}, c_i < c_j, \\
 \text{var. : } & b_{ij}, f_{ij}, u_{ij}, a_{ij}, d_{ij}, p_{ij}, r_{ij} \in \{0, 1\} & \forall i, j \in \mathcal{B}, \\
 & t_i, o_{i1}, o_{i2}, o_{i3}, o_{i4}, o_{i5}, o_{i6} \in \{0, 1\} & \forall i \in \mathcal{B}, \\
 & x_i, y_i, z_i \geq 0 & \forall i \in \mathcal{B}.
 \end{aligned}$$

References (1/4)

- M. Alonso, R. Alvarez-Valdes, M. Iori, and F. Parreno. Mathematical models for multi-container loading problems with practical constraints. *Computers & Industrial Engineering*, 127:722–733, 2019. doi: 10.1016/j.cie.2018.11.012.
- I. Araya, K. Guerrero, and E. & Nunez. Vcs: A new heuristic function for selecting boxes in the single container loading problem. *Computers & Operations Research*, 82:27–35, 2017. doi: 10.1016/j.cor.2017.01.002.
- E. E. Bischoff, F. Janetz, and M. Ratcliff. Loading pallets with non-identical items. *European Journal of Operational Research*, 84(3):681–692, 1995. doi: 10.1016/0377-2217(95)00031-K.
- A. Bortfeldt and G. Wäscher. Constraints in container loading—a state-of-the-art review. *European Journal of Operational Research*, 229(1):1–20, 2013. doi: 10.1016/j.ejor.2012.12.006.
- S. G. Christensen and D. M. Rousøe. Container loading with multi-drop constraints. *International Transactions in Operational Research*, 16(6):727–743, 2009. doi: 10.1111/j.1475-3995.2009.00714.x.
- T. G. Crainic, G. Perboli, and R. Tadei. Extreme point-based heuristics for three-dimensional bin packing. *INFORMS Journal on Computing*, 20(3):368–384, 2008. doi: 10.1287/ijoc.1070.0250.
- A. P. Davies and E. E. Bischoff. Weight distribution considerations in container loading. *European Journal of Operational Research*, 114(3):509–527, 1999. doi: 10.1016/S0377-2217(98)00139-8.
- T. A. de Queiroz and F. K. Miyazawa. Two-dimensional strip packing problem with load balancing, load bearing and multi-drop constraints. *International Journal of Production Economics*, 145(2):511–530, 2013. doi: 10.1016/j.ijpe.2013.04.032.
- T. Fanslau and A. Bortfeldt. A tree search algorithm for solving the container loading problem. *INFORMS Journal on Computing*, 22(2):222–235, 2010. doi: 10.1287/ijoc.1090.0338.
- S. P. Fekete, J. Schepers, and J. C. Van der Veen. An exact algorithm for higher-dimensional orthogonal packing. *Operations Research*, 55(3):569–587, 2007. doi: 10.1287/opre.1060.0369.
- K. M. Ferreira, T. A. de Queiroz, and F. M. B. Toledo. An exact approach for the green vehicle routing problem with two-dimensional loading constraints and split delivery. *Computers & Operations Research*, page 105452, 2021. doi: 10.1016/j.cor.2021.105452.
- G. Fuellerer, K. F. Doerner, R. F. Hartl, and M. Iori. Ant colony optimization for the two-dimensional loading vehicle routing problem. *Computers & Operations Research*, 36(3):655–673, 2009. doi: 10.1016/j.cor.2007.10.021.

References (2/4)

- G. Fuellerer, K. F. Doerner, R. F. Hartl, and M. Iori. Metaheuristics for vehicle routing problems with three-dimensional loading constraints. *European Journal of Operational Research*, 201(3):751–759, 2010. doi: 10.1016/j.ejor.2009.03.046.
- M. Gajda, A. Trivella, R. Mansini, and D. Pisinger. An optimization approach for a complex real-life container loading problem. *Available at SSRN*, 2021. doi: 10.2139/ssrn.3740046.
- M. Gendreau, M. Iori, G. Laporte, and S. Martello. A tabu search algorithm for a routing and container loading problem. *Transportation Science*, 40(3):342–350, 2006. doi: 10.1287/trsc.1050.0145.
- J. A. George and D. F. Robinson. A heuristic for packing boxes into a container. *Computers & Operations Research*, 7(3):147–156, 1980. doi: 10.1016/0305-0548(80)90001-5.
- P. Hokama, F. K. Miyazawa, and E. C. Xavier. A branch-and-cut approach for the vehicle routing problem with loading constraints. *Expert Systems with Applications*, 47:1–13, 2016. doi: 10.1016/j.eswa.2015.10.013.
- M. Iori and S. Martello. Routing problems with loading constraints. *Top*, 18(1):4–27, 2010. doi: 10.1007/s11750-010-0144-x.
- M. Iori, J.-J. Salazar-González, and D. Vigo. An exact approach for the vehicle routing problem with two-dimensional loading constraints. *Transportation science*, 41(2):253–264, 2007. doi: 10.1287/trsc.1060.0165.
- M. Iori, M. Locatelli, M. C. Moreira, and T. Silveira. Reactive GRASP-based algorithm for pallet building problem with visibility and contiguity constraints. In *International Conference on Computational Logistics*, pages 651–665. Springer, 2020. doi: 10.1007/978-3-030-59747-4_42.
- L. Junqueira, R. Morabito, and D. S. Yamashita. Three-dimensional container loading models with cargo stability and load bearing constraints. *Computers & Operations Research*, 39(1):74–85, 2012. doi: 10.1016/j.cor.2010.07.017.
- K. Lai, J. Xue, and B. Xu. Container packing in a multi-customer delivering operation. *Computers & Industrial Engineering*, 35(1-2):323–326, 1998. doi: 10.1016/S0360-8352(98)00085-0.
- G. Laporte. Fifty years of vehicle routing. *Transportation science*, 43(4):408–416, 2009. doi: 10.1287/trsc.1090.0301.
- J. Liu, Y. Yue, Z. Dong, C. Maple, and M. Keech. On the three-dimensional container packing problem under home delivery service. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Operational Research*, 28(05):601–621, 2011. doi: 10.1142/S0217595911003466.

References (3/4)

- V. Lurkin and M. Schyns. The airline container loading problem with pickup and delivery. *European Journal of Operational Research*, 244(3):955–965, 2015. doi: 10.1016/j.ejor.2015.02.027.
- S. Martello, D. Pisinger, and D. Vigo. The three-dimensional bin packing problem. *Operations Research*, 48(2): 256–267, 2000. doi: 10.1287/opre.48.2.256.12386.
- D. A. Martínez, R. Alvarez-Valdes, and F. Parreño. A grasp algorithm for the container loading problem with multi-drop constraints. *Pesquisa Operacional*, 35(1):1–24, 2015. doi: 10.1590/0101-7438.2015.035.01.0001.
- A. Moura and J. F. Oliveira. A GRASP approach to the container-loading problem. *IEEE Intelligent Systems*, 20(4): 50–57, 2005. doi: 10.1109/MIS.2005.57.
- O. X. Nascimento, T. A. Queiroz, and L. Junqueira. Practical constraints in the container loading problem: Comprehensive formulations and exact algorithm. *Computers & Operations Research*, 128:105186, 2021. doi: 10.1016/j.cor.2020.105186.
- L. Pan, S. C. Chu, G. Han, and J. Z. Huang. A tree-based wall-building algorithm for solving container loading problem with multi-drop constraints. In *IEEE International Conference on Industrial Engineering and Engineering Management*, pages 538–542. IEEE, 2009. doi: 10.1109/IEEM.2009.5373282.
- F. Parreño, R. Alvarez-Valdés, J. M. Tamarit, and J. F. Oliveira. A maximal-space algorithm for the container loading problem. *INFORMS Journal on Computing*, 20(3):412–422, 2008. doi: 10.1287/ijoc.1070.0254.
- F. Parreño, R. Alvarez-Valdes, J. F. Oliveira, and J. M. Tamarit. Neighborhood structures for the container loading problem: A VNS implementation. *Journal of Heuristics*, 16(1):1–22, 2010. doi: 10.1007/s10732-008-9081-3.
- D. Pisinger. Heuristics for the container loading problem. *European Journal of Operational Research*, 141(2):382–392, 2002. doi: 10.1016/S0377-2217(02)00132-7.
- H. Pollaris, K. Braekers, A. Caris, G. Janssens, and S. Limbourg. Vehicle routing problems with loading constraints: state-of-the-art and future directions. *OR Spectrum*, 37:297–330, 2015. doi: 10.1007/s00291-014-0386-3.
- H. Pollaris, K. Braekers, A. Caris, G. K. Janssens, and S. Limbourg. Capacitated vehicle routing problem with sequence-based pallet loading and axle weight constraints. *EURO Journal on Transportation and Logistics*, 5(2):231–255, 2016. doi: doi.org/10.1007/s13676-014-0064-2.

References (4/4)

- Research and Markets. Global logistics market 2017-2018 & 2023 - market is estimated to grow to \$12.6 bn, 2018. URL <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/global-logistics-market-2017-2018--2023---market-is-estimated-to-grow-to-12-6-bn-300708730.html>. Accessed 30 July 2021.
- E. F. Silva, T. A. M. Toffolo, and T. Wauters. Exact methods for three-dimensional cutting and packing: A comparative study concerning single container problems. *Computers & Operations Research*, 109:12–27, 2019. doi: 10.1016/j.cor.2019.04.020.
- Statista. Global parcel shipping volume between 2013 and 2026, 2020. URL <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1139910/parcel-shipping-volume-worldwide/>. Accessed 30 July 2021.
- Swiss Post. Swiss Post expects a new all-time record in December, 2020. URL <https://post-medien.ch/en/swiss-post-expects-a-new-all-time-record-in-december/>. Accessed 30 July 2021.
- J. Terno, G. Scheithauer, U. Sommerweiß, and J. Riehme. An efficient approach for the multi-pallet loading problem. *European Journal of Operational Research*, 123(2):372–381, 2000. doi: 10.1016/S0377-2217(99)00263-5.
- The Zug Post. Post Office almost drowning in the flood of parcels, 2020. URL <https://www.zug4you.ch/en/news/news-articles/a/post-office-almost-drowning-in-the-flood-of-parcels>. Accessed 30 July 2021.
- A. Trivella and D. Pisinger. The load-balanced multi-dimensional bin-packing problem. *Computers & Operations Research*, 74:152–164, 2016. doi: 10.1016/j.cor.2016.04.020.
- A. Trivella and D. Pisinger. Bin-packing problems with load balancing and stability constraints. *INFORMS Transportation and Logistics Society Conference*, 2017.
- G. Wäscher, H. Haußner, and H. Schumann. An improved typology of cutting and packing problems. *European Journal of Operational Research*, 183(3):1109–1130, 2007. doi: 10.1016/j.ejor.2005.12.047.
- E. E. Zachariadis, C. D. Tarantilis, and C. T. Kiranoudis. A guided tabu search for the vehicle routing problem with two-dimensional loading constraints. *European Journal of Operational Research*, 195(3):729–743, 2009. doi: 10.1016/j.ejor.2007.05.058.
- X. Zhao, J. A. Bennell, T. Bektaş, and K. Dowsland. A comparative review of 3d container loading algorithms. *International Transactions in Operational Research*, 23(1-2):287–320, 2016. doi: 10.1111/itor.12094.