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ON THE COMPUTATIONAL IMPACT OF MIQCP SOLVER COMPONENTS*

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ON THE COMPUTATIONAL IMPACT OF MIQCP SOLVER COMPONENTS*

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Abstract. We provide a computational study of the performance of a state-of-the-art solver for nonconvex mixed-integer quadratically constrained programs (MIQCPs). Since successful general-purpose solvers for large problem classes necessarily comprise a variety of algorithmic techniques, we focus especially on the impact of the individual solver components. The solver SCIP used for the experiments implements a branch-and-cut algorithm based on linear outer approximation to solve MIQCPs to global optimality. Our analysis is based on a set of 86 publicly available test instances.

1. Introduction. Recent years have seen a strong interest in algorithms for *Mixed-Integer Nonlinear Programming* (MINLP). Advances in research are also reflected by the development and computational progress of several general-purpose solvers for MINLP or specific sub-classes, such as convex MINLP or *Mixed-Integer Quadratically Constrained Programming* (MIQCP) [1, 5, 9, 10, 11, 13, 16, 17, 21].

State-of-the-art solvers for MINLP comprise a variety of algorithmic techniques from several related fields such as Nonlinear Programming, Mixed-Integer Linear Programming (MILP), Global Optimization (in case nonconvex functions are present), and Constraint Programming (CP). The overall computational performance of a solver crucially depends on its single constituents and the mutual interplay of these features. The aim of this paper is to provide a detailed computational study that investigates the impact of single MINLP solver components.

In our study, we focus on the important subclass of MIQCPs, i.e. optimization problems of the form

$$\begin{aligned} & \text{min} \quad x^{T}A_{0}x + b_{0}^{T}x + c_{0} \\ & \text{s.t.} \quad x^{T}A_{j}x + b_{j}^{T}x + c_{j} \leqslant 0 \quad \text{for } j = 1, \dots, m, \\ & \quad x_{k}^{L} \leqslant x_{k} \leqslant x_{k}^{U} & \text{for } k = 1, \dots, n, \\ & \quad x_{k} \in \mathbb{Z} & \text{for all } k \in \mathcal{I}, \end{aligned}$$

where $\mathcal{I} \subseteq \{1,\ldots,n\}$ is the index set of integer variables, $A_j \in \mathbb{R}^{n \times n}$, $b_j \in \mathbb{R}^n$, $c_j \in \mathbb{R}$ for $j=0,\ldots,m$, and $x_k^L \in \mathbb{R} \cup \{-\infty\}$ and $x_k^U \in \mathbb{R} \cup \{+\infty\}$ are the lower and upper bounds of variable x_k for $k=1,\ldots,n$, respectively. Note that we do not require the matrices A_i to be positive semidefinite, thus we allow for nonconvex constraints. If $\mathcal{I} = \emptyset$, we have a *Quadratically Constrained Quadratic Programming* problem (QCQP).

Recently, the *Constraint Integer Programming* framework SCIP [2, 4] has been extended to solve nonconvex MIQCPs to global optimality [9]. Computational results have shown the competitiveness of the solver with the current state-of-the-art. The plugin-based architecture of SCIP is particularly suited to analyze the impact of individual components. We use this solver for our computational experiments.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows: In Section 2, we briefly outline the general solution algorithm of SCIP and the specific algorithmic techniques used for MIQCPs. Section 3 describes our selection of publicly available test problems and the results of our experiments. In Section 4, we summarize and discuss the computational results.

2. Algorithm. SCIP employs a branch-and-bound algorithm to solve MIQCPs to global optimality. The problem is recursively split into smaller subproblems, thereby creating a branching tree. At each subproblem, domain propagation is applied to exclude further values from the variables' domains and a linear outer approximation is solved to achieve a local lower bound (assuming minimization problems). The relaxation may be strengthened by adding further valid inequalities. In case of an infeasible subproblem, conflict analysis is performed to learn no-goods,

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see, e.g., [?]. Primal heuristics are used as supplementary methods to improve the upper bound. Figure 1 provides a flowchart of the main solving loop of SCIP. In the following, we present a brief overview over the SCIP plugins essential for solving MIQCPs. For further details see [2, 6, 9, 24].

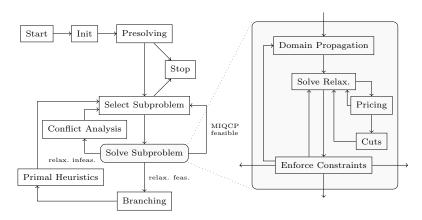


Figure 1. Flowchart of the main solving loop of SCIP

Presolving. During the presolving phase, a set of reformulations and simplifications are tried. Further, the domain propagation routines are used to tighten the bounds on the variables.

MILP presolving. Many MIQCPs contain a large linear and discrete part, for which SCIP's default MILP presolving routines [2] are applied.

Products containing binary variables. Products of a binary variable with a linear term, i.e. $x \sum_{i=1}^k a_i y_i$, where x is a binary variable, y_i are variables with finite bounds, and $a_i \in \mathbb{R}$, $i = 1, \ldots, k$, are replaced by new variables $z \in \mathbb{R}$ and linear inequalities guaranteeing $z = x \sum_{i=1}^k a_i y_i$ for $x \in \{0,1\}$.

Second-order cone (SOC) constraints. Constraints of the form $\gamma + \sum_{i=1}^{k} (\alpha_i(x_i + \beta_i))^2 \le (\alpha_0(y + \beta_0))^2$ with $k \ge 2$, $\alpha_i, \beta_i \in \mathbb{R}$ for $i = 0, \dots, k, \gamma \in \mathbb{R}_+$, and $y^L \ge -\beta_0$ are automatically recognized during presolving and handled by a specialized SOC constraint handler.

Convexity check. After the presolving phase, each quadratic function is checked for convexity by computing the sign of the minimum eigenvalue of the coefficient matrix A. For instances with bilinear terms, this information is essential for separation.

Separation. If the current solution \tilde{x} of the LP outer approximation violates a constraint, we may add valid cutting planes in order to strengthen the formulation.

MILP cutting planes. To cut off fractional LP solutions, SCIP's standard MILP separators are used at the root node. They comprise general techniques like Gomory cuts and problem specific separation routines like knapsack cover cuts, for an overview and a computational study see [24].

Separation of quadratic and SOC constraints. If a violated constraint is known to be convex, it is always possible to linearize the constraint function at \tilde{x} . In SCIP, a quadratic constraint is recognized as convex if it is either a SOC constraint or its coefficient matrix is positive semidefinite. For a violated nonconvex quadratic constraint, each term of a quadratic function $\sum_{i,j} a_{i,j} x_i x_j$ is individually underestimated by a linearization for $a_{i,i} x_i^2$ with $a_{i,i} > 0$, a secant for $a_{i,i} x_i^2$ with $a_{i,i} < 0$, and a McCormick underestimator [18] for a bilinear term, respectively. If a linear inequality generated by this method does not cut off the current LP solution \tilde{x} , the infeasibility is resolved by branching.

Domain propagation. In domain propagation, deductions of the variables' local domains are inferred. These can yield stronger linear underestimators in the separation procedures, they may cut off nodes due to infeasibility of a constraint, and can result in further domain deductions on other constraints. For quadratic constraints, we implemented an interval-arithmetic based method similar to [14]. Domain propagation for linear constraints, special cases like knapsack constraints, and global MILP propagators are described in [2].

Conflict Analysis. If domain propagation routines or the LP solver detect infeasibility of a subproblem, a (preferably small) set of domain reductions is determined which are sufficient to prove the infeasibility. This gives rise to globally valid no-goods, which may help to prune the tree in the remaining search. In the current implementation of SCIP, quadratic constraints do not take part in conflict analysis. Analysis of the linear core of an MIQCP might, however, still generate short no-goods.

Branching. If an integer-infeasible LP relaxation solution \tilde{x} cannot be cut off by separation or domain propagation, an integer variable with fractional value is selected for branching. SCIP's default branching variable selection rule is "hybrid branching" [3], which combines pseudo cost based reliability branching with VSIDS and inference/impact based branching.

Only if \tilde{x} is integer feasible but violates a nonconvex quadratic constraint, we perform a spatial branching operation. Therefore, we use a pseudo-cost based branching rule as suggested in [5] to select the branching variable. Note that feasibility of a convex quadratic constraint can always be enforced by separation.

Primal heuristics. When solving MIQCPs, we still make use of all default MILP primal heuristics of SCIP [6]. Even if solutions suggested by MILP heuristics are infeasible for the quadratic part of the problem, they might serve as starting points for nonlinear repair and improvement heuristics. Additionally, three *large neighborhood search* heuristics specific to MIQCPs are implemented in SCIP, a QCQP based local search [9], an extended form of the RENS heuristic [7], and the novel Undercover heuristic [8].

3. Computational experiments. For our experiments, we compiled a test set of 86 publicly available MIQCP instances from different sources: constrained layout problems (clay*) and safety layout problems (SLay*) from [20], Hans Mittelmann's MIQP benchmark instances (i*) [19], portfolio optimization problems (classical*, robust*, shortfall*) from [22], truss structure design problems (*bar*) from [25], uncapacitated facility location problems (uflquad*) from [15], and selected instances from the MINLPLib [12]. Problem statistics for the original instances and after default presolving are given in the Appendix (Table 2).

Initially, we ran all instances with default settings as outlined in Section 2. To measure the impact of individual components, we compare the default run to the performance with a feature disabled or switched to a simpler strategy. Since many MIQCP instances contain a considerable linear and discrete part, we also investigate the effect of the classical MILP components. All in all, we compared 11 alternative settings against the SCIP default: we disabled linear presolving, binary reformulations, the detection of SOC constraints, convexity checks, domain propagation, cutting plane separation, usage of a linear outer approximation, and primal heuristics; we further altered the variable selection strategy to random and the node selection to depth first search.

Our experiments were conducted on a $2.66\,\mathrm{GHz}$ Intel® Xeon® 5150 with 4 MB cache and 8 GB RAM. We used SCIP 1.2.1.1 with CPLEX 12.1.0 [16] as LP solver, IPOPT 3.8.1 [23] as QCQP solver for the heuristics, and LAPACK 3.1.0 to compute eigenvalues. The optimality tolerance was set to zero, the relative feasibility tolerance to 10^{-6} . We imposed a time limit of one hour and a memory limit of 4 GB for SCIP and 4 GB for the underlying solvers.

With default settings, SCIP could solve 55 of the 86 instances within the time limit of one hour. For 4 of the unsolved instances, no feasible solution was found. Table 1 shows the impact if a particular component of SCIP is switched off or changed to a simpler mode. Obviously, some of the features may only have an effect on a certain subset of the test set, e.g., disabling upgrading of SOC constraints is only applied if such constraints are present in the model. For those tests, we split the test set in a "relevant" and a "control" group, expecting no change in performance for the control group. Column "size" gives the number of instances in the respective test group.

All performance measures are w.r.t. the default settings of SCIP. We count the absolute number of instances for which a particular setting was more than 10% faster or slower, reported in columns "better" and "worse", respectively; for instances that could not be solved within the time limit, we compare the bounds at termination. Further, we compare the shifted geometric mean of the overall running time, the number of branch-and-bound nodes, and the time until the

Table 1
Impact of implemented MIQCP methods. Column "size" gives the number of instances in the test group. Performance measures are absolute/relative differences compared to SCIP with default settings.

			primal	${\rm bound}$	dual l	oound						
disabled feature	size	solved	better	worse	better	worse	better	worse	mean	to first sol.	to opt sol.	nodes
linear presolving	86	-1	3	4	5	9	15	19	+3%	+14%	+12%	-1%
binary var. reform.	86	0	2	6	1	6	4	16	+4%	+28%	+7%	-9%
relevant	27	0	1	5	0	5	2	11	+11%	+75%	+37%	-31%
control	59	0	1	1	1	1	2	5	+1%	+7 %	-9%	+2%
SOC upgrades	86	-9	1	3	1	13	3	13	+41%	+28%	-1%	+48%
relevant	12	-8	0	2	0	9	0	9	+1098%	+316%	0%	+2048%
control	74	- 1	1	1	1	4	3	4	-1%	+2%	-1%	-4%
convexity check	86	-4	3	3	2	8	5	7	+29%	-3%	0%	+59%
relevant	13	-3	2	2	1	4	2	6	+478%	-18%	-6%	+3005%
control	73	- 1	1	1	1	4	3	1	-1%	+1%	-2%	-4%
domain propagation	86	-2	4	4	4	13	18	14	+7%	+31%	+36%	+34%
MIP cuts	86	-1	3	2	5	6	15	19	+3%	+1%	+14%	+12%
nonlin. separation	86	-19	2	15	0	33	3	30	+140%	+26%	+60%	+680%
relevant	68	-19	2	14	0	33	1	30	+202%	+31%	+189%	+1300%
control	18	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	-3%	+5 %	-6%	-15%
hybrid branching	86	-8	1	5	1	21	5	29	+62%	+10%	+37%	+106%
relevant	82	-8	1	5	1	20	5	29	+67%	+10%	+41%	+112%
control	4	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	+1%	0%	0%	0%
best est. nodesel.	86	-2	2	12	2	18	13	18	+3%	+25%	+48%	+5%
relevant	82	- 2	2	12	2	18	13	18	+3 %	+26%	+53%	+5%
control	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%	-1%	0%	0%
primal heuristics	86	-3	0	19	4	11	17	13	+2%	+347%	+9%	+16%
conflict analysis	86	-2	4	4	3	7	8	10	+5%	+1%	-2%	+5%
relevant	82	- 2	4	4	3	7	8	10	+5 %	+1%	-2%	+5%
control	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%	-1%	+1%	0%

first and the optimal solution were found.

Table 1 shows that disabling a feature always leads to an increase in overall computation time and, except for linear presolving and binary variable reformulation, the number of branch-and-bound nodes. Even more importantly, except for binary variable reformulation, there is always at least one instance which could not be solved after disabling a certain component. We further see that the features specific to nonlinear optimization, like using an outer approximation, specialized algorithms for SOCs, or convexity detection, have by far the biggest impact. Using a sophisticated branching rule also reduces the computational effort tremendously. MILP specific features like linear presolving, cuts, and conflict analysis on the linear part are less successful than in pure MILP, but still slightly reduce the running time and the number of branch-and-bound nodes. The results for domain propagation surprised us. It gives a clear benefit w.r.t. the number of branching nodes and the dual bounds at termination, but this is not reflected by the computation time. Primal heuristics slightly improve the overall computation time, but very much help to find a first feasible solution and to obtain a good primal bound if a run has to be terminated due to a time limit.

4. Conclusion and Outlook. In this paper, we gave a brief overview over different algorithmic parts of the branch-and-cut framework SCIP and discussed their relevance for solving MIQCPs. The main focus was the last section, which presented and discussed computational results on the individual impact of those components. All 11 features proved to be beneficial for the overall performance. The parts specific to nonlinear optimization clearly made the biggest difference, but they often only operate on a small subset of instances.

The results for the MILP and CP components suggest that these techniques do not unfold their full potential for MINLP, yet. For some techniques like conflict analysis, this is probably due to a theoretical gap between MILP/CP and MINLP.

Finally, our experiments were only performed for one specific solver, which employs an LP-based branch-and-cut approach. It would be interesting to see the outcome of similar experiments for other solvers and algorithms.

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APPENDIX

Table 2 presents statistics on the size and structure of the 86 MIQCP instances in our test set. We show each instance before and after the default presolving of SCIP. Columns "bin", "int", and "vars" give the number of binary variables, general integers, and the total number (including continuous) of variables, respectively. Columns "soc", "quad", and "linear" show the number of second order cone, general quadratic, and linear constraints, respectively. If all quadratic constraints of an instance were recognized as convex or concave, a checkmark is set in column "conv". Note that this is different from the test set relevant for the convexity check in Table 1, which consists of all instances that have convex constraints with bilinear terms.

 ${\it TABLE~2} \\ Problem~statistics~before~and~after~default~presolving$

instance			origin	al probl	em				presolved problem						
	vars	int	bin	linear	quad	soc	conv	vars	int	bin	linear	quad	soc	conv	
108bar	1872	0	1188	1500	216	0		939	0	263	484	216	0		
10bar2	176	0	110	56	20	0		154	0	110	34	20	0		
200bar	7850	0	6000	4570	600	0		4532	0	2880	1175	600	0		
SLay05H	231	0	40	290	1	0	\checkmark	231	0	40	290	1	0	\checkmark	
SLay05M	71	0	40	90	1	0	\checkmark	71	0	40	90	1	0	✓	
SLay07M	141	0	84	189	1	0	\checkmark	141	0	84	189	1	0	✓	
SLay10M	291	0	180	405	1	0	\checkmark	291	0	180	405	1	0	\checkmark	
classical_200_0	601	0	200	403	1	0	\checkmark	600	0	200	402	1	0	✓	
classical_200_1	601	0	200	403	1	0	\checkmark	600	0	200	402	1	0	✓	
classical_20_0	61	0	20	43	1	0	\checkmark	60	0	20	42	1	0	✓	
classical_20_1	61	0	20	43	1	0	\checkmark	60	0	20	42	1	0	✓	
classical_50_0	151	0	50	103	1	0	\checkmark	150	0	50	102	1	0	\checkmark	
classical_50_1	151	0	50	103	1	0	\checkmark	150	0	50	102	1	0	✓	
clay0205m	81	0	50	96	40	0	\checkmark	75	0	45	90	40	0	✓	
clay0305m	86	0	55	96	60	0	\checkmark	81	0	51	93	60	0	✓	
du-opt	21	13	0	9	1	0	\checkmark	21	13	0	5	1	0	\checkmark	
ex1263	93	0	72	52	4	0		91	0	71	47	4	0		
ex1264	89	0	68	52	4	0		82	0	62	47	4	0		
ex1265	131	0	100	70	5	0		122	0	92	65	5	0		
ex1266	181	0	138	90	6	0		168	0	126	81	6	0		
fac3	67	0	12	33	1	0	\checkmark	67	0	12	33	1	0	✓	
feedtray2	88	0	36	137	147	0		300	0	12	1001	147	0		
iair04	8905	0	8904	823	1	0		12858	0	7363	17483	0	0	\checkmark	
iair05	7196	0	7195	426	1	0		10571	0	6117	14202	0	0	✓	
ibc1	1752	0	252	1913	1	0		865	0	252	1436	0	0	✓	
ibell3a	123	29	31	104	1	0	\checkmark	130	29	31	164	1	0	✓	
ibienst1	506	0	28	576	1	0	\checkmark	473	0	28	592	0	0	✓	
icap6000	6001	0	6000	2171	1	0	\checkmark	7301	0	5865	6307	0	0	✓	
icvxqp1	10001	10000	0	5000	1	0	\checkmark	10003	9998	2	5006	1	0	\checkmark	
ieilD76	1899	0	1898	75	1	0		2686	0	1898	3170	0	0	✓	
ilaser0	1003	151	0	1000	1	0	\checkmark	1003	151	0	1000	1	0	\checkmark	
imas284	152	0	150	68	1	0		228	0	150	299	0	0	\checkmark	
imisc07	261	0	259	212	1	0		360	0	238	583	0	0	✓	
imod011	10958	1	96	4480	1	0	\checkmark	8962	1	96	2727	1	0	✓	
inug08	1633	0	1632	912	1	0	\checkmark	2223	0	1632	3096	0	0	✓	
iportfolio	1201	192	775	201	1	0	\checkmark	1201	192	775	201	1	0	✓	
iqiu	841	0	48	1192	1	0	\checkmark	871	0	48	1285	0	0	✓	
iran13x13	339	0	169	195	1	0		469	0	169	588	0	0	✓	
iran8x32	513	0	256	296	1	0		649	0	256	707	0	0	✓	
isqp	1001	50	0	249	1	0	\checkmark	1001	50	0	249	1	0	\checkmark	
iswath2	6405	0	2213	483	1	0		8007	0	2213	5632	0	0	\checkmark	
itointqor	51	50	0	0	1	0	\checkmark	51	50	0	0	1	0	\checkmark	
ivalues	203	202	0	1	1	0		203	202	0	1	1	0		
lop97ic	1754	831	831	52	40	0		5228	708	708	11521	0	0	\checkmark	
lop97icx	987	831	68	48	40	0		488	68	68	1138	0	0	\checkmark	
meanvarx	36	0	14	44	1	0	\checkmark	30	0	12	36	1	0	\checkmark	
netmod_dol1	1999	0	462	3137	1	0	\checkmark	1993	0	462	3131	1	0	\checkmark	
netmod_dol2	1999	0	462	3080	1	0	\checkmark	1592	0	454	2637	1	0	\checkmark	
netmod_kar1	457	0	136	666	1	0	\checkmark	453	0	136	662	1	0	\checkmark	

continued on next page

instance			ori	ginal prol	blem		presolved problem							
	vars	$_{ m int}$	bin	linear	quad	soc	conv	vars	$_{ m int}$	bin	linear	quad	soc	conv
netmod_kar2	457	0	136	666	1	0	✓	453	0	136	662	1	0	√
nous1	51	0	2	15	29	0		47	0	2	11	29	0	
nous2	51	0	2	15	29	0		47	0	2	11	29	0	
nuclear14a	993	0	600	50	584	0		1568	0	600	2377	560	0	
nuclear14b	1569	0	600	1226	560	0		1568	0	600	1225	560	0	
nvs19	9	8	0	0	9	0		9	8	0	0	9	0	
nvs23	10	9	0	0	10	0		10	9	0	0	10	0	
pb351535	526	0	525	50	1	0		1049	0	525	1622	0	0	\checkmark
product	1554	0	107	1794	132	0		446	0	92	450	82	0	
product2	2843	0	128	2598	528	0		480	0	128	338	128	0	
qap	226	0	225	30	1	0		448	0	225	699	0	0	\checkmark
qapw	451	0	225	255	1	0		675	0	225	930	0	0	✓
robust_100_0	404	0	101	305	2	0		403	0	101	304	1	1	✓
robust_100_1	404	0	101	305	2	0		403	0	101	304	1	1	✓
robust_200_0	804	0	201	605	2	0		803	0	201	604	1	1	✓
robust_20_0	84	0	21	65	2	0		83	0	21	64	1	1	✓
robust_50_0	204	0	51	155	2	0		203	0	51	154	1	1	✓
robust_50_1	204	0	51	155	2	0		203	0	51	154	1	1	✓
sep1	30	0	2	26	6	0		19	0	2	15	6	0	
shortfall_100_0	405	0	101	306	2	0		404	0	101	305	0	2	✓
shortfall_100_1	405	0	101	306	2	0		404	0	101	305	0	2	✓
shortfall_200_0	805	0	201	606	2	0		804	0	201	605	0	2	✓
shortfall_20_0	85	0	21	66	2	0		84	0	21	65	0	2	✓
shortfall_50_0	205	0	51	156	2	0		204	0	51	155	0	2	✓
shortfall_50_1	205	0	51	156	2	0		204	0	51	155	0	2	✓
space25	894	0	750	211	25	0		767	0	716	118	25	0	
spectra2	70	0	30	65	8	0		68	0	30	30	8	0	
tln12	169	156	12	61	12	0		180	144	24	85	11	0	
tln5	36	30	5	26	5	0		35	30	5	20	5	0	
tln6	49	42	6	31	6	0		48	42	6	24	6	0	
tln7	64	56	7	36	7	0		63	56	7	28	7	0	
tltr	49	36	12	52	3	0		56	27	20	73	2	0	
uflquad-15-60	916	0	15	960	1	Ö	\checkmark	916	0	15	960	1	0	✓
uflquad-20-50	1021	Õ	20	1050	1	Ö	✓	1021	Ö	20	1050	1	Ö	· /
uflquad-30-100	3031	0	30	3100	1	0	· /	3031	0	30	3100	1	0	·
uflquad-40-80	3241	ő	40	3280	1	0	· /	3241	0	40	3280	1	0	· /
waste	2485	ő	400	624	1368	ő	•	1238	0	400	516	1230	0	•