

Portfolio Optimization under Short Sale Opportunity

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1. Introduction

We consider a portfolio optimization problem under short sale opportunity. When we sell assets short we must pay deposit and commission fee to the third party who lends the assets, and the cash obtained by the short sale is held at the party. We have to use up to all amount of fund at the time of portfolio construction. In this case the investable set is a nonconvex set, so that the mean-variance model becomes a nonconvex minimization problem. This kind of problem cannot be solved by standard nonlinear programming methodology. So we propose a branch and bound algorithm exploiting the special structure of this problem. It is demonstrated that this algorithm can solve virtually all test problems in a very efficient manner.

2. Formulation

Let there be n assets $S_j, j = 1, 2, \dots, n$ in the market and let R_j be the random variable representing the rate of return of S_j . Also, let $x_j, j = 1, 2, \dots, n$ be the proportion of fund (either positive or negative) to be allocated to S_j . The total cash outflow is (γ is a positive constant)

$$\sum_{j=1}^n \{|x_j|_+ + \gamma|x_j|_-\} = 1 \tag{1}$$

where

$$|x_j|_+ = \begin{cases} x_j & \text{if } x_j \geq 0 \\ 0 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

$$|x_j|_- = \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if } x_j \geq 0 \\ -x_j & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

Let us introduce u_j and v_j such that

$$u_j - v_j = x_j, u_j \geq 0, v_j \geq 0, u_j v_j = 0, \\ j = 1, 2, \dots, n.$$

Then $|x_j|_+ = u_j, |x_j|_- = v_j$. We employ the historical data to represent the return structure of the asset. The mean-variance model can be represented as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} &\text{maximize } f(u, v, y) = \sum_{j=1}^n r_j(u_j - v_j) \\ &\quad - \lambda \sum_{t=1}^T y_t^2 / T - \sum_{j=1}^n (c_j^+ u_j + c_j^- v_j) \\ &\text{subject to } y_t - \sum_{j=1}^n \beta_{jt}(u_j - v_j) = 0, \\ &\quad \quad \quad t = 1, 2, \dots, T \\ &\quad \quad \quad \sum_{j=1}^n u_j + \gamma \sum_{j=1}^n v_j = 1 \\ &\quad \quad \quad \sum_{j=1}^n a_{ij}(u_j - v_j) \geq b_i, \\ &\quad \quad \quad i = 1, 2, \dots, m \\ &\quad \quad \quad 0 \leq u_j \leq \alpha, \quad 0 \leq v_j \leq \alpha' \\ &\quad \quad \quad u_j v_j = 0, \quad j = 1, 2, \dots, n \end{aligned}$$

where $r_{jt}, t = 1, 2, \dots, T$ are the rate of return of the j -th asset during the past t -th period. Also, $\beta_{jt} = \tau_{jt} - r_j$.

To construct a practical algorithm, we relax the equality constraint (1) as follows:

$$1 - \delta \leq \sum_{j=1}^n u_j + \gamma \sum_{j=1}^n v_j \leq 1 \tag{2}$$

for some positive constant $\delta > 0$.

3. A Branch and Bound Algorithm

The first and natural step for solving this nonconvex problem is to relax the complementarity condition $u_j v_j = 0, j = 1, 2, \dots, n$ and solve the resulting quadratic programming problem. Let (u^*, v^*, y^*) be an optimal solution of the quadratic programming problem. If $u_j^* v_j^* = 0, j = 1, 2, \dots, n$, then it is obviously an optimal solution of the original problem. If there exist any j 's such that violate complementarity condition, we use a branch and bound method. We consider the following linear system

