Nonsmooth analysis for stochastic optimization : theory, algorithms and applications in energy

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based on joint work with Wim van Ackooij (EDF), Nicolas Lebbe (PhD), Welington de Oliveria (Rio, Brasil), and Sofia Zaourar (Xerox)

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About the key-words of the title

"Nonsmooth analysis for stochastic optimization: theory, algorithms and applications in energy"

 Stochastic optimization : optimization problems with random variables... in action ! (vs randomized optimization algorithms and convergence analysis)



Nonsmooth : non-differentiable (e.g. max-fct)

 \rightarrow difficult nonsmooth functions call for cutting-planes algorithms (vs proximal or conditional gradient algos)

 Energy : electricity generation (EDF) with randomness due to renewable sources (vs distribution, prediction, savings,...)





About this talk

- This talk can be seen as a (light, incomplete, biased) introduction to stochastic optimization, from a nonsmooth analysis perspective
- Bird-eye view
 - presentation of advanced algorithms on pictures !
 - presentation of real-life industrial problems in words/photos !
- Many technical details hidden (modeling issues, assumptions, mathematical details, convergence analysis,...)
- Emphasis on ideas and applications with a goal :
 advertize nonsmooth optimization for real-life energy problems
- Let's pick random topics in this talk: probability functions, eventual convexity, robust optimization, large-scale heterogeneous problems, decomposition algorithm, quadratic stabilization,...

Outline



- 2 Basic nonsmooth algorithm: cutting-plane method
- 3 Advanced nonsmooth algorithms: bundle methods



Stochastic optimization: ideas, examples

Outline

Stochastic optimization: ideas, examples

- 2 Basic nonsmooth algorithm: cutting-plane method
- 3 Advanced nonsmooth algorithms: bundle methods
- 4 Concluding remarks

A domain of applied maths : Mathematical Optimization

• Mathematical optimization

(\simeq the maths of "doing-better" or of the decision)

 $\begin{cases} \min f(x) \quad (\text{objective-function}) \\ g(x) \leq 0 \quad (\text{constraints}) \\ x \in X \subset \mathbb{R}^n \end{cases}$



- Intractable in general... but "easy" for linear optimization (f and g affine) or more generally for convex optimization (f and g convex) due to nice geometrical properties (globality, duality, guarantees...)
- Applications : recent explosion in data science on top of traditional applications in industry, services,... and energy !
- Basic example in machine learning or robust regression : LASSO (*f* data-fidelity term, *g* regularizer)

$$\begin{cases} \min \sum_{i=1}^{n} (a_i^\top x - b_i)^2 \\ \|x\|_{\ell_1} \leqslant \mu \end{cases} \text{ or } \begin{cases} \min \sum_{i=1}^{n} (a_i^\top x - b_i)^2 + \lambda \|x\|_{\ell_1} \\ x \in \mathbb{R}^n \end{cases}$$

Optimization face to uncertainty

Adding unknown uncertainty $\boldsymbol{\xi}$

$$\begin{cases} \min_{(x,\xi)} f(x,\xi) \\ g(x,\xi) \leqslant 0 \end{cases} (not well-posed)$$

Two main ways to model uncertainty

() Robust optimization: $\xi \in \Xi$ with a known uncertainty set

$$\begin{cases} \min_x \max_{\substack{\xi \in \Xi} \\ g(x,\xi) \leqslant 0 \quad \text{for all } \xi \in \Xi \end{cases}$$

Stochastic optimization: $\xi \sim \mathbb{P}$ with a (known) probability law

$$\left(egin{array}{c} \min_x & \mathbb{E}[f(x,\xi)] \\ & \mathbb{P}[g(x,\xi)\leqslant 0] \geqslant p \end{array}
ight.$$

for an uncertainty level p (p = 1 is almost-sure)

In practice: modeling is as important as solving the resulting optimization problem (and both interact ! see forthcoming examples)

Multi-stage stochastic optimization

• In some problems, we can take a second decision (= correction) once the uncertainty is known

$$x \rightsquigarrow \xi \rightsquigarrow y$$

The "recourse" variable y is a random variable depending on ξ

• This yields to "two-stage" stochastic optimization problems

- Examples from this morning : 2-stage linear
- Generalizes to multi-stage

$$x^0 \rightsquigarrow \xi^1 \rightsquigarrow x^1 \rightsquigarrow \xi^2 \rightsquigarrow \cdots \rightsquigarrow x^T$$

• Stochastic optimization problems are more complex, but very structured \rightarrow to be exploited in solution algorithms !

Example 1 : hydro-reservoir managment

Hydrological valley with N reservoirs

 ξ random inflows x decision variables (turbining, pumping) $V^{i}(t) = V_{0}^{i} + A^{i}x(t) + \xi(t)$ volume of reservoir i



Simplified model, see more in vanAckooij Henrion Moller Zorgati '14

- variable : $x \in X$ to be decided upon before observing ξ
- objective : maximizing remuneration for a price signal π
- bounds constraints : $\forall i, t, V_{\min}^i \leq V^i(t) \leq V_{\max}^i$ (irrigation, navigability,...)

$$\begin{cases} \max & \pi^{\top} x \\ & \mathbb{P}[V_{\min} \leqslant V_0 + Ax + \xi \leqslant V_{\max}] \geqslant p \\ & x \in X \end{cases}$$

probability-constrained optimization problem

Probability constraints

• In the example : if we assume ξ gaussian, we have good properties :

- $\varphi(x) = \mathbb{P}[V_{\min} \leqslant V_0 + Ax + \xi \leqslant V_{\max}]$ is log-concave Prekopa '95

- φ is differentiable (when cov. matrix is def. pos.) vanAckooij Henrion '10
- Efficient numerical integration scheme Deak '00 to compute the value $\varphi(x)$ together with the gradient $\nabla \varphi(x)$

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 - Efficient numerical integration scheme Deak '00 to compute the value $\varphi(x)$ together with the gradient $\nabla \varphi(x)$
- In general : many theoretical questions on $\varphi(x) = \mathbb{P}[g(x,\xi) \leqslant 0]$
 - simple counter-examples show that continuity, convexity, differentiability of g do not transfert trivially to φ
 - important question in view of optimization : convexity of the constraint φ(x) ≥ p ?

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- important question in view of optimization : convexity of the constraint φ(x) ≥ p ?
- In particular : recent result vanAckooij Malick '16 Under mild assumption on g, eventual convexity holds for a large family of laws (normal, log-normal, student,...): there exists p < 1 such that

$$ar{p} \leqslant p \leqslant 1 \quad \{x : \mathbb{P}[g(x,\xi) \leqslant 0] \geqslant p\} \text{ convex}$$



Example 2 : optimization of electricity generation

• In France : electricity produced by $N \simeq 200$ production units

nuclear 80%



oil + coal 3%



water 17%



- Day-to-day optimization of production : finding a minimal cost production schedule for the next day that satisfies the operational constraints and that meets customer demand
- Classical problem : "unit-commitment"
- Uncertainty on weather conditions
 - $\rightarrow\mbox{ consumption}$
 - $\rightarrow\,$ renewable sources (wind, solar, water)
 - $\rightarrow\,$ demand is uncertain



Deterministic unit-commitment

Simplified model : for $N \simeq 200$ units, on T = 96 = 2 * 48 periods of time

- variable : schedule $x = (x_1, \dots, x_N) \in X = X_1 \times \dots \times X_N$
- technical constraints : $x_i \in X_i$ $i = 1, \dots, N$
- demand constraints : $m^t \leqslant \sum_i x_i^t d^t \leqslant M^t$ $t = 1, \dots, T$
- objective : linear costs $c^{\top}x = \sum_i c_i^{\top}x_i$

Hard optimization problem: large-scale, heterogeneous, complex

$$\begin{cases} \min c^{\top} x \\ x \in X, \quad m \leq \sum_{i} x_{i} - d \leq M \end{cases}$$

Approach by duality : decomposition of computation over each unit

$$\min_{\substack{x_i \in X_i}} \pi_i^\top x_i$$

(with $\pi_i = c_i + A^{\top} \lambda$ where λ dual variable or price)

how to handle random $d = \xi$ in this situation ?

Model 1 : Robust unit-commitment

A simple robust approach (VanAckooij Lebbe Malick '16)

- get rid of bound constraint
- penalize instead the worst gap



$$\begin{cases} \min c^{\top} x + \max_{\xi \in \Xi} \sum_{t=1}^{T} \psi \left(\sum_{i} x_{i}^{t} - \xi^{t} \right) \\ x \in X \end{cases}$$

Complex model of uncertainty set Ξ (vs Ξ finite or $\Xi = [d_{\min}, d_{\max}]^T$)



The model of Minoux 2012

- is finite but of high cardinality
- expresses temporal dependencies
- preserves a fast computability

Model 2 : Two-stage stochastic unit-commitment 1/2

- The schedule x is sent to the grid-operator (RTE) before being activated and before observing uncertainty
- But in real time, a new production schedule can be sent to the grid-operator at specific moments in time
- After au periods :
 - $\xi_1,...,\xi_{ au}$: the observed net customer load of the previous time
 - $\xi_{\tau+1},...,\xi_{\mathcal{T}}$: the current best forecast of net customer load after τ

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- vanAckooij Malick '15 proposes two-stage model

$$c(x,\xi) = \begin{cases} \min c^{\top}y \\ y \in X, \quad m \leq \sum_{i} y_{i} - \xi \leq M \\ y \text{ coincides with } x \text{ on the } \tau \text{ first steps} \end{cases}$$

• The second-stage problem has the same form as the initial problem with a smaller horizon ${\cal T}-\tau$

fine operational modeling vs difficult to compute

Model 2 : Two-stage stochastic unit-commitment 2/2

• Stochastic optimization problem

$$\begin{cases} \min c^{\top} x + \mathbb{E}[c(x,\xi)] \\ x \in X, \quad m \leq \sum_{i} x_{i} - d \leq M \end{cases}$$

- Complexity of $c(x,\xi)$ only allows for simple modeling of randomness
- VanAckooij Malick '15 uses finite distribution

$$\mathbb{P}(\xi = \xi_s) = p_s \quad (s = 1, \dots, S)$$

• (Convex) implicit second-stage function

$$v(x) = \mathbb{E}[c(x,\xi)] = \sum_{s=1}^{S} p_s c(x,\xi_s)$$

• For our numerical experiments (see later) *S* = 50, 150, 250 problems with more than 1 million of variables and constraints...

Basic nonsmooth algorithm: cutting-plane method

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Cutting plane models and algorithms

Cutting-plane models of implicit function

 The convex function v only known partially through an oracle : given an entry x, it returns v(x) and g ∈ ∂v(x)



• From points $x_1, ..., x_k$, we can build the cutting plane model for v:

$$\check{v}_k(x) := \max_{j=1,\ldots,k} \{ v(x_j) + g_j^\top (x - x_j) \}$$

• Convexity yields : $\check{v}_k(x) \leqslant v(x)$ for all x

Cutting-plane algorithm (Kelley '60)

- Instead of $\min_{x \in X} v(x)$ we solve $\min_{x \in X} \check{v}_k(x)$ to get x_{k+1}
- When X is polyhedral this is a mere linear optimization problem
- Cultural note : cutting is a foundational technique of Operations Research in general

























Convergence in 6 iterations

Cutting-plane for stochastic optimization : inexact oracles

In our stochastic optimization examples:

• we do have convex functions

- example
$$1: v(x) = -\log \mathbb{P}[V_{\min} \leqslant V_0 + Ax + \xi \leqslant V_{\max}]$$

- example 2 :
$$v(x) = \max_{\xi \in \Xi} \sum_{t=1}^{T} \psi(\sum_{i} x_{i}^{t} - \xi^{t})$$

- example 3 :
$$v(x) = \mathbb{E}[c(x,\xi)] = \sum_{s=1}^{S} p_s c(x,\xi_s)$$

- we only approximate v(x) and $g \in \partial v(x)$
 - by numerical integration for example 1
 - by maximization for example 2
 - $-\,$ by dual resolution for example 3 $\,$

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Cutting-plane algorithms easily extend to inexact oracles

Inexact oracle provides approximate cutting planes: for given x

$$\begin{array}{lll} \mathbf{v}_{\mathbf{x}} &=& \mathbf{v}(\mathbf{x}) - \eta_{\mathbf{x}} & (\eta_{\max} \geqslant \eta_{\mathbf{x}} \geqslant \eta_{\min}) \\ \mathbf{v}(\mathbf{y}) & \geqslant & \mathbf{v}_{\mathbf{x}} + \mathbf{g}_{\mathbf{x}}^{\top}(\mathbf{y} - \mathbf{x}) - \varepsilon_{\mathbf{x}} & (\varepsilon_{\max} \geqslant \varepsilon_{\mathbf{x}} \geqslant 0), \end{array}$$

When $\eta^x = \varepsilon^x = 0$, we retrieve $g_x \in \partial v(x)$

Numerical illustration for stochastic unit-commitment

- With real-life EDF model (data from 2013)
 - deterministic problem (1 scenario) : around 50000 continuous variables, 27000 binary variables, and 815000 constraints
 - stochastic problem (50 scenarios) : 1,200,000 continuous variables, 700,000 binary variables, and 20,000,000 constraints
 - \rightarrow Out of reach for existing (mixed-integer linear) solvers !

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- Cutting-plane allows to solve it in reasonable time
- Observation : generation is transferred from inflexible but cheap units to expensive but flexible units


Further note on numerical experiments

- Emphasis on an interest of inexact cutting-plane : hot-restart
- When increasing the number of scenario:

Number of		Sub-pl	Average	
Scenarios	Nb. iter	1st Stage	2nd Stage	calls
50	4	167	1009	5.88
100	8	360	3461	4.77
250	16	694	14205	3.73

- Hot-restart yields decrease of sub-pbs calls per scenario and iteration
- The number of sub-pbs calls remains within reasonable limits. For comparison, using up to 300 calls is common for deterministic real-life unit-commitment
- See more in vanAckooij Malick '15

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- The cutting-plane algorithm is simple... but has several drawbacks
- Among them : inherent instability, see the picture...
- E.g. it is the case for robust unit-commitment ((vs stochastic unit-commitment ()))



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Stabilized cutting-plane: (level) bundle method

Simple idea : add a quadratic term stabilizing the cutting-plane model around the 'best' current point, called stability center \hat{x}_k

- prox-bundle methods Lemaréchal 70s-80s (interpreted as inexact proximal algorithm)
- level-bundle methods Lemaréchal Nesterov Nemirovski '95
- many recent improvements and generalizations (around inexactness)

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An iteration of level bundle algorithm

$$x_{k+1} := \operatorname{argmin} \left\{ \frac{1}{2} \| x - \hat{x}_k \|^2 : \ \check{\mathbf{v}}_k(x) \leqslant \mathbf{L}_k, \ x \in X \right\}$$

the level $L_k := (v_k^{up} + v_k^{low})/2$ middle of v_k^{low} lower bound and $v_k^{up} := \min_{1 \le j \le k} v(x_j)$ upper bound for the minimum of v on X.





















Same 1-dimension example :



convergence in only 4 iterations (vs 6 for cutting-plane)

Numerical illustration for robust unit-commitment : plot

Using quadratic stabilization does stabilize !

<

See e.g. on one run for robust unit-commitment on the EDF data set

$$\begin{cases} \min c^{\top}x + \max_{\xi \in \Xi} \sum_{t=1}^{T} \psi(\sum_{i} x_{i}^{t} - \xi^{t}) \\ x \in X \end{cases}$$



cutting-plane alg. vs bundle alg. (relative gap / number of iterations)

Numerical illustration for robust unit-commitment : table

More numerical results on the EDF data set

- comparison of iterations (#it) and sub-pbs calls (#calls)
- cutting-plane algorithm vs bundle algorithm
- easy stopping criteria : 5% (the comparison is even more unbalanced for 1%)

Instance	cutting-plane		bundle		improvement	
date	# it.	calls	# it.	calls	# it.	calls
15/01/2013	41	536	26	317	158%	169%
20/03/2013	393	613	103	245	382%	250%
13/05/2013	764	2315	319	974	239%	238%
22/08/2013	2648	3452	356	790	744%	347%
25/10/2013	724	2163	209	1147	346%	189%
10/12/2013	78	578	34	229	229%	252%

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Take-home message

Source in the second second

- In industrial energy applications, convex functions are often known implicitly through inexact oracles (vs machine learning)
- (Stabilized) cutting-plane algorithms are methods of choice for large-scale applications showing decomposability

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- In industrial energy applications, convex functions are often known implicitly through inexact oracles (vs machine learning)
- Stabilized) cutting-plane algorithms are methods of choice for large-scale applications showing decomposability
- There is active recent research on such methods (inexact computation, faster convergence, new applications...)
- These nonsmooth algorithms also method of choice for (hard) smooth problems !? e.g. probabilistic constrained optimization

Back to hydro-reservoir

$$\left(\begin{array}{c} \max \quad \pi^{\top} x \\ \mathbb{P}[V_{\min}^{i} \leqslant V_{0}^{i} + Ax + \xi \leqslant V_{\max}^{i}] \geqslant 0.8 \end{array} \right)$$

When ξ gaussian:

- it is a smooth convex problems
- but the best solution methods are nonsmooth optimization methods !



Comparison of algorithms on the Isère Valley (real-life EDF data)

method	obj. value	\mathbb{P}	Nb. Iter.	CPU time
			[InfeasQP]	(mins)
Prepoka '03	175222	0.799511	190	1504.7
Kiwiel '08	175237	0.799394	204	627.3
VanA. Sag. '15	175237	0.799418	188	573.5
LNN '95	175235	0.799854	161	529.6
level	175235	0.799604	165 [3]	423.2

Some references

Material mainly extracted from :



W. van Ackooij and J. Malick

Decomposition algorithm for large-scale two-stage unit-commitment Annals of Operations Research, 238(1):587-613, 2016



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Supplementary





More on probability functions

Outline




Counter-example of well-behaviour

Let $\xi \sim N(0,1)$ be given and consider

$$\phi(\mathbf{x}) := \mathbb{P}[Q\mathbf{x} + L\xi \ge b],$$

with

$$Q = \begin{bmatrix} 2 & 1 \\ -1 & 1 \end{bmatrix}, L = \begin{bmatrix} -1 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix}, b = \begin{bmatrix} 0 \\ -\frac{1}{2} \end{bmatrix}$$

Then ϕ is not continuous !

because of the presence of "deterministic" constraints $-1x_1 + x_2 \ge -\frac{1}{2}$

the set $\{z \in \mathbb{R}^m : g(x, z) = 0\}$ is not of zero measure (at some x's).



Evaluating \mathbb{P}

- Let $\xi \sim N(0, R)$ and $R = LL^{\top}$.
- ξ = ηLζ, where η has a chi-distribution with m degrees of freedom and ζ is uniformly distributed over S^{m−1} euclidian unit-sphere of ℝ^m
- As a consequence, for *M* Lebesgue-mesurable

$$\mathbb{P}[\xi \in M] = \int_{\mathbf{v} \in \mathbb{S}^{m-1}} \mu_{\eta} \left(\{ r \ge 0 : rL\mathbf{v} \cap M \neq \emptyset \} \right) d\mu_{\zeta}$$

- Efficient sampling schemes for such integrals Deak 00
- In our case $M(x) = \{z \in \mathbb{R}^m : g(x, z) \leq 0\}$ is a convex hence Lebesgue measurable

Eventual convexity example

In general $g: \mathbb{R}^n \times \mathbb{R}^m \to \mathbb{R}$ is defined by:

$$g(x,z) := z^{\top} W(x) z + 2 \sum_{i=1}^{n} x_i w_i^{\top} z + b,$$

where W a positive semi-definite matrix valued mapping

$$W(x) = x_1 W_1 + x_2 W_2, \text{ where}$$
$$W_1 = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0.9 \\ 0.9 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \text{ and } W_2 = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & -0.7 \\ -0.7 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$$
the correlation matrix *R*:

$$R = \left(\begin{array}{cc} 1 & 0.5 \\ 0.5 & 1 \end{array} \right).$$

and $w_1 = (-1,1)$, $w_2 = (2,3)$ and b = -3



Proba constraints are not just plain non-linear constraints

- φ is not known up to arbitrary precision (or would be unreasonably costly). A (sub-)gradient of φ also suffers from numerical imprecision. Explicit formula allowing for computations with a trade-off cost/efficiency.
- An example shows that cutting planes may locally over-estimate the map (or set):



Eventual convexity result

Theorem (Simplified version)

Let $g: \mathbb{R}^n \times \mathbb{R}^m \to \mathbb{R}$ convex in the first argument and "non-distorted". Let $\xi \sim E(\mu, \Sigma, \theta)$ be elliptically symmetrically distributed with mean μ , covariance matrix Σ , generator θ and associated radial distribution R. Assume also a "generalized concavity" property of F_R .

Then the set

$$M(p) = \{x \in \mathbb{R}^n : \mathbb{P}[g(x,\xi) \leq 0] \ge p\}$$

is convex provided that

$$p \ge p^* := \frac{1}{4} F_R \left(\frac{z_*(m, \alpha, \theta) \delta^{\mathrm{nd}}}{\delta^{\mathrm{vol}}} \right) + \frac{3}{4}$$

If g is only non-distorted for all $\bar{x} \in X$, where X is a convex compact set, then $M(p) \cap X$ is convex for $p \ge p^*$, with p^*





Solution by duality for deterministic case

For special case m = M

$$\begin{cases} \min c(x) \\ x \in X, \quad \sum_i x_i - d = 0 \end{cases}$$

$$L(x,\lambda) := \sum_{i} c_i(x_i) + \sum_{t} \lambda^t \left(\sum_{i} x_i^t - d^t \right) = \sum_{i} \left(c_i(x_i) + \sum_{t} \lambda^t (x_i^t - d^t) \right)$$

$$\theta(\lambda) := \min_{x \in X} L(x,\lambda) = \sum_{i} \min_{x_i \in X_i} \left(c_i(x_i) + \sum_{t} \lambda^t (x_i^t - d^t) \right)$$

dual resolution by proximal bundle method prima recovery by efficient heuristics

State-space model



- At each time step t ∈ τ, a set of nodes E_t containing both a value for D_t and a weight w_t.
- Graph (G, V), with $G = \bigcup_t E_t$, such that V connects all nodes in E_t to those in E_{t+1} that are not further apart than H,
- Ξ is the set of all paths in (G, V) satisfying $\sum_t w_t \leq W_{\max}$ for a given maximum budget of uncertainty W_{\max} .
- Card Ξ is huge, but computing the sup over Ξ by a simple 1-dimensional dynamic programming principle.

Load uncertaincy

We generate the uncertain loads as an average load on top of which we add a causal time series model (see, e.g., Bruhns et al 2005).

We consider the Gaussian random variable

$$D(\xi) = \bar{D} + \zeta,$$

where ζ is an AR(3) model with Gaussian innovations

The covariance matrix is $\Sigma^{D} = (C^{D}S)(S(C^{D}))^{\top}$, where S is a diagonal matrix with element

$$S_{ii} = \mathtt{f} rac{D_i}{rac{1}{T} \sum_{j=1}^T ar{D}_j}$$

and C^D is the nominal covariance matrix with $C_{ji} = \sum_{k=1}^{j-i+1} \phi_k^D$

$$\phi^D_k = \begin{cases} \phi_3 & \text{if } k = 1\\ \phi_3 \phi^D_1 + \phi_2 & \text{if } k = 2\\ \phi_3 \phi^D_2 + \phi_2 \phi^D_1 + \phi_1 & \text{if } k = 3\\ \sum_{k=1}^3 \phi_{4-k} \phi^D_{j-k} & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$