

Simultaneously Achieving Sublinear Regret and Constraint Violations for Online Convex Optimization with Time-varying Constraints

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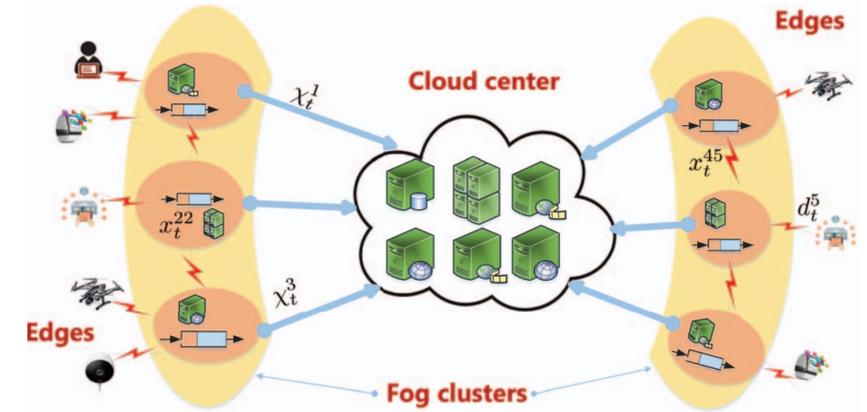
Zhixuan Fang

Outline

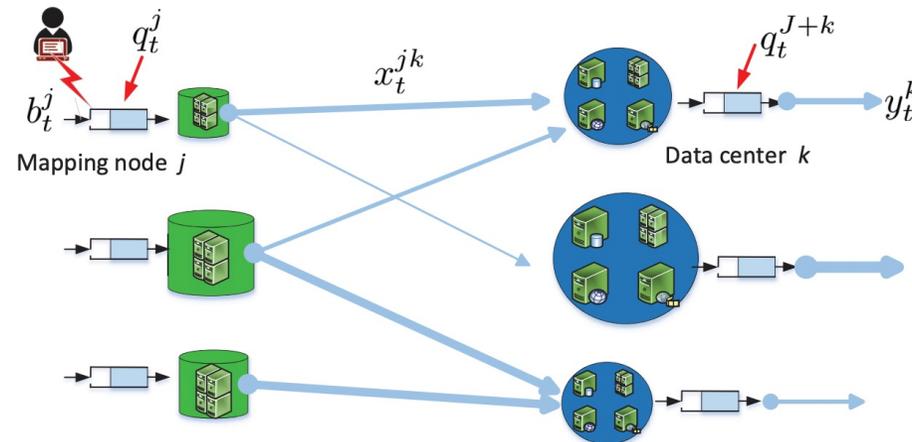
- Motivation
- Problem formulation
- Related works
- Algorithm
- Main results
- Simulation

Motivation

- Online network routing
- Online network resources allocation
- Online job scheduling
- Online fog computation offloading



A diagram of online fog computation offloading



A diagram of online network resources allocation

Problem formulation

- Model :
 - At round t , the agent makes a decision $x_t \in \mathcal{X}$
 - Incurs a loss function f_t and a constraint function \mathbf{g}_t
 - f_t and \mathbf{g}_t are **time-varying**, where $\mathbf{g}_t = [g_{t,1}(t), \dots, g_{t,k}(t)]^T$
 - Revealed after the decision making

- Goal :

$$\min_{\{x_t\}_{t=1}^T} \sum_{t=1}^T f_t(x_t), \quad s.t. \quad \sum_{t=1}^T \mathbf{g}_t(x_t) \leq \mathbf{0}. \quad (\text{P1})$$

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- Challenging in the **online setting**

Related works

- [Chen et al., 2017, Chen et al., 2018, Cao and Liu, 2019, Chen and Giannakis, 2019]
 - Based on the modified online saddle-point (MOSP) method
 - Assume the Slater condition holds
 - Cannot guarantee simultaneous sublinear regret (R) and constraint violations (C)

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- [Cao and Liu, 2019] :
 - **The only one work** that can achieve simultaneous R&C without the Slater condition
 - **not parameter-free**, i.e., the parameters in their algorithm require the prior information of the environments

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 - **The only one work** that can achieve simultaneous R&C without the Slater condition
 - **not parameter-free**, i.e., the parameters in their algorithm require the prior information of the environments

None of the **parameter-free** methods can guarantee the sublinear regret and constraint violations **simultaneously**

Metrics

- Benchmark: per-slot minimizers $\{x_t^*\}$

$$x_t^* = \arg \min_{x \in \mathcal{X}} \{f_t(x) \mid \mathbf{g}_t(x) \leq \mathbf{0}\}$$

- Dynamic regret

$$\text{Regret}(T) = \sum_{t=1}^T f_t(x_t) - \sum_{t=1}^T f_t(x_t^*)$$

- Constraint violations

$$\text{Vio}_k = \sum_{t=1}^T g_{k,t}(x_t), k = 1, 2, \dots, K.$$

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- Constraint violations

$$\text{Vio}_k = \sum_{t=1}^T g_{k,t}(x_t), k = 1, 2, \dots, K.$$

Note: dynamic regret is more **meaningful**
in **dynamic** environments

Regularities

- Quantifying the temporal variations of functions sequence (or environment)
- Two main kinds of regularities [Chen et al., 2018, Yi et al., 2020]
 - **Path-length**: the accumulated variation of per-slot minimizers $\{x_t^*\}$

$$V_x = \sum_{t=2}^T \|x_t^* - x_{t-1}^*\|$$

- **Function variation**: the accumulated variation of consecutive constraints

$$V_g = \sum_{t=2}^T \max_{x \in \mathcal{X}} \|\mathbf{g}_t(x) - \mathbf{g}_{t-1}(x)\|$$

Assumptions

- The feasible set χ is closed, convex, and bounded with diameter R , i.e.,
 - $\|x - y\| \leq R, \forall x, y \in \chi$.
- f_t and g_t are convex, and bounded by F on χ , i.e.,
 - $\max_{x \in \chi} \{|f_t(x)|, \|g_t(x)\|\} \leq F, \forall t$.
- ∇f_t and $\nabla g_{k,t}$ are bounded by G over χ , i.e.,
 - $\max_{x \in \chi} \{\|\nabla f_t(x)\|, \|\nabla g_{k,t}(x)\|\} \leq F, \forall k, t$.

Algorithm

Algorithm 1 VQB

- 1: **Initialize:** $\alpha_1, \gamma_0 > 0$, $\mathbf{g}_0 = \boldsymbol{\lambda}(0) = 0$, and $x_1 \in \mathcal{X}$.
 - 2: **for** round $t = 1 \dots T - 1$ **do**
 - 3: Update the dual iterate $\boldsymbol{\lambda}(t)$:
 - 4: $\boldsymbol{\lambda}(t) = \max\{\boldsymbol{\lambda}(t-1) + \gamma_{t-1} \mathbf{g}_{t-1}(x_t), -\gamma_{t-1} \mathbf{g}_{t-1}(x_t)\}$
 - 5: Update the primal iterate that satisfies:
 - 6: $x_{t+1} = \arg \min_{x \in \mathcal{X}} \nabla f_t(x_t)^T (x - x_t) + [\boldsymbol{\lambda}(t) + \gamma_{t-1} \mathbf{g}_{t-1}(x_t)]^T (\gamma_t \mathbf{g}_t(x)) + \alpha_t \|x - x_t\|^2$
 - 7: Choose the action x_{t+1}
 - 8: **end for**
-

- We introduces a sequence of dual variables $\{\boldsymbol{\lambda}(t)\}$ (also called virtual queues)
 - To characterize the regret and constraint violations through the drift-plus-penalty expression
 - analyze the regret and constraint violations based on it

Algorithm

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- If there are no constraints \mathbf{g}_t (i.e., $\mathbf{g}_t = \mathbf{0}$)
 - $\boldsymbol{\lambda}(t) = \mathbf{0}$

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- If there are no constraints \mathbf{g}_t (i.e., $\mathbf{g}_t = \mathbf{0}$)
 - $\boldsymbol{\lambda}(t) = \mathbf{0}$
 - Update rule of x_{t+1} is equivalent to

$$x_{t+1} = \arg \min_{x \in \mathcal{X}} \nabla f_t(x_t)^T (x - x_t) + \alpha_t \|x - x_t\|^2 = \Pi_{\mathcal{X}}(x_t - \frac{1}{2\alpha_t} \nabla f_t(x_t)).$$

VQB **reduces to** OGD algorithm if there is **no constraints**

Algorithm

Update the primal iterate that satisfies:

$$x_{t+1} = \arg \min_{x \in \mathcal{X}} \nabla f_t(x_t)^T (x - x_t) + [\lambda(t) + \gamma_{t-1} \mathbf{g}_{t-1}(x_t)]^T (\gamma_t \mathbf{g}_t(x)) + \alpha_t \|x - x_t\|^2$$

- Define **virtual queue backlogs**:

$$\mathbf{Q}(t) = \lambda(t) + \gamma_{t-1} \mathbf{g}_{t-1}(x_t) = \max\{\lambda(t-1) + 2\gamma_{t-1} \mathbf{g}_{t-1}(x_t), 0\}$$

- Define **Lyapunov drift**: $\Delta(t) = \frac{1}{2} \|\mathbf{Q}(t+1)\|^2 - \frac{1}{2} \|\mathbf{Q}(t)\|^2$

Algorithm

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- **Intuition**: choose x_{t+1} to **minimize an upper bound of the following expression**

$$\underbrace{\Delta(t)}_{\text{drift}} + \underbrace{\nabla f_t(x_t)^T (x - x_t) + \alpha_t \|x - x_t\|^2}_{\text{penalty}}.$$

Minimize penalty plus the
Lyapunov drift

Algorithm

Update the primal iterate that satisfies:

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Since x_{t+1} has been determined, we replace $\mathbf{g}_t(x_{t+1})$ with $\mathbf{g}_t(x_{t+1})$ in $\Delta(t)$ and omit the constant term

Algorithm

Update the primal iterate that satisfies:

$$x_{t+1} = \arg \min_{x \in \mathcal{X}} \nabla f_t(x_t)^T (x - x_t) + [\lambda(t) + \gamma_{t-1} \mathbf{g}_{t-1}(x_t)]^T (\gamma_t \mathbf{g}_t(x)) + \alpha_t \|x - x_t\|^2$$

- **Intuition:** choose x_{t+1} to minimize an upper bound of the following expression (i.e., to minimize the penalty plus the Lyapunov drift)

$$\underbrace{\Delta(t)}_{\text{drift}} + \underbrace{\nabla f_t(x_t)^T (x - x_t) + \alpha_t \|x - x_t\|^2}_{\text{penalty}}.$$

- The drift term $\Delta(t)$:
 - evaluate the constraint violations and is closed related to the virtual queues

Algorithm

Update the primal iterate that satisfies:

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- The drift term $\Delta(t)$:
 - evaluate the constraint violations and is closely related to the virtual queues
- The regularization term $\|x_t - x_{t-1}\|^2$:
 - smoothen the difference between the coherent actions

Algorithm

Update the primal iterate that satisfies:

$$x_{t+1} = \arg \min_{x \in \mathcal{X}} \nabla f_t(x_t)^T (x - x_t) + [\lambda(t) + \gamma_{t-1} \mathbf{g}_{t-1}(x_t)]^T (\gamma_t \mathbf{g}_t(x)) + \alpha_t \|x - x_t\|^2$$

- **Intuition:** choose x_{t+1} to minimize an upper bound of the following expression (i.e., to minimize the penalty plus the Lyapunov drift)

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- The drift term $\Delta(t)$:
 - evaluate the constraint violations and is closely related to the virtual queues
- The regularization term $\|x_t - x_{t-1}\|^2$:
 - smoothen the difference between the coherent actions
- The remaining term $\nabla f_t(x_t)^T (x - x_t)$:
 - describes the optimization problem

Comparison

- Updating dual variables based on virtual queues
 - [Yu and Neely, 2020]: time-invariant constraints, static regret
 - [Qiu and Wei, 2020]: time-invariant constraints, static regret, parameter-dependent
- Our algorithm VQB differs in
 - Design a **new way of involving instantaneous per-slot constraint violation** into the virtual queues and decision sequence update for the time-varying constraints setting
 - The learning rates of our algorithm, i.e., α_t and γ_t are time-varying

Main results

- Without the Slater condition:

Theorem 1:

(i) Set $\alpha_t = \sqrt{\frac{T}{R + \sum_{i \leq t} \|x_i^* - x_{i-1}^*\|}}$, $\gamma_t = O(\frac{1}{\sqrt{2R}})$, we have

$$\text{Regret}(T) \leq O(\max\{\sqrt{TV_x}, V_g\}),$$

$$\text{Vio}_k \leq O(\max\{\sqrt{T}, V_g\}), \forall k = 1, 2, \dots, K.$$

(ii) Set $\alpha_t = \sqrt{\frac{T}{R + \sum_{i \leq t} \|x_i^* - x_{i-1}^*\|}}$, $\gamma_t = O(\frac{1}{\sqrt{2R}} \frac{1}{\sqrt{t+1}})$, we have

$$\text{Regret}(T) \leq O(\sqrt{TV_x}),$$

$$\text{Vio}_k \leq O\left(\max\left\{T^{\frac{3}{4}}, V_g\right\}\right), \forall k = 1, 2, \dots, K.$$

Main results

- The **variation of consecutive constraints is smooth** across time (**Slater condition**) in many practical constrained OCO problems [Chen et al., 2017]
 - **Question:** Whether the **Slater condition** can lead to **better bounds** of constraint violations for VQB

Main results

- With the Slater condition:

Theorem 2: Set $\alpha_t = O(\sqrt{T})$, $\gamma_t = O(T^{\frac{1}{4}})$, we have

$$\text{Regret}(T) \leq O\left(\max\left\{\sqrt{TV_x}, \sqrt{TV_g}\right\}\right),$$
$$\text{Vio}_k \leq O(1), \forall k = 1, 2, \dots, K.$$

The $O(1)$ bound of constraint violations is achieved

Comparison

Reference	Regret(R)	Constraint violations(C)	Parameter-free	Slater condition-free ¹	Simultaneous sublinear R&C
[Chen et al., 2017]	$O(\max\{V_x T^a, V_g T^a, T^{1-a}\})$	$O(T^{1-a})$	✓	✗	✗
[Chen et al., 2018]	$O(T^{\frac{7}{8}} V_x)$	$O(\max\{T^{\frac{15}{16}}, T^{\frac{7}{8}} V_x\})$	✓	✓	✗
[Chen and Giannakis, 2019]	$O(V_x T^{\frac{3}{4}})$	$O(T^{\frac{3}{4}})$	✓	✗	✗
[Chen and Giannakis, 2019]	$O(V_x T^{\frac{1}{2}})$	$O(T^{\frac{1}{2}})$	✓	✗	✗
[Cao and Liu, 2018]	$O(V_x^{\frac{1}{2}} T^{\frac{1}{2}})$	$O(V_x^{\frac{1}{4}} T^{\frac{3}{4}})$	✗	✗	✓
Thm.1	$O(\max\{\sqrt{TV_x}, V_g\})$	$O(\max\{\sqrt{T}, V_g\})$	✓	✓	✓
Thm.1	$O(\sqrt{TV_x})$	$O(\max\{T^{\frac{3}{4}}, V_g\})$	✓	✓	✓
Thm.2	$O(\max\{\sqrt{TV_x}, \sqrt{TV_g}\})$	$O(1)$	✓	✗	✓

- **Sublinear** regret and constraint violations **simultaneously**

Comparison

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Thm.1	$O(\max\{\sqrt{TV_x}, V_g\})$	$O(\max\{\sqrt{T}, V_g\})$	✓	✓	✓
Thm.1	$O(\sqrt{TV_x})$	$O(\max\{T^{\frac{3}{4}}, V_g\})$	✓	✓	✓
Thm.2	$O \max\{\sqrt{TV_x}, \sqrt{TV_g}\})$	$O(1)$	✓	✗	✓

- Matches the state-of-the-art dynamic regret bound $O(\sqrt{TV_x})$ in classic OCO, when the path-length of the benchmark sequence is V_x

Comparison

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Thm.1	$O(\max\{\sqrt{TV_x}, V_g\})$	$O(\max\{\sqrt{T}, V_g\})$	✓	✓	✓
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Thm.2	$O(\max\{\sqrt{TV_x}, \sqrt{TV_g}\})$	$O(1)$	✓	✗	✓

- **Theorem 1 (case 1):** the regret and constraint violations bounds are all no worse than the state-of-the-art results when V_x is not too large

Comparison

Reference	Regret(R)	Constraint violations(C)	Parameter-free	Slater condition-free ¹	Simultaneous sublinear R&C
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Thm.1	$O(\max\{\sqrt{TV_x}, V_g\})$	$O(\max\{\sqrt{T}, V_g\})$	✓	✓	✓
Thm.1	$O(\sqrt{TV_x})$	$O(\max\{T^{\frac{3}{4}}, V_g\})$	✓	✓	✓
Thm.2	$O \max\{\sqrt{TV_x}, \sqrt{TV_g}\})$	$O(1)$	✓	✗	✓

- **Theorem 1 (Case 2):** the regret bound outperforms all existing works

Comparison

Reference	Regret(R)	Constraint violations(C)	Parameter-free	Slater condition-free ¹	Simultaneous sublinear R&C
[Chen et al., 2017]	$O(\max\{V_x T^a, V_g T^a, T^{1-a}\})$	$O(T^{1-a})$	✓	✗	✗
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Thm.1	$O(\max\{\sqrt{TV_x}, V_g\})$	$O(\max\{\sqrt{T}, V_g\})$	✓	✓	✓
Thm.1	$O(\sqrt{TV_x})$	$O(\max\{T^{\frac{3}{4}}, V_g\})$	✓	✓	✓
Thm.2	$O \max\{\sqrt{TV_x}, \sqrt{TV_g}\})$	$O(1)$	✓	✗	✓

- **Theorem 2:** the bound of constraint violations outperforms all existing works

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Thm.1	$O(\max\{\sqrt{TV_x}, V_g\})$	$O(\max\{\sqrt{T}, V_g\})$	✓	✓	✓
Thm.1	$O(\sqrt{TV_x})$	$O(\max\{T^{\frac{3}{4}}, V_g\})$	✓	✓	✓
Thm.2	$O \max\{\sqrt{TV_x}, \sqrt{TV_g}\})$	$O(1)$	✓	✗	✓

- **Parameter-free**, that is, the parameters in our algorithm do not require prior information of the regularities (e.g., V_x or V_g)

Comparison

Reference	Regret(R)	Constraint violations(C)	Parameter-free	Slater condition-free ¹	Simultaneous sublinear R&C
[Chen et al., 2017]	$O(\max\{V_x T^a, V_g T^a, T^{1-a}\})$	$O(T^{1-a})$	✓	✗	✗
[Chen et al., 2018]	$O(T^{\frac{7}{8}} V_x)$	$O(\max\{T^{\frac{15}{16}}, T^{\frac{7}{8}} V_x\})$	✓	✓	✗
[Chen and Giannakis, 2019]	$O(V_x T^{\frac{3}{4}})$	$O(T^{\frac{3}{4}})$	✓	✗	✗
[Chen and Giannakis, 2019]	$O(V_x T^{\frac{1}{2}})$	$O(T^{\frac{1}{2}})$	✓	✗	✗
[Cao and Liu, 2018]	$O(V_x^{\frac{1}{2}} T^{\frac{1}{2}})$	$O(V_x^{\frac{1}{4}} T^{\frac{3}{4}})$	✗	✗	✓
Thm.1	$O(\max\{\sqrt{TV_x}, V_g\})$	$O(\max\{\sqrt{T}, V_g\})$	✓	✓	✓
Thm.1	$O(\sqrt{TV_x})$	$O(\max\{T^{\frac{3}{4}}, V_g\})$	✓	✓	✓
Thm.2	$O \max\{\sqrt{TV_x}, \sqrt{TV_g}\})$	$O(1)$	✓	✗	✓

- Holds no matter whether the Slater condition holds or not

Insight

- Connections to queue systems stability.
 - Create a real queue $Q(t)$ to keep track of the “debt” to constraints up to round t
 - $Q(t) = 0, Q(t) = [Q(t-1) + g_t(x_t)]^+ = [\sum_{\tau=1}^t g_{\tau}(x_{\tau})]^+$

Insight

- Connections to queue systems stability.
 - Create a real queue $\mathbf{Q}(t)$ to keep track of the “debt” to constraints up to round t
 - $\mathbf{Q}(t) = \mathbf{0}$, $\mathbf{Q}(t) = [\mathbf{Q}(t-1) + \mathbf{g}_t(x_t)]^+ = [\sum_{\tau=1}^t \mathbf{g}_\tau(x_\tau)]^+$
 - **Sublinear constraint violations** means the real queue system $\{\mathbf{Q}(t)\}$ **mean rate stable** [Neely, 2010], i.e.,

$$\lim_{T \rightarrow \infty} \frac{\|\mathbf{Q}(T)\|}{T} = 0$$

- **$O(1)$ constraint violations** is sufficient to show the real queue system $\{\mathbf{Q}(t)\}$ **strongly stable** [Neely, 2010], i.e.,

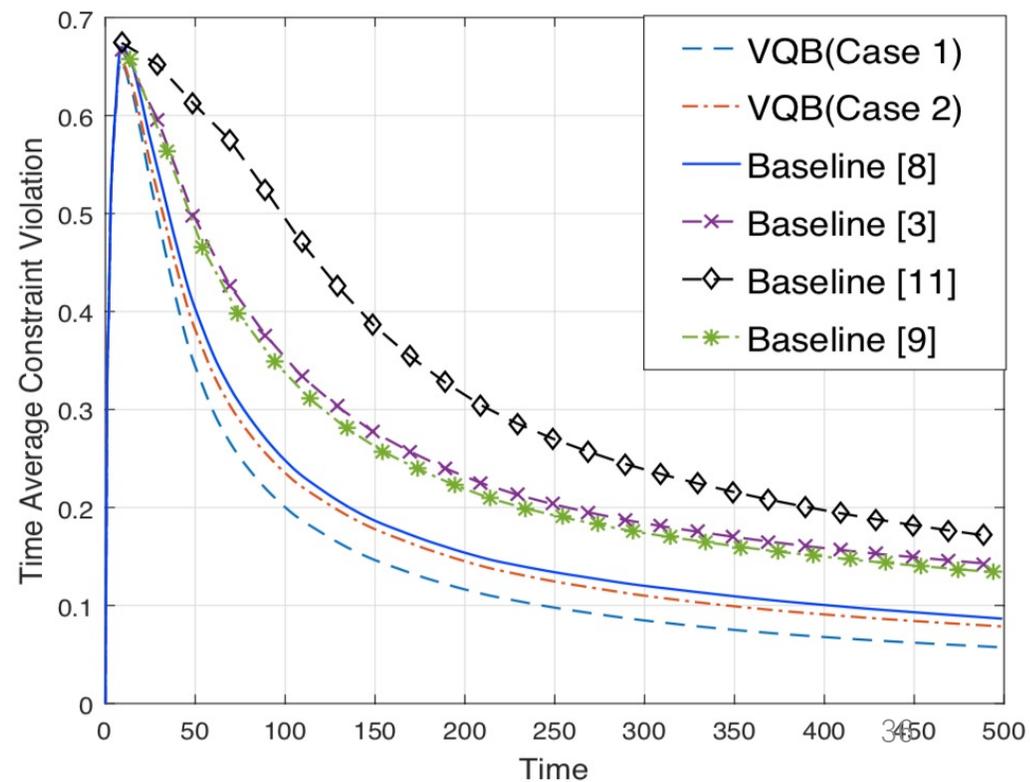
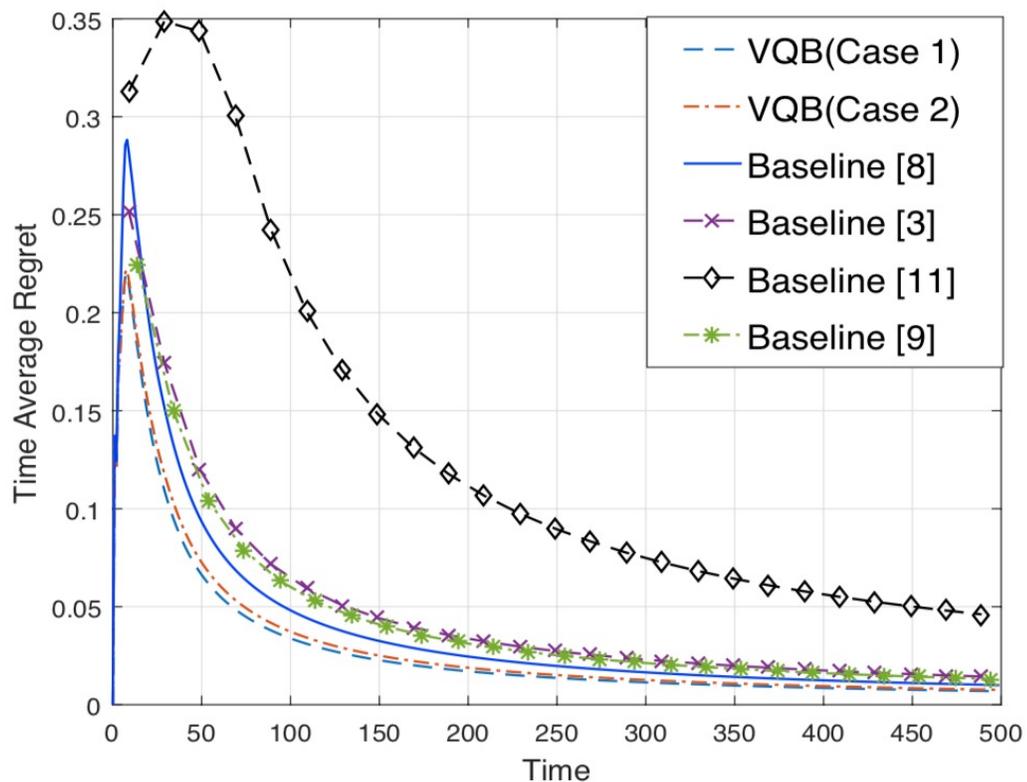
$$\lim_{T \rightarrow \infty} \frac{\sum_{t=1}^T \|\mathbf{Q}(t)\|}{T} \leq B < \infty$$

Simulation

- Baselines [8, 3, 11, 9]:
 - [Chen et al., 2017, Chen et al., 2018, Cao and Liu, 2019, Chen and Giannakis, 2019]

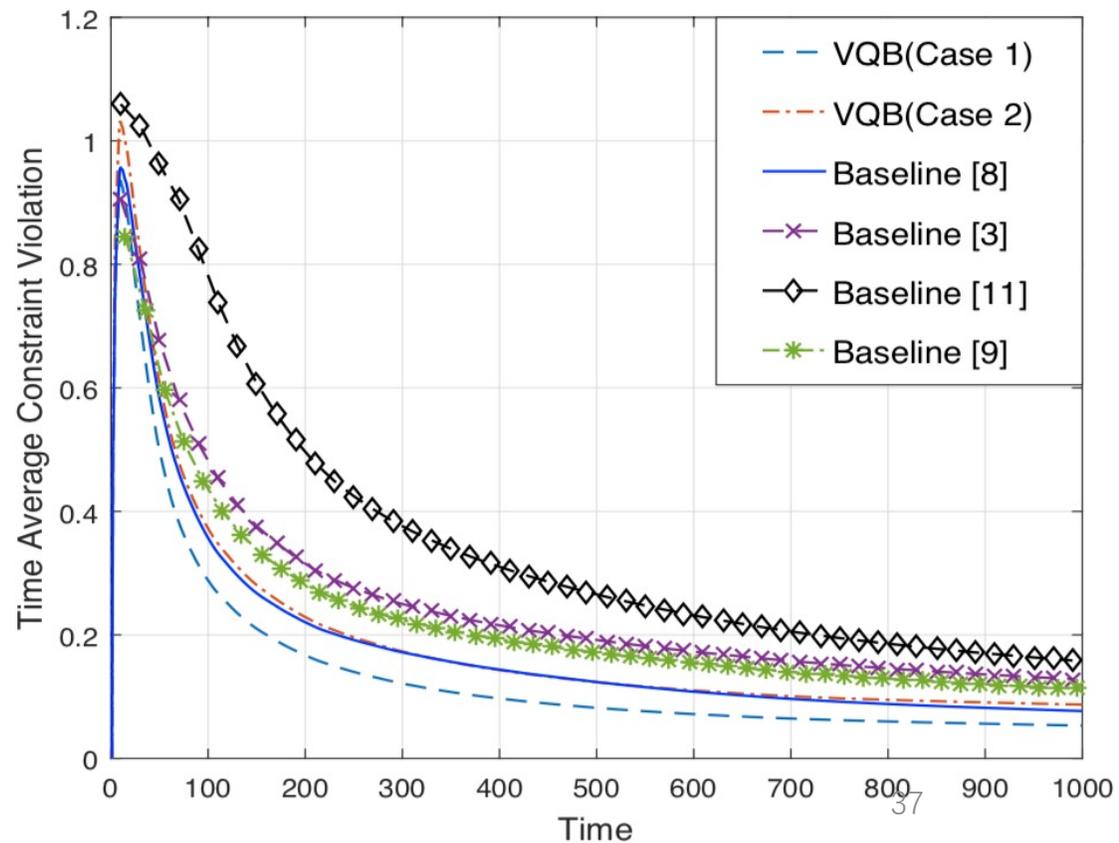
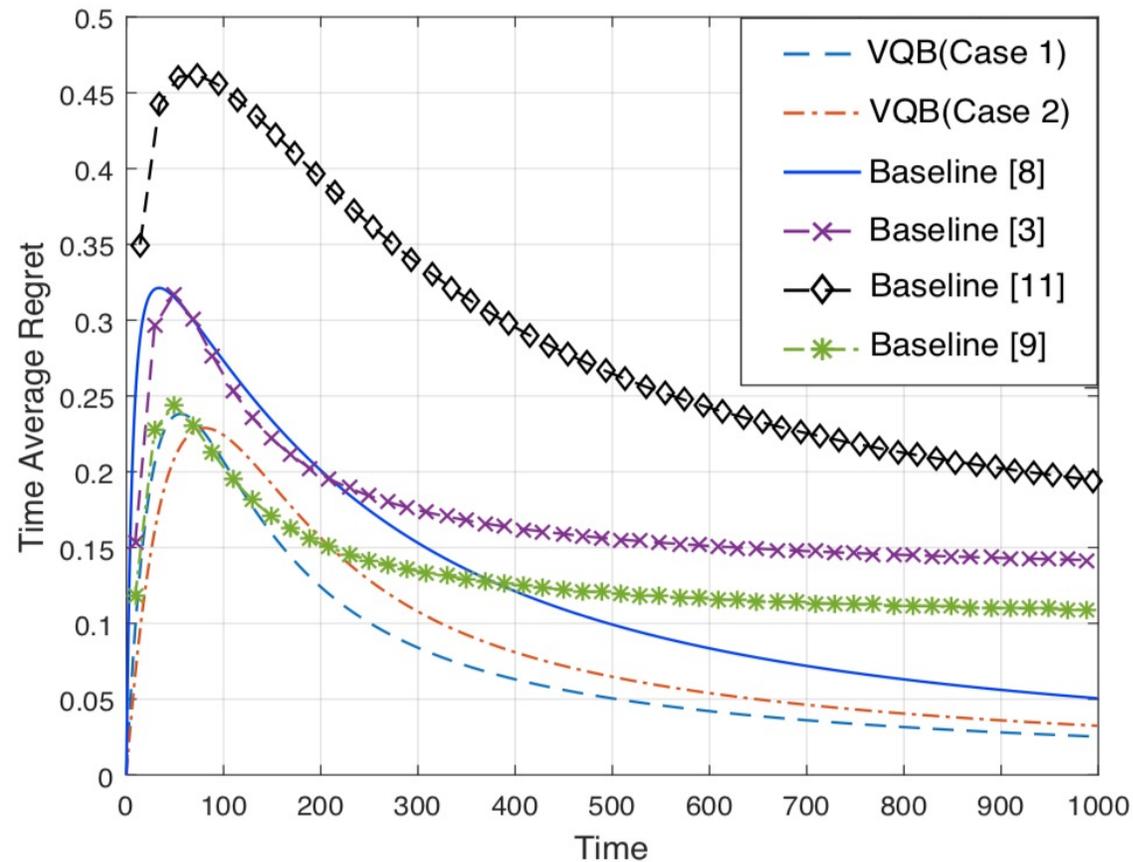
Simulation

- Baselines [8, 3, 11, 9]:
 - [Chen et al., 2017, Chen et al., 2018, Cao and Liu, 2019, Chen and Giannakis, 2019]
- Setting 1: $V_x = V_g = O(\ln T)$



Simulation

- Setting 2: $V_x = V_g = O(\sqrt{T})$



Q & A

Thanks!