



Quadratic programming theory over the rational numbers

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Introduction

This presentation deals with existence of optimal solutions and duality theory for quadratic programming, in particular applied to a natural primal-dual pair of problems.

- All variables and input data are rational numbers. ($x_j \in \mathbb{Q}$)
- Only elementary linear algebra in \mathbb{Q}^n is used.
- “Real-number concepts” like square roots, infimum, derivatives, compact sets, limits, eigenvalues of matrices, etc. are avoided.
- But every single result holds, and every single proof is valid, also if \mathbb{Q} is everywhere replaced by \mathbb{R} .

Quadratic programming problem on standard form

Consider first the following QP problem on standard form:

$$\begin{aligned} & \text{minimize} && \frac{1}{2} \mathbf{x}^T \mathbf{F} \mathbf{x} + \mathbf{c}^T \mathbf{x} \\ & \text{subject to} && \mathbf{A} \mathbf{x} = \mathbf{b}, \\ & && \mathbf{x} \geq \mathbf{0}, \end{aligned} \tag{1}$$

where

$\mathbf{x} \in \mathbb{Q}^n$ is the variable vector,

$\mathbf{F} \in \mathbb{Q}^{n \times n}$ is **symmetric** and **positive semidefinite**,

$\mathbf{A} \in \mathbb{Q}^{m \times n}$, $\mathbf{b} \in \mathbb{Q}^m$ and $\mathbf{c} \in \mathbb{Q}^n$.

$\mathcal{F} = \{ \mathbf{x} \in \mathbb{Q}^n \mid \mathbf{A} \mathbf{x} = \mathbf{b} \text{ and } \mathbf{x} \geq \mathbf{0} \}$, (the feasible region),

$\mathcal{D} = \{ \mathbf{d} \in \mathbb{Q}^n \mid \mathbf{d} \geq \mathbf{0}, \mathbf{A} \mathbf{d} = \mathbf{0}, \mathbf{F} \mathbf{d} = \mathbf{0} \text{ and } \mathbf{c}^T \mathbf{d} < 0 \}$.

First claim: There is at least one optimal solution to (1) **if and only if** the set \mathcal{F} is non-empty while the set \mathcal{D} is empty.

Partitioning of the feasible region

$\mathcal{F} = \{ \mathbf{x} \in \mathbb{Q}^n \mid \mathbf{A}\mathbf{x} = \mathbf{b} \text{ and } \mathbf{x} \geq \mathbf{0} \} =$ the feasible region.

Assume that σ is a **subset** of the index set $\{1, \dots, n\}$. Then let

$$\mathcal{F}_\sigma^+ = \{ \mathbf{x} \in \mathcal{F} \mid x_j > 0 \text{ for } j \in \sigma, \text{ while } x_j = 0 \text{ for } j \notin \sigma \}.$$

There are 2^n different subsets σ of $\{1, \dots, n\}$.

The corresponding 2^n regions \mathcal{F}_σ^+ are pair-wise disjoint, and their union is equal to \mathcal{F} , since for each point $\mathbf{x} \in \mathcal{F}$ there is a **unique** subset σ such that $\mathbf{x} \in \mathcal{F}_\sigma^+$, namely $\sigma = \{ j \mid x_j > 0 \}$.

Note that \mathcal{F}_σ^+ may be empty for some subsets σ .

Interesting points

Consider the following QP problem **without** any sign constraints but **with** some variables fixed to zero:

$$\begin{aligned} & \text{minimize} && f(\mathbf{x}) = \frac{1}{2} \mathbf{x}^\top \mathbf{F} \mathbf{x} + \mathbf{c}^\top \mathbf{x} \\ & \text{subject to} && \mathbf{A} \mathbf{x} = \mathbf{b}, \\ & && x_j = 0 \text{ for } j \notin \sigma. \end{aligned} \tag{2}$$

The subset σ is said to be an **interesting subset** if (2) has a **unique** optimal solution $\hat{\mathbf{x}}$, and $\hat{\mathbf{x}} \in \mathcal{F}_\sigma^+$, i.e. $x_j > 0$ for $j \in \sigma$.

In this case, $\hat{\mathbf{x}}$ is said to be an **interesting point**.

Otherwise, if (2) does not have a unique optimal solution, or if (2) has a unique optimal solution $\hat{\mathbf{x}}$ but $\hat{\mathbf{x}} \notin \mathcal{F}_\sigma^+$, σ is said to be a **boring subset**, without any interesting point.

Most interesting point and optimal solution

If $\mathcal{F} \neq \emptyset$ then there is at least one and at most 2^n interesting points.

An interesting point $\hat{\mathbf{x}}$ is said to be a **most interesting point** if $f(\hat{\mathbf{x}}) \leq f(\mathbf{x})$ for all interesting points \mathbf{x} .

If $\mathcal{F} \neq \emptyset$ then there is at least one most interesting point.

Theorem: If $\mathcal{F} \neq \emptyset$, $\mathcal{D} = \emptyset$ and $\hat{\mathbf{x}}$ is a **most interesting point**, then $\hat{\mathbf{x}}$ is an **optimal solution** to the considered problem (1).

Main step in proof: If $\mathcal{F} \neq \emptyset$, $\mathcal{D} = \emptyset$ and σ is a **boring** subset with $\mathcal{F}_\sigma^+ \neq \emptyset$ then, for each point $\mathbf{x} \in \mathcal{F}_\sigma^+$, there is a **strict** subset $\tilde{\sigma} \subset \sigma$ and a point $\mathbf{x} + t \mathbf{d} \in \mathcal{F}_{\tilde{\sigma}}^+$ such that $f(\mathbf{x} + t \mathbf{d}) \leq f(\mathbf{x})$.

Sign-constrained least squares problems

An important special case is the sign-constrained least squares problem:

$$\text{minimize } \frac{1}{2} \|\mathbf{B}\mathbf{x} - \mathbf{p}\|^2 \text{ subject to } \mathbf{x} \geq \mathbf{0}. \quad (3)$$

where $\mathbf{B} \in \mathbb{Q}^{k \times n}$ is a given matrix and $\mathbf{p} \in \mathbb{Q}^k$ is a given vector.

This is a problem of the form (1) with $\mathbf{F} = \mathbf{B}^\top \mathbf{B}$, $\mathbf{c} = -\mathbf{B}^\top \mathbf{p}$, and no equality constraints $\mathbf{A}\mathbf{x} = \mathbf{b}$. Then

$$\mathcal{F} = \{ \mathbf{x} \in \mathbb{Q}^n \mid \mathbf{x} \geq \mathbf{0} \} \neq \emptyset \text{ and}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{D} &= \{ \mathbf{d} \in \mathbb{Q}^n \mid \mathbf{d} \geq \mathbf{0}, \mathbf{F}\mathbf{d} = \mathbf{0} \text{ and } \mathbf{c}^\top \mathbf{d} < \mathbf{0} \} = \\ &= \{ \mathbf{d} \in \mathbb{Q}^n \mid \mathbf{d} \geq \mathbf{0}, \mathbf{B}^\top \mathbf{B} \mathbf{d} = \mathbf{0} \text{ and } \mathbf{p}^\top \mathbf{B} \mathbf{d} > \mathbf{0} \} = \emptyset. \end{aligned}$$

Thus, there is **always** at least one optimal solution to (3).

Moreover, it is easy to deduce optimality conditions:

The point $\hat{\mathbf{x}}$ is an optimal solution to (3) **if and only if**
 $\hat{\mathbf{x}} \geq \mathbf{0}$, $\mathbf{B}^\top (\mathbf{B}\hat{\mathbf{x}} - \mathbf{p}) \geq \mathbf{0}$ and $\hat{\mathbf{x}}^\top \mathbf{B}^\top (\mathbf{B}\hat{\mathbf{x}} - \mathbf{p}) = 0$.

An elementary proof of Farkas lemma

Farkas lemma: Assume that $\mathbf{B} \in \mathbb{Q}^{k \times n}$ and $\mathbf{p} \in \mathbb{Q}^k$ are given. Then **exactly one** of the following two systems has a solution.

System 1: $\mathbf{B}\mathbf{x} = \mathbf{p}$ and $\mathbf{x} \geq \mathbf{0}$, where $\mathbf{x} \in \mathbb{Q}^n$

System 2: $\mathbf{B}^T\mathbf{y} \geq \mathbf{0}$ and $\mathbf{p}^T\mathbf{y} < 0$, where $\mathbf{y} \in \mathbb{Q}^k$.

Proof: First, assume that there is a solution $\hat{\mathbf{x}}$ to System 1.

Then $\mathbf{p}^T\mathbf{y} = (\mathbf{B}\hat{\mathbf{x}})^T\mathbf{y} = \hat{\mathbf{x}}^T(\mathbf{B}^T\mathbf{y})$, which is ≥ 0 if $\mathbf{B}^T\mathbf{y} \geq \mathbf{0}$.

Next, assume that there is no solution to System 1.

Let $\hat{\mathbf{y}} = \mathbf{B}\hat{\mathbf{x}} - \mathbf{p}$, where $\hat{\mathbf{x}}$ is an optimal solution to (3).

Then $\hat{\mathbf{y}} \neq \mathbf{0}$, since there is no solution to System 1.

From the previous slide, $\hat{\mathbf{x}} \geq \mathbf{0}$, $\mathbf{B}^T\hat{\mathbf{y}} \geq \mathbf{0}$ and $\hat{\mathbf{x}}^T\mathbf{B}^T\hat{\mathbf{y}} = 0$, which implies that $\mathbf{p}^T\hat{\mathbf{y}} = (\mathbf{B}\hat{\mathbf{x}} - \hat{\mathbf{y}})^T\hat{\mathbf{y}} = \hat{\mathbf{x}}^T\mathbf{B}^T\hat{\mathbf{y}} - \hat{\mathbf{y}}^T\hat{\mathbf{y}} = 0 - \|\hat{\mathbf{y}}\|^2 < 0$.

Thus, $\hat{\mathbf{y}}$ is a solution to System 2.

QP problem on standard form, revisited

Now return to the original problem

$$\begin{aligned} & \text{minimize} && \frac{1}{2} \mathbf{x}^T \mathbf{F} \mathbf{x} + \mathbf{c}^T \mathbf{x} \\ & \text{subject to} && \mathbf{A} \mathbf{x} = \mathbf{b}, \\ & && \mathbf{x} \geq \mathbf{0}, \end{aligned} \tag{4}$$

with $\mathcal{F} = \{ \mathbf{x} \in \mathbb{Q}^n \mid \mathbf{A} \mathbf{x} = \mathbf{b} \text{ and } \mathbf{x} \geq \mathbf{0} \}$ = the feasible region
and $\mathcal{D} = \{ \mathbf{d} \in \mathbb{Q}^n \mid \mathbf{d} \geq \mathbf{0}, \mathbf{A} \mathbf{d} = \mathbf{0}, \mathbf{F} \mathbf{d} = \mathbf{0} \text{ and } \mathbf{c}^T \mathbf{d} < 0 \}$.

Let $\mathcal{G} = \{ (\mathbf{y}, \mathbf{v}) \in \mathbb{Q}^m \times \mathbb{Q}^n \mid \mathbf{A}^T \mathbf{y} - \mathbf{F} \mathbf{v} \leq \mathbf{c} \}$.

Then Farkas lemma implies that $\mathcal{D} = \emptyset$ if and only if $\mathcal{G} \neq \emptyset$.

Thus, there is at least one optimal solution to (4) if and only if $\mathcal{F} \neq \emptyset$ and $\mathcal{G} \neq \emptyset$.

Saddle points

Assume that

X is a given non-empty set in \mathbb{Q}^n ,

Y is a given non-empty set in \mathbb{Q}^m , and

$h : X \times Y \rightarrow \mathbb{Q}$ is a given function.

The point $(\hat{\mathbf{x}}, \hat{\mathbf{y}}) \in X \times Y$ is said to be a **saddle point** to $h(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{y})$ (for minimizing w.r.t. $\mathbf{x} \in X$ and maximizing w.r.t. $\mathbf{y} \in Y$) if

$$h(\hat{\mathbf{x}}, \mathbf{y}) \leq h(\hat{\mathbf{x}}, \hat{\mathbf{y}}) \leq h(\mathbf{x}, \hat{\mathbf{y}}) \text{ for all } (\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{y}) \in X \times Y.$$

Primal and dual problems

Let the sets $\mathcal{F} \subseteq X$ and $\mathcal{G} \subseteq Y$ be defined by

$$\mathcal{F} = \{\mathbf{x} \in X \mid \max_{\mathbf{y} \in Y} h(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{y}) \text{ exists}\},$$

$$\mathcal{G} = \{\mathbf{y} \in Y \mid \min_{\mathbf{x} \in X} h(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{y}) \text{ exists}\}.$$

Further, let the functions $f : \mathcal{F} \rightarrow \mathbb{Q}$ and $g : \mathcal{G} \rightarrow \mathbb{Q}$ be defined by

$$f(\mathbf{x}) = \max_{\mathbf{y} \in Y} h(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{y}),$$

$$g(\mathbf{y}) = \min_{\mathbf{x} \in X} h(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{y}).$$

Finally, let the **primal problem P** and the **dual problem D** be defined by

$$\text{P : minimize } f(\mathbf{x}) \text{ subject to } \mathbf{x} \in \mathcal{F}.$$

$$\text{D : maximize } g(\mathbf{y}) \text{ subject to } \mathbf{y} \in \mathcal{G}.$$

Connection between P, D and saddle points

Some easily proven facts:

- If $\mathbf{x} \in \mathcal{F}$ and $\mathbf{y} \in \mathcal{G}$ then $g(\mathbf{y}) \leq h(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{y}) \leq f(\mathbf{x})$.
- If $\hat{\mathbf{x}} \in \mathcal{F}$, $\hat{\mathbf{y}} \in \mathcal{G}$ and $f(\hat{\mathbf{x}}) = g(\hat{\mathbf{y}})$ then $\hat{\mathbf{x}}$ is an optimal solution to P, and $\hat{\mathbf{y}}$ is an optimal solution to D.
- $(\hat{\mathbf{x}}, \hat{\mathbf{y}})$ is a saddle point to $h(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{y})$ **if and only if** $\hat{\mathbf{x}} \in \mathcal{F}$, $\hat{\mathbf{y}} \in \mathcal{G}$ and $f(\hat{\mathbf{x}}) = g(\hat{\mathbf{y}})$.
- $(\hat{\mathbf{x}}, \hat{\mathbf{y}})$ is a saddle point to $h(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{y})$ **if and only if** $\hat{\mathbf{x}}$ is an optimal solution to P, $\hat{\mathbf{y}}$ is an optimal solution to D, and the optimal values to P and D are equal.

A quadratic convex-concave saddle function $h(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{y})$

Assume that $X = \{\mathbf{x} \in \mathbb{Q}^n \mid \mathbf{x} \geq \mathbf{0}\}$ and $Y = \{\mathbf{y} \in \mathbb{Q}^m \mid \mathbf{y} \geq \mathbf{0}\}$, while $h(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{y})$ is a general **quadratic** function which is **convex** in \mathbf{x} (for each fixed $\mathbf{y} \in Y$) and **concave** in \mathbf{y} (for each fixed $\mathbf{x} \in X$):

$$h(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{y}) = \begin{pmatrix} \mathbf{h}_1 \\ \mathbf{h}_2 \end{pmatrix}^\top \begin{pmatrix} \mathbf{x} \\ \mathbf{y} \end{pmatrix} + \frac{1}{2} \begin{pmatrix} \mathbf{x} \\ \mathbf{y} \end{pmatrix}^\top \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{H}_{11} & \mathbf{H}_{12} \\ \mathbf{H}_{21} & \mathbf{H}_{22} \end{bmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} \mathbf{x} \\ \mathbf{y} \end{pmatrix}$$

where $\mathbf{h}_1 \in \mathbb{Q}^n$ and $\mathbf{h}_2 \in \mathbb{Q}^m$ are given vectors, while $\mathbf{H}_{11} \in \mathbb{Q}^{n \times n}$, $\mathbf{H}_{12} \in \mathbb{Q}^{n \times m}$, $\mathbf{H}_{21} \in \mathbb{Q}^{m \times n}$ and $\mathbf{H}_{22} \in \mathbb{Q}^{m \times m}$ are given matrices such that \mathbf{H}_{11} and \mathbf{H}_{22} are **symmetric** and $\mathbf{H}_{21} = \mathbf{H}_{12}^\top$.

The requirements that $h(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{y})$ should be convex in \mathbf{x} and concave in \mathbf{y} are fulfilled if and only if \mathbf{H}_{11} is **positive semidefinite** and \mathbf{H}_{22} is **negative semidefinite**.

A quadratic convex-concave saddle funktion $h(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{y})$

The notations are now changed as follows:

$$\begin{pmatrix} \mathbf{h}_1 \\ \mathbf{h}_2 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} \mathbf{c} \\ \mathbf{b} \end{pmatrix} \quad \text{and} \quad \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{H}_{11} & \mathbf{H}_{12} \\ \mathbf{H}_{21} & \mathbf{H}_{22} \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{F} & -\mathbf{A}^\top \\ -\mathbf{A} & -\mathbf{G} \end{bmatrix}$$

where both \mathbf{F} and \mathbf{G} are **symmetric** and **positive semidefinite**. Then

$$h(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{y}) = \mathbf{c}^\top \mathbf{x} + \mathbf{b}^\top \mathbf{y} - \mathbf{y}^\top \mathbf{A} \mathbf{x} + \frac{1}{2} \mathbf{x}^\top \mathbf{F} \mathbf{x} - \frac{1}{2} \mathbf{y}^\top \mathbf{G} \mathbf{y},$$

while, as already mentioned above,

$$X = \{\mathbf{x} \in \mathbb{Q}^n \mid \mathbf{x} \geq \mathbf{0}\} \quad \text{and} \quad Y = \{\mathbf{y} \in \mathbb{Q}^m \mid \mathbf{y} \geq \mathbf{0}\}.$$

Saddle point conditions

Assume that X , Y and $h(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{y})$ are defined as above.

Then $(\hat{\mathbf{x}}, \hat{\mathbf{y}})$ is a **saddle point**, i.e. satisfies the inequalities

$h(\hat{\mathbf{x}}, \mathbf{y}) \leq h(\hat{\mathbf{x}}, \hat{\mathbf{y}}) \leq h(\mathbf{x}, \hat{\mathbf{y}})$ for all $(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{y}) \in X \times Y$,

if and only if the following conditions hold:

$$\mathbf{A}\hat{\mathbf{x}} + \mathbf{G}\hat{\mathbf{y}} \geq \mathbf{b},$$

$$\mathbf{A}^\top \hat{\mathbf{y}} - \mathbf{F}\hat{\mathbf{x}} \leq \mathbf{c},$$

$$\hat{\mathbf{x}} \geq \mathbf{0},$$

$$\hat{\mathbf{y}} \geq \mathbf{0},$$

$$\hat{\mathbf{y}}^\top (\mathbf{A}\hat{\mathbf{x}} + \mathbf{G}\hat{\mathbf{y}} - \mathbf{b}) = 0,$$

$$\hat{\mathbf{x}}^\top (\mathbf{c} - \mathbf{A}^\top \hat{\mathbf{y}} + \mathbf{F}\hat{\mathbf{x}}) = 0.$$

The natural pair of primal and dual QP problems

With X , Y and $h(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{y})$ as above, the **primal problem** is equivalent to the following QP problem in the variables $\mathbf{x} \in \mathbb{Q}^n$ and $\mathbf{u} \in \mathbb{Q}^m$:

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{P} : \quad & \text{minimize} \quad \mathbf{c}^\top \mathbf{x} + \frac{1}{2} \mathbf{x}^\top \mathbf{F} \mathbf{x} + \frac{1}{2} \mathbf{u}^\top \mathbf{G} \mathbf{u} \\ & \text{subject to} \quad \mathbf{A} \mathbf{x} + \mathbf{G} \mathbf{u} \geq \mathbf{b}, \\ & \quad \quad \quad \mathbf{x} \geq \mathbf{0}, \end{aligned}$$

while the **dual problem** is equivalent to the following QP problem in the variables $\mathbf{y} \in \mathbb{Q}^m$ and $\mathbf{v} \in \mathbb{Q}^n$:

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{D} : \quad & \text{maximize} \quad \mathbf{b}^\top \mathbf{y} - \frac{1}{2} \mathbf{y}^\top \mathbf{G} \mathbf{y} - \frac{1}{2} \mathbf{v}^\top \mathbf{F} \mathbf{v} \\ & \text{subject to} \quad \mathbf{A}^\top \mathbf{y} - \mathbf{F} \mathbf{v} \leq \mathbf{c}, \\ & \quad \quad \quad \mathbf{y} \geq \mathbf{0}. \end{aligned}$$

Properties of the natural pair of primal and dual QP problems

Let \mathcal{F} and \mathcal{G} denote the feasible regions for P and D, respectively, i.e.

$$\mathcal{F} = \{ (\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{u}) \in \mathbb{Q}^n \times \mathbb{Q}^m \mid \mathbf{A}\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{G}\mathbf{u} \geq \mathbf{b} \text{ and } \mathbf{x} \geq \mathbf{0} \} \text{ and}$$

$$\mathcal{G} = \{ (\mathbf{y}, \mathbf{v}) \in \mathbb{Q}^m \times \mathbb{Q}^n \mid \mathbf{A}^\top \mathbf{y} - \mathbf{F}\mathbf{v} \leq \mathbf{c} \text{ and } \mathbf{y} \geq \mathbf{0} \}.$$

Then the following equivalences hold:

$$\mathcal{F} \neq \emptyset \text{ and } \mathcal{G} \neq \emptyset \iff$$

$$\text{There is at least one optimal solution to P} \iff$$

$$\text{There is at least one optimal solution to D} \iff$$

There is at least one saddle point.

Moreover:

If $\mathcal{F} \neq \emptyset$ and $\mathcal{G} \neq \emptyset$ then the **optimal values** of P and D are **equal**.

More properties of the natural pair of QP problems

Some additional (easily proven) results:

- Assume that (\hat{x}, \hat{u}) is optimal to P and (\hat{y}, \hat{v}) is optimal to D. Then (\hat{x}, \hat{y}) is a saddle point.
- Assume that (\hat{x}, \hat{y}) is a saddle point. Then (\hat{x}, \hat{u}) is optimal to P **if and only if** $\mathbf{G}\hat{u} = \mathbf{G}\hat{y}$, and (\hat{y}, \hat{v}) is optimal to D **if and only if** $\mathbf{F}\hat{v} = \mathbf{F}\hat{x}$. In particular, (\hat{x}, \hat{y}) is optimal to P and (\hat{y}, \hat{x}) is optimal to D.
- (\hat{x}, \hat{u}) is optimal to P **if and only if** there is vector \hat{y} such that (\hat{x}, \hat{y}) is a saddle point and $\mathbf{G}\hat{u} = \mathbf{G}\hat{y}$. (\hat{y}, \hat{v}) is optimal to D **if and only if** there is vector \hat{x} such that (\hat{x}, \hat{y}) is a saddle point and $\mathbf{F}\hat{v} = \mathbf{F}\hat{x}$.