Continuous Optimization: Assignment 9

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Exercise 1

The problem of finding the clostest point to another point can be formulated as

$$\min_{x\in\mathbb{R}^3} ||x-p||^2 \quad \text{s.t.} \quad ||x||^2 = 4$$

while the problem of finding the farthest point can be formulated as

$$\max_{x\in\mathbb{R}^3} ||x-p||^2 \quad \text{s.t.} \quad ||x||^2 = 4$$

which is equivalent to

$$\min_{x\in\mathbb{R}^3} -||x-p||^2 \quad \text{s.t.} \quad ||x||^2 = 4$$

where $p = (2,4,2)^\top$

Closest Point

We want the constraint levelset to be tangent to the curve of the objective function at the optimal point i.e.

where $f(x) = ||x-p||^2$ and $g(x) = ||x||^2$ satisfying $g(x) = 4$.
After calculating the gradients, we have

$$\begin{aligned} 2(x-p) &= 2\lambda x \\ x - p &= \lambda x \\ x &= \frac{1}{1-\lambda} p \end{aligned}$$

x still has to satisfy the constraint $||x||^2 = 4$.

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{1}{(1-\lambda)^2}||p||^2 &= 4 \\ \frac{24}{(1-\lambda)^2} &= 4 \\ \frac{6}{(1-\lambda)^2} &= 1 \\ 1-\lambda &= \pm\sqrt{6} \\ \lambda &= 1 \pm \sqrt{6} \end{aligned}$$

We have two solutions for x:

$$x = \pm\frac{1}{\sqrt{6}} p$$

The Langrange multiplier method gives us only the stationary points and we have to determine the minimum by checking which solution results in a smaller objective function value.

$$||x-p||^2 = \frac{1+\sqrt{6}}{-\sqrt{6}}||p||^2 \text{ or } \frac{1-\sqrt{6}}{\sqrt{6}}||p||^2$$

Apparently, the latter is smaller.

Thus, the closest point is $-\frac{1}{\sqrt{6}}\begin{pmatrix}2\\4\\2\end{pmatrix}$.

Farthest Point

Similarly, we have

$$\begin{aligned} 2(x-p) &= -2\lambda x \\ x - p &= -\lambda x \\ x &= \frac{1}{1+\lambda}p \end{aligned}$$

with constraint

$$\begin{aligned} \left|\left|\frac{1}{1+\lambda}p\right|\right|^2 &= 4 \\ \frac{24}{(1+\lambda)^2} &= 4 \\ \lambda &= -1 \pm \sqrt{6} \end{aligned}$$

We have two solutions for x:

$$x = \pm\frac{1}{\sqrt{6}}p$$

Which is the same as the ones we calculated for the closest point. Thus, the farthest point is $\frac{1}{\sqrt{6}}\begin{pmatrix}2\\4\\2\end{pmatrix}$.

Exercise 2

The minimization problem is given by

$$\min_{x\in\mathbb{R}^n} ||x||^2 \quad \text{s.t.} \quad Ax = b$$

It is equivalent to

$$\min_{x\in\mathbb{R}^n} \frac{1}{2}||x||^2 \quad \text{s.t.} \quad Ax = b$$

Let $f(x) = \frac{1}{2}||x||^2$ and $c_i(x) = a_i^\top x$ where a_i is the i-th row of A.
The constraint $Ax = b$ can be rewritten as m smaller constraints: $c_i(x) = b_i$ for $i = 1, \ldots, m$.
Using the Lagrange multiplier method, we compose such equation:

$$\begin{aligned} \nabla f(x) &= \sum_{i=1}^{m} \lambda_i \nabla c_i(x) \\ x &= \sum_{i=1}^{m} \lambda_i a_i \\ x &= A^\top \lambda \end{aligned}$$

where λ_i is the Lagrange multiplier for the i-th constraint and λ is a column vector consists of all multipliers.
We also have the constraint level sets:

$$\begin{aligned} Ax &= b \\ AA^\top\lambda &= b \\ \lambda &= (AA^\top)^{-1}b \\ \Rightarrow x &= A^\top(AA^\top)^{-1}b \end{aligned}$$