

4.6 Linear Programming duality

To any minimization (maximization) LP we can associate a closely related maximization (minimization) LP based on same parameters.

Different spaces and objective functions but in general the optimal objective function values coincide.

Example: The value of a maximum feasible flow is equal to the capacity of a cut (separating the source s and the sink t) of minimum capacity.

Motivation: estimate of the optimal value

Given

$$\begin{aligned} \max \quad z &= 4x_1 + x_2 + 5x_3 + 3x_4 \\ x_1 - x_2 - x_3 + 3x_4 &\leq 1 & \text{(I)} \\ 5x_1 + x_2 + 3x_3 + 8x_4 &\leq 55 & \text{(II)} \\ -x_1 + 2x_2 + 3x_3 - 5x_4 &\leq 3 & \text{(III)} \\ x_i &\geq 0 & i = 1, \dots, 4 \end{aligned}$$

find an estimate of the optimal value z^* .

Any feasible solution is a lower bound.

Lower bounds:

$$\begin{aligned} (0,0,1,0) &\rightarrow z^* \geq 5 \\ (2,1,1,1/3) &\rightarrow z^* \geq 15 \\ (3,0,2,0) &\rightarrow z^* \geq 22 \\ \dots &\quad \dots \end{aligned}$$

Even if we are lucky, we are not sure it is the optimal solution!

Upper bounds:

- By multiplying $5x_1 + x_2 + 3x_3 + 8x_4 \leq 55$ (II) by $5/3$, we obtain an inequality that **dominates** the objective function:

$$4x_1 + x_2 + 5x_3 + 3x_4 \leq 25/3x_1 + 5/3x_2 + 5x_3 + 40/3x_4 \leq 275/3$$

\forall feasible solution

$$\Rightarrow z^* \leq 275/3.$$

- By adding constraints (II) and (III), we obtain:

$$4x_1 + x_2 + 5x_3 + 3x_4 \leq 4x_1 + 3x_2 + 6x_3 + 3x_4 \leq 58$$
$$\Rightarrow z^* \leq 58 \quad \text{better upper bound.}$$

Linear combinations with nonnegative multipliers of inequality constraints yields valid inequalities

General strategy: Linearly combine the constraints with non negative multiplicative factors (i -th constraint multiplied by $y_i \geq 0$).

first case: $y_1=0, y_2=5/3, y_3=0$

second case: $y_1=0, y_2=1, y_3=1$

In general any such linear combination of (I), (II), (III) reads

$$y_1(x_1 - x_2 - x_3 + 3x_4) + y_2(5x_1 + x_2 + 3x_3 + 8x_4) \\ + y_3(-x_1 + 2x_2 + 3x_3 - 5x_4) \leq y_1 + 5y_2 + 3y_3$$

which is equivalent to:

$$\begin{aligned} (y_1 + 5y_2 - y_3) x_1 + (-y_1 + y_2 + 2y_3) x_2 + (-y_1 + 3y_2 + 3y_3) x_3 \\ + (3y_1 + 8y_2 - 5y_3) x_4 \leq y_1 + 55y_2 + 3y_3 \end{aligned} \quad (*)$$

Observation: $y_i \geq 0$ so that the inequality direction is unchanged.

To use the left hand side of (*) as upper bound on

$$z = 4x_1 + x_2 + 5x_3 + 3x_4$$

$$z = 4x_1 + x_2 + 5x_3 + 3x_4$$

we must have

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} y_1 + 5y_2 - y_3 \geq 4 \\ -y_1 + y_2 + 2y_3 \geq 1 \\ -y_1 + 3y_2 + 3y_3 \geq 5 \\ 3y_1 + 8y_2 - 5y_3 \geq 3 \end{array} \right. \quad y_i \geq 0, \quad i = 1, 2, 3.$$

In such a case, any feasible solution \underline{x} satisfies

$$4x_1 + x_2 + 5x_3 + 3x_4 \leq y_1 + 5y_2 + 3y_3$$

In particular: $z^* \leq y_1 + 5y_2 + 3y_3$

Since we look for the best possible upper bound on z^* :

$$\begin{aligned}
 \min \quad & y_1 + 55y_2 + 3y_3 \\
 (D) \quad & y_1 + 5y_2 - y_3 \geq 4 \\
 & -y_1 + y_2 + 2y_3 \geq 1 \\
 & -y_1 + 3y_2 + 3y_3 \geq 5 \\
 & 3y_1 + 8y_2 - 5y_3 \geq 3 \\
 & y_i \geq 0 \quad i = 1, 2, 3
 \end{aligned}$$

Original problem:

$$\begin{aligned}
 \max \quad & z = 4x_1 + x_2 + 5x_3 + 3x_4 \\
 & x_1 - x_2 - x_3 + 3x_4 \leq 1 \quad (I) \\
 & 5x_1 + x_2 + 3x_3 + 8x_4 \leq 55 \quad (II) \\
 & -x_1 + 2x_2 + 3x_3 - 5x_4 \leq 3 \quad (III) \\
 & x_i \geq 0 \quad i = 1, \dots, 4
 \end{aligned}$$

Definition: The problem (D) is the dual problem, while the original problem is the primal problem.

In matrix form:

$$\begin{array}{ll} \text{Primal } (P) & \begin{array}{l} \max \quad z = \underline{c}^T \underline{x} \\ A \underline{x} \leq \underline{b} \\ \underline{x} \geq \underline{0} \end{array} \\ \\ \text{Dual } (D) & \begin{array}{l} \min \quad w = \underline{b}^T \underline{y} \\ A^T \underline{y} \geq \underline{c} \quad \text{or } \underline{y}^T A \geq \underline{c}^T \\ \underline{y} \geq \underline{0} \end{array} \end{array}$$

Dual problem

$$\begin{array}{ll} \max & z = \underline{c}^T \underline{x} \\ (P) & A \underline{x} \leq \underline{b} \\ & \underline{x} \geq \underline{0} \end{array} \qquad \begin{array}{ll} \min & w = \underline{b}^T \underline{y} \\ (D) & A^T \underline{y} \geq \underline{c} \\ & \underline{y} \geq \underline{0} \end{array}$$

Dual of an LP in standard form ?

$$\begin{array}{l} \min \quad z = \underline{c}^T \underline{x} \\ \quad \quad A \underline{x} = \underline{b} \\ \quad \quad \underline{x} \geq \underline{0} \end{array}$$

Standard form:

$$\begin{array}{ll}
 \min & z = \underline{c}^T \underline{x} \\
 (P) & A \underline{x} = \underline{b} \\
 & \underline{x} \geq \underline{0}
 \end{array}
 \equiv
 \begin{array}{ll}
 - \max & -\underline{c}^T \underline{x} \\
 & \begin{pmatrix} A \\ -A \end{pmatrix} \underline{x} \leq \begin{pmatrix} \underline{b} \\ -\underline{b} \end{pmatrix} \\
 & \underline{x} \geq \underline{0}
 \end{array}
 \left. \vphantom{\begin{array}{l} \\ \\ \end{array}} \right\} A' \underline{x} \leq \underline{b}'$$

with A an $m \times n$ matrix

$$\begin{array}{l}
 \downarrow \text{dual} \\
 - \min \quad (\underline{b}^T \quad -\underline{b}^T) \begin{pmatrix} \underline{y}^1 \\ \underline{y}^2 \end{pmatrix} \left. \vphantom{\begin{array}{l} \\ \end{array}} \right\} \underline{y}' = \begin{pmatrix} \underline{y}^1 \\ \underline{y}^2 \end{pmatrix} \\
 \begin{matrix} \swarrow \\ A'^T \end{matrix} \begin{pmatrix} A^T & -A^T \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} \underline{y}^1 \\ \underline{y}^2 \end{pmatrix} \geq -\underline{c} \\
 \underline{y}^1 \geq \underline{0}, \underline{y}^2 \geq \underline{0}
 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
 & - \min \quad (\underline{b}^T \quad -\underline{b}^T) \begin{pmatrix} \underline{y}^1 \\ \underline{y}^2 \end{pmatrix} \\
 & \quad (A^T \quad -A^T) \begin{pmatrix} \underline{y}^1 \\ \underline{y}^2 \end{pmatrix} \geq -\underline{c} \\
 & \quad \underline{y}^1 \geq \underline{0}, \underline{y}^2 \geq \underline{0}
 \end{aligned}$$

|||

$$\begin{array}{ll}
 \max & w = \underline{b}^T \underline{y} \\
 (D) & A^T \underline{y} \leq \underline{c} \\
 & \underline{y} \in \mathbf{R}^m
 \end{array}
 \quad \equiv \quad
 \begin{array}{l}
 - \min \quad -\underline{b}^T (\underline{y}^2 - \underline{y}^1) \\
 -A^T (\underline{y}^2 - \underline{y}^1) \geq -\underline{c} \\
 \underline{y}^1 \geq \underline{0}, \underline{y}^2 \geq \underline{0}
 \end{array}$$

$$\underline{y} := \underline{y}^2 - \underline{y}^1$$

unrestricted in sign!

Property: The dual of the dual problem coincides with the primal problem.

$$\begin{array}{ll} \max & z = \underline{c}^T \underline{x} \\ (P) & A \underline{x} \leq \underline{b} \\ & \underline{x} \geq \underline{0} \end{array} \qquad \begin{array}{ll} \min & w = \underline{b}^T \underline{y} \\ (D) & A^T \underline{y} \geq \underline{c} \quad \dots \\ & \underline{y} \geq \underline{0} \end{array}$$

Observation: it doesn't matter which one is a maximum or minimum problem.

General transformation rules

Primal (minimization)	Dual (maximization)
m constraints	m variables
n variables	n constraints
coefficients obj. fct	right hand side
right hand side	coefficients obj. fct
A	A^T
equality constraints	<u>unrestricted variables</u>
unrestricted variables	equality constraints
inequality constraints \geq (\leq)	variables ≥ 0 (≤ 0)
variables ≥ 0 (≤ 0)	inequality constraints \leq (\geq)

Example:

$$(P) \quad \begin{aligned} \max \quad & x_1 + x_2 \\ & x_1 - x_2 \leq 2 \\ & 3x_1 + 2x_2 \geq 12 \\ & x_1, x_2 \geq 0 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \max \quad & x_1 + x_2 \\ & x_1 - x_2 \leq 2 \\ & -3x_1 - 2x_2 \leq -12 \\ & x_1, x_2 \geq 0 \end{aligned}$$



dual

$$\begin{aligned} \min \quad & 2y_1 - 12y_2 \\ & y_1 - 3y_2 \geq 1 \\ & -y_1 - 2y_2 \geq 1 \\ & y_1, y_2 \geq 0 \end{aligned}$$

Example: using the above rules

$$(P) \quad \begin{array}{ll} \max & x_1 + x_2 \\ & x_1 - x_2 \leq 2 \\ & 3x_1 + 2x_2 \geq 12 \\ & x_1, x_2 \geq 0 \end{array}$$

→
dual

$$\min \quad \begin{array}{l} 2y_1 + 12y_2 \\ y_1 + 3y_2 \geq 1 \\ -y_1 + 2y_2 \geq 1 \\ y_1 \geq 0, y_2 \leq 0 \end{array}$$

$$\tilde{y}_2 := -y_2$$

$$\min \quad \begin{array}{l} 2y_1 - 12\tilde{y}_2 \\ y_1 - 3\tilde{y}_2 \geq 1 \\ -y_1 - 2\tilde{y}_2 \geq 1 \\ y_1 \geq 0, \tilde{y}_2 \geq 0 \end{array}$$

Exercise:

$$\begin{array}{ll} \min & 10x_1 + 20x_2 + 30x_3 \\ & 2x_1 - x_2 \geq 1 \\ & x_2 + x_3 \leq 2 \\ (P) & x_1 - x_3 = 3 \\ & x_1 \geq 0, x_2 \leq 0, x_3 \text{ unrestricted} \end{array}$$

Dual?

Weak duality theorem

$$\begin{array}{llll} \min & z = \underline{c}^T \underline{x} & \max & w = \underline{b}^T \underline{y} \\ (P) & \begin{array}{l} A\underline{x} \geq \underline{b} \\ \underline{x} \geq \underline{0} \end{array} & (D) & \begin{array}{l} A^T \underline{y} \leq \underline{c} \\ \underline{y} \geq \underline{0} \end{array} \end{array}$$

$$X := \{\underline{x} : A\underline{x} \geq \underline{b}, \underline{x} \geq \underline{0}\} \neq \emptyset \text{ and}$$

$$Y := \{\underline{y} : A^T \underline{y} \leq \underline{c}, \underline{y} \geq \underline{0}\} \neq \emptyset,$$

For each **feasible solution** $\bar{\underline{x}} \in X$ of (P) and each **feasible solution** $\bar{\underline{y}} \in Y$ of (D) we have

$$\underline{b}^T \bar{\underline{y}} \leq \underline{c}^T \bar{\underline{x}}.$$

Proof

For every pair $\bar{x} \in X$ and $\bar{y} \in Y$, we have $A\bar{x} \geq \underline{b}$, $\bar{x} \geq \underline{0}$ and $A^T\bar{y} \leq \underline{c}$, $\bar{y} \geq \underline{0}$ which imply that

$$\underbrace{\bar{y}^T A^T}_{\bar{x}^T A^T} \bar{x} \leq \underbrace{\bar{x}^T A^T \bar{y}}_{\bar{x}^T \underline{c}} \leq \bar{x}^T \underline{c} = \underline{c}^T \bar{x}$$

Consequence:

If $\bar{\underline{x}}$ is a feasible solution of (P) ($\bar{\underline{x}} \in X$), $\bar{\underline{y}}$ is a feasible solution of (D) ($\bar{\underline{y}} \in Y$),

and the values of the respective objective functions coincide

$$\underline{c}^T \bar{\underline{x}} = \underline{b}^T \bar{\underline{y}},$$

then

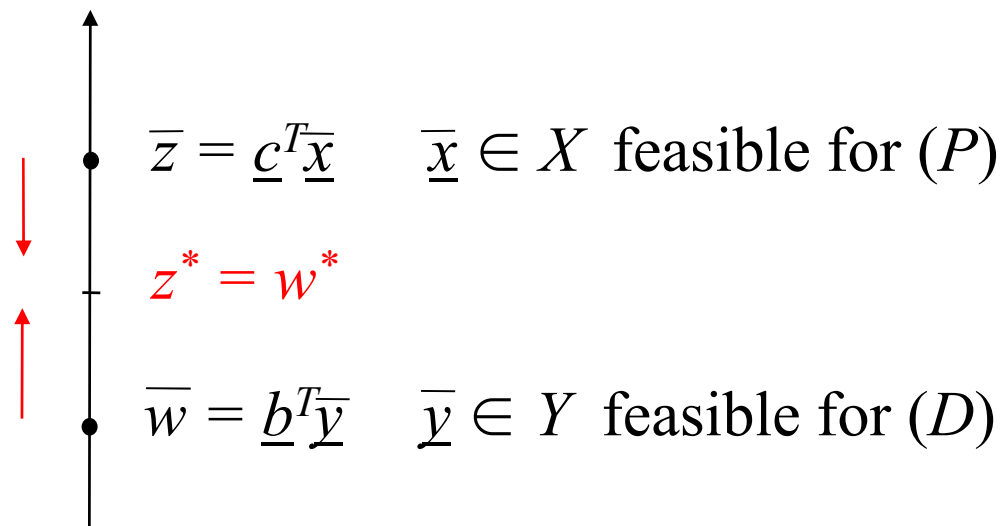
$\bar{\underline{x}}$ is optimal for (P) and $\bar{\underline{y}}$ is optimal for (D) .

Optimal solutions are denoted by \underline{x}^* and \underline{y}^*

Strong duality theorem

If $X = \{\underline{x} : A\underline{x} \geq \underline{b}, \underline{x} \geq \underline{0}\} \neq \emptyset$ and $\min\{\underline{c}^T \underline{x} : \underline{x} \in X\}$ is finite, there exist $\underline{x}^* \in X$ and $\underline{y}^* \in Y$ such that $\underline{c}^T \underline{x}^* = \underline{b}^T \underline{y}^*$.

$$\min\{\underline{c}^T \underline{x} : \underline{x} \in X\} = \max\{\underline{b}^T \underline{y} : \underline{y} \in Y\}$$



Proof

Derive an optimal solution of (D) from one of (P)

$$\begin{array}{ll} \text{Given} & \min \underline{c}^T \underline{x} \\ (P) & A \underline{x} = \underline{b} \\ & \underline{x} \geq \underline{0} \end{array} \qquad \begin{array}{ll} & \max \underline{y}^T \underline{b} \\ (D) & \underline{y}^T A \leq \underline{c}^T \\ & \underline{y} \in \mathbf{R}^m \end{array}$$

and \underline{x}^* is an optimal feasible solution of (P)

$$\underline{x}^* = \begin{pmatrix} \underline{x}_B^* \\ \underline{x}_N^* \end{pmatrix} \quad \text{with} \quad \begin{cases} \underline{x}_B^* = B^{-1} \underline{b} \\ \underline{x}_N^* = \underline{0} \end{cases}$$

provided (after a finite # of iterations) by the Simplex algorithm with Bland's rule.

Consider

$$\bar{y}^T := \underline{c}_B^T B^{-1}$$

- Verify that \bar{y} is a feasible solution of (D):

$$\bar{c}_N^T = \underline{c}_N^T - (\underline{c}_B^T B^{-1})N = \underline{c}_N^T - \bar{y}^T N \geq \underline{0}^T$$

reduced costs of the nonbasic variables

since \underline{x}^* is optimal

$$\Rightarrow \bar{y}^T N \leq \underline{c}_N^T$$

$$\bar{\underline{c}}_B^T = \underline{c}_B^T - (\underline{c}_B^T \underbrace{B^{-1}}_I)B = \underline{c}_B^T - \bar{\underline{y}}^T B = \underline{\mathbf{0}}^T \Rightarrow \bar{\underline{y}}^T B \leq \underline{c}_B^T$$

reduced costs of the basic variables

- According to weak duality, $\bar{\underline{y}}$ is an optimal solution of (D) :

$$\bar{\underline{y}}^T \underline{b} = (\underline{c}_B^T B^{-1}) \underline{b} = \underline{c}_B^T (B^{-1} \underline{b}) = \underline{c}_B^T \underline{x}_B^* = \underline{c}^T \underline{x}^*$$

Hence $\bar{\underline{y}} = \underline{y}^*$

Corollary

For any pair of primal-dual problems (P) and (D), only four cases can arise:

P	D	\exists optimal solution	unbounded LP	infeasible LP
\exists optimal solution		1)	1)	1)
unbounded LP		1)	2)	2)
Infeasible LP		1)	3)	4)

Strong duality theorem \Rightarrow 1)

Weak duality theorem \Rightarrow 2) and 3)

4) can arise:

$$(P) \quad \begin{array}{ll} \min & -4x_1 - 2x_2 \\ & -x_1 + x_2 \geq 2 \\ & x_1 - x_2 \geq 1 \\ & x_1, x_2 \geq 0 \end{array}$$

$$(D) \quad \begin{array}{ll} \max & 2y_1 + y_2 \\ & -y_1 + y_2 \leq -4 \\ & y_1 - y_2 \leq -2 \\ & y_1, y_2 \geq 0 \end{array}$$



empty feasible regions

Economic interpretation

The primal and dual problems correspond to two complementary point of views on the same “market”.

Diet problem:

n aliments $j=1, \dots, n$

m nutrients $i=1, \dots, m$ (vitamines,...)

a_{ij} quantity of i -th nutrient in one unit of j -th aliment

b_i requirement of i -th nutrient

c_j cost of one unit of j -th aliment

$$\begin{aligned}
 & \min \quad \sum_{j=1}^n c_j x_j \\
 (P) \quad & \sum_{j=1}^n a_{ij} x_j \geq b_i \quad \forall i = 1, \dots, m \\
 & x_j \geq 0 \quad \forall j = 1, \dots, n
 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
 & \max \quad \sum_{i=1}^m b_i y_i \\
 (D) \quad & \sum_{i=1}^m a_{ij} y_i \leq c_j \quad \forall j = 1, \dots, n \\
 & y_i \geq 0 \quad \forall i = 1, \dots, m
 \end{aligned}$$

Interpretation of the dual problem:

A company that produces pills of the m nutrients needs to decide the nutrient unit prices y_i so as to maximize income.

- If the customer buys nutrient pills, he will buy b_i units for each i , $1 \leq i \leq m$.
- The price of the nutrient pills must be competitive:

$$\sum_{i=1}^m a_{ij} y_i \leq c_j \quad \forall j = 1, \dots, n$$

cost of the pills that are equivalent to 1 unit of j -th aliment

If both linear programs (P) and (D) admit a feasible solution, the strong duality theorem implies that

$$z^* = w^*$$

An “equilibrium” exists (two alternatives with the same cost).

Observation: Strong connection with **Game theory** (zero-sum games).


Optimality conditions

Given $\min z = \underline{c}^T \underline{x}$ $\max w = \underline{b}^T \underline{y}$

$$(P) \quad X \begin{cases} A\underline{x} \geq \underline{b} \\ \underline{x} \geq \underline{0} \end{cases}$$

$$(D) \quad Y \begin{cases} \underline{y}^T A \leq \underline{c}^T \\ \underline{y} \geq \underline{0} \end{cases}$$

two feasible solutions $\underline{x}^* \in X$ and $\underline{y}^* \in Y$ are optimal

$$\Leftrightarrow \underline{y}^{*T} \underline{b} = \underline{c}^T \underline{x}^*$$


If x_j and y_i are unknown, it is a single equation in $n+m$ unknowns!

Since $\underline{y}^{*T} \underline{b} \leq \underbrace{\underline{y}^{*T} A \underline{x}^*}_{\substack{|\wedge \\ A \underline{x}^*}} \leq \underbrace{\underline{c}^T \underline{x}^*}_{\substack{|\wedge \\ \underline{c}^T}}$, we have

$$\underline{y}^{*T} \underline{b} = \underline{y}^{*T} A \underline{x}^* \quad \text{and} \quad \underline{y}^{*T} A \underline{x}^* = \underline{c}^T \underline{x}^*$$

and therefore

$$\underbrace{\underline{y}^{*T}}_{\substack{|\vee \\ \underline{0}^T}} \underbrace{(A \underline{x}^* - \underline{b})}_{\substack{|\vee \\ \underline{0}}} = 0 \quad \text{and} \quad \underbrace{(\underline{c}^T - \underline{y}^{*T} A)}_{\substack{|\vee \\ \underline{0}^T}} \underbrace{\underline{x}^*}_{\substack{|\vee \\ \underline{0}}} = 0$$

$\Rightarrow m+n$ equations in $n+m$ unknowns

necessary and sufficient optimality conditions!

Complementary slackness conditions

$\underline{x}^* \in X$ and $\underline{y}^* \in Y$ are optimal solutions of, respectively, (P) and (D) if and only if

$$\begin{array}{l}
 \text{\textit{i}-th row of } A \quad \underbrace{\hspace{10em}}_{\text{slack } s_i \text{ of } i\text{-th constraint of } (P)} \\
 y_i^* (\underline{a}_i^T \underline{x}^* - b_i) = 0 \quad \forall i = 1, \dots, m \\
 \underbrace{(c_j^T - \underline{y}^{*T} A_j)}_{\text{slack } s_i^D \text{ of } j\text{-th constraint of } (D)} x_j^* = 0 \quad \forall j = 1, \dots, n \\
 \hspace{15em} \text{\textit{j}-th column of } A
 \end{array}$$

At optimality, the product of each variable with the corresponding slack variable of the constraint of the relative dual is $= 0$.

Economic interpretation for the diet problem

- $\sum_{j=1}^n a_{ij} x_j^* > b_i \Rightarrow y_i^* = 0$

If the optimal diet includes an excess of i -th nutrient, the customer is not willing to pay $y_i^* > 0$.

- $y_i^* > 0 \Rightarrow \sum_{j=1}^n a_{ij} x_j^* = b_i$

If the company selects a price $y_i^* > 0$, the customer must not have an excess of i -th nutrient.

- $\sum_{i=1}^m y_i^* a_{ij} < c_j \Rightarrow x_j^* = 0$ — it is not convenient for the customer to buy aliment j

price of the pills equivalent to the nutrients contained in one unit of j -th aliment **is lower than the price of the aliment.**

- $x_j^* > 0 \Rightarrow \sum_{i=1}^m y_i^* a_{ij} = c_j$

If customer includes the j -th aliment in optimal diet, the company must have selected competitive prices y_i^* (price of the nutrients in pills contained in a unit of j -th aliment is not lower than c_j).

Example:

$$\begin{array}{ll} \min & 13x_1 + 10x_2 + 6x_3 \\ \text{s.t.} & 5x_1 + x_2 + 3x_3 = 8 \\ (P) & 3x_1 + x_2 = 3 \\ & x_1, x_2, x_3 \geq 0 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{ll} \max & 8y_1 + 3y_2 \\ \text{s.t.} & 5y_1 + 3y_2 \leq 13 \\ (D) & y_1 + y_2 \leq 10 \\ & 3y_1 \leq 6 \end{array}$$

Verify that the feasible $\underline{x}^* = (1, 0, 1)$ is an optimal, non degenerate solution of (P) .

Suppose it is true and **derives**, via the complementary slackness conditions, the **corresponding optimal solution** of (D) .

Since (P) is in standard form, the conditions

$$y_i^* (\underline{a}_i^T \underline{x}^* - b_i) = 0$$

are automatically satisfied $\forall i, 1 \leq i \leq 2$.

Condition $(c_j^T - \underline{y}^{*T} A_j) x_j^* = 0$ is satisfied for $j = 2$ because $x_2^* = 0$.

Since $x_1^* > 0$ and $x_3^* > 0$, we obtain the conditions:

$$5y_1 + 3y_2 = 13$$

$$3y_1 = 6$$

and hence the optimal solution $y_1^* = 2$ and $y_2^* = 1$ of (D)

with $\underline{b}^T \underline{y}^* = 19 = c^T \underline{x}^*$.