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CONTENTS

3. Nonlinear Programming Problems and the Kuhn Tucker conditions (cont)	1
3.4. A worked solution to an NPP: S&B #18.18 (on the problem set)	2
3.5. Computing a solution to an NPP: a simple worked example	5
3.6. Computed solution to a NPP: ARE problem set example.	8

3. NONLINEAR PROGRAMMING PROBLEMS AND THE KUHN TUCKER CONDITIONS (CONT)

Key points:

- (1) Interpretation of the Lagrangian multiplier: λ_j is the rate at which the maximized value of the objective increases as the j 'th constraint is relaxed.
 - (a) multipliers increases with the length of the gradient of the objective at the solution
 - (b) the j 'th multiplier *decreases* with the length of the gradient of the j 'th constraint at the solution
- (2) Lots of practice at computation

3.4. A worked solution to an NPP: S&B #18.18 (on the problem set)

The example: S&B qu 18.18

$$\begin{aligned} \min 2x^2 + 2y^2 - 2xy - 9y \quad \text{s.t.} \\ 4x + 3y &\leq 10 \\ y - 4x^2 &\geq -2 \\ x &\geq 0 \\ y &\geq 0 \end{aligned}$$

Flip the signs so it's a max problem, respecify nonnegativity constraints as inequalities

$$\begin{aligned} \max f(x, y) &= 2xy + 9y - 2x^2 - 2y^2 \quad \text{s.t.} \\ 4x + 3y &\leq 10 \\ 4x^2 - y &\leq 2 \\ -x &\leq 0 \\ -y &\leq 0 \end{aligned}$$

Now set up Lagrangian:

$$L(x, y, \boldsymbol{\lambda}) = (2xy + 9y - 2x^2 - 2y^2) + \lambda_1(10 - 4x - 3y) + \lambda_2(2 - 4x^2 + y) + \lambda_3x + \lambda_4y$$

Recall from (??), that the first order conditions were

$$\partial L(\bar{\mathbf{x}}, \bar{\boldsymbol{\lambda}})/\partial x_i = 0; \quad \partial L(\bar{\mathbf{x}}, \bar{\boldsymbol{\lambda}})/\partial \lambda_j \geq 0; \quad \bar{\lambda}_j \partial L(\bar{\mathbf{x}}, \bar{\boldsymbol{\lambda}})/\partial \lambda_j = 0. \quad (1)$$

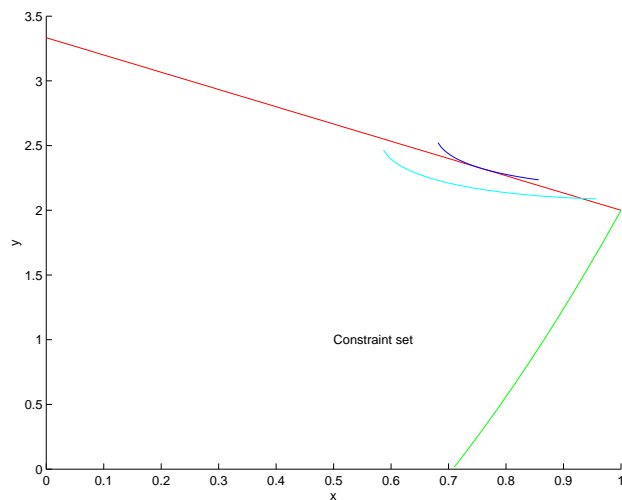


FIGURE 1. The feasible set for problem 18.18

In this particular problem, these conditions imply

$$L_x = 2y - 4x - 4\lambda_1 - 8x\lambda_2 + \lambda_3 = 0$$

$$L_y = 2x - 4y + 9 - 3\lambda_1 + \lambda_2 + \lambda_4 = 0$$

$$L_{\lambda_1} = 10 - 4x - 3y \geq 0$$

$$L_{\lambda_2} = 2 - 4x^2 + y \geq 0$$

$$L_{\lambda_3} = x \geq 0$$

$$L_{\lambda_4} = y \geq 0$$

3) Assume at least one nonnegativity constraint satisfied with equality:

(a) *First assume we're at the origin. $x = y = 0$;*

- $L_{\lambda_1} > 0$; $L_{\lambda_2} > 0$
- $\lambda_1 = \lambda_2 = 0$
- $L_x = 0 - 0 - 0 - 0 + \lambda_3 = 0 \implies \lambda_3 = 0$;
- $L_y = 0 - 0 + 9 - 0 + 0 + \lambda_4 > 0$. \otimes

(b) *Now assume just x is positive $x > y = 0$;*

- $\lambda_3 = 0$;
- $L_{\lambda_2} = 2 - 4x^2 \geq 0 \implies x \leq \sqrt{0.5}$
- $L_{\lambda_3} > 10 - 4\sqrt{0.5} > 0 \implies \lambda_1 = 0$
- $L_y = 2x + 9 + \lambda_2 + \lambda_4 > 0$. \otimes

(c) *Now assume just y is positive $y > x = 0$;*

- $\lambda_4 = 0$;
- $L_{\lambda_2} = 2 + y > 0$
- $\lambda_2 = 0$;
- $L_x = 2y + \lambda_3 - 4\lambda_1 = 0 \implies \lambda_1 > 0 \implies y = 10/3$;
- $L_y = -40/3 + 9 - 3\lambda_1 < 0$; \otimes

4) Conclude that $x > 0$; $y > 0$; $\lambda_3 = \lambda_4 = 0$.

5) Assume both x and y are positive:

(a) $L_{\lambda_1} = L_{\lambda_2} = 0$

- $\lambda_3 = \lambda_4 = 0$ (because both x and y are positive).
- $L_{\lambda_1} = 10 - 4x - 3y = 0 \implies y = (10 - 4x)/3$
- $L_{\lambda_2} = 2 - 4x^2 + (10 - 4x)/3 = 0 \implies 3x^2 + x - 4 = 0$.
- i.e., $(3x + 4) * (x - 1) = 0 \implies x = 1 \implies y = 2$.
- $L_y = 4 - 8 + 9 > 0$; \otimes

(b) $L_{\lambda_1} > 0$; $L_{\lambda_2} = 0$ (only the quadratic constraint satisfied with equality)

- $\lambda_1 = \lambda_3 = \lambda_4 = 0$
- $L_{\lambda_2} = 2 - 4x^2 + y = 0 \implies y = 4x^2 - 2$;
- $L_x = 0 \implies y \geq 2x$ (otherwise $L_x < 0$).

- $y = 4x^2 - 2$ and $y \geq 2x \implies x \geq 1 \implies y \geq 2$.
- $x \geq 1, y \geq 2 \implies L_{\lambda_2} = 10 - 4x - 3y \leq 0$; \otimes

(c) $L_{\lambda_1} > 0; L_{\lambda_2} > 0$ (solution in the interior of constraint set)

- $\lambda = 0$; (i.e. the whole vector zero)
- $L_x = 0 \implies y = 2x$;
- $L_y = 0 \implies 6x = 9 \implies x = 1.5$;
- $y = 3$;
- $L_{\lambda_1} = 10 - 4 * 1.5 - 3 * 3 = -5$; \otimes

6) Computing the solution: $L_{\lambda_1} = 0; L_{\lambda_2} > 0$ (only the linear constraint satisfied with equality)

- $\lambda_2 = \lambda_3 = \lambda_4 = 0$
- $L_{\lambda_1} = 10 - 4x - 3y = 0 \implies y = (10 - 4x)/3$
- $L_x = 2(10 - 4x)/3 - 4x - 4\lambda_1 = 0$ or $20 - 20x - 12\lambda_1 = 0$
- $L_y = 2x - 4(10 - 4x)/3 + 9 - 3\lambda_1 = 0$ or $22x - 13 - 9\lambda_1 = 0$

Two equations in two unknowns, i.e., $\begin{bmatrix} 20 & 12 \\ 22 & -9 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} x \\ \lambda_1 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 20 \\ 13 \end{bmatrix}$ so $x = 0.7568$; $\lambda_1 = 0.4054$.

From the constraint that's satisfied with equality, i.e., $10 - 4x - 3y = 0$, we have $y = (10 - 4 * 0.7568)/3 = 2.3242$. Now let's check that our answer satisfies the mantra:

$$\begin{aligned} \nabla f &= [2y - 4x \quad 2x - 4y + 9] \\ &= [1.6216 \quad 1.2162] \end{aligned}$$

For the mantra to be satisfied, ∇f must be collinear with $\nabla g = [4 \quad 3]$, or, equivalently, $f_1/f_2 = g_1/g_2$. And $1.6216/1.2162$ indeed equals $4/3$, so the mantra is satisfied.

3.5. Computing a solution to an NPP: a simple worked example

How do you actually solve an NPP? Answer is: a process of elimination. You check all the possibilities to see if you can find a point that satisfies the KT conditions, and then you eliminate anything that fails this test. Here you are using the fact that the KT conditions are *necessary* for a solution, i.e., if they fail this test, they *can't* be a maximum. Once you've found something

that does satisfy the KT conditions, then you have to go back and check that the second order conditions are satisfied.

The example:

$$\begin{aligned} \max f(\mathbf{x}) &= (x_1 + 2)(x_2 - 2) \text{ s.t.} \\ p_1x_1 + p_2x_2 &\leq y; \\ x_i &\geq 0; \end{aligned}$$

In this case, g is the matrix above, i.e.,

$$\begin{bmatrix} p_1 & p_2 \\ -1 & 0 \\ 0 & -1 \end{bmatrix};$$

Check the nonvanishing gradient condition: $\nabla f(\mathbf{x}) = 0$ iff $x_1 = -2$, $x_2 = 2$. Clearly this point is outside the constraint set, so we know the gradient is nonvanishing on the constraint set.

Set up Lagrangian:

$$L(\mathbf{x}, \lambda) = (x_1 + 2)(x_2 - 2) + \lambda_0(y - p_1x_1 - p_2x_2) + \lambda_1x_1 + \lambda_2x_2$$

Recall from (??), that the first order conditions were

$$\partial L(\bar{\mathbf{x}}, \bar{\lambda}) / \partial x_i = 0; \quad \partial L(\bar{\mathbf{x}}, \bar{\lambda}) / \partial \lambda_j \geq 0; \quad \bar{\lambda}_j \partial L(\bar{\mathbf{x}}, \bar{\lambda}) / \partial \lambda_j = 0.$$

In this particular problem, these conditions imply

$$L_{x_1} = x_2 - 2 - \lambda_0 p_1 + \lambda_1 = 0$$

$$L_{x_2} = x_1 + 2 - \lambda_0 p_2 + \lambda_2 = 0$$

$$L_{\lambda_0} = y - p_1 x_1 - p_2 x_2 \geq 0$$

$$L_{\lambda_1} = x_1 \geq 0$$

$$L_{\lambda_2} = x_2 \geq 0.$$

Observe that the last three FOC give you back precisely the constraint conditions.

We will set $p_1 = p_2 = y$ and solve explicitly for a solution. Under this condition, the solution will be at a corner. *NOTE WELL: this solution depends on the particular specification of parameters. In general, you could get a solution on the face of the budget line.*

Go through the interior, faces and vertices of the constraint set in turn. (Emphasize that while I can tell by inspection the solution to this problem, so I don't have to go thru all this hassle, in general I don't know the answer in advance, so don't have a clue about which corner, face, etc. to start with.)

- (1) Try none of the constraints binding; KT says $\bar{\lambda}_0 = \bar{\lambda}_1 = \bar{\lambda}_2 = 0$. which implies $x = (-2, 2)$. Contradiction. Assumed that \bar{x} was nonnegative; found that if there were a \bar{x} that satisfied the KT conditions under these assumptions, then \bar{x}_1 would be negative. Note that we couldn't have had a point satisfying this condition anyway, because of the non-vanishing gradient property, we checked above
- (2) Try $\bar{x}_1 > 0$, $\bar{x}_2 > 0$ and $p \cdot \bar{x} = y$. KT conditions say that $\bar{\lambda}_1 = \bar{\lambda}_2 = 0$; $\bar{\lambda}_0 \geq 0$. Plugging these is gives

$$x_2 - 2 = \lambda_0 p_1$$

$$x_1 + 2 = \lambda_0 p_2$$

But when $p_1 = p_2$, this means that $x_2 - x_1 = 4$. On the other hand, since $p_1 = p_2 = y$, the budget constraint implies that $x_1 + x_2 = 1$. Substituting yields $2x_2 = 5$, which implies x_1 MUST be negative, contradicting our initial condition that x_1 must be nonnegative.

- (3) Try $\bar{x}_1 > 0$, $\bar{x}_2 = 0$ and $p \cdot \bar{\mathbf{x}} = y$. KT conditions say that $\bar{\lambda}_0, \bar{\lambda}_2 \geq 0$; $\bar{\lambda}_1 = 0$. Plugging these in gives

$$\begin{aligned} L_{x_1} &= x_2 - 2 - \lambda_0 p_1 + \lambda_1 \\ &= -2 - \lambda_0 p_1 = 0; \end{aligned}$$

which implies $\lambda_0 = -2/p_1$, which is a contradiction.

- (4) Try $\bar{x}_1 = 0$, $\bar{x}_2 > 0$ and $p \cdot \bar{\mathbf{x}} = y$. KT conditions say that $\bar{\lambda}_0, \bar{\lambda}_1 \geq 0$; $\bar{\lambda}_2 = 0$. Plugging these in gives

$$L_{\lambda_0} = y - p_2 x_2 = 0$$

which implies $x_2 = y/p_2 > 0$. Also,

$$\begin{aligned} L_{x_2} &= x_1 + 2 - \lambda_0 p_2 \\ &= 2 - \lambda_0 p_2 = 0 \end{aligned}$$

which implies $\lambda_0 = 2/p_2$. Now consider L_{x_1} , i.e.,

$$\begin{aligned} L_{x_1} &= x_2 - 2 - \lambda_0 p_1 + \lambda_1 \\ &= y/p_2 - 2 - 2 + \lambda_1 \quad (\text{since } \lambda_0 = 2/p_2) \\ &= 1 - 4 + \lambda_1 \end{aligned}$$

which implies that $\lambda_1 = 3$. So we have a solution, i.e., $(0, y/p_2)$ with $\lambda_0 = 2/p_2$, $\lambda_1 = 3$.

3.6. Computed solution to a NPP: ARE problem set example.

This example was a homework problem for Econ 201A, 1999:

The example:

$$\begin{aligned} \max u_i(\mathbf{x}_i) &= x_{1i}(4 - x_{2i}) \text{ s.t.} \\ p_1x_{1i} + p_2x_{2i} &= p_1\omega_{1i} + p_2\omega_{2i}; \\ x_i &\geq 0; \end{aligned}$$

where $\omega_1 = (4, 3)$, $\omega_2 = (1, 0)$. The problem that 201 students faced was to solve for the \mathbf{x}_i 's for $i = 1, 2$, and for the equilibrium prices. What I'll do in these notes is to solve for the demand functions for good #1, *and* to derive some equilibrium properties of the price vector.

For this problem, g is the matrix above, i.e.,

$$\begin{bmatrix} p_1 & p_2 \\ -1 & 0 \\ 0 & -1 \end{bmatrix};$$

while b is

$$\begin{bmatrix} p_1\omega_{1i} + p_2\omega_{2i} \\ 0 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix};$$

We'll normalize by setting $p_1 = 1$ and let $\xi^i : \mathbb{R}^2 \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^2$ denote the demand function for agent i , i.e., the demand function is now a function only of relative prices. We know from the answer sheet that

$$\begin{aligned} \xi^1(p_2) &= \begin{cases} \left(\frac{4-p_2}{2}, \frac{4+7p_2}{2p_2}\right) & \text{if } p_2 \leq -4/7 \\ (4 + 3p_2, 0) & \text{otherwise} \end{cases} \\ \xi^2(p_2) &= \begin{cases} \left(\frac{1-4p_2}{2}, \frac{1+4p_2}{2p_2}\right) & \text{if } p_2 \leq -1/4 \\ (1, 0) & \text{otherwise} \end{cases} \end{aligned}$$

We'll now derive the demand functions for agent #1, and check that our answers agree with ξ^1 . You should check as an exercise that you can repeat the same steps for agent #2, and arrive at ξ^2 .

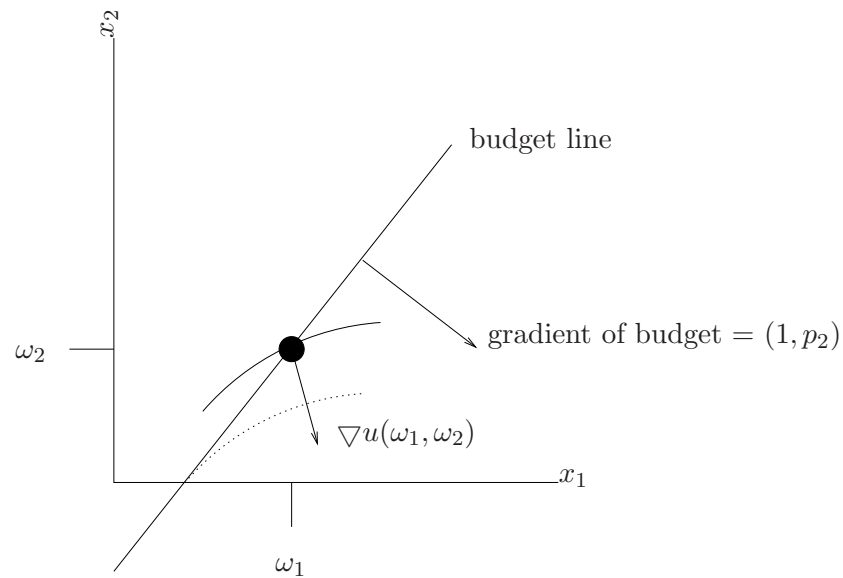


FIGURE 2. The problem facing agent #1

Before embarking on this problem, we'll get some intuition for the solution. Note first from the definition of the utility function that

- (1) provided that a positive quantity of good 1 is consumed, good 2 is a “bad”;
- (2) as x_{2i} increases above 4, then good 1 becomes a bad also, and the gradient of utility is a negative vector.
- (3) it may not be *immediately* obvious, but when $x_{2i} > 4$, $u_i(\cdot)$ is a strictly *quasi-concave* function.
- (4) now assume that both prices are both positive:
 - (a) if $x_{2i} < 4$, you cannot get an interior (i.e., strictly positive) solution to the KT conditions because the gradient of the constraint is a strictly positive vector while the gradient of the utility function has one positive and one negative component.
 - (b) if $x_{2i} > 4$, you *can* get an interior solution to the KT conditions because the gradient of the utility function is strictly negative. In this solution, the *non-typical* constraint will be binding, i.e., instead of wanting to move NE in the positive quadrant you want to move SW. *However*, in this case the utility function is quasi-concave not quasi-convex.

When you solve for an interior solution to the KT conditions, you'll have found a *minimum* on the constraint set, not a maximum.

(5) conclude from this that you cannot obtain an interior maximum to this problem if both prices are positive.

Rather than exploring all the possibilities exhaustively, we'll henceforth assume that $p_2 < 0$, i.e., good 2 is a bad. Now we'll draw the picture. The gradient of the budget constraint points down and to the right, i.e., SE., and the budget line is a positively sloped line through endowment point. Fig. 2 indicates the budget line with a relatively small negative price p_2 ; The optimum for this player is obviously a corner solution. Clearly, in order to get an interior solution to #1's optimization problem, you have to flatten the budget line, i.e., *lower* p_2 .

From now on, I'm going to dump all the i subscripts since we're only dealing with $i = 1$.

Set up the Lagrangian, setting $p_1 = 1$ and $y(p_2) = \omega_1 + p_2\omega_2$, i.e., $y_1(p_2) = 4 + 3p_2$ and $y_2(p_2) = 1$.

$$L(\mathbf{x}, \lambda) = x_1(4 - x_2) + \lambda_1 x_1 + \lambda_2 x_2 + \lambda_3 (y(p_2) - x_1 - p_2 x_2) + \lambda_4 (x_1 + p_2 x_2 - y(p_2))$$

Recall from (??), that the first order conditions were

$$\partial L(\bar{\mathbf{x}}, \bar{\lambda}) / \partial x_i = 0; \quad \partial L(\bar{\mathbf{x}}, \bar{\lambda}) / \partial \lambda_j \geq 0; \quad \bar{\lambda}_j \partial L(\bar{\mathbf{x}}, \bar{\lambda}) / \partial \lambda_j = 0. \quad (??)$$

In this particular problem, these conditions imply

$$L_{x_1} = (4 - x_2) + \lambda_1 - (\lambda_3 - \lambda_4) = 0$$

$$L_{x_2} = -x_1 + \lambda_2 - (\lambda_3 - \lambda_4)p_2 = 0$$

$$L_{\lambda_1} = x_1 \geq 0$$

$$L_{\lambda_2} = x_2 \geq 0$$

$$L_{\lambda_3} = y(p_2) - (x_1 + p_2x_2) \geq 0$$

$$L_{\lambda_4} = x_1 + p_2x_2 - y(p_2) \geq 0$$

Note that $L_{\lambda_3} > 0$ implies $L_{\lambda_4} < 0$ while $L_{\lambda_4} > 0$ implies $L_{\lambda_3} < 0$. Conclude that $L_{\lambda_3} = L_{\lambda_4} = 0$ leaving open the possibility that *either* λ_3 *or* λ_4 could be positive. Accordingly, it will be convenient to define $\lambda_0 = (\lambda_3 - \lambda_4)$, which can be either positive negative or zero. Thus for agent 1:

$$L_{x_1} = (4 - x_2) + \lambda_1 - \lambda_0 = 0$$

$$L_{x_2} = -x_1 + \lambda_2 - \lambda_0p_2 = 0$$

$$L_{\lambda_0} = x_1 + p_2x_2 - (4 + 3p_2) = 0$$

$$L_{\lambda_1} = x_1 \geq 0$$

$$L_{\lambda_2} = x_2 \geq 0$$

By inspection of the figure we can see that there are really two possibilities:

(A) $p_2 < 0$; the budget line alone is binding (if p_2 is large in abs value, i.e., budget line relatively flat). In this case,

$$\lambda_1 = \lambda_2 = 0, \lambda_0 = \lambda_3 > 0$$

(B) $p_2 < 0$; the budget line and the nonneg constraint on good 2 are both binding (if p_2 is small in abs value, i.e., budget line relatively steep). In this case,

$$\lambda_1 = 0, \lambda_2 > 0, \lambda_0 = \lambda_3 > 0$$

On the other hand, Fig. 2 suggests that there are several possibilities that we can *exclude* based on the Lagrangian conditions. We'll focus on one of them, just for practice, but there are *many* more that we won't check.

(C) $p_2 > 0$ and $x_i > 0$, $i = 1, 2$, i.e., the budget line is the only constraint satisfied with equality.

We'll begin with (C), write down the Lagrangian system and show that all of the requirements *cannot simultaneously* be satisfied. From the mantra, we know the reason: the gradient of the budget line and the gradient of the objective have to be co-linear, but they can't be, because the objective's gradient points NE, while the budget's gradient points SE. Our task now is to show this using the Lagrangian. The conditions are:

$$\begin{aligned} L_{x_1} &= (4 - x_2) - \lambda_0 = 0 \\ L_{x_2} &= -x_1 - \lambda_0 p_2 = 0 \\ L_{\lambda_0} &= x_1 + p_2 x_2 - (4 + 3p_2) = 0 \\ \lambda_1 &= 0; \quad \lambda_2 = 0; \end{aligned}$$

From L_{x_1} we have that

From L_{x_2} and $p_2 > 0$, we have that

$$\lambda_0 = 4 - x_2 \lambda_0 = -x_1/p_2 < 0$$

so that, substituting into L_{x_1}

$$(4 - x_2) + \frac{x_1}{p_2} = 0, \tag{2}$$

or, since $x_1 > 0$,

$$(x_2 - 4) = \frac{x_1}{p_2} > 0$$

But from L_{λ_0} , we have that

$$x_1 + p_2x_2 = 4 + 3p_2 > 4$$

or

$$4 - x_2 > \frac{x_1}{p_2} > 0 \tag{3}$$

But, obviously, (2) and (3) cannot simultaneously be satisfied, so we've established that the set of conditions listed in (C) cannot hold. Note, moreover, that we obtained the contradiction by showing that if $p_2 > 0$, then the combination of L_{x_1} and L_{x_2} would then be inconsistent with L_{λ_0} .

Now let's consider the possibilities which from the figure, we know *are* possible. We will take each of possibilities (A) and (B) in turn, and see their implications for the Lagrangian system;

(A) the budget line alone is binding:

$$L_{x_1} = (4 - x_2) - \lambda_0 = 0$$

$$L_{x_2} = -x_1 - \lambda_0 p_2 = 0$$

$$L_{\lambda_0} = x_1 + p_2x_2 - (4 + 3p_2) = 0$$

Solving this in the usual way:

$$(a) \quad 0 = (4 - x_2) + \frac{x_1}{p_2} \quad (\text{from } L_{x_1})$$

$$(b) \quad 0 = p_2(4 - x_2) + x_1 \quad (\text{rearranging (a)})$$

$$= x_1 - p_2x_2 + 4p_2$$

$$(c) \quad (4 + 3p_2) = x_1 + p_2x_2 \quad (\text{from } L_{x_2})$$

$$(d) \quad (4 + 3p_2) = 2p_2x_2 - 4p_2 \quad (\text{subtracting (b) from (c)})$$

$$(e) \quad x_2 = \frac{4 + 7p_2}{2p_2} \quad (\text{rearranging (d)})$$

$$(f) \quad x_1 = \frac{4 - p_2}{2} \quad (\text{subst (3) into (c)})$$

Note that $x_2 \geq 0$ iff $|p_2| \leq 4/7$. Summarizing, (e) and (f) give us agent #1's demand function for $p_2 \in (-\infty, -4/7]$, i.e.,

$$\xi^1(p_2) = \left(\frac{4 + 7p_2}{2p_2}, \frac{4 - p_2}{2} \right)$$

(B) both budget line and nonneg constraint on 2 are binding:

$$L_{x_1} = 4 - \lambda_0 = 0$$

$$L_{x_2} = -x_1 + \lambda_2 - \lambda_0 p_2 = 0$$

$$L_{\lambda_0} = x_1 - (4 + 3p_2) = 0$$

From $L_{x_1} = 0$, $\lambda_0 = 4$. From $L_{\lambda_0} = 0$, $x_1 = (4 + 3p_2)$. Plugging both values into $L_{x_2} = 0$,

$$L_{x_2} = -(4 + 3p_2) + \lambda_2 - 4p_2$$

$$= -4 - 7p_2 + \lambda_2 = 0;$$

Now L_{x_2} can be zero with $\lambda_2 \geq 0$ iff $-7p_2 - 4 \leq 0$, i.e., if $|p_2| \leq 4/7$. Therefore, we have now computed agent #1's demand function for $p_2 \in (-4/7, 0]$, i.e.,

$$\xi^1(p_2) = (4 + 3p_2, 0)$$