



## Infinitely Many Solutions for a Class of Systems Including the $(p_1, \dots, p_n)$ -Biharmonic Operators

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**Abstract.** In this work, we prove the existence of infinitely many solutions for a general form of an elliptic system involving the  $(p_1, \dots, p_n)$ -biharmonic operators via variational methods.

### 1. Introduction

The investigation of existence of solutions for problems at resonance has drawn the attention of many authors, (see for example [2–4, 13–16]) as well as the existence of infinity many solutions for elliptic systems (see [1, 6–8, 10, 11, 17, 18] and the references therein). Here, we consider the following system with Navier boundary conditions

$$\begin{cases} -\Delta_{p_i}^2 u_i - \theta_i(x) \Delta_{p_i} u_i = \mu F_{u_i}(x, u_1, \dots, u_n) & \text{in } \Omega, \\ \Delta u_i = u_i = 0 & \text{on } \partial\Omega, \end{cases} \quad (1)$$

for  $1 \leq i \leq n$ . Where  $\Omega \subset \mathbb{R}^N, N \geq 2$  is a bounded domain with smooth boundary and  $\mu > 0$  is a real parameter. For each  $1 \leq i \leq n, p_i > \max\{1, \frac{N}{2}\}$ ,  $\Delta_{p_i} u = \operatorname{div}(|\nabla u|^{p_i-2} \nabla u)$  and  $\Delta_{p_i}^2 u = \Delta(|\Delta u|^{p_i-2} \Delta u)$  denote  $p_i$ -Laplacian and  $p_i$ -biharmonic operators, respectively, where  $u : \Omega \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ . Note that for  $p = 2$ , the linear operator  $\Delta_2^2 = \Delta^2 = \Delta \cdot \Delta$  is the iterated Laplacian that multiplied with positive constant appears often in Navier-Stokes equations as being a viscosity coefficient.  $F : \Omega \times \mathbb{R}^n \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$  is a Carathéodory function, and besides,  $F_{u_i}$  is the partial derivative of  $F$  with respect to  $u_i, i = 1, \dots, n$ . Plus that  $\theta_i(x)$  hold the following condition:

$$(\Theta) \quad \theta_i \in L^\infty(\Omega) \text{ such that } \operatorname{ess\,inf}_{x \in \Omega} \theta_i(x) > 0, 1 \leq i \leq n.$$

We are going to prove the existence of infinitely many weak solutions for system (1) under suitable assumptions on  $F$ , whenever the parameter  $\mu$  belongs to appropriate interval. Here we recall the following theorem [4, 19].

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**Theorem 1.1.** *Let  $X$  be a reflexive real Banach space,  $\Phi, \Psi : X \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$  be two Gâteaux differentiable functionals such that  $\Phi$  is strongly continuous, sequentially weakly lower semi-continuous, and coercive, and  $\Psi$  is sequentially weakly upper-semi-continuous. For every  $r > \inf_X \Phi$ , let*

$$\varphi(r) := \inf_{u \in \Phi^{-1}(-\infty, r)} \frac{(\sup_{v \in \Phi^{-1}(-\infty, r)} \Psi(v)) - \Psi(u)}{r - \Phi(u)}$$

$$\kappa := \liminf_{r \rightarrow +\infty} \varphi(r), \quad \delta := \liminf_{r \rightarrow (\inf_X \Phi)^+} \varphi(r).$$

Then

(a) *If  $\kappa < +\infty$  then, for each  $\mu \in (0, \frac{1}{\kappa})$ , the following alternative holds: either*

(a1)  *$I_\mu := \Phi - \mu\Psi$  possesses a global minimum, or*

(a2) *there is a sequence  $\{u_n\}$  of critical points (local minima) of  $I_\mu$  such that  $\lim_{n \rightarrow +\infty} \Phi(u_n) = +\infty$ .*

(b) *If  $\delta < +\infty$  then, for each  $\mu \in (0, \frac{1}{\delta})$ , the following alternative holds: either*

(b1) *there is a global minimum of  $\Phi$  that is a local minimum of  $I_\mu$ , or*

(b2) *there is a sequence  $\{u_n\}$  of pairwise distinct critical points (local minima) of  $I_\mu$  that weakly converges to a global minimum of  $\Phi$  with*

$$\lim_{n \rightarrow +\infty} \Phi(u_n) = \inf_X \Phi.$$

## 2. Preliminaries

In this section we prepare some definitions and notations. Throughout this paper  $\Omega$  is an open bounded subset of  $\mathbb{R}^N, N > 2$  with smooth boundary. At first we define Carathéodory function on  $\Omega \times \mathbb{R}^n$ .

**Definition 2.1.** *We say that  $f : \Omega \times \mathbb{R}^n \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$  is a Carathéodory function, if*

- *$x \rightarrow f(x, \tau_1, \dots, \tau_n)$  is measurable for every  $(\tau_1, \dots, \tau_n) \in \mathbb{R}^n$ .*
- *$(\tau_1, \dots, \tau_n) \rightarrow f(x, \tau_1, \dots, \tau_n)$  is continuous for a.e.  $x \in \Omega$ .*

The Sobolev space  $W^{1,p}(\Omega)$  is defined by

$$W^{1,p}(\Omega) := \{u \in L^p(\Omega); |\nabla u| \in L^p(\Omega)\},$$

and norm in  $W^{1,p}(\Omega)$  is  $\|u\|_{1,p} := |u|_p + |\nabla u|_p$ , where  $|\cdot|_p$  denotes the norm on  $L^p(\Omega)$  and the vector  $\nabla u = (\frac{\partial u}{\partial x_1}(x), \dots, \frac{\partial u}{\partial x_n}(x))$  is the gradient of  $u$  at  $x = (x_1, \dots, x_n)$ . Also, we set

$$W_0^{1,p}(\Omega) := \{u \in W^{1,p}(\Omega); u|_{\partial\Omega} = 0\},$$

equipped with the norm  $\|u\|_* := |\nabla u|_p$ . Similarly,

$$W^2,p(\Omega) := \{u \in L^p(\Omega); |\nabla u|, |\Delta u| \in L^p(\Omega)\},$$

equipped with the norm

$$\|u\|_{2,p} := |u|_p + |\nabla u|_p + |\Delta u|_p.$$

And we set

$$W_0^{2,p}(\Omega) := \{u \in W^{2,p}(\Omega); u|_{\partial\Omega} = 0\}$$

endowed with the norm  $\|u\|_{**} := |\Delta u|_p$ . For  $1 \leq i \leq n$ , we set

$$X_i := W_0^{1,p_i}(\Omega) \cap W_0^{2,p_i}(\Omega),$$

where by Poincaré inequality:

$$\int_{\Omega} u^{p_i} dx \leq \hat{c} \int_{\Omega} |\nabla u|^{p_i} dx,$$

$X_i$  can be endowed with the norm  $\|u\|_{X_i} = |\Delta u|_{p_i}$ , where  $\hat{c} > 0$  is the best possible. Let us point out for the given  $\theta_i \in L^\infty(\Omega)$  satisfied  $(\Theta)$  condition, the following norm is a norm on  $X_i$  which is equivalent to  $\|u\|_{X_i}$ :

$$\|u\|_{p_i} = \left( \int_{\Omega} (|\Delta u(x)|^{p_i} + \theta_i(x)|\nabla u(x)|^{p_i}) dx \right)^{\frac{1}{p_i}}.$$

More precisely, we have

$$\|u\|_{X_i} \leq \|u\|_{p_i} \leq \hat{c}_* \|u\|_{X_i}, \tag{2}$$

where  $\hat{c}_* = (1 + \hat{c}|\theta_i|_\infty)$ . We let  $\mathcal{X}$  be the Cartesian product of the  $n$  Sobolev spaces  $X_i$  for  $1 \leq i \leq n$ , i.e.,

$$\mathcal{X} = \prod_{i=1}^n X_i,$$

endowed with the norm

$$\|u\|_{\mathcal{X}} := \sum_{i=1}^n \|u_i\|_{p_i}, \quad u = (u_1, \dots, u_n) \in \mathcal{X}.$$

We set

$$C := \max_{1 \leq i \leq n} \sup_{u_i \in X_i \setminus \{0\}} \frac{\max_{x \in \Omega} |u_i(x)|^{p_i}}{\|u_i\|_{p_i}^{p_i}},$$

that according to the Rellich Kondrachov theorem  $X_i \hookrightarrow C(\bar{\Omega})$ ,  $1 \leq i \leq n$ , is compact and hence  $C < +\infty$  (see more details in [5, p.290] and [20, p.286]). Moreover, for any  $u_i \in X_i, i = 1, \dots, n$ , we have

$$\sup_{x \in \Omega} |u_i(x)|^{p_i} \leq C \|u_i\|_{p_i}^{p_i}. \tag{3}$$

We end up this section by the next definition which is the meaning of weak solution for the problem (1):

**Definition 2.2.** We say that  $u = (u_1, \dots, u_n) \in \mathcal{X}$  is a weak solution of the system (1) if

$$\begin{aligned} & \int_{\Omega} \sum_{i=1}^n (|\Delta u_i(x)|^{p_i-2} \Delta u_i(x) \Delta v_i(x) + \theta_i(x) |\nabla u_i(x)|^{p_i-2} \nabla u_i(x) \nabla v_i(x)) dx \\ & - \mu \int_{\Omega} \sum_{i=1}^n F_{u_i}(x, u_1(x), \dots, u_n(x)) v_i(x) dx = 0, \end{aligned}$$

for all  $v = (v_1, \dots, v_n) \in \mathcal{X}$ .

### 3. Weak solution

In this section, our principal result is presented. We assume that functional  $I_\mu : X \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$  is given by

$$I_\mu u = \Phi(u) - \mu\Psi(u),$$

for all  $u = (u_1, \dots, u_n) \in X$ , where

$$\Phi(u) = \int_\Omega \sum_{i=1}^n \frac{1}{p_i} (|\Delta u_i(x)|^{p_i} + \theta_i(x)|\nabla u_i(x)|^{p_i}) dx, \tag{4}$$

and

$$\Psi(u) = \int_\Omega F(x, u_1(x), \dots, u_n(x)) dx. \tag{5}$$

Since  $X$  is compactly embedded in  $C^0(\bar{\Omega}) \times \dots \times C^0(\bar{\Omega})$ , it is well known that  $\Phi$  and  $\Psi$  are well defined and continuously Gâteaux differentiable functionals. Moreover, at the point  $u = (u_1, \dots, u_n) \in X$  one has

$$\langle \Phi'(u), v \rangle = \int_\Omega \sum_{i=1}^n (|\Delta u_i(x)|^{p_i-2} \Delta u_i(x) \Delta v_i(x) + \theta_i(x) |\nabla u_i(x)|^{p_i-2} \nabla u_i(x) \nabla v_i(x)) dx,$$

and

$$\langle \Psi'(u), v \rangle = \int_\Omega \sum_{i=1}^n F_{u_i}(x, u_1(x), \dots, u_n(x)) v_i(x) dx$$

for any  $v = (v_1, \dots, v_n) \in X$ . By the weakly lower semicontinuity of norm, clearly  $\Phi$  is sequentially weakly lower semicontinuous. Since  $\Psi$  has compact derivative, it follows that  $\Psi$  is sequentially weakly continuous. From (3), one has

$$\sup_{x \in \Omega} \sum_{i=1}^n \frac{1}{p_i} |u_i(x)|^{p_i} \leq C \sum_{i=1}^n \frac{1}{p_i} \|u_i\|_{p_i}^{p_i}.$$

So, for each  $r > 0$

$$\begin{aligned} \Phi^{-1}([-\infty, r]) &:= \{u = (u_1, \dots, u_n) \in X : \Phi(u) < r\} \\ &= \{u = (u_1, \dots, u_n) \in X : \sum_{i=1}^n \frac{1}{p_i} \|u_i\| < r\} \\ &\subseteq \{u = (u_1, \dots, u_n) \in X : \sum_{i=1}^n \frac{1}{p_i} |u_i(x)|^{p_i} \leq Cr, \text{ for all } x \in \Omega\}. \end{aligned} \tag{6}$$

**Proposition 3.1.** ([12]) *The functional  $\Phi : X \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$  is convex and mapping  $\Phi' : X \rightarrow X^*$  is a strictly monotone and bounded homeomorphism.*

Furthermore,  $\Phi$  is coercive, since indeed for  $u = (u_1, \dots, u_n)$  we have

$$\Phi(u) = \sum_{i=1}^n \frac{1}{p_i} \|u_i\|_{p_i}^{p_i}$$

and when  $\|u\|_X \rightarrow +\infty$ , there exists at least one  $\hat{i}$  such that  $1 \leq \hat{i} \leq n$  where  $\|u_{\hat{i}}\|_X \rightarrow +\infty$  and so  $\Phi(u) \rightarrow +\infty$  as  $\|u\|_X \rightarrow +\infty$ .

For fixed  $x_0 \in \Omega$ , set  $R_2 > R_1 > 0$  such that  $B(x_0, R_2) \subset \Omega$ , where  $B(x_0, R_2)$  denotes the ball with center at  $x_0$  and radius  $R_2$ . Besides, let

$$p^* = \max_{1 \leq i \leq n} p_i \text{ and } p_* = \min_{1 \leq i \leq n} p_i. \tag{7}$$

Define

$$\eta_{p_i} := \frac{\Gamma(1 + \frac{N}{2})}{\left(\sum_{i=1}^n (Cp_i)^{\frac{1}{p_i}}\right)^{p_*} \pi^{\frac{N}{2}}} \left(\frac{R_2^2 - R_1^2}{2N}\right)^{p_i} \frac{1}{R_2^N - R_1^N}, \tag{8}$$

where  $\Gamma$  denotes the Gamma function. Now we are ready to state the main result of the paper.

**Theorem 3.2.** *Assume that*

- (i)  $F(x, \tau_1, \dots, \tau_n) \geq 0$  for every  $(x, \tau_1, \dots, \tau_n) \in \Omega \times [0, +\infty)^n$ ;
- (ii) There exist a point  $x_0 \in \Omega$  and  $R_2 > R_1 > 0$  such that  $B(x_0, R_2) \subset \Omega$  and set

$$A := \liminf_{\sigma \rightarrow +\infty} \frac{\int_{\Omega} \sup_{\sum_{i=1}^n |\tau_i| \leq \sigma} F(x, \tau_1, \dots, \tau_n) dx}{\sigma^{p_*}},$$

$$B := \limsup_{\tau_1, \dots, \tau_n \rightarrow +\infty} \frac{\int_{B(x_0, R_1)} F(x, \tau_1, \dots, \tau_n) dx}{\sum_{i=1}^n \frac{\tau_i^{p_i}}{p_i}}. \tag{9}$$

Then we have  $A < \eta B$ , where  $\eta := \min_{1 \leq i \leq n} \eta_{p_i}$ . Then for each

$$\mu \in \mathcal{M} := \left[ \frac{1}{\left(\sum_{i=1}^n (Cp_i)^{\frac{1}{p_i}}\right)^{p_*}} \right] \frac{1}{\eta B}, \frac{1}{A} \Big], \tag{10}$$

the problem (1) admits an unbounded sequence of weak solutions.

*Proof.* To use Theorem 1.1, let  $\Phi$  and  $\Psi$  be as in (4) and (5), respectively. And set

$$\varphi(r) := \inf_{w \in \Phi^{-1}([-\infty, r])} \frac{\left(\sup_{w \in \Phi^{-1}([-\infty, r])} \Psi(w)\right) - \Psi(w)}{r - \Phi(w)},$$

where  $w = (w_1, \dots, w_n)$ . By our assumptions  $\Phi(0, 0) = 0$  and  $\Psi(0, 0) \geq 0$ . Therefore, by (6) for every  $r > 0$  and  $w = (w_1, \dots, w_n) \in X$  one has

$$\begin{aligned} \varphi(r) &\leq \frac{\sup_{\Phi^{-1}([-\infty, r])} \Psi}{r} \\ &= \frac{1}{r} \sup_{\Phi(w) < r} \int_{\Omega} F(x, w_1, \dots, w_n) dx \\ &\leq \frac{1}{r} \sup_{\{w \in X: \sum_{i=1}^n \frac{1}{p_i} |w_i(x)|^{p_i} < Cr, \text{ for all } x \in \Omega\}} \int_{\Omega} F(x, w_1, \dots, w_n) dx. \end{aligned} \tag{11}$$

Let  $\{\sigma_k\}$  be a real sequence of positive numbers such that  $\lim_{k \rightarrow +\infty} \sigma_k = +\infty$  and

$$\lim_{k \rightarrow +\infty} \frac{\int_{\Omega} \sup_{\sum_{i=1}^n |\tau_i| \leq \sigma_k} F(x, \tau_1, \dots, \tau_n) dx}{\sigma_k^{p_*}} = A < +\infty. \tag{12}$$

And define

$$r_k := \left( \frac{\sigma_k}{\sum_{i=1}^n (Cp_i)^{\frac{1}{p_i}}} \right)^{p_*}.$$

Let  $w = (w_1, \dots, w_n) \in \Phi^{-1}(]-\infty, r_k])$ , from (6), one has

$$\sum_{i=1}^n \frac{1}{p_i} |w_i(x)|^{p_i} < Cr_k, \text{ for all } x \in \Omega.$$

Then

$$|w_i(x)| \leq (Cr_k p_i)^{\frac{1}{p_i}} \text{ for } i = 1, \dots, n,$$

thus, for each  $k \in \mathbb{N}$  large enough ( $r_k > 1$ ),

$$\begin{aligned} \sum_{i=1}^n |w_i(x)| &\leq (Cr_k p_i)^{\frac{1}{p_i}} \\ &\leq \sum_{i=1}^n (Cp_i)^{\frac{1}{p_i}} r_k^{\frac{1}{p_*}} = \sigma_k. \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \varphi(r_k) &\leq \frac{\sup_{\{u \in X: \sum_{i=1}^n |w_i(x)| < \sigma_k, \text{ for all } x \in \Omega\}} \int_{\Omega} F(x, w_1, \dots, w_n) dx}{\left( \frac{\sigma_k}{\sum_{i=1}^n (Cp_i)^{\frac{1}{p_i}}} \right)^{p_*}} \\ &\leq \left( \sum_{i=1}^n (Cp_i)^{\frac{1}{p_i}} \right)^{p_*} \frac{\int_{\Omega} \sup_{\sum_{i=1}^n |\tau_i| \leq \sigma_k} F(x, \tau_1, \dots, \tau_n) dx}{\sigma_k^{p_*}}. \end{aligned} \tag{13}$$

Define  $\kappa := \liminf_{r \rightarrow +\infty} \varphi(r)$ , so from (12) and (13), one has

$$\begin{aligned} \kappa &\leq \liminf_{k \rightarrow +\infty} \varphi(r_k) \\ &\leq \left( \sum_{i=1}^n (Cp_i)^{\frac{1}{p_i}} \right)^{p_*} \frac{\int_{\Omega} \sup_{\sum_{i=1}^n |\tau_i| \leq \sigma_k} F(x, \tau_1, \dots, \tau_n) dx}{\sigma_k^{p_*}} \\ &= A \left( \sum_{i=1}^n (Cp_i)^{\frac{1}{p_i}} \right)^{p_*} < +\infty. \end{aligned}$$

On the other hand, we know that

$$\kappa \leq \left( \sum_{i=1}^n (Cp_i)^{\frac{1}{p_i}} \right)^{p_*} A < \frac{1}{\mu}, \tag{14}$$

then  $\mathcal{M} \subseteq ]0, \frac{1}{\kappa}[$ . For  $\mu \in \mathcal{M}$ , since  $\frac{1}{\mu} < \left( \sum_{i=1}^n (Cp_i)^{\frac{1}{p_i}} \right)^{p_*} \eta B$ , the functional  $I_{\mu} = \Phi - \mu\Psi$  is unbounded from below. So, we can consider a sequence  $\{\alpha_k\}$  of positive numbers and  $\delta > 0$  such that  $\alpha_k \rightarrow +\infty$  as  $k \rightarrow \infty$  and

$$\frac{1}{\mu} < \frac{\delta}{\hat{c}_*} < \eta \frac{\int_{B(x_0, R_1)} F(x, \alpha_k, \dots, \alpha_k) dx}{\sum_{i=1}^n \frac{\alpha_k^{p_i}}{p_i}}, \tag{15}$$

for  $k$  large enough, where  $\hat{c}_*$  is as in (2). Let

$$w_k(x) := \begin{cases} 0 & x \in \bar{\Omega} \setminus B(x_0, R_2), \\ \frac{\alpha_k}{R_2 - R_1} \left( R_2 - \left\{ \sum_{i=1}^n (x^i - x_0^i)^2 \right\}^{\frac{1}{2}} \right) & x \in B(x_0, R_2) \setminus B(x_0, R_1), \\ \alpha_k & x \in B(x_0, R_1). \end{cases} \tag{16}$$

Then  $(w_k, \dots, w_k) \in \mathcal{X}$  and for each  $1 \leq i \leq n$  we have

$$\|w_k\|_{X_i}^{p_i} = \frac{\pi^{\frac{N}{2}}}{\Gamma(1 + \frac{N}{2})} \left( \frac{2N\alpha_k}{R_2^2 - R_1^2} \right)^{p_i} (R_2^N - R_1^N),$$

see more details in [13]. In accordance with (2) one has

$$\|w_k\|_{X_i} \leq \|w_k\|_{p_i} \leq \hat{c}_* \|w_k\|_{X_i}.$$

Bearing (8) and (4) in mind, we deduce

$$\begin{aligned} \Phi(w_k, \dots, w_k) &= \int_{\Omega} \sum_{i=1}^n \frac{1}{p_i} \left( |\Delta w_k(x)|^{p_i} + \mu_i(x) |\nabla w_k(x)|^{p_i} \right) dx \\ &= \sum_{i=1}^n \frac{1}{p_i} \|w_k\|_{p_i}^{p_i} \\ &\leq \frac{\hat{c}_*}{\left( \sum_{i=1}^n (Cp_i)^{\frac{1}{p_i}} \right)^{p_*}} \sum_{i=1}^n \frac{1}{p_i} \frac{\alpha_k^{p_i}}{\eta_{p_i}}. \end{aligned} \tag{17}$$

On the other hand, according to our assumptions

$$\Psi(w_k, \dots, w_k) = \int_{\Omega} F(x, w_k, \dots, w_k) dx \geq \int_{B(x_0, R_1)} F(x, \alpha_k, \dots, \alpha_k) dx. \tag{18}$$

So, it follows from (15), (17) and (18) that

$$\begin{aligned} I_{\mu}(w_k, \dots, w_k) &= \Phi(w_k, \dots, w_k) - \mu \Psi(w_k, \dots, w_k) \\ &\leq \frac{\hat{c}_*}{\left( \sum_{i=1}^n (Cp_i)^{\frac{1}{p_i}} \right)^{p_*}} \sum_{i=1}^n \frac{1}{p_i} \frac{\alpha_k^{p_i}}{\eta_{p_i}} - \mu \int_{B(x_0, R_1)} F(x, \alpha_k, \dots, \alpha_k) dx \\ &< \frac{\hat{c}_* - \mu \delta}{\delta \left( \sum_{i=1}^n (Cp_i)^{\frac{1}{p_i}} \right)^{p_*}} \left( \sum_{i=1}^n \frac{1}{p_i} \frac{\alpha_k^{p_i}}{\eta_{p_i}} \right), \end{aligned} \tag{19}$$

for  $k$  large enough, so  $\lim_{k \rightarrow +\infty} I_{\mu}(w_k, \dots, w_k) = -\infty$ , and hence the claim has been archived.

The alternative of Theorem 1.1 case (a) assures the existence of unbounded sequence  $\{w_k\}$  of critical points of the functional  $I_{\mu}$ . This completes the proof in view of the relation between the critical points of  $I_{\mu}$  and the weak solutions of problem (1).  $\square$

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