# MULTIPLE SOLUTIONS FOR A BI-NONLOCAL ELLIPTIC PROBLEM INVOLVING p(x)-BIHARMONIC OPERATOR

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Communicated by Amjad Tufaha

MSC 2010 Classifications: 05C50; 05C82; 05C90.

 $Keywords \ and \ phrases: \ Bi-nonlocal \ elliptic \ problem, \ p(x)-Biharmonic \ operator, \ Variational \ method, \ Mountain \ theorem, \ Krasnoselskii's \ genus, (PS) \ condition.$ 

**Abstract** In this work, we study bi-nonlocal elliptic problem involving p(x)-Biharmonic operator. By applying variational method and under the adequate conditions, we prove the existence of nontrivial weak solutions of our problem.

# 1 Introduction and main result

In this paper, we are interested in the existence of weak solutions for the following fourth order elliptic equations of Kirchhoff type,

$$\begin{pmatrix}
M\left(\int_{\Omega} \frac{1}{p(x)} |\Delta u|^{p(x)}\right) \Delta_{p(x)}^{2} u = \lambda f(x, u) \left[\int_{\Omega} F(x, u)\right]^{r} & \text{in } \Omega, \\
\Delta u = u = 0 & \text{on } \partial\Omega,
\end{cases}$$
(1.1)

where  $\Omega \subset \mathbb{R}^N \ (N > 1)$  is bounded smooth domain,  $f : \overline{\Omega} \times \mathbb{R} \to \mathbb{R}$  and  $M : \mathbb{R}^+ \to \mathbb{R}^+$  are continuous functions satisfying conditions which will be stated later.  $F(x, u) = \int_0^u f(x, s) ds$ ,  $\lambda \in \mathbb{R}, r > 0$  is real parameter.

The study of differential equations and variational problems involving non-local operators have received more and more interest in the last few years, which arises from optimization, finance, continuum mechanics, phase transition phenomena, population dynamics, and game theory, see [2],[3],[4],[11],[14],[15],[16],[17].

Moreover, problem (1.1) involving p(x)-Laplacian operator was initially motivated by Corréa and Augusto Cézar [2],[3]. In [2], when  $q^+(r+1) < p^-$  and by Genus theory, the authors proved that the energy functional associated to problem (1.1) has infinitly many solutions. In the [3], when  $f(x, u) = |u|^{q(x)-2}u$  in problem (1.1) by using variational methods, they showed the existence of positive solutions for any positive  $\lambda$ .

Recently, F.jaafri, A. Ayoujil and M. Berrajaa in [1], proved the existence of multiple solutions for the following fourth order elliptic equations of Kirchhoff type, with an additional nonlocal term,

$$\begin{cases} M\left(\int_{\Omega} \frac{1}{p(x)} |\Delta u|^{p(x)}\right) \Delta_{p(x)}^{2} u = \lambda |u|^{q(x)-2} u \left[\int_{\Omega} |u|^{q(x)}\right]^{r} & \text{in } \Omega, \\ \Delta u = u = 0 & \text{on } \partial\Omega, \end{cases}$$
(1.2)

In the sequel, this paper is a generalization of the above mentioned paper [1]. More precisely, we treat our problem (1.1) when  $q^+(r+1) > \alpha^-(r+1) > p^+ > p^-$ , using the mountain pass theorem, and when the nonlinear term f(x, u) verifies the type of Ambrosetti-Rabinowitz condition which ensures the boundness of the Palais-Smale. In addition to other suitable conditions,

we will show the existence of a weak nontrivial solution. Note that, this case is different from the one in [2].

We assume the following hypotheses M and f there are positive constants  $m_0, m_1, A_1, A_2$  and functions  $\alpha(x), q(x) \in C_+(\overline{\Omega}) = \{h : h \in C(\overline{\Omega}); h(x) > 1, \forall x \in \overline{\Omega}\}$ , such that

$$(M1) \quad m_0 \le M(t) \le m_1.$$

 $(f_1) \quad A_1 t^{\alpha(x)-1} \le f(x,t) \le A_2 t^{q(x)-1}, \quad \forall x \in \overline{\Omega}, \quad \alpha(x) \le q(x).$ 

(f<sub>2</sub>) there exists  $\theta > \frac{m_1}{m_0}$  such that  $0 < \theta F(x,s) < (r+1)f(x,s)s$ , for all  $s > 0, x \in \Omega$ .

$$(f_3)$$
  $f(x,t) = -f(x,-t), \quad \forall (x,t) \in (\Omega,\mathbb{R}).$ 

Hereafter, let

$$p^*(x) = \begin{cases} \frac{Np(x)}{N-2p(x)} & \text{if } p(x) < \frac{N}{2} \\ +\infty & \text{if } p(x) \ge \frac{N}{2}. \end{cases}$$

Now we can present our main results.

**Theorem 1.1.** Suppose  $p(x) < q(x) < p^*(x)$  for all  $x \in \overline{\Omega}$  and  $\alpha^-(r+1) > p^+$ . Then for any  $\lambda > 0$ , with (M1), (f1) and (f2) satisfied, problem (1.1) has nontrivial solution.

**Theorem 1.2.** Suppose  $p(x) < q(x) < p^*(x)$  for all  $x \in \overline{\Omega}$  and  $p^- > q^+(r+1)$ . Then for any  $\lambda > 0$ , with (M1), (f1) and (f3) satisfied, problem (1.1) has infinitely many solutions.

**Remark 1.3.** Hypothesis (f2) is type of Ambrosetti-Rabinowitz condition (see [12]). Moreover, condition (f2) ensures that the Euler-Lagrange functional associated with problem (1.1) possesses the geometry of Mountain Pass theorem and it also guarantees the boundedness of the Palais-Smale sequence corresponding to the Euler-Lagrange's functional.

Problem in the form (1.1), are associated with the energy functional.

$$J_{\lambda}(u) = \tilde{M}\left(\int_{\Omega} \frac{1}{p(x)} |\Delta u|^{p(x)} dx\right) - \frac{\lambda}{r+1} \left[\int_{\Omega} F(x, u) dx\right]^{r+1},$$

for all  $u \in X = \{u \in W^{2,p(x)}(\Omega) : u = 0 \text{ and } \Delta u = 0 \text{ in } \partial \Omega\}$ , more precise estimates concerning this space will be established in Section 2 and  $\tilde{M}(t) = \int_0^t M(s) ds$ .

The functional  $J_{\lambda}$  is differentiable and its Fréchet-derivative is given by

$$J_{\lambda}'(u)(v) = M\left(\int_{\Omega} \frac{1}{p(x)} |\Delta u|^{p(x)} dx\right) \int_{\Omega} |\Delta u|^{p(x)-2} \Delta u \Delta v dx - \lambda \left[\int_{\Omega} F(x,u) dx\right]^{r} \int_{\Omega} f(x,u) uv dx$$

for all  $u, v \in X$ .

Thus, the weak solution of problem (1.1), coincides with the critical point of  $J_{\lambda}$ .

This paper is organized as follows: In section 2, we present some preliminaries on the variable exponent spaces. In section 3, we give the proof of our main results.

# 2 Preliminaries

We start with some preliminary basic results for the variable exponent Lebesgue-Sobolev spaces. For details, see [7],[8]. Define

$$\forall h \in C_+(\overline{\Omega}), h^- = \min_{x \in \overline{\Omega}} h(x) \le h^+ = \max_{x \in \overline{\Omega}} h(x).$$

For  $p \in C_+(\overline{\Omega})$ , we define the variable exponent Lebesgue space

$$L^{p(x)}(\Omega) = \left\{ u : \Omega \to \mathbb{R} \ mesurable; \int_{\Omega} |u(x)|^{p(x)} dx < \infty 
ight\},$$

with the norm

$$u|_{p(x)} = \inf \left\{ \mu > 0 : \int_{\Omega} \left| \frac{u}{\mu} \right|^{p(x)} dx \le 1 \right\},$$

and it is a separable and reflexive Banach space.

**Proposition 2.1.** ([7]) For  $u \in L^{p(x)}(\Omega)$  and  $v \in L^{q(x)}(\Omega)$ , we have

$$\left|\int_{\Omega} uvdx\right| \le \left(\frac{1}{p^-} + \frac{1}{q^-}\right)|u|_{p(x)}|v|_{q(x)}$$

where  $\frac{1}{p(x)} + \frac{1}{q(x)} = 1$ .

**Proposition 2.2.** ([7]) Let  $\rho(u) = \int_{\Omega} |u|^{p(x)} dx$ . For  $u, u_n \in L^{p(x)}(\Omega)$ , we have

- $I. \ |u|_{p(x)} < 1 \ (\textit{resp} = 1, > 1) \Leftrightarrow \rho(u) < 1 \ (\textit{resp} = 1, > 1).$
- 2.  $\min(|u|_{p(x)}^{p^-}, |u|_{p(x)}^{p^+}) \leq \rho(u) \leq \max(|u|_{p(x)}^{p^-}, |u|_{p(x)}^{p^+}).$
- 3.  $|u_n(x)|_{p(x)} \to 0 \ (resp \to \infty) \Leftrightarrow \rho(u_n) \to 0 \ (resp \to \infty).$

Define the variable exponent Sobolev space, for any positive integer k, set

$$W^{k,p(x)}(\mathbf{\Omega}) = \left\{ u \in L^{p(x)}(\mathbf{\Omega}) : D^{\alpha}u \in L^{p(x)}(\mathbf{\Omega}), |\alpha| \le k \right\},$$

where  $\alpha = (\alpha_1, \alpha_2, ..., \alpha_N)$  is a multi-index,  $|\alpha| = \sum_{i=1}^N \alpha_i$  and  $D^{\alpha}u = \frac{\partial^{|\alpha|}u}{\partial x_1^{\alpha_1} \dots \partial x_N^{\alpha_N}}$ , with the norm

$$||u||_{k,p(x)} = \sum_{|\alpha| \le k} |D^{\alpha}u|_{p(x)}$$

Then,  $W^{k,p(x)}(\Omega)$  also becomes a separable, reflexive and Banach space. We denote by  $W_0^{k,p(x)}(\Omega)$  the closure of  $C_0^{\infty}(\Omega)$  in  $W^{k,p(x)}(\Omega)$ .

Define  $||u||_X = |u|_{p(x)} + |\nabla u|_{p(x)} + \sum_{|\alpha|=2} |D^{\alpha}u|_{p(x)} \forall u \in X$ , the norm associad with the space X, which is equivalent to the norm  $|\Delta u(x)|_{p(x)}$  (see [18]).

Let us choose on X the norm defined by

$$\|u\| = |\Delta u(x)|_{p(x)}.$$

Note that  $(X, \|.\|)$  is also a separable and reflexive Banach space. Similar to Proposition 2.1, we have the following proposition:

**Proposition 2.3.** [13] Let  $I(u) = \int_{\Omega} |\Delta u|^{p(x)} dx$ . For  $u, u_n \in L^{p(x)}(\Omega)$ , we have

- $I. \ \|u\| < 1 \ (\textit{resp} = 1, > 1) \Leftrightarrow I(u) < 1 \ (\textit{resp} = 1, > 1).$
- 2.  $min(||u||^{p^-}, ||u||^{p^+}) \leq I(u) \leq max(||u||^{p^-}, ||u||^{p^+}).$
- 3.  $||u_n u|| \to 0 \Leftrightarrow I(u_n u) \to 0.$

**Remark 2.4.** Let  $h \in C_+(\overline{\Omega})$  and  $h(x) < p^*(x)$  for any  $x \in \overline{\Omega}$ . Then, by ([13], Theorem 3.2), we deduce that X, is continuously and compactly embedded in  $L^{h(x)}(\Omega)$ .

### **3** Proofs

## 3.1 **Proof of Theorem 1.1**

We apply the Mountain Pass Theorem,

$$J_{\lambda}(u) = \tilde{M}\left(\int_{\Omega} \frac{1}{p(x)} |\Delta u|^{p(x)} dx\right) - \frac{\lambda}{r+1} \left[\int_{\Omega} F(x, u) dx\right]^{r+1}$$
  
$$\geq \frac{m_0}{p^+} \int_{\Omega} |\Delta u|^{p(x)} dx - \frac{\lambda}{r+1} \left(\frac{A_2}{q^-}\right)^{r+1} \left[\int_{\Omega} |u|^{q(x)} dx\right]^{r+1},$$

||u|| is small enough, such that  $||u|| = \rho \in (0, 1)$ ,

$$J_{\lambda}(u) \geq \frac{m_{0}}{p^{+}}\rho^{p^{+}} - \frac{\lambda}{r+1} \left(\frac{A_{2}}{q^{-}}\right)^{r+1} C\rho^{q^{-}(r+1)}$$
$$= \rho^{p^{+}} \left[\frac{m_{0}}{p^{+}} - \frac{\lambda}{r+1} \left(\frac{A_{2}}{q^{-}}\right)^{r+1} C\rho^{q^{-}(r+1)-p^{+}}\right].$$

Since  $q^{-}(r+1) > \alpha^{-}(r+1) > p^{+}$ , we find positive  $a, \rho$  such that

$$J_{\lambda}(u) \ge a > 0$$

for any  $u \in X$  with  $||u|| = \rho$ .

Now we choose  $\phi \in X$ ,  $\phi > 0$ . For t > 1, we have

$$J_{\lambda}(t\phi) \leq \frac{m_1}{p^-} t^{p^+} \int_{\Omega} |\Delta\phi|^{p(x)} dx - \frac{\lambda}{r+1} \left(\frac{A_1}{\alpha^+}\right)^{r+1} t^{\alpha^-(r+1)} \left[\int_{\Omega} |\phi|^{\alpha(x)} dx\right]^{r+1}.$$

Using the fact that  $\alpha^-(r+1) > p^+$ , we obtain  $J_{\lambda}(t\phi) \to -\infty$  as  $t \to +\infty$ . It follows  $J_{\lambda}$  satisfies the geometry of The Mountain Pass Theorem.

Now to complete the proof, we show that  $J_{\lambda}$  satisfies the (PS) condition. For all sequence  $(u_n) \subset X$  such that

$$J_{\lambda}(u_n) \to c \text{ and } J'_{\lambda}(u_n) \to 0.$$
 (3.1)

From (3.1), (M1) and  $(f_2)$ , we have

$$\begin{aligned} c+1+\|u_n\| &\geq J_{\lambda}(u_n) - \frac{1}{\theta} J_{\lambda}'(u_n) u_n \\ &\geq \left(\frac{m_0}{p^+} - \frac{m_1}{\theta}\right) \int_{\Omega} \left|\Delta u_n\right|^{p(x)} dx \\ &+ \lambda \left[\int_{\Omega} F(x,u_n) dx\right]^r \left(\int_{\Omega} \frac{1}{\theta} f(x,u_n) u_n dx - \frac{1}{r+1} \int_{\Omega} F(x,u_n) dx\right) \\ &\geq \left(\frac{m_0}{p^+} - \frac{m_1}{\theta}\right) \|u_n\|^{p^-}, \end{aligned}$$

which is contradiction because  $p^- > 1$ . Hence  $\{u_n\}$  is bounded in X. By the reflexity of X, for a subsequence still denoted  $(u_n)$ , such that  $u_n \rightharpoonup u$  in X.

From

$$J'_{\lambda}(u_n) \to 0$$

we have

$$J'_{\lambda}(u_n)(u_n - u) = M\left(\int_{\Omega} \frac{1}{p(x)} |\Delta u_n|^{p(x)} dx\right) \int_{\Omega} |\Delta u_n|^{p(x) - 2} \Delta u_n \Delta (u_n - u) dx$$
$$- \lambda \left[\int_{\Omega} F(x, u_n) dx\right]^r \int_{\Omega} f(x, u_n)(u_n - u) v dx \to 0$$

By the Hölder inequality, we obtain

$$\begin{aligned} \left| \int_{\Omega} f(x, u_n)(u_n - u) dx \right| &\leq A_2 \int_{\Omega} |u_n|^{q(x) - 1} |u_n - u| dx \\ &\leq C' \left| |u_n|^{q(x) - 1} \right|_{\frac{q(x)}{q(x) - 1}} |u_n - u|_{q(x)} \end{aligned}$$

Since  $q(x) < p^*(x)$  for all  $x \in \overline{\Omega}$ , we deduce that X is compactly embedded in  $L^{q(x)}$ , hence  $(u_n)$  converges strongly to u in  $L^{q(x)}$ , then

$$\int_{\Omega} f(x, u_n)(u_n - u)dx \to 0.$$

From the definition of f and when  $(u_n)$  is bounded, there exist nonnegative constants C'' and C''' such that

$$C'' \le \left[A_1 \int_{\Omega} \frac{1}{\alpha(x)} |u_n|^{\alpha(x)} dx\right]^r \le \left[\int_{\Omega} F(x, u_n) dx\right]^r \le \left[A_2 \int_{\Omega} \frac{1}{q(x)} |u_n|^{q(x)} dx\right]^r \le C'''$$

we obtain

$$\left[\int_{\Omega} F(x, u_n) dx\right]^r \int_{\Omega} f(x, u_n) (u_n - u) dx \to 0.$$

From M1, we have also

$$L_{p(x)}(u_n)(u_n-u) = \int_{\Omega} |\Delta u_n|^{p(x)-2} \Delta u_n \Delta (u_n-u) dx \to 0.$$

By the Proposition 2.5(ii) in [5],  $L_{p(x)}$  satisfies condition  $S_+$ , we have  $u_n \to u$  in X. Hence  $J_{\lambda}$  satisfies the (PS) condition.

We denote that Proof of Theorem 1.2 is similar of [2].

### 3.2 Proof of Theorem 1.2

By  $(f_3)$  we know that  $J_{\lambda}$  is even, next we will prove the two important lemmas for our proof.

**Lemma 3.1.**  $J_{\lambda}$  is bounded from below.

*Proof.* From (M1) and  $(f_1)$ , we have

$$J_{\lambda}(u) = \tilde{M}\left(\int_{\Omega} \frac{1}{p(x)} |\Delta u|^{p(x)} dx\right) - \frac{\lambda}{r+1} \left[\int_{\Omega} F(x,u) dx\right]^{r+1}$$
  
$$\geq \frac{m_0}{p^+} \int_{\Omega} |\Delta u|^{p(x)} dx - \frac{\lambda}{r+1} \left(\frac{A_2}{q^-}\right)^{r+1} \left[\int_{\Omega} |u|^{q(x)} dx\right]^{r+1}$$

Taking  $||u|| \ge 1$ , we have

$$J_{\lambda}(u) \ge \frac{m_0}{p^+} \|u\|^{p^-} - \frac{\lambda}{r+1} \left(\frac{A_2}{q^-}\right)^{r+1} c' \|u\|^{q^+(r+1)}$$

So  $J_{\lambda}$  is bounded from below, because  $p^- > q^+(r+1)$  and the lemma is proved.

**Lemma 3.2.**  $J_{\lambda}$  satisfies the (*PS*) condition.

*Proof.* Let  $(u_n)$  has a convergent subsequence in X, such that

$$J_{\lambda}(u_n) \to d$$
 and  $J'_{\lambda}(u_n) \to 0$ ,

Then, by the ceorcivity of  $J_{\lambda}$ , the sequence  $(u_n)$  is bounded in X. By the reflexity of X, for a subsequence still denoted  $(u_n)$ , such that  $u_n \rightharpoonup u$  in X. Similar to proof of theorem 1.1 we deduce that  $u_n \rightarrow u$  in X.

In the sequel, for each  $k \in \mathbb{N}$  consider  $X_k = span\{e_1, e_2, e_3, \dots, e_k\}$ , the subspace of X (see Theorem 4.1 in [2]). Note that  $X_k \hookrightarrow L^{\alpha(x)}(\Omega)$ ,  $1 < \alpha(x) < p^*(x)$  with continuous immersions. Thus, the norm X,  $L^{\alpha(x)}(\Omega)$  are equivalent on  $X_k$ .

Note that using (M1) and  $(f_1)$ , we obtain

$$J_{\lambda}(u) \leq \frac{m_1}{p^-} \left( \int_{\Omega} |\Delta u|^{p(x)} \right) - \frac{\lambda}{r+1} \left( \frac{A_1}{\alpha^+} \right)^{r+1} \left( \int_{\Omega} |u|^{\alpha(x)} \right)^{r+1}$$
$$\leq \frac{m_1}{p^-} \|u\|^{p^-} - \frac{\lambda}{r+1} \left( \frac{A_1}{\alpha^+} \right)^{r+1} C(k) \|u\|^{\alpha^+(r+1)}$$

where C(k) is a positive constant and ||u|| is small enough. Hence,

$$J_{\lambda}(u) \le \|u\|^{\alpha^{+}(r+1)} \left[ \frac{m_{1}}{p^{-}} \|u\|^{p^{-}-\alpha^{+}(r+1)} - \frac{\lambda}{r+1} \left( \frac{A_{1}}{\alpha^{+}} \right)^{r+1} C(k) \right].$$

Let R be a positive constant such that

$$\frac{m_1}{p^-} R^{p^- - \alpha^+} \le \frac{\lambda}{r+1} \left(\frac{A_1}{\alpha^+}\right)^{r+1} C(k).$$

Thus, for all  $0 < r_0 < R$ , and considering  $K = \{u \in X : ||u|| = r_0\}$ , we obtain

$$J_{\lambda}(u) \leq r_{0}^{\alpha^{+}(r+1)} \left[ \frac{m_{1}}{p^{-}} r_{0}^{p^{-}-\alpha^{+}(r+1)} - \frac{\lambda}{r+1} \left( \frac{A_{1}}{\alpha^{+}} \right)^{r+1} C(k) \right]$$
  
$$< R^{\alpha^{+}(r+1)} \left[ \frac{m_{1}}{p^{-}} R^{p^{-}-\alpha^{+}(r+1)} - \frac{\lambda}{r+1} \left( \frac{A_{1}}{\alpha^{+}} \right)^{r+1} C(k) \right] < 0 = J_{\lambda}(0).$$

Which implies

$$\sup_{K} J_{\lambda}(u) < 0 = J_{\lambda}(0).$$

Because  $X_k$  and  $\mathbb{R}^k$  are isomorphic and K and  $S^{k-1}$  are homeomorphic, we conclude that  $\gamma(K) = k$ . By the Clark theorem,  $J_{\lambda}$  has at least k different critical points. Because k is arbitrary, we obtain infinitely many critical points of  $J_{\lambda}$ .

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Received: August 27, 2021. Accepted: December 23, 2021.