

Monday's Nonstandard Seminar 2020/21

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On the validity of variational inequalities for obstacle problems
with non-standard growth

Monday February 15th, 2021

Outline of the seminar

The aim of the seminar is to show that the solutions to variational problems with **non-standard growth conditions** satisfy a corresponding **variational inequality** without any smallness assumptions on the gap between growth and coercitivity exponents

Our results rely on techniques based on **Convex Analysis** that consist in establishing **duality formulas** and **pointwise relations** between minimizers and corresponding dual maximizers, for suitable approximating problems, that are preserved passing to the limit

In this respect we are able to show that **the right class of competitors are the functions with finite energy** in agreement with the unconstrained results

Joint project with Prof. A. Passarelli di Napoli ¹

¹M. E., A. Passarelli di Napoli, preprint arXiv:2010.02964 (2020)

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- The model problem
- Statement of the main results
- Dual formulation of the obstacle problem
- Proof of the main result

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More than 30 years ago, the celebrated papers by Marcellini ² opened the way to the study of the regularity properties of minimizers of integral functionals with **non-standard growth conditions**

Since then, many contributions appeared in several directions and many problems have been solved; however not all the questions have been addressed in an exhaustive way, in particular for what concerns the **obstacle problems**

It is well known that, for both constrained and unconstrained minimization problems, the regularity of the solutions often comes from the fact that they are also extremals, i.e. they solve a corresponding **variational inequality or equality**

² P. Marcellini: *Regularity of minimizers of integrals of the calculus of variations with nonstandard growth conditions*, Arch. Ration. Mech. Anal., **105** (1989), no. 3, 267–284

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Actually, in the recent paper ³ the authors, concerning the question of Lipschitz continuity for minimizers of the obstacle problem, were forced to deal with **the relation between minima and extremals**, in the sense of solutions to a corresponding variational inequality

In that specific situation, this problem has been solved due to a suitable **higher differentiability result** and imposing a smallness condition on the gap between the coercivity and the growth exponent of the lagrangian

We decided to deal with the question in the full generality

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The unconstrained case

Already for **unconstrained minimizers** with non-standard growth, the relation between extremals and minima is an issue that required a careful investigation

Indeed, a direct derivation of such a relation can be obtained in a trivial way only if the gap between the growth and the ellipticity exponent satisfies a suitable smallness condition.

Otherwise, using a regularization procedure and convex duality theory, much stronger results have been obtained by Carozza, Kristensen and Passarelli di Napoli for unconstrained minimizers ⁴

As far as we know, such investigation has not been carried out for constrained minimizers

We aim to find conditions so that **the solutions to variational obstacle problems with non standard growth conditions satisfy a corresponding variational inequality**

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The model problem

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More precisely, let us consider a class to variational obstacle problems of the form

$$\min \left\{ \int_{\Omega} F(Dz) : z \in \mathbb{K}_{\psi}^F(\Omega) \right\},$$

where Ω is a bounded open set of \mathbb{R}^n , $n \geq 2$

The function $\psi : \Omega \rightarrow [-\infty, +\infty)$, called *obstacle*, is such that

$$F(D\psi) \in L^1(\Omega)$$

and the class $\mathbb{K}_{\psi}^F(\Omega)$ is defined as

$$\mathbb{K}_{\psi}^F(\Omega) := \{z \in u_0 + W_0^{1,p}(\Omega) : z \geq \psi \text{ a.e. in } \Omega, F(Dz) \in L^1(\Omega)\},$$

where u_0 is a fixed boundary value such that

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The assumptions

We shall consider integrands $F : \mathbb{R}^n \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ of class \mathcal{C}^1 and satisfying the following **growth** and **strict convexity** assumptions:

$$\ell|\xi|^p \leq F(\xi) \leq L(1 + |\xi|^q) \quad (\text{H1})$$

$$\nu |V_p(\xi) - V_p(\eta)|^2 \leq F(\xi) - F(\eta) - \langle F'(\eta), \xi - \eta \rangle \quad (\text{H2})$$

for all $\xi, \eta \in \mathbb{R}^n$, for $0 < \ell < L$, $\nu > 0$ and $1 < p \leq q < \infty$ and where we used the customary notation

$$V_p(\xi) = (1 + |\xi|^2)^{\frac{p-2}{4}} \xi.$$

To simplify the statement of our main result, we shall assume that the integrand F satisfies a **sort of Δ_2 condition**, i.e.

$$F(\lambda \xi) \leq C(\lambda) F(\xi) \quad (\text{H3}),$$

for every real positive $\lambda > 1$ and every $\xi \in \mathbb{R}^n$

Actually, without (H3), our result holds true supposing that $F(cDu_0) \in L^1(\Omega)$, for some constant $c > 1$

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A remark

Let us notice that, by replacing u_0 by $\tilde{u}_0 = \max\{u_0, \psi\}$, we may assume, without loss of generality, that the boundary value function u_0 is such that $u_0 \in \mathbb{K}_\psi^F(\Omega)$

Indeed $\tilde{u}_0 = (\psi - u_0)^+ + u_0$ so $\tilde{u}_0 \geq \psi$

Moreover, since

$$0 \leq (\psi - u_0)^+ \leq (u - u_0)^+ \in W_0^{1,p}(\Omega),$$

the function $(\psi - u_0)^+$, and hence $u - \tilde{u}_0$, belongs to $W_0^{1,p}(\Omega)$

Finally our assumptions on u_0 and ψ imply $F(D\tilde{u}_0) \in L^1(\Omega)$. Indeed

$$\begin{aligned} \int_{\Omega} F(D\tilde{u}_0) dx &= \int_{\Omega \cap \{u_0 \geq \psi\}} F(Du_0) dx + \int_{\Omega \cap \{u_0 < \psi\}} F(D\psi) dx \\ &\leq \int_{\Omega} (F(Du_0) + F(D\psi)) dx < +\infty, \end{aligned}$$

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The case of standard growth conditions

It is worth mentioning that if G is a C^1 function satisfying (H1) (growth) and (H2) (strict convexity) with $\boxed{p=q}$, i.e. G satisfies **standard p -growth conditions**, the minimization problem reduces to

$$\min \left\{ \int_{\Omega} G(Dz) : z \in \mathcal{K}_{\psi}(\Omega) \right\},$$

where

$$\mathcal{K}_{\psi}(\Omega) := \{z \in u_0 + W_0^{1,p}(\Omega) : z \geq \psi \text{ a.e. in } \Omega\}$$

and the assumptions $F(D\psi), F(Du_0) \in L^1(\Omega)$ reduce in turn to $\psi, u_0 \in W^{1,p}(\Omega)$

In this case, because of the standard growth conditions, it is well known that, if $u \in u_0 + W_0^{1,p}(\Omega)$ is a solution to the minimization problem, then the corresponding **variational inequality**

$$\int_{\Omega} \langle G'(Du), Dz - Du \rangle dx \geq 0$$

holds true, for every $z \in \mathcal{K}_{\psi}(\Omega)$

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Assumptions

On the other hand, if $u \in \mathcal{K}_\psi(\Omega)$ and $\varphi \geq 0$, with $\varphi \in C_0^\infty(\Omega)$, then $u + \varphi \in \mathcal{K}_\psi(\Omega)$ and thus, if u is a solution to the minimization problem

$$\min \left\{ \int_{\Omega} G(Dz) : z \in \mathcal{K}_\psi(\Omega) \right\},$$

then also the following **inequality** holds

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Our **goal** is to show that the solutions to obstacle problems with non standard growth conditions solve the corresponding variational inequalities, *without any restriction on the gap* $\frac{q}{p}$

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$$\min \left\{ \int_{\Omega} G(Dz) : z \in \mathcal{K}_\psi(\Omega) \right\},$$

then also the following **inequality** holds

$$\int_{\Omega} \langle G'(Du), D\varphi \rangle dx \geq 0$$

for all $\varphi \in C_0^\infty(\Omega)$, $\varphi \geq 0$.

Our **goal** is to show that the solutions to obstacle problems with non standard growth conditions solve the corresponding variational inequalities, *without any restriction on the gap* $\frac{q}{p}$

Moreover we will show that **the right class of competitors are the functions with finite energy** and that, in case of standard growth conditions, this coincides with $\mathcal{K}_\psi(\Omega)$

Statement of the results

The main result

Theorem

Let $F : \mathbb{R}^n \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ be a C^1 function satisfying

$$\ell|\xi|^p \leq F(\xi) \leq L(1 + |\xi|^q) \quad (\text{H1})$$

$$\nu |V_p(\xi) - V_p(\eta)|^2 \leq F(\xi) - F(\eta) - \langle F'(\eta), \xi - \eta \rangle \quad (\text{H2})$$

$$F(\lambda \xi) \leq C(\lambda) F(\xi) \quad (\text{H3})$$

Assume moreover that

$$F(D\psi), F(u_0) \in L^1(\Omega)$$

Suppose finally that $u \in \mathbb{K}_\psi^F(\Omega)$ is the solution to the obstacle problem

$$\min \left\{ \int_{\Omega} F(Dz) : z \in \mathbb{K}_\psi^F(\Omega) \right\},$$

where

$$\mathbb{K}_\psi^F(\Omega) := \left\{ z \in u_0 + W_0^{1,p}(\Omega) : z \geq \psi \text{ a.e. in } \Omega, F(Dz) \in L^1(\Omega) \right\},$$

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Then

$$F^*(F'(Du)) \in L^1(\Omega) \quad \langle F'(Du), Du \rangle \in L^1(\Omega)$$

and

$$\operatorname{div} F'(Du) \leq 0$$

in the distributional sense

Moreover the following variational inequality

$$\int_{\Omega} \langle F'(Du), Dz - Du \rangle \geq 0$$

also holds for all $z \in \mathbb{K}_{\psi}^F(\Omega)$ such that $F(\pm Dz) \in L^1(\Omega)$

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A key example

It is worth noticing that, if there exists $f : [0, +\infty) \rightarrow [0, +\infty)$ such that

$$F(\xi) = f(|\xi|),$$

then assumption $F(\pm Dz) \in L^1(\Omega)$ is trivially satisfied

On the other hand, in order to have $F(\pm Dz) \in L^1(\Omega)$ satisfied for every $z \in \mathbb{K}_\psi^F(\Omega)$, it suffices to assume that $F(\xi) = F(-\xi)$

Under this assumption $F(\xi)$ needs not to depend on the length of ξ nor to be the sum of its components ξ_i

Indeed, an example of $F(\xi)$ satisfying our assumptions is ⁵

$$F(\xi) = |\xi_1 - \xi_2|^q + |\xi_1 + \xi_2|^p \log^\alpha(1 + |\xi_1|) \quad \xi \in \mathbb{R}^2,$$

with $2 \leq p \leq q$

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A regularity result

In case the gap $\frac{q}{p}$ satisfies a suitable **smallness assumption** and if the gradient of the obstacle $D\psi \in W_{loc}^{1,q}(\Omega)$, we are able to prove that the solution to problem

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solves the corresponding variational inequality *without any regularity on the boundary datum* u_0

Moreover, we can prove that **the solution to this minimization problem locally belongs to $W_{loc}^{1,q}(\Omega)$**

This result is particularly important in order to prevent the **Lavrentiev phenomenon** that may occur in the case of anisotropic growth conditions ⁶

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Moreover $u \in W^{1,q}_{loc}(\Omega)$

Note that in case ⁷

$$\frac{np}{n-1} \leq q < p^*$$

and $D\psi \in W^{1,q}_{loc}(\Omega)$, then u belongs to $W^{1,r}_{loc}(\Omega)$ for all $r < \bar{p}$ being

$$\bar{p} := \frac{np}{n - \frac{p}{p-1} \left(1 - n \left(\frac{1}{p} - \frac{1}{q} \right) \right)}$$

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A few words about the techniques

Let's mention a few words about the techniques employed

Our Lagrangian F is suitably approximated by strictly convex and uniformly elliptic integrands F_k

The minimizers of F_k , say u_k , strongly converge in $W^{1,p}$ to the minimizer u of original obstacle problem

To every such minimizer u_k we can associate the solutions of certain dual maximization problems in the sense of Convex Analysis, for divergence-measure fields

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These **duality formulas** and **pointwise relations** between **minimizers** and **dual maximizers** are preserved in passing to the limit

Such estimates will provide conditions in order for the variational inequality to hold for a constrained minimizer

The statement and the proofs of our results are the natural counterpart of those in the unconstrained setting

Our main tool is a suitable version of **Anzellotti type pairing**, involving general divergence-measure fields and specific representation of Sobolev functions (this reduces to integration by part formula once the correct summability is required on the fields involved)

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Dual formulation of the obstacle problem

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Let us establish the **dual formulation of obstacle problems with standard growth conditions**, extending classical ideas of Kohn and Temam and Anzellotti⁸

Given a convex continuous function $F : \mathbb{R}^n \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$, its polar (or Fenchel conjugate) is defined by

$$F^*(\zeta) := \sup_{\xi \in \mathbb{R}^n} (\langle \zeta, \xi \rangle - F(\xi)) \quad \forall \zeta \in \mathbb{R}^n. \quad (1)$$

The function $F^* : \mathbb{R}^n \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ is convex and, if F satisfies a p, q -growth condition, then F^* has q', p' -growth, i.e. there exist constants $c(L), c(\ell)$ such that

$$c(L)|\zeta|^{q'} \leq F^*(\zeta) \leq c(\ell)|\zeta|^{p'} \quad \forall \zeta \in \mathbb{R}^n.$$

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One can check that the bipolar integrand $F^{**} := (F^*)^*$ equals F at ξ if and only if F is lower semicontinuous and convex at ξ , as it is the case here

From the definition of polar function directly follows the Young-type (or Fenchel) inequality

$$\langle \zeta, \xi \rangle \leq F^*(\zeta) + F^{**}(\xi)$$

for all $\zeta, \xi \in \mathbb{R}^n$

Notice that, for a given ξ , we have equality in the Fenchel inequality precisely for $\zeta \in \partial F^{**}(\xi)$, the subgradient of F^{**} at ξ

In particular, when F is \mathcal{C}^1 , for every $\xi \in \mathbb{R}^n$, we have equality in the Fenchel inequality precisely for $\zeta = F'(\xi)$

Actually, it holds the following

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Now, we consider for any $p > 1$

$$S_-^{p'}(\Omega) = \{\sigma \in L^{p'}(\Omega) : \operatorname{div} \sigma \leq 0 \text{ in } \mathcal{D}'(\Omega)\},$$

where as usual $p' = \frac{p}{p-1}$ and, for $u_0 \in W^{1,p}(\Omega)$, $U \in L^p(\Omega)$ we introduce a measure $[[\sigma, DU]]_{u_0}$ on Ω by setting

$$[[\sigma, DU]]_{u_0} = \int_{\Omega} (U - u_0) d(-\operatorname{div} \sigma) + \int_{\Omega} \langle \sigma, Du_0 \rangle dx.$$

For $U \in u_0 + W_0^{1,p}(\Omega)$, the measure $[[\sigma, DU]]_{u_0}$ corresponds to the function $\langle \sigma, DU \rangle \in L^1(\Omega)$ as it follows from the well known integration by parts formula

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Dual formulation of the obstacle problem

Theorem

Let $G : \mathbb{R}^n \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ be a C^1 , strictly convex function satisfying

$$\ell_p (|\xi|^p - 1) \leq G(\xi) \leq L_p(1 + |\xi|^p),$$

for all $\xi \in \mathbb{R}^n$ and an exponent $p > 1$. Then

$$\min_{v \in \mathcal{K}_\psi(\Omega)} \int_{\Omega} G(Dv) dx = \max_{\sigma \in S_{-}'(\Omega)} \left(\llbracket \sigma, D\psi \rrbracket_{u_0} - \int_{\Omega} G^*(\sigma) dx \right)$$

where we recall that

$$\mathcal{K}_\psi(\Omega) := \{z \in u_0 + W_0^{1,p}(\Omega) : z \geq \psi \text{ a.e. in } \Omega\}$$

If moreover $u \in \mathcal{K}_\psi(\Omega)$ is the solution to

$$\min \left\{ \int_{\Omega} G(Dz) : z \in \mathcal{K}_\psi(\Omega) \right\},$$

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Dual formulation of the obstacle problem: idea of the proof

Step 1:

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- we use the fact that if $\sigma \in S_-^{p'}(\Omega)$ then $-\operatorname{div}\sigma$ is a non-negative Radon measure, so for every $v \in \mathcal{K}_\psi(\Omega)$

$$\int_{\Omega} (v - \psi) d(-\operatorname{div}\sigma) \geq 0$$

Step 2:

$$\min_{v \in \mathcal{K}_\psi(\Omega)} \int_{\Omega} G(Dv) dx \quad \boxed{\leq} \quad \max_{\sigma \in S_-^{p'}(\Omega)} \left(\llbracket \sigma, D\psi \rrbracket_{u_0} - \int_{\Omega} G^*(\sigma) dx \right)$$

- We use

$$G(Du) + G^*(G'(Du)) = \langle G'(Du), Du \rangle,$$

and exploit the fact that u solution to the minimization problem, satisfies the corresponding variational inequality

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Proof of the main result

The main result

Theorem

Let $F : \mathbb{R}^n \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ be a C^1 function satisfying

$$\ell|\xi|^p \leq F(\xi) \leq L(1 + |\xi|^q) \quad (\text{H1})$$

$$\nu |V_p(\xi) - V_p(\eta)|^2 \leq F(\xi) - F(\eta) - \langle F'(\eta), \xi - \eta \rangle \quad (\text{H2})$$

$$F(\lambda \xi) \leq C(\lambda) F(\xi) \quad (\text{H3})$$

Assume moreover that

$$F(D\psi), F(u_0) \in L^1(\Omega)$$

Suppose finally that $u \in \mathbb{K}_\psi^F(\Omega)$ is the solution to the obstacle problem

$$\min \left\{ \int_{\Omega} F(Dz) : z \in \mathbb{K}_\psi^F(\Omega) \right\},$$

where

$$\mathbb{K}_\psi^F(\Omega) := \{z \in u_0 + W_0^{1,p}(\Omega) : z \geq \psi \text{ a.e. in } \Omega, F(Dz) \in L^1(\Omega)\},$$

The main result

Theorem

Then

$$F^*(F'(Du)) \in L^1(\Omega) \quad \langle F'(Du), Du \rangle \in L^1(\Omega)$$

and

$$\operatorname{div} F'(Du) \leq 0$$

in the distributional sense

Moreover the following variational inequality

$$\int_{\Omega} \langle F'(Du), Dz - Du \rangle \geq 0$$

also holds for all $z \in \mathbb{K}_{\psi}^F(\Omega)$ such that $F(\pm Dz) \in L^1(\Omega)$

Strategy of the proof

Step 1: we construct a sequence of obstacle problems with standard growth condition for which the dual problem is given by the previous theorem

Step 2: we prove that the sequence of approximating minimizers converges to the solution to the original problem

Step 3: we prove that the sequence of dual maximizers converges to a field whose divergence is a non positive Radon measure

Step 4: we establish the validity of the variational inequality

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Step 1: approximation

Let F_k be the sequence of Lagrangians obtained applying a suitable approximation lemma to the integrand F and let $u_k \in \mathcal{K}_\psi(\Omega)$ be the solution to the obstacle problem

$$\min_{w \in \mathcal{K}_\psi(\Omega)} \int_{\Omega} F_k(Dw) \, dx$$

and let

$$\sigma_k := F'_k(Du_k) \in \mathcal{S}'_-(\Omega)$$

be the solution to the dual problem, i.e. σ_k is such that

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where F_k^* denotes the polar function of F_k . Then we have

$$\int_{\Omega} F_k(Du_k) \, dx = \llbracket \sigma_k, D\psi \rrbracket_{u_0} - \int_{\Omega} F_k^*(\sigma_k) \, dx$$

holds for all $k \in \mathbb{N}$ and

$$\int_{\Omega} \langle \sigma_k, D\varphi - Du_k \rangle \, dx \geq 0 \quad \forall \varphi \in \mathcal{K}_\psi(\Omega) \quad \text{and} \quad \forall k \in \mathbb{N}.$$

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Step 2: passage to the limit (minimizers)

Our next purpose is to prove that $u_k \rightarrow u$ strongly in $W^{1,p}(\Omega)$, where u is the solution to the obstacle problem to our original problem

To this aim we exploit:

- the growth condition on F_k , the minimality of u_k and the reflexivity of $W^{1,p}$ to show that u_k weakly converge to some v
- the fact that the set $\mathcal{K}_\psi(\Omega)$ is closed and convex to state that $v \in \mathcal{K}_\psi(\Omega)$
- the lower semicontinuity of some F_{k_0} , the monotonicity of F_k , the monotone convergence theorem to show that actually $v \in \mathbb{K}_\psi(\Omega)$
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Step 3: passage to the limit (dual maximizers)

At this point the assumptions given from the approximation lemma yield

$$\sigma_k = F'_k(Du_k) \rightarrow F'(Du) \quad \text{locally uniformly as } k \rightarrow \infty$$

It follows in particular that $F'_k(Du_k) \rightarrow F'(Du)$ in measure on Ω and so passing to the limit in the equality

$$\langle \sigma_k, Du_k \rangle = F_k^*(\sigma_k) + F_k(Du_k),$$

we recover, with $\sigma = F'(Du)$, the pointwise extremality relation

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Step 3: pointwise extremality relation

Once from the previous passage we established the pointwise extremality relation

$$\langle F'(Du), Du \rangle = F^*(F'(Du)) + F(Du)$$

we want to prove that $\langle F'(Du), Du \rangle \in L^1(\Omega)$ and $F^*(F'(Du)) \in L^1(\Omega)$

To this aim we derived the bound

$$\int_{\Omega} F^*(\sigma_k) dx \leq C \int_{\Omega} F(Du_0) dx$$

Since we already observed that $\sigma_k \rightarrow F'(Du)$ locally uniformly and $F^*(\sigma_k) \geq 0$ for every k , by **Fatou's lemma** and by previous estimate

$$\int_{\Omega} F^*(F'(Du)) dx \leq \liminf_{k \rightarrow +\infty} \int_{\Omega} F^*(\sigma_k) dx \leq C \int_{\Omega} F(Du_0) dx.$$

Thus

$$F^*(F'(Du)) \in L^1(\Omega).$$

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Step 3: the limit field is a non positive Radon measure

We prove that $\boxed{\operatorname{div} \sigma \leq 0}$ in the distributional sense

To this aim we exploit:

- the fact that in view of the (q', p') -growth of $F^*(\sigma)$ and of $F_k^*(\sigma_k)$ we are able to deduce a bound for the term $\int_{\Omega} |F'(Du)|^{q'} dx$ and thus the fact $\sigma_k \rightarrow \sigma$ a.e. up to a subsequence
- The minimality of u_k yields the validity of the following variational inequality

$$\int_{\Omega} \langle \sigma_k, D\eta \rangle dx \geq 0 \quad \text{for all } \eta \in C_0^\infty(\Omega), \eta \geq 0,$$

and so, by the weak convergence of σ_k to σ in $L^{q'}(\Omega)$, passing to the limit as $k \rightarrow \infty$ in previous inequality, also

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- the fact that in view of the (q', p') -growth of $F^*(\sigma)$ and of $F_k^*(\sigma_k)$ we are able to deduce a bound for the term $\int_{\Omega} |F'(Du)|^{q'} dx$ and thus the fact $\sigma_k \rightarrow \sigma$ a.e. up to a subsequence
- The minimality of u_k yields the validity of the following variational inequality

$$\int_{\Omega} \langle \sigma_k, D\eta \rangle dx \geq 0 \quad \text{for all } \eta \in C_0^\infty(\Omega), \eta \geq 0,$$

and so, by the weak convergence of σ_k to σ in $L^{q'}(\Omega)$, passing to the limit as $k \rightarrow \infty$ in previous inequality, also

$$\int_{\Omega} \langle \sigma, D\eta \rangle dx \geq 0 \quad \text{for all } \eta \in C_0^\infty(\Omega), \eta \geq 0$$

Step 4: the validity of the variational inequality

We have that

$$|\langle \sigma_k, Dz \rangle| \leq 2F_k^*(\sigma_k) + F(Dz) + F(-Dz),$$

Moreover

$$\begin{aligned} \int_{\Omega} |\langle \sigma_k, Dz \rangle| dx &\leq \int_{\Omega} F_k^*(\sigma_k) + \int_{\Omega} F(Dz) dx + \int_{\Omega} F(-Dz) dx \\ &\leq C \left(\int_{\Omega} F(Du_0) dx + \int_{\Omega} F(Dz) dx + \int_{\Omega} F(-Dz) dx \right). \end{aligned}$$

thus, by our assumptions, the sequence $\langle \sigma_k, Dz \rangle$ is equi-integrable

Using that $\langle \sigma_k, Dz \rangle \rightarrow \langle \sigma, Dz \rangle$ a.e., **Vitali's convergence Theorem** implies

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Step 4: the validity of the variational inequality

At this point, we start from the variational inequality

$$\int_{\Omega} \langle \sigma_k, Dz - Du_k \rangle dx \geq 0 \quad \text{for all } z \in \mathbb{K}_{\psi}^F(\Omega),$$

since $\mathbb{K}_{\psi}^F(\Omega) \subset \mathcal{K}_{\psi}(\Omega)$, writing it as

$$\int_{\Omega} \langle \sigma_k, Dz \rangle dx \geq \int_{\Omega} \langle \sigma_k, Du_k \rangle dx \quad \text{for all } z \in \mathbb{K}_{\psi}^F(\Omega)$$

and taking the liminf as $k \rightarrow +\infty$ in previous equality, we get

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