

HARNACK INEQUALITY FOR (p, q) -LAPLACIAN EQUATIONS UNIFORMLY DEGENERATED IN A PART OF DOMAIN

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ABSTRACT. We consider a (p, q) -Laplace equation with the exponent values p, q depending on the boundary which is divided into two parts by a hyperplane. Assuming that the equation is uniformly degenerate with respect to a small parameter in the part of domain where $q < p$, a special Harnack inequality is proved for non-negative solutions.

1. STATEMENT OF MAIN RESULT

We consider the elliptic equation

$$L_\varepsilon u = \operatorname{div}(\omega_\varepsilon(x)|\nabla u|^{p(x)-2}\nabla u) = 0 \quad (1.1)$$

in a domain $D \subset \mathbb{R}^n$, $n \geq 2$, with a positive weight $\omega_\varepsilon(x)$, and an exponent to be defined below. Assume that the domain is divided by the hyperplane $\Sigma = \{x : x_n = 0\}$ into two parts $D^{(1)} = D \cap \{x : x_n > 0\}$, $D^{(2)} = D \cap \{x : x_n < 0\}$, and that

$$\omega_\varepsilon(x) = \begin{cases} \varepsilon, & \text{if } x \in D^{(1)} \\ 1, & \text{if } x \in D^{(2)}, \end{cases} \quad \varepsilon \in (0, 1], \quad (1.2)$$

$$p(x) = \begin{cases} q, & \text{if } x \in D^{(1)} \\ p, & \text{if } x \in D^{(2)}, \end{cases} \quad 1 < q < p. \quad (1.3)$$

To define the solution of (1.1), we introduce a class of functions related to the exponent $p(x)$:

$$W_{\text{loc}}(D) = \{u : u \in W_{\text{loc}}^{1,1}(D), |\nabla u|^{p(x)} \in L_{\text{loc}}^1(D)\}.$$

This set is a Sobolev space of functions locally summable in D together with their first order generalized derivatives.

By a solution of to (1.1), we mean a function $u \in W_{\text{loc}}(D)$, which satisfies the integral identity

$$\int_D \omega_\varepsilon(x)|\nabla u|^{p(x)-2}\nabla u \cdot \nabla \varphi \, dx = 0 \quad (1.4)$$

for the test functions $\varphi \in C_0^\infty(D)$.

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For the exponent $p(\cdot)$, given by (1.3), the smooth functions are dense in $W_{\text{loc}}(D)$ (see [13]). Therefore, finite functions from $W_{\text{loc}}(D)$ can be considered as test functions in (1.4).

p -Laplace type equations with a variable nonlinearity exponent, $p(x)$, and variational problems with integrands satisfying non-standard coerciveness and growth conditions occur in the modeling of composite materials and electrorheological fluids whose characteristics depend on the considered electromagnetic field. In this work, we consider a model for the case of plane boundary between two different phases. Note that the problem is complicated by the degeneration, uniform in ε , in the domain $D^{(1)}$.

In each of the domains $D^{(i)}$, $i = 1, 2$, the regularity of the solution has been well studied before (see [10]). It was proved in [1] that for p defined by (1.3) and for every fixed $\varepsilon \in (0, 1]$, every solution of the equation (1.1) in the arbitrary subdomain $D' \Subset D$ belongs to the space $C^\alpha(D')$ of Hölder functions in D' . The independence of the Hölder exponent α on ε in case $p = q$ has been established in [2, 9], and for our equation it was proved in [8].

Harnack inequality plays an important role in the qualitative theory of differential equations (see [12]): if $p(x) \equiv p$, then the following inequality holds for the solution u of the equation (1.1) which is non-negative in the ball $B_{4R} \subset D$:

$$\inf_{B_R} u \geq \gamma(n, p) \sup_{B_R} u. \quad (1.5)$$

In [5], it was shown that the classical inequality (1.5) does not hold for the solutions of the equation (1.1) if $\varepsilon = 1$ and $q < p$. This inequality is not satisfied in the balls B_R centered on the hyperplane Σ . To state the result obtained in [5], denote by B_R^- the set $\{x \in B_R : x_n < -R/2\}$. It was established in [5] that if u is a non-negative solution of the equation (1.1) in the ball $B_{8R} \subset D$ centered on the hyperplane Σ , then the following inequality holds in the concentric ball B_R of radius R :

$$\inf_{B_R} u + R \geq C(n, p, q) \sup_{B_R^-} u. \quad (1.6)$$

Along with the invalidity of classical Harnack inequality (1.5); it was proved in [5] that for large values of R the term R in (1.6) cannot be replaced by R^ν when $\nu < (p - q)/(p - 1)$. Note that in case $p = q = 2$ the Harnack inequality of the form (1.6) with no R has been first obtained in [3], and in [7] in case $q = p \neq 2$.

In this work, we establish the Harnack inequality of the form (1.6) with a constant C independent of ε . Our main result is the following theorem.

Theorem 1.1. *If (1.2) and (1.3) hold, and u is a non-negative solution of (1.1) in the ball $B_{8R} \subset D$ centered on the hyperplane Σ , then the inequality (1.6) holds in the concentric ball B_R of radius R with the constant C depending only on n, p, q .*

The proof is based on the modified technique of Mozer [11], developed in [4, 6], where the domains $D^{(1)}$ and $D^{(2)}$ play different roles.

The assertion of Theorem 1.1 Also holds for the equation

$$\operatorname{div} \left(\omega_\varepsilon(x) |\nabla u|^{p(x)-2} a \nabla u \right) = 0,$$

where a is a measurable uniformly positive definite matrix. Besides, the constant in (1.6), it will additionally depend on ellipticity constants of this matrix.

2. PROOF OF MAIN RESULT

Below B_R will denote an open ball centered on $\Sigma \cap D$, so that $B_{4R} \subset D$, $B_R^{(i)} = D^{(i)} \cap B_R$, $i = 1, 2$, u is a non-negative solution of the equation (1.1) and $w = u + R$. Here $|E|$ is n -dimensional Lebesgue measure of the measurable set $E \subset \mathbb{R}^n$, and

$$\int_E f dx = \frac{1}{|E|} \int_E f dx.$$

Let us first establish auxiliary estimates for the solutions. Taking $\varphi = w^\beta \eta^p$, as a test function in the integral identity (1.4) with $\beta < 1 - p$, $\eta \in C_0^\infty(B_{3R})$ and $0 \leq \eta \leq 1$ by (1.2) we have

$$\int_{B_{3R}^{(2)}} |\nabla w|^p w^{\beta-1} \eta^p dx \leq C \left(\int_{B_{3R}^{(2)}} w^{\beta+p-1} |\nabla \eta|^p dx + \int_{B_{3R}^{(1)}} w^{\beta+q-1} |\nabla \eta|^q dx \right). \quad (2.1)$$

Below \tilde{f} will denote a continuation of a function from $D^{(2)}$ to $D^{(1)}$ even with respect to the hyperplane Σ . Let

$$G_R = B_{3R}^{(1)} \cap \{x : w(x) < \tilde{w}(x)\} \quad (2.2)$$

and, assuming $G_R \neq \emptyset$,

$$\varphi(x) = \begin{cases} (w^\gamma(x) - \tilde{w}^\gamma(x)) \eta^q(x) & \text{in } G_R \\ 0 & \text{in } B_{3R} \setminus G_R, \end{cases}$$

as a test function in (1.4), with the constant $\gamma < 1 - q$ to be defined later. Then we obtain (see (1.2))

$$\begin{aligned} & |\gamma| \int_{G_R} |\nabla w|^q u^{\gamma-1} \eta^q dx \\ & \leq |\gamma| \int_{G_R} |\nabla w|^{q-1} |\nabla \tilde{w}| \tilde{w}^{\gamma-1} \eta^q dx + q \int_{G_R} |\nabla w|^{q-1} |\nabla \eta| \tilde{w}^\gamma \eta^{q-1} dx \\ & \quad + q \int_{G_R} |\nabla w|^{q-1} |\nabla \eta| w^\gamma \eta^{q-1} dx. \end{aligned} \quad (2.3)$$

Let us estimate the integrands on the right-hand side of (2.3) by using Young's inequality, definition of G_R and relation $\gamma < 0$. We have

$$\begin{aligned} |\nabla w|^{q-1} |\nabla \tilde{w}| \tilde{w}^{\gamma-1} \eta^q & \leq \varepsilon_1 |\nabla w|^q \tilde{w}^{\gamma-1} \eta^q + C(\varepsilon_1, q) |\nabla \tilde{w}|^q \tilde{w}^{\gamma-1} \eta^q \\ & \leq \varepsilon_1 |\nabla w|^q u^{\gamma-1} \eta^q + C(\varepsilon_1, q) |\nabla \tilde{w}|^q \tilde{w}^{\gamma-1} \eta^q, \end{aligned} \quad (2.4)$$

$$\begin{aligned} |\nabla w|^{q-1} |\nabla \eta| \tilde{w}^\gamma \eta^{q-1} & \leq |\nabla w|^{q-1} |\nabla \eta| w^\gamma \eta^{q-1} \\ & \leq \varepsilon_2 |\nabla w|^q w^{\gamma-1} \eta^q + C(\varepsilon_2, q) w^{\gamma+q-1} |\nabla \eta|^q, \end{aligned} \quad (2.5)$$

$$|\nabla w|^{q-1} |\nabla \eta| w^\gamma \eta^{q-1} \leq \varepsilon_3 |\nabla w|^q w^{\gamma-1} \eta^q + C(\varepsilon_3, q) w^{\gamma+q-1} |\nabla \eta|^q. \quad (2.6)$$

Considering the relations (2.4)–(2.6) in (2.3), by a proper choice of ε_1 , ε_2 and ε_3 , we have

$$\int_{G_R} |\nabla w|^q w^{\gamma-1} \eta^q dx \leq C(q) \left(\int_{G_R} |\nabla \tilde{w}|^q \tilde{w}^{\gamma-1} \eta^q dx + \int_{G_R} w^{\gamma+q-1} |\nabla \eta|^q dx \right). \quad (2.7)$$

Introduce the constant γ as

$$\gamma = \beta + p - q. \quad (2.8)$$

Then

$$|\nabla \tilde{w}|^q \tilde{w}^{\gamma-1} \eta^q = |\nabla \tilde{w}|^q \tilde{w}^{(\beta-1)q/p} \tilde{w}^{(\beta-1)(p-q)/p+p-q} \eta^q,$$

and, by Young's inequality,

$$|\nabla \tilde{w}|^q \tilde{w}^{\gamma-1} \eta^q \leq R^{p-q} |\nabla \tilde{w}|^p \tilde{w}^{\beta-1} \eta^p + R^{-q} \tilde{w}^{\beta+p-1}. \quad (2.9)$$

Now we can rewrite the inequality (2.7) as

$$\begin{aligned} \int_{G_R} |\nabla w|^q w^{\gamma-1} \eta^q dx &\leq C(q) \left(R^{p-q} \int_{G_R} |\nabla \tilde{w}|^p \tilde{w}^{\beta-1} \eta^p dx \right. \\ &\quad \left. + R^{-q} \int_{G_R} \tilde{w}^{\beta+p-1} dx + \int_{G_R} w^{\beta+p-1} |\nabla \eta|^q dx \right). \end{aligned} \quad (2.10)$$

Let

$$v(x) = \begin{cases} w(x), & \text{if } x \in D^{(2)} \\ \min(w(x), \tilde{w}(x)), & \text{if } x \in D^{(1)}. \end{cases}$$

Note that (2.10) implies

$$\begin{aligned} &\int_{B_{3R}^{(1)}} |\nabla v|^q v^{\gamma-1} \eta^q dx \\ &\leq C(q) \left(R^{p-q} \int_{B_{3R}^{(1)}} |\nabla \tilde{w}|^p \tilde{w}^{\beta-1} \eta^p dx + R^{-q} \int_{B_{3R}^{(1)}} \tilde{w}^{\beta+p-1} dx \right. \\ &\quad \left. + \int_{B_{3R}^{(1)}} v^{\beta+p-1} |\nabla \eta|^q dx \right). \end{aligned} \quad (2.11)$$

To prove the theorem, it suffices to add the integral

$$\int_{B_{3R}^{(1)} \setminus G_R} |\nabla \tilde{w}|^q \tilde{w}^{\gamma-1} \eta^q dx$$

to both sides of the inequality (2.10) and then use (2.9) on the right-hand side.

Using the definition of the function v , we rewrite (2.1) as follows:

$$\int_{B_{3R}^{(2)}} |\nabla w|^p w^{\beta-1} \eta^p dx \leq C \left(\int_{B_{3R}^{(2)}} w^{\beta+p-1} |\nabla \eta|^p dx + \int_{B_{3R}^{(1)}} v^{\beta+q-1} |\nabla \eta|^q dx \right). \quad (2.12)$$

Hence, from (2.11) and the properties of even continuation of a function we obtain

$$\begin{aligned} \int_{B_{3R}^{(1)}} |\nabla v|^q v^{\gamma-1} \eta^q dx &\leq C(q) \left(\int_{B_{3R}^{(2)}} w^{\beta+p-1} (R^{-q} + R^{p-q} |\nabla \eta|^p) dx \right. \\ &\quad \left. + \int_{B_{3R}^{(1)}} (v^{\beta+p-1} + v^{\beta+q-1} R^{p-q}) |\nabla \eta|^q dx \right). \end{aligned} \quad (2.13)$$

Let us estimate from below the integrand on the left-hand side of (2.13) using the inequality (2.9) with \tilde{w} replaced by w . Also, note that $v^q \leq R^{q-p} w^p$ as $w \geq R$. Taking into account this relation, we can rewrite (2.12) and (2.13) as

$$\begin{aligned} &\int_{B_{3R}^{(2)}} |\nabla w|^q w^{\gamma-1} \eta^q dx \\ &\leq C \left(R^{p-q} \int_{B_{3R}^{(2)}} w^{\beta+p-1} |\nabla \eta|^p dx + \int_{B_{3R}^{(1)}} v^{\beta+p-1} |\nabla \eta|^q dx \right) \end{aligned} \quad (2.14)$$

and

$$\begin{aligned} & \int_{B_{3R}^{(1)}} |\nabla v|^q v^{\gamma-1} \eta^q dx \\ & \leq C(q) \left(\int_{B_{3R}^{(2)}} w^{\beta+p-1} (R^{-q} + R^{p-q} |\nabla \eta|^p) dx + \int_{B_{3R}^{(1)}} v^{\beta+p-1} |\nabla \eta|^q dx \right) \end{aligned} \tag{2.15}$$

respectively. Summing both sides of the inequalities (2.14) and (2.15), and using again the definition of the function v , we obtain

$$\begin{aligned} & \int_{B_{3R}} |\nabla v|^q v^{\gamma-1} \eta^q dx \\ & \leq C(q) \left(\int_{B_{3R}} v^{\beta+p-1} (R^{-q} + R^{p-q} |\nabla \eta|^p) dx + \int_{B_{3R}} v^{\beta+p-1} |\nabla \eta|^q dx \right) \end{aligned}$$

Hence, from the choice of γ (see (2.8) and by the Sobolev embedding theorem, we conclude that

$$\begin{aligned} & \left(\int_{B_{3R}} v^{k(\beta+p-1)} \eta^k dx \right)^{1/k} \\ & \leq C(n, p, q) |\beta|^q \left(\int_{B_{3R}} v^{\beta+p-1} (1 + R^p |\nabla \eta|^p + R^q |\nabla \eta|^q) dx \right), \end{aligned} \tag{2.16}$$

where $k = n/(n - 1)$. Iterating the relation (2.16) by Mozer method, we arrive at the following conclusion.

Lemma 2.1. *For every $q_0 > 0$, we have*

$$\inf_{B_R} v(x) \geq C(n, p, q, q_0) \left(\int_{B_{2R}} v^{-q_0}(x) dx \right)^{-1/q_0}. \tag{2.17}$$

As $w \geq v$, (2.17) implies

$$\inf_{B_R} w(x) \geq C(n, p, q, q_0) \left(\int_{B_{2R}} v^{-q_0}(x) dx \right)^{-1/q_0}. \tag{2.18}$$

Lemma 2.2. *For every ball $B_{2r} \subset B_{3R}$ centered in B_{3R} , it holds*

$$\int_{B_r} |\nabla \ln v|^q dx \leq Cr^{n-q}, \tag{2.19}$$

where the constant C does not depend on u , R and r .

Proof. As before, it is assumed below that $B_r^{(i)} = D^{(i)} \cap B_r$ $i = 1, 2$. Consider a cutting function $\eta \in C_0^\infty(B_{3R})$, such that $\eta \equiv 1$ in B_r , $|\nabla \eta| \leq Cr^{-1}$. Assuming $\varphi = w^{1-p} \eta^p$ in the integral identity (1.4), by simple calculation with the consideration of (1.2) we obtain

$$\int_{B_{2r}^{(2)}} |\nabla \ln w|^p \eta^p dx \leq C \left(\int_{B_{2r}^{(2)}} |\nabla \eta|^p dx + \int_{B_{2r}^{(1)}} w^{q-p} |\nabla \eta|^q dx \right).$$

Or, from $w^{q-p} \leq R^{q-p}$,

$$\int_{B_{2r}^{(2)}} |\nabla \ln w|^p \eta^p dx \leq C(r^{n-p} + R^{q-p} r^{n-q}) \leq Cr^{n-p}.$$

Thus,

$$\int_{B_{2r}^{(2)}} |\nabla \ln w|^q \eta^q dx \leq Cr^{n-q} \tag{2.20}$$

which proves (2.19) in the case $B_r \subset D^{(2)}$.

Now let $B_r \cap D^{(1)} \neq \emptyset$. To prove the similar estimate in $B_r^{(1)}$ we first assume that the set G_R defined by (2.2) is not empty and consider

$$\varphi(x) = \begin{cases} (w^{1-q}(x) - \tilde{w}^{1-q}(x))\eta^q(x) & \text{in } G_R \\ 0 & \text{in } B_{3R} \setminus G_R. \end{cases}$$

as a test function in (1.4). Then it is not difficult to see that

$$\begin{aligned} & \int_{G_R} |\nabla \ln w|^q \eta^q dx \\ & \leq \int_{G_R} |\nabla w|^{q-1} |\nabla \ln \tilde{w}| \tilde{w}^{1-q} \eta^q dx \\ & \quad + q \int_{G_R} |\nabla w|^{q-1} |\nabla \eta| \tilde{w}^{1-q} \eta^{q-1} dx + q \int_{G_R} |\nabla w|^{q-1} |\nabla \eta| w^{1-q} \eta^{q-1} dx. \end{aligned}$$

As $w(x) \leq \tilde{w}(x)$ in G_R , then, by Young's inequality, we obtain

$$\int_{G_R} |\nabla \ln w|^q \eta^q dx \leq C \left(\int_{G_R} |\nabla \ln \tilde{w}|^q \eta^q dx + \int_{G_R} |\nabla \eta|^q dx \right). \quad (2.21)$$

First consider the case where the center of the ball B_r is located in $\overline{D}^{(2)}$. Then, by (2.20),

$$\int_{B_{2r}^{(1)}} |\nabla \ln \tilde{w}|^q \eta^q dx \leq Cr^{n-q}. \quad (2.22)$$

Summing (2.21) and (2.22), we have

$$\int_{B_{2r}^{(1)}} |\nabla \ln v|^q \eta^q dx \leq C \left(\int_{B_{2r}^{(1)}} |\nabla \ln \tilde{w}|^q \eta^q dx + r^{n-q} \right) \leq Cr^{n-q}. \quad (2.23)$$

Hence, by (2.20), we obtain the inequality

$$\int_{B_{2r}} |\nabla \ln v|^q \eta^q dx \leq Cr^{n-q}, \quad (2.24)$$

which implies (2.19).

If the set G_R is empty, then $v(x) = \tilde{w}(x)$ in $B_{3R}^{(1)}$, and (2.19) follows from (2.20). Now consider the case where $G_R \neq \emptyset$ and the center of the ball B_r is located in $D^{(1)}$. Denote by \hat{B}_r the image of the ball B_r under mirror reflection with respect to the hyperplane Σ . By inequality (2.20), for the ball \hat{B}_{2r} we have

$$\int_{\hat{B}_{2r}^{(2)}} |\nabla \ln w|^q \eta^q dx = \int_{B_{2r}^{(1)}} |\nabla \ln \tilde{w}|^q \eta^q dx \leq Cr^{n-q}. \quad (2.25)$$

As above, summing (2.21) and (2.25), we obtain again (2.23), which, combined with (2.20), leads to the inequality (2.24), which in turn implies (2.19). If the set G_R is empty, then (2.19) follows from (2.20) and (2.25). The proof is complete. \square

John-Nirenberg lemma is a corollary of (2.19): there exist the positive constants q_0 and C , independent of u and R such that

$$\left(\int_{B_{2R}} v^{-q_0}(x) dx \right)^{-1/q_0} \geq C \left(\int_{B_{2R}} v^{q_0}(x) dx \right)^{1/q_0}. \quad (2.26)$$

Proof of Theorem 1.1. As before, let $w = u + R$. Using (2.18) and (2.26), we obtain

$$\inf_{B_R} u(x) \geq C \left(\int_{B_{2R}} v^q(x) dx \right)^{1/q} \geq C \inf_{B_R^-} w(x).$$

Then (1.6) follows from the classical Harnack inequality for the solutions of the equation (1.1) in the domain $D^{(2)}$, which states $\inf_{B_R^-} w(x) \geq c \sup_{B_R^-} w(x)$. Theorem 1 is proved. \square

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