# Multiple solutions for $p$-Laplacian type equations 

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#### Abstract

In this paper we establish the existence of three weak solutions of an equation which involves a general elliptic operator in divergence form (in particular, a $p$-Laplacian operator), while the nonlinearity has a $(p-1)$-sublinear growth at infinity. This result completes some recent papers, where mountain pass type solutions were obtained providing the nonlinear term via a $(p-1)$ superlinear growth at infinity (fulfilling an Ambrosetti-Rabinowitz type condition). In our case, an abstract critical point result is applied, proved by G. Bonanno [G. Bonanno, Some remarks on a three critical points theorem, Nonlinear Analysis 54 (2003) 651-665].


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## 1. Introduction

Various particular forms of the problem involving elliptic operators in divergence form

$$
\begin{cases}-\operatorname{div}(a(x, \nabla u))=f(x, u) & \text { in } \Omega  \tag{P}\\ u=0 & \text { on } \partial \Omega\end{cases}
$$

have been studied in the recent years. Here, $\Omega \subset \mathbb{R}^{N}$ is a bounded open domain, $N \geq 2$, while the nonlinearities $a: \Omega \times \mathbb{R}^{N} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^{N}$ and $f: \Omega \times \mathbb{R} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ fulfill certain structural conditions. The simplest case occurs when $a(x, s)=|s|^{p-2} s, p \geq 2$; thus $(\mathrm{P})$ reduces to a problem which involves the usual $p$-Laplacian operator $\Delta_{p}(\cdot)=\operatorname{div}\left(|\nabla(\cdot)|^{p-2} \nabla(\cdot)\right)$.

Recently, De Nápoli and Mariani [4] studied problem (P) when the potential a satisfies a set of assumptions, see H (a) below, which includes the $p$-Laplacian and also other important cases, such as the generalized prescribed mean

[^0]curvature operator. Duc and $\mathrm{Vu}[3]$ extended the result of [4], considering problem $(\mathrm{P})$ in the 'nonuniform' case, for when the potential $a$ fulfills
$$
|a(x, \xi)| \leq c_{0}\left(h_{0}(x)+h_{1}(x)|\xi|^{p-1}\right), \quad \forall(x, \xi) \in \Omega \times \mathbb{R}^{N},
$$
with $h_{0} \in L^{p /(p-1)}(\Omega), h_{1} \in L_{\mathrm{loc}}^{1}(\Omega), c_{0}>0$.
In both papers [3,4], the nonlinear term $f: \Omega \times \mathbb{R} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ verifies the Ambrosetti-Rabinowitz type condition: defining $F(x, s)=\int_{0}^{s} f(x, t) \mathrm{d} t$, there exist $s_{0}>0$ and $\theta>p$ such that
\[

$$
\begin{equation*}
0<\theta F(x, s) \leq s f(x, s), \quad \forall x \in \Omega, s \in \mathbb{R},|s| \geq s_{0} \tag{AR}
\end{equation*}
$$

\]

By (AR), one can deduce that

$$
|f(x, s)| \geq c|s|^{\theta-1}, \quad \forall x \in \Omega, s \in \mathbb{R},|s| \geq s_{0}
$$

i.e., $f$ is $(p-1)$-superlinear at infinity.

The purpose of this paper is to handle the counterpart of the above case, i.e., when $f$ is $(p-1)$-sublinear at infinity. For the sake of simplicity, we assume in the sequel that $f$ is autonomous, i.e., $f(x, s)=f(s)$. We consider the condition
( $\mathrm{f}_{1}$ ) $\lim _{|s| \rightarrow+\infty} \frac{f(s)}{|s|^{p-1}}=0$.
If $f(s)=\lambda(\arctan s)^{2}$, with $\lambda \in \mathbb{R}$ fixed (thus $f$ clearly fulfills $\left(\mathrm{f}_{1}\right)$ ), while $a(x, s)=s$ (thus in ( P ) there appears the standard Laplacian operator $\Delta u=\operatorname{div} \nabla u$ ), an easy computation shows that ( P ) possesses only the zero solution, whenever $|\lambda|<\pi^{-1} c_{2}^{-2}$, where $c_{2}>0$ is the best Sobolev constant of the embedding $H_{0}^{1}(\Omega) \hookrightarrow L^{2}(\Omega)$. Therefore, it is more appropriate to investigate, instead of $(\mathrm{P})$, the following eigenvalue problem:

$$
\begin{cases}-\operatorname{div}(a(x, \nabla u))=\lambda f(u) & \text { in } \Omega \\ u=0 & \text { on } \partial \Omega\end{cases}
$$

In the next section we will state our main result (Theorem 2.1) which guarantees the existence of at least three weak solutions of $\left(\mathrm{P}_{\lambda}\right)$ for certain $\lambda>0$. Our result completes in a natural way not only the papers of Duc and Vu [3], and De Nápoli and Mariani [4] (superlinear nonlinearities), but also some earlier works in the sublinear context (where $a(x, s)=s)$. For instance, Brézis and Oswald [2] studied problem $\left(\mathrm{P}_{\lambda}\right)$ when the behaviour of $f(s) / s$ is suitably controlled at infinity, obtaining an existence and uniqueness result via the minimization technique and maximum principle. Lin [5] exploited a sub-super-solution argument, applying the sweeping principle of Serrin in order to obtain existence, uniqueness, and asymptotical properties of the solutions of ( $\mathrm{P}_{\lambda}$ ) when $f(s)$ behaves like $s^{q}(0<q<1)$ with $s$ large.

The proof of our main result (Theorem 2.1) is based on a recent abstract critical point theorem proved by Bonanno [1] which is an extension of the famous result of Ricceri [6,7]. In the next section we give the precise statement of Theorem 2.1, Section 3 contains auxiliary results, while in Section 4 we will give the proof of Theorem 2.1.

## 2. Main result

In the sequel, let $p>1$ and $\Omega \subset \mathbb{R}^{N}$ be a bounded open domain, where $N \geq 2$. Now, we recall the same assumptions as in [4], concerning the potential $a: \Omega \times \mathbb{R}^{N} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^{N}$.
$\mathrm{H}(\mathrm{a})$ : Let $A: \bar{\Omega} \times \mathbb{R}^{N} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}, A=A(x, \xi)$ be a continuous function in $\bar{\Omega} \times \mathbb{R}^{N}$, with continuous derivative with respect to $\xi, a=D A=A^{\prime}$, and suppose that the following conditions hold:
(a) $A(x, 0)=0, \forall x \in \Omega$.
(b) $a$ satisfies the growth condition

$$
\begin{equation*}
|a(x, \xi)| \leq c_{1}\left(1+|\xi|^{p-1}\right), \quad \forall x \in \Omega, \xi \in \mathbb{R}^{N} \tag{1}
\end{equation*}
$$

for some constant $c_{1}>0$.
(c) $A$ is $p$-uniformly convex: There exists a constant $k>0$, such that

$$
A\left(x, \frac{\xi+\eta}{2}\right) \leq \frac{1}{2} A(x, \xi)+\frac{1}{2} A(x, \eta)-k|\xi-\eta|^{p}, \quad \forall x \in \Omega, \xi, \eta \in \mathbb{R}^{N}
$$

(d) $A$ is $p$-subhomogeneous:

$$
\begin{equation*}
0 \leq a(x, \xi) \cdot \xi \leq p A(x, \xi), \quad \forall x \in \Omega, \xi \in \mathbb{R}^{N} \tag{2}
\end{equation*}
$$

(e) $A$ satisfies the ellipticity condition: There exists a constant $C>0$ such that

$$
\begin{equation*}
A(x, \xi) \geq C|\xi|^{p}, \quad \forall x \in \Omega, \xi \in \mathbb{R}^{N} \tag{3}
\end{equation*}
$$

Remark 2.1. Let $p \geq 2$. If $A(x, s)=\frac{1}{p}|s|^{p}$, then $a(x, s)=|s|^{p-2} s$ and one obtains the usual $p$-Laplacian. If $A(x, s)=\frac{1}{p}\left[\left(1+s^{2}\right)^{\frac{p}{2}}-1\right]$, then we obtain the generalized mean curvature operator $\operatorname{div}\left(\left(1+|\nabla u|^{2}\right)^{\frac{p-2}{2}} \nabla u\right)$. For another specific choice of $a$, see [4].

Let $f: \mathbb{R} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ be a function which, besides $\left(\mathrm{f}_{1}\right)$, satisfies the following conditions:
(f $\left.\mathrm{f}_{2}\right) \lim _{s \rightarrow 0} \frac{f(s)}{|s|^{p-1}}=0$.
$\left(\mathrm{f}_{3}\right)$ There exists $s_{0} \in \mathbb{R}$ such that $F\left(s_{0}\right)>0$, where $F(s)=\int_{0}^{s} f(t) \mathrm{d} t$.
Our main result is the following:
Theorem 2.1. Let a : $\Omega \times \mathbb{R}^{N} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^{N}$ be a potential which fulfills the hypothesis $\mathrm{H}(\mathrm{a})$, and let $f: \mathbb{R} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ be a continuous function which satisfies $\left(f_{1}\right),\left(f_{2}\right)$ and $\left(f_{3}\right)$. Then, there exist an open interval $\Lambda \subset(0,+\infty)$ and a constant $\mu>0$ such that for every $\lambda \in \Lambda$ problem $\left(\mathrm{P}_{\lambda}\right)$ has at least three distinct weak solutions in $W_{0}^{1, p}(\Omega)$, whose $W_{0}^{1, p}(\Omega)$-norms are less than $\mu$.

## 3. Preliminaries

We assume that the assumptions of Theorem 2.1 are verified. The norm of the space $L^{p}(\Omega)$ will be denoted by $\|\cdot\|_{p}$. The Sobolev space $W_{0}^{1, p}(\Omega)$ is endowed with the usual norm $\|u\|=\left(\int_{\Omega}|\nabla u|^{p} \mathrm{~d} x\right)^{1 / p}$. Since the embedding $W_{0}^{1, p}(\Omega) \hookrightarrow L^{q}(\Omega)\left(q \in\left[1, p^{*}\right)\right)$ is compact, let $c_{q}>0$ be the best Sobolev constant, i.e. $\|u\|_{q} \leq c_{q}\|u\|$ for every $u \in W_{0}^{1, p}(\Omega)$, and $c_{q}=\gamma_{q}^{-1}$, with $\gamma_{q}=\inf \left\{\|u\|:\|u\|_{q}=1\right\}$. Above, $p^{*}$ denotes the usual Sobolev critical exponent.

We introduce the energy functional $\mathcal{E}_{\lambda}: W_{0}^{1, p}(\Omega) \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ given by $\mathcal{E}_{\lambda}(u)=\mathcal{A}(u)-\lambda \mathcal{F}(u)$, where

$$
\mathcal{A}(u)=\int_{\Omega} A(x, \nabla u(x)) \mathrm{d} x \quad \text { and } \quad \mathcal{F}(u)=\int_{\Omega} F(u(x)) \mathrm{d} x .
$$

It is easy to see that the functional $\mathcal{E}_{\lambda}$ is of class $\mathcal{C}^{1}$ and its derivative is given by

$$
\left\langle\mathcal{E}_{\lambda}^{\prime}(u), \varphi\right\rangle=\int_{\Omega} a(x, \nabla u(x)) \nabla \varphi(x) \mathrm{d} x-\lambda \int_{\Omega} f(u(x)) \varphi(x) \mathrm{d} x .
$$

Here, $\langle\cdot, \cdot\rangle$ denotes the duality pairing between $W_{0}^{1, p}(\Omega)$ and its dual $W^{-1, p^{\prime}}(\Omega), 1 / p+1 / p^{\prime}=1$. Moreover, the critical points of the functional $\mathcal{E}_{\lambda}$ are exactly the weak solutions of problem $\left(\mathrm{P}_{\lambda}\right)$.

Remark 3.1. Due to hypothesis $\mathrm{H}(\mathrm{a})$, a simple calculation shows that the functional $\mathcal{A}$ is locally uniformly convex. Moreover, $\mathcal{A}^{\prime}: W_{0}^{1, p}(\Omega) \rightarrow W^{-1, p^{\prime}}(\Omega)$ verifies the $\left(S_{+}\right)$condition, i.e., for every sequence $\left\{u_{n}\right\} \subset W_{0}^{1, p}(\Omega)$ such that $u_{n} \rightharpoonup u$ weakly and $\lim \sup _{n \rightarrow \infty}\left\langle\mathcal{A}^{\prime}\left(u_{n}\right), u_{n}-u\right\rangle \leq 0$, we have $u_{n} \rightarrow u$ strongly; see Proposition 2.1 in [4].

Lemma 3.1. For every $\lambda \in \mathbb{R}$, the functional $\mathcal{E}_{\lambda}: W_{0}^{1, p}(\Omega) \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ is sequentially weakly lower semicontinuous.
Proof. The functional $\mathcal{A}$ being locally uniformly convex is weakly lower semicontinuous. On the other hand, condition ( $\mathrm{f}_{1}$ ) implies the existence of a constant $c>0$ such that $|f(s)| \leq c\left(1+|s|^{p-1}\right)$ for every $s \in \mathbb{R}$. Since the embedding $W_{0}^{1, p}(\Omega) \hookrightarrow L^{p}(\Omega)$ is compact, one can deduce in a standard way that $\mathcal{F}$ is sequentially weakly continuous.

Lemma 3.2. For every $\lambda \in \mathbb{R}$, the functional $\mathcal{E}_{\lambda}$ is coercive and satisfies the Palais-Smale condition.

Proof. Let us fix $\lambda \in \mathbb{R}$, arbitrary. By ( $\mathrm{f}_{1}$ ) there exists $\delta=\delta(\lambda)$ such that

$$
|f(s)| \leq p C c_{p}^{-p}(1+|\lambda|)^{-1}|s|^{p-1} \quad \text { for every }|s| \geq \delta
$$

(Here, $C$ is from $\mathrm{H}(\mathrm{a})(\mathrm{e})$.) Integrating the above inequality we have

$$
|F(s)| \leq C c_{p}^{-p}(1+|\lambda|)^{-1}|s|^{p}+\max _{|t| \leq \delta}|f(t)||s|, \quad \forall s \in \mathbb{R}
$$

Thus, for every $u \in W_{0}^{1, p}(\Omega)$ we obtain

$$
\begin{aligned}
\mathcal{E}_{\lambda}(u) & \geq \mathcal{A}(u)-|\lambda||\mathcal{F}(u)| \\
& \geq C\|u\|^{p}-C \frac{|\lambda|}{(1+|\lambda|)}\|u\|^{p}-c_{p}|\lambda|(\nu(\Omega))^{\frac{1}{p}}\|u\| \max _{|t| \leq \delta}|f(t)|,
\end{aligned}
$$

where $v(\Omega)$ denotes the Lebesgue measure of $\Omega$. Since $p>1, \mathcal{E}_{\lambda}(u) \rightarrow+\infty$ whenever $\|u\| \rightarrow+\infty$. Hence $\mathcal{E}_{\lambda}$ is coercive.

Now, let $\left\{u_{n}\right\} \subset W_{0}^{1, p}(\Omega)$ be a sequence such that $\left\{\mathcal{E}_{\lambda}\left(u_{n}\right)\right\}$ is bounded and $\left\|\mathcal{E}_{\lambda}^{\prime}\left(u_{n}\right)\right\|_{W^{-1, p^{\prime}}} \rightarrow 0$. Since $\mathcal{E}_{\lambda}$ is coercive, it follows that the sequence $\left\{u_{n}\right\}$ is bounded in $W_{0}^{1, p}(\Omega)$. Up to a subsequence, $u_{n} \rightharpoonup u$ weakly in $W_{0}^{1, p}(\Omega)$ and $u_{n} \rightarrow u$ strongly in $L^{p}(\Omega)$. From $\mathcal{E}_{\lambda}=\mathcal{A}-\lambda \mathcal{F}$ we get

$$
\begin{equation*}
\left\langle\mathcal{A}^{\prime}\left(u_{n}\right), u_{n}-u\right\rangle=\left\langle\mathcal{E}_{\lambda}^{\prime}\left(u_{n}\right), u_{n}-u\right\rangle+\lambda \int_{\Omega} f\left(u_{n}(x)\right)\left(u_{n}(x)-u(x)\right) \mathrm{d} x . \tag{4}
\end{equation*}
$$

Since $\left\|\mathcal{E}_{\lambda}^{\prime}\left(u_{n}\right)\right\|_{W^{-1, p^{\prime}}} \rightarrow 0$ and $\left\{u_{n}-u\right\}$ is bounded in $W_{0}^{1, p}(\Omega)$, by the inequality $\mid\left\langle\mathcal{E}_{\lambda}^{\prime}\left(u_{n}\right), u_{n}-u\right\rangle \leq \leq$ $\left\|\mathcal{E}_{\lambda}^{\prime}\left(u_{n}\right)\right\|_{W^{-1, p^{\prime}}}\left\|u_{n}-u\right\|$ it follows that

$$
\left\langle\mathcal{E}_{\lambda}^{\prime}\left(u_{n}\right), u_{n}-u\right\rangle \rightarrow 0 .
$$

As before, ( $\mathrm{f}_{1}$ ) implies the existence of a constant $c>0$ such that $|f(s)| \leq c\left(1+|s|^{p-1}\right)$ for every $s \in \mathbb{R}$. Therefore

$$
\begin{aligned}
\int_{\Omega}\left|f\left(u_{n}(x)\right) \| u_{n}(x)-u(x)\right| \mathrm{d} x & \leq c \int_{\Omega}\left|u_{n}(x)-u(x)\right| \mathrm{d} x+c \int_{\Omega}\left|\left(u_{n}(x)\right)\right|^{p-1}\left|u_{n}(x)-u(x)\right| \mathrm{d} x \\
& \leq c\left((v(\Omega))^{\frac{1}{p^{\prime}}}+\left\|u_{n}\right\|_{p}^{p-1}\right)\left\|u_{n}-u\right\|_{p} .
\end{aligned}
$$

Since $u_{n} \rightarrow u$ strongly in $L^{p}(\Omega)$, we get

$$
\lim _{n \rightarrow \infty} \int_{\Omega}\left|f\left(u_{n}(x)\right)\right|\left|u_{n}(x)-u(x)\right| \mathrm{d} x=0
$$

In conclusion, relation (4) implies

$$
\limsup _{n \rightarrow \infty}\left\langle\mathcal{A}^{\prime}\left(u_{n}\right), u_{n}-u\right\rangle \leq 0
$$

But the operator $\mathcal{A}^{\prime}$ has the $\left(S_{+}\right)$property; therefore we have $u_{n} \rightarrow u$ strongly in $W_{0}^{1, p}(\Omega)$.
Lemma 3.3. The following property holds:

$$
\lim _{\rho \rightarrow 0^{+}} \frac{\sup \{\mathcal{F}(u): \mathcal{A}(u)<\rho\}}{\rho}=0
$$

Proof. Due to ( $\mathrm{f}_{2}$ ), for an arbitrary small $\varepsilon>0$, there exists $\delta>0$ such that

$$
|f(s)| \leq \varepsilon p c_{p}^{-p}|s|^{p-1} \quad \text { for every }|s| \leq \delta .
$$

Combining the above inequality with

$$
|f(s)| \leq c\left(1+|s|^{p-1}\right) \quad \text { for every } s \in \mathbb{R}
$$

we obtain

$$
\begin{equation*}
|F(s)| \leq \varepsilon c_{p}^{-p}|s|^{p}+K(\delta)|s|^{q} \quad \text { for every } s \in \mathbb{R}, \tag{5}
\end{equation*}
$$

where $q \in\left(p, p^{\star}\right)$ is fixed, and $K(\delta)>0$ does not depend on $s$. For $\rho>0$, define the sets

$$
S_{\rho}^{1}=\left\{u \in W_{0}^{1, p}(\Omega): \mathcal{A}(u)<\rho\right\}
$$

and

$$
S_{\rho}^{2}=\left\{u \in W_{0}^{1, p}(\Omega): C\|u\|^{p}<\rho\right\} .
$$

By H(a)(e) it follows that $S_{\rho}^{1} \subset S_{\rho}^{2}$.
From (5) we obtain

$$
\begin{equation*}
\mathcal{F}(u) \leq \varepsilon\|u\|^{p}+K(\delta) c_{q}^{q}\|u\|^{q} . \tag{6}
\end{equation*}
$$

Since $0 \in S_{\rho}^{1}$ (due to $\mathrm{H}(\mathrm{a})(\mathrm{a})$ ), and $\mathcal{F}(0)=0$, one has $0 \leq \sup _{u \in S_{\rho}^{1}} \mathcal{F}(u)$. On the other hand, if $u \in S_{\rho}^{2}$, then $\|u\| \leq C^{-\frac{1}{p}} \rho^{\frac{1}{p}}$, and using (6) we get

$$
0 \leq \frac{\sup _{u \in S_{\rho}^{1}} \mathcal{F}(u)}{\rho} \leq \frac{\sup _{u \in S_{\rho}^{2}} \mathcal{F}(u)}{\rho} \leq \varepsilon C^{-1}+K(\delta) c_{q}^{q} C^{-\frac{q}{p}} \rho^{\frac{q}{p}-1}
$$

Because $\varepsilon>0$ is arbitrary and $\rho \rightarrow 0^{+}$, we get the desired result.

## 4. Proof of Theorem 2.1

The main ingredient for the proof of Theorem 2.1 is a recent critical point result due to Bonanno [1] which it is actually a refinement of a result of Ricceri [6,7]. For completeness, we recall the result from [1].

Theorem B ([1, Theorem 2.1]). Let $X$ be a separable and reflexive real Banach space, and let $\mathcal{A}, \mathcal{F}: X \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ be two continuously Gâteaux differentiable functionals. Assume that there exists $x_{0} \in X$ such that $\mathcal{A}\left(x_{0}\right)=\mathcal{F}\left(x_{0}\right)=0$ and $\mathcal{A}(x) \geq 0$ for every $x \in X$ and that there exists $x_{1} \in X, \rho>0$ such that
(i) $\rho<\mathcal{A}\left(x_{1}\right)$;
(ii) $\sup _{\mathcal{A}(x)<\rho} \mathcal{F}(x)<\rho \frac{\mathcal{F}\left(x_{1}\right)}{\mathcal{A}\left(x_{1}\right)}$.

## Further, put

$$
\bar{a}=\frac{\zeta \rho}{\rho \frac{\mathcal{F}\left(x_{1}\right)}{\mathcal{A}\left(x_{1}\right)}-\sup _{\mathcal{A}(x)<\rho} \mathcal{F}(x)},
$$

with $\zeta>1$, and assume that the functional $\mathcal{A}-\lambda \mathcal{F}$ is sequentially weakly lower semicontinuous, satisfies the Palais-Smale condition and
(iii) $\lim _{\|x\| \rightarrow+\infty}(\mathcal{A}(x)-\lambda \mathcal{F}(x))=+\infty$, for every $\lambda \in[0, \bar{a}]$.

Then, there exist an open interval $\Lambda \subset[0, \bar{a}]$ and a number $\mu>0$ such that for each $\lambda \in \Lambda$, the equation $\mathcal{A}^{\prime}(x)-\lambda \mathcal{F}^{\prime}(x)=0$ admits at least three solutions in $X$ having norm less than $\mu$.

Proof of Theorem 2.1. Let $s_{0} \in \mathbb{R}$ be from ( $\mathrm{f}_{3}$ ), i.e., $F\left(s_{0}\right)>0$. Fix an element $x_{0} \in \Omega$. Choose $R_{0}>0$ in such a way that

$$
\left\{x \in \mathbb{R}^{N}:\left|x-x_{0}\right| \leq R_{0}\right\} \subseteq \Omega,
$$

where $|\cdot|$ denotes the usual euclidean norm in $\mathbb{R}^{N}$. Let us denote by $B_{N}\left(x_{0}, r\right)$ the $N$-dimensional closed euclidean ball with center $x_{0} \in \mathbb{R}^{N}$ and radius $r>0$.

For $\sigma \in(0,1)$ define

$$
u_{\sigma}(x)= \begin{cases}0, & \text { if } x \in \mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash B_{N}\left(x_{0}, R_{0}\right)  \tag{7}\\ s_{0}, & \text { if } x \in B_{N}\left(x_{0}, \sigma R_{0}\right) ; \\ \frac{s_{0}}{R_{0}(1-\sigma)}\left(R_{0}-\left|x-x_{0}\right|\right), & \text { if } x \in B_{N}\left(x_{0}, R_{0}\right) \backslash B_{N}\left(x_{0}, \sigma R_{0}\right)\end{cases}
$$

It is clear that $u_{\sigma} \in W_{0}^{1, p}(\Omega)$. Moreover, we have

$$
\left|u_{\sigma}(x)\right| \leq\left|s_{0}\right| \quad \text { for each } x \in \mathbb{R}^{N},
$$

and

$$
\begin{equation*}
\left\|u_{\sigma}\right\|^{p}=\int_{\Omega}\left|\nabla u_{\sigma}\right|^{p}=\frac{\left|s_{0}\right|^{p}\left(1-\sigma^{N}\right)}{(1-\sigma)^{p}} R_{0}^{N-p} \omega_{N}>0 \tag{8}
\end{equation*}
$$

where $\omega_{N}$ is the volume of $B_{N}(0,1)$. Using the definition of $u_{\sigma}$ we obtain

$$
\begin{equation*}
\mathcal{F}\left(u_{\sigma}\right) \geq\left[F\left(s_{0}\right) \sigma^{N}-\max _{|t| \leq\left|s_{0}\right|}|F(t)|\left(1-\sigma^{N}\right)\right] R_{0}^{N} \omega_{N} . \tag{9}
\end{equation*}
$$

For $\sigma$ close enough to 1 , the right-hand side of the last inequality becomes strictly positive; let $\sigma_{0}$ be such a number.
On account of Lemma 3.3, we may choose $\rho_{0} \in(0,1)$ such that

$$
\rho_{0}<C\left\|u_{\sigma_{0}}\right\|^{p} \quad\left(\leq \mathcal{A}\left(u_{\sigma_{0}}\right)\right)
$$

and

$$
\begin{equation*}
\frac{\sup \left\{\mathcal{F}(u): \mathcal{A}(u)<\rho_{0}\right\}}{\rho_{0}}<\frac{\left[F\left(s_{0}\right) \sigma_{0}^{N}-\max _{|t| \leq\left|s_{0}\right|}|F(t)|\left(1-\sigma_{0}^{N}\right)\right] R_{0}^{N} \omega_{N}}{2 \mathcal{A}\left(u_{\sigma_{0}}\right)} \tag{10}
\end{equation*}
$$

In Theorem B we choose $x_{1}=u_{\sigma_{0}}$ and $x_{0}=0$ and observe that the hypotheses (i) and (ii) are satisfied. We define

$$
\begin{equation*}
\bar{a}=\frac{1+\rho_{0}}{\frac{\mathcal{F}\left(u_{0}\right)}{\mathcal{A}\left(u_{\sigma_{0}}\right)}-\frac{\sup \left\{\mathcal{F}(u): \mathcal{A}(u)<\rho_{0}\right\}}{\rho_{0}}} . \tag{11}
\end{equation*}
$$

Taking into account Lemmas 3.1 and 3.2, all the assumptions of Theorem B are verified.
Thus there exist an open interval $\Lambda \subset[0, \bar{a}]$ and a number $\mu>0$ such that for each $\lambda \in \Lambda$, the equation $\mathcal{E}_{\lambda}^{\prime}(u)=\mathcal{A}^{\prime}(u)-\lambda \mathcal{F}^{\prime}(u)=0$ admits at least three solutions in $W_{0}^{1, p}(\Omega)$ having $W_{0}^{1, p}(\Omega)$-norms less than $\mu$. This concludes the proof.

Remark 4.1. A natural question arises when the interval $\Lambda$ is obtained in Theorem 2.1: can we estimate it? In order to give such an estimation, let us fix $s_{0}, R_{0}$, and $\sigma_{0}$ as before. Due to (9) and (10), we have

$$
\frac{\sup \left\{\mathcal{F}(u): \mathcal{A}(u)<\rho_{0}\right\}}{\rho_{0}}<\frac{\mathcal{F}\left(u_{\sigma_{0}}\right)}{2 \mathcal{A}\left(u_{\sigma_{0}}\right)} .
$$

Thus, according to (11) and $\rho_{0}<1$, one has $\bar{a}<\frac{4 \mathcal{A}\left(u_{\sigma_{0}}\right)}{\mathcal{F}\left(u_{\sigma_{0}}\right)}$. Using $\mathrm{H}(\mathrm{a})$ (a), (b), we have

$$
\mathcal{A}\left(u_{\sigma_{0}}\right) \leq c_{1}\left(\operatorname{meas}(\Omega)^{1-1 / p}\left\|u_{\sigma_{0}}\right\|+\left\|u_{\sigma_{0}}\right\|^{p}\right)
$$

In conclusion, invoking now (8) and (9), we have

$$
\Lambda \subset[0, \bar{a}] \subset\left[0, \frac{4 c_{1}\left(\operatorname{meas}(\Omega)^{1-1 / p} C\left(s_{0}, \sigma_{0}\right) R_{0}^{N / p-N-1} \omega_{N}^{1 / p-1}+C\left(s_{0}, \sigma_{0}\right)^{p} R_{0}^{-p}\right)}{F\left(s_{0}\right) \sigma_{0}^{N}-\max _{|t| \leq\left|s_{0}\right|}|F(t)|\left(1-\sigma_{0}^{N}\right)}\right],
$$

where

$$
C\left(s_{0}, \sigma_{0}\right)=\frac{\left|s_{0}\right|\left(1-\sigma_{0}^{N}\right)^{1 / p}}{1-\sigma_{0}}
$$

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