Research Article

Existence Results for Constrained Quasivariational Inequalities

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We deal with a constrained quasivariational inequality under a general form. We study existence of solutions in two situations depending on whether the set of constraints is bounded or possibly unbounded.

1. Introduction and Statement of Main Results

Let X be a real reflexive and separable Banach space assumed to be compactly embedded in a Banach space Y . We denote by X^* the dual space of X , by Y^* the dual space of Y , by $\langle \cdot, \cdot \rangle_X$ the duality brackets between X^* and X , by $\langle \cdot, \cdot \rangle_Y$ the duality brackets between Y^* and Y , by $\| \cdot \|_X$ the norm of X , and by $\| \cdot \|_Y$ the norm of Y . Given a function $\psi : X \rightarrow \mathbb{R} \cup \{+\infty\}$, we denote by $D(\psi) := \{x \in X : \psi(x) < +\infty\}$ the effective domain of ψ .

In this paper we deal with the following problem

Find $u \in K$ such that $(u, u) \in D(\Phi)$,

$$\langle Au, v - u \rangle_X + \Phi(u, v) - \Phi(u, u) + J^0(u; v - u) \geq \langle f, v - u \rangle_X, \quad \forall v \in K. \quad (1)$$

We describe the data entering problem (1):

- (i) $K \subset X$ is a nonempty, convex, closed subset;
- (ii) $A : X \rightarrow X^*$ is a (possibly nonlinear) operator;
- (iii) $\Phi : X \times X \rightarrow \mathbb{R} \cup \{+\infty\}$ is such that, for all $\eta \in K$, the function $\Phi(\eta, \cdot) : X \rightarrow \mathbb{R} \cup \{+\infty\}$ is convex with $K \cap D(\Phi(\eta, \cdot)) \neq \emptyset$; moreover, we will denote by $\partial\Phi(\eta, \cdot)$ the convex subdifferential of $\Phi(\eta, \cdot)$; that is,

$$\begin{aligned} \partial\Phi(\eta, u) &= \{w \in X^* : \Phi(\eta, v) - \Phi(\eta, u) \\ &\geq \langle w, v - u \rangle_X, \forall v \in X\}; \end{aligned} \quad (2)$$

- (iv) $J : Y \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ is a locally Lipschitz function, and the notation J^0 stands for its generalized directional derivative in the sense of Clarke [1]; that is,

$$\begin{aligned} J^0(u; v) &= \limsup_{\substack{w \rightarrow u \\ \lambda \rightarrow 0^+}} \frac{J(w + \lambda v) - J(w)}{\lambda}, \quad \forall u, v \in Y. \end{aligned} \quad (3)$$

In addition, we will denote by ∂J the generalized gradient of J ; that is,

$$\begin{aligned} \partial J(u) &= \{w \in Y^* : J^0(u; v) \geq \langle w, v \rangle_Y, \forall v \in Y\}, \quad \forall u \in Y; \end{aligned} \quad (4)$$

- (v) $f \in X^*$.

Problem (1) is called a constrained quasivariational problem. Typically, we can choose X to be the Sobolev space $(H_0^1(\Omega), \|\nabla \cdot\|_{L^2(\Omega)})$ defined as the closure of $C_c^\infty(\Omega)$ in $H^1(\Omega)$ for a bounded domain $\Omega \subset \mathbb{R}^N$ ($N \geq 1$), Y to be the Lebesgue space $L^p(\Omega)$ for $1 \leq p < 2^*$ (where $2^* = +\infty$ if $N \in \{1, 2\}$ and $2^* = 2N/(N - 2)$ if $N \geq 3$), $K = \{u \in H_0^1(\Omega) : u \geq 0 \text{ a.e. in } \Omega\}$, $A = -\Delta$ (the negative Laplacian operator), $\Phi(u, v) = \int_\Omega g(u, v)dx$ where $g : \mathbb{R}^2 \rightarrow \mathbb{R}_+$ is convex in the second variable (then $D(\Phi) = \{(u, v) \in H_0^1(\Omega) \times H_0^1(\Omega) : g(u, v) \in L^1(\Omega)\}$), and

$J(u) = \int_{\Omega} j(x, u(x)) dx$ where $j : \Omega \times \mathbb{R} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ is locally Lipschitz in the second variable. Constrained quasivariational problems were extensively studied; we refer, for example, to [2–5] and to the references therein. We point out three aspects which make our approach natural and general. First, we deal with the general setting of a pair of Banach spaces (X, Y) instead of focusing on spaces of functions; in particular, our results can be applied to problems with different boundary conditions. Second, the set of constraints K may be unbounded. Third, the form of the studied problem allows both variational and hemivariational constraints as it involves both a convex term $\Phi(u, \cdot)$ and a generalized directional derivative J^0 ; this type of problems models important processes in mechanics and engineering (see [6, 7]).

In this paper, we consider the following hypotheses on the data described above:

(H_1) for every sequence $\{u_n\}_{n \geq 1} \subset K$ with $u_n \rightharpoonup u$ in X , for some $u \in K$, one has

$$\begin{aligned} & \langle Au, u - v \rangle_X \\ & \leq \limsup_{n \rightarrow \infty} \langle Au_n, u_n - v \rangle_X, \quad \forall v \in K; \end{aligned} \quad (5)$$

(H_2) whenever $\{(\eta_n, u_n)\}_{n \geq 1} \subset (K \times K) \cap D(\Phi)$, $\eta_n \rightharpoonup \eta$ in X , $u_n \rightharpoonup u$ in X , one has $(\eta, u) \in (K \times K) \cap D(\Phi)$ and

$$\begin{aligned} & \limsup_{n \rightarrow \infty} (\Phi(\eta_n, v) - \Phi(\eta_n, u_n)) \\ & \leq \Phi(\eta, v) - \Phi(\eta, u), \quad \forall v \in K; \end{aligned} \quad (6)$$

(H_3) given $\eta \in K$, if $u_1, u_2 \in K$ satisfy $(\eta, u_1) \in D(\Phi)$, $(\eta, u_2) \in D(\Phi)$ and

$$\begin{aligned} & J^0(\eta; u_2 - u_1) + J^0(\eta; u_1 - u_2) \\ & \geq \langle Au_2 - Au_1, u_2 - u_1 \rangle_X, \end{aligned} \quad (7)$$

then $u_1 = u_2$.

Remark 1. We emphasize certain situations when hypotheses (H_1)–(H_3) are satisfied.

(a) Hypothesis (H_1) is satisfied, for instance, if A is weakly strongly continuous, that is, A is continuous from X endowed with the weak topology to X^* endowed with the norm topology.

(b) Note that (H_1) is satisfied, for instance, for $X = H_0^1(\Omega)$, any closed, convex subset $K \subset X$, and $A : H_0^1(\Omega) \rightarrow H_0^1(\Omega)^*$ defined by $A = -\Delta$, where $\Delta : H_0^1(\Omega) \rightarrow H_0^1(\Omega)^*$ is the Laplacian operator, with $\Omega \subset \mathbb{R}^N$ ($N \geq 1$) a bounded domain. Indeed, let a sequence $\{u_n\}_{n \geq 1} \subset K$ with $u_n \rightharpoonup u$ in

$H_0^1(\Omega)$, for some $u \in K$. Using the weak lower semicontinuity of the norm, we can write

$$\begin{aligned} \limsup_{n \rightarrow \infty} \langle -\Delta u_n, u_n - v \rangle &= \limsup_{n \rightarrow \infty} \left(\|u_n\|_{H_0^1(\Omega)}^2 - (u_n, v)_{H_0^1(\Omega)} \right) \\ &\geq \liminf_{n \rightarrow \infty} \|u_n\|_{H_0^1(\Omega)}^2 - (u, v)_{H_0^1(\Omega)} \\ &\geq \|u\|_{H_0^1(\Omega)}^2 - (u, v)_{H_0^1(\Omega)} \\ &= \langle -\Delta u, u - v \rangle \end{aligned} \quad (8)$$

for all $v \in H_0^1(\Omega)$. Here, $\langle \cdot, \cdot \rangle$ are the duality brackets for the pair $(H_0^1(\Omega)^*, H_0^1(\Omega))$ and $(u, v)_{H_0^1(\Omega)} = \int_{\Omega} \nabla u \cdot \nabla v dx$ denotes the scalar product on $H_0^1(\Omega)$. Whence (H_1) holds in this case.

(c) Hypothesis (H_2) is fulfilled in the case where Φ is sequentially weakly lower semicontinuous, $D(\Phi)$ is weakly closed, and $\Phi(\cdot, u)$ is weakly strongly continuous on its effective domain for all $u \in X$.

(d) If A is strongly monotone, that is, there exists a constant $m > 0$ such that

$$\langle Au_2 - Au_1, u_2 - u_1 \rangle_X \geq m \|u_1 - u_2\|_X^2, \quad \forall u_1, u_2 \in K, \quad (9)$$

and ∂J is bounded on K in the sense that

$$\|\zeta\|_{Y^*} \leq c \|u\|_Y, \quad \forall \zeta \in \partial J(u), \quad \forall u \in K, \quad (10)$$

with a positive constant $c < m/(2\bar{c})$, where $\bar{c} > 0$ is the best constant satisfying $\|u\|_Y \leq \bar{c} \|u\|_X$, for all $u \in X$ (which exists by the continuity of the embedding of X in Y), then condition (H_3) is satisfied.

(e) If A is strictly monotone and J is Gâteaux differentiable and regular (see [1, Definition 2.3.4]), then condition (H_3) is satisfied. In particular, if A is strictly monotone and J is continuously differentiable, then (H_3) is satisfied.

In this paper, we distinguish two cases depending on whether the set K is bounded or not necessarily bounded. The following result concerns the former situation.

Theorem 2. Assume that conditions (H_1)–(H_3) are satisfied and that the closed, convex set K is bounded in X . Then problem (1) has at least one solution.

Remark 3. Note that the existence of a solution of problem (1), which is the conclusion of Theorem 2, forces the intersection $\text{diag}(K) \cap D(\Phi)$ to be nonempty, where the notation $\text{diag}(K)$ stands for the diagonal of the set K ; that is, $\text{diag}(K) = \{(v, v) : v \in K\}$. The nonemptiness of this intersection is not directly implied by the hypotheses (H_1)–(H_3), nor by the assumption made that $K \cap D(\Phi(\eta, \cdot)) \neq \emptyset$ for all $\eta \in K$. However, Theorem 4 below incorporates hypothesis (H_4) which assumes in particular that $\text{diag}(K) \cap D(\Phi) \neq \emptyset$.

Now, we deal with the case where K is not assumed to be bounded. In this case, we additionally suppose the following:

(H_4) there exist an element $v_0 \in K$ with $(\eta, v_0) \in D(\Phi)$ for all $\eta \in K$ and a real $p \geq 1$ such that

$$\limsup_{\|w\|_X \rightarrow \infty} \frac{\langle Aw, w - v_0 \rangle_X}{\|w\|_X^p} = +\infty; \quad (11)$$

(H_5) there exists a constant $c_0 > 0$ such that we have

$$\begin{aligned} & \langle z, v_0 - u \rangle_X \\ & \leq c_0 (1 + \|u\|_X^p), \quad \forall z \in \partial\Phi(u, \cdot)(v_0), \end{aligned} \quad (12)$$

$$\|z\|_{Y^*} \leq c_0 (1 + \|u\|_Y^{p-1}), \quad \forall z \in \partial J(u),$$

for all $u \in K$ with $(u, u) \in D(\Phi)$, where v_0 and $p \geq 1$ are as in (H_4).

We state now our main result for problem (1) dealing with the case where the set K is possibly unbounded.

Theorem 4. Assume that conditions (H_1)–(H_5) are satisfied. Then problem (1) has at least a solution.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. In Section 2, we present the proof of Theorem 2, where we apply a version of the Schauder fixed point theorem. In Section 3, we give the proof of Theorem 4, which is actually based on Theorem 2.

2. Proof of Theorem 2

For each $\eta \in K$, we consider the auxiliary problem

$$\begin{aligned} & \text{Find } u \in K \text{ such that } (\eta, u) \in D(\Phi), \\ & \langle Au, v - u \rangle_X + \Phi(\eta, v) - \Phi(\eta, u) + J^0(\eta; v - u) \\ & \geq \langle f, v - u \rangle_X, \quad \forall v \in K. \end{aligned} \quad (13)$$

Our first purpose, accomplished in Lemma 6 below, is to show that problem (13) has a unique solution. To do this, we need Fan's lemma (see [8, page 208]) which we recall in the following statement.

Theorem 5. Let W be a Hausdorff topological vector space, let Z be a nonempty subset of W , and let $F : Z \rightarrow 2^W$ be such that

- (i) $F(x)$ is a nonempty, closed subset of W , for all $x \in Z$;
- (ii) $\text{conv}\{x_1, \dots, x_n\} \subset \bigcup_{i=1}^n F(x_i)$ for all $\{x_1, \dots, x_n\} \subset Z$;
- (iii) there is $\bar{x} \in Z$ for which $F(\bar{x})$ is compact.

Then $\bigcap_{x \in Z} F(x) \neq \emptyset$.

Lemma 6. Assume that hypotheses (H_1)–(H_3) are fulfilled and that the closed, convex set K is bounded in X . Then, for every $\eta \in K$, problem (13) has a unique solution.

Proof. Fix $\eta \in K$. Consider the set-valued mapping $G : K \cap D(\Phi(\eta, \cdot)) \rightarrow 2^X$ defined by

$$\begin{aligned} G(v) = \{u \in K \cap D(\Phi(\eta, \cdot)) : & \langle Au - f, u - v \rangle_X \\ & - J^0(\eta; v - u) \\ & + \Phi(\eta, u) - \Phi(\eta, v) \leq 0\} \end{aligned} \quad (14)$$

for all $v \in K \cap D(\Phi(\eta, \cdot))$. We show that the assumptions of Theorem 5 are satisfied for $W = X$ endowed with the weak topology, $Z = K \cap D(\Phi(\eta, \cdot))$, and $F = G$.

For every $v \in K \cap D(\Phi(\eta, \cdot))$, we clearly have $v \in G(v)$; hence $G(v)$ is nonempty.

We check that $G(v)$ is weakly compact for every $v \in K \cap D(\Phi(\eta, \cdot))$. To this end, we first prove that $G(v)$ is sequentially weakly closed in X . Let a sequence $\{u_n\}_{n \geq 1} \subset G(v)$ with $u_n \rightharpoonup u$ in X , for some $u \in X$. Taking into account that X is compactly embedded in Y it follows that $u_n \rightarrow u$ in Y . Using the first part of assumption (H_2), we have that $u \in K \cap D(\Phi(\eta, \cdot))$. As $u_n \in G(v)$, we know that

$$\begin{aligned} & \langle Au_n, u_n - v \rangle_X \\ & \leq \langle f, u_n - v \rangle_X + J^0(\eta; v - u_n) + \Phi(\eta, v) - \Phi(\eta, u_n). \end{aligned} \quad (15)$$

Passing to the lim sup as $n \rightarrow \infty$, we find

$$\begin{aligned} & \limsup_{n \rightarrow \infty} \langle Au_n, u_n - v \rangle_X \\ & \leq \langle f, u - v \rangle_X + J^0(\eta; v - u) + \Phi(\eta, v) - \Phi(\eta, u). \end{aligned} \quad (16)$$

Here we made use of the weak convergence $u_n \rightharpoonup u$ in X , the continuity of $J^0(\eta; \cdot)$ on Y , and the second part of (H_2). Combining with (H_1), we obtain that $u \in G(v)$, thereby $G(v)$ is sequentially weakly closed in X .

Using that X is reflexive and separable and K is bounded, convex, and closed, we deduce that K is metrizable and weakly compact (see, e.g., [9, pages 44–50]). Since $G(v) \subset K$ and using that $G(v)$ is sequentially weakly closed, we derive that $G(v)$ is weakly compact whenever $v \in K \cap D(\Phi(\eta, \cdot))$. Therefore conditions (i) and (iii) in Theorem 5 are fulfilled.

We focus now on the verification of condition (ii) in Theorem 5. Arguing by contradiction, we suppose that there exist $v_1, \dots, v_n \in K \cap D(\Phi(\eta, \cdot))$ and $u_0 \in \text{conv}\{v_1, \dots, v_n\}$ such that $u_0 \notin \bigcup_{i=1}^n G(v_i)$. The convexity of the set K and of the function $\Phi(\eta, \cdot)$ ensures that $u_0 \in K \cap D(\Phi(\eta, \cdot))$. Then the assertion that $u_0 \notin \bigcup_{i=1}^n G(v_i)$ reads as

$$\begin{aligned} & \langle Au_0 - f, u_0 - v_i \rangle_X - J^0(\eta; v_i - u_0) \\ & + \Phi(\eta, u_0) - \Phi(\eta, v_i) > 0, \quad \forall i \in \{1, \dots, n\}. \end{aligned} \quad (17)$$

Let

$$\begin{aligned} \Lambda := \{v \in D(\Phi(\eta, \cdot)) : \langle Au_0 - f, u_0 - v \rangle_X \\ - J^0(\eta; v - u_0) \\ + \Phi(\eta, u_0) - \Phi(\eta, v) > 0\}. \end{aligned} \quad (18)$$

It is clear that $v_i \in \Lambda$ for all $i \in \{1, \dots, n\}$. The convexity of the functions $\Phi(\eta, \cdot)$ and $J^0(\eta; \cdot)$ implies that Λ is a convex subset in X . We infer that $\text{conv}\{v_1, \dots, v_n\} \subset \Lambda$, so $u_0 \in \Lambda$, which is obviously impossible. This contradiction justifies condition (ii) in Theorem 5. Thus all the assumptions of Theorem 5 are satisfied.

Applying Theorem 5, we obtain

$$\bigcap_{v \in K \cap D(\Phi(\eta, \cdot))} G(v) \neq \emptyset. \quad (19)$$

This ensures the existence of an element $u \in K \cap D(\Phi(\eta, \cdot))$ satisfying

$$\begin{aligned} \langle Au, v - u \rangle_X + \Phi(\eta, v) - \Phi(\eta, u) \\ + J^0(\eta; v - u) \geq \langle f, v - u \rangle_X \end{aligned} \quad (20)$$

for all $v \in K \cap D(\Phi(\eta, \cdot))$. The above inequality being also satisfied if $v \notin D(\Phi(\eta, \cdot))$, we conclude that u is a solution of problem (13).

It remains to show that the solution of problem (13) is unique. If $u_1, u_2 \in K$ are solutions of (13), then we have that $(\eta, u_1) \in D(\Phi)$, $(\eta, u_2) \in D(\Phi)$, and

$$\begin{aligned} \langle Au_1, v - u_1 \rangle_X + \Phi(\eta, v) - \Phi(\eta, u_1) \\ + J^0(\eta; v - u_1) \geq \langle f, v - u_1 \rangle_X, \quad \forall v \in K, \\ \langle Au_2, v - u_2 \rangle_X + \Phi(\eta, v) - \Phi(\eta, u_2) \\ + J^0(\eta; v - u_2) \geq \langle f, v - u_2 \rangle_X, \quad \forall v \in K. \end{aligned} \quad (21)$$

Letting $v = u_2$ in the first inequality and $v = u_1$ in the second one and then adding the obtained relations, we arrive at

$$\begin{aligned} \langle Au_1 - Au_2, u_2 - u_1 \rangle_X + J^0(\eta; u_2 - u_1) \\ + J^0(\eta; u_1 - u_2) \geq 0. \end{aligned} \quad (22)$$

By assumption (H_3) , we conclude that $u_1 = u_2$. The proof is complete. $\square$

Denote by $u_\eta \in K$ the unique solution of problem (13) corresponding to $\eta \in K$. Lemma 6 guarantees that u_η exists and is unique. We define $\pi : K \rightarrow K$ by

$$\pi(\eta) = u_\eta, \quad \forall \eta \in K. \quad (23)$$

Lemma 7. Assume that hypotheses (H_1) – (H_3) are fulfilled and that the closed, convex set K is bounded in X . Then, the map $\pi : K \rightarrow K$ given in (23) is sequentially weakly continuous.

Proof. Let a sequence $\{\eta_n\}_{n \geq 1} \subset K$ such that $\eta_n \rightharpoonup \eta$ in X for some $\eta \in K$. We need to show that $\pi(\eta_n) \rightharpoonup \pi(\eta)$ as $n \rightarrow \infty$. To do this, it suffices to check that, for any relabeled subsequence $\{\eta_n\}_{n \geq 1}$, there is a subsequence of $\{\pi(\eta_n)\}_{n \geq 1}$ weakly converging to $\pi(\eta)$.

By the compactness of the embedding of X in Y , we have that $\eta_n \rightarrow \eta$ in Y . Denote, for simplicity, $\pi(\eta_n) = u_n$. The definition of π yields $(\eta_n, u_n) \in D(\Phi)$ and

$$\begin{aligned} \langle Au_n, u_n - v \rangle_X \\ \leq \Phi(\eta_n, v) - \Phi(\eta_n, u_n) + J^0(\eta_n; v - u_n) \\ + \langle f, u_n - v \rangle_X, \quad \forall v \in K. \end{aligned} \quad (24)$$

Since K is bounded, $\{u_n\}_{n \geq 1} \subset K$ and X is reflexive, we know that along a subsequence, denoted again by $\{u_n\}_{n \geq 1}$, we have

$$u_n \rightharpoonup w \quad \text{in } X \text{ as } n \rightarrow \infty, \quad (25)$$

for some $w \in X$. The first part of (H_2) yields $(\eta, w) \in (K \times K) \cap D(\Phi)$. Moreover, the compactness of the embedding of X in Y implies that $u_n \rightarrow w$ in Y . Letting $n \rightarrow \infty$ in (24), by means of (H_1) , (H_2) , the convergences $\eta_n \rightarrow \eta$ and $u_n \rightarrow w$ in Y , and the upper semicontinuity of $J^0(\cdot; \cdot)$ on $Y \times Y$, we get

$$\begin{aligned} \langle Aw, w - v \rangle_X &\leq \limsup_{n \rightarrow \infty} \langle Au_n, u_n - v \rangle_X \\ &\leq \limsup_{n \rightarrow \infty} (\Phi(\eta_n, v) - \Phi(\eta_n, u_n)) \\ &\quad + \limsup_{n \rightarrow \infty} J^0(\eta_n; v - u_n) + \langle f, w - v \rangle_X \\ &\leq \Phi(\eta, v) - \Phi(\eta, w) + J^0(\eta; v - w) \\ &\quad + \langle f, w - v \rangle_X, \quad \forall v \in K. \end{aligned} \quad (26)$$

This means that $w \in K$ is a solution of problem (13). Lemma 6 ensures that w is the unique solution of (13). Thus, by (23), we have $\pi(\eta) = w$. Taking into account (25), it follows that $\pi(\eta_n) \rightharpoonup \pi(\eta)$ as $n \rightarrow \infty$ up to a subsequence. This completes the proof. $\square$

Remark 8. As noted in the proof of Lemma 6, the closed, bounded, convex subset $K \subset X$ is metrizable for the weak topology. Therefore, Lemma 7 implies that π is weakly continuous.

We need the following version of the Schauder fixed point theorem (see [10, page 452]).

Theorem 9. Suppose that

- (i) X is a reflexive, separable Banach space;
- (ii) the map $T : M \subset X \rightarrow M$ is sequentially weakly continuous;
- (iii) the set M is nonempty, closed, bounded, and convex.

Then T has a fixed point.

We are now in position to prove Theorem 2.

Proof of Theorem 2. In view of Lemma 7 and the assumptions on X and K , we may apply Theorem 9 which shows that the map $\pi : K \rightarrow K$ admits a fixed point $u \in K$; that is, $\pi(u) = u$. Using the definition of π (see (23)), we deduce that $u \in K$ is a solution of problem (1). $\square$

3. Proof of Theorem 4

It suffices to prove Theorem 4 when the set K is unbounded because for a bounded set K the result is true according to Theorem 2. Let $K_m = \{x \in K : \|x\|_X \leq m\}$. Let $m_0 \geq 1$ be an integer such that $\|v_0\|_X \leq m_0$, where v_0 is the element entering (H_4) . We claim that Theorem 2 can be applied with K replaced by K_m whenever $m \geq m_0$.

Note that $v_0 \in K_{m_0}$, so $v_0 \in K_m \cap D(\Phi(\eta, \cdot))$ for all $\eta \in K$, all $m \geq m_0$ (using the first part of (H_4)). Thus, $K_m \cap D(\Phi(\eta, \cdot)) \neq \emptyset$ for all $\eta \in K_m$, all $m \geq m_0$. Since K is convex and closed in X , it turns out that K_m is convex, closed, and bounded in X , for all $m \geq m_0$.

We check that assumptions (H_1) – (H_3) of Theorem 2 remain valid when K is replaced by K_m with $m \geq m_0$. Towards this, we fix some $m \geq m_0$. If $\{(\eta_n, u_n)\}_{n \geq 1} \subset (K_m \times K_m) \cap D(\Phi)$ satisfies $\eta_n \rightarrow \eta$ in X and $u_n \rightarrow u$ in X , then assumption (H_2) (for K) implies $(\eta, u) \in (K \times K) \cap D(\Phi)$. On the other hand, the weak convergences ensure that

$$\|\eta\|_X \leq \liminf_{n \rightarrow \infty} \|\eta_n\|_X \leq m, \quad \|u\|_X \leq \liminf_{n \rightarrow \infty} \|u_n\|_X \leq m. \quad (27)$$

Hence, $(\eta, u) \in (K_m \times K_m) \cap D(\Phi)$. The second part of (H_2) for K_m and conditions (H_1) and (H_3) for K_m hold because (H_1) , (H_2) , and (H_3) have been imposed for K , which contains K_m . Thus it is permitted to apply Theorem 2 for K_m in place of K , with any $m \geq m_0$.

Applying Theorem 2, we find a sequence $\{u_m\}_{m \geq m_0}$ in X such that $u_m \in K_m$, $(u_m, u_m) \in D(\Phi)$, and

$$\begin{aligned} \langle Au_m, v - u_m \rangle_X + \Phi(u_m, v) - \Phi(u_m, u_m) \\ + J^0(u_m; v - u_m) \geq \langle f, v - u_m \rangle_X \end{aligned} \quad (28)$$

for all $v \in K_m$, all $m \geq m_0$. Letting $v = v_0$ (see (H_4)) in (28), we obtain

$$\begin{aligned} \langle Au_m, u_m - v_0 \rangle_X \leq \Phi(u_m, v_0) - \Phi(u_m, u_m) \\ + J^0(u_m; v_0 - u_m) + \langle f, u_m - v_0 \rangle_X \end{aligned} \quad (29)$$

for all $m \geq m_0$. By the definition of the convex subdifferential $\partial\Phi(u_m, \cdot)$, we have

$$\begin{aligned} \Phi(u_m, v_0) - \Phi(u_m, u_m) \\ \leq \langle z, v_0 - u_m \rangle_X, \quad \forall z \in \partial\Phi(u_m, \cdot)(v_0), \quad \forall m \geq m_0. \end{aligned} \quad (30)$$

Then, invoking the growth condition for $\partial\Phi(u_m, \cdot)(v_0)$ in (H_5) , we see that

$$\Phi(u_m, v_0) - \Phi(u_m, u_m) \leq c_0 (1 + \|u_m\|_X^p), \quad \forall m \geq m_0. \quad (31)$$

Recall that

$$J^0(u; v) = \max_{w \in \partial J(u)} \langle w, v \rangle_Y, \quad \forall u, v \in Y \quad (32)$$

(see [1, Proposition 2.1.2(b)]). This fact combined with the growth condition for the generalized gradient $\partial J(u_m)$ as stated in (H_5) enables us to write

$$\begin{aligned} J^0(u_m; v_0 - u_m) &= \max_{w \in \partial J(u_m)} \langle w, v_0 - u_m \rangle_Y \\ &\leq c_0 (1 + \|u_m\|_Y^{p-1}) \|v_0 - u_m\|_Y \end{aligned} \quad (33)$$

for all $m \geq m_0$. By the continuity of the embedding $X \subset Y$, the inequality above leads to

$$\begin{aligned} J^0(u_m; v_0 - u_m) \\ \leq c_1 (1 + \|u_m\|_X^{p-1}) \|v_0 - u_m\|_X, \quad \forall m \geq m_0, \end{aligned} \quad (34)$$

where $c_1 > 0$ is a constant. Combining (29), (31), and (34) yields

$$\begin{aligned} \langle Au_m, u_m - v_0 \rangle_X \\ \leq c_0 (1 + \|u_m\|_X^p) + [c_1 (1 + \|u_m\|_X^{p-1}) + \|f\|_{X^*}] \|v_0 - u_m\|_X \end{aligned} \quad (35)$$

for all $m \geq m_0$. Relation (35) ensures that the sequence $\{u_m\}_{m \geq m_0}$ is bounded in X ; indeed, if we suppose that we have $\|u_m\|_X \rightarrow +\infty$ along a (relabelled) subsequence, then it is seen from (35) that there is a constant $c > 0$ such that

$$\limsup_{m \rightarrow \infty} \frac{\langle Au_m, u_m - v_0 \rangle_X}{\|u_m\|_X^p} \leq c, \quad (36)$$

which contradicts hypothesis (H_4) .

By the reflexivity of X , there exists a subsequence of $\{u_m\}_{m \geq m_0}$, denoted again by $\{u_m\}_{m \geq m_0}$, such that

$$u_m \rightharpoonup u \quad \text{in } X \text{ as } m \rightarrow \infty, \quad (37)$$

for some $u \in X$. Using hypothesis (H_2) with $\eta_m = u_m$, we derive that $(u, u) \in (K \times K) \cap D(\Phi)$.

It remains to show that u verifies the inequality in problem (1). Let an arbitrary element $v \in K$ and let $m_1 = m_1(v) \in \mathbb{N}$ such that $m_1 \geq \max\{m_0, \|v\|_X\}$. Then $v \in K_m$ for each $m \geq m_1$ and so from (28), we have that

$$\begin{aligned} \langle Au_m, u_m - v \rangle_X \leq \Phi(u_m, v) - \Phi(u_m, u_m) \\ + J^0(u_m; v - u_m) + \langle f, u_m - v \rangle_X. \end{aligned} \quad (38)$$

The compactness of the embedding $X \subset Y$ and (37) guarantee that $u_m \rightarrow u$ in Y as $m \rightarrow \infty$. Then the upper semicontinuity of $J^0(\cdot; \cdot)$ on $Y \times Y$ implies

$$\limsup_{m \rightarrow \infty} J^0(u_m; v - u_m) \leq J^0(u; v - u). \quad (39)$$

Assumptions (H_1) and (H_2) ensure that

$$\begin{aligned} \langle Au, u - v \rangle_X &\leq \limsup_{m \rightarrow \infty} \langle Au_m, u_m - v \rangle_X, \\ \limsup_{m \rightarrow \infty} (\Phi(u_m, v) - \Phi(u_m, u_m)) &\leq \Phi(u, v) - \Phi(u, u). \end{aligned} \quad (40)$$

Passing to the $\limsup$ as $m \rightarrow \infty$ in (38) and using (39) and (40), we get that $u \in K$ satisfies the inequality in (1). Since v was chosen arbitrarily in K , we conclude that u solves problem (1). The proof of Theorem 4 is complete.

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