2007 Conference on Variational and Topological Methods: Theory, Applications, Numerical Simulations, and Open Problems. *Electronic Journal of Differential Equations*, Conference 18 (2010), pp. 15–22.
ISSN: 1072-6691. URL: http://ejde.math.txstate.edu or http://ejde.math.unt.edu
ftp ejde.math.txstate.edu

ON THE NUMBER OF NODAL SOLUTIONS FOR A NONLINEAR ELLIPTIC PROBLEM ON SYMMETRIC RIEMANNIAN MANIFOLDS

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ABSTRACT. We consider the problem

$$-\varepsilon^2\Delta_g u + u = |u|^{p-2}u$$

in a symmetric Riemannian manifold (M, g). We give a multiplicity result for antisymmetric changing sign solutions.

1. INTRODUCTION

Let (M, g) be a smooth connected compact Riemannian manifold of finite dimension $n \geq 2$ embedded in $\mathbb{R}^N$. We consider the problem

$$-\varepsilon^2\Delta_g u + u = |u|^{p-2}u \text{ in } M, \quad u \in H_g^1(M) \tag{1.1}$$

where $2 < p < 2* = \frac{2N}{N-2}$, if $N \geq 3$.

Here $H_g^1(M)$ is the completion of $C^\infty(M)$ with respect to

$$\|u\|_g^2 = \int_M |\nabla_g u|^2 + u^2 d\mu_g \tag{1.2}$$

It is well known that the problem (1.1) has a mountain pass solution u_ε. In [3] the authors showed that u_ε has a spike layer and its peak point converges to the maximum point of the scalar curvature of M as ε goes to 0.

Recently there have been some results on the influence of the topology and the geometry of M on the number of solutions of the problem. In [1] the authors proved that, if M has a rich topology, problem (1.1) has multiple solutions. More precisely they show that problem (1.1) has at least $\operatorname{cat}(M) + 1$ positive nontrivial solutions for ε small enough. Here $\operatorname{cat}(M)$ is the Lusternik-Schnirelmann category of M. In [17] there is the same result for a more general nonlinearity. Furthermore in [9] it was shown that the number of solution is influenced by the topology of a suitable subset of M depending on the geometry of M. To point out the role of the geometry in finding solutions of problem (1.1), in [13] it was shown that for any stable critical

2000 *Mathematics Subject Classification.* 35J60, 58G03.
Key words and phrases. Riemannian manifolds; nodal solutions; topological methods.

Published July 10, 2010.

point of the scalar curvature it is possible to build positive single peak solutions. The peak of these solutions approaches such a critical point as ε goes to zero.

Successively in [6] the authors build positive k-peak solutions whose peaks collapse to an isolated local minimum point of the scalar curvature as ε goes to zero.

The first result on sign changing solution is in [12] where it is showed the existence of a solution with one positive peak η_1^ε and one negative peak η_2^ε such that, as ε goes to zero, the scalar curvature $S_g(\eta_1^\varepsilon)$ (respectively $S_g(\eta_2^\varepsilon)$) goes to the minimum (resp. maximum) of the scalar curvature when the scalar curvature of (M,g) is non constant. Here we give a multiplicity result for changing sign solutions when the Riemannian manifold (M,g) is symmetric.

We look for solutions of the problem

$$\begin{gathered} -\varepsilon^2\Delta_g u + u = |u|^{p-2}u \quad u \in H_g^1(M); \\ u(\tau x) = -u(x) \quad \forall x \in M, \end{gathered} \tag{1.3}$$

where $\tau : \mathbb{R}^N \to \mathbb{R}^N$ is an orthogonal linear transformation such that $\tau \neq \mathrm{Id}$, $\tau^2 = \mathrm{Id}$, Id being the identity of $\mathbb{R}^N$. Here M is a compact connected Riemannian manifold of dimension $n \geq 2$ and M is a regular submanifold of $\mathbb{R}^N$ which is invariant with respect to τ. Let $M_\tau := \{x \in M : \tau x = x\}$ be the set of the fixed points with respect to the involution τ; in the case $M_\tau \neq \emptyset$ we assume that M_τ is a regular submanifold of M.

We obtain the following result.

Theorem 1.1. *The problem 1.3 has at least $G_\tau - \mathrm{cat}(M - M_\tau)$ pairs of solutions $(u,-u)$ which change sign (exactly once) for ε small enough*

Here $G_\tau - \mathrm{cat}$ is the G_τ-equivariant Lusternik Schnirelmann category for the group $G_\tau = \{\mathrm{Id}, \tau\}$.

In [4] the authors prove a result of this type for the Dirichlet problem

$$\begin{gathered} -\Delta u - \lambda u - |u|^{2^*-2}u = 0 \quad u \in H_0^1(\Omega); \\ u(\tau x) = -u(x). \end{gathered} \tag{1.4}$$

Here Ω is a bounded smooth domain invariant with respect to τ and λ is a positive parameter.

We point out that in the case of the unit sphere $S^{N-1} \subset \mathbb{R}^N$ (with the metric g induced by the metric of $\mathbb{R}^N$) the theorem of existence of changing sign solutions of [12] can not be used because it holds for manifold of non constant curvature. Instead, we can apply Theorem 1.1 to obtain sign changing solutions because we can consider $\tau = -\mathrm{Id}$, and we have $G_\tau - \mathrm{cat}\, S^{N-1} = N$.

Equation like (1.1) has been extensively studied in a flat bounded domain $\Omega \subset \mathbb{R}^N$. In particular, we would like to compare problem (1.1) with the following Neumann problem

$$\begin{gathered} -\varepsilon^2\Delta u + u = |u|^{p-2}u \quad \text{in } \Omega; \\ \frac{\partial u}{\partial \nu} = 0 \quad \text{in } \partial\Omega. \end{gathered} \tag{1.5}$$

Here Ω is a smooth bounded domain of $\mathbb{R}^N$ and ν is the unit outer normal to Ω. Problems (1.1) and (1.5) present many similarities. We recall some classical results about the Neumann problem.

In the fundamental papers [11, 14, 15], Lin, Ni and Takagi established the existence of least-energy solution to (1.5) and showed that for ε small enough the least energy solution has a boundary spike, which approaches the maximum point of the mean curvature H of $\partial\Omega$, as ε goes to zero. Later, in [16, 18] it was proved that for any stable critical point of the mean curvature of the boundary it is possible to construct single boundary spike layer solutions, while in [7, 19, 10] the authors construct multiple boundary spike solutions at multiple stable critical points of H. Finally, in [5, 8] the authors proved that for any integer K there exists a boundary K-peaks solutions, whose peaks collapse to a local minimum point of H.

2. Setting

We consider the functional defined on $H^1_g(M)$

$$J_\varepsilon(u) = \frac{1}{\varepsilon^N}\int_M \Big(\frac{1}{2}\varepsilon^2|\nabla_g u|^2 + \frac{1}{2}|u|^2 - \frac{1}{p}|u|^p\Big)d\mu_g. \tag{2.1}$$

It is well known that the critical points of $J_\varepsilon(u)$ constrained on the Nehari manifold

$$\mathcal{N}_\varepsilon = \big\{u \in H^1_g \setminus \{0\} : J'_\varepsilon(u)u = 0\big\} \tag{2.2}$$

are non trivial solution of problem (1.1).

The transformation $\tau : M \to M$ induces a transformation on H^1_g we define the linear operator τ^* as

$$\begin{aligned} \tau^* :& H^1_g(M) \to H^1_g(M) \\ & \tau^*(u(x)) = -u(\tau(x)) \end{aligned}$$

and τ^* is a selfadjoint operator with respect to the scalar product on $H^1_g(M)$

$$\langle u, v\rangle_\varepsilon = \frac{1}{\varepsilon^N}\int_M \big(\varepsilon^2\nabla_g u \cdot \nabla_g v + u \cdot v\big)d\mu_g. \tag{2.3}$$

Moreover, $\|\tau^* u\|_{L^p(M)} = \|u\|_{L^p(M)}$, and $\|\tau^* u\|_\varepsilon = \|u\|_\varepsilon$, thus $J_\varepsilon(\tau^* u) = J_\varepsilon(u)$. Then, for the Palais principle, the nontrivial solutions of (1.3) are the critical points of the restriction of J_ε to the τ-invariant Nehari manifold

$$\mathcal{N}^\tau_\varepsilon = \{u \in \mathcal{N}_\varepsilon : \tau^* u = u\} = \mathcal{N}_\varepsilon \cap H^\tau. \tag{2.4}$$

Here $H^\tau = \{u \in H^1_g : \tau^* u = u\}$.

In fact, since $J_\varepsilon(\tau^* u) = J_\varepsilon(u)$ and τ^* is a selfadjoint operator we have

$$\langle \nabla J_\varepsilon(\tau^* u), \tau^*\varphi\rangle_\varepsilon = \langle \nabla J_\varepsilon(u), \varphi\rangle_\varepsilon \quad \forall \varphi \in H^1_g(M). \tag{2.5}$$

Then $\nabla J_\varepsilon(u) = \tau^*\nabla J_\varepsilon(\tau^* u) = \tau^*\nabla J_\varepsilon(u)$ if $\tau^* u = u$. We set

$$m_\infty = \inf_{\int_{\mathbb{R}^N}|\nabla u|^2 + u^2 = \int_{\mathbb{R}^N}|u|^p} \frac{1}{2}\int_{\mathbb{R}^N}|\nabla u|^2 + u^2 - \frac{1}{p}\int_{\mathbb{R}^N}|u|^p; \tag{2.6}$$

$$m_\varepsilon = \inf_{u \in \mathcal{N}_\varepsilon} J_\varepsilon; \tag{2.7}$$

$$m^\tau_\varepsilon = \inf_{u \in \mathcal{N}^\tau_\varepsilon} J_\varepsilon. \tag{2.8}$$

Remark 2.1. It is easy to verify that J_ε satisfies the Palais Smale condition on $\mathcal{N}^\tau_\varepsilon$. Then there exists v_ε minimizer of m^τ_ε and v_ε is a critical point for J_ε on $H^1_g(M)$. Thus v^+_ε and v^-_ε belong to $\mathcal{N}_\varepsilon$, then $J_\varepsilon(v_\varepsilon) \geq 2m_\varepsilon$.

We recall some facts about equivariant Lusternik-Schnirelmann theory. If G is a compact Lie group, then a G-space is a topological space X with a continuous G-action $G \times X \to X$, $(g, x) \mapsto gx$. A G-map is a continuous function $f : X \to Y$ between G-spaces X and Y which is compatible with the G-actions, i.e. $f(gx) = gf(x)$ for all $x \in X$, $g \in G$. Two G-maps f_0, $f_1 : X \to Y$ are G-homotopic if there is a homotopy $\theta : X \times [0, 1] \to Y$ such that $\theta(x, 0) = f_0(x)$, $\theta(x, 1) = f_1(x)$ and $\theta(gx, t) = g\theta(x, t)$ for all$x \in X$, $g \in G$, $t \in [0, 1]$. A subset A of a X is G-invariant if $ga \in A$ for every $a \in A$, $g \in G$. The G-orbit of a point $x \in X$ is the set $Gx = \{gx : g \in G\}$.

Definition 2.2. The G-category of a G-map $f : X \to Y$ is the smallest number $k = G - \operatorname{cat}(f)$ of open G-invariant subsets $X_1, \dots, X_k$ of X which cover X and which have the property that, for each $i = 1, \dots, k$, there is a point $y_i \in Y$ and a G-map $\alpha_i : X_i \to Gy_i \subset Y$ such that the restriction of f to X_i is G-homotopic to α_i. If no such covering exists we define $G - \operatorname{cat}(f) = \infty$.

In our applications, G will be the group with two elements, acting as $G_\tau = \{\mathrm{Id}, \tau\}$ on Ω, and as $\mathbb{Z}/2 = \{1, -1\}$ by multiplication on the Nehari manifold $\mathcal{N}_\varepsilon^\tau$. We remark the following result on the equivariant category.

Theorem 2.3. *Let $\phi : M \to \mathbb{R}$ be an even $C1$ functional on a complete $C^{1,1}$ submanifold M of a Banach space which is symmetric with respect to the origin. Assume that ϕ is bounded below and satisfies the Palais Smale condition $(PS)_c$ for every $c \le d$. Then ϕ has at least $\mathbb{Z}/2 - \operatorname{cat}(\phi^d)$ antipodal pairs $\{u, -u\}$ of critical points with critical values $\phi(\pm u) \le d$.*

3. Sketch of the proof of main theorem

In our case we consider the even positive C^2 functional J_ε on the $C2$ Nehari manifold $\mathcal{N}_\varepsilon^\tau$ which is symmetric with respect to the origin. As claimed in Remark 2.1, J_ε satisfies Palais Smale condition on $\mathcal{N}_\varepsilon^\tau$. Then we can apply Theorem 2.3 and our aim is to get an estimate of this lower bound for the number of solutions. For $d > 0$ we consider

$$M_d = \{x \in \mathbb{R}^N : \operatorname{dist}(x, M) \le d\};$$
$$M_d^- = \{x \in M : \operatorname{dist}(x, M_\tau) \ge d\}.$$

We choose d small enough such that

$$G_\tau - \operatorname{cat}_{M_d} M_d = G_\tau - \operatorname{cat}_M M$$
$$G_\tau - \operatorname{cat}_M M_d^- = G_\tau - \operatorname{cat}_M (M - M_\tau)$$

Now we build two continuous operator

$$\Phi_\varepsilon^\tau : M_d^- \to \mathcal{N}_\varepsilon^\tau \cap J_\varepsilon^{2(m_\infty+\delta)};$$
$$\beta : \mathcal{N}_\varepsilon^\tau \cap J_\varepsilon^{2(m_\infty+\delta)} \to M_d,$$

such that $\Phi_\varepsilon^\tau(\tau q) = -\Phi_\varepsilon^\tau(q)$, $\tau\beta(u) = \beta(-u)$ and $\beta \circ \Phi_\varepsilon^\tau$ is G_τ homotopic to the inclusion $M_d^- \to M_d$.

By equivariant category theory we obtain

$$\begin{aligned} G_\tau - \operatorname{cat}_M (M - M_\tau) &= G_\tau - \operatorname{cat}(M_d^- \hookrightarrow M_d) \\ &= G_\tau - \operatorname{cat} \beta \circ \Phi_\varepsilon^\tau \\ &\le \mathbb{Z}_2 - \operatorname{cat} \mathcal{N}_\varepsilon^\tau \cap J_\varepsilon^{2(m_\infty+\delta)} \end{aligned} \tag{3.1}$$

4. Technical lemmas

First of all, we recall that there exists a unique positive spherically symmetric function $U \in H^1(\mathbb{R}^n)$ such that

$$-\Delta U + U = U^{p-1} \text{ in } \mathbb{R}^n \tag{4.1}$$

It is well known that $U_\varepsilon(x) = U\left(\frac{x}{\varepsilon}\right)$ is a solution of

$$-\varepsilon^2 \Delta U_\varepsilon + U_\varepsilon = U_\varepsilon^{p-1} \text{ in } \mathbb{R}^n. \tag{4.2}$$

Secondly, let us introduce the exponential map $\exp : TM \to M$ defined on the tangent bundle TM of M which is a C^∞ map. Then, for ρ sufficiently small (smaller than the injectivity radius of M and smaller than $d/2$), the Riemannian manifold M has a special set of charts $\{\exp_x : B(0,\rho) \to M\}$. Throughout the paper we will use the following notation: $B_g(x,\rho)$ is the open ball in M centered in x with radius ρ with respect to the distance given by the metric g. Corresponding to this chart, by choosing an orthogonal coordinate system $(x_1,\dots,x_n) \subset \mathbb{R}^n$ and identifying T_xM with $\mathbb{R}^n$ for $x \in M$, we can define a system of coordinates called *normal coordinates*.

Let χ_ρ be a smooth cut off function such that

$$\chi_\rho(z) = 1 \quad \text{if } z \in B(0,\rho/2);$$
$$\chi_\rho(z) = 0 \quad \text{if } z \in \mathbb{R}^n \setminus B(0,\rho);$$
$$|\nabla \chi_\rho(z)| \le 2 \quad \text{for all } x.$$

Fixed a point $q \in M$ and $\varepsilon > 0$, let us define the function $w_{\varepsilon,q}(x)$ on M as

$$w_{\varepsilon,q}(x) = \begin{cases} U_\varepsilon(\exp_q^{-1}(x))\chi_\rho(\exp_q^{-1}(x)) & \text{if } x \in B_g(q,\rho) \\ 0 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases} \tag{4.3}$$

For each $\varepsilon > 0$ we can define a positive number $t(w_{\varepsilon,q})$ such that

$$\Phi_\varepsilon(q) = t(w_{\varepsilon,q})w_{\varepsilon,q} \in H_g^1(M) \cap \mathcal{N}_\varepsilon \text{ for } q \in M. \tag{4.4}$$

Namely, $t(w_{\varepsilon,q})$ turns out to verify

$$t(w_{\varepsilon,q})^{p-2} = \frac{\int_M \varepsilon^2 |\nabla_g w_{\varepsilon,q}|^2 + |w_{\varepsilon,q}|^2 d\mu_g}{\int_M |w_{\varepsilon,q}|^p d\mu_g} \tag{4.5}$$

Lemma 4.1. *Given $\varepsilon > 0$ the application $\Phi_\varepsilon(q) : M \to H_g^1(M) \cap \mathcal{N}_\varepsilon$ is continuous. Moreover, given $\delta > 0$ there exists $\varepsilon_0 = \varepsilon_0(\delta)$ such that, if $\varepsilon < \varepsilon_0(\delta)$ then $\Phi_\varepsilon(q) \in \mathcal{N}_\varepsilon \cap J_\varepsilon^{m_\infty + \delta}$.*

For the proof see [1, Proposition 4.2]. Now, fixed a point $q \in M_d^-$, let us define the function

$$\Phi_\varepsilon^\tau(q) = t(w_{\varepsilon,q})w_{\varepsilon,q} - t(w_{\varepsilon,\tau q})w_{\varepsilon,\tau q} \tag{4.6}$$

Lemma 4.2. *Given $\varepsilon > 0$ the application $\Phi_\varepsilon^\tau(q) : M_d^- \to H_g^1(M) \cap \mathcal{N}_\varepsilon^\tau$ is continuous. Moreover, given $\delta > 0$ there exists $\varepsilon_0 = \varepsilon_0(\delta)$ such that, if $\varepsilon < \varepsilon_0(\delta)$ then $\Phi_\varepsilon^\tau(q) \in \mathcal{N}_\varepsilon^\tau \cap J_\varepsilon^{2(m_\infty + \delta)}$.*

Proof. Since $U_\varepsilon(z)\chi_\rho(z)$ is radially symmetric we set $U_\varepsilon(z)\chi_\rho(z) = \tilde{U}_\varepsilon(|z|)$. We recall that

$$|\exp_{\tau q}^{-1} \tau x| = d_g(\tau x, \tau q) = d_g(x,q) = |\exp_q^{-1} x|;$$
$$|\exp_q^{-1} \tau x| = d_g(\tau x, q) = d_g(x, \tau q).$$

We have

$$\begin{aligned}\tau^*\Phi_\varepsilon^\tau(q)(x) &= -t(w_{\varepsilon,q})w_{\varepsilon,q}(\tau x) + t(w_{\varepsilon,\tau q})w_{\varepsilon,\tau q}(\tau x)\\ &= -t(w_{\varepsilon,q})\tilde U_\varepsilon(|\exp_q^{-1}(\tau x)|) + t(w_{\varepsilon,\tau q})\tilde U_\varepsilon(|\exp_{\tau q}^{-1}(\tau x)|)\\ &= t(w_{\varepsilon,\tau q})\tilde U_\varepsilon(|\exp_q^{-1}(x)|) - t(w_{\varepsilon,q})\tilde U_\varepsilon(|\exp_q^{-1}(\tau x)|)\\ &= t(w_{\varepsilon,q})\tilde U_\varepsilon(|\exp_q^{-1}(x)|) - t(w_{\varepsilon,q})\tilde U_\varepsilon(|\exp_{\tau q}^{-1}(x)|),\end{aligned}$$

because by the definition we have $t(w_{\varepsilon,q}) = t(w_{\varepsilon,\tau q})$.

Moreover by definition the support of the function Φ_ε^τ is $B_g(q,\rho)\cup B_g(\tau q,\rho)$, and $B_g(q,\rho)\cap B_g(\tau q,\rho)=\emptyset$ because $\rho < d/2$ and $q\in M_d^-$. Finally, because

$$\int_M |w_{\varepsilon,q}|^\alpha d\mu_g = \int_M |w_{\varepsilon,\tau q}|^\alpha d\mu_g \quad \text{for } \alpha = 2, p;$$
$$\int_M |\nabla w_{\varepsilon,q}|^2 d\mu_g = \int_M |\nabla w_{\varepsilon,\tau q}|^2 d\mu_g,$$

we have

$$J_\varepsilon(\Phi_\varepsilon^\tau(q)) = \Big(\frac12 - \frac1p\Big)\frac{1}{\varepsilon^n}\int_M |\Phi_\varepsilon^\tau(q)|^p d\mu_g = 2J_\varepsilon(\Phi_\varepsilon(q)). \tag{4.7}$$

Then by previous lemma we have the claim. □

Lemma 4.3. *We have* $\lim_{\varepsilon\to 0} m_\varepsilon^\tau = 2m_\infty$

Proof. By the previous lemma and by Remark 2.1 we have that for any $\delta > 0$ there exists $\varepsilon_0(\delta)$ such that, for $\varepsilon < \varepsilon_0(\delta)$

$$2m_\varepsilon \le m_\varepsilon^\tau \le 2J_\varepsilon(\Phi_\varepsilon(q)) \le 2(m_\infty + \delta). \tag{4.8}$$

Since $\lim_{\varepsilon\to 0} m_\varepsilon = m_\infty$ (see [1, Remark 5.9]) we get the claim. □

For any function $u\in\mathcal N_\varepsilon^\tau$ we can define a point $\beta(u)\in\mathbb R^N$ by

$$\beta(u) = \frac{\int_M x|u^+(x)|^p d\mu_g}{\int_M |u^+(x)|^p d\mu_g} \tag{4.9}$$

Lemma 4.4. *There exists δ_0 such that, for any $0<\delta<\delta_0$ and any $0<\varepsilon<\varepsilon_0(\delta)$ (as in Lemma 4.2) and for any function $u\in\mathcal N_\varepsilon^\tau\cap J_\varepsilon^{2(m_\infty+\delta)}$, it holds $\beta(u)\in M_d$.*

Proof. Since $\tau^*u = u$ we set

$$M^+ = \{x\in M : u(x) > 0\},\quad M^- = \{x\in M : u(x) < 0\}.$$

It is easy to see that $\tau M^+ = M^-$. Then we have

$$\begin{aligned}J_\varepsilon(u) &= \Big(\frac12 - \frac1p\Big)\frac{1}{\varepsilon^n}\int_M |u|^p d\mu_g\\ &= \Big(\frac12 - \frac1p\Big)\frac{1}{\varepsilon^n}\Big[\int_{M^+}|u^+|^p d\mu_g + \int_{M^-}|u^-|^p d\mu_g\Big] = 2J_\varepsilon(u^+)\end{aligned}$$

By the assumption $J_\varepsilon(u)\le 2(m_\infty+\delta)$ we have $J_\varepsilon(u^+)\le m_\infty+\delta$ then by Proposition 5.10 of [1] we get the claim. □

Lemma 4.5. *There exists $\varepsilon_0 > 0$ such that for any $0<\varepsilon<\varepsilon_0$ the composition*

$$I_\varepsilon = \beta\circ\Phi_\varepsilon^\tau : M_d^- \to M_d \subset \mathbb R^N \tag{4.10}$$

is well defined, continuous, homotopic to the identity and $I_\varepsilon(\tau q) = \tau I_\varepsilon(q)$.

Proof. It is easy to check that

$$\Phi_\varepsilon^\tau(\tau q) = -\Phi_\varepsilon^\tau(q), \quad \beta(-u) = \tau\beta(u).$$

Moreover, by Lemma 4.2 and by Lemma 4.4, for any $q \in M_d^-$ we have $\beta \circ \Phi_\varepsilon^\tau(q) = \beta(\Phi_\varepsilon(q)) \in M_d$, and I_ε is well defined.

In order to show that I_ε is homotopic to identity, we evaluate the difference between I_ε and the identity as follows.

$$\begin{aligned} I_\varepsilon(q) - q &= \frac{\int_M (x-q)|w_{\varepsilon,q}^+|^p d\mu_g}{\int_M |w_{\varepsilon,q}^+|^p d\mu_g} \\ &= \frac{\int_{B(0,\rho)} z \left|U\left(\frac{z}{\varepsilon}\right)\chi_\rho(|z|)\right|^p \left|g_q(z)\right|^{1/2}}{\int_{B(0,\rho)} \left|U\left(\frac{z}{\varepsilon}\right)\chi_\rho(|z|)\right|^p \left|g_q(z)\right|^{1/2}} \\ &= \frac{\varepsilon\int_{B(0,\rho/\varepsilon)} z\left|U(z)\chi_\rho(|\varepsilon z|)\right|^p\left|g_q(\varepsilon z)\right|^{1/2}}{\int_{B(0,\rho/\varepsilon)} \left|U(z)\chi_\rho(|\varepsilon z|)\right|^p\left|g_q(\varepsilon z)\right|^{1/2}}, \end{aligned}$$

hence $|I_\varepsilon(q) - q| < \varepsilon c(M)$ for a constant $c(M)$ that does not depend on q. $\square$

Now, by previous lemma and by Theorem 2.3 we can prove Theorem 1.1. In fact, we know that, if ε is small enough, there exist $G_\tau - \operatorname{cat}(M - M_\tau)$ minimizers which change sign, because they are antisymmetric. We have only to prove that any minimizer changes sign exactly once. Let us call $\omega = \omega_\varepsilon$ one of these minimizers. Suppose that the set $\{x \in M : \omega_\varepsilon(x) > 0\}$ has k connected components $M_1, \dots, M_k$. Set

$$\omega_i = \begin{cases} \omega_\varepsilon(x) & x \in M_i \cup \tau M_i; \\ 0 & \text{elsewhere} \end{cases} \tag{4.11}$$

For all i, $\omega_i \in \mathcal{N}_\varepsilon^\tau$. Furthermore we have

$$J_\varepsilon(\omega) = \sum_i J_\varepsilon(\omega_i), \tag{4.12}$$

thus

$$m_\varepsilon^\tau = J_\varepsilon(\omega) = \sum_{i=1}^k J_\varepsilon(\omega_i) \geq k \cdot m_\varepsilon^\tau, \tag{4.13}$$

so $k = 1$, that concludes the proof.

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