

# EXISTENCE AND REGULARITY OF WEAK SOLUTIONS TO THE PRESCRIBED MEAN CURVATURE EQUATION FOR A NONPARAMETRIC SURFACE

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## 1. Introduction

The prescribed mean curvature equation with Dirichlet condition for a nonparametric surface  $X : \Omega \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^3$ ,  $X(u, v) = (u, v, f(u, v))$  is the quasilinear partial differential equation

$$\begin{aligned} (1 + f_v^2)f_{uu} + (1 + f_u^2)f_{vv} - 2f_u f_v f_{uv} &= 2h(u, v, f)(1 + |\nabla f|^2)^{3/2} \quad \text{in } \Omega, \\ f &= g \quad \text{in } \partial\Omega, \end{aligned} \quad (1.1)$$

where  $\Omega$  is a bounded domain in  $\mathbb{R}^2$ ,  $h : \bar{\Omega} \times \mathbb{R} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$  is continuous and  $g \in H^1(\Omega)$ .

We call  $f \in H^1(\Omega)$  a weak solution of (1.1) if  $f \in g + H_0^1(\Omega)$  and for every  $\varphi \in C_0^1(\Omega)$

$$\int_{\Omega} ((1 + |\nabla f|^2)^{-1/2} \nabla f \nabla \varphi + 2h(u, v, f)\varphi) du dv = 0. \quad (1.2)$$

It is known that for the parametric Plateau's problem, weak solutions can be obtained as critical points of a functional (see [2, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11]).

The nonparametric case has been studied for  $H = H(x, y)$  (and generally  $H = H(x_1, \dots, x_n)$  for hypersurfaces in  $\mathbb{R}^{n+1}$ ) by Gilbarg, Trudinger, Simon, and Serrin, among other authors. It has been proved [5] that there exists a solution for any smooth boundary data if the mean curvature  $H'$  of  $\partial\Omega$  satisfies

$$H'(x_1, \dots, x_n) \geq \frac{n}{n-1} |H(x_1, \dots, x_n)| \quad (1.3)$$

for any  $(x_1, \dots, x_n) \in \partial\Omega$ , and  $H \in C^1(\bar{\Omega}, \mathbb{R})$  satisfying the inequality

$$\left| \int_{\Omega} H\varphi \right| \leq \frac{1-\epsilon}{n} \int_{\Omega} |D\varphi| \quad (1.4)$$

for any  $\varphi \in C_0^1(\Omega, \mathbb{R})$  and some  $\epsilon > 0$ . They also proved a non-existence result (see [5, Corollary 14.13]): if  $H'(x_1, \dots, x_n) < (n/(n-1))|H(x_1, \dots, x_n)|$  for some  $(x_1, \dots, x_n)$  and the sign of  $H$  is constant, then for any  $\epsilon > 0$  there exists  $g \in C^\infty(\overline{\Omega})$  such that  $\|g\|_\infty \leq \epsilon$  and that Dirichlet's problem is not solvable.

We remark that the solutions obtained in [5] are classical. In this paper, we find weak solutions of the problem by variational methods.

We prove that for prescribed  $h$  there exists an associated functional to  $h$ , and under some conditions on  $h$  and  $g$  we find that this functional has a global minimum in a convex subset of  $H^1(\Omega)$ , which provides a weak solution of (1.1). We denote by  $H^1(\Omega)$  the usual Sobolev space, [1].

## 2. The associated variational problem

Given a function  $f \in C^2(\Omega)$ , the generated nonparametric surface associated to this function is the graph of  $f$  in  $\mathbb{R}^3$ , parametrized as  $X(u, v) = (u, v, f(u, v))$ .

The mean curvature of this surface is

$$h(u, v, f) = \frac{1}{2} \frac{Ef_{vv} - 2Ff_{uv} + Gf_{uu}}{(1 + f_u^2 + f_v^2)^{3/2}}, \quad (2.1)$$

where  $E, F$ , and  $G$  are the coefficients of the first fundamental form [4, 9].

For prescribed  $h$ , weak solutions of (1.1) can be obtained as critical points of a functional.

**PROPOSITION 2.1.** *Let  $J_h : H^1(\Omega) \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$  be the functional defined by*

$$J_h(f) = \int_{\Omega} ((1 + |\nabla f|^2)^{1/2} + H(u, v, f)) du dv, \quad (2.2)$$

where  $H(u, v, z) = \int_0^z 2h(u, v, t) dt$ . Then (1.1) is the Euler Lagrange equation of (2.2).

*Remark 2.2.* If  $f \in T = g + H_0^1(\Omega)$  is a critical point of  $J_h$ , then  $f$  is a weak solution of (1.1).

*Proof.* For  $\varphi \in C_0^1(\Omega)$ , integrating by parts we obtain

$$dJ_h(f)(\varphi) = 2 \int_{\Omega} \left( \frac{1}{2} \frac{Ef_{vv} - 2Ff_{uv} + Gf_{uu}}{(1 + f_u^2 + f_v^2)^{3/2}} - h(u, v, f) \right) \varphi du dv. \quad (2.3)$$

□

## 3. Behavior of the functional $J_h$

In this section, we study the behavior of the functional  $J_h$  restricted to  $T$ . For simplicity we write  $J_h(f) = A(f) + B(f)$ , with

$$A(f) = \int_{\Omega} (1 + |\nabla f|^2)^{1/2} du dv, \quad B(f) = \int_{\Omega} H(u, v, f) du dv. \quad (3.1)$$

We will assume that  $h$  is bounded.

LEMMA 3.1. *The functional  $A : T \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$  is continuous and convex.*

*Proof.* Continuity can be proved by a simple computation. Let  $a, b \geq 0$  such that  $a + b = 1$ . By Cauchy inequality, it follows that

$$\sqrt{1 + |\nabla(af + bf_0)|^2} \leq a\sqrt{1 + |\nabla f|^2} + b\sqrt{1 + |\nabla f_0|^2} \quad (3.2)$$

and convexity holds.  $\square$

*Remark 3.2.* As  $A$  is continuous and convex, then it is weakly lower semicontinuous in  $T$ .

LEMMA 3.3. *The functional  $B$  is weakly lower semicontinuous in  $T$ .*

*Proof.* Since  $h$  is bounded, we have

$$|H(u, v, z)| \leq c|z| + d. \quad (3.3)$$

From the compact immersion  $H_0^1(\Omega) \hookrightarrow L^1(\Omega)$  and the continuity of Nemytskii operator associated to  $H$  in  $L^1(\Omega)$ , we conclude that  $B$  is weakly lower semicontinuous in  $T$  (see [3, 12]).  $\square$

#### 4. Weak solutions as critical points of $J_h$

Let us assume that  $g \in W^{1,\infty}$ , and consider for each  $k > 0$ , the following subset of  $T$ :

$$\overline{M}_k = \{f \in T : \|\nabla(f - g)\|_\infty \leq k\}. \quad (4.1)$$

$\overline{M}_k$  is nonempty, closed, convex, bounded, then it is weakly compact.

*Remark 4.1.* As  $g \in W^{1,\infty}$ , taking  $p > 2$  we obtain, for any  $f \in \overline{M}_k$ :

$$\|f - g\|_p \leq c\|\nabla(f - g)\|_p. \quad (4.2)$$

Then, by Sobolev imbedding,  $\|f - g\|_\infty \leq c_1\|f - g\|_{1,p} \leq \bar{c}k$  for some constant  $\bar{c}$ . We deduce that  $f \in W^{1,\infty}$  and  $f(\Omega) \subset K$  for some fixed compact  $K \subset \mathbb{R}$ . Thus, the assumption  $\|h\|_\infty < \infty$  is not needed.

Let  $\rho$  be the slope of  $J_h$  in  $\overline{M}_k$  defined by

$$\rho(f_0, \overline{M}_k) = \sup \{dJ_h(f_0)(f_0 - f); f \in \overline{M}_k\} \quad (4.3)$$

(see [7, 11]), then the following result holds.

LEMMA 4.2. *If  $f_0 \in \overline{M}_k$  verifies*

$$J_h(f_0) = \inf \{J_h(f) : f \in \overline{M}_k\}, \quad (4.4)$$

*then  $\rho(f_0, \overline{M}_k) = 0$ .*

*Proof.*

$$\begin{aligned} dJ_h(f_0)(f - f_0) &= \lim_{\varepsilon \rightarrow 0} \frac{J_h(f_0 + \varepsilon(f - f_0)) - J_h(f_0)}{\varepsilon} \\ &= \lim_{\varepsilon \rightarrow 0} \frac{J_h((1 - \varepsilon)f_0 + \varepsilon f) - J_h(f_0)}{\varepsilon}. \end{aligned} \quad (4.5)$$

When  $0 < \varepsilon < 1$  we have that  $(1 - \varepsilon)f_0 + \varepsilon f \in \overline{M}_k$ , and then  $dJ_h(f_0)(f_0 - f) \leq 0$  for all  $f \in \overline{M}_k$ . As  $dJ_h(f_0)(f_0 - f_0) = 0$ , we conclude that  $\rho(f_0, \overline{M}_k) = 0$ .  $\square$

*Remark 4.3.* Let  $J_h$  be weakly semicontinuous and let  $\overline{M}_k$  be a weakly compact subset of  $T$ , then  $J_h$  achieves a minimum  $f_0$  in  $\overline{M}_k$ . By Lemma 4.2,  $\rho(f_0, \overline{M}_k) = 0$ .

As in [7], if  $f_0$  has zero slope, we call it a  $\rho$ -critical point. The following result gives sufficient conditions to assure that if  $f_0$  is a  $\rho$ -critical point, then it is a critical point of  $J_h$ .

**THEOREM 4.4.** *Let  $f_0 \in \overline{M}_k$  such that  $\rho(f_0, \overline{M}_k) = 0$ , and assume that one of the following conditions holds:*

- (i)  $dJ_h(f_0)(f_0 - g) \geq 0$
- (ii)  $\|\nabla(f_0 - g)\|_\infty < k$ .

Then  $dJ_h(f_0) = 0$ .

*Proof.* As  $\rho(f_0, \overline{M}_k) = 0$ , we have that  $dJ_h(f_0)(f_0 - f) \leq 0$ , and then  $dJ_h(f_0)(f_0 - g) \leq dJ_h(f_0)(f - g)$  for any  $f \in \overline{M}_k$ .

We will prove that  $dJ_h(f_0)(\varphi) = 0$  for any  $\varphi \in C_0^1$ . Let  $\tilde{\varphi} = k\varphi/2\|\nabla\varphi\|_\infty$ , then  $\pm\tilde{\varphi} + g \in \overline{M}_k$ , and then  $dJ_h(f_0)(f_0 - g) \leq \pm dJ_h(f_0)(\tilde{\varphi})$ .

Suppose that  $dJ_h(f_0)(\tilde{\varphi}) \neq 0$ , then  $dJ_h(f_0)(f_0 - g) < 0$ .

If (i) holds, we immediately get a contradiction. On the other hand, if (ii) holds, there exists  $r > 1$  such that  $g + r(f_0 - g) \in \overline{M}_k$ . Then  $dJ_h(f_0)(f_0 - g) \leq rdJ_h(f_0)(f_0 - g)$ , a contradiction.  $\square$

## Examples

Let us assume that  $\int_\Omega ((\nabla(f - g)\nabla g)/\sqrt{1 + |\nabla f|^2}) du dv \geq 0$  for any  $f \in \overline{M}_k$ . Then condition (i) of Theorem 4.4 is fulfilled for example if

(a)  $|h(u, v, z)| \leq c(z - g(u, v))_+$  for every  $(u, v) \in \Omega$ ,  $z \in \mathbb{R}^3$ , for some constant  $c$  small enough.

(b)  $\int_\Omega h(u, v, f)(f - g) du dv \geq 0$  for every  $f \in \overline{M}_k$ . As a particular case, we may take  $h(u, v, z) = c(z - g(u, v))$  for any  $c \geq 0$ .

(c)  $h(u, v, z) = -c(z - g(u, v))$  for some  $c > 0$  small enough.

Indeed, in all the examples the inequality  $dJ_h(f)(f-g) \geq 0$  holds for any  $f \in \overline{M}_k$ , since

$$\begin{aligned} dJ_h(f)(f-g) &= \int_{\Omega} \left( \frac{\nabla f \nabla(f-g)}{\sqrt{1+|\nabla f|^2}} + 2h(u,v,f)(f-g) \right) du dv \\ &= \int_{\Omega} \left( \frac{|\nabla(f-g)|^2}{\sqrt{1+|\nabla f|^2}} + 2h(f-g) \right) du dv + \int_{\Omega} \frac{\nabla(f-g)\nabla g}{\sqrt{1+|\nabla f|^2}} du dv \\ &\geq \int_{\Omega} \left( \frac{|\nabla(f-g)|^2}{\sqrt{1+|\nabla f|^2}} + 2h(f-g) \right) du dv. \end{aligned} \tag{4.6}$$

Then the result follows immediately in example (b). In examples (a) and (c), being  $\|\nabla(f-g)\|_{\infty} \leq k$  we can choose  $\tilde{k}$  such that  $\sqrt{1+\|\nabla f\|_{\infty}^2} \leq \tilde{k}$ . Then

$$\begin{aligned} \int_{\Omega} \left( \frac{|\nabla(f-g)|^2}{\sqrt{1+|\nabla f|^2}} + 2h(u,v,f)(f-g) \right) du dv &\geq \int_{\Omega} \left( \frac{|\nabla(f-g)|^2}{\tilde{k}} - 2c(f-g)^2 \right) du dv \\ &\geq \frac{1}{\tilde{k}} \|\nabla(f-g)\|_2^2 - 2cc_1^2 \|\nabla(f-g)\|_2^2 \\ &= \left( \frac{1}{\tilde{k}} - 2cc_1^2 \right) \|\nabla(f-g)\|_2^2, \end{aligned} \tag{4.7}$$

where  $c_1$  is the Poincaré's constant associated to  $\Omega$ .

Thus, the result holds for  $c \leq 1/2\tilde{k}c_1^2$ .

*Remark 4.5.* As in the preceding examples, it can be proved that if  $dJ_h(f)(f-g) \geq 0$  for any  $f \in \overline{M}_k$ , then  $g$  is a weak solution of (1.1). Indeed, if  $dJ_h(g) \neq 0$ , from Theorem 4.4 it follows that  $\rho(g, \overline{M}_k) > 0$ . As  $J_h$  achieves a minimum in every  $\overline{M}_k$ , we may take  $k \geq k_n \rightarrow 0$ , and  $f_n$  such that  $\rho(f_n, \overline{M}_{k_n}) = 0$ . As  $\overline{M}_{k_n} \subset \overline{M}_k$ , condition (i) in Theorem 4.4 holds, and then  $dJ_h(f_n) = 0$ . It is immediate that  $f_n \rightarrow g$  in  $W^{1,\infty}$ , and then it follows easily that  $dJ_h(g) = 0$ .

Furthermore, for constant  $g$  we can see that if  $dJ_h(f)(f-g) \geq 0$  for any  $f \in \overline{M}_k$ , then  $g$  is a global minimum of  $J_h$  in  $\overline{M}_k$ : let us define  $\varphi(t) = J_h(tf + (1-t)g)$ , then  $\varphi'(t) = dJ_h(tf + (1-t)g)(f-g)$ . As  $0 \leq dJ_h(tf + (1-t)g)(tf + (1-t)g - g) = tdJ_h(tf + (1-t)g)(f-g)$  it follows that  $J_h(f) - J_h(g) = \varphi(1) - \varphi(0) = \varphi'(c) \geq 0$ .

### 5. Multiple solutions

In this section, we study the multiplicity of weak solutions of (1.1). Consider

$$\overline{N}_k = \left\{ f \in \overline{M}_k \cap H^2 : \left\| \frac{\partial^2 f}{\partial x_i \partial x_j} \right\|_2 \leq k \right\}, \tag{5.1}$$

$\overline{N}_k$  is a nonempty, closed, bounded, and convex subset of  $T$ , therefore  $\overline{N}_k$  is weakly compact.

Then we obtain the following theorem, which is a variant of the mountain pass lemma.

**THEOREM 5.1.** *Let  $f_0 \in \overline{N}_k$  be a local minimum of  $J_h$  and assume that  $J_h(f_1) < J_h(f_0)$  for some  $f_1 \in \overline{N}_k$ . Let*

$$c = \inf_{\gamma \in \Gamma} \sup_{t \in [0,1]} J_h(\gamma(t)), \quad (5.2)$$

where  $\Gamma = \{\gamma \in C([0,1], \overline{N}_k) : \gamma(0) = f_0, \gamma(1) = f_1\}$ . Then there exists  $f \in \overline{N}_k$  such that  $J_h(f) = c$  and  $\rho(f, \overline{N}_k) = 0$ .

We remark that  $f$  is not a local minimum of  $J_h$ . This kind of  $f$  is called an unstable critical point.

The proof of Theorem 5.1 follows from Theorem 3 in [7] and Lemmas 5.2, 5.3, and 5.4 below.

**LEMMA 5.2.** *The functional  $J_h$  is  $C^1(\overline{N}_k)$ .*

*Proof.* Let  $f, f_0 \in \overline{N}_k$ . Then

$$\begin{aligned} & |dJ_h(f)(\varphi) - dJ_h(f_0)(\varphi)| \\ & \leq \|\varphi\|_{H_0^1} \left( \left\| \frac{\nabla f}{\sqrt{1+|\nabla f|^2}} - \frac{\nabla f_0}{\sqrt{1+|\nabla f_0|^2}} \right\|_2 + \|N_h(f_0) - N_h(f)\|_2 \right), \end{aligned} \quad (5.3)$$

where  $N_h$  is the Nemytskii operator associated to  $h$ . Let

$$\begin{aligned} \left\| \frac{\nabla f}{\sqrt{1+|\nabla f|^2}} - \frac{\nabla f_0}{\sqrt{1+|\nabla f_0|^2}} \right\|_2 & \leq \left\| \sqrt{1+|\nabla f_0|^2} \nabla f - \sqrt{1+|\nabla f|^2} \nabla f_0 \right\|_2 \\ & \leq \kappa \|f_0 - f\|_{H_0^1} \end{aligned} \quad (5.4)$$

and  $N_h : L^2 \rightarrow L^2$  continuous, the result holds.  $\square$

**LEMMA 5.3.** *The slope  $\rho$  is  $H^1$ -continuous.*

*Proof.* Let  $f_n \in \overline{N}_k$  such that  $f_n \rightarrow f_0$  in  $H_0^1$ . For  $\epsilon > 0$  we take  $g_n \in \overline{N}_k$  such that  $\rho(f_n, \overline{N}_k) - \epsilon/2 < dJ_h(f_n)(f_n - g_n)$ . Then

$$\begin{aligned} \rho(f_n, \overline{N}_k) - \rho(f_0, \overline{N}_k) & \leq dJ_h(f_n)(f_n - g_n) + \frac{\epsilon}{2} - dJ_h(f_0)(f_0 - g_n) \\ & \leq \|dJ_h(f_n)\|_{(H_0^1)^*} \|f_n - f_0\|_{H_0^1} \\ & \quad + \|dJ_h(f_n) - dJ_h(f_0)\|_{(H_0^1)^*} \|f_0 - g_n\|_{H_0^1} + \frac{\epsilon}{2} < \epsilon \end{aligned} \quad (5.5)$$

for  $n \geq n_0$ . Operating in the same way with  $\rho(f_0, \overline{N}_k) - \rho(f_n, \overline{N}_k)$ , we conclude that  $\rho(f_n, \overline{N}_k) \rightarrow \rho(f_0, \overline{N}_k)$ .  $\square$

LEMMA 5.4 (Palais Smale condition). *Let  $(f_n)_{n \in \mathbb{N}} \subset \overline{N}_k$  such that  $\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \rho(f_n, \overline{N}_k) = 0$ . Then  $(f_n)_{n \in \mathbb{N}}$  has a convergent subsequence in  $H_0^1(\Omega)$ .*

*Proof.* As  $f_n \in \overline{N}_k$ , we may suppose that  $f_n \rightarrow f$  weakly. Let  $\Psi_n = f_n - f$ . We will see that  $\Psi_n \rightarrow 0$ . Indeed,

$$\begin{aligned} dJ_h(f_n)(\Psi_n) &= \int_{\Omega} \left( \frac{\nabla f_n}{\sqrt{1+|\nabla f_n|^2}} \nabla \Psi_n + 2h(u, v, f_n) \Psi_n \right) du dv \\ &= \int_{\Omega} \frac{1}{\sqrt{1+|\nabla f_n|^2}} |\nabla \Psi_n|^2 du dv + \int_{\Omega} \frac{\nabla \Psi_n}{\sqrt{1+|\nabla f_n|^2}} \nabla f du dv \quad (5.6) \\ &\quad + \int_{\Omega} 2h(u, v, f_n) \Psi_n du dv. \end{aligned}$$

Then for some constant  $c$

$$c \|\nabla \Psi_n\|_2^2 \leq \rho(f_n, \overline{N}_k) - \int_{\Omega} \frac{\nabla \Psi_n}{\sqrt{1+|\nabla f_n|^2}} \nabla f du dv - \int_{\Omega} 2h(u, v, f_n) \Psi_n du dv. \quad (5.7)$$

By Rellich-Kondrachov theorem  $\Psi_n \rightarrow 0$  in  $L^2(\Omega)$ , and then

$$\left| \int_{\Omega} 2h(u, v, f_n) \Psi_n du dv \right| \leq 2\|h\|_{\infty} |\Omega|^{1/2} \|\Psi_n\|_2 \rightarrow 0, \quad (5.8)$$

$$\begin{aligned} &\left| \int_{\Omega} \frac{\nabla \Psi_n}{\sqrt{1+|\nabla f_n|^2}} \nabla f du dv \right| \\ &= \left| - \int_{\Omega} \frac{\Delta f}{\sqrt{1+|\nabla f_n|^2}} \Psi_n du dv - \int_{\Omega} \Psi_n \nabla (1+|\nabla f_n|^2)^{-1/2} \nabla f du dv \right| \quad (5.9) \\ &\leq \|\Delta f\|_2 \|\Psi_n\|_2 + \|\nabla f_n\|_{\infty} \|\nabla f\|_{\infty} \|D^2 f_n\|_2 \|\Psi_n\|_2 \rightarrow 0. \quad \square \end{aligned}$$

*Example 5.5.* Now we will show with an example that problem (1.1) may have at least three  $\rho$ -critical points in  $N_k$ .

Let  $g = g_0$  be a constant, and  $h(u, v, z) = -c(z - g_0)$  for some constant  $c > 0$ . Then,  $g_0$  is a minimum of  $J_h$  in  $\overline{M}_{k_1}$  for  $k_1$  small enough, and a local minimum in  $M_k$  for any  $k \geq k_1$ .

Moreover, taking  $\Omega = B_R$ ,  $f(u, v) = g_0 + R^2 - (u^2 + v^2)$ , it follows that

$$J_h(f) - J_h(g_0) = 2\pi \left( o(R^3) - \frac{c}{6} R^6 \right), \quad (5.10)$$

and taking  $k = 2\sqrt{\pi}R$  it holds that  $f \in \overline{N}_k$ . Hence, if  $R$  is big enough, it follows that  $g_0$  is not a global minimum in  $\overline{N}_k$ . Furthermore, we see that the proof of Lemma 4.2 may be repeated in  $\overline{N}_k$ , and then the minimum of  $J_h$  in  $\overline{N}_k$  is a  $\rho$ -critical point. From Theorem 5.1 there is a third  $\rho$ -critical point which is not a local minimum of  $J_h$ .

## 6. Regularity

As we proved, problem (1.1) admits (for an appropriate  $k > 0$ ) a weak solution in a subset  $\overline{M}(k) = \{f \in T / \|\nabla(f - g)\|_\infty \leq k\}$ .

Consider  $p > 2$ , and  $f_0 \in W^{2,p}(\Omega) \hookrightarrow C^1(\overline{\Omega})$  a weak solution of (1.1). Then  $L_{f_0} f_0 = 2h(u, v, f_0)(1 + \nabla f_0^2)^{3/2}$  in  $\Omega$  where for any  $f \in C^1(\overline{\Omega})$   $L_f : W^{2,p} \rightarrow L^p$  is the strictly elliptic operator given by

$$L_f \phi = (1 + f_v^2)\phi_{uu} + (1 + f_u^2)\phi_{vv} - 2f_u f_v \phi_{uv}. \quad (6.1)$$

In order to prove the regularity of  $f_0$ , we study equation (6.2)

$$L_{f_0} \phi = 2h(u, v, f_0)(1 + \nabla f_0^2)^{3/2} \quad \text{in } \Omega, \quad \phi = g \text{ in } \partial\Omega. \quad (6.2)$$

**PROPOSITION 6.1.** *Let us assume that  $\partial\Omega \in C^{2,\alpha}$ ,  $g \in C^{2,\alpha}$ , and  $h \in C^\alpha$  for some  $0 < \alpha \leq 1 - 2/p$ . Then, if  $\phi \in W^{2,p}$  is a strong solution of (6.2),  $\phi \in C^{2,\alpha}(\overline{\Omega})$ .*

*Proof.* By Sobolev imbedding  $\phi \in C^{1,\alpha}(\overline{\Omega})$ . Then  $L_{f_0} \phi \in C^\alpha(\overline{\Omega})$  and the coefficients of the operator  $L_{f_0}$  belong to  $C^\alpha$ . By Theorem 6.14 in [5], the equation  $Lw = L_{f_0} \phi$  in  $\Omega$ ,  $w = g$  in  $\partial\Omega$  is uniquely solvable in  $C^{2,\alpha}(\overline{\Omega})$ , and the result follows from the uniqueness in Theorem 9.15 in [5].  $\square$

*Remark 6.2.* As a simple consequence, we obtain that  $f_0 \in C^{2,\alpha}(\overline{\Omega})$ , by the uniqueness in  $W^{2,p}$  given by [5, Theorem 9.15].

**COROLLARY 6.3.** *Let us assume that  $\partial\Omega \in C^{k+2,\alpha}$ ,  $g \in C^{k+2,\alpha}$ , and  $h \in C^{k,\alpha}$  for some  $0 < \alpha \leq 1 - 2/p$ . Then  $f_0 \in C^{k+2,\alpha}(\overline{\Omega})$ .*

*Proof.* It is immediate from Proposition 2.1 and Theorem 6.19 in [5].  $\square$

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