Sign changing solutions of Poisson’s equation

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Abstract
Let Ω be an open, possibly unbounded, set in Euclidean space \( \mathbb{R}^m \) with boundary \( \partial \Omega \), let \( A \) be a measurable subset of \( \Omega \) with measure \( |A| \) and let \( \gamma \in (0, 1) \). We investigate whether the solution \( v_{\Omega,A,\gamma} \) of
\[ -\Delta v = \gamma 1_{\Omega \setminus A} + (1 - \gamma) 1_A \]
with \( v = 0 \) on \( \partial \Omega \) changes sign. Bounds are obtained for \( |A| \) in terms of geometric characteristics of \( \Omega \) (bottom of the spectrum of the Dirichlet Laplacian, torsion, measure or \( R \)-smoothness of the boundary) such that \( \text{essinf} v_{\Omega,A,\gamma} \geq 0 \). We show that \( \text{essinf} v_{\Omega,A,\gamma} < 0 \) for any measurable set \( A \), provided \( |A| > \gamma |\Omega| \). This value is sharp. We also study the shape optimisation problem of the optimal location of \( A \) (with prescribed measure) which minimises the essential infimum of \( v_{\Omega,A,\gamma} \). Surprisingly, if \( \Omega \) is a ball, a symmetry breaking phenomenon occurs.

1. Introduction
Let \( \Omega \) be an open, possibly unbounded, set in Euclidean space \( \mathbb{R}^m \) with boundary \( \partial \Omega \), and with, possibly infinite, measure \( |\Omega| \). It is well known \([4]\) that if the bottom of the Dirichlet Laplacian defined by
\[ \lambda(\Omega) = \inf_{\varphi \in H_0^1(\Omega) \setminus \{0\}} \frac{\int_{\Omega} |D\varphi|^2}{\int_{\Omega} \varphi^2}, \]
is bounded away from 0, then
\[ -\Delta v = 1, \; v = 0 \text{ on } \partial \Omega, \]
has a unique weak solution denoted by \( v_\Omega \), which is non-negative, and which satisfies,
\[ \lambda(\Omega)^{-1} \leq \|v_\Omega\|_{L^\infty(\Omega)} \leq (4 + 3m \log 2) \lambda(\Omega)^{-1}. \]
The \( m \)-dependent constant in the right-hand side of (2) has been improved in \([13]\), and subsequently in \([24]\).
If \( |\Omega| < \infty \) then, by the Faber–Krahn inequality, \( \lambda(\Omega) > 0 \), and by (2), \( v_\Omega \in H_0^1(\Omega) \), and \( v_\Omega \in L^1(\Omega) \). For an arbitrary open set \( \Omega \), we define the torsion, or torsional rigidity, by
\[ T(\Omega) = \int_\Omega v_\Omega. \]
Note that, under the assumption \( \lambda(\Omega) > 0 \), by (2) the solution of an equation like in (1) with a right-hand side \( f \in L^\infty(\Omega) \) can be defined by approximation on balls for the positive and negative parts of \( f \).
For a measurable subset $A \subset \Omega$, with $\lambda(\Omega) > 0$, and $0 < \gamma < 1$, we denote by $v_{\Omega,A,\gamma}$ the solution of
\[
-\Delta v = \gamma 1_{\partial \Omega} - (1 - \gamma) 1_{A}, \; v = 0 \text{ on } \partial \Omega.
\] (3)
These hypotheses on $A$, $\Omega$ and $\gamma$ will not be repeated in the statements of all lemmas and theorems below.

This paper investigates whether the solution of (3) satisfies $\text{essinf}_{\Omega,A,\gamma} v < 0$. Whether this holds depends on the geometry of $\Omega$, and on the size and the location of the set $A \subset \Omega$. This question shows up in a variety of situations. We refer, for instance, to [17], where $v$ is a scalar potential and the right-hand side stands for a magnetic field which changes sign. The influence of the magnetic field on the asymptotic behaviour of the bottom of the spectrum of the Pauli operator is effective, provided that the scalar potential has constant sign, that is, $\text{essinf}_{\Omega,A,\gamma} v = 0$. In fluid mechanics, the function $v$ can be interpreted as a vorticity stream function, for a vorticity taking the values $\gamma$ and $-(1 - \gamma)$. If $v_{\Omega,A,\gamma}$ changes sign, then there exist at least two stagnation points. More situations where the sign question of the state function is put in relationship with sign changing data can be found in [7, 11, 21] and, in some biological models, [19].

**Definition 1.** For $\gamma \in (0, 1)$, $\Omega \subset \mathbb{R}^m$, with $\lambda(\Omega) > 0$,
\[
\mathcal{C}_-(\Omega, \gamma) = \sup\{c \geq 0 : \forall A \subset \Omega, A \text{ measurable}, |A| \leq c, \text{essinf}_{\Omega,A,\gamma} v \geq 0\},
\]
\[
\mathcal{C}_+(\Omega, \gamma) = \inf\{c \geq 0 : \forall A \subset \Omega, A \text{ measurable}, |A| > c, \text{essinf}_{\Omega,A,\gamma} v < 0\}.
\]

It follows immediately from the definition that for a homothety $t\Omega$, $t > 0$ of $\Omega$, we have the scaling relations
\[
\mathcal{C}_-(t\Omega, \gamma) = t^{m} \mathcal{C}_-(\Omega, \gamma),
\] (4)
and
\[
\mathcal{C}_+(t\Omega, \gamma) = t^{m} \mathcal{C}_+(\Omega, \gamma).
\]
Furthermore, if $\Omega_1, \Omega_2$ are disjoint open sets, then
\[
\mathcal{C}_-(\Omega_1 \cup \Omega_2, \gamma) = \min\{\mathcal{C}_-(\Omega_1, \gamma), \mathcal{C}_-(\Omega_2, \gamma)\},
\]
\[
\mathcal{C}_+(\Omega_1 \cup \Omega_2, \gamma) = \mathcal{C}_+(\Omega_1, \gamma) + \mathcal{C}_+(\Omega_2, \gamma).
\]

This paper concerns the analysis of these quantities and their dependence on $\Omega$. It turns out that $\mathcal{C}_+(\Omega, \gamma) = \gamma|\Omega|$ for arbitrary open sets $\Omega$ with finite measure. On the contrary, $\mathcal{C}_-(\Omega, \gamma)$ is very sensitive to the geometry. We find its main properties, give basic estimates, establish isoperimetric and isotorsional inequalities, and we discuss the shape optimisation problem related to the optimal location of the set $A$ in order to minimise the essential infimum.

**Theorem 1.** For every non-empty open set $\Omega \subset \mathbb{R}^m$ of finite measure, we have
\[
\mathcal{C}_+(\Omega, \gamma) = \gamma|\Omega|.
\]

Below we show that, in general, we have to assume some regularity of $\Omega$ in order to have $\mathcal{C}_-(\Omega, \gamma) > 0$. For instance, if $\Omega = \bigcup_{j \in \mathbb{N}} C_j$ is a set of finite measure, where the sets $C_j, j \in \mathbb{N}$ are non-empty, open, disjoint, then $\mathcal{C}_-(\Omega, \gamma) = 0$. Indeed, if we let $A = C_j$, then $\text{essinf}_{\Omega,A,\gamma} v_{C_j} < 0$. Consequently, $\mathcal{C}_-(\Omega, \gamma) \leq |C_j|$ for every $j$, so $\mathcal{C}_-(\Omega, \gamma) = 0$.

**Theorem 2.** If $\Omega \subset \mathbb{R}^2$ is any open triangle, then $\mathcal{C}_-(\Omega, \gamma) = 0$.

In Theorem 3 below, we show that if $\Omega$ is bounded, and $\partial \Omega$ is of class $C^2$, then $\mathcal{C}_-(\Omega) > 0$. In order to quantify this assertion, we introduce some notation. For a non-empty open set $\Omega$,
we denote by \( \text{diam}(\Omega) = \sup \{|x - y| : x \in \Omega, y \in \Omega\} \). We denote the complement \( \mathbb{R}^m \setminus E \) of \( E \) by \( E^c \), and the closure of \( E \) by \( \overline{E} \). Furthermore, \( B_r(x) := \{y \in \mathbb{R}^m : |x - y| < r\} \) denotes the open ball centred at \( x \) of radius \( r \). If \( x = 0 \), we simply write \( B_r \). We set \( \omega_m = |B_1| \). For \( x \in \Omega \), we let \( \bar{x} \in \partial \Omega \) be a point such that \( |x - \bar{x}| = \min \{|x - z| : z \in \partial \Omega\} \). We recall the following from [2, p. 280].

**Definition 2.** An open set \( \Omega \subset \mathbb{R}^m \), \( m \geq 2 \), has \( R \)-smooth boundary if at any point \( x_0 \in \partial \Omega \), there are two open balls \( B_R(x_1), B_R(x_2) \) such that \( B_R(x_1) \subset \Omega \), \( B_R(x_2) \subset \mathbb{R}^m \setminus \Omega \) and \( B_R(x_1) \cap B_R(x_2) = \{x_0\} \).

We also recall that a bounded \( \Omega \) with \( C^2 \) boundary \( \partial \Omega \) is \( R \)-smooth for some \( R > 0 \).

**Theorem 3.** If \( \Omega \) is an open, bounded set in \( \mathbb{R}^m \) with a \( C^2 \) and \( R \)-smooth boundary, then

\[
\mathcal{E}_-(\Omega, \gamma) \geq \mathcal{E}_-(B_R, \gamma).
\]

Furthermore,

\[
\mathcal{E}_-(B_R, \gamma) \geq \left( \frac{\gamma}{4m} \right)^m \omega_m R^m, \quad m = 2, 3, \ldots, \tag{5}
\]

\[
\mathcal{E}_-(B_R, \gamma) \leq \gamma^{m/2} \omega_m R^m, \quad m \geq 3, \tag{6}
\]

and

\[
\mathcal{E}_-(B_R, \gamma) \leq \left( 1 + \log \left( \frac{1}{\gamma} \right) \right)^{-1} \gamma \pi R^2, \quad m = 2. \tag{7}
\]

The following inequality gives an upper bound for \( \mathcal{E}_-(\Omega, \gamma) \) in terms of \( \lambda(\Omega) \).

**Theorem 4.** For every open set \( \Omega \subset \mathbb{R}^m \) with \( \lambda(\Omega) > 0 \),

\[
\mathcal{E}_-(\Omega, \gamma) \leq C_1(m) \left( \frac{\gamma}{1 - \gamma} \right)^{m/2} \lambda(\Omega)^{-m/2},
\]

where

\[
C_1(m) = \omega_m^{(m+2)/2} 2^{5m^2/12} 3^{m(m+2)/4} e^{2^2/\lambda(\Omega)} \left( \frac{12m(m+2)}{eC_2(m)^{1/2}} \right)^{m(m+2)/2}, \tag{8}
\]

and where \( C_2(m) \) is the constant in the Kohler–Jobin inequality (37) below.

This implies that if \( \Omega \) is an open set with \( T(\Omega) < \infty \), then

\[
\mathcal{E}_-(\Omega, \gamma) \leq C_1(m)C_2(m)^{-m/2} \left( \frac{\gamma}{1 - \gamma} \right)^{m/2} \lambda(\Omega)^{m/(m+2)}. \tag{9}
\]

The optimal coefficient of \( T(\Omega)^{m/(m+2)} \) in (9) is not known. However, the Kohler–Jobin inequality suggests to prove (or disprove) optimality for balls.

**Theorem 5.** There exists \( C_3(m) < \infty \) such that for every open, connected set \( \Omega \subset \mathbb{R}^m \) with \( T(\Omega) < \infty \),

\[
\mathcal{E}_-(\Omega, \gamma) \leq C_3(m) \max \left\{ \left( \frac{\gamma}{1 - \gamma} \right)^{m/2}, \left( \frac{\gamma}{1 - \gamma} \right)^{m/(2m+1)} \right\} \left( \frac{T(\Omega)}{\text{diam}(\Omega)} \right)^{m/(m+1)}. \tag{10}
\]
In particular, if $\Omega$ is unbounded, then $C_.(\Omega, \gamma) = 0$. The value of $C_3(m)$ can be read off from the proof in Section 6.

We see from Theorems 1 and 3 that $C_.(B_R, \gamma) < C_+. (B_R, \gamma)$. The isoperimetric inequality below generalises this to arbitrary open sets with finite measure.

**Theorem 6.**

$$\sup \left\{ \frac{C_.(\Omega, \gamma)}{|\Omega|} : \Omega \subseteq \mathbb{R}^m, \Omega \text{ open}, 0 < |\Omega| < \infty \right\} < \gamma.$$  \hspace{1cm} (11)

The theorem above implies that $C_.(\Omega, \gamma) \leq C(m, \gamma)|\Omega|$ for every open set of finite measure with $C(m, \gamma) < \gamma$. The proof of Theorem 6 relies on the relaxation of the shape optimisation problem (11) to the larger class of quasi-open sets. We shall prove that the supremum is attained at some quasi-open set $\Omega^*$ for which $C_.(\Omega^*, \gamma) < \gamma|\Omega^*|.$

The optimal value $C(m, \gamma) = \frac{C_.(\Omega^*, \gamma)}{|\Omega^*|}$ is not known, nor whether $\Omega^*$ is open. The symmetry breaking phenomenon for balls stated in Theorem 7 below does not support the ball to be a maximiser.

Given a constant $c \in (C_.(\Omega, \gamma), |\Omega|)$, there exists at least one set $A \subseteq \Omega, |A| = c$ such that $\operatorname{essinf} v_{\Omega, A, \gamma} < 0$. A natural question is to find the best location of the set $A$ of measure $c$, which minimises $\operatorname{essinf} v_{\Omega, A, \gamma}$. This question is of particular interest for values of $c$ close to $C_.(\Omega, \gamma)$, as this gives information on where the geometry of $\Omega$ is most sensitive to negative values. We prove the following shape optimisation result for the optimal location.

**Theorem 7.** Let $\gamma \in (0, 1)$ and let $\Omega \subseteq \mathbb{R}^m$ be an open, bounded and connected set with a smooth boundary $\partial \Omega$. For every $c \in (C_.(\Omega, \gamma), |\Omega|)$, the shape optimisation problem

$$\min \{\operatorname{essinf} v_{\Omega, A, \gamma} : A \subset \Omega, |A| = c\},$$  \hspace{1cm} (12)

has a solution. Moreover, if $\Omega$ is a ball $B$, then, depending on the value of $c$, the optimal locations may be radial or not.

The existence of an optimal set relies partly on a concavity property of the shape functional $A \mapsto \operatorname{essinf} v_{\Omega, A, \gamma}$. We point out that the proof relies on both the concavity and the analysis of optimality conditions in relationship with the partial differential equation (3) (see [9]). If $\Omega$ is a ball $B$ and $c$ is close to $|B|$, then the optimal location is a ball. If $c$ is close to $C_.(B, \gamma)$, then the optimal location is no longer radial. This symmetry breaking phenomenon occurs at a value $c \in (C_.(B, \gamma), |B|)$, and is supported by analytical, and numerical computations.

Theorem 7 can be interpreted both as a (rather non-standard) shape optimisation problem or as an optimisation problem in a prescribed class of rearrangements, see, for example, [1]. We also refer to the paper of Burton and Toland [8] for models of steady waves with vorticity, where the distribution of the vorticity is prescribed, but we point out that our problem is essentially of different nature since the functional to be minimised is not an energy of the problem.

The proofs of Theorems 1–7 are deferred to Sections 2–8 below.

2. **Proof of Theorem 1**

In order to simplify notation, throughout the paper, if $\Omega$ is an open set and $A \subset \mathbb{R}^m$ is measurable, not necessarily contained in $\Omega$, by $v_{\Omega, A, \gamma}$ we mean $v_{\Omega, \Omega \cap A, \gamma}$.

**Proof.** Firstly, assume that $\Omega \subset \mathbb{R}^m$ is an open set with finite measure. Assume that $A \subset \Omega$ is a measurable set such that $v_{\Omega, A, \gamma} \geq 0$. In a first step, we shall prove that $|A| \leq \gamma|\Omega|$. As a consequence, $C_+(\Omega, \gamma) \leq \gamma|\Omega|$. 

...
Indeed, since \( v_{\Omega,A,\gamma} \geq 0 \), one can use Talenti’s theorem (see, for instance, [18, Theorem 3.1.1]) in the following way. We denote by \( v^* \) the Schurz rearrangement of \( v_{\Omega,A,\gamma} \), and by \( f^* \) the rearrangement of \( \gamma_1 \Omega \setminus A - (1 - \gamma)1_A \). There exist two positive values \( 0 < r_1 < r_2 \) such that \( f^* = \gamma_1 B_{r_1} - (1 - \gamma)1_{B_{r_2} \setminus B_{r_1}} \), where \( r_1 \) is such that \( |B_{r_1}| = |\Omega \setminus A| \) and \( |B_{r_2}| = |\Omega| \). By Talenti’s theorem, we get

\[
0 \leq v^* \leq v_{B_{r_2},B_{r_1},\gamma}.
\]

By elementary computations, one gets the expression for \( v_{B_{r_2},B_{r_1},\gamma} \). Indeed, the solution \( v_{B_{r_2},B_{r_1},\gamma} \) is radially symmetric and satisfies the equation

\[
-\frac{m-1}{r}v'' = \gamma_11_{[0,r_1]} - (1 - \gamma)1_{[r_1,r_2]},
\]

with initial condition \( v'(0) = 0 \), and \( v(r_2) = 0 \). Moreover, the solution is \( C^{1,\alpha} \) regular, for some \( \alpha > 0 \).

We integrate separately on \([0,r_1]\), and on \([r_1,r_2]\), and write the equality of the left and right derivatives in \( r_1 \), namely

\[
-v''(r_1) = v'(r_1).
\]

Hence, we get

\[
-\frac{r_1}{m} = \frac{r_1^{m-1}}{m^{m-1}}v'(r_2) - \frac{(1 - \gamma)\hat{r}_2^m}{mr_1^m} + (1 - \gamma)\hat{r}_1.
\]

In general, from the positivity of \( v_{B_{r_2},B_{r_1},\gamma} \), one gets that \( v'(r_2) \leq 0 \). Hence,

\[
(1 - \gamma)\frac{r_1^{m-1}}{mr_1^m} \leq \frac{r_1}{m},
\]

which gives \( r_1 \geq (1 - \gamma)^{\hat{r}_2^m}e_2 \), or \( |B_{r_1}| \geq (1 - \gamma)|B_{r_2}| \). Finally, one gets that \( |A| \leq \gamma|\Omega| \). Hence, \( C_+ (\Omega,\gamma) \leq \gamma|\Omega| \).

As a by-product of the computation, we observe that the constant \( \gamma \) in Theorem 1 is sharp, and that equality holds for the ball. As soon as, \( r_1 < (1 - \gamma)^{\hat{r}_2^m}e_2 \), one gets that \( v'(r_2) > 0 \). This means that as \( v(r_2) = 0 \), the solution is not positive near the boundary of the ball.

In order to prove the converse inequality, let us prove that for every \( \varepsilon > 0 \), there exists a set \( A \subset \Omega \) of measure \( \gamma|\Omega| - \varepsilon \) such that \( v_{\Omega,A,\gamma} \geq 0 \). This will imply that \( C_+ (\Omega,\gamma) \geq \gamma|\Omega| \).

The construction is based on the following observation. There exists a finite family of mutually disjoint balls \( \bigcup_{i=1}^k B_i \) contained in \( \Omega \) such that

\[
|\Omega \setminus \bigcup_{i=1}^k B_i| < \varepsilon.
\]

In every ball, we display the set \( A_i \) of measure \( \gamma|B_i| \) in an annulus centred at the centre of \( B_i \) and having \( \partial B_i \) as external boundary. Hence \( v_{\Omega_1,A_i,\gamma} \geq 0 \). Moreover, since the sets \( B_i \) are mutually disjoint, we get that

\[
v_{\Omega_1,B_i,\bigcup_{i=1}^k B_i,\gamma} \geq 0.
\]

We have the following.

**Lemma 8.** Let \( \Omega_1 \subseteq \Omega_2 \subseteq \mathbb{R}^m \) be open sets with finite measure, \( f \in L^2(\Omega_2) \), and let \( u_1, u_2 \) weak solutions of

\[
-\Delta u_i = f \text{ on } \Omega_i, u \in H^1_0(\Omega_i), i = 1, 2.
\]

If \( u_1 \geq 0 \) on \( \Omega_1 \) and \( f \geq 0 \) on \( \Omega_2 \setminus \Omega_1 \), then \( u_2 \geq 0 \) on \( \Omega_2 \).

**Proof.** As a consequence of the hypotheses, we get

\[
-\Delta u_1 \leq f \text{ in } \mathcal{D}'(\Omega_2).
\]
Hence, by the maximum principle,

$$0 \leq u_1 \leq u_2 \text{ on } \Omega_2. \square$$

A direct consequence of Lemma 8 is that if $\Omega_1 \subseteq \Omega_2$, then $C_+(\Omega_1, \gamma) \leq C_+(\Omega_2, \gamma)$. Indeed, for every measurable set $A \subseteq \Omega_1$ such that $v_{\Omega_1, A, \gamma} \geq 0$, we get $v_{\Omega_2, A, \gamma} \geq 0$.

Coming back to the proof of Theorem 1, using the additivity and monotonicity property of $C_+$, we get that

$$C_+(\Omega, \gamma) \geq \gamma|\bigcup_i B_i| \geq \gamma|\Omega| - \gamma\varepsilon.$$ 

The theorem follows by letting $\varepsilon \to 0$. \square

3. Proof of Theorem 2

We first introduce some basic notation and properties. For a non-empty open set $\Omega \subset \mathbb{R}^m$, we denote by $G_\Omega(x, y)$, $x \in \Omega$, $y \in \Omega$, $x \neq y$, the kernel of the resolvent of the Dirichlet Laplacian acting in $L^2(\Omega)$. This function exists and is well defined for all $x \neq y$, provided $m \geq 3$. It also exists for $m = 2$, for example, under the hypothesis that the torsion function $v_\Omega$ defined by approximation on balls is locally finite. The resolvent kernel is non-negative, symmetric in $x$ and $y$ and is monotone increasing in $\Omega$. That is, if $\Omega_1 \subset \Omega_2$, then

$$0 \leq G_{\Omega_1}(x, y) \leq G_{\Omega_2}(x, y), x \in \Omega_1, y \in \Omega_1, x \neq y. \tag{13}$$

If $v_\Omega$ is locally finite, then

$$v_\Omega(x) = \int_\Omega dy G_\Omega(x, y).$$

The monotonicity in (13) implies that both the torsion function $v_\Omega$ and torsion $T(\Omega)$ are monotone increasing in $\Omega$.

We have also that

$$v_{\Omega, A, \gamma}(x) = \int_\Omega dy G_\Omega(x, y)\left(\gamma 1_{\Omega\setminus A}(y) - (1 - \gamma)1_A(y)\right)$$

$$= \int_\Omega dy G_\Omega(x, y)(\gamma 1_\Omega(y) - 1_A(y))$$

$$= \gamma v_\Omega(x) - \int_A dy G_\Omega(x, y). \tag{14}$$

Formula (14) implies that

$$-(1 - \gamma)v_\Omega \leq v_{\Omega, A, \gamma} \leq \gamma v_\Omega.$$ 

Proof of Theorem 2. Let $\Omega = \Delta OAB$ be a triangle, with $\alpha := \angle BOA \leq \frac{\pi}{3}$ at the origin, and oriented such that the positive $x$-axis is the bisectrix of that angle. Let $W_\alpha$ be the infinite wedge with vertex at $O$, and edges at angles $\pm \frac{1}{2}\alpha$ with the positive $x$-axis, which contain the two sides $OA$ and $OB$ of $\Omega$. Let $W_{\alpha, c}$ be the radial sector with area $c$ and edges at angles $\pm \frac{1}{2}\alpha$. Then $W_{\alpha, c} \subset \Omega$ for all $c$ sufficiently small. We have by monotonicity that

$$v_{\Omega, W_{\alpha, c}, \gamma}(x) = \int_\Omega dy G_\Omega(x, y)\left(\gamma 1_{\Omega\setminus W_{\alpha, c}}(y)\right)$$

$$\leq \gamma \int_{W_\alpha} dy G_{W_\alpha}(x, y) - \int_{W_{\alpha, c}} dy G_{W_{\alpha, c}}(x, y)$$

$$= \gamma v_{W_\alpha}(x) - v_{W_{\alpha, c}}(x). \tag{15}$$
In Cartesian coordinates $x = (x_1, x_2)$, we have that
\[
v_{W_\alpha}(x_1, x_2) = \frac{x_2^2 - s^2 x_1^2}{2(s^2 - 1)} ,
\]
where $s = \tan(\alpha/2)$. In polar coordinates $x = (r; \theta)$, we have by [22, p. 279] for the sector with radius $a = (2e/\alpha)^{1/2}$,
\[
v_{W_{\alpha,c}}(r; \theta) = \frac{r^2}{4} \left( \frac{\cos(2\theta)}{\cos \alpha} - 1 \right) + \frac{4a^2 \alpha^2}{\pi^3} \sum_{n=1,3,5,\ldots} (-1)^{(n+1)/2}(r/a)^{n\pi/\alpha} \cos(n\pi \theta/\alpha).
\]
We observe that for $\theta = 0$ the terms in the series in the right-hand side of (17) are alternating and decreasing in absolute value. Hence
\[
v_{W_{\alpha,c}}(r; 0) = \frac{r^2}{4} \left( \frac{1}{\cos \alpha} - 1 \right) - \frac{4a^2 \alpha^2}{\pi^3} \left( \frac{r}{a} \right)^{\pi/\alpha} \left( 1 - \frac{4a^2}{\pi^2} \right)^{-1}.
\]
By (16) $v_{W_\alpha}(x_1, 0) = \frac{x_1^2\pi^2}{2(1-s^2)}$, and so in polar coordinates,
\[
v_{W_\alpha}(r; 0) = \frac{r^2}{4} \left( \frac{1}{\cos \alpha} - 1 \right).
\]
By (15)–(18), we have
\[
v_{\Omega, W_{\alpha,c}}(x_1, 0) \leq (\gamma - 1) \frac{s^2 x_1^2}{2(1-s^2)} + O(x_1^{\pi/\alpha}), \ x_1 \downarrow 0,
\]
which is negative for all $x_1$ sufficiently small.

We see from the proof above that we could have chosen any angle of the triangle, provided that angle is strictly less than $\pi/2$. The proof above also shows that the infinite wedge $W_\alpha, \alpha < \pi/2$ with radial sector $W_{\alpha,c}, c > 0$ has a sign changing solution $v_{W_\alpha, W_{\alpha,c}}$.

\[
4. \text{ Proof of Theorem 3}
\]

\textbf{Proof of Theorem 3.} Let us start by observing that the following covering property holds: for every $x \in \Omega$, there exists a ball $B$ of radius $R$ such that $x \in B \subset \Omega$. Indeed, let $\bar{x} \in \partial \Omega$ be a point which realises the distance to the boundary. Since the boundary of $\Omega$ is of class $C^2$, then $x - \bar{x}$ is normal to the boundary $\partial \Omega$ at $\bar{x}$. If $|x - \bar{x}| \geq R$, then $B_R(x) \subset \Omega$. If $|x_0 - \bar{x}| < R$, then $x$ belongs to the ball of radius $R$ tangent to $\partial \Omega$ at $\bar{x}$.

Assume for a contradiction that \[ \mathcal{C}_-(\Omega, \gamma) < \mathcal{C}_-(B_R, \gamma). \]
For every $\varepsilon > 0$ such that $\mathcal{C}_-(\Omega, \gamma) + \varepsilon < \mathcal{C}_-(B_R, \gamma)$, there exists a set $A_\varepsilon \subset \Omega$ such that $|A_\varepsilon| \leq \mathcal{C}_-(\Omega, \gamma) + \varepsilon$ and
\[
\text{essinf} \ v_{\Omega, A_\varepsilon, \gamma} < 0,
\]
the infimum being attained at $x_\varepsilon$. Taking a sequence $\varepsilon \to 0$, we may assume (up to extracting suitable subsequences) that
\[
1_{A_\varepsilon} \to g \text{ weakly-}\ast \text{ in } L^\infty, \ x_\varepsilon \to x_* \in \Omega.
\]
Then $\int_\Omega g = \mathcal{C}_-(\Omega, \gamma)$. Let $v_{\Omega, g, \gamma}$ denote the solution of
\[
-\Delta v = \gamma(1 - g) - (1 - \gamma)g, \ v \in H_0^1(\Omega),
\]
we get
\[ v_{\Omega, A_s, \gamma} \to v_{\Omega, g, \gamma} \]
uniformly on \( \overline{\Omega} \). This is a consequence of the elliptic regularity of the solutions, which are uniformly bounded in \( C^{1,\alpha}(\overline{\Omega}) \) for some \( \alpha > 0 \). Consequently, \( v_{\Omega, g, \gamma} \geq 0 \) in \( \Omega \). Indeed, for \( x^* \) a minimum point of \( v_{\Omega, g, \gamma} \) with \( v_{\Omega, g, \gamma}(x^*) < 0 \), we can modify \( g \) slightly to find a new function \( \tilde{g} \), such that
\[ 0 \leq \tilde{g} \leq 1, \quad \int_{\Omega} \tilde{g} < \mathcal{C}_-(\Omega, \gamma), \quad v_{\Omega, \tilde{g}, \gamma}(x^*) < 0. \]

From the density of the characteristic functions, we can find a sequence of sets \( \tilde{A}_\delta \) such that \( 1_{\tilde{A}_\delta} \to \tilde{g} \) weakly-* in \( L^\infty \), and \( |\tilde{A}_\delta| = \int_{\Omega} \tilde{g} \). In particular, \( v_{\Omega, \tilde{A}_\delta, \gamma}(x^*) < 0 \). This contradicts the definition of \( \mathcal{C}_-(\Omega, \gamma) \).

Consequently, \( v_{\Omega, g, \gamma}(x^*) = 0 \). There are two possibilities: either \( x^* \in \Omega \), or \( x^* \in \partial \Omega \). Assume first that \( x^* \in \Omega \). As a consequence of the covering property, there exists a ball \( B \) of radius \( R \) such that \( x_0 \in B \subset \Omega \). In particular, this implies that \( v_{\Omega, g, \gamma} \geq 0 \) on \( \partial B \). The maximum principle gives
\[ v_{\Omega, g, \gamma} \geq v_{B, g, \gamma}, \text{ on } B. \]
Consequently \( v_{B, g, \gamma}(x^*) \leq 0 \). Clearly,
\[ \int_B g \leq \mathcal{C}_-(\Omega, \gamma) < \mathcal{C}_-(B_R, \gamma). \quad (19) \]

**Case 1.** In case \( v_{B, g, \gamma}(x^*) < 0 \), we immediately get a contradiction since, as above, we can build a sequence of sets \( \tilde{A}_\delta \subset B \) such that \( 1_{\tilde{A}_\delta} \to \tilde{g} \cdot 1_B \) weakly-* in \( L^\infty(B) \), and \( |\tilde{A}_\delta| = \int_B \tilde{g} \). By the uniform convergence, we get that \( v_{B, \tilde{A}_\delta, \gamma}(x^*) < 0 \), so that \( \mathcal{C}_-(B_R, \gamma) \leq \int_B \tilde{g} \). This contradicts (19).

**Case 2.** In case \( v_{B, g, \gamma}(x^*) = 0 \), we claim that either \( g \) is itself a characteristic function, or we can find another function \( \tilde{g} \) such that
\[ 0 \leq \tilde{g} \leq 1, \quad \int_B \tilde{g} < \mathcal{C}_-(B_R, \gamma), \quad v_{B, \tilde{g}, \gamma}(x^*) < 0. \]
Assume that \( g \) is a characteristic function. Then \( g = 1_A \). Taking a new set \( A \subset \tilde{A} \subset B \), such that \( |A| < |\tilde{A}| < \mathcal{C}_-(B_R, \gamma) \) we get by the maximum principle that \( v_{B, A, \gamma}(x^*) < 0 \), in contradiction with the definition of \( \mathcal{C}_-(B_R, \gamma) \).

Assume that \( g \) is not a characteristic function on \( B \). Then, for some value \( \delta > 0 \), the set \( U_\delta = \{ x \in B : \delta < g(x) < 1 - \delta \} \) has positive Lebesgue measure. We put \( \tilde{g} = g + s1_{U_\delta} \), where \( s > 0 \) is small enough such that \( \int_B \tilde{g} < \mathcal{C}_-(B_R, \gamma) \). By the maximum principle, we get \( v_{B, \tilde{g}, \gamma}(x^*) < 0 \). In this case, we are back to Case 1.

Assume now that \( x^* \in \partial \Omega \). Let \( \mathbf{n}_{x^*} \) be the outward normal vector at \( x^* \). Let \( \overline{x}_e \) be the projection on \( \partial \Omega \) of \( x^* \). Since \( \Omega \) is of class \( C^2 \), we get \( \overline{x}_e \to x^* \) and that there exists a point \( y_e \) on the segment \( [\overline{x}_e, x_e] \) such that \( \nabla v_{\Omega, A_s, \gamma}(y_e) \cdot \mathbf{n}_{x^*} \geq 0 \). Passing to the limit, we get
\[ \nabla v_{\Omega, g, \gamma}(x^*) \cdot \mathbf{n}_{x^*} \geq 0. \]
Meanwhile, \( x^* \) is a minimum point of \( v_{\Omega, g, \gamma} \), so that
\[ \frac{\partial v_{\Omega, g, \gamma}}{\partial n}(x^*) \leq 0. \]
Hence,
\[ \frac{\partial v_{\Omega, g, \gamma}}{\partial n}(x^*) = 0. \]
Using the $R$-smoothness at $x^*$, the ball $B \subset \Omega$ of radius $R$ tangent to $\partial \Omega$ at $x^*$ stays in $\Omega$. Since $v_{\Omega,g,\gamma} \geq 0$, by the maximum principle, we get $v_{\Omega,g,\gamma} \geq v_{B,g,\gamma}$. By the Hopf maximum principle, applied to $v_{\Omega,g,\gamma} - v_{B,g,\gamma}$ on $B$ at the minimum point $x^* \in \partial B$, we have either that

$$\frac{\partial v_{\Omega,g,\gamma}(x^*)}{\partial n} - \frac{\partial v_{B,g,\gamma}(x^*)}{\partial n} < 0,$$

or that $v_{\Omega,g,\gamma} - v_{B,g,\gamma} = 0$ on $B$. In the first situation,

$$\frac{\partial v_{B,g,\gamma}(x^*)}{\partial n} < 0,$$

which means that $v_{B,g,\gamma}$ takes negative values close to $x^*$. Then, we conclude as in Case 1 above. In the second situation, if we find a point $\bar{x} \in \partial B \cap \Omega$, we can conclude as in Case 2 since $v_{B,g,\gamma}(\bar{x}) = 0$. The alternative is that $\partial B \subset \partial \Omega$ so that $\Omega = B$, and we have a contradiction.

To prove (5) we let $m \geq 3$, and let $H$ be an open half-space. Then

$$G_H(x,y) = c_m(|x - y|^{2-m} - |x^* - y|^{2-m}),$$

where $x^*$ is the reflection of $x$ with respect to $\partial H$, and

$$c_m = \frac{\Gamma((m - 2)/2)}{4\pi m^2}.$$

By (14), and monotonicity we have that

$$v_{B,R,A,\gamma}(x) \geq \gamma v_{B_R}(x) - \int_A dy G_H(x,y),$$

where $H_x$ is the half-space tangent to $B_R$ at $x \in \partial B_R$. Note that $|x^* - x| = |\bar{x} - x|$. Moreover, $|x - y| \leq |x^* - y|$, $y \in \Omega$. Hence,

$$0 \leq |x - y|^{2-m} - |x^* - y|^{2-m} \leq (m - 2)|x - x^*||x - y|^{1-m}. \quad (22)$$

Let

$$A_x^* = \{y : |y - x| < r_A\},$$

where

$$\omega_m r_A^m = |A|. \quad (23)$$

By (20)–(22) and radial rearrangement of $A$ about $x$, we have

$$\int_A dy G_H(x,y) \leq (m - 2)c_m|x - x^*| \int_A dy |x - y|^{1-m}
\leq (m - 2)c_m|x - x^*| \int_{A_x^*} dy |x - y|^{1-m}
= (m - 2)mc_m \omega_m r_A|x - x^*|
= 2r_A|x - \bar{x}|. \quad (24)$$

The following will be used in the proof of (5), and in the proof of (55) and (56) in Remark 6 below.

**Lemma 9.** If $\Omega$ is an open set in $\mathbb{R}^m$, $m \geq 2$ with $R$-smooth boundary, and if if $\lambda(\Omega) > 0$, then

$$v_{\Omega}(x) \geq \frac{|x - \bar{x}|R}{2m}. \quad (25)$$
Proof. Recall that
\[ v_{B_r(c)}(x) = \frac{r^2 - |x - c|^2}{2m}. \]
We first consider the case \(|x - \bar{x}| > R\). Then, by domain monotonicity of the torsion function and (24),
\[ v_{\Omega}(x) \geq v_{B_r(x)}(x) = \frac{|x - \bar{x}|^2}{2m} \geq \frac{|x - \bar{x}| R}{2m}. \]
We next consider the case \(|x - \bar{x}| \leq R\). Since \(\partial \Omega\) is \(R\)-smooth, there exists \(B_{R(c_x)} \subset \Omega\) such that \(|c_x - \bar{x}| = R\). Hence, by (25),
\[ v_{\Omega}(x) \geq v_{B_{R(c_x)}}(x) = \frac{R^2 - |x - c_x|^2}{2m} \geq \frac{(R - |x - c_x|)R}{2m} = \frac{|x - \bar{x}| R}{2m}. \]
In either case, we conclude (25). \(\Box\)

By (24) and (25) we have that
\[ v_{B_{R,A},\gamma}(x) \geq \gamma \frac{|x - \bar{x}| R}{2m} - 2r_A|x - \bar{x}|. \] (26)
The right-hand side of (26) is non-negative for \(r_A \leq \gamma R/(4m)\). This is, by (23), equivalent to (5).

Consider the case \(m = 2\). Then
\[ G_H(x,y) = \frac{1}{2\pi} \log \left( \frac{|x^* - y|}{|x - y|} \right). \]
By the triangle inequality,
\[ G_{B_R}(x,y) \leq G_H(x,y) \leq \frac{1}{2\pi} \log \left( \frac{|x^* - x| + |x - y|}{|x - y|} \right) \leq \frac{|x^* - x|}{2\pi|x - y|}. \]
Hence, we have that
\[ \int_A dy G_{B_R}(x,y) \leq (2\pi)^{-1}|x - x^*| \int_A dy |x - y|^{-1} = 2r_A|x - \bar{x}|. \]
The remaining arguments follow those of the case \(m \geq 3\), as the right-hand side above equals the right-hand side of (24).

To prove (6), we let \(m \geq 3\). By scaling it suffices to prove (6) for \(R = 1\). Let \(a \in (0, 1)\). We obtain an upper bound for \(a\) such that \(v_{B_1(B_a,\gamma)}(0) < 0\). Note that
\[ G_{B_1}(0,y) = \frac{\Gamma((m - 2)/2)}{4\pi^{m/2}}(\|y\|^{2-m} - 1). \] (27)
Hence, by (27), we have that
\[ v_{B_1(B_a,\gamma)}(0) = \gamma v_{B_1}(0) - \int_{B_a} dy G_{B_1}(0,y) \]
\[ = \frac{\gamma}{2m} - \frac{\Gamma((m - 2)/2)}{4\pi^{m/2}} m \omega_m \int_{[0,a]} \omega(r - r^{-m-1}) \]
\[ \leq \frac{\gamma}{2m} - \frac{a^2}{2m}. \] (28)
The right-hand side of (28) is negative for \(a > \gamma^{1/2}\). This implies (6).
To prove (7), we let \( m = 2 \), \( a \in (0, 1) \), and note that 
\[
G_{B_1}(0, y) = -\frac{1}{2\pi} \log |y|.
\]
Hence,
\[
v_{B_1, B_a, \gamma}(0) = \frac{\gamma}{4} + \int_{[0, a]} dr \, r \log r 
= \frac{\gamma}{4} - \frac{a^2}{4} + \frac{a^2}{4} \log a^2.
\]  
(29)

Let 
\[
a = \left( 1 + \log \left( \frac{1}{\gamma} \right) \right)^{-1/2} \gamma^{1/2}.
\]  
(30)

Then \( a \in (0, 1) \), and by (29) and (30),
\[
v_{B_1, B_a, \gamma}(0) \leq -\frac{\gamma}{4} \frac{\log \left( 1 + \log \left( \frac{1}{\gamma} \right) \right)}{1 + \log \left( \frac{1}{\gamma} \right)} < 0.
\]

This implies (7). \( \Box \)

5. Proof of Theorem 4

Proof of Theorem 4. The proof of Theorem 4 relies on some basic facts on the connection between torsion function, Green function and heat kernel. These have been exploited elsewhere in the literature. See, for example, [3]. We recall that (see [10, 14, 15]) the heat equation 
\[
\Delta u = \frac{\partial u}{\partial t} \text{ on } \Omega \times \mathbb{R}^+,
\]
has a unique, minimal, positive fundamental solution \( p_{\Omega}(x, y; t) \), where \( x \in \Omega \), \( y \in \Omega \), \( t > 0 \). This solution, the heat kernel for \( \Omega \), is symmetric in \( x, y \), strictly positive, jointly smooth in \( x, y \in \Omega \) and \( t > 0 \), and it satisfies the semigroup property 
\[
p_{\Omega}(x, y; s+t) = \int_{\Omega} dz \, p_{\Omega}(x, z; s)p_{\Omega}(z, y; t),
\]
for all \( x, y \in \Omega \) and \( t, s > 0 \). If \( \Omega \) is an open subset of \( \mathbb{R}^m \), then, by minimality, 
\[
p_{\Omega}(x, y; t) \leq p_{\mathbb{R}^m}(x, y; t) = (4\pi t)^{-m/2}e^{-|x-y|^2/(4t)}, \, x \in \Omega, \, y \in \Omega, \, t > 0.
\]  
(31)

It is a standard fact that for \( \Omega \) open in \( \mathbb{R}^m \), 
\[
G_{\Omega}(x, y) = \int_{[0, \infty)} dt \, p_{\Omega}(x, y; t),
\]  
(32)
whenever the integral with respect to \( t \) converges. We have 
\[
v_{\Omega}(x) = \int_{[0, \infty)} dt \int_{\Omega} dy \, p_{\Omega}(x, y; t).
\]

By the heat semigroup property, we have that for \( x \in \Omega, \, y \in \Omega, \, t > 0 \), 
\[
p_{\Omega}(x, y; t) = \int_{\Omega} dr \, p_{\Omega}(x, r; t/2)p_{\Omega}(r, y; t/2)
\]
Furthermore, for all $s \in (0, t)$,
\[ p_\Omega(z, z; t) \leq e^{-s\lambda(\Omega)} p_\Omega(z, z; t-s). \]
(34)
So choosing $s = t/2$ in (34), and subsequently using (33) gives that
\[ p_\Omega(x, y; t) \leq e^{-t\lambda(\Omega)/3} (p_\Omega(x, x; t/2) p_\Omega(y, y; t/2))^{1/3} p_\Omega(x, y; t)^{1/3}. \]
(35)
By (31), both diagonal heat kernels in the right-hand side of (35) are bounded by $(2\pi t)^{-m/2}$, and $p_\Omega(x, y; t)^{1/3} \leq (4\pi t)^{-m/6} e^{-|x-y|^2/(24t)}$. Hence, by (35),
\[ p_\Omega(x, y; t) \leq 2^{m/3} (4\pi t)^{-m/2} e^{-t\lambda(\Omega)/3 - |x-y|^2/(12t)}. \]
\[ \leq 2^{m/3} \sup_{t>0} \left( e^{-t\lambda(\Omega)/6 - |x-y|^2/(24t)} \right) e^{-t\lambda(\Omega)/6 - t\lambda(\Omega)/3 - |x-y|^2/(12t)}. \]
\[ = 2^{m/3} e^{-t\lambda(\Omega)/6 - |x-y|\lambda(\Omega)^{1/2}/6} (4\pi t)^{-m/2} e^{-|x-y|^2/(24t)}. \]
(36)
Let $c > 0$, and let $r_1$ be the radius of a ball of volume $\frac{c}{2}$ and $r_2 = \frac{2}{\pi} r_1$ be the radius of a ball of volume $c$. Following the result of Lieb [20, Theorem 1], there exists a translation $x$ of $B_{r_1}$ such that
\[ \lambda(\Omega) + \lambda(B_{r_1}) \geq \lambda(\Omega \cap B_{r_1}(x)). \]
The Kohler–Jobin inequality asserts that (see, for instance, [5]) there exists $C_2(m) > 0$ such that for every open set $\Omega$,
\[ \lambda(\Omega) T(\Omega) \frac{m+2}{m} \geq C_2(m). \]
(37)
This, together with the Lieb inequality, implies
\[ T(A') = \int_{\Omega \cap B_{r_1}(x)} v_{\Omega \cap B_{r_1}(x)} \geq \left( \frac{C_2(m)}{\lambda(\Omega \cap B_{r_1}(x))} \right)^{\frac{m+2}{m}} \geq \left( \frac{C_2(m)}{\lambda(\Omega) + \lambda(B_{r_1})} \right)^{\frac{m+2}{m}}, \]
(38)
where $A' = B_{r_1}(x) \cap \Omega$. We put $A = B_{r_2}(x) \cap \Omega$.
We estimate the integral of $v_{\Omega, A, \gamma}$ on the set $A'$ as follows:
\[ \int_{A'} v_{\Omega, A, \gamma} = \int_{A'} dx \left( \int_{\Omega} dy G_{\Omega}(x, y)(\gamma 1_{\Omega \setminus A}(y) - (1 - \gamma) 1_A(y)) \right) \]
\[ = \gamma \int_{A'} dx \int_{\Omega \setminus A} dy G_{\Omega}(x, y) - (1 - \gamma) \int_{A'} dx \int_{A} dy G_{\Omega}(x, y). \]
(39)
By monotonicity, we have that
\[ (1 - \gamma) \int_{A'} dx \int_{A} dy G_{\Omega}(x, y) 1_A(y) \geq (1 - \gamma) \int_{A'} v_{A'} = (1 - \gamma) T(A'). \]
(40)
For all $x \in A'$, and for all $y \in \Omega \setminus A$, we have that
\[ |x - y| \geq \frac{1}{2m} (c/\omega_m)^{1/m}. \]
By (32) and (36) and the preceding inequality,
\[
\gamma \int _{A'} dx \int _{\Omega \setminus A} dy G_\Omega (x, y)
\leqslant \gamma^{2m/3} 6^{m/2} \int _{[0, \infty)} dt \int _{A'} dx \int _{\Omega \setminus A} dy \, e^{-t \lambda (\Omega)/6 - |x-y| \lambda (\Omega)/12} p_{\mathbb{R}^m} (x, y; 6t)
\leqslant \gamma^{2m/3} 6^{m/2} e^{-(c/\omega_m)^{1/m} \lambda (\Omega)^{1/2}/(12m)}
\times \int _{[0, \infty)} dt \, e^{-t \lambda (\Omega)/6} \int _{A'} dx \int _{\mathbb{R}^m} dy \, p_{\mathbb{R}^m} (x, y; 6t)
\leqslant \gamma^{2m/3} 6^{m/2} e^{-(c/\omega_m)^{1/m} \lambda (\Omega)^{1/2}/(12m)}
\times \int _{[0, \infty)} dt \, e^{-t \lambda (\Omega)/6} \int _{A'} dx \int _{\mathbb{R}^m} dy \, p_{\mathbb{R}^m} (x, y; 6t)
\leqslant \gamma^{2m/6} 6^{(m+2)/2} e^{-(c/\omega_m)^{1/m} \lambda (\Omega)^{1/2}/(12m)} |A'| \lambda (\Omega)^{-1}
\leqslant \gamma^{2m/6} 6^{(m+2)/2} e^{-(c/\omega_m)^{1/m} \lambda (\Omega)^{1/2}/(12m)} c \lambda (\Omega)^{-1}.
\]
By (38), (40), (39) and (41), we find
\[
\int _{A'} r_{\Omega, A, \gamma} \leqslant \gamma^{2m/6} 6^{(m+2)/2} e^{-(c/\omega_m)^{1/m} \lambda (\Omega)^{1/2}/(12m)} c \lambda (\Omega)^{-1} - (1 - \gamma) \left( \frac{C_2 (m)}{\lambda (\Omega) + \lambda (B_r)} \right)^{m+2}.
\]
In order to bound the right-hand side of (42) from above, we have
\[
\left( \frac{C_2 (m)}{\lambda (\Omega) + \lambda (B_r)} \right)^{m+2} \geqslant \left( \frac{C_2 (m)^{1/2}}{\lambda (\Omega)^{1/2} + \lambda (B_r)^{1/2}} \right)^{m+2}
= \left( \frac{c}{\omega_m} \right)^{(m+2)/m} \left( \lambda (\Omega)^{1/2} (c/\omega_m)^{1/m} + 2^{1/m} \lambda (B_1)^{1/2} \right)^{m+2},
\]
where we have used the scaling \( \lambda (B_r) = |r-x|^2 \lambda (B_1) \).

In order to bound the first term in the right-hand side of (43) from above, we use the inequality \( e^{-x} \leqslant \frac{1}{4} e^{(m+2)/m x^{m+2}}, x > 0 \). We have
\[
e^{-(c/\omega_m)^{1/m} \lambda (\Omega)^{1/2}/(12m)} = e^{2^{1/m} \lambda (B_1)^{1/2}/(12m)} e^{-(c/\omega_m)^{1/m} \lambda (\Omega)^{1/2} + 2^{1/m} \lambda (B_1)^{1/2}/(12m)}
\leqslant e^{2^{1/m} \lambda (B_1)^{1/2}/(12m)}
\times (12m (m+2)/e)^{m+2} ((c/\omega_m)^{1/m} \lambda (\Omega)^{1/2} + 2^{1/m} \lambda (B_1)^{1/2})^{-(m+2)}.
\]
By (43) and (44), we obtain that the right-hand side of (42) is bounded from above by 0, provided
\[
c \geqslant C_1 (m) \left( \frac{\gamma}{1 - \gamma} \right)^{m/2} \lambda (\Omega)^{-m/2},
\]
with \( C_1 (m) \) given by (8). This implies the bound for \( C_- (\Omega, \gamma) \) in (9). \( \square \)
6. Proof of Theorem 5

We start with the following.

**Lemma 10.** There exists \( \varepsilon = \varepsilon(m, \gamma) > 0 \) such that for every open set \( \Omega \subseteq \mathbb{R}^m \) with finite torsion and for every \( x_0 \in \Omega \), the following holds:

\[
\text{if } v_\Omega(x, \gamma) \leq \varepsilon \text{ for a.e. } x \in B_1(x_0) \text{ then } v_{\Omega, B_1(x_0), \gamma}(x_0) \leq 0.
\]

Note that a consequence of the lemma above, for every \( \delta > 0 \)

\[
\text{if } v_\Omega(x, \gamma) \leq \varepsilon \text{ for a.e. } x \in B_{1+\delta}(x_0) \text{ then } v_{\Omega, B_{1+\delta}(x_0), \gamma} \leq 0 \text{ on } B_\delta(x_0). \tag{45}
\]

**Proof.** Assume for the moment that \( \Omega \) is bounded and smooth. Let \( x_0 \in \Omega \) such that

\[
v_\Omega(x) \leq \varepsilon \text{ for a.e. } x \in B_1(x_0),
\]

for some value \( \varepsilon > 0 \) that will be specified later in the proof. We observe that \( v_{\Omega, B_1(x_0), \gamma} \) is Lipschitz and bounded from above by \( x \), and integrating over \( (0,1) \), one can define

\[
M(r) := \sup_{x \in \partial B_r(x_0)} v_{\Omega, B_1(x_0), \gamma}(x).
\]

The function \( M : (0,1) \to \mathbb{R} \) is Lipschitz and bounded from above by \( \varepsilon \). If there exists some \( r \in (0,1) \) such that \( M(r) = 0 \), then the assertion of the theorem is proved since one gets by the maximum principle that \( v_{\Omega, B_1(x_0), \gamma} \leq 0 \) on \( B_r(x_0) \). So, we can assume that \( M > 0 \) on \( (0,1) \). Then, the supremum above is achieved at a point \( x_r \in \partial B_r(x_0) \cap \Omega \).

Moreover,

\[
M''(r) + \frac{m-1}{r} M'(r) \geq 1 - \gamma,
\]

in the viscosity sense on \( (0,1) \). For every \( 0 < \varepsilon < R \leq 1 \), we introduce the equation

\[
\phi''(r) + \frac{m-1}{r} \phi'(r) = 1 - \gamma, \quad \text{on } (\varepsilon, R), \quad \phi(\varepsilon, R) = M(\varepsilon), \quad \phi(\varepsilon, R) = M(R).
\]

By the comparison principle (see, for instance, \([23, \text{Theorem 1.1}]\)), we get that \( M \leq \phi(\varepsilon, R) \) on \((R, d)\). In particular, this implies that \( \phi \) is non-negative. If \( M \) is differentiable at \( R \), then \( \phi(\varepsilon, R) \leq M'(R) \).

Multiplying the equation for \( \phi(\varepsilon, R) \) by \( r^{m-1} \) and integrating between \( r \) and \( R \) gives

\[
R^{m-1} \phi'_r(R) - r^{m-1} \phi'_r(r) = (1 - \gamma) \left( \frac{R^m}{m} - \frac{r^m}{m} \right).
\]

Dividing by \( r^m-1 \) and integrating over \( (\varepsilon, R) \) yields

\[
R^{m-1} \phi'_r(R) \int_\varepsilon^R \frac{1}{r^{m-1}} dr - (M(R) - M(\varepsilon)) = (1 - \gamma) \frac{R^m}{m} \int_\varepsilon^R \frac{1}{r^{m-1}} dr - \frac{1-\gamma}{2m} \left( R^2 - \varepsilon^2 \right).
\]

Since \( M \) is Lipschitz and \( \lim_{\varepsilon \to 0} \int_\varepsilon^R \frac{1}{r^{m-1}} dr = +\infty \), we get

\[
\lim_{\varepsilon \to 0} \phi'_r(R) = (1 - \gamma) \frac{R}{m}.
\]

Finally,

\[
M'(R) \geq (1 - \gamma) \frac{R}{m}.
\]
Integrating over (0,1) gives
\[ M(1) - M(0) \geq \frac{1 - \gamma}{2m}. \]
Since \( M \geq 0 \),
\[ M(1) \geq \frac{1 - \gamma}{2m}. \]
Taking into account that \( M \leq \gamma v_{\Omega} \), and putting
\[ \varepsilon := \frac{1 - \gamma}{2m\gamma}, \]
concludes the proof.

Assume now that \( \Omega \) is open and with finite torsion. Assume that \( x_0 \in \Omega \) is such that
\[ v_{\Omega}(x) \leq \varepsilon \text{ for a.e. } x \in B_1(x_0). \]
Let \((\Omega_n)\) be an increasing sequence of open, smooth sets such that \( \Omega = \cup_n \Omega_n \). For all \( n \) sufficiently large, \( x_0 \in \Omega_n \). Moreover, by the maximum principle,
\[ v_{\Omega_n}(x) \leq \varepsilon \text{ for a.e. } x \in B_1(x_0). \]
Then \( v_{\Omega_n, B_1(x_0), \gamma}(x_0) \leq 0 \). At the same time, \( v_{\Omega_n, B_1(x_0), \gamma} \) converges to \( v_{\Omega, B_1(x_0), \gamma} \) uniformly on any compact contained in \( \Omega \cap B_1(x_0) \). Hence \( v_{\Omega_n, B_1(x_0), \gamma}(x_0) \leq 0 \).

Proof of Theorem 5. Let \( \Omega \) be open, connected and with finite torsion. If \( \varepsilon(\Omega, \gamma) = 0 \), then inequality (10) is satisfied. Assume \( \varepsilon(\Omega, \gamma) > 0 \). Then, for every \( \delta > 0 \), there exists \( t > 0 \) such that
\[ \varepsilon(t\Omega, \gamma) = (1 + \delta)|B_1|. \]
By (4),
\[ t = \left( \frac{(1 + \delta)|B_1|}{\varepsilon(\Omega, \gamma)} \right)^\frac{1}{m}. \]
If there exists \( x_0 \in t\Omega \) such that \( v_{t\Omega}(x) \leq \varepsilon \) on \( B_1(x_0) \), then by Lemma 10, we get \( v_{t\Omega, B_1(x_0), \gamma}(x_0) \leq 0 \), so that \( \varepsilon(t\Omega, \gamma) \leq |B_1| \), in contradiction with our choice. Consequently, for every \( x_0 \in t\Omega \), \( \sup_{B_1(x_0)} v_{t\Omega} > \frac{1 - \gamma}{2m\gamma} \). This inequality leads to a relationship between \( T(t\Omega) \) and \( \text{diam}(t\Omega) \).

Indeed, if for some \( y \in t\Omega \), \( v_{t\Omega}(y) > \frac{1 - \gamma}{2m\gamma} \), then for every \( r > 0 \)
\[ \int_{B_r(y)} v_{t\Omega}(x) \, dx \geq r^m|B_1| \left( \frac{1 - \gamma}{2m\gamma} - \frac{r^2}{2(m+2)} \right). \]
This follows from the fact that \( x \to v_{t\Omega}(x) + \frac{|x-y|^2}{2m} \) is subharmonic on \( \mathbb{R}^m \). We have extended \( v_{t\Omega} \) to all of \( \mathbb{R}^m \) by putting \( v_{t\Omega}(x) = 0 \) on \( \mathbb{R}^m \setminus \Omega \).

Choosing \( r \) such that
\[ \frac{r^2}{2(m+2)} = \frac{1 - \gamma}{4m\gamma}, \]
we get
\[ \int_{B_r(y)} v_{t\Omega}(x) \, dx \geq \frac{(m+2)^{m/2}}{2^{m+2}m^{m/2}} \left( \frac{1 - \gamma}{\gamma} \right)^{(m+2)/2} |B_1|. \]
Assume that \( N \) is an integer such that
\[ N(2r + 2) \leq \text{diam}(t\Omega) < (N + 1)(2r + 2). \]
Then,
\[
T(t\Omega) \geq N \frac{(m+2)^\frac{m}{2}}{2^{(m+4)/2}m^{(m+2)/2}} \frac{(1-\gamma)}{\gamma} \frac{m+2}{2} |B_1|.
\]

If \(N \geq 1\), then using the inequality \(N + 1 \leq 2N\), we get
\[
diam(t\Omega) \leq 2(2r + 2) \left( \frac{(m+2)^{m/2}}{2^{(m+4)/2}m^{(m+2)/2}} \frac{(1-\gamma)}{\gamma} \right)^{(m+2)/2} T(t\Omega).
\]

If \(N = 0\), then we observe that \(diam(t\Omega) \leq 2r + 2\). Inequality (9) (which follows from Theorem 4) gives
\[
C_-(t\Omega, \gamma) \leq C_1(m)C_2(m)(m/2) T(t\Omega)^{m/(m+2)}.
\]

By (46),
\[
(1+\delta)|B_1| \leq C_1(m)C_2(m)(m/2) T(t\Omega)^{m/(m+2)}.
\]

Finally,
\[
diam(t\Omega) \leq 2r + 2 \leq 2(2r + 2) \left( \frac{C_1(m)C_2(m)m/2}{(1+\delta)|B_1|} \right)^{(m+2)/2} \left( \frac{\gamma}{1-\gamma} \right)^{(m+2)/2} T(t\Omega).
\]

We observe that the \(\gamma\)-dependence in both (49) and (50) is the same. Taking the larger of the two \(m\)-dependant constants which show up in front of \(T(t\Omega)\) in (49) and (50), replacing \(t\) from (47), and letting \(\delta \to 0\), and using (48) concludes the proof. \(\Box\)

7. Proof of Theorem 6

The proof of Theorem 6 requires the extension of the constant \(C_-(\Omega, \gamma)\) to quasi-open sets. A proper introduction to the Laplace equation on quasi-open sets, capacity theory and gamma convergence can be found in [16, Chapter 2] and [16]. We prefer, for expository reasons, to avoid an extensive introduction to this topic, and refer the interested reader to [6, Sections 4.1 and 4.3] where all terminology used below can be found.

The key observation is that the class of quasi-open sets is the largest class of sets where the Dirichlet–Laplacian problem is well defined in the Sobolev space \(H^1_0\), and satisfies a strong maximum principle (see [12]). Of course, any open set is also quasi-open. Although the reader may only be interested in open sets, we are forced to work with quasi-open ones since the crucial step of the proof is the existence of a quasi-open set \(\Omega^*\) which maximises the left-hand side of (11).

The strategy of the proof is as follows. We analyse the shape optimisation problem
\[
\sup \left\{ \frac{C_-(\Omega, \gamma)}{|\Omega|} : \Omega \subseteq \mathbb{R}^m, \ \Omega \text{ quasi-open with } 0 < |\Omega| < \infty \right\},
\]
and prove in Step 1 below the existence of a maximiser \(\Omega^*\). Denoting \(C'(m, \gamma) = C_-(\Omega^*, \gamma)/|\Omega^*|\), we then prove in Step 2 that \(C'(m, \gamma) < \gamma\) by a direct estimate on \(\Omega^*\).

We start with the following observation. Assume that \((\Omega_n)_{n}\) is a sequence of quasi-open sets of \(\mathbb{R}^m\), \(|\Omega_n| \leq 1\), such that \(v_{\Omega_n}\) converges strongly in \(L^2(\mathbb{R}^m)\), and pointwise almost everywhere to some function \(v\). Let us denote \(\Omega := \{v > 0\}\). We then have
\[
C_-(\Omega, \gamma) \geq \limsup_{n \to +\infty} C_-(\Omega_n, \gamma).
\]
Indeed, in order to prove this assertion, let us consider a set \( A \subseteq \Omega \) such that \( \text{essinf} \, v_{\Omega, A, \gamma} < 0 \). We have
\[
1_{\Omega}(x) \leq \liminf_{n \to +\infty} 1_{\Omega_n}(x) \quad \text{a.e. } x \in D,
\]
and hence
\[
1_{\Omega_n \cap A} \to 1_A \text{ in } L^1(\mathbb{R}^m).
\]
Following [6, Lemma 4.3.15], there exists larger sets \( \tilde{\Omega}_n \supset \Omega_n \), \( |\tilde{\Omega}_n| \leq 2 \), such that for a subsequence (still denoted with the same index)
\[
\lim_{n \to +\infty} v_{\tilde{\Omega}_n, A \cap \Omega_n, \gamma}(x) = v_{\Omega, A, \gamma}(x), \quad \text{for a.e. } x \in \mathbb{R}^m.
\]
Since \( \text{essinf} \, v_{\Omega, A, \gamma} < 0 \), we get for \( n \) large enough that \( \text{essinf} \, v_{\tilde{\Omega}_n, A \cap \Omega_n, \gamma} < 0 \) for \( n \) large enough. Lemma 8 (which also holds in the class of quasi-open sets) implies that \( \text{essinf} \, v_{\tilde{\Omega}_n, A \cap \Omega_n, \gamma} < 0 \), since the right-hand side equals to \( \gamma, \gamma > 0 \) on \( \tilde{\Omega}_n \setminus \Omega_n \). Consequently, \( \mathcal{C}_-(\Omega_n, \gamma) \leq |\Omega_n \cap A| \).

Passing to the limit,
\[
\limsup_{n \to +\infty} \mathcal{C}_-(\Omega_n, \gamma) \leq |A|,
\]
which implies the assertion.

Let us prove now that the shape optimisation problem (51) has a solution. In order to prove this result, it is enough to consider a maximising sequence \( (\Omega_n) \) of quasi-open, quasi-connected subsets of \( \mathbb{R}^m \), with \( |\Omega_n| = 1 \). We first notice that the diameters of \( \Omega_n \) are uniformly bounded, so that up to a translation, all of them are subsets of the same ball \( B \). This is a consequence of Theorem 5 which by approximation holds as well on quasi-open, quasi-connected sets. Indeed, this is essentially a consequence of (45) which passes to the limit by approximation.

Then, the existence result is immediate from the compact embedding of \( H_0^1(B) \rightarrow L^2(B) \) and the observation above: there exists a subsequence such that \( v_{\Omega_n} \) converges strongly in \( L^2(\mathbb{R}^m) \) and pointwise almost everywhere to some function \( v \). Taking \( \Omega^* := \{ v > 0 \} \), and using the upper semi-continuity result (52) together with the lower semicontinuity of the Lebesgue measures coming from (53), we conclude that \( \Omega^* \) is optimal.

8. Proof of Theorem 7 and further remarks

Proof of Theorem 7. For a measurable set \( A \subset \Omega \), we denote
\[
m(A) := \text{essinf} \, v_{\Omega, A, \gamma}.
\]
Note that the smoothness of \( \partial \Omega \) implies that \( v_{\Omega, A, \gamma} \in C^{1,\alpha}(\overline{\Omega}) \).

Firstly, we extend the shape functional \( m \) on the closure of the convex hull of
\[
\{ \gamma 1_{\Omega \setminus A} - (1-\gamma)1_A : A \subset \Omega, |A| = c \}.
\]
Denote by
\[
\mathcal{F} := \{ f \in L^\infty(\Omega) : -(1-\gamma) \leq f \leq \gamma, \int_{\Omega} f = \gamma|\Omega| - c \}.
\]
One naturally extends the functional \( m \) to the set \( \mathcal{F} \) by defining \( v_{\Omega, f, \gamma} \) as the solution of \(-\Delta v = f \) in \( H_0^1(\Omega) \). We shall prove in the sequel that the relaxation of the shape optimisation problem (12) on the set \( \mathcal{F} \) has a solution in \( \mathcal{F} \). Precisely, we solve
\[
\min\{ m(f) : f \in \mathcal{F} \}.
\]
Clearly, \( \mathcal{F} \) is compact for the weak-\( \star \) \( L^\infty \)-topology, so that we can assume that \( (f_n) \) is a minimising sequence which converges in weak-\( \star \) \( L^\infty \) to \( f \). We know, by the Calderon–Zygmund
inequality, that \((v_{Ω_1, f_1, γ})_n\) are uniformly bounded in \(W^{2,p}(Ω)\), for every \(p < ∞\). In particular, for \(p\) large enough, this implies that \(v_{Ω_1, f_1, γ}\) converges uniformly to \(v_{Ω_1, f_1, γ}\). Consequently, this implies that \(m(f_n)\) converges to \(m(f)\) so that \(f\) is a solution to the optimisation problem (54).

Secondly, we prove that there exists some set \(A\) such that \(f = γ 1_{Ω \setminus A} - (1 - γ)1_A\). To prove this, we exploit both the concavity property of the map \(f \mapsto m(f)\), and the structure of the partial differential equation. Assume for contradiction that the set

\[
A_ε := \{ x ∈ Ω, -(1 - γ) + ε ≤ f(x) ≤ γ - ε \}
\]

has non-zero measure, for some \(ε > 0\). Let \(A_1, A_2 \subseteq A_ε\) be two disjoint sets, such that \(|A_1| = |A_2|\). We consider the functions \(f_1 = f + t1_{A_1} - t1_{A_2}\), and \(f_2 = f - t1_{A_1} + t1_{A_2}\), for \(t ∈ (−ε, ε)\). Then, \(f_1, f_2 ∈ F\), and by linearity, we have

\[
v_{Ω, f, γ} = \frac{1}{2} v_{Ω, f_1, γ} + \frac{1}{2} v_{Ω, f_2, γ}.
\]

Consequently,

\[
m(f) ≥ \frac{1}{2} m(f_1) + \frac{1}{2} m(f_2),
\]

with strict inequality if the point \(x^*\) where \(v_{Ω, f_1, γ}\) is minimised also minimises \(v_{Ω, f_1, γ}\) and \(v_{Ω, f_2, γ}\). Moreover, we have \(v_{Ω, f_1, γ}(x^*) = v_{Ω, f_1, γ}(x^*) = v_{Ω, f_2, γ}(x^*)\). We distinguish between two situations: \(v_{Ω, f_1, γ}(x^*) = 0\), and \(v_{Ω, f_2, γ}(x^*) < 0\). If we are in the first situation, then \(x^*\) could belong to \(∂Ω\). In this case, for all admissible sets \(A\), we have \(v_{Ω, A, γ} ≥ 0\), the minimal value, which is 0 being attained on \(∂Ω\). In this case, every admissible set \(A\) is a solution to the shape optimisation problem.

If we are in the second situation, then necessarily \(x^* ∈ Ω\). By linearity, from \(v_{Ω, f_1, γ}(x^*) = v_{Ω, f_1, γ}(x^*)\), we get

\[
v_{Ω, 1_{A_1}, 0}(x^*) = v_{Ω, 1_{A_2}, 0}(x^*).
\]

In particular, for every pair of points \(z, y ∈ A_ε \setminus \{x^*\}\) with density 1 in \(A_ε\), we get

\[
G_Ω(x^*, x) = G_Ω(x^*, y).
\]

Since \(G_Ω\) is harmonic on \(Ω \setminus \{x^*\}\), we get that \(G_Ω\) is constant in \(Ω \setminus \{x^*\}\), in contradiction with the fact that it is a fundamental solution.

Finally, this implies that \(|A_ε| = 0\) for every \(ε > 0\). Hence, \(f\) is a characteristic function. □

**Remark 1.** Clearly, the solution of the shape optimisation problem above is, in general, not unique. If the minimal value is 0, then any admissible set \(A\) is a solution. If the minimal value is strictly negative, then there are geometries with non-uniqueness. For example, if \(Ω\) is the union of two disjoint balls with the same radius, then \(A\) is a subset of one of the two balls.

**Remark 2.** Assume \(Ω = B_R\), and \(|B_R| ≥ c ≥ |B_R|\). The solution to the shape optimisation problem (12) is given by the (concentric) ball \(B_{ε_c}\), of mass \(c, c = |B_{ε_c}|\). Indeed, there are two possibilities. This follows directly from Talenti’s theorem applied to \(−v_{B_R, A, γ}\) in case \(A ⊂ B_R\) has measure \(c\), and \(v_{B_R, A, γ} ≤ 0\).

Assume now that \(v_{B_R, A, γ}\) changes sign on \(B_R\). We define the sets \(Ω^+ = \{ v_{B_R, A, γ} > 0 \} \) and \(Ω^- = \{ v_{B_R, A, γ} < 0 \} \). In view of Theorem 1, we have that \(|A ∩ Ω^+| ≤ γ|Ω^+|\) and \(|A ∩ Ω^-| ≥ γ|Ω^-|\). We use Talenti’s theorem on \(Ω^-\), and get that the essential infimum of the function \(v_{B_R', B_{ε_c}, γ}\) is not larger than the infimum of \(v_{B_R, A, γ}\), where \(B_R', B_{ε_c}\) are the balls centred at the origin of measures \(|Ω^-|, |Ω^- ∩ A|\), respectively. We claim that \(v_{B_R, B_{ε_c}, γ} ≤ v_{B_R', B_{ε_c}, γ}\).

Indeed, making a suitable rescaling by a factor \(t ≥ 1\) such that \(|t(Ω^- ∩ A)| = c ≥ γ|B_R|\), the function \(v_{tB_R', tB_{ε_c}, γ}\) has an essential infimum lower than that of \(v_{B_R', B_{ε_c}, γ}\). We finally notice
that \( v_{BR,r_c,\gamma} \leq v_{tBR',B_{r_c'},\gamma} \). Indeed, this is a consequence of the fact that \( v_{tBR',B_{r_c'},\gamma} \) is equal to \( \min\{-\delta, v_{BR,r_c,\gamma}\} + \delta \), for a suitable \( \delta > 0 \).

**Remark 3.** Assume \( \Omega = B_R \). Let \( 0 < c < |B_R| \) and denote by \( B_r \) the ball with the same centre as \( B_R \) and of volume \( c \). For every radial set \( A \) of volume \( c \), we have

\[
v_{BR,B_{r_c},\gamma} \leq v_{BR,A,\gamma}.
\]

Indeed, let us denote for simplicity \( v = v_{BR,A,\gamma} \) and \( v_c = v_{BR,B_{r_c},\gamma} \). Using the fact that both \( v \) and \( v_c \) are radial, we get

\[
-r^{m-1}v'(r) = \int_0^r s^{m-1}(\gamma 1_{BR\setminus A} - (1 - \gamma)1_A)ds
= \frac{1}{\omega_{m-1}} \int_{B_r} (\gamma 1_{BR\setminus A} - (1 - \gamma)1_A),
\]

\[
-r^{m-1}v_c'(r) = \int_0^r s^{m-1}(\gamma 1_{B_{r_c}\setminus B_{r_c}} - (1 - \gamma)1_{BR_{r_c}})ds
= \frac{1}{\omega_{m-1}} \int_{B_r} (\gamma 1_{B_{r_c}\setminus B_{r_c}} - (1 - \gamma)1_{BR_{r_c}}),
\]

where, for a radial set \( E \subseteq B_R \), we define (with abuse of notation), \( 1_E(r) \) being the value of \( 1_E \) on the sphere of radius \( r \).

Since for all \( r \in (0, R) \),

\[
\int_{B_r} (\gamma 1_{B_{r_c}\setminus B_{r_c}} - (1 - \gamma)1_{BR_{r_c}}) \geq \int_{B_r} (\gamma 1_{BR\setminus A} - (1 - \gamma)1_A),
\]

we get that for all \( r \in (0, R) \)

\[
-r^{m-1}v'(r) \geq -r^{m-1}v_c'(r).
\]

Hence,

\[
\int_r^1 v_c'(s)ds \geq \int_r^1 v'(s)ds,
\]

and

\[
v_c(r) \geq v(r).
\]

This concludes the proof. Moreover, the infimum value of \( v_c \) is attained either at 0 or at \( R \), as \( v_c' \) is positive on some interval \((0, \alpha)\) and negative on \((\alpha, R)\).

For \( \gamma = \frac{1}{2} \), we can compute the value of \( c \) such that \( v_c(0) = v_c(R) = 0 \). Indeed, in \( \mathbb{R}^2 \), the corresponding value \( r_c \) is the solution of

\[
\frac{r^2}{2} - \frac{1}{4} - r^2 \ln r = 0.
\]

An estimate of the solution is \( r_c \approx 0.432067 \).

**Remark 4.** Assume \( \Omega = B_R \), and \( C_-(B_R, \gamma) < c < |B_R| \). The solution of the shape optimisation problem is non-trivial in this case. While we do not know the general solution, we can observe a symmetry breaking phenomenon: the solution is not radially symmetric for small values of \( c \).

Let \( \gamma = \frac{1}{2}, r_c = 0.432 \) just below the value computed in the previous remark. Then, for every radial set \( A \), the essential infimum of \( v_{BR,A,\frac{1}{2}} \) is equal to 0. Meanwhile, there exists a non-radial
set $A$ which gives a lower essential infimum. This fact is observed numerically, if, for instance, the set $A$ is a disc, centred at $(0.52,0)$ of radius $r_c = 0.432$. Of course, the fact that in this case the essential infimum is strictly negative can be directly deduced from estimates of the Poisson formula. In Figures 1 and 2 below, we display the (rescaled) numerical solutions computed with MATLAB.

If $c$ is less than the critical value, the infimum is equal to 0, and is attained for an infinite number of solutions to the shape optimisation problem.

**Remark 5.** The solutions of the following shape optimisation problems

$$\max \left\{ \int_\Omega v_{\Omega,A,\gamma} : A \subset \Omega, |A| = c \right\},$$

and

$$\min \left\{ \int_\Omega v_{\Omega,A,\gamma} : A \subset \Omega, |A| = c \right\},$$

are immediate. Indeed, we observe that

$$\int_\Omega v_{\Omega,A,\gamma} = \gamma \int_\Omega v_\Omega - \int_A v_\Omega.$$

Hence, the position of the set $A$ is a suitable lower/upper level set of $v_\Omega$.

**Remark 6.** If $|A| \leq C_r (B_{R',\gamma})$, then $v_{\Omega,A,\gamma} \geq 0$, and $\int_\Omega v_{\Omega,A,\gamma} \geq 0$. Below we improve the bound $|A| \leq (\frac{\gamma}{4m})^m \omega_m R^m$ in (5) for $\int_\Omega v_{\Omega,A,\gamma} \geq 0$ to hold.
Let $\Omega \subset \mathbb{R}^m, m \geq 2$, be an open set with finite measure and a $C^2$, $R$-smooth boundary. Let $\gamma > 0$ and let $v_{\Omega,A,\gamma}$ be the solution of (3). If either $m \geq 3$, and
\[
|A| \leq \frac{m}{6(m-1)^2} \gamma \omega_m R^m,
\] (55)
or $m = 2$, and
\[
|A| \leq \frac{10 + 7\sqrt[8]{7}}{324} \gamma \pi R^2,
\] (56)
then $\int_{\Omega} v_{\Omega,A,\gamma} \geq 0$.

**Proof.** First consider the case $m \geq 3$. By Lemma 9 and the coarea formula, we have for $a > 0$ that,
\[
\int_{\Omega} v_{\Omega} \geq \int_{\{x \in \Omega : |x-\bar{x}| < a\}} dx \frac{|x-\bar{x}|R}{2m}
\]
\[
\geq \int_{[0,a]} d\theta R\frac{\theta}{2m} \mathcal{H}^{m-1}(\partial \Omega_\theta),
\] (57)
where $\mathcal{H}^{m-1}(\partial \Omega_\theta)$ denotes the $(m-1)$-dimensional Hausdorff measure of the parallel set $\{x \in \Omega : |x-\bar{x}| = \theta\}$. It was shown in [2, Lemma 5] that for an open, bounded set $\Omega$ with a $C^2$, $R$-smooth boundary,
\[
\mathcal{H}^{m-1}(\partial \Omega_\theta) \geq \left(1 - \frac{(m-1)\theta}{R}\right) \mathcal{H}^{m-1}(\partial \Omega), \theta \geq 0.
\] (58)
By (57) and (58), we obtain
\[
\int_{\Omega} v_{\Omega} \geq R \left(\frac{a^2}{2} - \frac{(m-1)a^3}{3R}\right) \mathcal{H}^{m-1}(\partial \Omega).
\]
Optimising over $a$ yields,
\[
\int_{\Omega} v_{\Omega} \geq \frac{R^3}{12m(m-1)^2} \mathcal{H}^{m-1}(\partial \Omega).
\] (59)
By the isoperimetric inequality, we have
\[
\mathcal{H}^{m-1}(\partial \Omega) \geq m\omega_m^{1/m} |\Omega|^{(m-1)/m}.
\] (60)
Since $\Omega$ contains a ball of radius $R$, $|\Omega| \geq \omega_m R^m$. Hence, by (59) and (60),
\[
\mathcal{H}^{m-1}(\partial \Omega) \geq m\omega_m^{(m-2)/m} R^{m-3} |\Omega|^{2/m}.
\]
This, together with (59), yields
\[
\int_{\Omega} v_{\Omega} \geq \frac{\omega_m^{(m-2)/m}}{12(m-1)^2} R^m |\Omega|^{2/m}.
\] (61)
By Talenti’s theorem,
\[
\int_{A} v_{\Omega} \leq \int_{A^*} v_{\Omega^*}.
\]
\[
= 2^{-1} \omega_m \int_{[0,r_A]} dr \left(R_{\Omega}^2 - r^2\right)^{m-1}
\]
\[
\leq (2m)^{-1} \omega_m R_{\Omega}^2 r_A^m
\]
\[
= (2m)^{-1} \omega_m^{2/m} |\Omega|^{2/m} |A|.
\] (62)
By (3), (61) and (62), we have
\[
\int_{\Omega} v_{\Omega,A,\gamma} = \gamma \int_{\Omega} v_{\Omega} - \int_{A} v_{\Omega} \\
\geq \frac{\omega_{m}^{(m-2)/m}}{12(m-1)^{2}} \gamma R^{m} |\Omega|^{2/m} - (2m)^{-1} \omega_{m}^{-2/m} |\Omega|^{2/m} |A|.
\] (63)

This implies that \( \int_{\Omega} v_{\Omega,A,\gamma} \geq 0 \) for all measurable \( A \subset \Omega \) satisfying (55).

Next consider the planar case. By Lemma 9, we have for any \( \alpha \in (0, 1) \),
\[
\int_{\{x \in \Omega : |x - \bar{x}| \geq \alpha R\}} v_{\Omega} \geq \frac{\alpha R^{2}}{4} |\{x \in \Omega : |x - \bar{x}| \geq \alpha R\}|.
\] (64)

By the coarea formula, Lemma 9 and (58), we find
\[
\int_{\{x \in \Omega : |x - \bar{x}| < \alpha R\}} v_{\Omega} \geq \frac{R^{3}}{4} \left( \frac{\alpha^{2}}{2} - \frac{\alpha^{3}}{3} \right) \mathcal{H}^{1}(\partial \Omega).
\] (65)

By [2, Lemma 5],
\[
\mathcal{H}^{1}(\partial \Omega_{\theta}) \leq \frac{R}{R - \theta} \mathcal{H}^{1}(\partial \Omega), \quad 0 \leq \theta < R.
\] (66)

By the coarea formula and (66), we find
\[
|\{x \in \Omega : |x - \bar{x}| \leq \alpha R\}| \leq \mathcal{H}^{1}(\partial \Omega) \int_{[0, \alpha R]} d\theta \frac{R}{R - \theta} \\
\leq \alpha(1 - \alpha)^{-1} \mathcal{H}^{1}(\partial \Omega) R.
\] (67)

Putting (64), (65) and (67) together gives
\[
\int_{\Omega} v_{\Omega} \geq \frac{\alpha R^{2}}{4} |\{x \in \Omega : |x - \bar{x}| \geq \alpha R\}| + \frac{1}{24} \alpha(1 - \alpha)(3 - 2\alpha) R^{2} |\{x \in \Omega : |x - \bar{x}| \leq \alpha R\}| \\
\geq \min \left\{ \frac{\alpha}{4}, \frac{1}{24} \alpha(1 - \alpha)(3 - 2\alpha) \right\} R^{2} |\Omega| \\
= \frac{1}{24} \alpha(1 - \alpha)(3 - 2\alpha) R^{2} |\Omega|.
\]

We choose \( \alpha = \frac{1}{6} (5 - \sqrt{7}) \) so as to maximise the above right-hand side, and obtain
\[
\int_{\Omega} v_{\Omega} \geq \frac{10 + 7\sqrt{7}}{1296} R^{2} |\Omega|.
\] (68)

Formula (62) for \( m = 2 \), (68), and the first equality in (63) yield,
\[
\int_{\Omega} v_{\Omega,A,\gamma} \geq \left( \frac{10 + 7\sqrt{7}}{1296} \gamma R^{2} - \frac{1}{4\pi} |A| \right) |\Omega|.
\]

The above right-hand side is non-negative for all measurable \( A \subset \Omega \) satisfying (56). \( \square \)

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