New fuzzy spheres through confining potentials and energy cutoffs

Gaetano Fiore*, Francesco Pisacane
Dip. di Matematica e Applicazioni, Università di Napoli “Federico II”,
& INFN, Sezione di Napoli,
Complesso Universitario M. S. Angelo, Via Cintia, 80126 Napoli, Italy
E-mail: gaetano.fiore@unina.it, francesco.pisacane@unina.it

We briefly report on our recent construction [1] of new fuzzy spheres \( S_\Lambda^d \) of dimensions \( d = 1, 2 \) covariant under the full orthogonal group \( O(D) \), \( D = d+1 \). \( S_\Lambda^d \) is built imposing a suitable energy cutoff on a quantum particle in \( \mathbb{R}^D \) subject to a confining potential well \( V(r) \) with a very sharp minimum on the sphere of radius \( r = 1 \); the cutoff and the depth of the well depend on (and diverge with) \( \Lambda \in \mathbb{N} \). The commutator of the coordinates depends only on the angular momentum, as in Snyder noncommutative spaces. As \( \Lambda \to \infty \) the Hilbert space dimension diverges, \( S_\Lambda^d \to S^d \), and we recover ordinary quantum mechanics on \( S^d \). These models might be useful in quantum field theory, quantum gravity or condensed matter physics.

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*Speaker.
1. Introduction

Nowadays noncommutative space(time) algebras are introduced and studied for several reasons. In particular: to regularize ultraviolet (UV) divergences in quantum field theory (QFT) [2, 3, 4]; as an arena to formulate Quantum Gravity (QG) that naturally induces uncertainty relations of the type \( \Delta x \gtrsim L_p \), as predicted by QG arguments (see e.g. [5, 6, 7, 8]); as an arena for the unification of fundamental interactions (see e.g. [9, 10]). Today Noncommutative Geometry [11, 12, 13, 14] is a sophisticated framework that develops the whole machinery of differential geometry on noncommutative spaces. Fuzzy spaces are particularly appealing noncommutative spaces: a fuzzy space is a sequence \( \{A_n\}_{n \in \mathbb{N}} \) of finite-dimensional algebras such that \( A_n \xrightarrow{n \to \infty} \mathbb{C}^\infty \equiv \text{algebra of regular functions on an ordinary manifold, with } \dim(A_n) \xrightarrow{n \to \infty} \infty \). The first and seminal fuzzy space is the Fuzzy Sphere (FS) of Madore and Hoppe [15, 16], the first applications to QFT models are in [17, 18]; \( A_n \simeq M_n(\mathbb{C}) \) is generated by coordinates \( x^i \) \((i = 1, 2, 3)\) fulfilling

\[
[x^i, x^j] = \frac{2i}{\sqrt{n^2 - 1}} \epsilon^{ijk} x^k, \quad r^2 := x^i x^i = 1, \quad n \in \mathbb{N} \setminus \{1\} \tag{1.1}
\]

(sum over repeated indices is understood); in fact they are obtained by the rescaling \( x^i = 2L_i/\sqrt{n^2 - 1} \) of the elements \( L_i \) of the standard basis of \( so(3) \) in the irreducible representation \( (\pi, V_l) \) characterized by \( L_1 L_2 = l(l+1), n = 2l+1 \). Fuzzy spaces have raised a big interest in the high energy physics community as a non-perturbative technique in QFT based on a finite-discretization of space(time) alternative to the lattice one: the main advantage is that the algebras \( A_n \) can carry representations of Lie groups (not only of discrete ones). They can be used also for internal (e.g. gauge) degrees of freedom (see e.g. [19]), or as a new tool in string and D-brane theories (see e.g. [20, 21]).

Relations (1.1) are covariant under \( SO(3) \), but not under the whole \( O(3) \); in particular not under parity \( x^i \mapsto -x^i \), as the ordinary sphere \( S^2 \). In our opinion, another reason why the FS does not approximate \( S^2 \) in the best possible way is that \( V_l \) carries an irreducible representation of \( SO(3) \) (so that the Casimir \( r^2 \) is identically 1), whereas the Hilbert space of a quantum particle on \( S^2 \) has the following decomposition in irreducible representations of \( SO(3) \):

\[
\mathcal{L}^2(S^2) = \bigoplus_{l=0}^{\infty} V_l. \tag{1.2}
\]

Here we present new fuzzy approximations [1] of quantum mechanics (QM) on \( S^d \) \((d = 1, 2)\) overcoming these two problems: We start with an ordinary zero-spin quantum particle in \( \mathbb{R}^D \) configuration space \((D = d+1)\) with Hamiltonian

\[
H = -\frac{1}{2} \Delta + V(r). \tag{1.3}
\]

Here \( r^2 := x^i x^i, \Delta := \partial_i \partial_i, \partial_i \equiv \partial/\partial x^i, i = 1, \ldots, D; \) we use dimensionless cartesian coordinates, momentum components and Hamiltonian \( x^i, p_i := -i\partial_i H, x^i, p_i \) generate the Heisenberg algebra \( \mathcal{O} \) of observables. The canonical commutation relations \([x^i, x^j] = 0, [p_i, p_j] = 0, [x^i, p_j] = i\delta_{ij}\) as well as the Hamiltonian are invariant under all orthogonal transformations \( x^i \mapsto x'^i = Q_{ij} x^j (Q^{-1} = Q^T) \), including parity \( Q = -I \). We choose \( V(r) \) as a confining potential with a very sharp minimum.
at \( r = 1 \), i.e. with \( V'(1) = 0 \) and very large \( k := V''(1)/4 > 0 \), and fix \( V_0 := V(1) \) so that the ground state has zero energy, \( E_0 = 0 \). We choose an energy cutoff \( E \) satisfying first of all the condition
\[
V(r) \simeq V_0 + 2k(r-1)^2 \quad \text{if } r \text{ fulfills } V(r) \leq E, \tag{1.4}
\]
so that \( V(r) \) is approximately harmonic in the classical region \( v_E \) compatible with the energy cutoff \( V(r) \leq E \). Then we project the theory onto the finite-dimensional Hilbert subspace \( \mathcal{H}_E \subset \mathcal{H} \equiv \mathcal{L}^2(\mathbb{R}^D) \) spanned by \( \psi \) fulfilling the eigenvalue equation
\[
H \psi = E \psi, \quad \psi \in \mathcal{L}^2(\mathbb{R}^D), \tag{1.5}
\]
with \( E \leq E \). This entails replacing every observable \( A \) by \( \bar{A} \):
\[
A \mapsto \bar{A} := P_E A P_E,
\]
where \( P_E \) is the projection on \( \mathcal{H}_E \). \( H, L_{ij}, P_E \) commute; \( L_{ij} := x^i p_j - x^j p_i \) are the angular momentum components. Decomposing the Laplacian on \( \mathbb{R}^D \) in polar coordinates \( r, \varphi, \ldots \)
\[
\Delta = \partial_r^2 + (D-1)\frac{1}{r} \partial_r - \frac{1}{2r^2} L_{ij} L_{ij}, \tag{1.6}
\]
recalling that the eigenvalues of the square angular momentum \( L^2 = L_{ij} L_{ij} / 2 \) are \( j(j + D - 2) \), and using the Ansatz \( \psi = f(r) Y(\varphi, \ldots) \) [\( Y \) are eigenfunctions of \( L^2 \) and of the elements of a Cartan subalgebra of \( \text{so}(D) \)] we transform (1.5) into this auxiliary ODE in the unknown \( f(r) \):
\[
\left[ -\partial_r^2 - \frac{D-1}{r} \partial_r + \frac{j(j + D - 2)}{r^2} + V(r) \right] f(r) = Ef(r). \tag{1.7}
\]
To obtain the lowest eigenvalues at leading order in \( 1/k \) we don’t need to solve it exactly: condition (1.4) allows us to approximate (1.7) with the eigenvalue equation of a \( 1 \)-dimensional harmonic oscillator, by Taylor expanding \( V(r), 1/r, 1/r^2 \) around \( r = 1 \).

As a second condition on the cutoff we ask that it be sufficiently low to ‘freeze’ radial excitations, so that the eigenvalues of \( H \) fulfilling \( E \leq E \) coincide at leading order with those of the square angular momentum \( L^2 = L_{ij} L_{ij} / 2 \) on the sphere \( S^d \); this can be considered as a quantum version of the constraint \( r = 1 \). It turns out that on \( \mathcal{H}_E \) the \( x^i \) are noncommutative \( \text{à la Snyder} \), namely their commutators depend only on the angular momentum, and that they generate the whole algebra of observables. The whole procedure is \( O(D) \)-covariant by construction. Making \( E, V''(1) \) diverge with some \( \Lambda \in \mathbb{N} \) (while \( E_0 = 0 \)), and keeping the leading terms in \( 1/\Lambda \), we get a sequence \( \{ \mathcal{A}_\Lambda \}_{\Lambda \in \mathbb{N}} \) of fuzzy approximations of ordinary quantum mechanics (QM) on \( S^d \). On \( \mathcal{H}_E \equiv \mathcal{H}_\Lambda = \bigoplus_{\Lambda=0}^{\infty} \mathcal{V}_\Lambda \) the square distance \( R^2 \) from the origin is not identically 1, but a function of \( L^2 \), whose spectrum collapses to 1 in the \( \Lambda \to \infty \) limit.

Our construction is inspired by the Landau model, where noncommuting \( x, y \) are obtained projecting QM with a strong uniform magnetic field \( B \) on the lowest energy subspace; therefore the method is physically sound. Our models might have applications to quantum models in condensed matter physics with an effective one- or two-dimensional configuration space in the form of a circle, a cylinder or a sphere, because they respect parity, and the restriction to the circle, cylinder or sphere
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is an effective one obtained “a posteriori” from the exact dynamics in the physical dimension $D = 3$. But we think that they are interesting also as new toy-models of fuzzy geometries in quantum field theory, quantum gravity, string theory. Our procedure can be generalized in a straightforward manner to $D > 3$, as well as to other confining potentials; the dimension of the accessible Hilbert space $\mathcal{H}_F$ will be approximately $B/h^D$, where $h, B$ are the Planck constant and the volume of the classically allowed region in phase space (i.e. the one characterized by energies $E \leq \mathcal{E}$). If $H$ is invariant under some symmetry group, then the projection $P_\mathcal{E}$ on $\mathcal{H}_F$ is invariant as well, and the projected theory will inherit that symmetry. Imposing a cutoff $\mathcal{E}$ on a given theory may have various motivations, in particular: it can yield an effective description of a system when our preparation of the system, or our measurements, or the interactions with the environment, cannot bring its state to energies $E > \mathcal{E}$; or it may even be a necessity if we believe $\mathcal{E}$ represents the threshold for the onset of new physics not accountable by that theory.

In sections 2, 3 we treat the cases $D = 2, 3$ leading to $S^1, S^2$ respectively. Section 4 contains a comparison with the literature, final remarks, outlook and conclusions. For more details, explicit computations and proofs we refer the reader to Ref. [1].

![Figure 1: Three-dimensional plot of $V(r)$](image1)

![Figure 2: Two-dimensional plot of $V(r)$ including the energy-cutoff](image2)

2. $D = 2$: $O(2)$-covariant fuzzy circle

The potential is shown in fig. 1. For convenience we look for the solution $\psi$ of (1.5) in the form $\psi = e^{i m \rho} f(\rho)$, with $m \in \mathbb{Z} \equiv$ spectrum of $L \equiv L_{12}$, $\rho := \ln r$, and expand around $\rho = 0$. The harmonic oscillator approximation of (1.7) has eigenvalues and (Hérmite) eigenfunctions

$$E = E_{n,m} = 2 n \sqrt{2k} - 2 n + m^2 + O\left(1/\sqrt{k}\right)$$

$$f_{n,m}(\rho) = N_{n,m} \exp \left[ -\frac{(\rho - \tilde{\rho}_{n,m})^2 \sqrt{k_{n,m}}}{2} \right] H_n \left[ (\rho - \tilde{\rho}_{n,m}) \sqrt{k_{n,m}} \right],$$

$$k_{n,m} = 2(k - E_{n,m} + V_0), \quad \tilde{\rho}_{n,m} = \frac{E_{n,m} - V_0}{k_{n,m}}.$$
with \( n \in \mathbb{N}_0 \); we have set \( V_0 = -\sqrt{2k} + 2 + O\left(\frac{1}{\sqrt{k}}\right) \) to fulfill the requirement \( E_{0,0} = 0 \). Up to terms \( O\left(\frac{1}{\sqrt{k}}\right) \) (2.1) gives

\[
E_m \equiv E_{0,m} = m^2, \tag{2.3}
\]

which are the eigenvalues of the Laplacian \( L^2 \) on \( S^1 \), while \( E_{n,m} \to \infty \) as \( k \to \infty \) if \( n > 0 \) we have (we have highlighted the unwelcome \( n \)-dependent contribution in red, the welcome \( m \)-dependent one in blue); we can eliminate the latter eigenvalues by choosing a cutoff \( \mathcal{E} < 2\sqrt{2k} - 2 \). The eigenfunctions of \( H \) corresponding to \( E = E_m \) are

\[
\psi_m(\rho, \varphi) = N_m e^{im\varphi} e^{-\frac{\sqrt{2}}{2}k^2}. \tag{2.4}
\]

We set \( \Lambda : = \sqrt{\mathcal{E}} \in \mathbb{N} \) and abbreviate \( \mathcal{H}_\Lambda \equiv \mathcal{H}_\mathcal{E} \). \( E_m \leq \mathcal{E} \) implies

\[
m^2 \leq \Lambda^2 < 2\sqrt{2k} - 2 \tag{2.4}
\]

so that all \( E_m \) are smaller than the energy levels corresponding to \( n > 0 \) (see fig. 2). Clearly \( \dim(\mathcal{H}_\Lambda) = 2\Lambda + 1 \). We recover the whole spectrum of \( L^2 \) on \( S^1 \) by allowing \( \sqrt{\mathcal{E}} \), or equivalently \( \Lambda \), to diverge with \( k \) while respecting (2.4).

Let \( x^\pm : = \frac{x \pm iy}{\sqrt{2}} = re^{\pm i\varphi} \). By explicit computations

\[
\langle \psi_n, x^\pm \psi_m \rangle = \frac{a}{\sqrt{2}} \left[ 1 + \frac{m(m \pm 1)}{2k} \right] \delta_{m \pm 1} \tag{2.5}
\]

with \( a = 1 + \frac{9}{4} \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} + \frac{137}{64k} + \ldots \). To get rid of \( a \) we rescale \( \xi^\pm : = \frac{x^\pm}{a} \). \( \xi^- \), \( \xi^+ \) are resp. the adjoints of \( \bar{x}^-, \bar{x}^+ \). Then, up to terms \( O(1/k^{3/2}) \)

\[
\xi^\pm \psi_m = \begin{cases} \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \left[ 1 + \frac{m(m \pm 1)}{2k} \right] \psi_{m \pm 1} & \text{if } -\Lambda \leq \pm m \leq \Lambda-1 \\ 0 & \text{otherwise}, \end{cases} \tag{2.6}
\]

\[
\mathcal{L} \psi_m = m \psi_m.
\]

We define the square distance from the origin as the \( O(2) \)-invariant \( \mathcal{R}^2 : = \xi^+ \xi^- + \xi^- \xi^+ \); let \( \tilde{P}_m \) be the projection over the 1-dim subspace spanned by \( \psi_m \). Eq. (2.6) implies at leading order in \( 1/k \)

\[
\begin{bmatrix} \xi^+ & \xi^- \end{bmatrix} = -\frac{\mathcal{L}}{k} + \left[ 1 + \frac{\Lambda(\Lambda + 1)}{k} \right] \frac{\tilde{P}_\Lambda - \tilde{P}_\Lambda}{2}. \tag{2.7}
\]

\[
\prod_{m = -\Lambda}^{\Lambda} (\mathcal{L} - ml) = 0, \quad (\mathcal{L})^\dagger = \mathcal{L}, \tag{2.8}
\]

\[
[\mathcal{L}, \xi^\pm] = \pm \xi^\mp, \quad \xi^+\dagger = \xi^- , \quad (\xi^\pm)^{2\Lambda + 1} = 0. \tag{2.9}
\]

\[
\mathcal{R}^2 = 1 + \frac{\mathcal{L}^2}{k} - \left[ 1 + \frac{\Lambda(\Lambda + 1)}{k} \right] \frac{\tilde{P}_\Lambda + \tilde{P}_\Lambda}{2}. \tag{2.10}
\]
Eq. (2.7-2.10) are exact if we adopt (2.6) as definitions of $\xi^+, \xi^-, L$. To obtain a fuzzy space we can choose $k$ as a function of $\Lambda$ fulfilling (2.4), for example $k = \Lambda^2(\Lambda + 1)^2$, and the commutative limit will be $\Lambda \to \infty$. Then e.g. (2.7) becomes
\[
[\xi^+, \xi^-] = \frac{-L}{\Lambda^2(\Lambda + 1)^2} + \left[1 + \frac{1}{\Lambda(\Lambda + 1)}\right] \frac{P_\Lambda - P_{-\Lambda}}{2}.
\] (2.11)

Let us summarize what we have found so far:

- The matched confining potential and energy cutoff lead to a non-zero commutator of the coordinates of the Snyder’s Lie algebra type, i.e. depending only on $L$, and vanishing as $k \to \infty$. To obtain a fuzzy space we can choose $k$ as a function of $\Lambda$ fulfilling (2.4); and the commutative limit will be $\Lambda \to +\infty$.

- $S^2 \neq 1$, but it is a function of $L^2$; its eigenvalues (except on $\pm \Lambda$) are close to 1, slightly grow with $|m|$ and collapse to 1 as $\Lambda \to \infty$.

- Relations (2.7-2.10) are $O(2)$-invariant, because in the original model both the commutation relations $H$ (hence also $P_\pm$) are.

- The ordered monomials $(\xi^+)^l (\xi^-)^m$ [with degrees $h, l, n$ bounded by (2.8-2.9)] make up a basis of the $*$-algebra of observables $\mathcal{A}_{\Lambda} = End(\mathcal{H}_{\Lambda})$ [a $(2\Lambda + 1)^2$-dim vector space]; for instance, the $P_m$ themselves can be expressed as polynomials in $L$.

- $\xi^+, \xi^-$ (or equivalently $x^+, x^-$) generate $\mathcal{A}_{\Lambda}$, because also $L$ can be expressed as a non-ordered polynomial in $\xi^+, \xi^-$. An alternative set of generators is $\{E^+, E^-\}$ in the $(2\Lambda + 1)$-dimensional representation of $Uso(2)$ (see below).

- As $\Lambda \to \infty$ $[\xi^+, \xi^-] \to 0$, dim($\mathcal{H}_{\Lambda}) \to \infty$, $\psi_m \to \delta(\rho) e^{imp}$.

What about the operators $\overline{P}_\pm$? As seen, they are not needed as generators of $\mathcal{A}_{\Lambda}$. Actually, $\overline{P}_\pm$ do not go to $\partial_\pm$ as $\Lambda \to \infty$ because every $\partial_\pm \psi_m$ has a non-negligible $n = 1$ component. On the contrary, $L \to L$; this is welcome, because in the limit $\Lambda \to \infty$ all vector fields tangential to $S^1$ are of the form $f(\varphi)L$.

2.1 Realization of the algebra of observables through $Uso(3)$

The algebra of observables $\mathcal{A}_{\Lambda} := End(\mathcal{H}_{\Lambda})$ is isomorphic to
\[
\mathcal{A}_{\Lambda} \simeq M_N(\mathbb{C}) \simeq \pi_{\Lambda}[Uso(3)], \quad N = 2\Lambda + 1,
\] (2.12)
where $\pi_{\Lambda}$ is the $N$-dimensional unitary representation of $Uso(3)$. The latter is characterized by the condition $\pi_{\Lambda}(C) = \Lambda(\Lambda + 1)$, where $C = E^a E^{-a}$ is the Casimir, and $E^a$ ($a \in \{+, 0, -\}$) make up the Cartan-Weyl basis $E^a$ of $so(3)$,
\[
[E^+, E^-] = E^0, \quad [E^0, E^\pm] = \pm E^\pm, \quad E^{a\dagger} = E^{-a}.
\] (2.13)
To simplify the notation we drop $\pi_{\Lambda}$. In fact we can realize $\xi^+, \xi^-$ by setting
\[
\xi^\pm = f_{\pm}(E^0) E^\pm,
\] (2.14)
where
\[
f_+(s) = \sqrt{\frac{1 + s(s-1)/k}{\Lambda(\Lambda + 1) - s(s-1)}} = f_-(s-1).
\]
2.2 *-Automorphisms of the algebra of observables

Within the group $SU(N)$ of *-automorphisms of $M_N(\mathbb{C}) \simeq \mathcal{A}_\Lambda$

$$a \mapsto g a g^{-1}, \quad a \in \mathcal{A}_\Lambda \simeq M_N, \quad g \in SU(N),$$

(2.15)
a special role is played by the subgroup $SO(3)$ acting through the representation $\pi_\Lambda$, namely $g = \pi_\Lambda \left( e^{i\alpha} \right)$, where $\alpha \in \text{so}(3)$ is a combination with real coefficients of $E^0, E^+ = E^+ - iE^-, i(E^- - E^+)$. $O(2) \subset SO(3)$ plays the role of isometry group. In particular, choosing $\alpha = \theta E^0$ amounts to a rotation by an angle $\theta$ in the $\overline{x^1 \overline{x^2}}$ plane: $L \mapsto \overline{L}$ and

$$\overline{x^\pm} \mapsto \overline{x^\pm} = e^{\pm i\theta} x^\pm \quad \iff \quad \begin{cases} x^1 = \overline{x^1} \cos \theta + x^2 \sin \theta \\ x^2 = -\overline{x^1} \sin \theta + \overline{x^2} \cos \theta \end{cases}.$$

Choosing $\alpha = \pi(E^+ + E^-)/\sqrt{2}$ we obtain a $O(2)$-transformation with determinant $= -1$ in such a plane: $E^0 \mapsto -E^0, E^\pm \mapsto E^\mp$. As $f_\pm(-s) = f_{\mp}(1+s) = f_{\mp}(s)$, this is equivalent to $x^1 \mapsto \overline{x^1}$, $x^2 \mapsto -\overline{x^2}, L \mapsto -\overline{L}$.

2.3 Convergence to $O(2)$-covariant quantum mechanics on $S$ as $\Lambda \to \infty$

Define the natural $O(2)$-covariant embedding $\mathcal{I} : \mathcal{H}_\Lambda \to \mathcal{L}^2(S) \equiv \mathcal{H}_\Lambda$ by setting $\mathcal{I} (\psi_m) := u^m \ (u \equiv e^{i\theta})$ and applying linear extension; below we drop $\mathcal{I}$ and identify $\psi_m = u^m$ as elements of the Hilbert space. Clearly $P_\Lambda \phi \to \phi$ in the $\mathcal{H}_\Lambda$-norm $|||$, for all $\phi \in \mathcal{H}_\Lambda$: $\mathcal{H}_\Lambda$ ‘invades’ $\mathcal{H}_\Lambda$ as $\Lambda \to \infty$.

$\mathcal{I}$ induces an embedding $\mathcal{I} : \mathcal{A}_\Lambda \to B[\mathcal{H}_\Lambda]$ in the operator algebra, with $\mathcal{A}_\Lambda$ annihilating $\mathcal{H}_\Lambda$; one easily finds that $\overline{L} = L$ on $\mathcal{H}_\Lambda$, and $\overline{L} \phi \to L \phi$ as $\Lambda \to \infty$, for all $\phi \in D(L) \subset \mathcal{H}_\Lambda$. Bounded (resp. continuous) functions $f$ on $S$, acting as multiplication operators $f : \phi \in \mathcal{H}_\Lambda \to f\phi \in \mathcal{H}_\Lambda$, make up a subalgebra $B(S)$ [resp. $C(S)$] of $B[\mathcal{H}_\Lambda]$. The fuzzy analog of the vector space $B(S)$ is:

$$\mathcal{C}_\Lambda := \left\{ \sum_{h = -2\Lambda}^{2\Lambda} f_h \eta^h, \ f_h \in \mathbb{C} \right\},$$

(2.16)

where $\eta^m = (\sqrt{2} \xi^+)^m$, $\eta^{-m} = (\sqrt{2} \xi^-)^m$, $m \geq 0$. $\mathcal{C}_\Lambda \subset \mathcal{A}_\Lambda$ as a vector space, but not as a subalgebra. One easily shows that $\eta^h \phi \to u^h \phi$. Moreover, setting $\hat{f}_\Lambda := \sum_{h = -2\Lambda}^{2\Lambda} f_h \eta^h \in \mathcal{A}_\Lambda$ for all $f \in B(S)$, we find

**Proposition 3.3 in [1].** Choose $k(\Lambda) \geq 2\Lambda(\Lambda+1)(2\Lambda+1)^2$. Then $\hat{f}_\Lambda \to f \cdot$; $(\overline{f})_\Lambda \to f_{\overline{g}}$; $\hat{f}_\Lambda \hat{g}_\Lambda \to f g$: strongly as $\Lambda \to \infty$, $\forall f, g \in B(S)$.

On the other hand, the corresponding convergences in the operator norm do not hold, because for all $\Lambda > 0$ the operators $\overline{x^\pm}, \overline{L}$ annihilate $\mathcal{H}_\Lambda$, whereas $u^{\pm 1}, L$ do not.

3. D=3: $O(3)$-covariant fuzzy sphere

We associate the pseudovector $L_i = \frac{i}{2} \varepsilon^{ijk} L_{ijk}$ to the antisymmetric matrix $L_{ijk}$ of the angular momentum components. For all vectors $\mathbf{v}$ depending on $\mathbf{x}, i\mathbf{V}$ we shall use either the components
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\( v^i (i \in \{1, 2, 3\}) \) or the ones \( v^\alpha (\alpha \in \{-, 0, +\}) \) defined by

\[
\begin{pmatrix}
v^+ \\
v^- \\
v^0 \\
0
\end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix}
\frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} & \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} & 0 & 0 \\
\frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} & -\frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} & 0 & 0 \\
0 & 0 & 1 & 0 \\
0 & 0 & 0 & 1
\end{pmatrix}
\begin{pmatrix}
v^1 \\
v^2 \\
v^3 \\
v^0
\end{pmatrix}.
\tag{3.1}
\]

(\( U \) is a unitary matrix) which fulfill

\[
[L_n, v^\alpha] = 0, \quad [L_0, v^\pm] = \pm v^\pm, \quad [L_\pm, v^0] = \mp v^0, \quad [L_\pm, v^0] = \mp v^\pm.
\tag{3.2}
\]

In particular, \( x^0 \equiv z, \quad x^\pm = \frac{\pm i + i^2}{\sqrt{2}} = \frac{\pm \sin \theta \pm \phi}{\sqrt{2}} \). We make the Ansatz \( \psi = \frac{f(r)}{r} Y^m_l (\theta, \phi) \). \( Y^m_l \) are the spherical harmonics:

\[
L^2 Y^m_l (\theta, \phi) = l(l+1)Y^m_l (\theta, \phi), \quad L_3 Y^m_l (\theta, \phi) = mY^m_l (\theta, \phi),
\]

with \( l \in \mathbb{N}_0, m \in \mathbb{Z}, |m| \leq l \). Under assumption (1.4) the harmonic oscillator approximation of (1.7) admits the (Hérmite) eigenfunctions

\[
f_{n,l}(r) = N_{n,l} e^{-\frac{(r-\bar{r})^2}{4}} H_n \left( (r-\bar{r}) \sqrt{\frac{k}{k}} \right), \quad n, 0, 1, \ldots
\]

with \( k_l := 2k + 3l(l+1), \quad \bar{r}_l = \frac{2k + 4l(l+1)}{2k + 3l(l+1)} \). We set \( V_0 = -\sqrt{2k} \) to fulfill the requirement \( E_{0,0} = 0 \); then the energies associated to \( \psi_{n,l,m} = \frac{f_{n,l}(r)}{r} Y^m_l (\theta, \phi) \) are

\[
E_{n,l} = 2n\sqrt{2k} + l(l+1) + O \left( \frac{1}{\sqrt{2k}} \right).
\]

Again \( E_{0,l} = l(l+1) = ; E_l \) are the eigenvalues of the Laplacian \( L^2 \) on \( S^2 \), while \( E_{n,l} \to \infty \) as \( k \to \infty \) if \( n > 0 \) (we have highlighted the unwelcome \( n \)-dependent contribution in red, the welcome \( l \)-dependent one in blue). We can eliminate the latter (i.e. constrain \( n = 0 \)) imposing a cutoff

\[
E \leq \Lambda (\Lambda + 1) \equiv \mathcal{E} < 2\sqrt{2k},
\tag{3.3}
\]

namely projecting the theory on the Hilbert subspace \( \mathcal{H}_\Lambda \subset L^2 (\mathbb{R}^2) \) spanned by

\[
\psi^m_l := \psi_{0,l,m} \approx \frac{N_l}{r} e^{-\frac{(r-\bar{r})^2}{2}} Y^m_l (\theta, \phi), \quad |m| \leq l, \quad l \leq \Lambda.
\tag{3.4}
\]

Clearly \( \dim (\mathcal{H}_\Lambda) = (\Lambda + 1)^2 \). Multiplication by \( x^\alpha = r^\alpha (a = -, 0, +) \) on \( \psi^m_l \) factorizes into the one by \( r \) on \( \frac{f_{0,l}(r)}{r} \) and the one by \( \frac{v^\alpha}{r} \) on \( Y^m_l \). After projection we find

\[
x^\alpha \psi^m_l = c_l A^a_{l-1} \psi^m_{l-1} + c_{l+1} B^a_{l+1} \psi^m_{l+1},
\tag{3.5}
\]

up to terms \( O \left( \frac{1}{k^2} \right) \); here \( A^a_{l,m}, B^a_{l,m} \) are the coefficients determined by the ordinary multiplication rules

\[
x^\alpha Y^m_l = A^a_{l,m} Y^m_{l+1} + B^a_{l,m} Y^m_{l-1}.
\]
namely $B_{l}^{a,m} = A_{l+1}^{-a,m+a}$, and

$$A_{l}^{\pm,m} = \pm \sqrt{\frac{(l+m)(l+m-1)}{2(2l+1)(2l-1)}}$$

$$A_{l}^{0,m} = \sqrt{\frac{(l+m)(l-m)}{2l+1}}.$$  

(3.6)

At leading order the $T_{i,x}^i$, $i \in \{1, 2, 3\}$, fulfill

$$\prod_{i=0}^{\Lambda} \left[ T_i^2 - l(l+1) \right] = 0, \quad \prod_{m=-l}^{l} (T_3 - ml) \tilde{P}_l = 0,$$

(3.7)

$$T_i^3 = \mathcal{T}_i, \quad [T_i, T_j] = i \varepsilon^{ijk} T_k, \quad \tilde{T}^i = T^i, \quad \tilde{T}^i = 0,$$

(3.8)

$$[T_i, \tilde{T}^j] = i \varepsilon^{ijk} \tilde{T}^k,$$  

(3.9)

where $K = \frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{2\Lambda+1}$, $T^2 \equiv T_i T_i = T_a T_a$ is $L^2$ projected on $\mathcal{H}_{\Lambda}$, and $\tilde{P}_l$ is the projection on its eigenspace with eigenvalue $l(l+1)$. Moreover, the square distance from the origin is the $O(3)$-invariant

$$\mathcal{R}^2 := \tilde{x} \cdot \tilde{x} = 1 + \frac{T^2 + 1}{k} \left[ 1 + \frac{\Lambda+1)^2}{k} \right] = \frac{\Lambda+1}{2\Lambda+1} \tilde{P}_l.$$  

(3.10)

Relations (3.7-3.10) are exact if we adopt (3.5) as definitions of $\pi^i$. To obtain a fuzzy space we can choose $k$ as a function of $\Lambda$ fulfilling (3.3); one possible choice is $k = \Lambda^2(\Lambda+1)^2$, and the commutative limit will be $\Lambda \to +\infty$. Again:

- The commutators $[\tilde{x}^i, \tilde{x}^j]$ (3.9) depend only on the angular momentum and are Snyder-like, i.e. (apart from the additional term in the second formula) are proportional to angular momentum components, and vanish as $\Lambda \to \infty$; in the same limit $\psi^m_\ell \to \delta(r-1)Y^m_\ell$.

- Hence (3.7-3.9) are covariant under the whole group $O(3)$, including parity $\pi_i \mapsto -\pi_i$, $\mathcal{T}_i \mapsto -\mathcal{T}_i$, contrary to Madore’s and Hoppe’s FS.

- $\mathcal{R}^2 \neq 1$; but it is a function of $L^2$, and, for each fixed $\Lambda$, its eigenvalues (except the highest one) are close to 1, slightly grow with $l$ and collapse to 1 as $\Lambda \to \infty$.

- The ordered monomials in $\pi_i, \mathcal{T}_i$ make up a basis of the $(\Lambda+1)^4$-dim vector space $\mathcal{A} := \text{End}(\mathcal{H}_{\Lambda}) \simeq M_{(\Lambda+1)^2}(\mathbb{C})$, because the $P_l$ themselves can be expressed as polynomials in $\mathcal{T}^2$.

- Actually, $\pi_i$ generate the $*$-algebra $\mathcal{A}$, because also the $\mathcal{T}_i$ can be expressed as a non-ordered polynomial in the $\pi_i$.

### 3.1 Realization of the algebra $\mathcal{A}_{\Lambda}$ of observables through $USo(4)$

We recall that $so(4) \simeq su(2) \oplus su(2)$; hence this Lie algebra is spanned by $\{E_i^1, E_i^2\}_{i=1}^{3}$ fulfilling

$$[E_i^1, E_j^2] = 0, \quad [E_i^1, E_j^1] = i \varepsilon^{ijk} E_k^1, \quad [E_i^2, E_j^1] = i \varepsilon^{ijk} E_k^2.$$  

(3.11)
\[ L_i := E_i^1 + E_i^2, \quad X_i := E_i^1 - E_i^2 \] make up alternative basis of \( \mathfrak{so}(4) \) and fulfill

\[
[L_i, L_j] = i\epsilon^{ijk}L_k, \quad [L_i, X_j] = i\epsilon^{ijk}X_k, \quad [X_i, X_j] = i\epsilon^{ijk}L_k. \tag{3.12}
\]

The \( L_i \) close another \( \mathfrak{su}(2) \). Passing to generators labelled by \( a \in \{-, 0, +\} \), we find

\[
[L_+, L_-] = L_0, \quad [L_0, L_\pm] = \pm L_\pm = [X_0, X_\pm], \quad [X_+, X_-] = L_0,
\]

and therefore \( L^2 := L_\downarrow L = L_{a Laz} \), \( X^2 := X_iX_i = X_{a Xa} \).

In the representation \( \pi_\Lambda := \pi_\Lambda \otimes \pi_\Lambda \) of \( U\mathfrak{so}(4) \cong U\mathfrak{su}(2) \otimes U\mathfrak{su}(2) \) on the Hilbert space \( V_\Lambda := V_\frac{\Lambda}{2} \otimes V_\frac{\Lambda}{2} \) it is \( C_i := E_i^1E_i^1 = \frac{1}{2}(\Lambda + 1) = E_i^2E_i^2 = : C_2 \), or equivalently

\[
X \cdot L = L \cdot X = 0, \quad X^2 + L^2 = \Lambda(\Lambda+2) \tag{3.15}
\]

(we have dropped the symbols \( \pi_\Lambda \)). \( V_\Lambda \) admits an orthonormal basis consisting of common eigenvectors of \( L^2 \) and \( L_0 \); in standard ket notation,

\[
L_0 |l, m\rangle = m |l, m\rangle, \quad L^2 |l, m\rangle = l(l+1) |l, m\rangle \tag{3.16}
\]

with \( 0 \leq l \leq \Lambda \) and \( |m| \leq l \). \( V_\Lambda, \mathcal{H}_\Lambda \) have the same dimension \( (\Lambda+1)^2 \) and decomposition in irreducible representations of the \( L_i \) subalgebra; we identify them setting \( \psi^m_l \equiv |l, m\rangle \). The action of \( X^a \) on \( V_\Lambda \) reads

\[
X^a |l, m\rangle = d_i\psi^m_{l-a} |l-1, m+a\rangle + d_{l+1} \psi^m_{l+a} |l+1, m+a\rangle \tag{3.17}
\]

\[
d_i := \sqrt{(\Lambda+1)^2 - l^2}
\]

We can naturally realize \( L_i, \pi^a \) within \( \pi_\Lambda [U\mathfrak{su}(2) \otimes U\mathfrak{su}(2)] \) \[1\]. Define \( \lambda := \sqrt{\frac{(2l+1)^2}{2}} \); then \( \lambda |l, m\rangle = l |l, m\rangle \). The Ansatz

\[
L_{ai} = L_{ai}, \quad \pi^a = g(\lambda) X^a g(\lambda), \tag{3.18}
\]

fulfills (3.5) and therefore (3.7-3.9), provided

\[
g(l) = \sqrt{\frac{\prod_{l=0}^{\Lambda-1}(\Lambda+l-2h)}{\prod_{l=0}^{\Lambda+1}(\Lambda+l+1-2h)}} \prod_{j=0}^{\Lambda+1} \left[ 1 + \frac{t-l(j-2h)}{2} \right]^{-1} \tag{3.19}
\]

\[
= \sqrt{\frac{\Gamma(l+\frac{\Lambda+1}{2}) \Gamma(l+\frac{\Lambda}{2}) \Gamma(l+1+\frac{\Lambda}{2}) \Gamma(l+1+\frac{\Lambda}{2})}{\Gamma(l+\frac{\Lambda+1}{2}) \Gamma(l+\frac{\Lambda}{2}) \sqrt{\kappa} \Gamma(l+\frac{\Lambda}{2})}}.
\]

here we have used Euler’s gamma-function \( \Gamma \). The inverse of (3.18) is clearly \( X^a = [g(\lambda)]^{-1} \pi^a [g(\lambda)]^{-1} \).

We have thus explicitly constructed a *-algebra isomorphism

\[ \mathfrak{A}_\Lambda := \text{End}(\mathcal{H}_\Lambda) \simeq M_N(\mathbb{C}) \simeq \pi_\Lambda[U\mathfrak{so}(4)], \quad N := (\Lambda+1)^2. \tag{3.20} \]
3.2 ∗-Automorphisms of the algebra of observables

Within the group of ∗-automorphisms of the algebra of observables \( M_N(\mathbb{C}) \simeq \mathcal{A}_\Lambda \)

\[ b \to g bg^{-1}, \quad b \in \mathcal{A}_\Lambda, \quad g \in SU(N) \]

again a special role is played by the subgroup \( SO(4) \) acting through the representation \( \pi_\Lambda \), namely \( g = \pi_\Lambda [e^{i\alpha}], \alpha \in so(4) \). \( O(3) \subset SO(4) \) plays the role of isometry subgroup. In particular, choosing \( \alpha = \alpha_i L_i (\alpha_i \in \mathbb{R}) \) the automorphism amounts to a \( SO(3) \) transformation (a rotation in \( \mathbb{R}^3 \)). An \( O(3) \) transformation with determinant \(-1\) in the \( X^1 X^2 X^3 \) space, and therefore also in the \( \mathbb{R}^3 \) space, is parity: \( (L_i, X^i) \to (L_i, -X^i) \), or equivalently \( E^1 \leftrightarrow E^2 \), the only automorphism of \( so(4) \) (corresponding to the exchange of the two nodes in the Dynkin diagram).

3.3 Convergence to \( O(3) \)-covariant quantum mechanics on \( S^2 \) as \( \Lambda \to \infty \)

Define the \( O(3) \)-covariant embedding \( \mathcal{I} : \mathcal{H}_\Lambda \to \mathcal{L}^2(S^2) \equiv \mathcal{H}_\psi \) by setting \( \mathcal{I} \left( \psi^m \right) := Y^m_\ell \) and applying linear extension; below we drop \( \mathcal{I} \) and identify \( \psi^m_\ell = Y^m_\ell \) as elements of the Hilbert space. Clearly \( P_{\Lambda} \phi \to \phi \) in the \( \mathcal{H}_\Lambda \)-norm \( \| \| \), for all \( \phi \in \mathcal{H}_\psi \); \( \mathcal{A}_\Lambda \) ‘invades’ \( \mathcal{H}_\psi \) as \( \Lambda \to \infty \).

\( \mathcal{I} \) induces the embedding of operator algebras \( \mathcal{I} : \mathcal{A}_\Lambda \to B(\mathcal{H}_\psi) \), with \( \mathcal{A}_\Lambda \) annihilating \( \mathcal{H}_\psi \); \( \mathcal{I}_\ell = L_\ell \) on \( \mathcal{A}_\Lambda \), and \( \mathcal{I}_\ell \phi \to L_\ell \phi \) as \( \Lambda \to \infty \), for all \( \phi \in D(L_\ell) \subset \mathcal{H}_\psi \). Bounded (resp. continuous) functions \( f \) on \( S^2 \) acting as multiplication operators \( f : \phi \in \mathcal{H}_\psi \to f \phi \in \mathcal{H}_\psi \), make up a subalgebra \( B(S^2) \) [resp. \( C(S^2) \)] of \( B(\mathcal{H}_\psi) \). We define the fuzzy analog of the vector space \( B(S^2) \) as

\[ \mathcal{C}_\Lambda := \left\{ \sum_{l=0}^{2\Lambda} \sum_{m=-l}^{l} f^m_l \tilde{Y}^m_\ell, \ f^m_l \in \mathbb{C} \right\}, \]

where \( \tilde{Y}^m_\ell := M_\ell (l+m)!2l^{-m}l^m [(1+m)(l-m)] \)

are the fuzzy analogs of \( Y^m_\ell \in B(S^2) \). \( \mathcal{C}_\Lambda \subset \mathcal{A}_\Lambda \) as a vector space, but not as a subalgebra. The decomposition of \( \mathcal{C}_\Lambda \) in irreducible representations of \( O(3) \) reads \( \mathcal{C}_\Lambda = \bigoplus_{l=0}^{2\Lambda} \mathcal{V}_l \). In [1] we have shown that for all \( \phi \in \mathcal{H}_\psi \), \( \pi_\phi \to (x^r/r) \phi \); more generally, setting \( \hat{f}_\Lambda := \sum_{l=0}^{2\Lambda} \sum_{|m|\leq l} f^m_l \tilde{Y}^m_\ell \in \mathcal{A}_\Lambda \) for all \( f \in B(S^2) \) we find

**Proposition 4.3 in [1]**. Choose \( k(\Lambda) \geq 2^{2\Lambda+3} \Lambda^{\Lambda+5}(\Lambda+1) \).

Then \( \hat{f}_\Lambda \to f, \ (\hat{f}g)_\Lambda \to fg, \hat{f}_\Lambda \hat{g}_\Lambda \to fg \) strongly as \( \Lambda \to \infty \), \( \forall f, g \in B(S^2) \).

On the other hand, the corresponding convergences in the operator norm do not hold, because for all \( \Lambda > 0 \) the operators \( \pi_\phi \) annihilate \( \mathcal{H}_\Lambda^{-1} \), whereas \( x^r/r, L_\ell \) do not.

4. Comparison with the literature, final remarks and outlook

In conclusion, for \( d = 1, 2 \) we have built a sequence \( (\mathcal{A}_\Lambda, \mathcal{H}_\Lambda) \) of finite-dim, \( O(D) \)-covariant \( (D = d+1) \) approximations of quantum mechanics of a spinless particle on the sphere \( S^d \); \( R^2 \geq 1 \) collapses to 1 as \( \Lambda \to \infty \). This result has been achieved imposing an energy-cutoff \( E \leq \Lambda(\Lambda+d-1) \) on quantum mechanics of a particle in \( \mathbb{R}^D \) subject to a sharp confining potential \( V(r) \) on the sphere \( r = 1 \). \( \mathcal{A}_\Lambda \) is a fuzzy approximation of the whole algebra of observables of the particle on \( S^d \).
(phase space algebra), and converges to it in the limit $\Lambda \to \infty$. We have explicitly determined a $\ast$-isomorphism $\mathcal{A}_\Lambda \simeq \pi_\Lambda[Uso(D+1)]$, with a suitable irreducible representation $\pi_\Lambda$ of $Uso(D+1)$ on $\mathcal{H}_\Lambda$. On the other hand $\mathcal{H}_\Lambda$ carries a reducible representation of the $Uso(D)$ subalgebra generated by the $T_{ij}$: $\mathcal{H}_\Lambda$ is the direct sum of all irreducible representations fulfilling $L^2 \leq \Lambda(A+d-1)$. A similar decomposition holds for the subspace $\mathcal{C}_\Lambda \subset \mathcal{A}_\Lambda$ of completely symmetrized polynomials in the $\pi'$ acting as multiplication operators on $\mathcal{H}_\Lambda$. As $\Lambda \to \infty$ these respectively become the decompositions (1.2) of $L^2(S^d)$ and of $C(S^d)$ acting on $L^2(S^d)$.

Our approach seems applicable to $d \geq 3$; this will allow a more direct comparison with the rest of the literature. The fuzzy spheres of dimension $d = 4$ introduced in [22], as well as the $d \geq 3$ ones considered in [23, 24, 25], are based on $End(V)$, where $V$ carries a particular irreducible representation of $SO(D)$; as $\mathcal{B}^2$ is central, it can be set $\mathcal{B}^2 = 1$ identically. The commutation relations are also Snyder-like, hence $O(D)$-covariant. The fuzzy spherical harmonics are elements of $End(V)$, but do not close a subalgebra of $End(V)$, i.e. the product $Y \cdot Y'$ of two spherical harmonics is not a combination of spherical harmonics. This is exactly as in our models, i.e. $\mathcal{C}_\Lambda$ is a subspace, but not a subalgebra, of $\mathcal{A}_\Lambda$. (One can introduce a product in $\mathcal{C}_\Lambda$ by projecting the result of $Y \cdot Y'$ to the vector space $\mathcal{C}_\Lambda$, but it will be non-associative).

In [26, 27] Steinacker and Sperling consider the possibility of constructing a fuzzy 4-sphere $S^4_\Lambda$ through a reducible representation of $Uso(5)$ on a Hilbert space $V$ obtained decomposing an irreducible representation $\pi$ of $Uso(6)$ characterized by a triple of highest weights $(N,n_1,n_2)$; so $End(V) \simeq \pi[Uso(6)]$, in analogy with our result. The elements $X'$ of a basis of the vector space $so(6) \setminus so(5)$ play the role of noncommuting cartesian coordinates. Hence, the $O(5)$-scalar $\mathcal{B}^2 \equiv X'X'$ is no longer central, but its spectrum is still very close to 1 provided $N \gg n_1,n_2$, because then $V$ decomposes only in few irreducible $SO(5)$-components, all with eigenvalues of $\mathcal{B}^2$ very close to 1; if $n_1 = n_2 = 0$ then $\mathcal{B}^2 \equiv 1$ ($V$ carries an irreducible representation of $O(5)$), and one recovers the fuzzy 4-sphere of [22]. On the contrary, in our approach $\mathcal{B}^2 \simeq 1$ is guaranteed by adopting $\pi' = g(L^2)X'g(L^2)$ rather than $X'$ as noncommutative cartesian coordinates, and $\mathcal{B}^2 = \pi'\pi'$.

Many other aspects of these new fuzzy spheres deserve investigations: e.g. space uncertainties, optimally localized states (coherent states [28]), their distance (as done e.g. in [29] for the FS), extension to particles with spin, etc. We hope that progresses on these and other issues can be reported soon.

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