Effective three-body interactions in triangular optical lattices

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(Dated: August 15, 2018)

We demonstrate that a triangular optical lattice of two atomic species, bosonic or fermionic, can be employed to generate a variety of novel spin-1/2 Hamiltonians. These include effective three-spin interactions resulting from the possibility of atoms tunneling along two different paths. Such interactions can be employed to simulate particular one or two dimensional physical systems with ground states that possess a rich structure and undergo a variety of quantum phase transitions. In addition, tunneling can be activated by employing Raman transitions, thus creating an effective Hamiltonian that does not preserve the number of atoms of each species. In the presence of external electromagnetic fields, resulting in complex tunneling couplings, we obtain effective Hamiltonians that break chiral symmetry. The ground states of these Hamiltonians can be used for the physical implementation of geometrical or topological objects.

PACS numbers: 03.75.Kk, 05.30.Jp, 42.50.-p, 73.43.-f

I. INTRODUCTION

With the development of optical lattice technology\textsuperscript{1, 2, 3}, considerable attention has been focused on the experimental simulation of a variety of many-particle systems, such as spin chains\textsuperscript{4, 5, 6, 7}. This provides the possibility to probe and realise complex quantum models with unique properties in the laboratory. Such examples, that are of interest in various areas of physics, are the systems that include many-body interactions. The latter have been hard to study in the past due to the difficulty in controlling them externally and isolating them from the environment\textsuperscript{8}. To overcome these problems, techniques have been developed in quantum optics\textsuperscript{9, 10, 11} which minimise imperfections and impurities in the implementation of the desired structures, thus paving the way for the consideration of such “higher order” phenomena of multi-particle interactions. Their applications could be of much interest to cold atom technology as well as to condensed matter physics and quantum information.

In this paper we obtain the interaction terms of bosonic or fermionic lattices of two species of atoms, denoted here by $↑$ and $↓$ (see\textsuperscript{4, 5, 7}). These can be two different hyperfine ground states of the same atom coupled via an excited state by a Raman transition. The system is brought initially into the Mott insulator phase where the number of atoms at each site of the lattice is well defined. By restricting to the case of only one atom per site it is possible to characterise the system by pseudospin basis states provided by internal ground states of the atom. Interactions between atoms in different sites are facilitated by virtual transitions. These are dictated by the tunneling coupling $J$ from one site to its neighbours and by collisional couplings $U$ that take place when two or more atoms are within the same site.

In the following we consider the case of weak tunneling couplings, $J \ll U$, assuring that we are always in the Mott insulator regime. Our aim is to construct a perturbative study of the effective interactions with respect to the small parameter $J/U$. Up to the third order this expansion will provide Hamiltonians that include three-spin interactions. These multi-particle interactions can be, in principle, realised with the near future technology. The main physical requirement is large collisional couplings, $U$, which can be obtained experimentally by Feshbach resonances\textsuperscript{15, 16, 17}. First theoretical\textsuperscript{18} and experimental\textsuperscript{19} advances are already promising. Hence, the time interval needed for those higher order terms to have a significant effect can be well within the coherence times of the system.

Several applications spring out from our studies. The systematic description of the low energy Hamiltonian provides the means for the advanced control of the three-spin interactions simulated in the lattice. Hence, different physical models can be realised, with ground states that present a rich structure such as multiple degeneracies and a variety of quantum phase transitions\textsuperscript{12, 13, 14}. Some of these multi-spin interactions have been theoretically studied in the past in the context of the hard rod boson\textsuperscript{20, 21, 22, 23, 24}, using self-duality symmetries\textsuperscript{25, 26}. Phase transitions between the corresponding ground states have been analysed\textsuperscript{27, 28}. Subsequently, these phases may also be viewed as possible phases of the initial system, that is in the Mott insulator, where the behaviour of its ground state can be controlled at will\textsuperscript{29}.

The paper is organised as follows. In Section II, we present the physical system and the conditions required to obtain three-body interactions. The effective three-spin Hamiltonians for the case of bosonic or fermionic species of atoms in a system of three sites on a lattice are given in Sec. III. In Sec. IV, we study the effect Raman transitions can have on the tunneling process and generalised effective Hamiltonians are presented that do
not preserve the number of atoms of each species. These
are of particular interest for the construction of certain
geometrical evolutions. In Sec. IV complex tunnelings are
considered and the generation of the atoms belonging to the three sites. As we
shall see in the following this results in the generation of
collisions of the atoms at the same site. This allows for the
construction of one dimensional models and several
applications are discussed. In Sec. VII we present an out-
look and the conclusions. Finally, in the Appendix, two
alternative methods are presented for the perturbation
theory that results in the three-spin interactions.

II. THE PHYSICAL MODEL

Let us consider a cloud of ultra cold neutral atoms su-
perimposed with several optical lattices. For sufficiently strong intensities of the laser field this system
is placed in the Mott insulator phase where the expec-
tation value of only one particle per lattice site is en-
ergetically allowed. We are interested in the partic-
ular setup of lattices that form an equilateral triangular
configuration, as shown in Fig. 1. This allows for the
simultaneous superposition of the positional wave func-
tions of the atoms belonging to the three sites. As we
shall see in the following this results in the generation of
three-spin interaction.

The main contributions to the dynamics of the atoms
in the lattice sites are given by the collisions of the atoms
within the same site and the tunneling transitions of the
atoms between neighbouring sites. In particular, the cou-
pling of the collisional interaction for atoms in the same
site are taken to be very large in magnitude, while they
are supposed to vanish when they are in different sites.
Due to the low temperature of the system, this term is
completely characterised by the s-wave scattering length.
Furthermore, the overlap of the Wannier wave functions
between adjacent sites determines the tunneling ampi-
dude, \( J \), of the atoms from one site to its neighbours.
Here, the relative rate between the tunneling and the
collisional interaction term is supposed to be very small,
i.e. \( J \ll U \), so that the state of the system is mainly
dominated by the collisional interaction.

The Hamiltonian describing the three lattice sites with
three atoms of species \( \sigma = \{\uparrow, \downarrow\} \) subject to the
above interactions is given by

\[
H = H^{(0)} + V,
\]

with

\[
H^{(0)} = \frac{1}{2} \sum_{j} U_{\sigma\sigma'} n_{j\sigma} n_{j\sigma'} + V = -\sum_{j} (J_j a_{j\sigma} a_{(j+1)\sigma} + H.c.),
\]

where \( a_{j\sigma} \) denotes the annihilation operator of atoms of
species \( \sigma \) at site \( j \). The annihilation operator can
describe fermions or bosons satisfying commutation or an-
ticommutation relations respectively given by

\[
[a_{j\sigma}, a_{j'\sigma'}]^\pm = \delta_{jj'} \delta_{\sigma\sigma'}^\pm,
\]

\[
[a_{j\sigma}, a_{j'\sigma'}]^\pm = (a_{j\sigma}, a_{j'\sigma'}^\dagger)^\pm = 0,
\]

where the \( \pm \) sign denotes the anticommutator or the
commutator. The operator \( n_{j\sigma} \) is the corresponding num-
erator and \( : ... : \) denotes normal ordering of the
product of the creation and annihilation operators. The
Hamiltonian \( H^{(0)} \) is the lowest order in the
expansion with respect to the tunneling interaction.

Due to the large collisional couplings activated when
two or more atoms are present within the same site, the
weak tunneling transitions do not change the average
number of atoms per site. This is achieved by adiabi-
etic elimination of higher population states along the evolu-
tion leading eventually to an effective Hamiltonian (see
Appendix). The latter allows virtual transitions between
these levels providing eventually non-trivial evolutions.
As we shall see in the Appendix it is possible to describe
the low energy evolution of the bosonic or fermionic sys-
"
the three-body interactions where \( \sigma \) to frustration, that is ground states that are not minimis-
tern allows for the generation of exotic ground states due to the triangular geometry of the optical lattice. This places the requirements of our proposal for detecting the effect of three-spin interactions within the range of the possible experimental values of the near future technology.

Within the regime of single atom occupancy per site it is possible to switch to the pseudo-spin basis of states of the site \( j \) given by \( | \uparrow \rangle = | n_{j\uparrow} = 1, n_{j\downarrow} = 0 \rangle \) and \( | \downarrow \rangle = | n_{j\uparrow} = 0, n_{j\downarrow} = 1 \rangle \). Hence, the effective Hamiltonian can be given in terms of Pauli matrices acting on states expressed in the pseudo-spin basis. The sym-
metries of the initial Hamiltonian \( H \) restrict to a large degree the form of the low energy expansion. For exam-
ple, the conservation of the atom number of each species corresponds, in the spin basis, to the conservation of the total \( z \)-spin. Hence, any rotation on the \( xy \)-spin plane leaves the Hamiltonian invariant. This fact limits the possible spin operators that can contribute to the effective low energy interactions. Possible terms of the effective Hamiltonian are given by

\[
H_{\text{eff}} = \sum_{j=1}^{3} \left[ A_j \hat{\mathbb{I}} + B_j \hat{\sigma}^z_j + \lambda_j^{(1)} \hat{\sigma}^x_j \hat{\sigma}^x_{j+1} + \lambda_j^{(2)} (\hat{\sigma}^y_j \hat{\sigma}^x_{j+1} + \hat{\sigma}^x_j \hat{\sigma}^y_{j+1}) + \lambda_j^{(3)} \hat{\sigma}^z_j \hat{\sigma}^z_{j+1} \hat{\sigma}^z_{j+2} + \lambda_j^{(4)} (\hat{\sigma}^y_j \hat{\sigma}^x_{j+1} \hat{\sigma}^y_{j+2} + \hat{\sigma}^y_j \hat{\sigma}^x_{j+1} \hat{\sigma}^y_{j+2}) \right],
\]

(3.1)

where \( \lambda_j^\alpha \) is the \( \alpha \) Pauli matrix with the usual commutation properties \([\sigma^\alpha_j, \sigma^\beta_k] = 2i \epsilon^{\alpha\beta\gamma} \delta_{jk} \sigma^\gamma_k\). The three-spin interactions presented in the last line can be viewed as the two spin interactions of the second line controlled by the third spin (being spin up or down) through an additional \( \sigma^z \) operator. The couplings, \( A, B \), and \( \lambda^{(\alpha)} \), are given as expansions in \( J^\alpha/U_{\sigma\sigma'} \) by

\[
A_j = -J^1_j J^2_j J^3_j \left( \frac{3}{2U_{\uparrow\uparrow}^2} + \frac{1}{2U_{\uparrow\downarrow}^2} + \frac{1}{U_{\uparrow\uparrow} U_{\uparrow\downarrow}} \right) - J_j^2 \frac{1}{U_{\uparrow\uparrow}^2} \left( \frac{1}{U_{\uparrow\downarrow}^2} + (\uparrow\downarrow) \right),
\]

\[
B_j = -J_j^2 (\frac{9}{2U_{\uparrow\uparrow}^2} + \frac{1}{2U_{\uparrow\downarrow}^2} + \frac{1}{U_{\uparrow\uparrow} U_{\uparrow\downarrow}}) - \left( \frac{1}{U_{\uparrow\uparrow}^2} \right) + (\uparrow\downarrow),
\]

\[
\lambda_j^{(1)} = -J^1_j J^2_j J^3_j \left( \frac{9}{2U_{\uparrow\uparrow}^2} - \frac{1}{2U_{\uparrow\downarrow}^2} - \frac{1}{U_{\uparrow\uparrow} U_{\uparrow\downarrow}} \right) - J_j^2 \left( \frac{1}{U_{\uparrow\downarrow}^2} - \frac{1}{U_{\uparrow\uparrow}^2} \right) + (\uparrow\downarrow),
\]

\[
\lambda_j^{(2)} = -J^1_j J^2_j J^3_j \left( \frac{3}{2U_{\uparrow\uparrow}^2} + \frac{1}{2U_{\uparrow\downarrow}^2} + \frac{1}{U_{\uparrow\uparrow} U_{\uparrow\downarrow}} \right) - \left( \frac{J^2_j}{2U_{\uparrow\uparrow}} \right) + (\uparrow\downarrow),
\]

\[
\lambda_j^{(3)} = -J^1_j J^2_j J^3_j \left( \frac{3}{2U_{\uparrow\uparrow}^2} - \frac{1}{U_{\uparrow\downarrow}^2} \right) + (\uparrow\downarrow),
\]

\[
\lambda_j^{(4)} = -J^1_j J^2_j J^3_j \left( \frac{1}{2U_{\uparrow\uparrow}^2} + \frac{1}{U_{\uparrow\downarrow}^2} \right) - (\uparrow\downarrow),
\]

where the symbol \((\uparrow\downarrow)\) denotes the repeating of the same term as on its left, but with the \( \uparrow \) and \( \downarrow \) indices interchanged. The \( A \) term contributes to an overall phase factor in the time evolution of the system and can be ignored. The \( B \) term can easily be eliminated and an arbitrary magnetic field term of the form \( \sum_j \vec{B} \cdot \hat{\sigma} \) can be added by applying a Raman transition with the appropriate laser fields. The behaviour of the effective couplings

III. THE EFFECTIVE THREE-SPIN INTERACTIONS

A. The bosonic model

Consider the low energy evolution of the triangular system given in Fig. 4 of three atoms in three sites of the lattice without the application of any external field. Different rates in the tunneling parameter can then be achieved by tuning the intensities of the laser field corresponding to the different directions of the triangle. By applying the perturbative expansion up to the third order we obtain that the system can effectively be described by

\[
H_{\text{eff}} = \sum_{j=1}^{3} \left[ A_j \hat{\mathbb{I}} + B_j \hat{\sigma}^z_j + \lambda_j^{(1)} \hat{\sigma}^x_j \hat{\sigma}^x_{j+1} + \lambda_j^{(2)} (\hat{\sigma}^y_j \hat{\sigma}^x_{j+1} + \hat{\sigma}^x_j \hat{\sigma}^y_{j+1}) + \lambda_j^{(3)} \hat{\sigma}^z_j \hat{\sigma}^z_{j+1} \hat{\sigma}^z_{j+2} + \lambda_j^{(4)} (\hat{\sigma}^y_j \hat{\sigma}^x_{j+1} \hat{\sigma}^y_{j+2} + \hat{\sigma}^y_j \hat{\sigma}^x_{j+1} \hat{\sigma}^y_{j+2}) \right],
\]

(3.1)
as functions of the tunneling and collisional couplings is given in Fig. 2.

\[ \chi^{(1)}(J/U) \]

\[ \chi^{(2)}(J/U) \]

\[ \chi^{(3)}(J/U) \]

\[ \chi^{(4)}(J/U) \]

FIG. 2: The effective couplings (a) \( \lambda^{(1)} \), (b) \( \lambda^{(2)} \), (c) \( \lambda^{(3)} \) and (d) \( \lambda^{(4)} \) as functions of the tunneling couplings \( J^x/U \) and \( J^z/U \), where we have set the tunneling couplings to be \( J^x = J^y = J^z \) and the collisional couplings to be \( U_{↑↑} = U_{↓↓} = U_{↑↓} = U_{↓↑} = U \). All the parameters are normalised with respect to \( U \).

One can isolate different parts of Hamiltonian \( \chi^{(1)} \), each one including a three-spin interaction term, by varying the tunneling and/or the collisional couplings appropriately so that particular terms in \( \chi^{(1)} \) vanish, while others are freely varied. An example of this can be seen in Fig. 2 where the couplings \( \lambda^{(1)} \) and \( \lambda^{(3)} \) are depicted. There, for the special choice of the collisional terms, \( U_{↑↑} = U_{↓↓} = 2.12U_{↑↓} \), the \( \lambda^{(1)} \) coupling is kept to zero for a wide range of the tunneling couplings, while the three-spin coupling, \( \lambda^{(3)} \), can take any arbitrary value. One can also suppress the exchange interactions by keeping one of the two tunneling couplings zero without affecting the freedom in obtaining arbitrary positive or negative values for \( \lambda^{(3)} \) as seen in Fig. 2.

Hence, the one dimensional Hamiltonian of the form

\[ H(B_x, B_z) = -\sum_j (B_x \sigma_j^x + B_z \sigma_j^z + \sigma_j^x \sigma_{j+1}^x \sigma_{j+2}^x) \]

can be simulated in the optical lattice where all of its couplings can be arbitrarily and independently varied. The three-spin interaction term of this Hamiltonian possesses fourfold degeneracy in its ground state, spanned by the states \( \{ \uparrow \uparrow \uparrow, \uparrow \uparrow \downarrow, \uparrow \downarrow \uparrow, \downarrow \downarrow \uparrow \} \). The criticality behaviour of this model has been extensively studied in the past \cite{21, 25}, where it is shown to present first and second order phase transitions. In particular, for \( B_z = 0 \) its self dual character can be demonstrated \cite{25, 26}. To explicitly show that let us define the dual operators

\[ \bar{\sigma}_j^x \equiv \sigma_j^x \sigma_{j+1}^x \sigma_{j+2}^x \]

that also satisfy the usual Pauli spin algebra. We can re-express the Hamiltonian \( H(B_x, 0) \) with respect to the dual operators obtaining finally

\[ H(B_x, 0) = B_x H(B_x^{-1}, 0). \]

This equation of self duality indicates that if there is one critical point then it should be at \( |B_x| = 1 \) as has also been verified numerically. Furthermore, the two spin interactions \( \sigma_j^x \sigma_{j+1}^x \sigma_{j+2}^x \) has a degeneracy with a \( Z_2 \) symmetry while \( \sigma_j^x \sigma_{j+1}^x \sigma_{j+2}^y \) has a three fold degeneracy leading to a \( Z_3 \) symmetry. By varying the corresponding couplings of the effective Hamiltonian it is possible to induce transitions to and from the \( Z_2 \) and \( Z_3 \) ordered phases in a similar fashion as has been theoretically demonstrated in \cite{15}.

B. The fermionic model

Alternatively, one can consider the case of fermionic atoms and derive the effective interactions they induce up to the third order. Compared to the couplings in the bosonic case we now have \( U_{↑↓} = U \) being the only one that is present. The Pauli exclusion principle can be signalled by having \( U_{↑↑}, U_{↓↓} \rightarrow \infty \) that eventually forbids two fermionic atoms of the same species from occupying the same site. Keeping terms up to the third order in \( J_j^z/U \) and employing the anticommutation relations \cite{22, 23}.
we obtain the effective Hamiltonian
\[
H_{\text{eff}} = \sum_{j=1}^{3} \left[ \mu_j^{(1)} (1 - \sigma_j^z \sigma_{j+1}^z) + \mu_j^{(3)} (\sigma_j^x - \sigma_j^z \sigma_{j+1}^z) + \\
\mu_j^{(2)} (\sigma_j^x \sigma_{j+1}^x + \sigma_j^y \sigma_{j+1}^y) + \mu_j^{(4)} (\sigma_j^x \sigma_{j+1}^x + \sigma_j^z \sigma_{j+1}^z) \right],
\]
where the effective couplings are a function of the initial variables of the Hamiltonian and
\[
\begin{align*}
\mu_j^{(1)} &= -\frac{1}{2U} (J_j^2 + J_j^2), \\
\mu_j^{(2)} &= \frac{1}{U} J_j^1 J_j^1, \\
\mu_j^{(3)} &= \frac{1}{2U^2} (J_j^3 J_j^3 - J_j^2 J_j^2 J_j^2), \\
\mu_j^{(4)} &= \frac{3}{2U^2} (J_j^1 J_{j+1} J_j^1 - J_j^1 J_{j+2} J_{j+2}).
\end{align*}
\]
The dependence of the coupling terms on the parameters of the initial Hamiltonian is simpler than in the bosonic case. Nevertheless, they can express a similar behaviour as can been seen in Fig. 4.

### IV. RAMAN ACTIVATED TUNNELINGS

A number of variations of the previous Hamiltonians are possible by employing techniques available from quantum optics. An interesting example involves the application of Raman transitions during the tunneling process. These transitions involve the direct coupling of the two atomic states \( \uparrow \) and \( \downarrow \). Consequently they are not atom-number preserving for each of the species.

#### A. The general case

Let us first consider the case where the atoms are strongly trapped by an optical lattice as in the previous sections. If the lasers producing the Raman transition are forming standing waves it is possible to activate tunneling transitions of atoms that simultaneously experience a change in their internal state. As we shall see in the following the resulting Hamiltonian is given by an \( SU(2) \) rotation applied to each Pauli matrix of the Hamiltonian.

In particular, we shall consider the case of activating the tunneling with the application of two individual Raman transitions. These transitions consist of four paired laser beams \( L_1, L_2 \) and \( L'_1, L'_2 \), each pair having a blue detuning \( \Delta \) and \( \Delta' \), different for the two different transitions. The phases and amplitudes of the laser beams can be properly tuned so that the first Raman transition allows the tunneling of the state
\[
|+\rangle = \cos \theta |a\rangle + \sin \theta e^{-i\phi} |b\rangle
\]
with tunneling rate \( J_+ \) between two neighbouring sites, while the second one activates the tunneling of the state
\[
|\rangle = \sin \theta |a\rangle - \cos \theta e^{-i\phi} |b\rangle,
\]
by an additional phase difference of \( \pi \) between the lasers \( L'_1, L'_2 \), with an effective tunneling rate \( J_- \). In the above equations \( \phi \) denotes the phase difference between the \( L_1 \) laser field, while \( \tan \theta = \Omega_2/\Omega_1 \), where \( \Omega_i \) are their corresponding Rabi frequencies. Hence, the effective tunneling term is given by
\[
V_c = - \sum_i (J_+ c_i^{+\dagger} c_{i+1} + J_- c_i^{-} c_{i+1}^{+}) + \text{H.c.},
\]
where the tunneling couplings \( J_+ \) and \( J_- \) are given by the potential barrier of the initial optical lattice superposed by the potential reduction due to the Raman transitions. In addition, the creation and annihilation operators are given as an \( SU(2) \) rotation of the initial ones, i.e.
\[
\begin{pmatrix} c_i^+ \\ c_i^- \end{pmatrix} = g(\phi, \theta) \begin{pmatrix} a_i \\ b_i \end{pmatrix}
\]
with the unitary \( SU(2) \) matrix
\[
g(\phi, \theta) = \begin{pmatrix} \cos \theta & e^{i\phi} \sin \theta \\ \sin \theta & -e^{i\phi} \cos \theta \end{pmatrix}.
\]
Hence, the resulting tunneling Hamiltonian can be obtained from the initial one via an \( SU(2) \) rotation \( V_c = \)
is the order of the perturbation theory and reads in its generality

\[ \hat{H}_{\text{eff}}^{(n)}(\phi, \theta) = g(\phi, \theta)H_{\text{eff}}^{(n)}g(\phi, \theta), \]

where \( n \) is the order of the perturbation. Note that this useful result holds not only for the \( \phi \) rotations, but also for the \( \theta \) rotations which, in general, do not commute with the collisional Hamiltonian \( H^{(0)} \).

**B. Rotated anisotropic XY model**

We now show that the above presented Raman transitions can be employed to obtain, for example, the anisotropic XY model. The direction of anisotropy is determined by the phase difference of the laser fields employed for the Raman transition. In particular consider, as in the previous, three sites of the optical lattice in an equilateral triangular configuration. For simplicity we assume \( J_+ = J_-, J_3 = J \), and \( U_{12} = U_{14} = U_{41} = U \). Then the effective Hamiltonian to the third order becomes the rotation

\[ \hat{H}_{\text{eff}}(\phi, \pi/2) = g(\phi)\hat{H}_{\text{eff}}g(\phi), \quad (4.1) \]

where \( g(\phi) = g(\phi, \theta = 0) \) is a \( z \)-axis rotation and \( \hat{H}_{\text{eff}} \) is the \( \theta = \pi/2 \) rotated effective Hamiltonian around the \( y \)-axis given by

\[ \hat{H}_{\text{eff}} = \sum_{i=1}^{3} \left( A\sigma_i^x + B\sigma_i^z + \nu^{(1)}\sigma_i^x\sigma_{i+1}^x + \nu^{(3)}\sigma_i^x\sigma_{i+1}^x\sigma_{i+2}^x \right), \]

with

\[ A = -\frac{3}{2}J_2^2 - \frac{3}{2}J_3^2, \quad B = -\frac{3}{2}J_2^2 - \frac{11}{2}J_3^2, \]

\[ \nu^{(1)} = -\frac{1}{2}J_2^2 - \frac{3}{2}J_3^2, \quad \nu^{(3)} = -\frac{1}{2}J_3^2. \]

These effective couplings agree with the ones presented in [32]. Moreover, by controlling the amplitude of the initial standing waves that trap the atoms in their equilibrium positions it is possible to reactivate the tunnelings \( J^+ \) and \( J^- \). This has the effect that the overall Hamiltonian is the sum of the two Hamiltonians, the rotated one \( \hat{H}_{\text{eff}}^{(3)} \) and the initial one \( \hat{H}_{\text{eff}}^{(0)} \).

One can now check that the Hamiltonian \( \hat{H}_{\text{eff}}^{(3)} \) is invariant under \( g(\phi) \) rotations. On the other hand, when we add the Hamiltonians \( \hat{H}_{\text{eff}}^{(0)} \) and the one from \( \hat{H}_{\text{eff}}^{(3)} \) we obtain the generalised version of the anisotropic XY model where additional third order terms are present. Hence, by turning on the \( J^+ \) and \( J^- \) tunnelings we can obtain the rotated version of the anisotropic XY model, where the rotation is performed with respect to the \( z \)-spin axis by an angle \( \phi \). This approach provides a variety of control parameters (e.g. the angle \( \phi \) and the ratio of the couplings of the two added Hamiltonians) and, in addition, one can have these variables independent for each of the three directions of the two dimensional optical lattice. Particular settings of these structures have been proved to generate topological phenomena [2], that support exotic anyonic excitations, useful for the construction of topological memories [2]. In addition, the possibility of varying arbitrarily the control parameters of the above Hamiltonians and, consequently, of their ground states gives us the natural setup to study such phenomena as geometrical phases in lattice systems. Examples will be presented elsewhere [32].

**V. COMPLEX TUNNELING AND TOPOLOGICAL EFFECTS**

Consider the case where we employ complex tunneling couplings [34] in the transitions described above. This can be performed by employing additional characteristics of the atoms like a charge \( e \), an electric moment \( \vec{\mu}_e \) or a magnetic moment \( \vec{\mu}_m \), and external electromagnetic fields. As the external fields can break time reversal symmetry, new terms of the form \( \{ \sigma_j^x\sigma_{j+1}^x\sigma_{j+2}^x - \sigma_j^x\sigma_{j+1}^x\sigma_{j+2}^x \} \) appear in the effective Hamiltonian. In particular, the minimal coupling of the atom with the external field can be given in general by substituting its momentum by

\[ \vec{p} \rightarrow \vec{p} + e\vec{A}(\vec{r}) + \vec{p} \times \vec{E}(\vec{r}) + (\vec{p} \cdot \vec{\nabla})\vec{A}(\vec{r}), \]

where \( \vec{E} \) is the electric field and \( \vec{A} \) is the vector potential. All of these terms satisfy the Gauss gauge if we demand that \( \vec{\nabla} \cdot \vec{A} = 0 \) and \( \vec{E}(\vec{r}) \propto r/r^3 \), hence they can generate a possible phase factor for the tunneling couplings.

The first term results in the well known Aharonov-Bohm effect [36], while the second one is the origin of the Aharonov-Casher effect [37]. The first one requires that the atoms involved are charged, which is not possible to achieve in the optical lattice setup. On the other hand it is plausible to consider the electric or magnetic moments of the atoms. Nevertheless the Aharonov-Casher effect requires that the magnetic moment of the atom moves in the field of a straight homogeneously charged line, the latter being technologically difficult to implement. Though, recent experiments have been performed...
that generalise the Aharonov-Casher effect partly over-
coming the technological obstacles . The third case
involves the cyclic move of an electric moment through a
gradient of a magnetic field finally contributing the phase
\[ \phi = \int_S (\vec{\mu}_e \cdot \nabla) \vec{B} \cdot d\vec{s}, \]
to the initial state, where \( S \) is the surface enclosed by
the cyclic path of the electric moment. For example, if \( \vec{\mu}_e \)
is perpendicular to the surface \( S \), taken to lie on the \( x-y \)
plane then a non-zero phase, \( \phi \), is produced if there is
a non-vanishing gradient of the magnetic field along the \( z \)
direction. Alternatively, if \( \vec{\mu}_e \) is along the surface plane,
then a non-zero phase is produced if the \( z \) component of
the magnetic field has a non-vanishing gradient along the
direction of \( \vec{\mu}_e \). Hence, it is possible to generate a phase
factor contribution to the tunneling couplings \( J = e^{i\phi} |J| \)
with
\[ \phi = \int_{\vec{x}_i}^{\vec{x}_{i+1}} (\vec{\mu}_e \cdot \nabla) \vec{A} \cdot d\vec{x}. \]
Here \( \vec{x}_i \) and \( \vec{x}_{i+1} \) denote the positions of the lattice sites
connected by the tunneling coupling \( J \).

In order to isolate the new terms that appear in
the case of complex tunneling couplings we should restrict
to purely imaginary ones, i.e. \( J^\sigma = \pm i |J| \). Then the
effective Hamiltonian \( \mathcal{H}_{\text{eff}} \) becomes
\[ \mathcal{H}_{\text{eff}} = \sum_i \left[ A \bar{\tau}_i + B \sigma_i^x + \right. \]
\[ \tau^{(1)} \sigma_i^x \sigma_{i+1}^x + \tau^{(2)} (\sigma_i^x \sigma_{i+1}^x + \sigma_i^y \sigma_{i+1}^y) + \]
\[ \tau^{(3)} (\sigma_i^x \sigma_{i+1}^y - \sigma_i^y \sigma_{i+1}^x) + \tau^{(4)} \epsilon_{lmn} \sigma_i^l \sigma_{i+1}^m \sigma_{i+2}^n \right], \]
(5.1)

where \( \epsilon_{lmn} \) with \( \{l, m, n\} = \{x, y, z\} \) denotes the total
antisymmetric tensor in three dimensions and summation
over the indices \( l, m, n \) is implied. The couplings appearing in
\( \mathcal{H}_{\text{eff}} \) are given in the bosonic case by
\[ A = \frac{J_{\uparrow\uparrow}}{U_{\uparrow\uparrow}} + \frac{J_{\downarrow\downarrow}}{U_{\downarrow\downarrow}} + \frac{J_{\uparrow\downarrow} + J_{\downarrow\uparrow}}{2U_{\uparrow\downarrow}} , \]
\[ B = 2 \frac{J_{\uparrow\uparrow}^2}{U_{\uparrow\uparrow}} - 2 \frac{J_{\downarrow\downarrow}^2}{U_{\downarrow\downarrow}} , \]
\[ \tau^{(1)} = \frac{J_{\uparrow\uparrow}^2}{U_{\uparrow\uparrow}} + \frac{J_{\downarrow\downarrow}^2}{U_{\downarrow\downarrow}} - \frac{J_{\uparrow\downarrow}^2 + J_{\downarrow\uparrow}^2}{2U_{\uparrow\downarrow}} , \]
\[ \tau^{(2)} = \frac{J_{\uparrow\uparrow} J_{\downarrow\downarrow}}{U_{\uparrow\downarrow}} , \]
\[ \tau^{(3)} = i \frac{J_{\uparrow\downarrow} J_{\downarrow\uparrow}}{U_{\uparrow\downarrow}} \left( \frac{1}{2U_{\uparrow\downarrow}} + \frac{1}{U_{\downarrow\uparrow}} \right) + (\uparrow\downarrow) , \]
\[ \tau^{(4)} = i \frac{J_{\uparrow\downarrow} J_{\downarrow\uparrow}}{U_{\uparrow\downarrow}} \left( \frac{1}{2U_{\uparrow\downarrow}} + \frac{1}{U_{\downarrow\uparrow}} \right) - (\uparrow\downarrow) , \]
and in the fermionic case by
\[ A = -\tau^{(1)} = \frac{J_{\uparrow\uparrow}^2 + J_{\downarrow\downarrow}^2}{2U} , \]
\[ B = \tau^{(3)} = 0 , \]
\[ \tau^{(2)} = \frac{J_{\uparrow\downarrow} J_{\downarrow\uparrow}}{U} , \]
\[ \tau^{(4)} = i \frac{J_{\uparrow\downarrow}^2 J_{\downarrow\uparrow} - J_{\downarrow\uparrow}^2 J_{\uparrow\downarrow}}{2U^2} . \]

By taking \( U_{\uparrow\uparrow} \to \infty \), \( U_{\downarrow\downarrow} = -U_{\downarrow\uparrow} = -U \), \( J^+ = J \) and
\( J^\dagger = J \), one can set, in the bosonic case, with the aid of
Feshbach resonances and compensating Zeeman terms,
all the couplings to be zero apart from \( \tau^{(4)} \). Hence, the
effective Hamiltonian reduces to
\[ \mathcal{H}_{\text{eff}} = \tau^{(4)} \sum_{(ijk)} \frac{\sigma_i^l \sigma_j^m \sigma_k^n}{2}, \]
(5.2)

with \( \sigma = (\sigma^x, \sigma^y, \sigma^z) \) and \( \tau^{(4)} = |J|^3 / U^2 \). Remarkably,
with this physical proposal, the interaction term \( \mathcal{H}_{\text{eff}} \)
can be isolated, especially from the Zeeman terms that are
predominant in equivalent solid state implementations.
This interaction term is also known in the literature as
the chirality operator . It breaks time reversal symmetry
of the system, a consequence of the externally applied field,
by effectively splitting the degeneracy of the ground state
into two orthogonal sectors, namely “+” and “−”, related by
time reversal, \( T \). These sectors are uniquely described
by the eigenstates of \( \mathcal{H}_{\text{eff}} \) at the sites of one triangle.
The lowest energy sector with eigenenergy \( E_+ = -2\sqrt{3}\tau^{(4)} \)
is given by
\[ |\Psi_{1/2}^+ \rangle = \frac{1}{\sqrt{3}} (|\uparrow\uparrow\downarrow\rangle + \omega |\uparrow\downarrow\uparrow\rangle + \omega^2 |\uparrow\downarrow\downarrow\rangle), \]
\[ |\Psi_{1/2}^- \rangle = -\frac{1}{\sqrt{3}} (|\downarrow\downarrow\uparrow\rangle + \omega |\downarrow\uparrow\downarrow\rangle + \omega^2 |\downarrow\uparrow\uparrow\rangle) \]
(5.3)

The excited sector, \( |\Psi_{1/2}^- \rangle \), represents counter propa-
gation with eigenvalue \( E_- = 2\sqrt{3}\tau^{(4)} \) and it is obtained
from \( |\Psi_{1/2}^+ \rangle \) by complex conjugation . We would
like to point out that, to the best of our knowledge, this is
the first physical proposal where this interaction term can
be isolated, especially from the Zeeman terms that are
predominant in equivalent solid state implementations.
Alternative models employing cold atom technology
for the generation of topologically non-trivial ground states
are given in .

VI. ONE- AND TWO-DIMENSIONAL MODELS

It is also possible to employ the three-spin interactions
that we studied extensively in the previous sections for
the construction of extended one and two dimensional
systems. The two dimensional generalisation is rather
straightforward as the triangular system we considered is
already defined on the plane. Hence, all the interactions
considered so far can be generalised for the case of a two
dimensional lattice where the summation runs through
all the lattice sites with each site having six neighbours.

The construction of the one dimensional model is more
involving. In particular, we now consider a whole chain
of triangles in a zig-zag one dimensional pattern as shown
in Fig. . In principle this configuration can extend our
model from the triangle to a chain. Nevertheless, a care-
ful consideration of the two spin interactions shows that
terms of the form \( \sigma_i^l \sigma_{i+2}^n \) appear in the effective Hamil-
tonian, due to the triangular setting (see Fig. ). Such
Hamiltonian terms involving nearest and next-to-nearest neighbour interactions are of interest in their own right \[12, 13\] but will not be addressed here. It is also possible to introduce a longitudinal optical lattice with half of the initial wavelength, and an appropriate amplitude such that it cancels exactly those interactions generating, finally, chains with only neighbouring couplings.

In a similar fashion it is possible to avoid generation of terms of the form \(\sigma^z_i \sigma^z_{i+1} + \sigma^x_i \sigma^x_{i+2}\) by deactivating the longitudinal tunneling coupling in one of the modes, e.g. the \(\uparrow\) mode, which deactivates the corresponding exchange interaction.

As we are particularly interested in three-spin interactions we would like to isolate the chain term \(\sum_i (\sigma^z_i \sigma^z_{i+1} \sigma^z_{i+2} + \sigma^y_i \sigma^y_{i+1} \sigma^y_{i+2})\) from the \(\lambda^{(4)}\) term of Hamiltonian (3.1). This term includes, in addition, all the possible triangular permutations. To achieve that we could deactivate the non-longitudinal tunneling for one of the two modes, e.g. the one that traps the \(\uparrow\) atoms. The interaction \(\sigma^z_i \sigma^z_{i+1} \sigma^z_{i+2}\) is homogeneous, hence it does not pose such a problem when it is extended to the one dimensional ladder. With the above procedures we can finally obtain a chain Hamiltonian as in (3.1) where the summation runs up to the total number \(N\) of the sites.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

In this paper we presented a variety of different spin interactions that can be generated by a system of ultracold atoms superposed by optical lattices and initiated in the Mott insulator phase. In particular, we have been interested in the simulation and study of various three-spin interactions conveniently obtained in a lattice with equilateral triangular structure. They appear by a perturbation expansion to the third order with respect to the tunneling transitions of the atoms when the dominant interaction is the collisions of atoms within the same site. Among the models presented here we specifically considered the \(\sigma^z_i \sigma^z_{i+1} \sigma^z_{i+2}\) interaction, a third order generalisation of the rotated inhomogeneous \(XY\) model, as well as interactions that explicitly break chiral symmetry. These models can exhibit degeneracy in their ground states and undergo a variety of quantum phase transitions that can also be viewed as phases of the initial Mott insulator.

It is possible to employ quantum simulation techniques \[31\], in a similar fashion as for two spin Hamiltonians, to generate effective three-spin interactions that are not possible to obtain straightforwardly from the optical lattice system. Hence, a variety of additional Hamiltonians can be obtained by considering manipulations of the above three-spin interactions with the application of appropriate instantaneous one or two spin transformations. The possibility to externally control most of the parameters of the effective Hamiltonians at will reenters our model as a unique laboratory to study the relationship among exotic systems such as chiral spin systems, fractional quantum Hall systems or systems that exhibit high-\(T_c\) superconductivity \[28, 30\]. In addition, suitable applications have been presented within the realm of quantum computation \[32\] where three-qubit gates can be straightforwardly generated from the three-spin interactions. Furthermore, unique properties related with the criticality behaviour of the chain with three-spin interactions has been analysed in \[14\] where the two-point correlations, used traditionally to describe the criticality of a chain, seem to fail to identify long quantum correlations, suitably expressed by particular entanglement measures \[12\].

In conclusion, we have presented a physical model that can efficiently simulate a variety of three-spin interactions. The employed optical lattice techniques give the possibility to externally manipulate and control the couplings of the interactions. The effect of these terms will eventually be significant with the improvement of the experimental techniques. Importantly, the three-spin interactions can be isolated from two-spin ones or from possible Zeeman terms that are always present in the corresponding spin systems. This makes the further study of their properties an important task for future work.

Acknowledgments

We thank Derek Lee for inspiring conversations and Almut Beige, Alastair Kay and Martin Plenio for critical reading of the manuscript. This work was supported by a Royal Society University Research Fellowship and by the Spanish grant MECD AP2001-1676. E.R. thanks the QI group at DAMTP for their hospitality, where part of this work was done.

APPENDIX A: PERTURBATION THEORY

Consider the case of two species of atoms trapped in optical potentials forming a triangular configuration subject to the Hamiltonian given by \[24\]. For simplicity define the diagonal free Hamiltonian to be given by \(H^{(0)}_{ij} = E_i \delta_{ij}\), where \(E_i\) is either zero or proportional to
\( U_{aa}, U_{ab}, \) or \( U_{ab}. \) As we have already mentioned we consider the case where tunneling couplings are much smaller than the collisional ones \( J \ll U. \) Then the evolution of the system is dominated by the term \( H^{(0)} \). In fact, when we start from a configuration of one atom per lattice site, denoted by the subspace \( M \) of configurations, and activate small tunneling couplings, the change of atom number per site would be energetically unfavourable and is hence adiabatically eliminated.

To see this analytically we employ the interaction picture with respect to the Hamiltonian \( H^{(0)} \) obtaining

\[
H_{I_{ij}}(t) = V_{ij} \exp \left[ i(E_i - E_j)t/h \right]. \tag{A1}
\]

The evolution operator in the interaction picture is given by the time ordered formula

\[
U_I(t, 0) = \mathcal{T} \exp \left[ -\frac{i}{\hbar} \int_0^t H_I(t') dt' \right] = \mathbb{1} - \frac{i}{\hbar} \int_0^t H_I(t') dt' - \frac{1}{\hbar^2} \int_0^t dt' \int_0^{t'} dt'' H_I(t') H_I(t'') + \mathcal{O}((Jt)^4). \tag{A2}
\]

Higher orders are negligible as long as times \( t \) are considered for which \( Jt \) remains sufficiently small, while \( Ut \) is large enough to avoid the accumulation of population outside the subspace \( M \). The latter condition is necessary to exempt fast rotating phase factors appearing when performing the above time integrals. These phase factors are of the form \( e^{i\omega t} - 1 \) and

\[
\lim_{t \to \infty} \left( e^{i\omega t} - 1 \right) = \lim_{t \to \infty} \left( -2 \sin^2 \frac{\omega t}{2} + i \sin \omega t \right) = (-\omega^2 t \pi + i2\pi\omega)\delta(\omega),
\]

which is zero for \( \omega \propto E_i - E_j \neq 0 \). These conditions are in agreement with the previous demands that \( Jt \) is very small while \( Ut \) is relatively large. Hence, we can directly calculate each term of the expansion \( \text{(A2)} \) without having to take into account fast rotating terms.

The effective Hamiltonian \( H_{\text{eff}} \) that corresponds to this evolution can be obtained by the term proportional to time \( t \) in the expansion of the evolution operator, i.e.

\[
U_I(t, 0) = \mathbb{1} - \frac{i}{\hbar} H_{\text{eff}} t + \mathcal{O}(t^2)
\]

Consider now the second term on the right hand side of \( \text{(A2)} \). This term gives no evolution within the subspace \( M \) of states as the tunneling Hamiltonian term \( V \) moves you necessarily out of the \( M \) configurations. The third term gives (see \( \text{(A2)} \))

\[
(H_{\text{eff}}^{(2)})_{\alpha\beta} = -\sum_{\gamma} \frac{V_{\alpha\gamma} V_{\gamma\beta}}{E_{\gamma}}, \tag{A3}
\]

where \( \alpha \) and \( \beta \) indicate states in \( M \), \( \gamma \) indicates states out of \( M \) and \( E \) are the eigenstates of \( H^{(0)} \), where we have used \( E_\alpha = E_\beta = 0 \). This gives the usual second order effective Hamiltonian presented in detail in \( [\text{3, 4}] \). Consider now three sites and the effect of the third term in Eqn. \( \text{(A2)} \). Finally, we obtain the effective Hamiltonian with matrix elements

\[
(H_{\text{eff}}^{(3)})_{\alpha\beta} = \sum_{\gamma\delta} \frac{V_{\alpha\gamma} V_{\gamma\delta} V_{\delta\beta}}{E_{\gamma} E_{\delta}}. \tag{A4}
\]

With the formulae \( \text{(A3)} \) and \( \text{(A4)} \) one can perform the perturbation up to the third order and find the desired three-spin interactions \( \text{(2, 3)} \). In practise the evaluation of the terms that contribute to the three-spin Hamiltonian is quite simple. The states corresponding to \( \gamma \) and \( \delta \) include states with two or three atoms of the same or of different species. Hence, \( E_\gamma, E_\delta \propto U_{\sigma\sigma'} \). Next you need to consider the different evolutions of the form \( \alpha \to \gamma \to \delta \to \beta \), that populations undertake. The tunneling couplings \( J_{\sigma'} \) are determined by each of these transitions and an appropriate coefficient is obtained in the case of the bosonic generation or annihilation of two atoms of the same species in one site.

**APPENDIX B: ADIABATIC ELIMINATION**

As an alternative procedure it is possible to eliminate the fast oscillating term without performing the perturbative expansion. This elimination is related with the adiabatic elimination of the states with two or more atoms per lattice site that are separated from the states with one atom per lattice site (configurations in \( M \)) by a large energy gap proportional to \( U_{\sigma\sigma'} \). In fact if we set a decomposition of the three site in terms of basis states of the form \( |i_1 j_1; i_2, j_2; i_3, j_3\rangle \) where \( 1, 2, 3 \) denote the site, and \( i_k \) and \( j_k \) denote the number of atoms of species \( \uparrow \) and \( \downarrow \) respectively in site \( k \) we can write the general state of the three sites as

\[
|\Psi(t)\rangle = \sum_{i_k, j_k} c_{i_1 j_1, i_2 j_2, i_3 j_3}^{i_1 j_1; i_2, j_2; i_3, j_3} (t) |i_1, j_1; i_2, j_2; i_3, j_3\rangle.
\]

By employing the Schrödinger equation we can obtain the time-differential equations of the coefficients \( c_{i_k j_k}^{i_1 j_1} \) of the form

\[
i\hbar \frac{\partial c_{i_k j_k}^{i_1 j_1}}{\partial t} = \sum_{i'_k j'_k} H_{i_k j_k; i'_k j'_k}^{i_1 j_1} c_{i_k j_k}^{i'_k j'_k}, \tag{B1}
\]

where \( H_{i_k j_k; i'_k j'_k}^{i_1 j_1} = \langle c_{i_k j_k}^{i_1 j_1} | H | c_{i'_k j'_k}^{i'_k j'_k} \rangle \). It is easy to verify that the elements of \( H \) with indexes \( (i_k j_k) \) corresponding to states that do not belong to \( M \) include fast rotating phases and, hence, they are zero, i.e. for those states \( c_{i_k j_k}^{i_1 j_1} = 0 \). This provides a set of linear equations of the form

\[
\sum_{i'_k j'_k} H_{i_k j_k; i'_k j'_k}^{i_1 j_1} c_{i'_k j'_k}^{i'_k j'_k} = 0
\]

that can be solved, in principle, explicitly. In our case, Eqn. \( \text{(B1)} \) has overall 56 equations.
resulting from the Schrödinger equation with 48 reduced to a linear system of coupled algebraic equations. This set can be solved by a computer and then expanded in terms of small couplings $J \ll U$ obtaining an alternative verification of the previous perturbative expansion.

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