Commutators, eigenvalues, and quantum mechanics on surfaces. **Evans Harrell Georgia** Tech www.math.gatech.edu/~harrell

Tucson and Tours, 2004

Dramatis personae

$$\Delta := \nabla^{2} := \sum_{j} \overline{\partial x_{j}^{2}}$$

Schrödinger:

$$H := -\frac{\hbar^2}{2m}\Delta + V(\mathbf{x})$$

Dramatis personae

• Commutator [A,B] = AB - BA

Dramatis personae

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- The "nano" world

Dramatis personae

- Commutator [A,B] = AB BA
- The "nano" world
- Curvature

Eigenvalues

- H $u_k = \lambda u_k$
- For simplicity, the spectrum will often be assumed to be discrete. For example, the operators might be defined on bounded regions.

Eigenvalues

• Laplacian - squares of frequencies of normal modes of vibration (acoustics/electromagnetics, etc.)

Eigenvalues

- Laplacian squares of frequencies of normal modes of vibration (acoustics/electromagnetics, etc.)
- Schrödinger Operator energies of an atom or quantum system.

The spectral theorem for a general selfadjoint operator

• The spectrum can be any closed subset of R.

The spectral theorem for a general selfadjoint operator

• For each u, there exists a measure μ , such that

$$\langle u, f(A)u \rangle = \int_{sp} f(\lambda) d\mu(\lambda)$$

The spectral theorem for a general selfadjoint operator

- Implication:
 - If $f(\lambda) \ge g(\lambda)$ on the spectrum, then
 - $\langle u, f(H) u \rangle \geq \langle u, g(H) u \rangle$

The spectrum of H

• For Laplace or Schrödinger not just any old set of numbers can be the spectrum!

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- Hile-Protter, 1980, Like PPW, but more complicated.

PPW vs. HP

• L. Payne, G. Pólya, H. Weinberger, 1956:

$$\lambda_{n+1} - \lambda_n \le \frac{4}{d} \frac{1}{n} \sum_{k \le n} \lambda_k$$

• Hile-Protter, 1980:

$$1 \le \frac{4}{d} \frac{1}{n} \sum_{k \le n} \frac{\lambda_k}{\lambda_{n+1} - \lambda_k}$$

The universal industry after PPW

• Ashbaugh-Benguria 1991, proof of the isoperimetric conjecture of PPW.

PPW:

$$\frac{\lambda_2}{\lambda_1} \le 1 + \frac{4}{d}$$

Ashbaugh-Benguria:

$$\frac{\lambda_2}{\lambda_1} \le \frac{\lambda_2(\text{ball})}{\lambda_1(\text{ball})}$$

"Universal" constraints on eigenvalues

- Ashbaugh-Benguria 1991, isoperimetric conjecture of PPW proved.
- H. Yang 1991-5, unpublished, complicated formulae like PPW, respecting Weyl asymptotics.
- Harrell, Harrell-Michel, Harrell-Stubbe, 1993-present, commutators.
- Hermi PhD thesis
- Levitin-Parnovsky, 2001?

In this industry....

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- 1. The arguments have varied, but always essentially algebraic.
- 2. Geometry often shows up isoperimetric theorems, etc.

On a (hyper) surface, what object is most like the Laplacian?

(Δ = the good old flat scalar Laplacian of Laplace)

- Answer #1 (Beltrami's answer): Consider only tangential variations.
- At a fixed point, orient Cartesian x₀ with the normal, then calculate

$$\sum_{j=1}^{d} \frac{\partial^2}{\partial x_j^2}$$

Difficulty:

• The Laplace-Beltrami operator is an intrinsic object, and as such is unaware that the surface is immersed!

Answer #2 The nanophysicists' answer

• E.g., Da Costa, Phys. Rev. A 1981

Answer #2:

$$-\Delta_{\text{LB}} + q$$
,

Where the effective potential q responds to how the surface is immersed in space.

• Nanoscale = 10-1000 X width of atom

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- Laboratories by 1990.

• Quantum wires - etched semiconductors, wires of gold in carbon nanotubes.

- Quantum wires
- Quantum waveguides macroscopic in two dimensions, nanoscale in the width

- Quantum wires
- Quantum waveguides
- Designer potentials STM places individual atoms on a surface

• Answer #2 (The nanoanswer):

-
$$\Delta_{\text{LB}}$$
 + q

• Since Da Costa, PRA, 1981: Perform a singular limit and renormalization to attain the surface as the limit of a thin domain.
Thin domain of fixed width variable r= distance from edge

Energy form in separated variables:

$$\int_{D} |\nabla_{\parallel} \zeta|^{2} d^{d+1}x + \int_{D} |\zeta_{r}|^{2} d^{d+1}x$$



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First term is the energy form of Laplace-Beltrami.

Conjugate second term so as to replace it by a potential.

Some subtleties

- The limit is singular change of dimension.
- If the particle is confined e.g. by Dirichlet boundary conditions, the energies all diverge to +infinity
- "Renormalization" is performed to separate the divergent part of the operator.

The result:

$$-\Delta_{\text{LB}} + q$$
,

$$q(\mathbf{x}) = \frac{1}{4} \left(\sum_{j=1}^{d} \kappa_j \right)^2 - \frac{1}{2} \sum_{j=1}^{d} \kappa_j^2$$

Principal curvatures



The result:

-
$$\Delta_{\text{LB}}$$
 + q,

$$q(\mathbf{x}) = \frac{1}{4} \left(\sum_{j=1}^d \kappa_j \right)^2 - \frac{1}{2} \sum_{j=1}^d \kappa_j^2$$

d=1, q = $-\kappa^2/4 \le 0$ d=2, q = $-(\kappa_1 - \kappa_2)^2/4 \le 0$

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- If there is any bending at all, and the wire or waveguide is large and asymptotically flat, then there is always a bound state below the conduction level.
- By bending or straightening the wire, current can be switched off or on.

Difficulty:

• Tied to a particular physical model other effective potentials arise from other physical models or limits.

Some other answers

- In other physical situations, such as reaction-diffusion, q(x) may be other quadratic expressions in the curvature, usually q(x) ≤ 0.
- The conformal answer: q(x) is a multiple of the scalar curvature.

Heisenberg's Answer (if he had thought about it)

$$q(\mathbf{x}) = \frac{1}{4} \left(\sum_{j=1}^{d} \kappa_j \right)^2$$

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$$q(\mathbf{x}) = \frac{1}{4} \left(\sum_{j=1}^{d} \kappa_j \right)^2.$$

Note: $q(\mathbf{x}) \ge 0$!

Commutators: [A,B] := AB-BA

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1. Quantum mechanics is the effect that observables do not commute:

• Canonical commutation:

 $[Q, P] = i\hbar$

• Equations of motion, "Heisenberg picture"

$$\frac{\partial A}{\partial t} = \frac{i}{\hbar} \left[H, A \right]$$

Canonical commutation

Set $\hbar = 1$

[Q, P] = i

Represented by Q = x, P = -i d/dxCanonical commutation is then just the product rule:

$$xi\frac{d}{dx}f(x) - i\frac{d}{dx}\left(xf(x)\right) = if(x)$$

Commutators: [A,B] := AB-BA

2. Eigenvalue gaps are connected to commutators:

H $u_k = \lambda_k u_k$, H self-adjoint

Elementary gap formula:

 $\langle u_j, [H,G]u_k \rangle = (\lambda_j - \lambda_k) \langle u_j, Gu_k \rangle.$

Commutators: [A,B] := AB-BA

Elementary gap formula:

 $[H,G]u_k = (H - \lambda_k)Gu_k,$

 $\langle u_j, [H, G]u_k \rangle = (\lambda_j - \lambda_k) \langle u_j, Gu_k \rangle.$

What do you get when you put canonical commutation together with the gap formula?

Elementary gap formula:

$$\langle u_j, [H,G]u_k \rangle = (\lambda_j - \lambda_k) \langle u_j, Gu_k \rangle.$$
 (1.2)

Since $[H,G]u_k = (H - \lambda_k)Gu_k$,

$$\|[H,G]u_k\|^2 = \left\langle Gu_k, (H-\lambda_k)^2 Gu_k \right\rangle, \tag{1.3}$$

and more generally

$$\langle [H,G]u_j, [H,G]u_k \rangle = \langle Gu_j, (H-\lambda_j) (H-\lambda_k) Gu_k \rangle.$$
 (1.4)

Second commutator formula:

$$\langle u_j \mid [G, [H, G]] \, u_k \rangle = \langle G u_j \mid (2H - \lambda_j - \lambda_k) \, G u_k \rangle \,. \tag{1.5}$$

In particular,

$$\langle u_j \mid [G, [H, G]] u_j \rangle = 2 \langle Gu_j \mid (H - \lambda_j) Gu_j \rangle.$$
 (1.6)

The fundamental eigenvalue gap $\Gamma := \lambda_2 - \lambda_1$

- In quantum mechanics, an excitation energy
- In "spectral geometry" a geometric quantity small gaps indicate decoupling (dumbbells) (Cheeger, Yang-Yau, etc.)
 large gaps indicate convexity/isoperimetric (Ashbaugh-Benguria)

Gap Lemma

 $\Gamma \langle u_1, [G, [H, G]] u_1 \rangle \le 2 ||[H, G] u_1||^2.$

H = your favorite self-adjoint operator, u_1 the fundamental eigenfunction, and G is whatever you want.

Gap Lemma

 $\Gamma \langle u_1, [G, [H, G]] u_1 \rangle \le 2 ||[H, G] u_1||^2.$

H = your favorite self-adjoint operator, u_1 the fundamental eigenfunction, and G is whatever you want. *CHOOSE IT WELL!*

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$$\langle u_j \mid [G, [H, G]] \, u_j \rangle = 2 \, \langle G u_j \mid (H - \lambda_j) \, G u_j \rangle \,. \tag{1.6}$$

Since $[H,G]u_k = (H - \lambda_k)Gu_k,$ $\|[H,G]u_k\|^2 = \left\langle Gu_k, (H-\lambda_k)^2 Gu_k \right\rangle,$ (1.3) $\langle u_j \mid [G, [H, G]] u_j \rangle = 2 \langle Gu_j \mid (H - \lambda_j) Gu_j \rangle.$ (1.6)

Proof Because

$$\langle u_k \mid [G, [H, G]] u_k \rangle = 2 \langle Gu_k \mid (H - \lambda_k) Gu_k \rangle.$$

and

$$\|[H,G]u_k\|^2 = \left\langle Gu_k, (H-\lambda_k)^2 Gu_k \right\rangle$$

the inequality

$$\Gamma \langle u_1, [G, [H, G]] u_1 \rangle \le 2 ||[H, G] u_1||^2.$$
 (1.7)

is equivalent to

$$\langle Gu_1 \mid (H - \lambda_1) (\lambda_2 - \lambda_1) Gu_1 \rangle \leq \langle Gu_1 \mid (H - \lambda_1)^2 Gu_1 \rangle$$

Proof Because

$$\left\langle u_{k} \mid \left[G, \left[H, G\right]\right] u_{k}\right\rangle = 2\left\langle Gu_{k} \mid \left(H - \lambda_{k}\right) Gu_{k}\right\rangle.$$

and

$$\|[H,G]u_k\|^2 = \left\langle Gu_k, (H-\lambda_k)^2 Gu_k \right\rangle$$

the inequality

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But on the spectrum,

$$(\lambda - \lambda_1) (\lambda_2 - \lambda_1) \leq (\lambda - \lambda_1)^2$$

Universal Bounds using Commutators

- Play off canonical commutation relations against the specific form of the operator: $H = p^2 + V(x)$
- Insert projections, take traces.

Universal Bounds using Commutators

• A "sum rule" identity (Harrell-Stubbe, 1997):

$$1 = \frac{4}{d} \sum_{k:\lambda_k \neq \lambda_j} \frac{\left| \langle u_k, \mathbf{p} u_j \rangle \right|^2}{\lambda_k - \lambda_j}$$

Here, H is *any* Schrödinger operator, **p** is the gradient (times -i if you are a physicist and you use atomic units)

Universal Bounds with Commutators

• Compare with Hile-Protter:

$$1 = \frac{4}{d} \sum_{k:\lambda_k \neq \lambda_j} \frac{|\langle u_k, \mathbf{p} u_j \rangle|^2}{\lambda_k - \lambda_j}$$
$$1 \le \frac{4}{d} \frac{1}{n} \sum_{k \le n} \frac{\lambda_k}{\lambda_{n+1} - \lambda_k}$$

Universal Bounds with Commutators

$$1 = \frac{4}{d} \sum_{k:\lambda_k \neq \lambda_j} \frac{\left| \langle u_k, \mathbf{p} u_j \rangle \right|^2}{\lambda_k - \lambda_j}$$

- No sum on j multiply by $f(\lambda_j)$, sum and symmetrize
- Numerator only kinetic energy no potential.

Among the consequences:

• All gaps: $[\lambda_n, \lambda_{n+1}] \subseteq [\lambda_n, \lambda_+(n)]$, where

$$\lambda_{\pm} := \left(1 + \frac{2\sigma}{d}\right) \frac{1}{n} \sum_{k=1}^{n} \lambda_n \pm \sqrt{D_n}$$

The constant σ is a bound for the kinetic energy/total energy. (σ=1 for Laplace, but 1/2 for the harmonic oscillator)

Among the consequences:

• All gaps: $[\lambda_n, \lambda_{n+1}] \subseteq [\lambda_n, \lambda_+(n)]$, where

$$\lambda_{\pm} := \left(1 + \frac{2\sigma}{d}\right) \frac{1}{n} \sum_{k=1}^{n} \lambda_n \pm \sqrt{D_n}$$

• D_n is a statistical quantity calculated from the lower eigenvalues.

Among the consequences:

• All gaps: $[\lambda_n, \lambda_{n+1}] \subseteq [\lambda_n, \lambda_+(n)]$, where

$$\lambda_{\pm} := \left(1 + \frac{2\sigma}{d}\right) \frac{1}{n} \sum_{k=1}^{n} \lambda_n \pm \sqrt{D_n}$$

• Sharp for the harmonic oscillator for all n!
And now for some completely different commutators....



3. Curvature is the effect that motions do not commute:



 More formally (from, e.g., Chavel, *Riemannian Geometry, A Modern Introduction*: Given vector fields X,Y,Z and a connection ∇, the curvature tensor is given by:

$$R(X,Y) = [\nabla_Y,\nabla_X] - \nabla_{[Y,X]}$$

3a. The equations of space curves are commutators:

$$\frac{d\mathbf{x}}{ds} = \mathbf{t}$$
$$\frac{d\mathbf{t}}{ds} = \kappa \mathbf{n}$$

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Note: curvature is defined by a second commutator

The Serret-Frenet equations as commutator relations:

$$[H, X_m] = -\frac{d^2 X_m}{ds^2} - 2 \frac{d X_m}{ds} \frac{d}{ds} = -\kappa n_m - 2t_m \frac{d}{ds}, \qquad (2.2)$$
$$[X_m [H, X_m]] = 2t_m^2. \qquad (2.3)$$

Proposition 2.1 Let M be a smooth curve in \mathbb{R}^{ν} , $\nu = 2$ or 3. Then for $H = -\frac{d^2}{ds^2} + V(s)$ and $\varphi \in W_0^1(M)$, $\sum_{m=0}^{d} \|[H, X_m] \varphi\|^2 = 4 \int_M \left(\left| \frac{d\varphi}{ds} \right|^2 + \frac{\kappa^2}{4} |\varphi|^2 \right) ds.$

Proposition 2.1 Let
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 be a smooth curve in \mathbb{R}^{ν} , $\nu = 2$ or 3. Then for $H = -\frac{d^2}{ds^2} + \mathbf{V}(\mathbf{s})$ and $\varphi \in W_0^1(M)$,

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Proof. By closure it may be assumed that $\varphi \in C_c^{\infty}(M)$. Apply (2.2) to φ and square the result, to obtain

$$4\left(t_m^2\left(\frac{d\varphi}{ds}\right)^2 + \frac{1}{4}\kappa^2 n_m^2\varphi^2 + \frac{1}{2}\kappa n_m t_m\varphi\frac{d\varphi}{ds}\right).$$

Sum on m and integrate.

QED

Interpretation:

Algebraically, for quantum mechanics on a wire, the natural H_0 is not

but rather

$$H_{1/4} := p^2 + \kappa^2/4.$$

Corollary 2.2 Let M be as in Proposition 2.1 and suppose that H is a Schrödinger Hamiltonian with a bounded measurable potential V(s). Then

$$\Gamma \le 4 \int_M \left(\left(\frac{du_1}{ds} \right)^2 + \frac{\kappa^2}{4} u_1^2 \right) ds.$$
(2.5)

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That is, the gap for *any* H is controlled by an expectation value of $H_{1/4}$.

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$$\Gamma \le 4 \int_M \left(\left(\frac{du_1}{ds} \right)^2 + \frac{\kappa^2}{4} u_1^2 \right) ds.$$
(2.5)

Furthermore, if H is of the form

$$H_g := -\frac{d^2}{ds^2} + g\kappa^2,$$

then

$$\Gamma \le \max\left(4, \frac{1}{g}\right)\lambda_1.$$
 (2.6)

Equivalently, the universal ratio bound

$$\frac{\lambda_2}{\lambda_1} \le \max\left(5, 1 + \frac{1}{g}\right)$$

holds.

Bound is sharp for the circle:

 $\frac{\lambda_2}{\lambda_1} = \frac{4\pi^2 \left(1+g\right)}{4\pi^2 g} = 1 + \frac{1}{g}.$

Gap bounds for (hyper) surfaces

Let M be a d-dimensional manifold immersed in \mathbb{R}^{d+1} .

Theorem 3.1 Let H be a Schrödinger operator on M with a bounded potential, i.e.,

$$H = -\Delta + V, \tag{3.1}$$

Here h is the sum of the principal curvatures.

Corollary 3.2 Let *H* be as in (3.1) and define $\delta := \sup_M \left(\frac{h^2}{4} - V\right)$. Then $\Gamma(H) \leq \frac{4}{d} (\lambda_1 + \delta)$.

Bound is sharp for the sphere: $\lambda_1 = qd^2, \quad \lambda_2 = qd^2 + d$ $d = \lambda_2 - \lambda_1 \le \left(\frac{gd^2}{gd}\right) = d.$

Spinorial Canonical Commutation

$$\mathbf{P} = \sum_{j=1}^{d} \left(\mathbf{t}_j \frac{\partial}{\partial s_j} \pm \frac{1}{2} \kappa_j \mathbf{n} \right)$$
(4.1)

and for a dense set of functions φ ,

$$\|\mathbf{P}\varphi\|^2 = \left\langle \varphi, H_{1/4}\varphi \right\rangle. \tag{4.2}$$

Spinorial Canonical Commutation

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and for a dense set of functions φ ,

$$\|\mathbf{P}\varphi\|^2 = \left\langle \varphi, H_{1/4}\varphi \right\rangle. \tag{4.2}$$

Thus **P** plays the rôle of a momentum operator, with which there is a version of canonical commutation (cf. (1.9)) as follows. Defining a variant commutator bracket for operators $L^2(M) \to \mathbb{R}^{d+1} \otimes L^2(M)$ by $[A; B] := A \cdot B - B \cdot A$, a calculation shows that $[\mathbf{P}; X_k \mathbf{e}_k] = \sum_{j=1}^d \mathbf{t}_j \cdot \frac{\partial X_k \mathbf{e}_k}{\partial s_j} = \mathbf{1}$ (identity operator), and by averaging on k,

$$\mathbf{1} = \frac{1}{d} \ [\mathbf{P}; \mathbf{X}] \tag{4.3}$$

which is a coordinate-independent formula.

Sum Rules

Proposition 4.1 Let H be as in (3.1), with eigenvalues $\{\lambda_k\}$ and normalized eigenfunctions $\{u_k\}$. Then

$$1 = \frac{4}{d} \sum_{\substack{k \\ \lambda_k \neq \lambda_j}} \frac{|\langle u_k, \mathbf{P} u_j \rangle|^2}{\lambda_k - \lambda_j}.$$
(4.4)

Corollaries of sum rules

- Sharp universal bounds for all gaps
- Some estimates of partition function $Z(t) = \sum \exp(-t \lambda_k)$

Speculations and open problems

- Can one obtain/improve Lieb-Thirring bounds as a consequence of sum rules?
- Full understanding of spectrum of H_g . What spectral data needed to determine the curve? What is the bifurcation value for the minimizer of λ_1 ?
- Physical understanding of H_g and of the spinorial operators it is related to.

Sharp universal bound for all gaps

Corollary 4.4 b) For H_g be of the form (1.10) on a smooth, compact submanifold. Then

$$[\lambda_n, \lambda_{n+1}] \subseteq \left[\left(1 + \frac{2\sigma}{d}\right) \overline{\lambda_n} - \sqrt{D_n}, \left(1 + \frac{2\sigma}{d}\right) \overline{\lambda_n} + \sqrt{D_n} \right],$$

with

$$D_n := \left(\left(1 + \frac{2\sigma}{d} \right) \overline{\lambda_n} \right)^2 - \left(1 + \frac{4\sigma}{d} \right) \overline{\lambda_n^2}.$$

This bound is sharp for every non-zero eigenvalue gap of $H_{\frac{1}{4}}$ on the sphere.

Partition function

$$Z(t) := tr(exp(-tH)).$$

Partition function

$$Z(t) \le \left(\frac{2t}{d}\right) \sum_{j} \left(\exp\left(-t\lambda_{j}\right)\right) \|\mathbf{P}u_{j}\|^{2},$$

which implies

- **Corollary 4.5** a) Let H be as (3.1), with M a compact, smooth submanifold. Then $t^{\frac{d}{2}} \exp(-\delta t) Z(t)$ is a nondecreasing function;
 - b) For H_g be of the form (1.10) on a smooth, compact submanifold M, $t^{\frac{d}{2\sigma}}Z(t)$ is a nondecreasing function.