FINITE-DIFFERENCE EQUATIONS IN
RELATIVISTIC QUANTUM MECHANICS\(^1\)

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Relativistic Quantum Mechanics suffers from structural problems which are traced back to the lack of a position operator \(\hat{x}\), satisfying \([\hat{x}, \hat{p}] = i\hbar \mathbb{1}\) with the ordinary momentum operator \(\hat{p}\), in the basic symmetry group – the Poincaré group. In this paper we provide a finite-dimensional extension of the Poincaré group containing only one more (in 1+1D) generator \(\hat{\pi}\), satisfying the commutation relation \([\hat{k}, \hat{\pi}] = i\hbar \mathbb{1}\) with the ordinary boost generator \(\hat{k}\). The unitary irreducible representations are calculated and the carrier space proves to be the set of Shapiro’s wave functions. The generalized equations of motion constitute a simple example of exactly solvable finite-difference set of equations associated with infinite-order polarization equations.

Introduction: Higher-order Polarizations

One essential difference between Geometric Quantization [1, 2, 3, 4] and a Group Approach to Quantization (GAQ) [5, 6] is the possibility of introducing in the latter higher-order polarizations made out of elements of the (left) enveloping algebra. These higher-order polarizations are especially suitable for those (anomalous) cases in which the symplectic phase space is not polarizable, i.e., there is no maximal (half the dimension of the manifold) isotropic distribution of vector fields with respect to the symplectic form \(\omega\), or that which is the same, there is no Lagrangian submanifold.

GAQ is formulated on a group \(\tilde{G}\) which is a principal bundle with fibre \(U(1)\) and the symplectic form is replaced by \(d\Theta\), where \(\Theta\) is the left 1-form dual to the vertical generator. The analogous, anomalous problem on a group, corresponds to the absence of a first-order full polarization, i.e. a maximal left subalgebra containing the kernel of \(\Theta\) and excluding the \(U(1)\) generator. It can be solved by adding operators in the left enveloping

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algebra to a non-full, first-order polarization, thus defining a higher-order polarization [6]. The anomalous representations of the Virasoro group related to the non-Kählerian co-adjoint orbits have been, for instance, successfully worked out in this way [7].

Higher-order polarizations have also proven to be useful for representing a physical system in a different (although equivalent) realization than the ones given by first-order, full polarizations. This is the case, for instance, of the configuration space representation of the free particle and the harmonic oscillator (either relativistic or not) [8, 9] whose first-order polarizations lead to momentum space and Bargmann-Fock representation, respectively.

An interesting particularity of the infinite-order polarization is the finite-difference character of the generalized equations of motion and physical operators, in some sense analogous to the differential realization of quantum group operators [10, 11]. It constitutes a system of infinite-order differential operators closing a “weak” algebra: the commutator of two operators only closes, in general, on the reduced space of wave functions.

The general form of the solutions to the polarization equations, leading to the \(q\)-realization, can be formally written as:

\[
\Psi(t, p, q) \approx e^{-ip\hat{O}_p} e^{-it\hat{O}_t}\psi(q)
\]

where \(t\) represents the variables with non-dynamical character like time, rotations, etc., \(q\) the generalized coordinates and \(p\) their conjugated momenta. \(\psi(q)\) is an arbitrary function and constitutes the carrier space for the irreducible representation of the group. \(\hat{O}_t\) is the set of operators generating transformations in the variables \(t\) (energy, angular momentum, etc.) and \(\hat{O}_p\) is a set of operators generating (no-local) transformations in \(p\), all of them given in the \(q\)-realization. When the set of operators \(\{\hat{O}_t, \hat{O}_p\}\) generates (under commutation) a subalgebra of the original Lie algebra the unitarity of the minimal realization in terms of only \(q\) and \(\hat{\partial}/\partial q\) is insured, otherwise a further unitarization process is required, which consists in a non-canonical choice among algebraically equivalent higher-order polarizations, i.e. with the same commutation relations (“symmetrization” process). It must be stressed that the representation of the group on the complete wave function is nevertheless unitary. A general study of the integration of higher-order polarization will be published elsewhere.

In the particular case of Relativistic Quantum Mechanics, the \(p\)-realization (momentum space) is naturally unitary, due to the fact that \(\{\hat{O}_t, \hat{O}_x\}\) generates an algebra isomorphic to the one generated by \(\{\hat{H}, \hat{p}\}\), which is a subalgebra of the Poincaré algebra. However, the \(x\)-realization (configuration space) requires further unitarization since \(\{\hat{O}_t, \hat{O}_p\}\) generate an infinite-dimensional algebra isomorphic to the one generated by \(\{\hat{H}, \hat{x}\}\), where \(\hat{x}\) is the position operator (note that \([\hat{x}, \hat{H}] = i\hbar \hat{x} \approx i\hbar \hat{p}/mc - i\hbar^3/16mc^3 + \ldots\).

In this letter we elaborate on a finite enlargement of the 1+1-D Poincaré group which contains a momentum operator \(\hat{\pi}\) giving a canonical commutation relation with the boost operator \(\hat{k}\). A infinite-order polarization on a central extension of this group provides a unitary representation of the Poincaré subgroup in a natural way, the support of which are
the Shapiro’s wave functions. It constitutes an example of exactly tractable physical system associated with finite-difference (generalized) equations of motion and an alternative way out to the problem of the position operator.

**Relativistic Configuration Space: the S-Poincaré group**

The main problem we face in quantizing Relativistic Mechanics is the absence of a commutator like $[\hat{x}, \hat{p}] = i\hat{1}$ in the basic symmetry group, the Poincaré group, where we only find $[\hat{k}, \hat{p}] = ip^0/mc$. As mentioned in the introduction, the position operator $\hat{x}$ belongs to the infinite-order shell of the Poincaré algebra and does not close a finite dimensional algebra with the rest of the generators. Furthermore, the operator $\hat{p}$ does not generate translations on the spectrum of $\hat{k}$ or, equivalently, the ordinary Minkowski variable $x$ is not the spectrum of the operator $\hat{k}$.

The solution we propose in this paper is to keep $\hat{k}$ as basic operator and look for a new momentum operator $\hat{\pi}$ such that

$$[\hat{k}, \hat{\pi}] = i\hat{1},$$

where now $\hat{\pi}$ closes a finite-dimensional enlarged Poincaré algebra: the S-Poincaré algebra. The operator $\hat{\pi}$ generates true translations on the spectrum of $\hat{k}$, $\kappa$. The spectrum of $\hat{\pi}$, $\pi \equiv mc\chi$, is related to $p$ through $\pi \equiv mc\sinh^{-1} \frac{p}{mc} = mc\cosh^{-1} \frac{p^o}{mc}$, and $\chi$ is the hyperpolar co-ordinate parametrizing the (upper sheet of the) hyperboloid $p^0^2 - p^2 = m^2c^2$, often referred to as the Lobachevsky space (see [10] and references therein).

The group law we propose for the S-Poincaré group is given by:

$$x'^{0n} = x^{0n} + \frac{p^{0n}}{mc} x^0 + \frac{p^l}{mc} x$$
$$x^n = x^n + \frac{p^{0n}}{mc} x + \frac{p^l}{mc} x^0$$
$$p^n = \frac{p^0}{mc} p^l + \frac{p^{0n}}{mc} p$$
$$\kappa^n = \kappa^l + \kappa$$
$$\zeta^n = \zeta^l \exp[imc(x^{0n} - x^{0l} - x^0)] \exp[imc\chi \sinh^{-1} \frac{p}{mc}]$$

from which the left-invariant vector fields,

$$\hat{X}^{L}_{x^0} = \frac{p^0}{mc} \frac{\partial}{\partial x^0} + \frac{p}{mc} \frac{\partial}{\partial x} + \frac{p^0(p^0 - mc)}{mc} \Xi$$
$$\hat{X}^{L}_{x} = \frac{p^0}{mc} \frac{\partial}{\partial x} + \frac{p}{mc} \frac{\partial}{\partial x^0} + \frac{p(p^0 - mc)}{mc} \Xi$$
$$\hat{X}^{L}_{p} = \frac{p^0}{mc} \frac{\partial}{\partial p} + (\kappa + \frac{p^0}{mc} x) \Xi$$
$$\hat{X}^{L}_{\kappa} = \frac{\partial}{\partial \kappa}$$
\[ \hat{X}_L^i = i \xi \frac{\partial}{\partial \xi} \equiv \Xi \]

and the right ones,

\[ \hat{X}_R^{\rho} = \frac{\partial}{\partial x^0} \]
\[ \hat{X}_x^R = \frac{\partial}{\partial x} + p \Xi \]
\[ \hat{X}_p^R = \frac{p^0}{mc} \frac{\partial}{\partial p} + \frac{x^0}{mc} \frac{\partial}{\partial x} + \frac{x}{mc} \frac{\partial}{\partial x^0} + \left( \frac{p^0}{mc} x^0 + \frac{p}{mc} x - x \right) \Xi \]
\[ \hat{X}_\kappa^R = \frac{\partial}{\partial \kappa} + m c \sinh^{-1} \left( \frac{p}{mc} \right) \Xi \]
\[ \hat{X}_\xi^R = i \xi \frac{\partial}{\partial \xi} \equiv \Xi \]

are easily derived. The commutators between (say) left generators are:

\[
\begin{align*}
[\hat{X}_o^L, \hat{X}_x^L] &= 0 \\
[\hat{X}_o^L, \hat{X}_p^L] &= -\frac{1}{mc} \hat{X}_x^L \\
[\hat{X}_o^L, \hat{X}_\kappa^L] &= 0 \\
[\hat{X}_x^L, \hat{X}_p^L] &= -\frac{1}{mc} \hat{X}_{x,0} + \Xi \\
[\hat{X}_x^L, \hat{X}_\kappa^L] &= 0 \\
[\hat{X}_\kappa^L, \hat{X}_p^L] &= \Xi
\end{align*}
\]

The quantization 1-form, i.e. the \( U(1) \)-left-invariant canonical 1-form,

\[
\Theta = -(x + \frac{mc}{p^0} \kappa) dp - (p^0 - mc) dx^0 + \frac{d\xi}{i\xi}
\]

\[ \equiv -(x \cosh \frac{\pi}{mc} + \kappa) d\pi - mc (\cosh \frac{\pi}{mc} - 1) dx^0 + \frac{d\xi}{i\xi} \]

provides the Noether invariants:

\[
\begin{align*}
i \hat{X}_o^i \Theta &= -(p^0 - mc) \\
i \hat{X}_x^i \Theta &= p \\
i \hat{X}_p^i \Theta &= -\frac{p^0}{mc} x + \frac{p}{mc} x^0 - \kappa \equiv -K \\
i \hat{X}_\kappa^i \Theta &= mc \sinh^{-1} \left( \frac{p}{mc} \right) \equiv \pi
\end{align*}
\]

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The integration measure, defined as the product of all left-invariant forms, is:

\[ \Omega = \frac{mc}{p^0} dx^0 \wedge dx \wedge dp \wedge d\kappa = dx^0 \wedge dx \wedge d\pi \wedge d\kappa \]  

(9)

The characteristic module of \( \Theta \) (the Kernel of the Lie algebra cocycle) is \( G_\Theta = \langle \hat{X}^L_{\rho, \kappa}, \hat{X}^L_x - \hat{X}^L_{\kappa} \rangle \), and constitutes the generalized equation of motion. \( G_\Theta \), or at least a proper subalgebra, must be included in any polarization.

Representations of the S-Poincaré group

There are three equivalent polarizations which comes out naturally:

\[ \mathcal{P}^1_p = \langle \hat{X}^L_{p, \kappa}, \hat{X}^L_x - \hat{X}^L_{\kappa}, \hat{X}^L_x + \hat{X}^L_{\kappa} \rangle \approx \langle \hat{X}^L_{p, \kappa}, \hat{X}^L_x, \hat{X}^L_{\kappa} \rangle \]  

(10)

\[ \mathcal{P}^{HO}_x = \langle \hat{X}^L_{x, \kappa}, \left[ \sqrt{m^2 c^2 - \langle \hat{X}^L_x \rangle^2} - mc \right] \Xi, \hat{X}^L_{\kappa} + \frac{i}{mc} \hat{X}^L_x ) \Xi, \hat{X}^L_{\kappa} \rangle \]  

(11)

\[ \mathcal{P}^{HO}_\kappa = \langle \hat{X}^L_{\kappa, \kappa}, \left[ \cos \left( \frac{i}{mc} \hat{X}^L_x \right) - 1 \right] \Xi, \hat{X}^L_x + \frac{mc \sinh^{-1} \frac{\hat{X}^L_x}{mc}}{\hat{X}^L_x} \Xi, \hat{X}^L_{\kappa} \rangle \]  

(12)

They correspond to the realization of the unitary irreducible representation in momentum space, \( x \)-configuration space (ordinary configuration space) and \( \kappa \)-configuration space, respectively.

\( \mathcal{P}^1_p \) Polarization: Realization in Momentum Space

The polarization equations (once \( \zeta \) has been factorized out everywhere) give us the irreducible wave functions:

\[ \begin{aligned} \hat{X}^L_{p, \kappa} \Psi &= 0 \\ \hat{X}^L_x \Psi &= 0 \\ \hat{X}^L_{\kappa} \Psi &= 0 \end{aligned} \]  

\[ \Rightarrow \Psi \text{ = exp}[ -i (p^0 - mc) x^0 \]  

(13)

\[ \text{\Omega} \]  

on which the right generators act as quantum operators:

\[ \begin{aligned} i\hat{X}^R_{p, \kappa} \Psi &= (p^0 - mc) \Psi \\ -i\hat{X}^R_x \Psi &= p \Psi \\ i\hat{X}^R_{p, \kappa} \Psi &= \frac{i}{mc} \text{exp}[ -i (p^0 - mc) x^0 ] \frac{\partial \Phi}{\partial p} \\ -i\hat{X}^R_{\kappa} \Psi &= \frac{mc}{mc} \sinh^{-1} \frac{\hat{X}^L_x}{mc} \Psi \end{aligned} \]  

\[ \Rightarrow \begin{cases} \hat{p}^0 \Phi &= p^0 \Phi & \equiv mc \cosh \frac{\pi}{mc} \Phi \\ \hat{\rho} \Phi &= \rho \Phi & \equiv mc \sinh \varphi \frac{\pi}{mc} \Phi \\ \hat{\kappa} \Phi &= \frac{i}{mc} \frac{\partial \Phi}{\partial p} & \equiv i \frac{\partial \Phi}{\partial p} \\ \hat{\pi} \Phi &= mc \sinh^{-1} \frac{\pi}{mc} \Phi & \equiv \pi \Phi \end{cases} \]  

(15)
\( \mathcal{P}^{HO}_{x} \) Polarization: Realization in \( x \)-Configuration Space

We follow the same steps as before. Polarization equations:

\[
\hat{X}_{p} \Psi = 0 \Rightarrow \Psi = \exp[-ip] \exp[-i m c \kappa \sinh^{-1} \frac{p}{mc}] \Phi(x^0, x, \kappa) \quad (16)
\]

\[
\left\{ \hat{X}_{\kappa} + m c \sinh^{-1} \left( \frac{i}{mc} \hat{X}_{x} \right) \right\} \Psi = 0 \Rightarrow -i \frac{\partial \Phi}{\partial \kappa} = m c \sinh^{-1} \left( \frac{i}{mc} \frac{\partial}{\partial x} \right) \Phi
\]

\[
\Rightarrow \Phi(x^0, x, \kappa) = \exp[i m c \sinh^{-1} \left( \frac{i}{mc} \frac{\partial}{\partial x} \right)] \phi(x^0, x) \quad (17)
\]

\[
\left\{ \hat{X}_{X_{x^0}} + \sqrt{m^2 c^2 - (\hat{X}_{x})^2} \right\} \Psi = 0 \Rightarrow i \frac{\partial \phi}{\partial x^0} = \left[ \sqrt{m^2 c^2 - \frac{\partial^2}{\partial x^2} - mc} \right] \phi
\]

\[
\Rightarrow \phi(x^0, x) = \exp\{-ix^0[\sqrt{m^2 c^2 - \frac{\partial^2}{\partial x^2} - mc}] \} \varphi(x) \quad (18)
\]

\[
\Psi = \exp[-ip] \exp[-i m c \sinh^{-1} \frac{p}{mc}]
\times \exp[i m c \sinh^{-1} \left( \frac{i}{mc} \frac{\partial}{\partial x} \right)] \exp\{-imc x^0[\sqrt{m^2 c^2 - \frac{\partial^2}{\partial x^2} - mc}] \} \varphi(x) \quad (19)
\]

Quantum operators (restricted to \( \varphi(x) \)):

\[
\hat{p}^0 \varphi = \sqrt{m^2 c^2 - \frac{\partial^2}{\partial x^2}} \varphi
\]

\[
\hat{p} \varphi = -i \frac{\partial}{\partial x} \varphi
\]

\[
\hat{k} \varphi = \left[ \frac{x}{mc} \sqrt{m^2 c^2 - \frac{\partial^2}{\partial x^2}} + \kappa + i \frac{x^0}{mc} \frac{\partial}{\partial x} \right] \varphi \quad (20)
\]

\[
\hat{\pi} \varphi = m c \sinh^{-1} \left( \frac{-i}{mc} \frac{\partial}{\partial x} \right) \varphi
\]

This realization (restricted to \( x \) and \( \frac{\partial}{\partial x} \)) is not unitary, even though the representation is unitary on the complete wave functions, because the \( \hat{k} \) operator is not hermitian. This problem is solved by using a proper (higher-order) polarization on the Poincaré group [8]. The \( \mathcal{P}^{HO}_{\kappa} \) polarization on the S-Poincaré group provides an alternative solution.

\( \mathcal{P}^{HO}_{\kappa} \) Polarization: Realization in \( \kappa \)-Configuration Space and the Shapiro Wave Functions
Polarization equations:

\[ \tilde{X}_p \Psi = 0 \Rightarrow \Psi = \exp[-i x \hat{p}] \exp[-i mc \kappa \sinh^{-1} \frac{p}{mc}] \Phi(x^0, x, \kappa) \] (21)

\[ \left\{ \tilde{X}_{x^0} + mc \left[ \cosh \left( \frac{i}{mc} \tilde{X}_\kappa \right) - 1 \right] \right\} \Psi = 0 \Rightarrow i \frac{\partial \Phi}{\partial x^0} = mc \left[ \cosh \left( \frac{-i}{mc} \frac{\partial}{\partial \kappa} \right) - 1 \right] \Phi \]

\[ \Rightarrow \Phi(x^0, x, \kappa) = \exp\left\{ -i mc x^0 \left[ \cosh \left( \frac{-i}{mc} \frac{\partial}{\partial \kappa} \right) - 1 \right] \right\} \phi(x, \kappa) \] (22)

\[ \left\{ \tilde{X}_x + mc \sinh \left( \frac{i}{mc} \tilde{X}_\kappa \right) \right\} \Psi = 0 \Rightarrow -i \frac{\partial \phi}{\partial x} = mc \sinh \left( \frac{-i}{mc} \frac{\partial}{\partial \kappa} \right) \phi \]

\[ \Rightarrow \phi(x, \kappa) = \exp[imc x \sinh \left( \frac{-i}{mc} \frac{\partial}{\partial \kappa} \right)] \varphi(\kappa) \] (23)

\[ \Psi = \exp[-i x \hat{p}] \exp[-i mc \kappa \sinh^{-1} \frac{p}{mc}] \times \exp\left\{ -i mc x^0 \left[ \cosh \left( \frac{-i}{mc} \frac{\partial}{\partial \kappa} \right) - 1 \right] \right\} \exp[imc x \sinh \left( \frac{-i}{mc} \frac{\partial}{\partial \kappa} \right)] \varphi(\kappa) \] (24)

Quantum operators:

\[ \hat{p}^0 \varphi = mc \cosh \left( \frac{-i}{mc} \frac{\partial}{\partial \kappa} \right) \varphi \]

\[ \hat{p} \varphi = mc \sinh \left( \frac{-i}{mc} \frac{\partial}{\partial \kappa} \right) \varphi \]

\[ \hat{k} \varphi = \kappa \varphi - x^0 \sinh \left( \frac{-i}{mc} \frac{\partial}{\partial \kappa} \right) \varphi + x \cosh \left( \frac{-i}{mc} \frac{\partial}{\partial \kappa} \right) \varphi \] (25)

\[ \hat{\pi} \varphi = -i \frac{\partial}{\partial \kappa} \varphi \]

As can be seen, this representation of the S-Poincaré group is unitary and contains a unitary and irreducible representation of the Poincaré subgroup.

The Shapiro wave functions are nothing other than the eigen-functions of the momentum operator \( \hat{p} \) in \( \kappa \)-configuration space:

\[ \hat{p} \varphi_p(\kappa) = p \varphi_p(\kappa) \Rightarrow mc \sinh \left( \frac{-i}{mc} \frac{\partial}{\partial \kappa} \right) \varphi_p = p \varphi_p \]

\[ \Rightarrow \varphi_p(\kappa) = \exp[imc \kappa \sinh^{-1} \frac{p}{mc}] \equiv \exp[i \kappa \pi] = \left( \frac{p - p}{mc} \right)^{-imc} \] (26)
References


