

Semiconductor quantum dots in high magnetic fields

The composite-fermion view

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Abstract. We review and extend the composite fermion theory for semiconductor quantum dots in high magnetic fields. The mean-field model of composite fermions is unsatisfactory for the qualitative physics at high angular momenta. Extensive numerical calculations demonstrate that the microscopic CF theory, which incorporates interactions between composite fermions, provides an excellent qualitative and quantitative account of the quantum dot ground state down to the largest angular momenta studied, and allows systematic improvements by inclusion of mixing between composite fermion Landau levels (called A levels).

PACS. 71.10.Pm Fermions in reduced dimensions (anyons, composite fermions, Luttinger liquid, etc.) – 73.43.-f Quantum Hall effects

1 Introduction

The system of interacting electrons confined to a two dimensional quantum dot and exposed to a strong magnetic field has been a subject of intense theoretical study for over two decades [1–25]. Such quantum dots have been realized and studied in the laboratory [26–29]. Exact diagonalization studies show that the ground states are strongly correlated, and the aim of theory is to achieve a satisfactory understanding of the correlations. It is also of interest to understand how this ties into our understanding of the FQHE [30], obtained in the thermodynamic limit without confinement.

The CF theory has been applied to parabolic quantum dots subjected to a strong magnetic field. The plot of ground state energy as a function of the angular momentum (L) has a rich structure. In particular, downward cusps appear at certain values of L , which are consequently especially favorable. Early studies [4,5,10,11] demonstrated the CF theory to be promising. Specifically, a “mean-field model”, in which the composite fermions are taken as noninteracting particles at an effective angular momentum L^* , with their mass or the cyclotron energy treated as a phenomenological parameter, predicts cusps in the energy at certain magic angular momenta; these predictions are in agreement with the actual cusp positions in exact diagonalization studies at small angular momenta L , but discrepancies appear at large L [12,15]. Further work [31,32] showed that these discrepancies are

special to the mean-field model of the CF theory. A perfect agreement between the actual and the predicted cusp positions was obtained when the CF energies were calculated from microscopic wave functions. One of the surprising aspects was the success of the CF theory even at the largest angular momenta studied, which appears, at first, to be at odds with the classical crystal-like correlations found in exact diagonalization studies [12,17]. While both composite fermions and the crystal are generated by the repulsive interaction between electrons, the implicit assumption had been that one excluded the other. The work in reference [32] showed that no logical inconsistency exists between the simultaneous formations of composite fermions and crystal-like structures at low fillings, and, furthermore, the formation of composite fermions itself induces crystal structure at low fillings. This crystal has been shown to be very well described as a crystal of composite fermions [33,34].

The aim of this paper is to review and extend the CF theory of quantum dots in high magnetic fields, and also provide many details left out in earlier papers. Section 2 briefly outlines the basics of the CF theory for quantum dot states, giving explicit wave functions for some simple cases. Section 3 describes the numerical methods (exact diagonalization, Lanczos, and CF diagonalization). The mean-field CF model is discussed in Section 4, and the “zeroth-order” CF diagonalization in Section 5. Section 6 illustrates how the results are improved by going to higher orders in the CF theory. The paper is concluded in Section 7.

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2 The composite-fermion basics for quantum dots

Following the standard practice, we assume below parabolic confinement. This should be a good approximation for most quantum dots at low energies, and simplifies calculations because of the availability of exact solutions for single particle eigenstates. The Hamiltonian of interest is

$$H = \sum_j \frac{1}{2m_b} \left(\mathbf{p}_j + \frac{e}{c} \mathbf{A}_j \right)^2 + \sum_j \frac{m_b \omega_0^2 r_j^2}{2} + \sum_{j < k} \frac{e^2}{\epsilon r_{jk}}, \quad (1)$$

where m_b is the band mass of the electron, ω_0 is a measure of the strength of the confinement, ϵ is the dielectric constant of the host semiconductor, and $r_{jk} \equiv |\mathbf{r}_j - \mathbf{r}_k|$. We will specialize to the case of very large magnetic fields, when $\omega_c \equiv eB/m_b c \gg \omega_0$. Only the lowest Landau level (LL) is relevant in this limit. In that limit, at each angular momentum the eigenenergy neatly separates into a confinement part and an interaction part:

$$E(L) = E_c(L) + V(L), \quad (2)$$

where $E_c(L) = (\hbar/2)[\Omega - \omega_c]L$, relative to the lowest LL, with $\Omega^2 \equiv \omega_c^2 + 4\omega_0^2$, and $V(L)$ is the interaction energy of electrons without confinement, but with the magnetic length replaced by an effective magnetic length given by $\ell \equiv \sqrt{\hbar/m_b \Omega}$. In the following, we will consider only V as a function of the angular momentum L ; it must be remembered, however, that the confinement part must be added to determine the global ground state.

In the CF theory, [4, 10, 35] the interacting state of electrons in the lowest LL at angular momentum L is mapped into the noninteracting electron state at L^* , where

$$L = L^* + pN(N-1), \quad (3)$$

N is the number of electrons, and p is an integer. The wave functions

$$\Psi_\alpha^L = \mathcal{P}_{\text{LLL}} \prod_{j < k} (z_j - z_k)^{2p} \Phi_\alpha^{L^*} \quad (4)$$

give ansatz wave functions for interacting electrons at L in terms of the known wave functions of noninteracting electrons at L^* . Here $\Phi_\alpha^{L^*}$ are the wave functions for noninteracting electrons at L^* (which in general occupy several Landau levels), $\alpha = 1, 2, \dots, D^*$ labels the different states, $z_j = x_j - iy_j$ denotes the position of the j th electron, \mathcal{P}_{LLL} indicates projection into the lowest LL, Ψ_α^L are basis functions for interacting electrons at L , and D^* is the dimension of the CF basis. We will restrict $\Phi_\alpha^{L^*}$ to states with the lowest kinetic energy at L^* , and choose p so as to have the smallest dimension for the basis. The composite fermions carrying $2p$ vortices are labeled ^{2p}CF 's. At certain values of L , the above prescription produces only one state ($D^* = 1$), which is the CF theory's answer for the ground state. In the notation of reference [10], this is a compact state, denoted by $[N_0, N_1, \dots]$, with N_j composite fermions compactly occupying the innermost angular

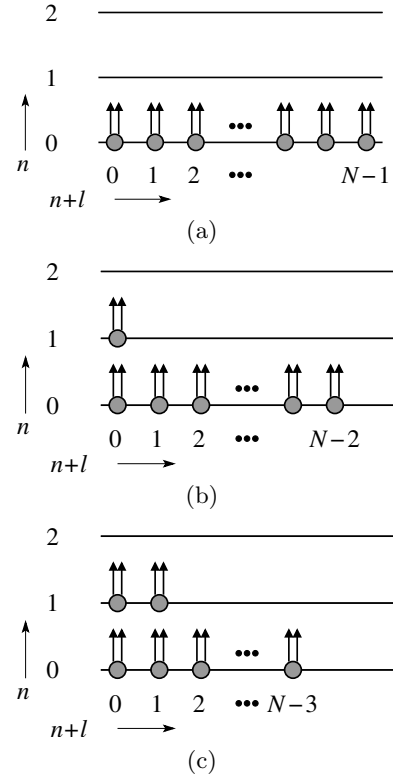


Fig. 1. Schematic depiction of (a) $[N, 0]$; (b) $[N-1, 1]$; and (c) $[N-2, 2]$ states in terms of composite fermions carrying two vortices ($2p = 2$). The composite fermions are shown as electrons with two arrows, where the arrows represent the vortices bound to composite fermions. The labels n and l denote the Λ level (CF Landau level) index and the angular momentum of the composite fermion, respectively.

momentum orbitals of the j th CF level. At other values of L , when there are many CF basis states ($D^* > 1$), we diagonalize the Coulomb Hamiltonian in the CF basis to obtain the ground state, using methods described earlier [11, 36]. For any N , there are many values of L where the CF theory gives a unique answer, but in general, D^* increases with N .

2.1 Examples of CF bases

Construction of the CF basis is in principle straightforward. We consider some explicit examples.

In many cases, the CF basis consists of a unique wave function, which simplifies the analysis tremendously. The simplest wave function is the one for one filled Λ level (CF Landau level), shown schematically in Figure 1a:

$$\begin{aligned} \Psi &= A \left[\prod_{i=1}^N z_i^{i-1} \right] \Phi_1^{2p} \\ &= \prod_{j < k} (z_j - z_k)^{2p+1} e^{-\sum_{i=1}^N |z_i|^2/4}, \end{aligned} \quad (5)$$

where A denotes an antisymmetric Slater determinant, i.e.

$$A \left[\prod_{i=1}^N z_i^{i-1} \right] = \begin{vmatrix} 1 & 1 & \dots & 1 \\ z_1 & z_2 & \dots & z_N \\ \vdots & \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ z_1^{N-1} & z_2^{N-1} & \dots & z_N^{N-1} \end{vmatrix} = \prod_{j < k} (z_j - z_k) \quad (6)$$

and

$$\Phi_1^{2p} \equiv \prod_{j < k} (z_j - z_k)^{2p} e^{-\sum_{i=1}^N |z_i|^2/4}. \quad (7)$$

It corresponds to $L = (2p + 1)N(N - 1)/2$. It is identical to the Laughlin wave function.

The state $[N - 1, 1]$ at $L = (2p + 1)N(N - 1)/2 - N$, shown in Figure 1b, represents the wave function

$$\Psi = \mathcal{P}_{\text{LLL}} A \left[z_1^* \cdot \prod_{i=2}^N z_i^{i-2} \right] \Phi_1^{2p}. \quad (8)$$

This state has been interpreted as a charged quasiparticle excitation of the $\nu = 1/(2p + 1)$ FQHE state. [37] The $[N - 2, 2]$ state (Fig. 1c) occurs at $L = (2p + 1)N(N - 1)/2 - 2(N - 1)$, and has the wave function

$$\Psi = \mathcal{P}_{\text{LLL}} A \left[z_1^* \cdot z_2 z_2^* \cdot \prod_{i=3}^N z_i^{i-3} \right] \Phi_1^{2p}. \quad (9)$$

For many angular momenta, the basis contains more than one state. For six composite fermions at $L = 33$ we have two compact states $[3,3]$ and $[4,1,1]$, as depicted schematically in Figure 2a. The basis functions are given by

$$\Psi_1^{L=33} = \mathcal{P}_{\text{LLL}} A \left[\prod_{i=1}^3 (z_i^* z_i^{i-1}) \cdot \prod_{i=4}^6 z_i^{i-4} \right] \Phi_1^2, \quad (10)$$

$$\Psi_2^{L=33} = \mathcal{P}_{\text{LLL}} A \left[(z_1^*)^2 \cdot z_2^* \cdot \prod_{i=3}^6 z_i^{i-3} \right] \Phi_1^2. \quad (11)$$

These have the same CF kinetic energy, leading to $D^* = 2$ at $L = 33$. The five basis states at $L = 34$ are shown in Figure 2b, derived from either $[4,1,1]$ or $[3,3]$ by increasing the angular momentum by one unit. The corresponding basis functions are written as

$$\Psi_1^{L=34} = \mathcal{P}_{\text{LLL}} A [\eta_1^{-1}(z_1)] \quad (12)$$

$$\cdot \eta_1^0(z_2) \cdot \eta_1^1(z_3) \cdot \eta_0^0(z_4) \cdot \eta_0^1(z_5) \cdot \eta_0^3(z_6)] \Phi_1^2,$$

$$\Psi_2^{L=34} = \mathcal{P}_{\text{LLL}} A [\eta_1^{-1}(z_1)] \quad (13)$$

$$\cdot \eta_1^0(z_2) \cdot \eta_1^2(z_3) \cdot \eta_0^0(z_4) \cdot \eta_0^1(z_5) \cdot \eta_0^2(z_6)] \Phi_1^2,$$

$$\Psi_3^{L=34} = \mathcal{P}_{\text{LLL}} A [\eta_2^{-2}(z_1)] \quad (14)$$

$$\cdot \eta_1^{-1}(z_2) \cdot \eta_0^0(z_3) \cdot \eta_0^1(z_4) \cdot \eta_0^2(z_5) \cdot \eta_0^4(z_6)] \Phi_1^2,$$

$$\Psi_4^{L=34} = \mathcal{P}_{\text{LLL}} A [\eta_2^{-2}(z_1)] \quad (15)$$

$$\cdot \eta_1^0(z_2) \cdot \eta_0^0(z_3) \cdot \eta_0^1(z_4) \cdot \eta_0^2(z_5) \cdot \eta_0^3(z_6)] \Phi_1^2,$$

$$\Psi_5^{L=34} = \mathcal{P}_{\text{LLL}} A [\eta_2^{-1}(z_1)] \quad (16)$$

$$\cdot \eta_1^{-1}(z_2) \cdot \eta_0^0(z_3) \cdot \eta_0^1(z_4) \cdot \eta_0^2(z_5) \cdot \eta_0^3(z_6)] \Phi_1^2.$$

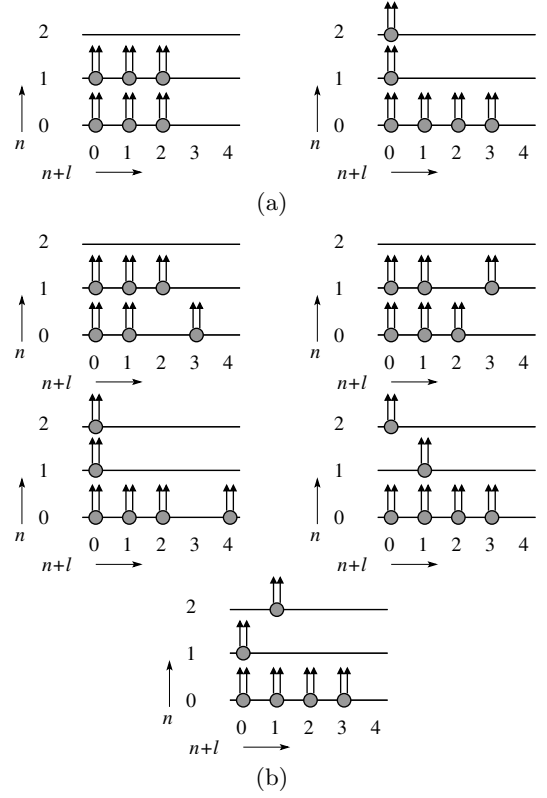


Fig. 2. Schematic depiction of basis states at (a) $L = 33$; (b) $L = 34$ for $N = 6$ particles.

Here

$$\eta_n^l(z) \equiv z^l L_n^l(z z^*/2) \quad (17)$$

with $L_n^l(x)$ being an associated Laguerre polynomial.

The projection into the lowest LL is accomplished by the method outlined in the literature [11]. To give a simple example, consider the state $[N - 1, 1]$ state in equation (8). We use the identity (apart from the constant factor),

$$A \left[z_1^* \cdot \prod_{i=2}^N z_i^{i-2} \right] \prod_{j < k} (z_j - z_k)^{2p} = A \left[z_1^* J_1^p \cdot \prod_{i=2}^N (z_i^{i-2} J_i^p) \right] \quad (18)$$

with

$$J_i \equiv \prod_{j(\neq i)} (z_i - z_j) \quad (19)$$

and project each element to the lowest LL, resulting in

$$\Psi = e^{-\sum_{i=1}^N |z_i|^2/4} A \left[\mathcal{P}_{\text{LLL}}(z_1^* J_1^p) \cdot \prod_{i=2}^N \mathcal{P}_{\text{LLL}}(z_i^{i-2} J_i^p) \right]. \quad (20)$$

The final step is achieved by placing all of the z_j^* 's to the left, and substituting $2\partial/\partial z_j$ into z_j^* with the assumption that the derivatives do not act on the Gaussian factor [35,38]. The resulting wave function is then given by

$$\Psi = A \left[\sum_{j \neq 1} \frac{1}{z_1 - z_j} \cdot \prod_{i=2}^N z_i^{i-2} \right] \Phi_1^{2p}. \quad (21)$$

Lowest LL projection of other can be accomplished similarly, although the details are more complicated.

3 Numerical methods

3.1 Exact diagonalization

We calculate the exact interaction energy for small systems by either numerical diagonalization using standard routines for small L , or a modified Lanczos algorithm for larger L . In either cases, it is essential to know the Coulomb matrix elements. In the second quantization language, the Coulomb Hamiltonian is written as

$$\mathcal{H} = \frac{1}{2} \sum_{r,s,t,u} \langle r, s | V | t, u \rangle a_r^\dagger a_s^\dagger a_u a_t, \quad (22)$$

where the operator a_r^\dagger (a_r) creates (annihilates) a particle at state $|r\rangle$ with angular momentum r . V is the Coulomb interaction in real space and $\langle r, s | V | t, u \rangle$ is its restriction to the lowest Landau level Hilbert space. Several expressions for $\langle r, s | V | t, u \rangle$ exist in the literature [3, 4, 39]. In this work we use the formula derived by Tsiper [40]:

$$\langle s+r, t | V | s, t+r \rangle = \sqrt{\frac{(s+r)!(t+r)!}{s!t!}} \frac{\Gamma(r+s+t+\frac{3}{2})}{\pi 2^{r+s+t+2}} \times [A_{st}^r B_{ts}^r + B_{st}^r A_{ts}^r], \quad (23)$$

where

$$A_{st}^r = \sum_{i=0}^s \binom{s}{i} \frac{\Gamma(\frac{1}{2}+i)\Gamma(\frac{1}{2}+r+i)}{(r+i)!\Gamma(\frac{3}{2}+r+t+i)}, \quad (24)$$

$$B_{st}^r = \sum_{i=0}^s \binom{s}{i} \frac{\Gamma(\frac{1}{2}+i)\Gamma(\frac{1}{2}+r+i)}{(r+i)!\Gamma(\frac{3}{2}+r+t+i)} \left(\frac{1}{2}+r+2i\right). \quad (25)$$

Each term in the sum on the right hand side of equation (25) is positive definite, which makes this expression more stable in numerical calculations, which is especially important for large L .

Exact numerical diagonalization is limited to systems with small numbers of particles at small angular momentum L , because the size of the Hilbert space grows exponentially fast with N and L . For example, for $N = 6$, the Fock space dimension grows from 21 to 701661 as L is increased from 21 to 148. When D becomes large, we have obtained the ground state energy using the modified Lanczos algorithm of Gagliano et al. [41]. Briefly, the algorithm begins with an initial guess of the ground state $|\psi_0\rangle$. By applying the Hamiltonian \mathcal{H} onto $|\psi_0\rangle$, a new state $|\psi_1\rangle$ is defined as the following

$$|\psi_1\rangle = \frac{\mathcal{H}|\psi_0\rangle - \langle\mathcal{H}\rangle|\psi_0\rangle}{\sqrt{\langle\mathcal{H}^2\rangle - \langle\mathcal{H}\rangle^2}}, \quad (26)$$

where the notation $\langle\mathcal{H}^n\rangle$ represents the expectation value $\langle\psi_0|\mathcal{H}^n|\psi_0\rangle$. It is straightforward to verify that $|\psi_1\rangle$ is

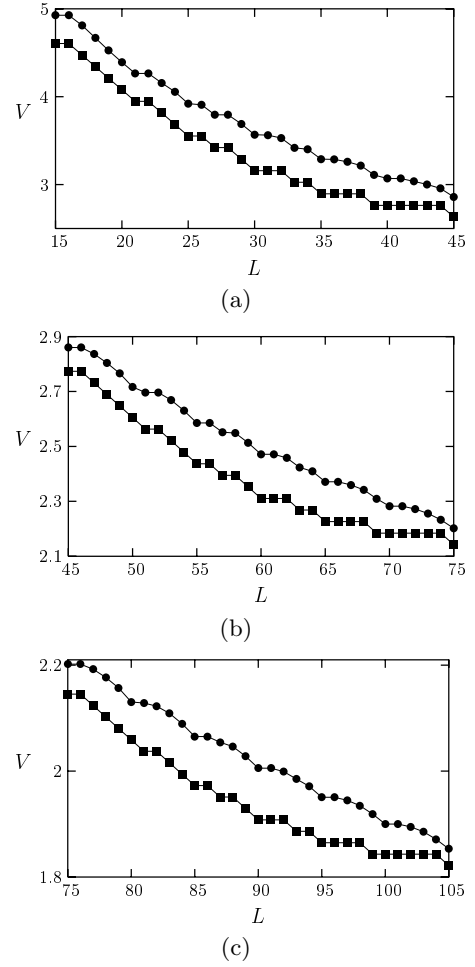


Fig. 3. The exact interaction energy (circle) vs. the mean-field CF ground-state energy (square) as a function of the angular momentum L for $N = 6$. The exact energy is plotted in units of $e^2/\epsilon\ell$ while the CF energy is in arbitrary units.

normalized and orthogonal to $|\psi_0\rangle$ by this construction. The Hamiltonian \mathcal{H} is now diagonalized in the subspace spanned by $\{|\psi_0\rangle, |\psi_1\rangle\}$, and the lowest eigenvalue ε and its corresponding eigenvector $|\tilde{\psi}_1\rangle$ are chosen as a better approximation to the true ground state and its energy than $\langle\mathcal{H}\rangle$ and $|\psi_0\rangle$. In terms of $\langle\mathcal{H}^n\rangle$ and $|\psi_0\rangle$, the “better” ground state energy and corresponding state can be written as

$$\varepsilon = \langle\mathcal{H}\rangle + b\alpha, \quad (27)$$

$$|\tilde{\psi}_0\rangle = \frac{|\psi_0\rangle + \alpha|\psi_1\rangle}{\sqrt{1+\alpha^2}}, \quad (28)$$

in which

$$\alpha = f - \sqrt{f^2 + 1}, \quad (29)$$

$$f = \frac{\langle\mathcal{H}^3\rangle - 3\langle\mathcal{H}\rangle\langle\mathcal{H}^2\rangle + 2\langle\mathcal{H}\rangle^3}{2(\langle\mathcal{H}^2\rangle - \langle\mathcal{H}\rangle^2)^{3/2}}, \quad (30)$$

$$b = \sqrt{\langle\mathcal{H}^2\rangle - \langle\mathcal{H}\rangle^2}. \quad (31)$$

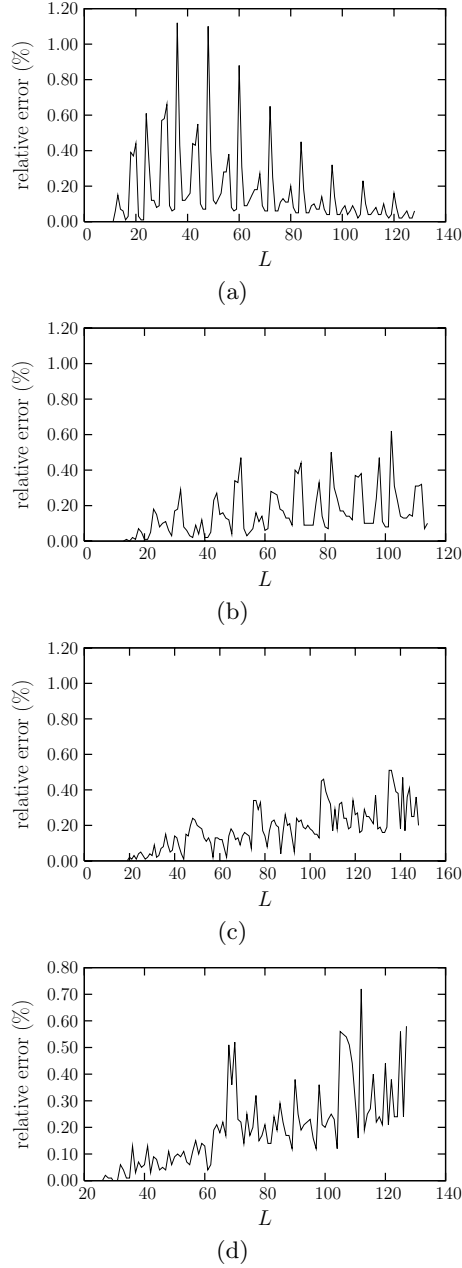


Fig. 4. The relative errors of CF ground-state energy compared with the exact energies for (a) $N = 4$; (b) $N = 5$; (c) $N = 6$; (d) $N = 7$.

The state $|\tilde{\psi}_0\rangle$ is then used as a new initial guess and the entire procedure is iterated until the relative energy difference $|\varepsilon - \langle \mathcal{H} \rangle|$ is smaller than a predefined tolerance.

We place the program on a node of a Beowulf type PC cluster, each node consists a dual PentiumIII 1GHz processor. The modified Lanczos algorithm converges relatively fast to the true ground state. The most time consuming part of the calculation is the Coulomb matrix element, especially when L is very large. For example, when $N = 6$ it takes approximately 24 CPU hours to obtain the ground state energy for $L = 135$. The largest system we have studied by the Lanczos method has a Fock space di-

mension of 817789. We note that for large L , our energies are slightly lower than those in reference [15], presumably because they work with a truncated basis.

3.2 CF diagonalization

CF diagonalization refers to a diagonalization of the full Coulomb Hamiltonian in a correlated CF basis. The basis wave functions correspond to states with low ‘‘CF kinetic energies’’ (the kinetic energy is given by $\sim \sum_{j=1}^N n_j$) with the restriction that the total angular momentum is L , i.e.,

$$\sum_{j=1}^N l_j + pN(N-1) = L, \quad (32)$$

where n_j and l_j are the Λ -level and the angular momentum indices, respectively, for composite fermions. In most of this paper, we choose states that have the lowest CF kinetic energy (zeroth order CF diagonalization). By allowing hybridization with CF states with higher kinetic energies (higher order CF diagonalization), more accurate approximations can be obtained, as seen explicitly below. As illustrated in the previous section, the wave function Ψ_α^L corresponding to the α th basis at L is then given by

$$\Psi_\alpha^L = A \left[\psi_{n_1^{(\alpha)}, l_1^{(\alpha)}}(z_1) \cdot \psi_{n_2^{(\alpha)}, l_2^{(\alpha)}}(z_2) \cdots \psi_{n_N^{(\alpha)}, l_N^{(\alpha)}}(z_N) \right] \times \Phi_1^{2p}, \quad (\alpha = 1, 2, \dots, D^*) \quad (33)$$

where

$$\psi_{n,l}(z_i) \equiv J_i^{-p} \mathcal{P}_{LLL}[\eta_n^l(z_i) J_i^p]. \quad (34)$$

The CF basis states Ψ_α^L constructed in this manner are not orthogonal to one another at given L , and sometimes not even linearly independent. We use Gram-Schmidt procedure to orthogonalize the states. The orthogonal basis states $|\xi\rangle$ are expressed as

$$|\xi_\alpha\rangle = |\eta_\alpha\rangle - \sum_{\gamma=1}^{\alpha-1} \frac{\langle \xi_\gamma | \eta_\alpha \rangle}{\langle \xi_\gamma | \xi_\gamma \rangle} |\xi_\gamma\rangle, \quad (35)$$

where the normalized state $|\eta_\alpha\rangle$ is defined by

$$|\eta_\alpha\rangle \equiv \frac{|\Psi_\alpha\rangle}{\sqrt{\langle \Psi_\alpha | \Psi_\alpha \rangle}}. \quad (36)$$

From the relation in equation (35) we can find the recursion relation for the transformation matrix $U_{\alpha\beta}$, defined by $|\xi_\alpha\rangle \equiv \sum_\beta U_{\alpha\beta} |\eta_\beta\rangle$,

$$U_{\alpha\beta} = \begin{cases} -\sum_{\gamma=1}^{\alpha-1} \frac{\sum_{\delta=1}^{\gamma} U_{\gamma\delta}^* \mathcal{O}_{\delta\alpha}}{\sum_{\delta,\epsilon=1}^{\gamma} U_{\gamma\delta}^* U_{\gamma\epsilon} \mathcal{O}_{\delta\epsilon}} U_{\gamma\beta} & \text{for } \beta < \alpha \\ 1 & \text{for } \beta = \alpha \\ 0 & \text{for } \beta > \alpha, \end{cases} \quad (37)$$

where $\mathcal{O}_{\alpha\beta} \equiv \langle \eta_\alpha | \eta_\beta \rangle$. The computation of $U_{\alpha\beta}$ enables us to calculate the Coulomb Hamiltonian matrix elements $V_{\alpha\beta}$ in orthonormal basis sets,

$$V_{\alpha\beta} = \frac{\langle \xi_\alpha | V | \xi_\beta \rangle}{\sqrt{\langle \xi_\alpha | \xi_\alpha \rangle \langle \xi_\beta | \xi_\beta \rangle}}, \quad (38)$$

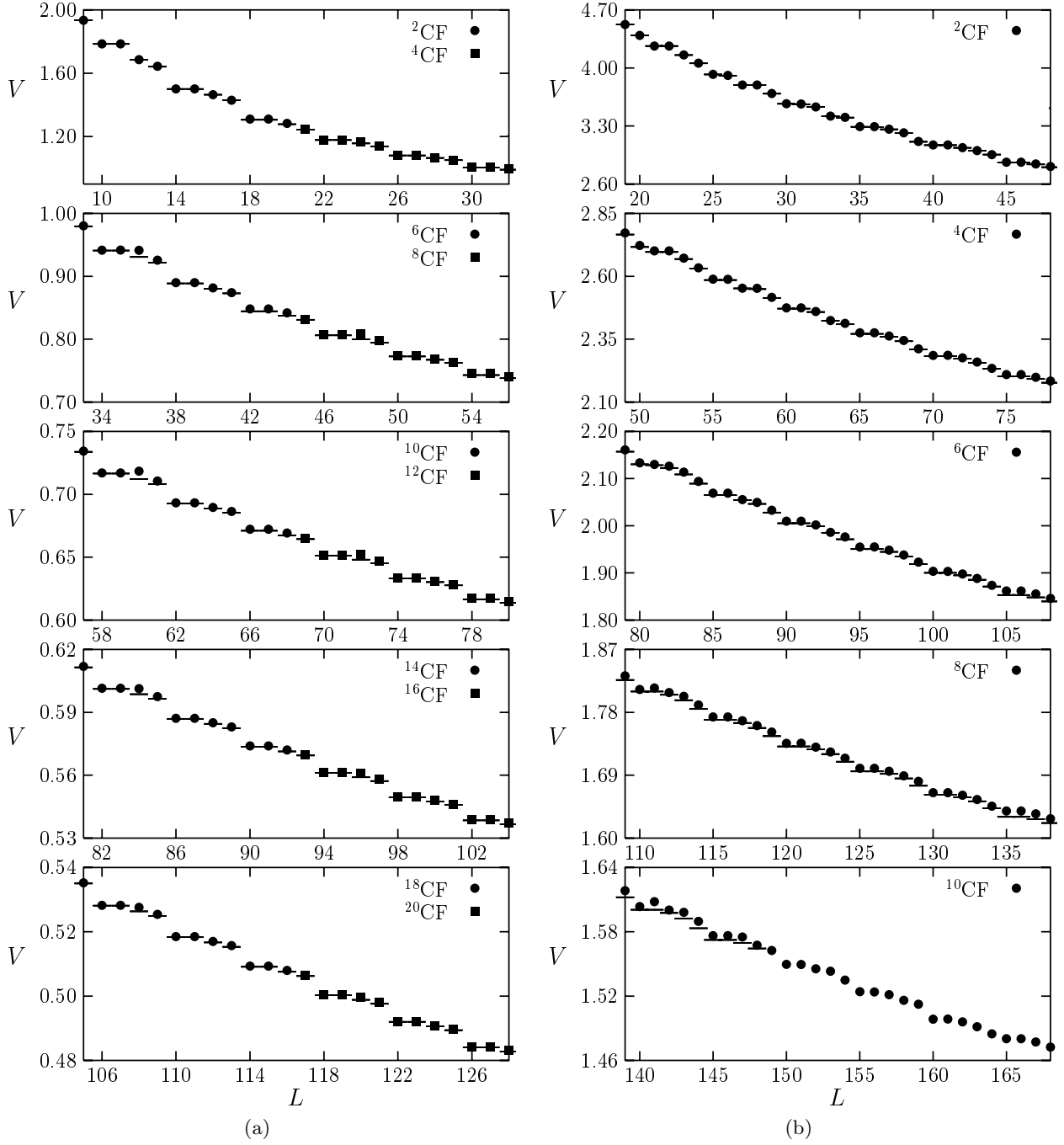


Fig. 5. The exact interaction energies V (dashes) are given as a function of the angular momentum L for (a) $N = 4$; (b) $N = 6$ particles. The dots are the predictions of the zeroth-order CF theory. Different panels correspond to L regions where composite fermions of different flavors are relevant. The energies are quoted in units of $e^2/\epsilon\ell$.

available computer memory and execution time restricts our *exact* diagonalization study to $L \leq 148, 127, 118, 116$, and 113 for $N = 6, 7, 8, 9$, and 10 , respectively. (To our knowledge [34,42,43], the largest systems for which exact results have been computed are $N = 8, L = 140$ with $D_{\text{ex}} = 3023010$ and $N = 10, L = 135$ with $D_{\text{ex}} = 2977866$). The results are listed in Tables 1–7, which show that the CF energies compare well to the exact ones. (Many of the exact energies have been reported previously

in the literature [11,15,33,34], but are included here for completeness). The deviation between the CF and the exact energies (V_{CF} and V_{ex}) is L dependent but small in the entire range of L studied in this work. The largest deviations are 1.1% ($L = 36, N = 4$), 0.6% ($L = 102, N = 5$), 0.5% ($L = 135, N = 6$), 0.7% ($L = 112, N = 7$), 0.9% ($L = 89, N = 8$), 1.3% ($L = 114, N = 9$), and 0.2% ($L = 80, N = 10$). For $N = 4$, the maximum deviation occurs for composite fermions carrying 6–8 vortices; for

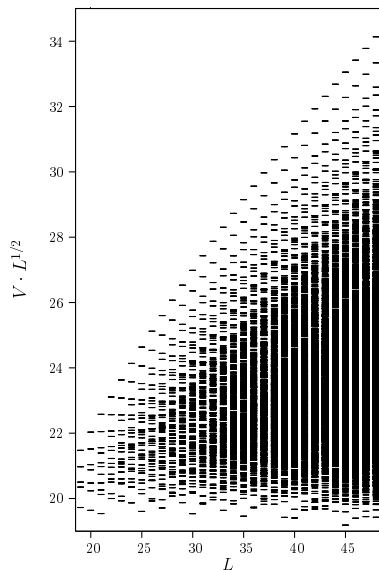


Fig. 6. Exact energy spectrum for $N = 6$.

$N \geq 5$, the deviation grows generally with L in the range considered in this work (see Fig. 4).

The plot of interaction energy as a function of L in Figure 5 gives a demonstration of the accuracy of the CF predictions. In addition to the quantitative accuracy, the qualitative features of the energy versus L plot are reproduced faithfully by the CF theory. For $N = 4$, the major cusps occurs at $L = 4n + 2$. The system with six particles exhibits more complicated features. For system of ${}^2\text{CFs}$ (top panel) shows cusps at $L = 21, 25, 27, 30, 33, 35, 39, 40$ and 45 . As the flavor increases, the cusps at angular momenta other than $L = 5n$ become less prominent and eventually disappear. Such periodic behavior is consistent with the geometric interpretation [15,16].

6 Next order CF theory

The CF theory allows a systematic perturbative way of improving the results. Above we considered only the CF states with the lowest CF kinetic energy, called the zeroth-order CF theory. The next step is to include states with one more unit of the kinetic energy in the CF basis [31]. The degree of improvement can be seen in Figures 6–8. Figure 6 shows the full spectrum for six electrons in a range of angular momentum; Figure 7 shows the spectrum from the zeroth order CF diagonalization, and Figure 8 from the first order. Both the zeroth and first order spectra capture the qualitative behavior and the positions of the cusps, but the first order theory is quantitatively much more accurate. In both cases, the discrepancy between the CF and the exact energies (V_{CF} and V_{ex}) grows with L , because while the dimension of the CF basis remains the same when L is changed by $N(N - 1)$, the dimension of the full lowest LL Fock space increases rapidly. In spite of the small basis (which sometimes contains only one state at the zeroth order), the CF theory is quantitatively satisfactory.

7 Concluding remarks

Several authors [12,15] have noted that the CF theory fails to produce the cusp positions for large L . These comparisons, however, refer only to the mean-field model of composite fermions, in which the interaction energy of electrons at L is viewed as the kinetic energy of *free* fermions at an effective angular momentum L^* , with the cyclotron energy treated as a parameter. The validity of the CF theory should not be confused with the validity of the mean-field picture, which serves, at best, as a useful guide; given its crudeness, it is in fact surprising it works as well as it does. A more substantive, microscopic test of the CF theory requires working with the correlated wave functions produced by the CF theory.

Our extensive study of quantum dot states shows that the microscopic composite fermion theory, defined through wave functions, gives an excellent description in regions including both liquid-like and crystal-like ground states, and continues to be satisfactory from very low angular momenta to the largest angular momenta studied to date. It provides an accurate approximation for the ground state wave function and the ground state energy at every single L in the wide range studied, and correctly reproduces all cusps in plot of the ground state energy vs. L . Taken together, these results constitute a detailed verification for the validity of the composite fermion theory for quantum dots.

It is expected, from general considerations, that the ground state at large L will resemble a classical crystal, because large L implies small density (or small filling factor) with particles far from one another, as a result of which the system behaves more or less classically. Reference [15] has studied a Hartree-Fock crystal trial wave function based on an analogy to the classical crystal ground state in a quantum dot. No crystalline correlations are put in by hand in our calculations described above, however. As implied by the successful comparisons with the exact results, and also confirmed by an explicit calculation of the pair correlation function [31,32], the CF theory automatically generates a crystal of correct symmetry. The CF approach offers many other advantages over the Hartree-Fock electron crystal description. The latter obtains wave functions and energies only for certain special values of L , and even then only for the ground state. The CF theory, on the other hand, provides a quantitative understanding of states at all L . For $N = 6$, reference [15] explicitly quotes energies from their approach for seven values of L in the range $75 \leq L \leq 135$. For these angular momenta, the zeroth order CF theory gives lower energy in every case except at $L = 135$. (The state at $L = 135$ has one filled Λ level, described by the Laughlin wave function.) At the first order, the CF results improve substantially for large L . As shown in reference [33], an almost exact description of the crystallite at large L is obtained in terms of a crystal of composite fermions, wherein a combination of the crystal and CF physics are introduced right at the outset. It is gratifying that the principle that applies to the fractional quantum Hall effect in a bulk two-dimensional electron

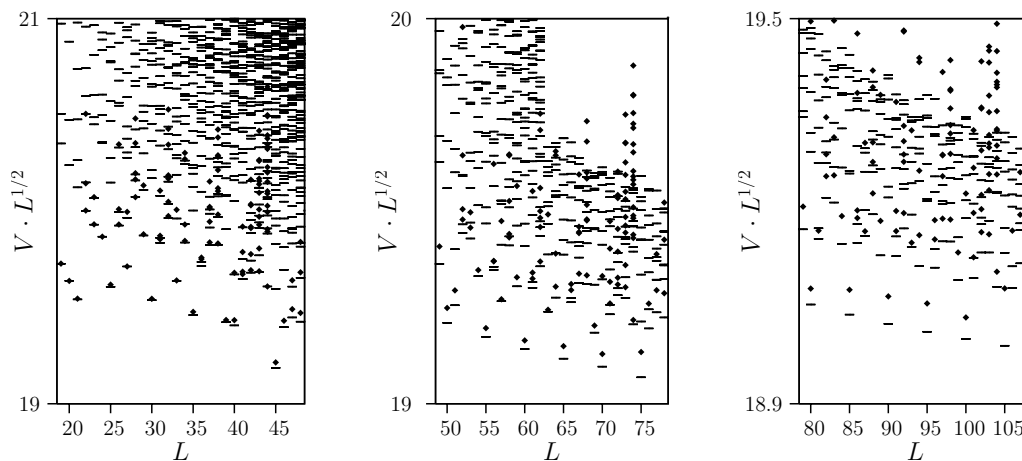


Fig. 7. Exact energies (dashes) and the CF energies (dots) for six particles as a function of the angular momentum L . The left, center, and right panels correspond to ${}^2\text{CFs}$, ${}^4\text{CFs}$, and ${}^6\text{CFs}$, respectively. The CF energies are obtained in the zeroth order calculation (explained in text). For $L > 62$, the exact spectrum is truncated because the energies are obtained by the Lanczos method. The energies are multiplied by \sqrt{L} for convenience of illustration.

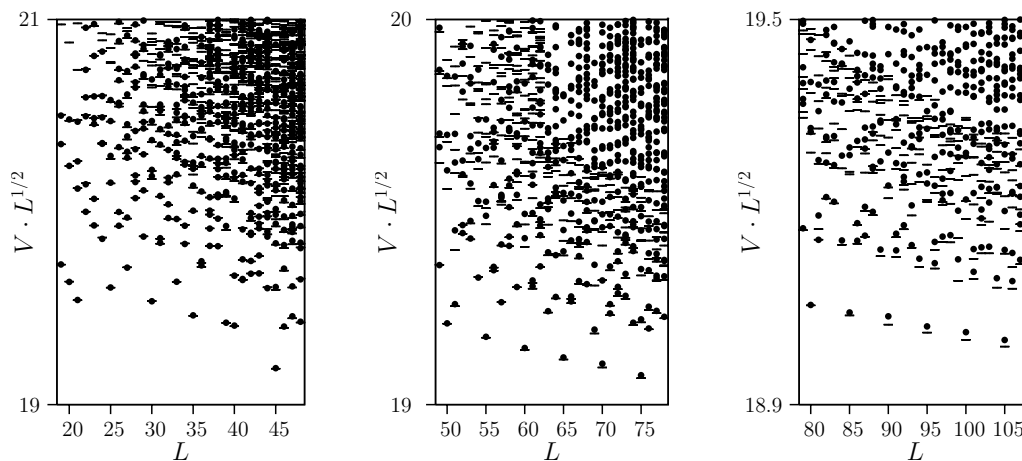


Fig. 8. Same as in Figure 7, but with the CF energies obtained in the first order calculation.

system also produces an understanding of the quantum dot physics at high magnetic fields.

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