

# Self-binding of a Fermi-Fermi atomic mixture with zero-range attraction in 1D

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Orsay

07/09/2023

based on

- [1] [AT, J. Givois, and D. S. Petrov, PRA **106**, L011302 (2022)]
  - [2] [J. Givois, AT and D. S. Petrov, SciPost Physics **14**, 091 (2023)]
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# Ultracold atomic gases

- Neutral atomic gases, either **bosonic** or **fermionic**
- Experiments with  $N \sim 10^4$  atoms cooled at  $T \sim 1 \mu\text{K}$
- **Bose-Einstein condensate** or **degenerate Fermi gas**
- Typical density:  $n \sim 10^{20}$  atoms/ $\text{m}^3$
- Potential range:  $b \sim a \sim 1 \text{ nm} \ll d = n^{-1/3} \sim 1 \mu\text{m}$   
 $\Rightarrow$  interatomic interactions can be well approximated as *zero-range* interactions with *s-wave* scattering length  $a$ .

# Ultracold atomic gases in $D=2$ and $D=1$

Atomic gases are 3D systems.

Experimental techniques to study their physics (*effectively*) also in 1D and 2D geometries. How?

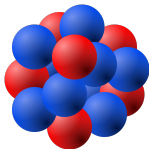
- Atoms are confined in space using external fields (e.g. magnetic potentials  $U(\vec{r}) \sim -\vec{\mu} \cdot \vec{B}(\vec{r})$ )
- Single point-like atom moving in the potential 
$$U(\vec{r}) = \frac{m}{2}\omega_x^2 x^2 + \frac{m}{2}\omega_y^2 y^2 + \frac{m}{2}\omega_z^2 z^2$$
- If the energy scales of the system  $\langle k_B T \rangle, \langle gn \rangle \ll \hbar\omega_i$ ,  
 $\Rightarrow$  the atoms are confined to the ground state of the harmonic oscillator along the direction  $i$ .
- Motion confined along *one* direction: 2D system
- Motion confined along *two* directions: 1D system

# Physical system of this talk

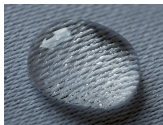
Fermionic atoms confined in a 1D geometry.

*Two-component mixture* of different fermions.

Mixtures of fermionic particles form self-bound states:



nuclei



liquids



neutron stars

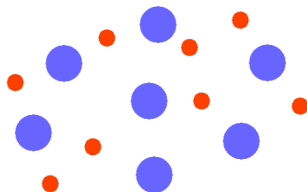
**Can we describe fermionic binding with simple models?**

# Ultracold fermionic mixtures

$N_h$  heavy fermions with mass  $M$

+

$N_l$  light fermions with mass  $m$

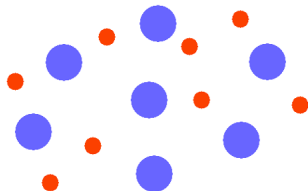


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+

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Noninteracting heavy

Noninteracting light

Heavy-light attraction

## Ultracold fermionic mixtures

$$\hat{H} = \int \left( -\frac{\hat{\Psi}_r^\dagger \nabla^2 \hat{\Psi}_r}{2M} - \frac{\hat{\phi}_r^\dagger \nabla^2 \hat{\phi}_r}{2m} + g \hat{\Psi}_r^\dagger \hat{\phi}_r^\dagger \hat{\Psi}_r \hat{\phi}_r \right) dr, \quad g < 0$$



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Competition between:

- ▶ Kinetic energy of **heavy** fermions
- ▶ Kinetic energy of **light** fermions
- ▶ Heavy-light **attraction**

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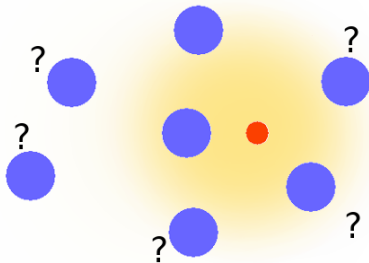
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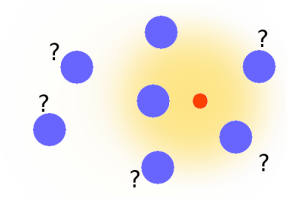
Possibility to form **bound states**  
of **heavy** and **light** fermions:



How many **heavy** fermions can be bound by a single **light** fermion?



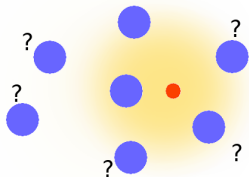
The  $(N+1)$ -body problem:



Few simple parameters:

- ▶ spatial dimension  $D$ ,
- ▶ mass ratio  $M/m$ ,
- ▶ scattering length  $a$
- ▶ number of heavy atoms  $N$

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$N + 1$  clusters form for sufficiently large  $M/m$ .

Studied in  $D = 3, 2, 1$ . Previous literature?

## D=3: 2+1 (trimer)

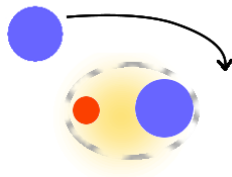
$$M/m < 8.2:$$

p-wave atom-dimer scattering resonance

$$M/m > 8.2:$$

trimer state with  $L = 1$

[Kartavtsev, et al., J. Phys. B **40**, 1429 (2007)]



$D=3$ : 2+1 (trimer) , 3+1 (tetramer), 4+1 (pentamer)

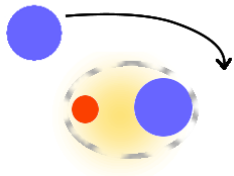
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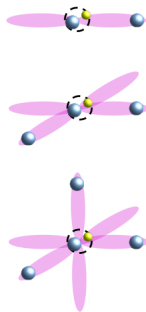
Completing the p-wave shell:

Tetramer at  $M/m > 8.86$

( $p_x$ ,  $p_y$  orbitals),

Pentamer at  $M/m > 9.67$

( $p_x$ ,  $p_y$ ,  $p_z$  orbitals)



[Bazak, Petrov, PRL **118**, 083002 (2017)]

D=1

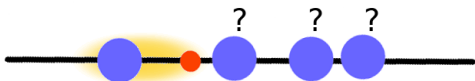
No shell effect, numerically treatable.

- ▶ 2+1 (trimer) at  $M/m \geq 1$   
[Kartavtsev, et al. JETP **108**, 365 (2009)]
- ▶ 3+1 (tetramer) through Born-Oppenheimer theory  
[Mehta, PRA **89**, 052706 (2014)]

...and then?

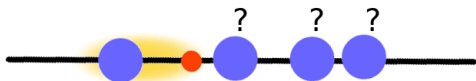


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What is the ground state of the  $N_h + N_l$  system?

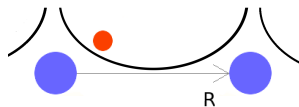


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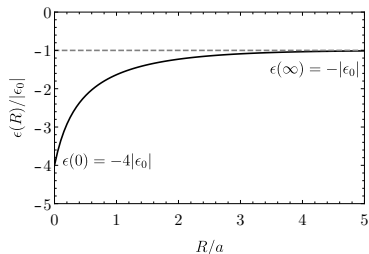
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- ▷ Introduction and motivation
- ▷ [1] Bound states of  $N + 1$  fermions in 1D
  - ▷ Born-Oppenheimer theory of the trimer
  - ▷ Exact  $N + 1$  results for  $N \leq 5$
  - ▷ Mean-field results for large  $N$ : Thomas-Fermi approximation
- ▷ [2] Self-bound mixtures of  $N_h + N_l$  fermions
- ▷ Conclusions and perspectives

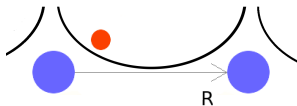
# Born-Oppenheimer theory of the 1D trimer



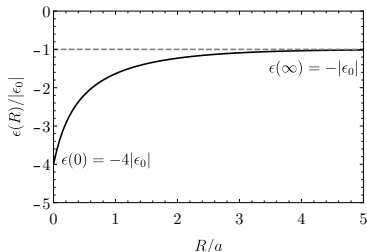
- 1 **light** atom, in the field of
- 2 **fixed heavy** fermions



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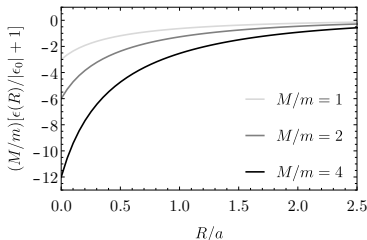


Heavy fermion with reduced mass  $M/2$  in the effective potential:

$$\left[ -\frac{\hbar^2}{M} \frac{\partial^2}{\partial R^2} + \epsilon_m(R) - E \right] \chi(R) = 0$$

The depth of the potential well...

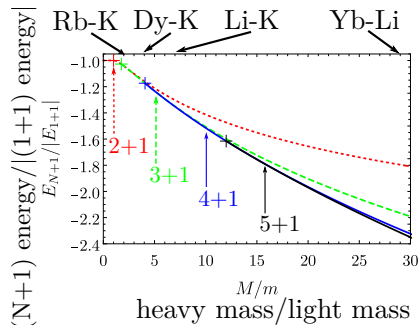
...is “tuned” by  $M/m$ :



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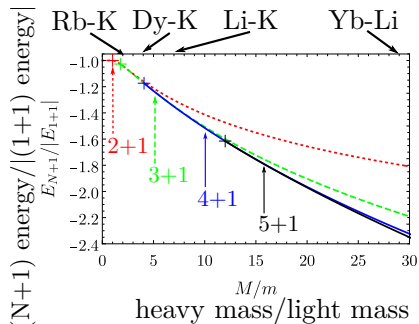
## Our results



We provide the **exact solution of the quantum mechanical problem** up to  $N = 5$ .

( $N = 2, 3, 4, 5$  here)

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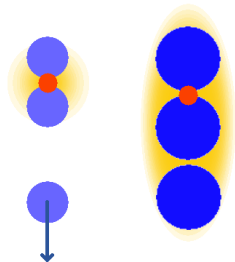
We identify the critical mass ratios:

$$(M/m)_{2+1} = 1,$$

$$(M/m)_{3+1} = 1.76,$$

$$(M/m)_{4+1} = 4.2,$$

$$(M/m)_{5+1} = 12.0 \pm 0.5$$



[A. Tononi, J. Givois, and D. S. Petrov, PRA **106**, L011302 (2022)]



## The Skorniakov-Ter Martirosian equation

Schrödinger equation for a system of  $N$  heavy plus 1 light fermions:

$$\left[ -\sum_{i=1}^N \frac{\partial_{x_i}^2}{2M} - \frac{\partial_{x_{N+1}}^2}{2m} + g \sum_{i < N+1} \delta(x_i - x_{N+1}) - E \right] \psi(x_1, \dots, x_N, x_{N+1}) = 0,$$

where  $E < 0$ , and  $g = -1/(m_r a) < 0$ ,  $m_r = mM/(m + M)$ .

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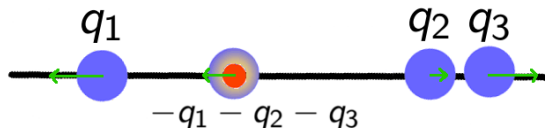
Wave function of  $(N - 1)$  fermions plus a dimer:

$$\psi(x_1, \dots, x_{N-1}, x_N, x_{N+1} = x_N)$$

Fourier transform:  $F(q_1, \dots, q_{N-1}, q_N)$

In center of mass coordinates  $q_N = -\sum_{i=1}^{N-1} q_i$  we have:

$$F(q_1, \dots, q_{N-1})$$



# The Skorniakov-Ter Martirosian equation

$F(q_1, \dots, q_{N-1})$  satisfies the STM equation

$$\left[ \frac{a}{2} - \frac{1}{2\kappa(q_1, \dots, q_{N-1})} \right] F(q_1, \dots, q_{N-1}) = - \int \frac{dp}{2\pi} \frac{\sum_{j=1}^{N-1} F(q_1, \dots, q_{j-1}, p, q_{j+1}, \dots, q_{N-1})}{\kappa^2(q_1, \dots, q_{N-1}) + (p + \frac{m_r}{m} \sum_{i=1}^{N-1} q_i)^2},$$

where  $\kappa(q_1, \dots, q_{N-1}) = \sqrt{-2m_r E + \frac{m_r}{M+m} (\sum_{i=1}^{N-1} q_i)^2 + \frac{m_r}{M} \sum_{i=1}^{N-1} q_i^2}$ .

[Skorniakov, Ter-Martirosian, JETP **4**, 648 (1957)]

[Pricoupenko, Petrov, PRA **100**, 042707 (2019)]

Integral equation that includes naturally zero-range interactions,  
and removes the dimer coordinates.

## Two questions

- ▶ Large  $N$  limit?
- ▶ Are there computationally-cheap methods that work also at small  $N$ ?

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## Thomas-Fermi approach

Large  $N$  limit: mean-field theory based on the Thomas-Fermi approximation for the heavy fermions

$$\Omega = \int \left[ \frac{|\phi'(x)|^2}{2m} + gn(x)|\phi(x)|^2 + \frac{\pi^2 n^3(x)}{6M} - \epsilon|\phi(x)|^2 - \mu n(x) \right] dx,$$



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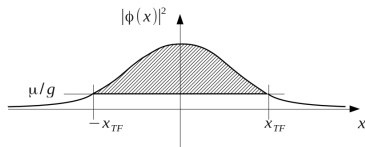
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Minimize with  $n$  and with  $\phi$ :

$$-\frac{\phi''(x)}{2m} + gn(x)\phi(x) = \epsilon\phi(x),$$

$$n(x) = \sqrt{-2Mg(|\phi(x)|^2 - \mu/g)/\pi^2},$$

when  $|\phi(x)|^2 > \mu/g$ .



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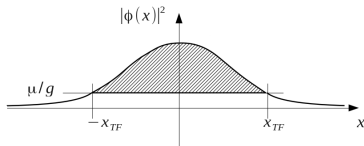
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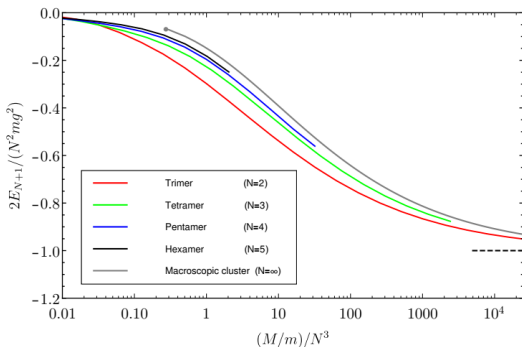


When  $\mu = 0$ ,  $\phi(x) \propto \cosh^{-2}(\sqrt{-m\epsilon/2}x)$ , and **threshold for binding a new heavy atom:**  $\left(\frac{M}{m}\right)_{N+1} = \frac{\pi^2}{36} N^3$

# Thomas-Fermi approach

We extend the theory for  $\mu \neq 0$ , and calculate cluster energies.

Thomas-Fermi approach (grey curve), computationally cheap and works at large  $N$ :



What is the source of discrepancy with the small- $N$  exact results:  
TF approximation or mean field? Mean field!

## Hartree-Fock approach

$$\hat{H} = \int \left( -\frac{\hat{\Psi}_x^\dagger \partial_x^2 \hat{\Psi}_x}{2M} - \frac{\hat{\phi}_x^\dagger \partial_x^2 \hat{\phi}_x}{2m} + g \hat{\Psi}_x^\dagger \hat{\phi}_x^\dagger \hat{\Psi}_x \hat{\phi}_x \right) dx$$

Energy  $E_{N+1} = \langle v | \hat{H} | v \rangle$ , with the variational ansatz:

$$|v\rangle = \int dx \phi_1(x) \hat{\phi}_x^\dagger \int dx_1 \dots dx_N \frac{\det[\Psi_\nu(x_\eta)]}{\sqrt{N!}} \prod_{\eta=1}^N \hat{\Psi}_{x_\eta}^\dagger |0\rangle$$

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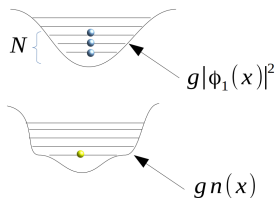
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Minimizing  $E_{N+1} - \epsilon_1 - \mu N$  with respect to the orbitals yields:

$$-\frac{\partial_x^2 \phi_1}{2m} + g n \phi_1 = \epsilon_1 \phi_1,$$

$$-\frac{\partial_x^2 \Psi_\nu}{2M} + g |\phi_1|^2 \Psi_\nu = E_\nu \Psi_\nu,$$

$$n = \sum_{\nu=1}^N |\Psi_\nu|^2$$



## $N - 1$ atoms momentum distribution

All methods give access to the following quantity:

$$\rho_{N+1}(q) = \int |F(q, q_2, \dots, q_{N-1})|^2 dq_2 \dots dq_{N-1},$$

that can be used to compare their effectiveness at small  $N$ .

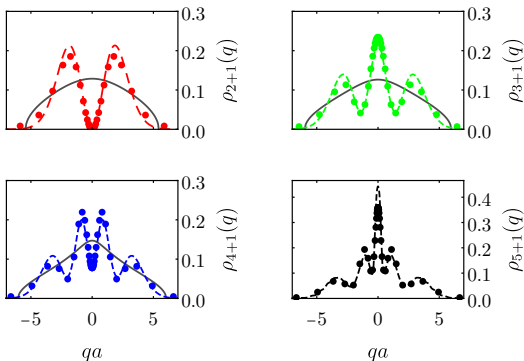
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We find that Hartree-Fock reproduces very well these momentum correlations:



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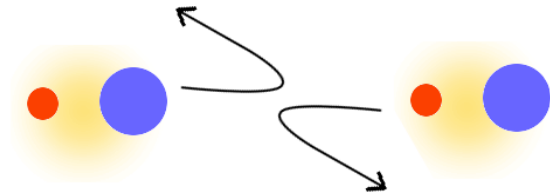
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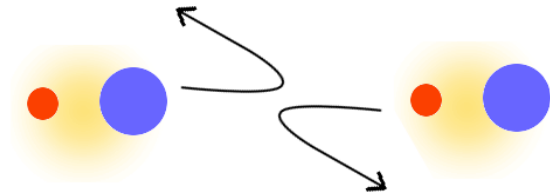


- ▶ BCS-BEC crossover (mass-balanced): the dimers repel each other
- ▶ BCS-BEC crossover (mass-imbalanced): the dimers repel or form trimers

When clusters of type  $N + 1$  can form, can they bind together?



Nontrivial  
problem...



- ▷ BCS-BEC crossover (mass-balanced): the dimers repel each other
- ▷ BCS-BEC crossover (mass-imbalanced): the dimers repel or form trimers

Can the mass imbalance help?

## Thomas-Fermi approach

Extending the previous approach to many light fermions:

$$\Omega = \int dx \left[ \sum_{i=1}^{N_f} \left( \frac{|\partial_x \phi_i|^2}{2m} + gn|\phi_i|^2 \right) + \frac{\pi^2 n^3}{6M} - \sum_{i=1}^{N_f} \epsilon_i |\phi_i|^2 - \mu n \right],$$

## Thomas-Fermi approach

Extending the previous approach to many light fermions:

$$\Omega = \int dx \left[ \sum_{i=1}^{N_l} \left( \frac{|\partial_x \phi_i|^2}{2m} + gn|\phi_i|^2 \right) + \frac{\pi^2 n^3}{6M} - \sum_{i=1}^{N_l} \epsilon_i |\phi_i|^2 - \mu n \right],$$

Rescaling with the length scale  $\lambda = 1/(2m|g|N)$  gives:

$$\frac{\Omega}{2mg^2N^2} = \int du \left[ \sum_{i=1}^{N_l} \left( |\partial_u \tilde{\phi}_i|^2 - \tilde{n} |\tilde{\phi}_i|^2 \right) + \alpha \tilde{n}^3 - \sum_{i=1}^{N_l} \tilde{\epsilon}_i |\tilde{\phi}_i|^2 - \tilde{\mu} \tilde{n} \right],$$

which depends only on:

$$N_l \text{ and } \alpha = (\pi^2/3)N^3m/M, \text{ with } N = N_h/N_l.$$

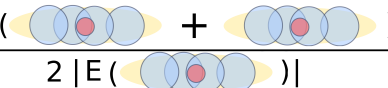
Minimize the functional and solve the equations of motion.

$\Rightarrow$  energy, and the heavy and light atoms densities  $\forall \alpha$

## Binding of several $N + 1$ clusters

Binding energy per  
( $N+1$ )-cluster.

For instance,  $N_h = 8$ ,  $N_l = 2$ :

$$\frac{E \left( \text{diagram 1} + \text{diagram 2} \right)}{2 \left| E \left( \text{diagram 3} \right) \right|}$$


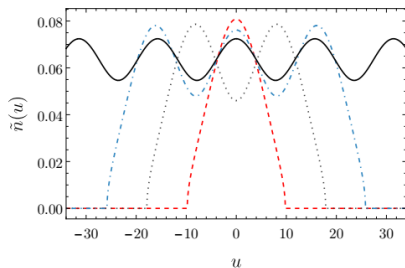
# Binding of several $N + 1$ clusters

Binding energy per  
( $N+1$ )-cluster.

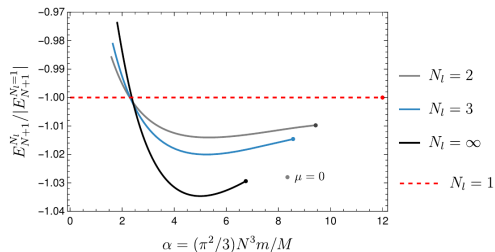
For instance,  $N_h = 8$ ,  $N_l = 2$ :

$$E \left( \text{diagram} \right) + \text{diagram} \Bigg/ 2 \left| E \left( \text{diagram} \right) \right|$$

The diagram shows two clusters of four overlapping circles (blue and red) with yellow tails, separated by a plus sign, over a single cluster of four overlapping circles with a yellow tail.



density profiles

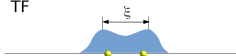


binding energy per ( $N+1$ )-cluster

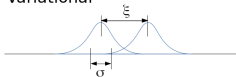
# Interaction between the $N + 1$ clusters

$E(\xi)$ , various cases:

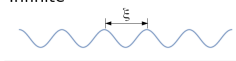
TF



Variational

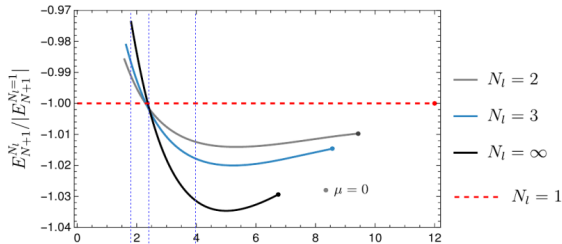


Infinite

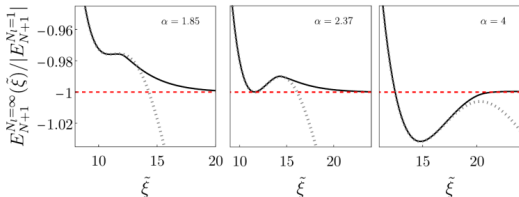


Repulsive  
interaction at  $\xi \gg 0$

(Meta)stable  
minimum at  $\xi \sim 1$ .



$$\alpha = (\pi^2/3)N^3m/M$$





# Outline

- ▷ Introduction and motivation
- ▷ [1] Bound states of  $N + 1$  fermions in 1D
  - ▷ Born-Oppenheimer theory of the trimer
  - ▷ Exact  $N + 1$  results for  $N \leq 5$
  - ▷ Mean-field results for large  $N$ : Thomas-Fermi approximation
- ▷ [2] Self-bound mixtures of  $N_h + N_l$  fermions
- ▷ 2D preliminary results
- ▷ Conclusions and perspectives

## 2D preliminary results

Mean-field TF approximation in 2D:

$$\Omega = \int d^2r \left[ \sum_{i=1}^{N_l} \left( \frac{|\nabla\phi_i|^2}{2m} + gn|\phi_i|^2 \right) + \frac{\pi n^2}{M} - \sum_{i=1}^{N_l} \epsilon_i |\phi_i|^2 - \mu n \right],$$

Method: iterative solution.

Preliminary:

- ▶ We find a solution of the binding problem for  $N_l = 1$ . More atoms can be bound for larger mass ratio.  
(given a bound state wavefunction  $\phi(\rho)$ , also  $\lambda\phi(\lambda\rho)$  is a solution)
- ▶ Not clear if two  $N + 1$  clusters bind

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## Conclusions

Binding of  $N$  heavy fermions by a light atom:  
for larger mass ratio more atoms can be bound.

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Binding of  $N$  heavy fermions by a light atom:  
for larger mass ratio more atoms can be bound.

- Exact results up to  $N = 5$
- **TF theory**: analytical and works for large  $N$
- **HF theory**: reproduces well energy and correlations at small and large  $N$

# Conclusions

Binding of  $N$  heavy fermions by a light atom:  
for larger mass ratio more atoms can be bound.

- Exact results up to  $N = 5$
- **TF theory**: analytical and works for large  $N$
- **HF theory**: reproduces well energy and correlations at small and large  $N$

Fermionic mixture in 1D:  
self-binding in a specific region of parameters.

# Perspectives

- Self binding in 2D?
- What is the minimum  $N$  to observe the self-bound state?  
...open question!

# Thank you for your attention!

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