

Wheeler-DeWitt equation and flat space holography

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Edinburgh, 8 September 2025

Spatial infinity

**Wheeler-DeWitt
equation and flat
space holography**

Marc Henneaux
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France and
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Introduction

Key Ingredients

The role of the
Wheeler-DeWitt
equation

Spatial infinity

Wheeler-DeWitt
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The role of the
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(based on M.H, Phys. Rev. Lett. **135** (2025) no.6, 061501,
arXiv :2506.02240 [hep-th]).

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**What is the role of Cauchy slices and spatial infinity in flat
space holography?**

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**What is the role of Cauchy slices and spatial infinity in flat
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Motivations : important understanding of “holography of
information” developed by Raju (alone and with collaborators).

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Motivations : important understanding of “holography of
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In AdS, information present in the bulk of a Cauchy slice is
available near its boundary.

Holography in AdS

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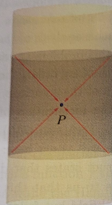
The role of the
Wheeler-DeWitt
equation

(picture taken from arXiv :2107.14802)

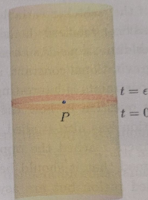
Holography in AdS

Wheeler-DeWitt
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space holography

(picture taken from arXiv :2107.14802)



(a)



(b)

Figure 1: A common misunderstanding of “holography” is that it only tells us that data on the timelike boundary of AdS can be used to reconstruct physics at the bulk point P as shown in the left subfigure. But this statement follows from the causal structure of AdS and does not require holography. Gravitational theories are genuinely holographic. In this paper we show how, in gravity, data on an infinitesimal time band (right subfigure) can be used to reconstruct physics in the bulk.

between a component of the asymptotic metric and the energy of the state. This analysis also reveals how the unusual localization of quantum information in quantum gravity is visible at

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More similar to spatial infinity than to null infinity!

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More similar to spatial infinity than to null infinity!
(or even the past of future null infinity)

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Constraints on canonical variables ("Gauss' law") -
diffeomorphism invariance

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Energy is a boundary observable.

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Energy is a boundary observable.

Non-locality of gravitational observables.

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Uncertainty principle

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Completeness of boundary observables.

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Completeness of boundary observables.

Note : In the Swampland program, it is expected that there is no
global symmetry (but asymptotic symmetries ok)

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Non-locality of gravitational observables.

Uncertainty principle

Completeness of boundary observables.

Note : In the Swampland program, it is expected that there is no
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These key features hold both for asymptotically AdS or
asymptotically flat spacetimes.

Differences between anti-de Sitter space and Minkowski space

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Degeneracy of vacuum in asymptotically Minkowski space
(BMS group)

Wheeler-DeWitt equation

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**The role of the
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(specific features of quantum gravity)

Wheeler-DeWitt equation

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Quantum version of the constraints :

Wheeler-DeWitt equation

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The role of the
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(specific features of quantum gravity)

Quantum version of the constraints :

$$\hbar^2 G_{ijmn} \frac{\delta}{\delta g_{ij}} \left(\frac{\delta \Psi}{\delta g_{mn}} \right) + R \sqrt{g} \Psi = 0$$
$$\left(\frac{\delta \Psi}{\delta g_{mn}} \right)_{|m} = 0$$

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(non-locality)

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(non-locality)

How does the BMS group act?

Wheeler-DeWitt equation

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(non-locality)

How does the BMS group act?

Known classically.

Hamiltonian formulation of the BMS symmetry

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**The role of the
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Formulation at spatial infinity indeed worked out some years ago.

Hamiltonian formulation of the BMS symmetry

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(no super-rotations, but ok for discussing problem of vacuum degeneracy)

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The role of the
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Generators of Poincaré transformations and pure supertranslations written 'à la ADM' as surface integrals at spatial infinity.

Hamiltonian formulation of the BMS symmetry

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Logarithmic supertranslations that are conjugate to the pure supertranslations are also present (“Goldstone bosons”).

Hamiltonian formulation of the BMS symmetry

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(can be used to “charge” the vacuum)

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(can be used to “charge” the vacuum)

These are all **boundary observables**, i.e., belong to the boundary algebra.

BMS and Wheeler-DeWitt

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Quantum formulation can then be worked out.

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The role of the
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Quantum formulation can then be worked out.

Best way to control the scalar product of physical states (formally infinite) is through the BRST extension of the formalism.

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BRST formulation of the Wheeler-DeWitt equation can be achieved.

BMS and Wheeler-DeWitt

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The BMS group acts in a BRST-compatible way.

BMS and Wheeler-DeWitt

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Neat separation between proper and improper gauge transformations,

BMS and Wheeler-DeWitt

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BRST formulation of the Wheeler-DeWitt equation can be achieved.

The BMS group acts in a BRST-compatible way.

Neat separation between proper and improper gauge transformations,

which correspond to exact or non-exact operators.

BMS and Wheeler-DeWitt

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**The role of the
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All tools are present to extend to asymptotically flat spaces the
analysis of the Wheeler-DeWitt equation performed in
arXiv :2107.14802

BMS and Wheeler-DeWitt

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(perturbative approach connecting the Wheeler-DeWitt equation with holography of information)

BMS and Wheeler-DeWitt

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Spatial infinity is thus also a good place to understand holography.