REGULAR BLACK HOLES FROM PURE GRAVITY: LESSONS AND PERSPECTIVES

PABLO BUENO

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Based on:

- [PB, Cano, Hennigar]
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- [PB, Cano, Hennigar, Murcia] PRD 2025 | PRL 2025 | 2509.19016
- [PB, Cano, Hennigar, Murcia, Vicente-Cano] PRD 2025
- [PB, Hennigar, Murcia] 2510.25823
- +WIP with:

Cano, Hennigar, Moreno, Murcia, van der Velde, Vicente-Cano

OUTLINE

★1. Regular black holes (RBHs)

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★2. RBHs from pure gravity: lessons

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- ★1. Regular black holes (RBHs)
- ★2. RBHs from pure gravity: lessons
- ★3. RBHs from pure gravity: perspectives

\star 1. Regular black holes

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 - ...In the absence of a dynamical framework, all these ideas are very poorly justified
- The success of all previous attempts at embedding RBHs into actual theories has been quite limited

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All curvature invariants remain finite everywhere

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- Understanding such effects is in general out of reach...

★ 2. RBHs from pure gravity: lessons

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- RBHs arise as the unique spherically symmetric solutions of Einstein gravity coupled to infinite towers of higher-curvature terms
- First complete dynamical models of matter collapse leading to the formation of regular black holes

 \star 2.1 Quasi-topological gravities

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- \circ Quasi-topological theories constructed at curvature orders: n=3 [Oliva, Ray; Myers, Robinson], n=4 [Dehghani, Bazrafshan, Mann, Mehdizadeh, Ghanaatian, Vahidinia], n=5 [Cisterna, Guajardo, Hassaine, Oliva] and $\forall n$ (and $\forall D\geq 5$) [PB, Cano, Hennigar; Moreno, Murcia].

Let W_{abcd} denote the Weyl tensor and Z_{ab} the traceless part of the Ricci tensor, then:

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$$\begin{split} & \mathcal{Z}_{(1)} = R \,, \\ & \mathcal{Z}_{(2)} = \frac{1}{(D-2)} \left[\frac{W_{abcd} W^{abcd}}{D-3} - \frac{4Z_{ab} Z^{ab}}{D-2} \right] + \frac{Z_{(1)}^2}{D(D-1)} \,, \\ & \mathcal{Z}_{(3)} = \frac{24}{(D-2)(D-3)} \left[\frac{W_{ac}{}^{bd} Z_b^a Z_b^c}{(D-2)^2} - \frac{W_{acde} W^{bcde} Z_b^a}{(D-2)(D-4)} + \frac{2(D-3)Z_b^a Z_c^b Z_c^c}{3(D-2)^3} + \frac{(2D-3)W^{ab}{}^{cd} W^{cd}_{ef} W^{ef}_{ab}}{12(D((D-9)D+26)-22)} \right] \\ & \quad + \frac{3Z_{(1)}Z_{(2)}}{D(D-1)} - \frac{2Z_{(1)}^3}{D^2(D-1)^2} \,, \\ & \mathcal{Z}_{(4)} = \frac{96}{(D-2)^2(D-3)} \left[\frac{(D-1)\left(W_{abcd} W^{abcd}\right)^2}{8D(D-2)^2(D-3)} - \frac{(2D-3)Z_e^f Z_f^e W_{abcd} W^{abcd}}{4(D-1)(D-2)^2} - \frac{2W_{acbd} W^{cefg} W^d_{efg} Z^{ab}}{D(D-3)(D-4)} \right. \\ & \quad - \frac{4Z_{ac} Z_{de} W^{bdce} Z_b^a}{(D-2)^2(D-4)} + \frac{(D^2-3D+3)\left(Z_a^b Z_b^a\right)^2}{D(D-1)(D-2)^3} - \frac{Z_a^b Z_b^c Z_c^d Z_d^a}{(D-2)^3} + \frac{(2D-1)W_{abcd} W^{aecf} Z^{bd} Z_{ef}}{D(D-2)(D-3)} \right] + \frac{4Z_{(1)}Z_{(3)} - 3Z_{(2)}^2}{D(D-1)} \,, \end{split}$$

$$\begin{split} \mathcal{Z}_{(5)} &= \frac{960(D-1)}{(D-2)^4(D-3)^2} \left[\frac{(D-2)W_{ghij}W^{ghij}W_{ab}^{cd}W_{cd}^{ef}W_{ef}^{ef}w_{ef}^{ab}}{40D(D^3-9D^2+26D-22)} + \frac{4(D-3)Z_{a}^{b}Z_{c}^{c}Z_{d}^{e}Z_{e}^{a}}{5(D-1)(D-2)^2(D-4)} \right. \\ &- \frac{(3D-1)W^{ghij}W_{ghij}W_{acde}W^{bcde}Z_{b}^{a}}{10D(D-1)^2(D-4)} - \frac{4(D-3)(D^2-2D+2)Z_{a}^{b}Z_{b}^{a}Z_{c}^{d}Z_{e}^{e}Z_{e}^{c}}{5D(D-1)^2(D-2)^2(D-4)} \\ &- \frac{(D-3)(3D-1)(D^2+2D-4)W^{ghij}W_{ghij}Z_{c}^{c}Z_{d}^{e}Z_{e}^{c}}{10D(D-1)^2(D+1)(D-2)^2(D-4)} + \frac{(5D^2-7D+6)Z_{b}^{f}Z_{b}^{g}W_{abcd}Z^{ac}Z^{bd}}{10D(D-1)^2(D-2)} \\ &+ \frac{(D-2)(D-3)(15D^5-148D^4+527D^3-800D^2+472D-88)W_{ab}C^{d}W_{cd}^{ef}W_{ef}^{ab}Z_{b}^{g}Z_{b}^{e}}{40D(D-1)^2(D-4)(D^5-15D^4+91D^3-277D^2+418D-242)} \\ &- \frac{2(3D-1)Z^{ab}W_{acbd}Z^{ef}W_{ef}^{ef}Z_{g}^{e}Z_{g}^{e}}{D(D^2-1)(D-4)} - \frac{Z_{b}^{b}Z_{c}^{c}Z_{cd}Z_{ef}W^{eefd}}{(D-1)^2(D-4)(D^2-6D+11)} + \frac{W_{ghij}W^{ghij}Z^{ac}Z^{bd}W_{abcd}}{20D(D-1)^2} \\ &- \frac{(D-2)(D-3)(3D-2)Z_{b}^{a}Z_{c}^{b}W_{adef}W^{efgh}W_{gh}^{dc}}{4(D-1)^2(D-4)(D^2-6D+11)} + \frac{W_{ghij}W^{ghij}Z^{ac}Z^{bd}W_{abcd}}{20D(D-1)^2} \\ &+ \frac{5Z_{(1)}Z_{(4)}-2Z_{(2)}Z_{(3)}}{D(D-1)} + \frac{6Z_{(1)}Z_{(2)}^2-8Z_{(1)}^2Z_{(3)}}{D^2(D-1)^2} \, . \end{split}$$

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$$\xrightarrow{g_{ab} \to g_{ab} + \beta_2 R_{ab} + \dots}} I_{\text{QT}} = \int \frac{\mathrm{d}^D x \sqrt{|g|}}{16\pi G} \left[R + \sum_n \alpha_n \mathcal{Z}_n \right]$$

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Here we will go **beyond** the perturbative regime...

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$$\mathrm{d} s^2 = -N(r,t)f(r,t)\mathrm{d} t^2 + rac{\mathrm{d} r^2}{f(r,t)} + r^2\mathrm{d}\Omega_{(D-2)}^2 \,.$$

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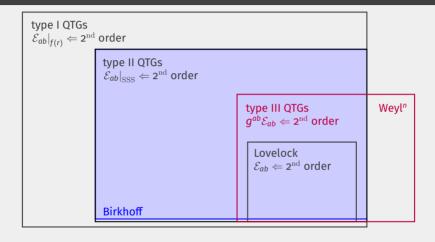
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[PB, HENNIGAR, MURCIA]

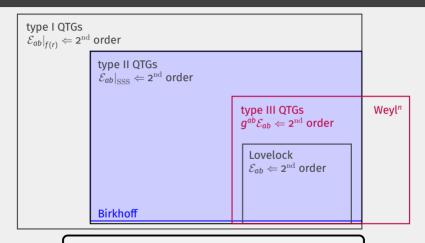
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Birkhoff ⇒ **Quasi-topological**

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- Overcoming this limitation ← consider **non-polynomial densities**. For instance:

$$\begin{split} \mathcal{Z}_{(3)} &= +\frac{R^3}{144} + \frac{1}{8}RW^{cd}_{ab}W^{ab}_{cd} - \frac{1}{4}RZ^b_aZ^a_b + \frac{5}{2}W^{cd}_{ab}W^{ef}_{cd}W^{ab}_{ef} \\ &+ 3W^{cd}_{ab}Z^a_cZ^b_d + Z^b_aZ^c_bZ^a_c + \frac{9}{2}\frac{W^{cd}_{ab}W^{ef}_{cd}W^{ef}_{ef}Z^b_gZ^b_hZ^i_iZ^g_iW^{lm}_{jk}W^{jk}_{lm}}{W^{cd}_{ab}Z^a_cZ^b_dW^{ef}_{ef}W^{ef}_{gh} - 2W^{cd}_{ab}W^{ef}_{cd}W^{ef}_{ef}Z^b_gZ^b_h} \,. \end{split}$$

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■ Similar densities of arbitrary order exist (identical recursion formulas as in the $D \ge 5$ polynomial cases).

A UNIFIED DIMENSIONAL REDUCTION

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As long as we inquire about spherically symmetric problems, the dynamics can be studied by means of this 2d action.

*2.2 RBHs from infinite towers of QT gravities

Both for polynomial $D \ge 5$ and non-polynomial D = 4 QT theories, the full non-linear EOM for a general spherically symmetric ansatz reduce to an algebraic equation for f(r):

$$\frac{1 - f(r)}{r^2} + \sum_{n=2}^{n_{\text{max}}} \alpha_n \frac{(D - 2n)}{(D - 2)} \left[\frac{1 - f(r)}{r^2} \right]^n = \frac{2M}{r^{D-1}}$$

where M is an integration constant proportional to the mass.

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Note that exponent tends to 2 as $n_{\max} \to \infty$...

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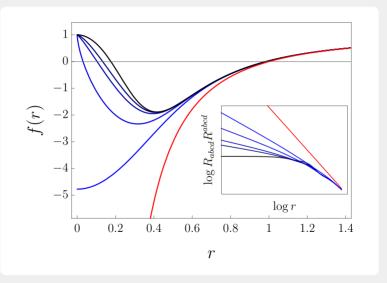
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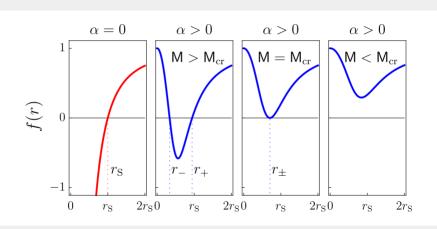
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Example:

$$\alpha_n = \frac{(D-2)}{(D-2n)} \alpha^{n-1} \quad \Rightarrow \quad f(r) = 1 - \frac{2Mr^2}{r^{D-1} + 2M\alpha}$$
(Hayward black hole)





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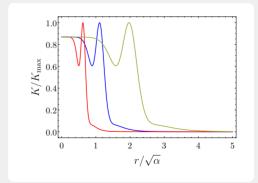
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- General proof
 [Frolov, Koek, Pinedo Soto, Zelnikov]



\star 2.3 Dynamical formation of RBHs

Collapse of a very thin spherical shell of dust

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■ Birkhoff's theorem ⇒ the exterior is given by the unique static and spherically symmetric vacuum solution.

[PB, Cano, Hennigar, Murcia

Find and solve the modified Israel junction conditions using the two-dimensional Horndeski effective action.

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, where $\Pi_{AB} \sim \delta I_{2d}^{\rm bdy}/\delta h^{AB}$

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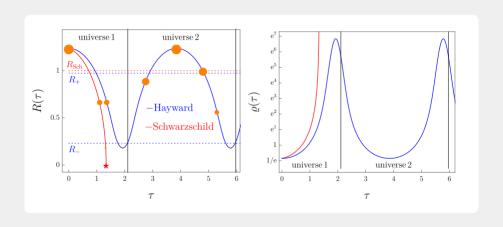
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- The shell/star grows up to $r = R_0$, at which point the process of collapse starts over.

[PB, Cano, Hennigar, Murcia, Vicente-Cano]



 \star 3. RBHs from pure gravity: perspectives

[PB, HENNIGAR, MURCIA, VICENTE-CANO]

■ Buchdahl limit

[PB, HENNIGAR, MURCIA, VICENTE-CANO]

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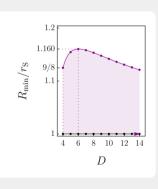
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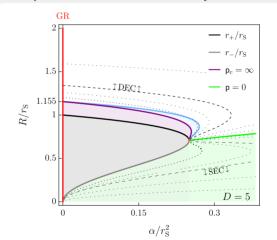
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- A generalized inequality can be found for QT models with RBHs. This is also saturated by infinite-central pressure, constant-density stars at least for broad classes of such models.

[PB, HENNIGAR, MURCIA, VICENTE-CANO]

Space of constant-density stars



[PB, Hennigar, Murcia, Vicente-Cano]

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- One way to avoid this ⇒ impose the dominant energy condition on matter (non-negative energy density for every observer and non-spacelike local energy flow). More generally, this suggests that less-naive matter couplings may be needed in order to preserve regularity beyond the vacuum sector.

[PB, Cano, Carballo-Rubio, Hennigar, Murcia, Vicente-Cano]

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- ∘ Stability on other backgrounds? \Rightarrow can be healed by including explicit non-local $f(\Box)$ terms

[PB, Cano, Hennigar, Moreno, Murcia, van der Velde

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[Barenboim, Frolov, Kunstatter]

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33

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