



ID de Contribution: 32

Type: Non spécifié

Shift-Invariant Orders of an Axionlike Particle

jeudi 28 septembre 2023 11:10 (20 minutes)

Usually, effective field theories (EFTs) for axion-like particles (ALPs) are built assuming a shift symmetry for the ALP due to the global $U(1)$ Peccei-Quinn (PQ) symmetry that is at the heart of the axion mechanism. However, it is generally believed that global symmetries, in particular axion shift symmetries, can only be approximate. Therefore, it is important to include shift-breaking interactions in the EFT description and find a clear way to implement the different power countings of the shift-conserving and shift-breaking sectors. Focusing on the flavorful effective Yukawa couplings to Standard Model fermions, I will present Jarlskog-like flavor invariants which act as order parameters for shift symmetry breaking of the axion. In this description, shift-breaking couplings are characterized in an explicit and flavor-invariant way and it is straightforward to give different power countings to the shift-conserving and shift-breaking sectors. I will discuss properties of the invariants like their CP parities, enabling us to make non-trivial connections between conservation of CP in the theory and an almost conserved shift-symmetry for the ALP. Finally, I will discuss how they can be used to identify shift-breaking contributions in observables like electric dipole moments.

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Classification de Session: HEP - Phenomenology