CM-P00061734

Archives

Ref.TH.2374-CERN

COMMENTS ON CONFINEMENT CRITERIA

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ABSTRACT

For a QED_2 model with $\text{SU}(n)$ flavour, the nature of the physical states space is more subtle than one expects on the basis of the loop criterion for confinement. One may have colour confinement without confinement of the fundamental flavour representation. We also discuss attempts to formulate confinement criteria in which the quark fields play a more fundamental role.

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1. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The standard picture for the possible mechanism for quark confinement which originates from ideas of Wilson¹⁾ and has been elaborated by several authors²⁾, uses mainly quasi-classical ideas and leads to certain consequences which partially justify a potential theoretical picture of spatially increasing interaction between "external" quarks. The support comes from lattice investigations^{1),3),4)} on the one hand and certain qualitative assumptions on the Callan Symanzik $\beta(g)$ functions⁴⁾ (assuming that such functions globally exist). Among the widely accepted consequences of this "test charge" picture, the Wilson loop criterion plays a significant role. One considers the Wilson (Euclidean) loop integral over the vector potential

$$\langle \exp i e \oint A_\mu dx^\mu \rangle \quad (1)$$

and studies the dependence of its logarithm on the extension of the enclosed surface. If this quantity is proportional to the area of the enclosed surface, one argues that this leads to quark confinement (via an energy increase with the separation distance between "quark probes"), whereas a linear dependence on the extension (i.e., the diameter of a square surface) yields the unconfining situation.

Within the continuous field theory framework the support for the loop criterion comes from the Schwinger model, i.e., QED_2 either in its massless or massive fermion version. A free A_μ field coupled to external charges leads to a surface increase of (1), whereas the direct computation of the model with quantum ψ 's shows the absence of charged states in the physical state space of the solution. Two aspects of this model are remarkable: first the loop confining criterion only works with test charges in a theory which contains only gluon fields. The test fails if quark fields are present, the logarithm of the loop integral in that case is easily demonstrated to be proportional to the linear dimensions. This fact seems to be implicitly known in the existing literature. It is sometimes argued that test charges are equivalent to infinitely heavy quarks. However, this philosophy taken literally (say in the massive QED_2) meets some obstacles and its validity in quantum field theory has never been rigorously established. The second aspect of the loop picture in two-dimensional gauge theories namely the implication of quark confinement (i.e., the non-appearance of the fundamental representation of flavour in the physical spectrum) is not borne out by

field theoretical reality of massless QED_2 with $\text{SU}(2)$ (isospin) flavour. As we will show in the next section, this model contains colourless physical states with half integer isospin. The introduction of a quark mass partially suppresses this phenomenon, however, for a particular value of one of the parameters of the theory (the θ angle $\theta = \pi$) colourless $I = \frac{1}{2}$ states will appear. These true bound states can be viewed as the relics of the $I = \frac{1}{2}$ physical states in the massless theory. In this way we are able to shed some light on one of Coleman's open problems⁵⁾. It is conceivable that in QCD_4 theories the quark fields are playing an even more essential role than in QED_2 . For example it may turn out that the loop test in the continuous field theory does not give the desired surface proportionality and yet the colour of quantum quarks may be confined. If this in future discussions turns out to be a relevant point, one would have to consider other criteria for confinement. The last section discusses this point in a (unfortunately) very sketchy and speculative way.

2. MODEL FOR UNCONFINED FUNDAMENTAL FLAVOUR

The confinement picture based on increasing potentials or on bilocal (or multilocal) gauge invariant strings leads to the disappearance of the fundamental flavour representation from the physical states. As a simple illustration imagine an $\text{SU}(n)$, $D = 2$ Schwinger model with Abelian gauge coupling. The non-confined physical states are expected to be "mesons" (i.e., they have ψ charge zero) of isospin $I = 0, 1, \dots$. This conclusion is, however, false; the physical sector rather contains also $I = \frac{1}{2}$ states. In other words, field theory leads to a more economical confinement mechanism than potential theory, only the charges coupled to gauge fields are confined, the fundamental flavour ($I = \frac{1}{2}$), appears among the physical states.

In the following we give a simple demonstration of this statement. In analogy to the ordinary Schwinger model we make the $\text{SU}(n)$ ansatz [unitary gauge of Ref. 6)]:

$$\psi^i(x) = e^{i\chi^i(x)} \psi_0^i(x) e^{i\chi^i(x)} \quad (2)$$

$$\chi(x) = \alpha j(x) + \beta \gamma^5 \tilde{j}(x) + i a \gamma^5 \Sigma(x) \quad (3)$$

$$\begin{aligned}
 j(x) &= j_e(u) + j_r(v) \quad , \quad \tilde{j}(x) = j_e(u) - j_r(v) \\
 \langle j_e(u) j_e(u') \rangle &= -\frac{m}{4\pi} \left\{ \ln(u-u'-i\epsilon) + i\frac{\pi}{2} \right\} \\
 \langle j_r(v) j_r(v') \rangle &= -\frac{m}{4\pi} \left\{ \ln(v-v'-i\epsilon) + i\frac{\pi}{2} \right\} \\
 u &= t+x \quad , \quad v = t-x
 \end{aligned} \tag{4}$$

and Σ is a free field of mass m .

From the validity of the Dirac and Maxwell equation:

$$i\gamma^\mu \partial_\mu \psi^i(x) + \lim_{\substack{\epsilon \rightarrow 0 \\ \epsilon^2 \neq 0}} \frac{e}{2} \gamma^\mu \left\{ A_\mu(x+\epsilon) \psi^i(x) + \psi^i(x) A_\mu(x-\epsilon) \right\} = 0 \tag{5}$$

$$\partial_\nu F^{\mu\nu} = -e J^\mu(x) \tag{6}$$

we obtain

$$e A_\mu(x) = (\alpha - \beta) \partial_\mu j(x) - a \epsilon_{\mu\nu} \partial^\nu \Sigma(x) \tag{7}$$

and

$$\beta = \frac{\sqrt{\pi}}{m} \quad , \quad m = \sqrt{\frac{m}{\pi}} e \tag{8}$$

In working out the Maxwell equation we have used the gauge invariant definition

$$J^\mu(x) = - \lim_{\substack{\epsilon \rightarrow 0 \\ \epsilon^2 \neq 0}} \text{Tr} \left[\gamma^0 \gamma^\mu (T(x+\epsilon, x) - \langle T(x+\epsilon, x) \rangle) \right] \tag{9}$$

where

$$T(x, y) = e^{iK^{(+)}(x, y)} \psi_0(x) \psi_0^\dagger(y) e^{iK^{(-)}(x, y)} \tag{10}$$

$$K^{(\pm)}(x, y) = e \int_x^y A^\mu(\pm) dz_\mu + \chi^{(\pm)}(x) - \chi^{(\pm)}(y) \tag{11}$$

This leads to

$$J^\mu(x) = \left(1 - \frac{m}{\sqrt{\pi}}\right) \partial^\mu \phi - \frac{ma}{\pi} \epsilon^{\mu\nu} \partial_\nu \Sigma(x) \quad (12)$$

and, therefore, via (7) to (6).

The value $a = \sqrt{\pi}/n$ leads to the canonical short-distance behaviour of gauge invariant composites expected from the super-renormalizability of the formal Lagrangian.

In contrast to the U(1) Schwinger model there is no value of the gauge parameter α such that

$$\psi^i(x) = e^{i \frac{\sqrt{\pi}}{n} \gamma^5 \Sigma(x)} \sigma^i \quad (13)$$

where σ is a true spurion, i.e., a field with zero dimension and spin. The "optimal" gauge fulfils

$$\dim \sigma^i = \text{spin } \sigma^i = \frac{1}{2} \left(1 - \frac{1}{n}\right) \quad (14)$$

The word "optimal" has the precise meaning that only for this particular gauge:

$$[\sigma^i, J_\mu(x)] = 0 \quad (15)$$

The operator σ^k still depends on the SU(n) vector current, i.e.,

$$[\sigma^k, J_\mu^i] \neq 0 \quad (16)$$

with

$$J_\mu^i = : \bar{\psi}_0 \gamma_\mu \frac{\lambda^i}{2} \psi_0 : = j_\mu^i \quad (17)$$

This free current is the result of the gauge invariant bilocal limiting procedure. The operator algebra of the physical Hilbert space contains exponential functions

of Σ (no infra-red problem since $m \neq 0$) and, hence, by a limiting procedure also the σ 's. They generate physical states (without mass gap) which carry the fundamental flavour but are colourless.

Now consider the case of massive QED_2 , i.e., the massive version of the Schwinger model. In that case one may introduce into the free spinor Lagrangian a "dummy" Lagrangian parameter θ by making a chiral transformation

$$M \bar{\psi} \psi \rightarrow M \cos \theta \bar{\psi} \psi + i M \sin \theta \bar{\psi} \gamma^5 \psi \quad (18)$$

The content of the free theory (i.e., the existence of two discrete symmetries P and C) is not changed. This is even more visible in the "bosonized" version: $m \cos 2\sqrt{\pi}\phi \rightarrow m \cos (2\sqrt{\pi}\phi + \theta)$. However, the switching on of the electromagnetic field converts it into a relevant Lagrangian parameter (a somewhat different way is to introduce θ as an apparent non-Lagrangian parameter through cosmological boundary behaviour of the electric field, see Coleman et al.⁷⁾). In an $\text{SU}(2)$ theory this procedure leads in the bosonized description to⁵⁾ ($m = \sqrt{2/\pi} e$)

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{L} = & \frac{1}{2} \partial_\mu \phi \partial^\mu \phi - \frac{m^2}{2} \phi^2 + \frac{1}{2} \partial_\mu \phi_3 \partial^\mu \phi_3 \\ & + M \cos(\sqrt{2\pi} \phi + \theta) \cos \sqrt{2\pi} \phi_3 \end{aligned} \quad (19)$$

where ϕ_3 is the isovector pseudoscalar potential. The natural $U(1)$ neutral $\text{SU}(2)$ non-trivial states are described by (we take a bosonic realization of these solitons) applying

$$\mathcal{L} \rightarrow i\sqrt{2\pi} \int_{-\infty}^x \dot{\phi}_3 dx' \quad (20)$$

to the vacuum.

With

$$j_{\mu 3} = -\frac{1}{\sqrt{\pi}} \epsilon_{\mu\nu} \partial^\nu \phi_3 \quad (21)$$

these states are members of an isotriplet. However, for $\theta = \pi$ we have the following interesting possibility: we use the states generated by the soliton operator with the smaller coefficient leading to the third component of isospin $\frac{1}{2}$:

$$e^{i\sqrt{\frac{\pi}{2}} \int_{-\infty}^x \dot{\phi}_3 dx'} \quad (22)$$

This in itself would not lead to a finite energy state, however multiplying it with a kink operator $K_\phi(x)$ in ϕ , similar to the quantum kink of the ϕ_2^4 theory, we do obtain a finite energy state in the form

$$K_\phi(x) e^{i\sqrt{\frac{\pi}{2}} \int_{-\infty}^x \dot{\phi}_3 dx'} |0\rangle \quad (23)$$

An explicit description of K can be given in terms of a properly modified Bogoliubov transformation⁸⁾. The only relevant property for our present use is that K_ϕ "rotates" ϕ into $-\phi$ and therefore compensates the undesired change of sign arising from using (22) instead of (23).

So the mass term acts like a filter for neutral $I_3 = \frac{1}{2}$ states, only for $\theta = \pi$ those states pass and come out. The appearance of $I = \frac{1}{2}$ physical states in the massless Schwinger model is the explanation for one of Coleman's problems at the end of his paper⁵⁾.

3. CONFINEMENT AND BILOCALS, SPURIONIZATION OF COLOUR

The short-coming of the loop criterion discussed in the previous section and the possibly more dominant role of quantized quark fields in $D = 4$ makes it desirable to find alternative tests for colour confinement.

In two-dimensional theories of colour confinement the gauge invariant bilocals ("dipole operators")

$$\psi(x) \exp i e \int_x^y A_\mu dz^\mu \psi(y)^\dagger \quad (24)$$

turn out to be very useful⁹⁾. For the non-Abelian case the A_μ are matrices, the integral is path-ordered and a trace over colour indices is to be taken. The short

distance problem involved in the ordering of the exponential and the handling of the end-point singularities is simple, thanks to the super-renormalizability of $D = 2$ gauge theories.

Let us now look at the behaviour of gauge invariant observable σ in gauge invariant "dipole states":

$$\langle 0 | D^\dagger(x, y) O(z) D(x, y) | 0 \rangle \quad (25)$$

In order to talk about normalizable states we should perform the well-known quantum field theoretical smearing in x and y which we will not do in order to keep our formulas simple.

The existence of charged sectors would then come about from the asymptotic behaviour of neutral states: apart from small-distance fluctuations the $+$ and $-$ charges are expected to stabilize at the ends of the dipole if the separation increases and the expectation values are expected to converge in the following sense

$$\langle D^\dagger(x, y) O(z) D(x, y) \rangle \underset{y \rightarrow \infty}{\sim} \langle \psi(x) | O(z) | \psi(x) \rangle \cdot F(\text{path}) \quad (26)$$

The second factor contains all the complicated dependence on how one goes with y "behind the moon"; all the σ dependence is contained in the first factor which describes the σ expectation value in some state tentatively written as $\psi|0\rangle$.

This picture of the reconstruction of charge sectors in a theory of neutral dipoles is an extrapolation of the results on sector construction in the algebraic field theory for gauge invariance of the first kind¹⁰⁾.

The most prominent observables σ which one may be interested in are the charge density, the energy density and their fluctuations:

$$O(z) = \begin{cases} j_0(z), j_0(z_1) j_0(z_2), \dots \\ \mathcal{H}(z), \mathcal{H}(z_1) \mathcal{H}(z_2), \dots \end{cases} \quad (27)$$

On the other hand, in the presence of colour confinement, one expects no stabilization for increasing distances. In particular the expectation value of $j_0(z)$ should

reveal that charges do not stabilize at the end-points of strings. This picture of non-confinement versus confinement works for all known two-dimensional models. Consider the bilocals in the massive (or massless) Schwinger model⁹⁾

$$D(x, y) = N(x, y) \exp i \sqrt{\pi} \left\{ \gamma^5 \phi(x) - \int_x^y \epsilon^{\mu\nu} \partial_\nu \phi dx'_\mu - \gamma^5 \phi(y) \right\}$$

$$N(z) = -\frac{1}{2\pi} \begin{pmatrix} -\frac{i}{2^* - 2^*} & c \\ c & -\frac{i}{2^* - 2^*} \end{pmatrix} \quad (28)$$

The exponential is normal ordered in the following way: first the line integral is normal ordered and second the $\phi(x)$ and $\phi(y)$ exponentials are normal ordered relative to the line integral (but not with respect to themselves). Here ϕ is a solution of the massive (mass m) Sine-Gordon equation.

The electromagnetic field and the current expressed in terms of ϕ are:

$$j_\mu = -\frac{1}{\sqrt{\pi}} \epsilon_{\mu\nu} \partial^\nu \phi$$

$$F_{\mu\nu} = m \epsilon_{\mu\nu} \phi \quad (29)$$

It is known that the massive Sine-Gordon model does not lead to charge sectors. Technically speaking, this means that the dipole states do not approach a stable limit. Only in the case $m \rightarrow 0$, which is equivalent to the switching off of electromagnetism, the dipole states converge and the $\psi|0\rangle$ in formula (26) is a local charged field which generates the topological charge sectors of the Sine-Gordon equation.

Therefore this intuitively reasonable picture of confinement is a good candidate for a general confinement criterion in two dimensional gauge theories. In general it may not be a very manageable criterion. A formula in terms of Euclidean functional integrals using concepts of integration over winding gauge classes or instanton solutions¹¹⁾ may be preferable. Here a simplifying idea may be the understanding of confinement in terms of colour "spurionization"¹²⁾ (or condensation in analogy with the BCS theory) expressed by the non-vanishing gauge invariant 1-point function $[U(1) \text{ flavour}]$:

$$\langle \hat{\psi} \rangle \neq 0, \quad \hat{\psi}(x) = \psi(x) e^{ie \int_x^\infty A_\mu^L dz^\mu} \quad (30)$$

where A_μ^L is the longitudinal part of the gauge field. The decomposition of A_μ into A_μ^{Tr} and A_μ^L makes perfect sense in the Euclidean functional integral. The main A_μ configuration giving the non-vanishing contribution has non-integer winding number¹²⁾. For non-trivial flavour groups, say $SU(N)$, the spurionization picture is more complicated (see discussion of previous section) and one obtains additional insight by comparing this model with the simple $U(1)$ model.

In the generalization of these ideas to $D = 4$ gauge theories one has to pay attention to avoid any artificially generated confinement. A bilocal state of the form (36) would be in agreement with Gauss law (the electric flux goes through a line or thin tube). However, forcing all the flux through a thin tube is expected to lead to infinite energy states in the limit $(x-y) \rightarrow \infty$ which have nothing to do with a natural confinement mechanism. Here one should allow for more general flux pictures in the dipole operators (trace over colour indices):

$$D(x,y) = \psi(x) T \exp \left\{ ie \int G^\mu(x,y;z) A_\mu(z) dz^\mu \right\} \psi^\dagger(y) \quad (31)$$

For $t_x = t_y$ one may think of a "Coulombic" shape of the kernel G :

$$G^\mu = \begin{cases} 0 & \mu = 0 \\ G^i(\vec{x}, \vec{y}; z) \delta(t_z - t_x) \end{cases} \quad (32)$$

$$\vec{G}(\vec{x}, \vec{y}; z) = -\vec{\nabla}_z \left(\frac{1}{|\vec{x}-\vec{z}|} - \frac{1}{|\vec{y}-\vec{z}|} \right)$$

with such a general form of the charge "backflow" between x and y we obtain gauge invariant dipoles in terms of which the confinement discussion can be more naturally formulated. Note that this consideration is very formal, we have not spelled out which ordering will lead to a gauge invariant result¹³⁾.

Again we expect the colour charge instability at the end-points and the increase of energy and energy fluctuations to be the signals for confinement.

We do not want to propose this definition of confinement as a practical criterion; it is too much related to the detailed dynamics of the system. A computationally more realistic criterium would emerge if colour confinement goes through a "colour spurionization" mechanism. This is the case in two-dimensional model theories where the operator (gauge invariant)

$$\hat{\psi}(x) = \psi(x) e^{i \int_{-\infty}^x A_r^L(z) dz} \quad (33)$$

has a non-vanishing expectation value through functional integration over induced half-integer instanton configurations¹⁴⁾

$$\langle \hat{\psi} \rangle \neq 0 \quad (34)$$

Although we have become used to the idea¹⁵⁾ of generating space-spin from "internal (colour) spin" and therefore consider (33), which requires the opposite mechanism, not as absolutely absurd, we feel that there are many other possibilities of "spurionization" of colour in the U(1) flavour case. For example the space spin may be carried by self-dual Majorana fields in which case one would like to show

$$\langle \hat{\psi} \hat{\psi} \rangle \neq 0$$

where $\hat{\psi}$ is some gauge invariant $\hat{\psi}$ similar to the one used in (33). An understanding of such colour spurionization phenomena in physical (Minkowski) space presumably requires better insight into the field theory of monopoles. Such speculation is based on the fact that the understanding of two-dimensional "bosonization" of charge has turned out to be helpful for the QED₂ confinement problem. On the other hand, two dimensional confining models can be very efficiently understood in terms of "unusual" field configurations¹²⁾. It is in this direction that we entertain some hopes for the understanding of D = 4 colour confinement.

Acknowledgements

The authors wish to thank Prof. J. Prentki and the Theoretical Physics Division for the kind hospitality extended to them.

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