

QCD Chiral Phase Diagram from Weak fRG Equation

< INT Workshops in Autumn 2025 >

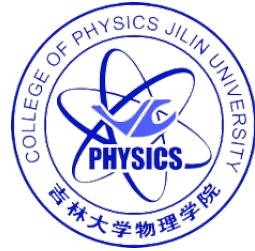
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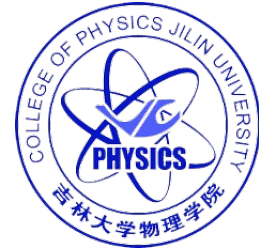
November 3rd, 2025

Content



- **Introduction**
- **Functional renormalization group (fRG) setup**
 - FRG setups for QCD fermionic potential: LPA'
 - Gluonic sector and running coupling
- **Searching for the weak solution of fRG equations**
 - Why divergence of 4-fermi matters?
 - Weak form of the RG equations
 - Rankine-Hugoniot condition
 - Method of characteristics
- **Results and discussions**
- **Summary**
- **References**

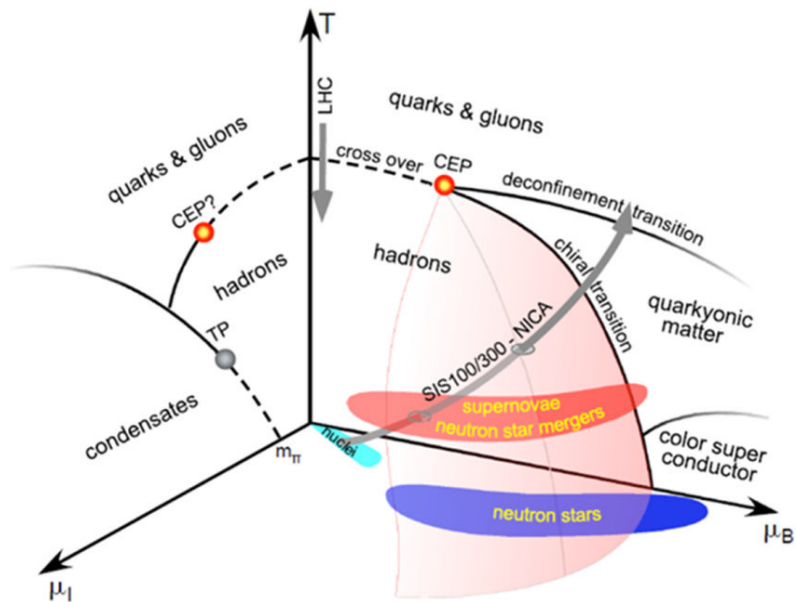
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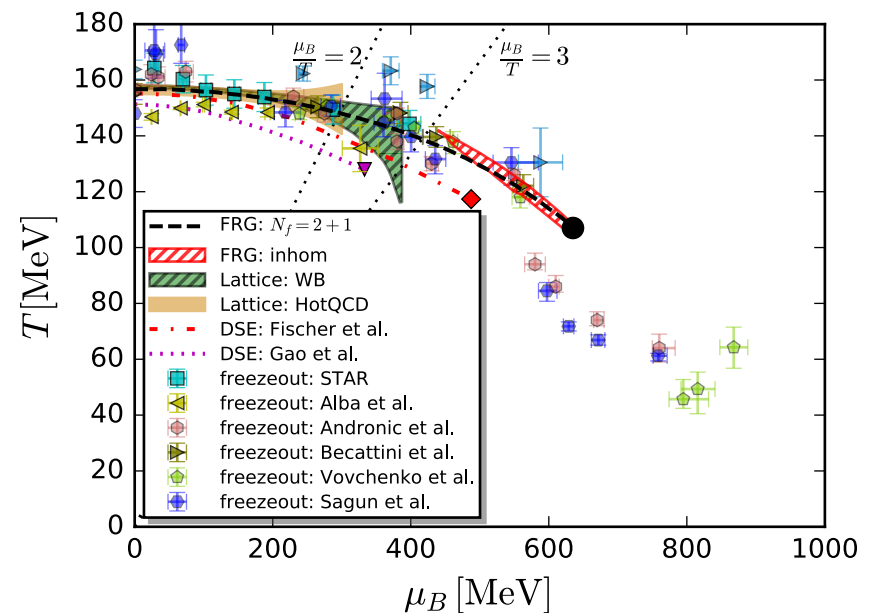
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Introduction

- Quantum Chromodynamics (QCD) and its (chiral) phase structure



[1] Peter Senger. Probing dense QCD matter in the laboratory—The CBM experiment at FAIR. Phys. Scripta, 95(7):074003, 2020



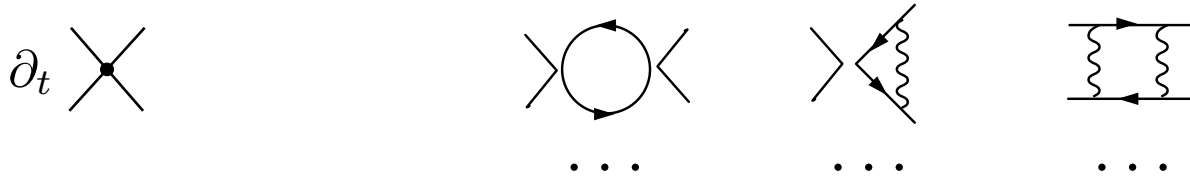
[2] Wei-jie Fu, Jan M. Pawłowski, and Fabian Rennecke. QCD phase structure at finite temperature and density. Phys. Rev. D, 101(5):054032, 2020.

Introduction

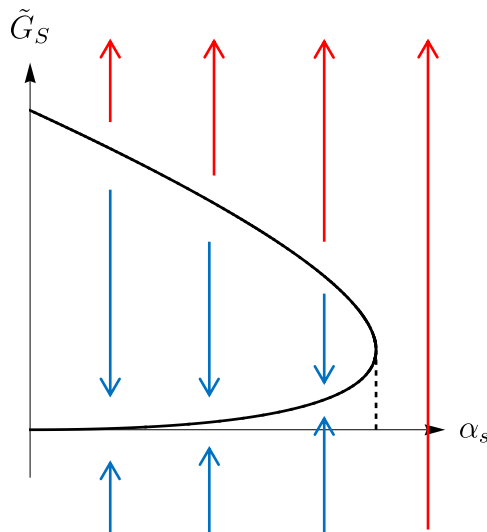
○ Renormalization group acrossing the critical scale [3]

E.g.: RG flow of 4-fermion coupling in massless gauged-NJL, with fixed gauge coupling.

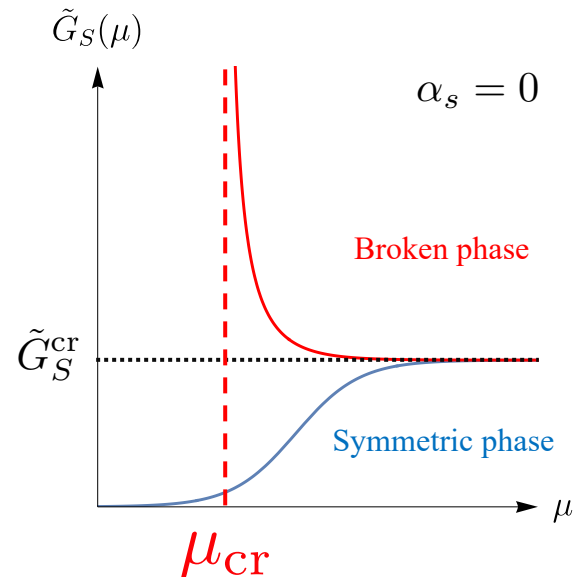
$$\partial_t \tilde{G}_S = -2\tilde{G}_S + A\tilde{G}_S^2 + B\tilde{G}_S\alpha_s + C\alpha_s^2$$



Flowing structure and phases:



Flow w.r.t. RG scale:



Divergence of the
4-fermion coupling

Signal of
Spontaneous Chiral
Symmetry
breaking

Introduction

- Dynamical bosonization and meson fluctuations

4-fermion coupling?

Chiral susceptibility!

$$\text{X} \sim \frac{\delta^2 \Gamma_k}{\delta (\bar{\psi}\psi) \delta (\bar{\psi}\psi)} \quad \chi = \frac{1}{\mathcal{V}} \frac{\partial^2 W_k}{\partial m^2} = \int_x \langle (\bar{\psi}\psi)_x (\bar{\psi}\psi)_0 \rangle_k$$

Divergence arises from the massless mode propagation:

$$\text{X} \ni \text{X} \text{---} \text{X} \sim \frac{1}{p^2}$$

Emergence of the mesonic resonances: See, e.g. W.-j. Fu, et al. [2] and J. Braun, et al. [4].

$$\partial_t \phi_k^a(p) = \int_q \boxed{\partial_t \mathcal{A}_k(q-p, q)} \bar{\psi}(q-p) \Gamma^a \psi(q)$$

⇓

Enters the flow, tuned to absorb the flow of 4-fermion

Introduction

- Question:

Is the mesonic fluctuations necessary to get into the broken phase?

- “Conclusion” from this work:

No in principle, and yes in practice.

- No: See, e.g, K.-I. Aoki, et al. [5].

Weak solution of fRG.

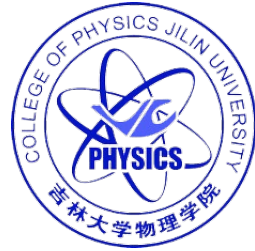
- Yes: See, e.g W.-J. Fu, et al. [2].

Mesonic fluctuation
and chiral criticality

- In this work:

- Functional renormalization group (fRG) equation for QCD (fermion) in the medium;
- Local potential approximation (LPA) and its modification, ladder and non-ladder approximations.
- Weak solution;
- Phase diagram in (μ_B, T) -plane.

Content



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FRG setup

○ FRG setups for QCD fermionic potential: LPA'

Mean-field
approximation

QCD action at UV:

$$S_{\text{bare}}[\Phi] = \int_x \left[\frac{1}{4} F_{\mu\nu}^a F_{\mu\nu}^a + \frac{1}{2\xi} (\partial_\mu A_\mu^a)^2 + \bar{\psi} (\not{\partial} + i g_s \not{A} - m_l - \mu_q \gamma_4) \psi \right]$$

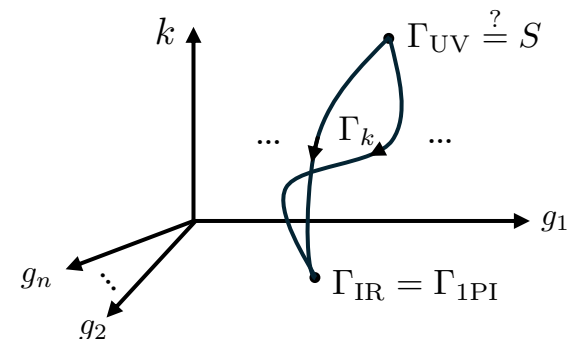
QCD action at IR:

$$\Gamma_k[\Phi] = \int_x \left[\frac{Z_k^A}{4} F_{\mu\nu}^a F_{\mu\nu}^a + \frac{Z_k^A}{2\xi} (\partial_\mu A_\mu^a)^2 + Z_k^\psi \bar{\psi} (\not{\partial} + i g_s \not{A} - \mu_q \gamma_4) \psi - V_k(\psi, \bar{\psi}) \right]$$

- Flow equation of average one-partical effective action (1PIEA)

Wetterich equation [6]:

$$\partial_t \Gamma_k[\Phi] = \frac{1}{2} \text{STr} \left[\left(\Gamma_k^{(2)} + \mathcal{R}_k \right)^{-1} \partial_t \mathcal{R}_k \right]$$



FRG setup

- Regulator function: **sharp cutoff** $t = \log(k/\Lambda)$

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{R}_k^\psi(|\mathbf{p}|) &= Z_k^\psi i \not{\mathbf{p}} r_k^\psi(|\mathbf{p}|/k), \\ \mathcal{R}_k^A(|\mathbf{p}|) &= Z_k^A \mathbf{p}^2 r_k^\psi(|\mathbf{p}|/k), \\ r_k^A = r_k^\psi &= \frac{1}{\theta(|\mathbf{p}|/k - 1)} - 1. \end{aligned} \quad \partial_t \Gamma_k[\Phi] = -\frac{1}{2} \int_{p, \text{shell}} \text{str} \log \Gamma_k^{(2)}$$

$$\Gamma_{k,a,b}^{(2)} = \begin{pmatrix} H_{BB} & H_{BF} \\ H_{FB} & H_{FF} \end{pmatrix}$$

$$\int_{p, \text{shell}} \equiv T \sum_{n=-\infty}^{\infty} \int \frac{d^3 \mathbf{p}}{(2\pi)^3} k \delta(|\mathbf{p}| - k) \quad \begin{matrix} \partial_t \mathcal{R}_k \\ \downarrow \end{matrix}$$

- Fierz subspace projection $\sigma = \bar{\psi} \psi$

$$V_k(\psi, \bar{\psi}) \ni (\bar{\psi} \lambda^I \psi)^2 + (\bar{\psi} \lambda^I i \gamma_5 \psi)^2 + \dots \quad \Longrightarrow \quad V_k(\psi, \bar{\psi}) \equiv V(\sigma; t)$$

- Large-N leading order

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{\overrightarrow{\delta}}{\delta \psi^T(-p_\psi)} \mathcal{V}_k^\psi \frac{\overleftarrow{\delta}}{\delta \psi(q_\psi)} &\rightarrow 0, & \frac{\overrightarrow{\delta}}{\delta \bar{\psi}(p_\psi)} \mathcal{V}_k^\psi \frac{\overleftarrow{\delta}}{\delta \bar{\psi}^T(-q_\psi)} &\rightarrow 0, \\ \frac{\overrightarrow{\delta}}{\delta \psi^T(-p_\psi)} \mathcal{V}_k^\psi \frac{\overleftarrow{\delta}}{\delta \bar{\psi}^T(-q_\psi)} &\rightarrow +\mathbf{1}_{\text{total}} \int_x e^{-i(p_\psi - q_\psi)} \partial_\sigma V(\sigma), & \frac{\overrightarrow{\delta}}{\delta \bar{\psi}(p_\psi)} \mathcal{V}_k^\psi \frac{\overleftarrow{\delta}}{\delta \psi(q_\psi)} &\rightarrow -\mathbf{1}_{\text{total}} \int_x e^{-i(p_\psi - q_\psi)} \partial_\sigma V(\sigma). \end{aligned}$$

FRG setup

- General structure of the flow equation

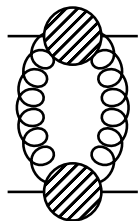
$$\partial_t V(\sigma; t) - \eta_\psi \sigma \partial_\sigma V(\sigma; t) = -\frac{1}{2} \int_{p, \text{shell}} \text{tr} \left[\log S^{-1}(p_\psi^-) + \log (S^{(T)}(p_\psi^+))^{-1} \right] + \frac{1}{2} \int_{p, \text{shell}} \text{tr}' \log \left\{ \delta^{ab} \delta_{\mu\nu} + \mathcal{A}_{\mu\nu}^{ab} + \underline{\underline{\mathcal{B}_{\mu\nu}^{ab}}} \right\}$$



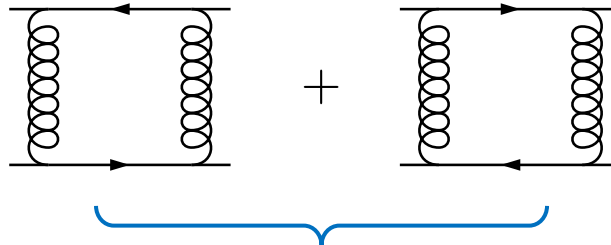
- Truncating the loops: “ladder” and “non-ladder” approximations

$$\text{tr}' \log(1 + \mathcal{A} + \mathcal{B}) = - \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{(-1)^n}{n} \text{tr}' (\mathcal{A} + \mathcal{B})^n$$

E.g.: (Part of) RG flow of 4-fermion coupling.

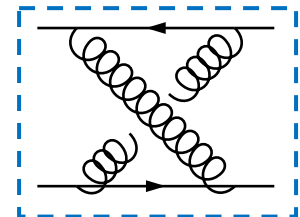


Ladder $\rightarrow$



Color factors: $\left(\frac{C_2}{4N_c} \right)^2 N_c \propto N_c$

Non-ladder diagram:



$\left(\frac{C_2}{4N_c^2} \right) \propto \frac{1}{N_c}$

FRG setup

- Partial differential equations [7]

$$\partial_t V(\sigma; t) = -F(\partial_\sigma V, \sigma; t)$$

$$\partial_t \text{ (shaded circle with 4 fermion lines) } = + \text{ (circle with shaded segment and cross) } - \frac{1}{2} \text{ (circle with shaded segment and cross, wavy line loop) }$$

$$\partial_t V(\sigma; t) - \eta_\psi \sigma \partial_\sigma V(\sigma; t) = -\frac{1}{2} \int_{p, \text{shell}} \text{tr} \left[\log S^{-1}(p_\psi^-) + \log (S^{(T)}(p_\psi^+))^{-1} \right] + \frac{1}{2} \int_{p, \text{shell}} \text{tr}' \log \left\{ \delta^{ab} \delta_{\mu\nu} + \mathcal{A}_{\mu\nu}^{ab} + \mathcal{B}_{\mu\nu}^{ab} \right\}$$

Ladder:

$$\begin{aligned} \partial_t V(\sigma; t) &= \eta_\psi \sigma \partial_\sigma V(\sigma; t) \\ &- T \sum_n \frac{k^3}{2\pi^2} \log \left(\omega_{\psi, n}^2 + (\sqrt{k^2 + \mathcal{M}^2} - \mu_q)^2 \right) \\ &- T \sum_n \frac{k^3}{2\pi^2} \log \left(\omega_{\psi, n}^2 + (\sqrt{k^2 + \mathcal{M}^2} + \mu_q)^2 \right), \end{aligned}$$

Non-ladder:

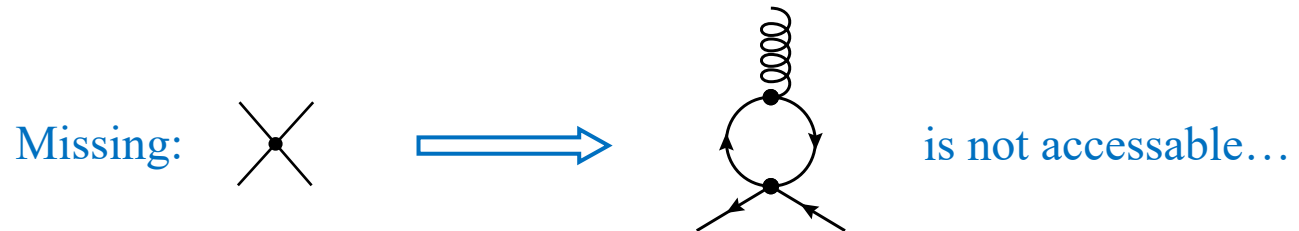
$$\begin{aligned} \partial_t V(\sigma; t) &= \eta_\psi \sigma \partial_\sigma V(\sigma; t) \\ &- \frac{1}{2} \left[\text{Flow}_k^{\text{N.L.,-}}(\sigma, M_\psi) + \text{Flow}_k^{\text{N.L.,+}}(\sigma, M_\psi) \right]. \end{aligned}$$

Now, the fermionic sector is ready, leaving gluonic sector (gauge coupling) unknown.

FRG setup

○ Gluonic sector and running coupling

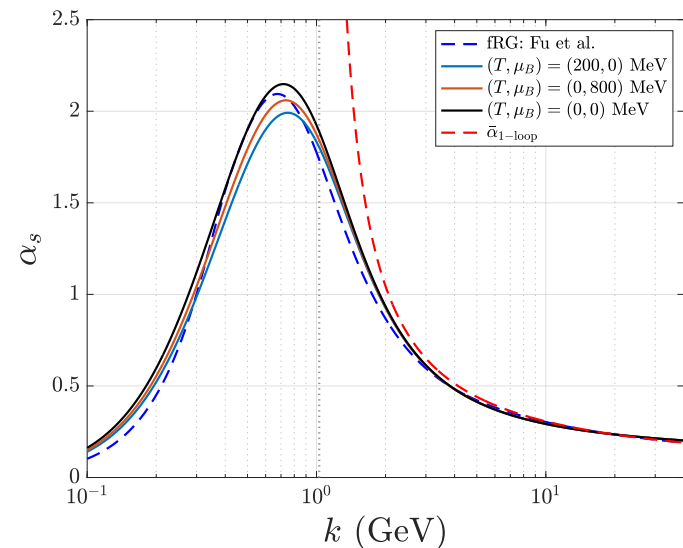
- Difficulty: running coupling



- (Quark-gluon) gauge coupling as input

Renormalized gauge coupling:

$$\alpha_s = \frac{1}{Z_k^A} \frac{\bar{g}_s^2}{4\pi}$$

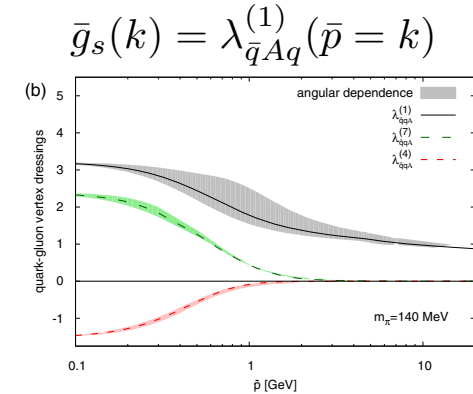


FRG setup

- Quantitative result of the quark-gluon dressing

Padé approximation to fit the running coupling [8]:

$$\bar{g}_s(k) = \frac{0.2301 + 0.4411 k + 0.3967 k^2}{0.0832 + 0.0838 k + 0.4502 k^2}$$



A. K. Cyrol, et al. [8]

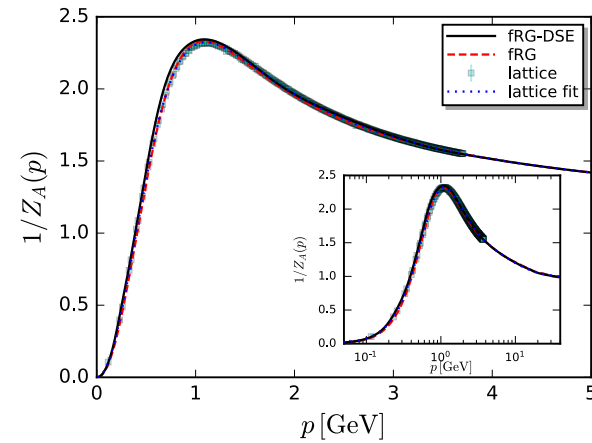
- Quantitative result of the gluon propagator wave function $Z_k^A = Z_{T,\mu_q}^{\text{trans}}(p = k)$

HTL approximation to the thermal mass
(quark vacuum polarization):

$$Z_{T,\mu_q}^{\text{trans}}(p) = Z_{\text{vac}}(p) + \frac{4\pi}{3} \alpha_S^{\text{HTL}} \left(T^2 + \frac{3}{\pi^2} \mu_q^2 \right) \frac{1}{p^2}$$

Gluon dressing at vanishing temperature and quark chemical potential: (see, e.g., F. Gao, et al. [9].)

$$Z_{\text{vac}}^{-1}(k^2) = \frac{k^2 \frac{a^2 + k^2}{b^2 + k^2}}{M_G^2(k^2) + k^2 [1 + c \log(d^2 k^2 + e^2 M_G^2(k^2))]^\gamma}$$



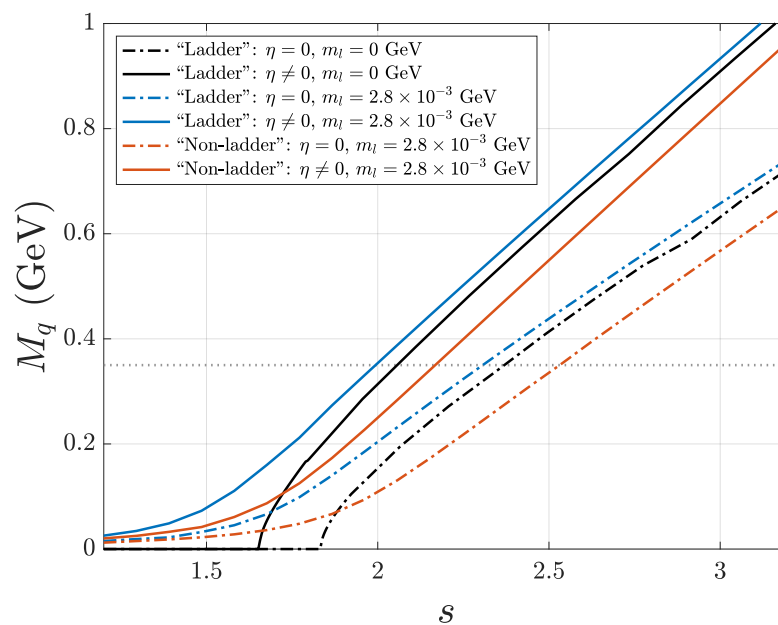
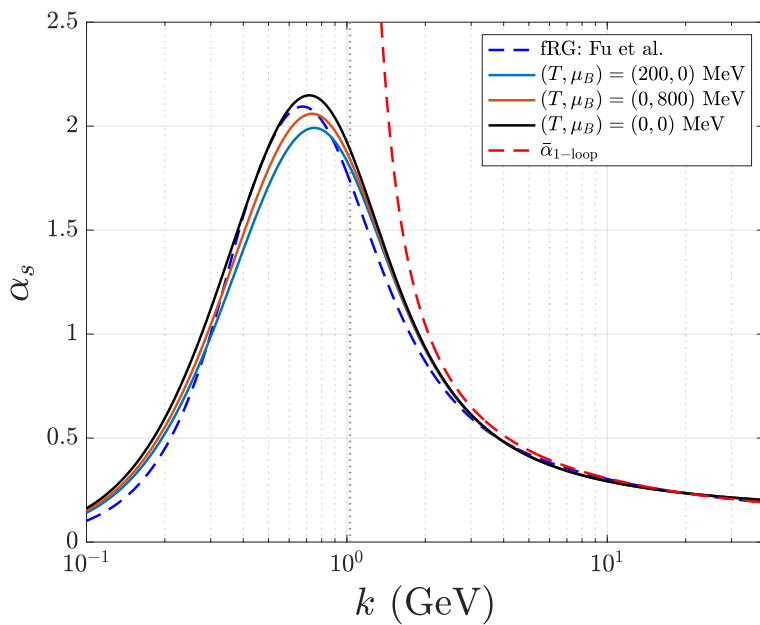
F. Gao, et al. [9]

Flavor: (2+1) at physical point.

FRG setup

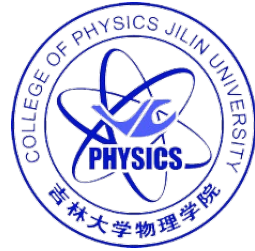
- Rescale the gauge coupling: controlling IR quantities

$$\alpha_s \rightarrow \bar{\alpha}_s = s \cdot \alpha_s$$



PDE closed.

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Searching for the weak solution of fRG equations

○ Why divergence of 4-fermi matters?

$$\sigma = \bar{\psi}\psi$$

- Center object:

Fermionic potential

$$\partial_t V(\sigma; t) = -F(\partial_\sigma V, \sigma; t)$$

- Defining:

Mass function

4-fermion coupling

$$M(\sigma; t) \equiv \partial_\sigma V(\sigma; t), \quad G(\sigma; t) \equiv \partial_\sigma^2 V(\sigma; t)$$

- “Problem” we meet:

E.g., chiral limit

$$\underbrace{|G(0^\pm; t_c^+)|}_{\text{Critical scale}} \rightarrow \infty \implies \begin{cases} M(0^+; t < t_c) \neq M(0^-; t < t_c) & \text{Discontinuity} \\ \partial_\sigma V(0^+; t < t_c) \neq \partial_\sigma V(0^-; t < t_c) & \text{Non-analyticity} \end{cases}$$

At some points, flow equation is not defined below the critical scale.

(* Possible solution: divide the field space, e.g.: K.-I. Aoki et al. PTEP, 2013:043B04 [7];

Singularities appears elsewhere @ finite chemical potential or beyond chiral limit. *)

Searching for the weak solution of fRG equations

○ Weak form of the RG equations

- Original RG equation vs. **weak form** of the RG equation

$$\begin{array}{l}
 \partial_t V(\sigma; t) = -F(\partial_\sigma V, \sigma; t) \\
 \text{Deformation: } \Downarrow_{\partial_\sigma} \\
 \text{Original RG: } \partial_t M(\sigma; t) = -\partial_\sigma F(M(\sigma; t), \sigma; t) = -\frac{\partial F}{\partial M} \cdot \frac{\partial M}{\partial \sigma} - \frac{\partial F}{\partial \sigma} \\
 \text{“Conservation law”} \\
 \text{Arbitrary smooth test function} \\
 \lim_{\sigma \rightarrow \pm\infty} \varphi(\sigma; t) = 0, \quad \lim_{t \rightarrow -\infty} \varphi(\sigma; t) = 0 \quad \Downarrow \\
 \text{Weak RG: } \int_{-\infty}^0 dt \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} d\sigma \left(M \frac{\partial \varphi}{\partial t} + F \frac{\partial \varphi}{\partial \sigma} \right) = - \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} d\sigma (M \varphi)_{t=0} \\
 \text{Singularity at some points} \\
 \text{Discontinuity is allowed!}
 \end{array}$$

- Weak solution of the weak RG equation

Mass function satisfies the weak RG equation is the **weak solution**.

- Containing finite numbers of discontinuity **points** (σ -direction);
 - Satisfies the **original RG** elsewhere.

Searching for the weak solution of fRG equations

○ Rankine-Hugoniot condition

- Condition for weak solution

$$\left(M^{(L)} - M^{(R)} \right) d\sigma^* = \left[F(M^{(L)}) - F(M^{(R)}) \right] dt.$$

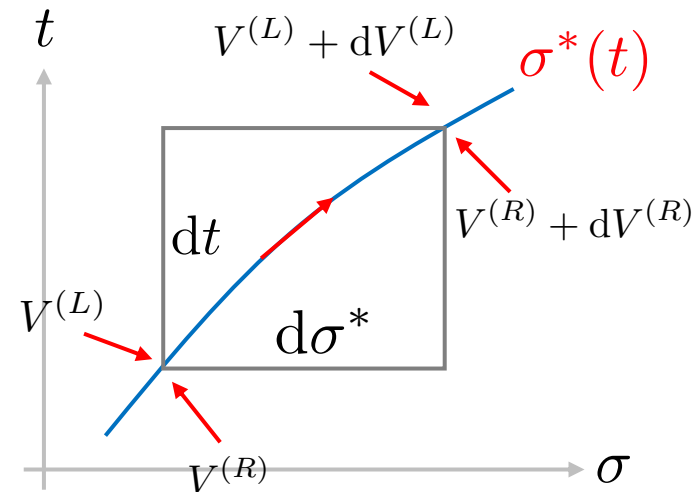
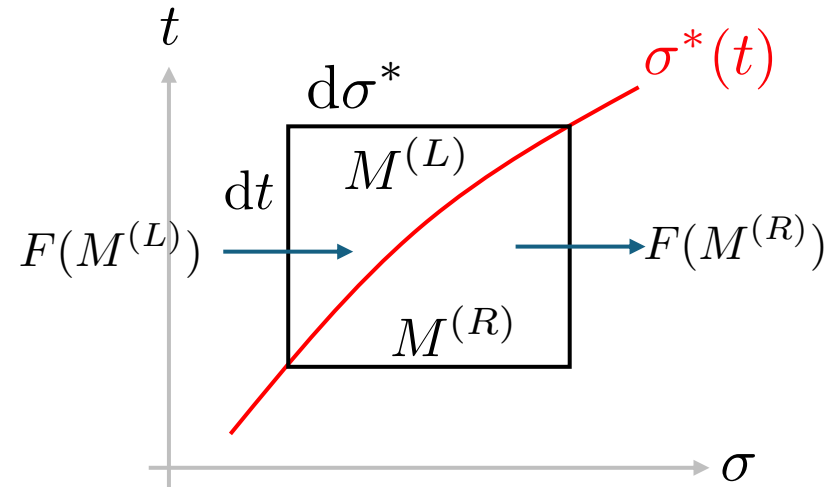
- Continuity condition from “conserved charge”

$$\begin{aligned} dV^{(L/R)}(\sigma^*(t)) &= \frac{\partial V}{\partial \sigma} \Big|_{(L/R)} d\sigma^* + \frac{\partial V}{\partial t} \Big|_{(L/R)} dt \\ &= M^{(L/R)} d\sigma^* - F(M^{(L/R)}) dt. \end{aligned}$$



$$dV^{(L)}(\sigma^*(t); t) - dV^{(R)}(\sigma^*(t); t) = 0.$$

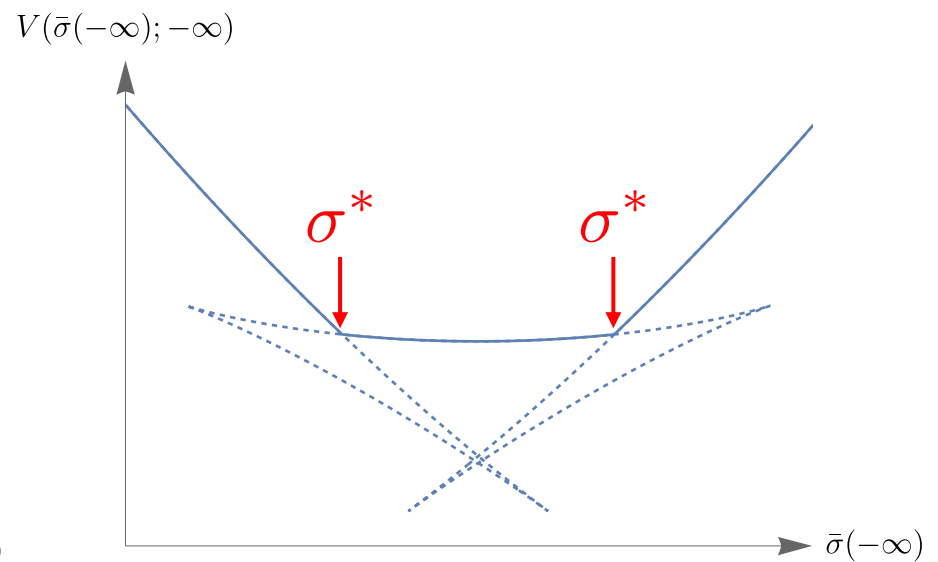
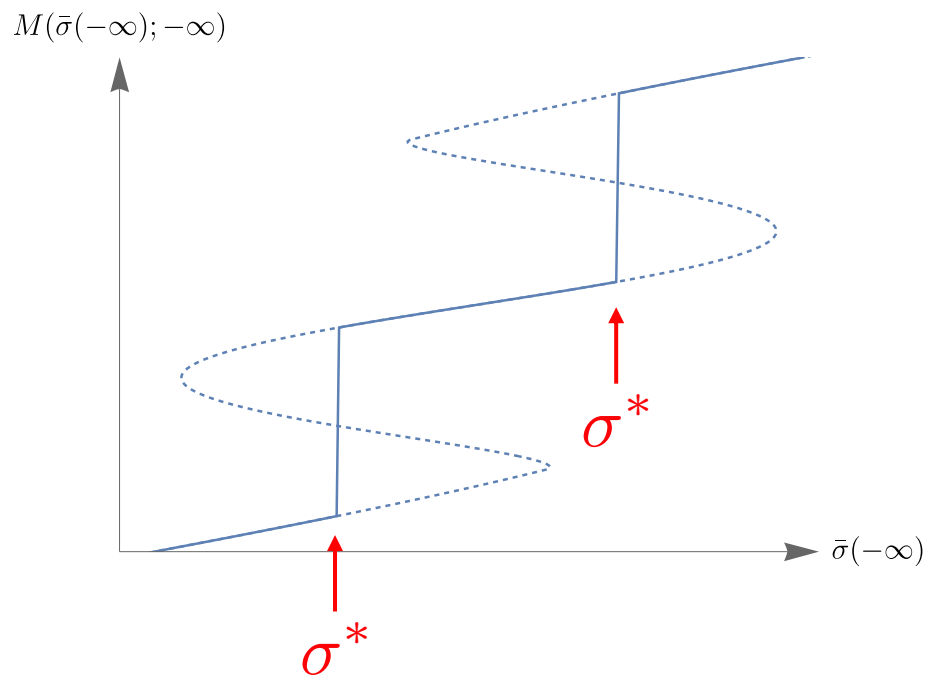
Potential stays continuous during the flow.



Searching for the weak solution of fRG equations

- Extract weak solution according to RH condition

E.g.: solution of fermionic potential and mass function from NJL-type model @ finite chemical potential [10].



Determines the unique weak solution from a multi-values solution.

Searching for the weak solution of fRG equations

○ Method of characteristics

Method of obtaining the “strong” solution.

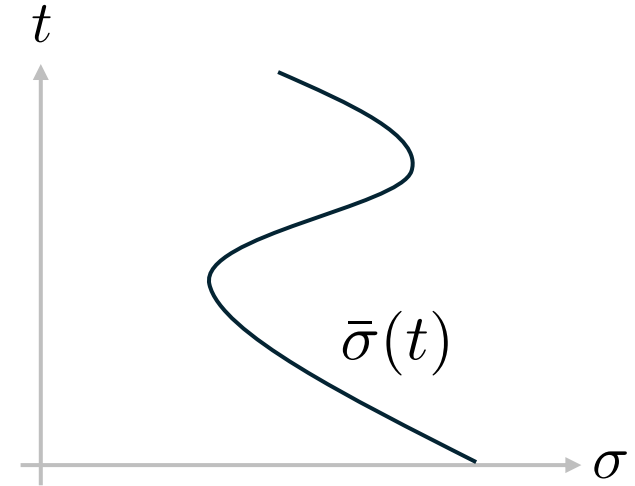
- Characteristic curve in (σ, t) -plane

$$\frac{d}{dt}\bar{\sigma}(t) = \frac{\partial F(\bar{M}, \bar{\sigma}; t)}{\partial \bar{M}}$$

- PDE vs. coupled ODE

$$\begin{aligned}\frac{d}{dt}\bar{M} &= \left. \frac{\partial M(\sigma; t)}{\partial \sigma} \right|_{\sigma=\bar{\sigma}} \frac{d}{dt}\bar{\sigma} + \frac{\partial M(\bar{\sigma}; t)}{\partial t} \\ &= - \left. \frac{\partial F(M, \sigma; t)}{\partial \sigma} \right|_{\sigma=\bar{\sigma}}.\end{aligned}$$

(Also the integral form of fermionic potential.)

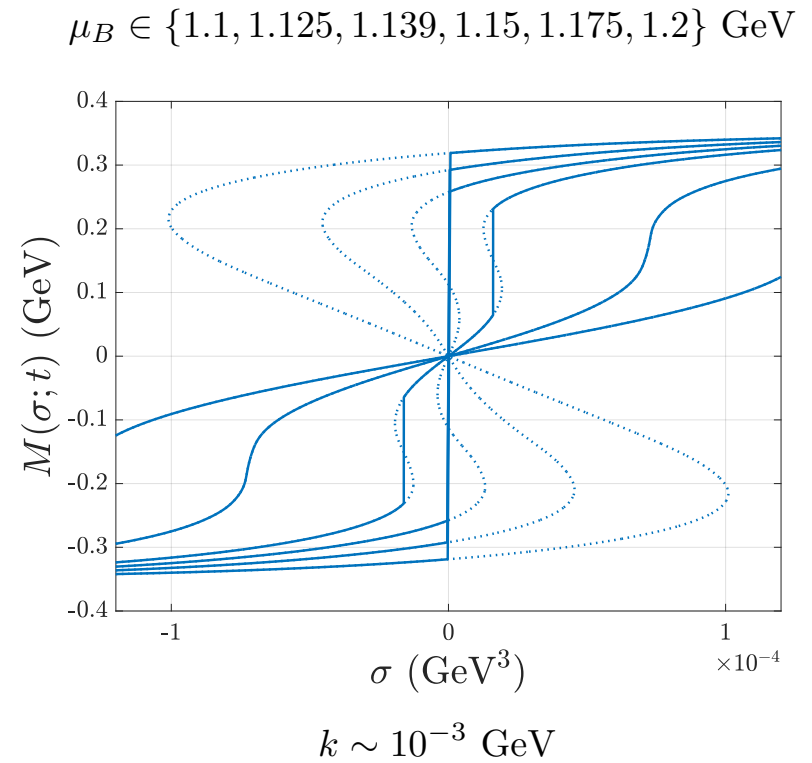
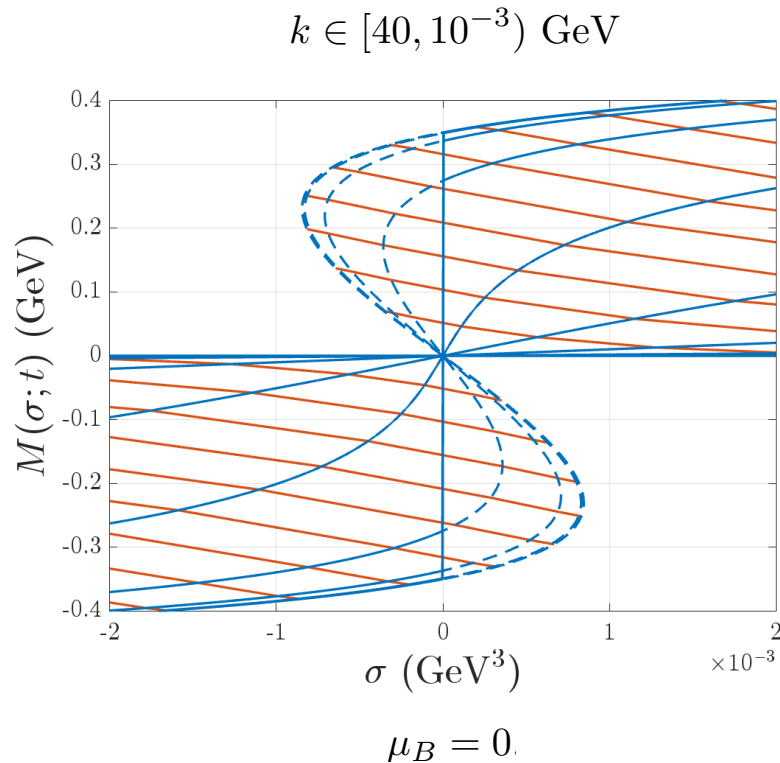


$$\begin{cases} \bar{M} = \bar{M}(t) \\ \bar{\sigma} = \bar{\sigma}(t) \end{cases}$$

$$\begin{cases} \bar{\sigma}(0) = \sigma_0 \\ \bar{M}(0) = M_\Lambda(\sigma_0) \end{cases}$$

Searching for the weak solution of fRG equations

- Examples: ladder w/o. A.D., chiral limit @ $T = 10$ MeV



Searching for the weak solution of fRG equations

- Strategy in this work



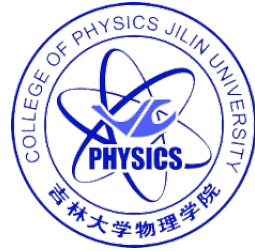
- Numerical implement

Two coupled ODE, 5-th Runge-Kutta method with initial condition

$$\bar{\sigma}(0) = \sigma_0, \quad \bar{M}(\bar{\sigma}(0); 0) = m_l$$

We are ready.

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Results and discussions

○ Quark mass function and parameter fixing

- Quark mass function with $p = k$
- Parameter fixing $(\bar{\alpha}_s, m_l)$

$$M_q(p) = \bar{M}(0; k = p)$$

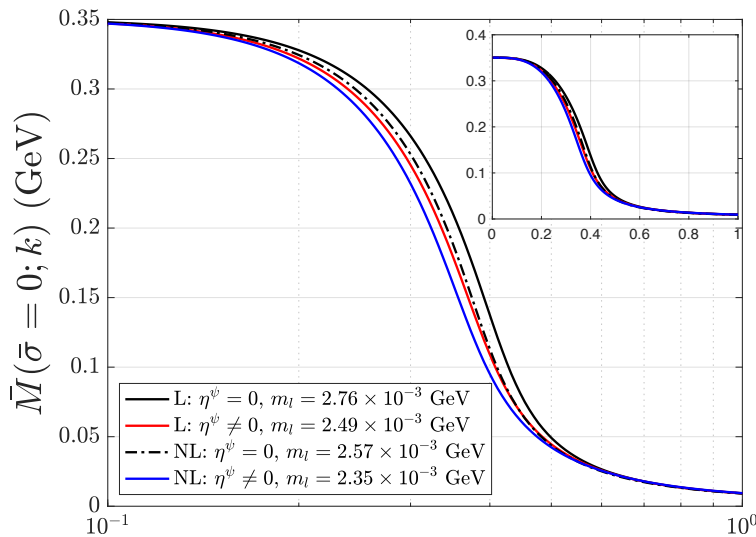
$$m_\sigma \sim 2\bar{M}(0; \infty) \equiv 2M_q$$

$$m_\pi^2 f_\pi^2 \sim 2m_l \langle \bar{\psi}\psi \rangle$$

where

$$f_\pi^2 = \frac{3}{\pi^2} \int_\kappa^\Lambda dp \frac{p^3 M_q(p)}{[p^2 + M_q^2(p)]^2} \left[M_q(p) - \frac{p}{4} \partial_p M_q(p) \right]$$

$$\langle \bar{\psi}\psi \rangle = -\frac{N_c}{2\pi^2} \int_\kappa^\Lambda p^3 dp \left[\frac{M_q(p)}{p^2 + M_q^2(p)} - \frac{m_l}{p^2 + m_l^2} \right]$$



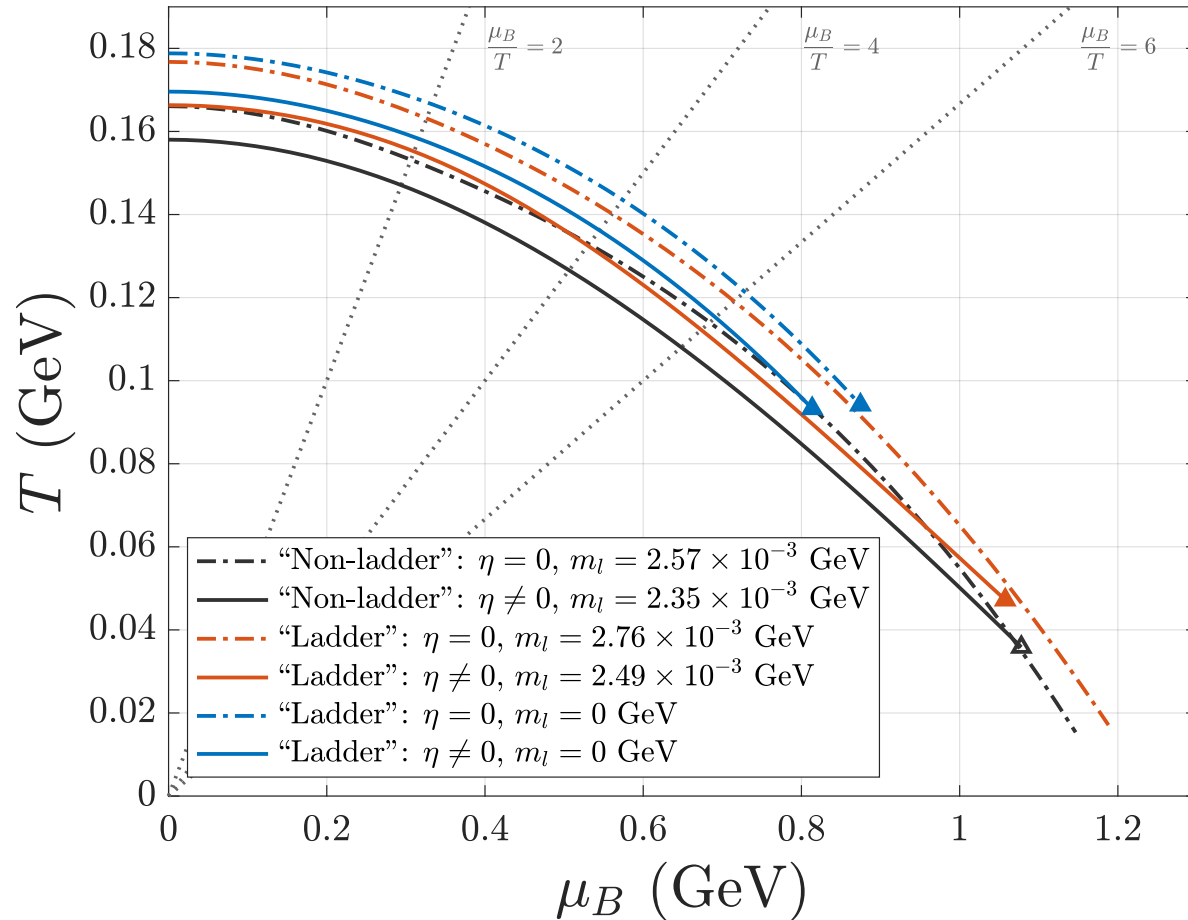
Results and discussions

Case		Parameters	Values	Observables	Values (MeV)
“Ladder”	$\eta_\psi = 0$	m_l (MeV)	0	M_q	350.4
		$\bar{\alpha}_s$	0.1529		
		m_l (MeV)	2.76	M_q	350.2
		$\bar{\alpha}_s$	0.1493	m_π	134.9
				f_π	83.2
	$\eta_\psi \neq 0$	m_l (MeV)	0	M_q	351.1
		$\bar{\alpha}_s$	0.1331		
		m_l (MeV)	2.49	M_q	350.1
		$\bar{\alpha}_s$	0.1294	m_π	135.3
				f_π	80.0
“Non-ladder”	$\eta_\psi = 0$	m_l (MeV)	2.57	M_q	350.3
		$\bar{\alpha}_s$	0.1640	m_π	135.0
				f_π	80.6
	$\eta_\psi \neq 0$	m_l (MeV)	2.35	M_q	350.3
		$\bar{\alpha}_s$	0.1410	m_π	136.2
				f_π	78.1

TABLE I. Parameter fixing in the current work. We demonstrate in the case with “ladder” and “non-ladder”, with or without quark anomalous dimension, and also the case of the chiral limit in the “ladder” case.

Results and discussions

○ Phase diagram of dynamical chiral symmetry breaking



Results and discussions

- Quantitative results from the phase diagram

- (Pseudo-) Phase transition temperature @ vanishing chemical potential

$$T_c(0) = T_c(\mu_B = 0)$$

- Curvature of the transition temperature line $\sim$ vanishing chemical potential

$$\frac{T_c(\mu_B)}{T_c(0)} = 1 - \kappa \left(\frac{\mu_B}{T_c(0)} \right)^2 + \dots$$

- Position of the critical end point (CEP)

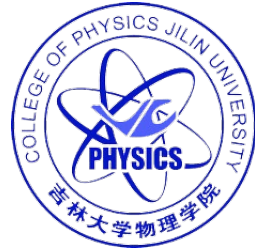
$$(T_c, \mu_{B,c})$$

Results and discussions

Cases			Observables	Values
“Ladder”	$\eta_\psi = 0$	$m_l = 0$	$T_c(0)$ (MeV)	178.8
			κ	0.0197
			$(T_c, \mu_{B,c})$ (MeV)	(94.16,874.6)
		$m_l \neq 0$	$T_c(0)$ (MeV)	176.8
			κ	0.0193
			$(T_c, \mu_{B,c})$ (MeV)	-
	$\eta_\psi \neq 0$	$m_l = 0$	$T_c(0)$ (MeV)	169.6
			κ	0.0183
			$(T_c, \mu_{B,c})$ (MeV)	(93.31,813.6)
		$m_l \neq 0$	$T_c(0)$ (MeV)	166.3
			κ	0.0187
			$(T_c, \mu_{B,c})$ (MeV)	(47.22,1058)
“Non-ladder”	$\eta_\psi = 0$	$m_l \neq 0$	$T_c(0)$ (MeV)	166.1
			κ	0.0176
			$(T_c, \mu_{B,c})$ (MeV)	-
	$\eta_\psi \neq 0$		$T_c(0)$ (MeV)	158.0
			κ	0.0198
			$(T_c, \mu_{B,c})$ (MeV)	(35.85,1078)

TABLE II. Observables related to the QCD phase diagram in Figure 7.

Content



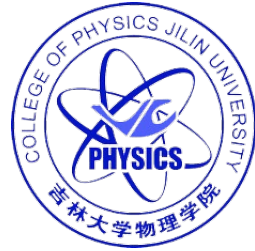
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Summary

- In this work, we revisit the problem of realizing the broken phase in RG method and the QCD phase structure;
- By truncating the IR effective action at the leading order of derivative expansion, we isolate the minimum quarkonic fluctuation we need;
- Utilizing the “ladder” and its beyond, we closed the RG equation at finite temperature and baryon chemical potential;
- Through weak RG formalism, we obtain the weak solution to read off the physical observables;
- We obtain the QCD chiral phase diagram through the dynamical mass:
 - In the vicinity of vanishing baryon chemical potential, the “non-ladder” approx. works well in terms of the phase transition temperature and the curvature of the T_c -line, compared to the other functional approaches;
 - The position of the CEP deviate from those previous approaches, which, in part, is as we expected, indicating the importance of the mesonic fluctuation around the chiral criticality.

Thanks!

Content



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