

Two Approaches to Adjoint QCD₂

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Princeton University

Based on:

- [arXiv:2101.05432](#) with Ross Dempsey and Igor Klebanov
- [arXiv:2210.10895](#) with Ross Dempsey, Igor Klebanov, and Loki Lin
- [arXiv:2311.09334](#) with Ross Dempsey, Igor Klebanov, and Benjamin Sogaard

February 21, 2024

Introduction: two-dimensional gauge theories

- **Two-dimensional gauge theories** are useful toy models for:
 - confinement and mass gap; generalized symms, anomalies (HET)
 - numerical algorithms (cond-mat)
 - quantum simulators (atomic physics)
- **Simpler, b/c gluons are non-dynamical**
- Naively: Coulomb potential is linear, so all gauge theories w/o (fundamental) quarks should be confining.
- Pure $SU(N_c)$ gauge theory
 - confining, fundamental string tension $\sim g_{YM}^2 N_c$, no particles
- 't Hooft model: $SU(N_c)$ gauge theory + 1 fundamental Dirac fermion (quark) of mass m_{fund} .
 - particles: mesons. (Large N_c single-trace spectrum: discrete, one Regge trajectory, solved using light-cone quantization [['t Hooft '74](#)])
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$SU(N_c)$ + adjoint Majorana fermion

- **This talk:** $SU(N_c)$ gauge theory
+ 1 adjoint Majorana fermion (gluino) of mass m

$$L = \text{tr} \left(-\frac{1}{2g_{\text{YM}}^2} F_{\mu\nu}^2 + i\bar{\Psi} \not{D}\Psi - m\bar{\Psi}\Psi \right).$$

- studied at large N_c using discretized light-cone quantization (DLCQ) [Dalley, Klebanov '92; Kutasov '93; Bhanot, Demeterfi, Klebanov '93; Dempsey, Klebanov, SSP '21; Dempsey, Klebanov, Lin, SSP '22] or using light-cone Hamiltonian truncation [Katz, Tavares, Xu '13]
- $m = 0$: mass gap, screening of charges in the fundamental representation (!) [Gross, Klebanov, Matytsin, Smilga '95; Komargodski, Ohmori, Roupedakis, Seifnashri '20; Dempsey, Klebanov, SSP '21] (see also [Lenz, Shifman, Thies '94; Cherman, Jacobson, Tanizaki, Unsal '20; Cherman, Jacobson, Neuzil '21]). Deep IR: coset $\frac{SO(N_c^2 - 1)_1}{SU(N_c)_{N_c}}$ w/ $c = 0$.
- $m > 0$: mass gap, confining
- particles: gluinoballs

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Outline

- 1 Adjoint QCD₂ in DLCQ at large N_c .
- 2 Probe fundamental string tension with additional massive quarks [Dempsey, Klebanov, SSP '21] .
- 3 Spectrum of adjoint QCD₂ at *finite* N_c using DLCQ [Dempsey, Klebanov, Lin, SSP '22] .
- 4 A Hamiltonian lattice model for adjoint QCD₂ + numerical results [Dempsey, Klebanov, SSP, Søgaard '23] .

Light-cone quantization

Think of $x^+ = \frac{t+x}{\sqrt{2}}$ as **time** and perform canonical quantization.
 $x^- = \frac{t-x}{\sqrt{2}}$ as **space**

- Choose gauge $A_- = 0$ and write $\Psi_{ij} = \begin{pmatrix} \psi_{ij} \\ \chi_{ij} \end{pmatrix}$.
- A_+ , χ are not dynamical (no x^+ derivatives) \rightarrow can be eliminated.
- To compute mass spectrum, first compute light-cone momentum P^+ and light-cone Hamiltonian P^- , and then $M^2 = 2P^+P^-$:

$$P^+ = \int dx^- \operatorname{tr} (i\psi \partial_- \psi),$$

$$P^- = - \int dx^- \operatorname{tr} \left(g_{\text{YM}}^2 J^+ \frac{1}{\partial_-^2} J^+ + im^2 \psi \frac{1}{\partial_-} \psi \right).$$

where $J_{ij}^+ = \psi_{ik} \psi_{kj} - \frac{1}{N_c} \delta_{ij} \psi_{kl} \psi_{lk}$ is the $SU(N_c)$ current.

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Discretized light-cone quantization

- Discretization: compactify x^- into a circle of radius L with **anti-periodic** BC's for fermions [Brodsky, Hornbostel, Pauli '88]

$$\psi_{ij}(x^-) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{4\pi L}} \sum_{\text{odd } n > 0} \left(B_{ij}(n) e^{-inx^-/2L} + B_{ji}^\dagger(n) e^{inx^-/2L} \right)$$

- **Creation ops** $B_{ij}^\dagger(n)$, annihilation ops $B_{ij}(n)$, for $n = 1, 3, 5, \dots$
- **States:** act w/ $B^\dagger(n_i)$'s on $|0\rangle$, contract all $SU(N_c)$ indices.

Discretized light-cone quantization

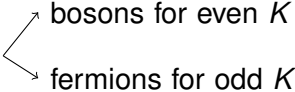
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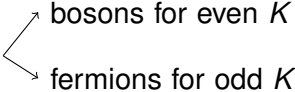
Discretized light-cone quantization

Procedure to obtain **mass spectrum**:

- Write all states (finitely many) with $\sum_i n_i = K$ and $P^+ = \frac{K}{2L}$.
- We have  bosons for even K
fermions for odd K
- Compute P^- and diagonalize $M^2 = 2P^+ P^-$.
- Extrapolate to $K \rightarrow \infty$.
- Charge conjugation symmetry $\mathcal{C}\psi_{ij}\mathcal{C}^{-1} = \psi_{ji}$ splits the states into \mathbb{Z}_2 -even (bosons & fermions) and \mathbb{Z}_2 -odd (bosons & fermions).
- **Start with large N_c** b/c it is simpler: single trace sector decouples.

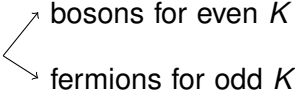
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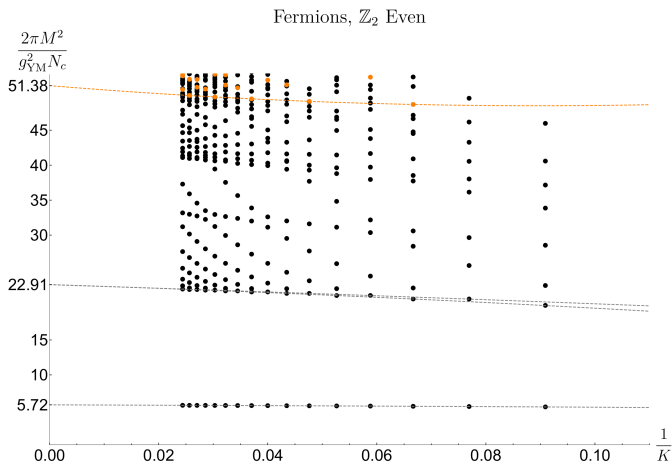
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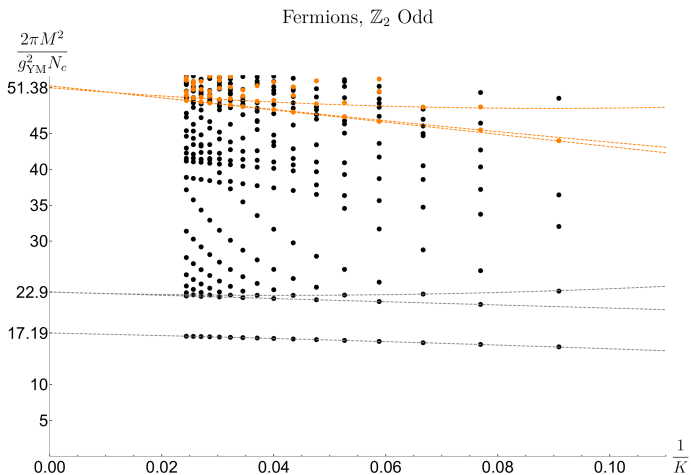
Numerical results for gluinoballs for $m = 0$

- Gluinoballs: First done in the '90's.
- Lowest state: \mathbb{Z}_2 -even fermion w/ $M_1^2 \approx 5.72$ (units of $g_{\text{YM}}^2 N_c / 2\pi$), almost entirely 3-bit



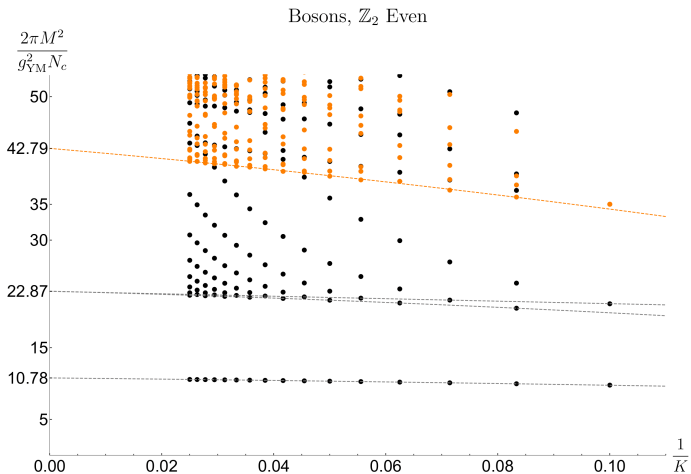
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- In each sector, it looks like there's a continuum starting at $4M_1^2$!
(Very surprising—these are single trace states!)



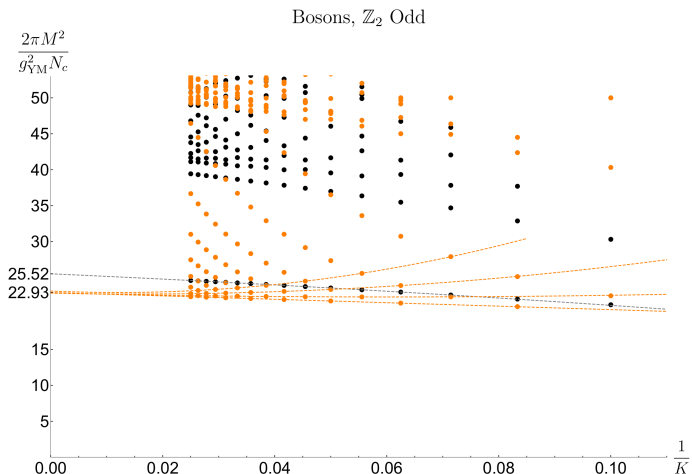
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Numerical results for gluinoballs for $m = 0$

- The largest matrix we diagonalized has dim 9 030 450 at $K = 41$!



Numerical results for gluinoballs for $m = 0$

- Exact degeneracies (in the discretized problem!) of the form [Gross, Hashimoto, Klebanov '97]

$$P^-(K) = \sum_{i=1}^n P^-(K_i), \quad K = \sum_{i=1}^n K_i$$

for any **fermionic gluinoballs** with $P^-(K_i)$.

- The **orange** points in the plots obey this exact relation.
- \implies For any set of fermionic trajectories that asymptote to M_i as $K \rightarrow \infty$, there's a continuum starting at $M_{\text{threshold}} = \sum_{i=1}^n M_i$ in the fermionic/bosonic spectrum if n is odd/even.
- If $m > 0$, the continuum disappears.

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Universality of massive spectrum

- “Explanation” for degeneracies: **universality of massive spectrum + large N_c factorization** [Kutasov, Schwimmer '95; Dempsey, Klebanov, SSP '21]
- For 2d QCD w/ $m_{\text{ferm}} = 0$ (in any rep), in the *discretized* problem:

$$P^- = \frac{2g^2 L}{\pi} \sum_{\text{even } n > 0} \frac{\text{tr}[J(-n)J(n)]}{n^2}$$

where $J(n)$ are the Fourier modes of the $SU(N_c)$ current.

- The current obeys a **Kac-Moody (KM) algebra** at level k_{KM}

$$[J_{ij}(n), J_{kl}(m)] = \delta_{kj}J_{il}(n+m) - \delta_{il}J_{kj}(n+m) + k_{\text{KM}} \frac{n\delta_{n,-m}}{2} \left(\delta_{il}\delta_{kj} - \frac{1}{N_c}\delta_{ij}\delta_{kl} \right)$$

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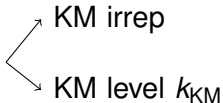
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Kac-Moody blocks

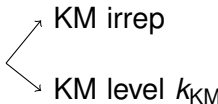
- States (gauge-invariant and non-gauge invariant) split into **current blocks (KM irreps)**:
 - KM primary $|\chi\rangle_I$ annihilated by all $J_{ij}(n)$ with $n > 0$.
 I labels states in irrep of $SU(N_c)$.
 - KM descendants $J_{ij}(-n_1)J_{kl}(-n_2)\cdots|\chi\rangle_I$
- Physical states are annihilated by $J(0)$.
- P^- e'values depend only on 
 - KM irrep
 - KM level k_{KM}

[Kutasov, Schwimmer '95]

\implies two (or more) KM irreps (either in the same theory or in different theories with same k_{KM}) give same P^- e'values.

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$$\begin{aligned} & \text{(massless) adj QCD}_2 \\ & k_{\text{KM}} = N_c \\ & B_{ij}^\dagger \end{aligned}$$



$$\begin{aligned} & \text{(massless) QCD}_2 \\ & + N_c \text{ fundamental quarks} \\ & k_{\text{KM}} = N_c \\ & C_{i\alpha}^\dagger, D_{i\alpha}^\dagger, \alpha = 1, \dots, N_c \end{aligned}$$

share some of the same P^- spectrum. Schematically,

- $n = 0$: bosonic gluinoballs
 $\text{tr}[J(-n_1) \cdots J(-n_p)] |0\rangle \longleftrightarrow \text{tr}[J(-n_1) \cdots J(-n_p)] |0\rangle$.
- $n = 1$: fermionic gluinoballs \longrightarrow single string states
 $\text{tr}[B^\dagger(1)J(-n_1) \cdots J(-n_p)] |0\rangle \longleftrightarrow C_\alpha^\dagger(1)J(-n_1) \cdots J(-n_p)D_\beta^\dagger(1)|0\rangle$
- $n = 2$: bosonic gluinoballs \longrightarrow double string states
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degenerate w/ sums of single string states
- $n = 3$: fermionic gluinoballs \longrightarrow triple string states, etc.

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degenerate w/ sums of single string states

- $n = 3$: **fermionic gluinoballs** \longrightarrow **triple string states**, etc.

Gluinoball degeneracies

- At large N_c , the P^- e'values of $n > 1$ states (orange dots in previous plots) are sums of e'values of $n = 1$ states (black dots in previous plots of fermionic e'vals).
- These arguments **prove** the existence of continuum starting at $2M_1$ in bosonic spectrum (where M_1 is the lowest fermionic gluinoball).

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Additional massive quark and meson spectrum

- Continuum was suspected to be related to the fact that the massless theory is screening of fundamental charges [Gross, Hashimoto, Klebanov '97].
- Can gain more insight by adding a very massive fundamental quark: $SU(N_c)$ gauge theory + 1 Majorana adjoint fermion (gluino) + 1 fundamental fermion (quark)

$$L = \text{tr} \left(-\frac{1}{2g_{\text{YM}}^2} F_{\mu\nu}^2 + \frac{i}{2} \bar{\Psi} \not{D} \Psi - \frac{m}{2} \bar{\Psi} \Psi \right) + (i\bar{q} \not{D} q - m_{\text{fund}} \bar{q} q).$$

- Use DLCQ to compute the meson spectrum.
- Focus on $m_{\text{fund}} > 0$ (quark is a probe of adj QCD)
- Set $m_{\text{fund}}^2 = 1$ (in units of $g^2 N_c / 2\pi$) in the following plots as an example.

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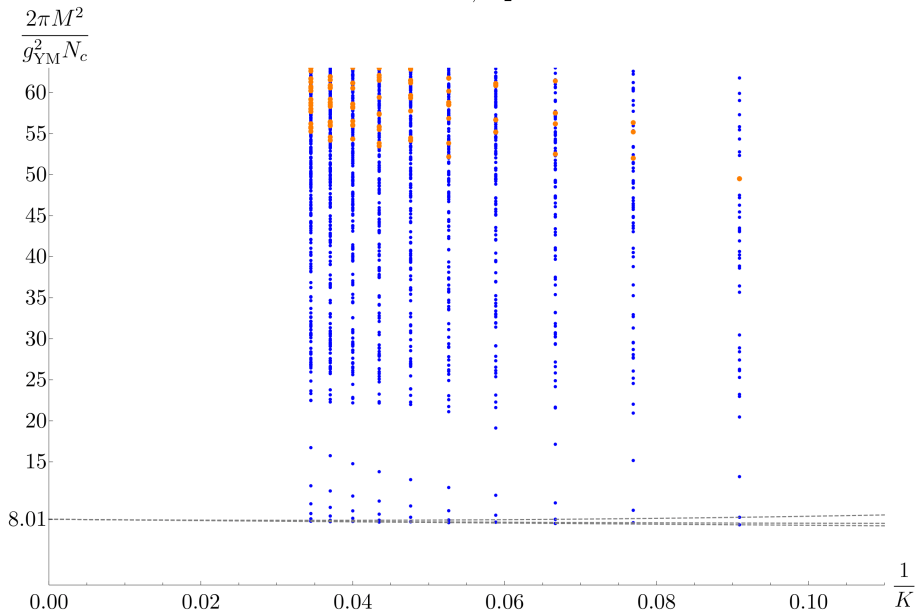
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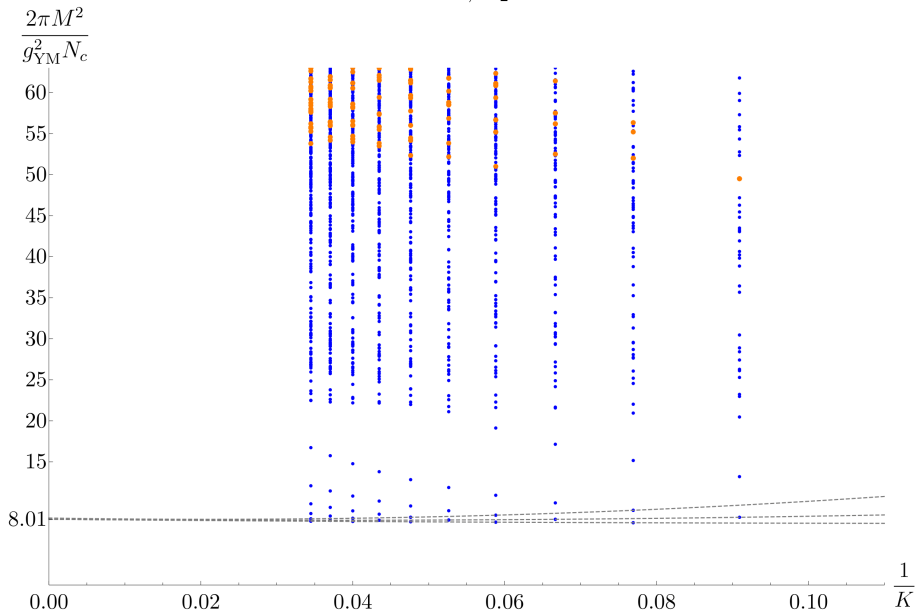
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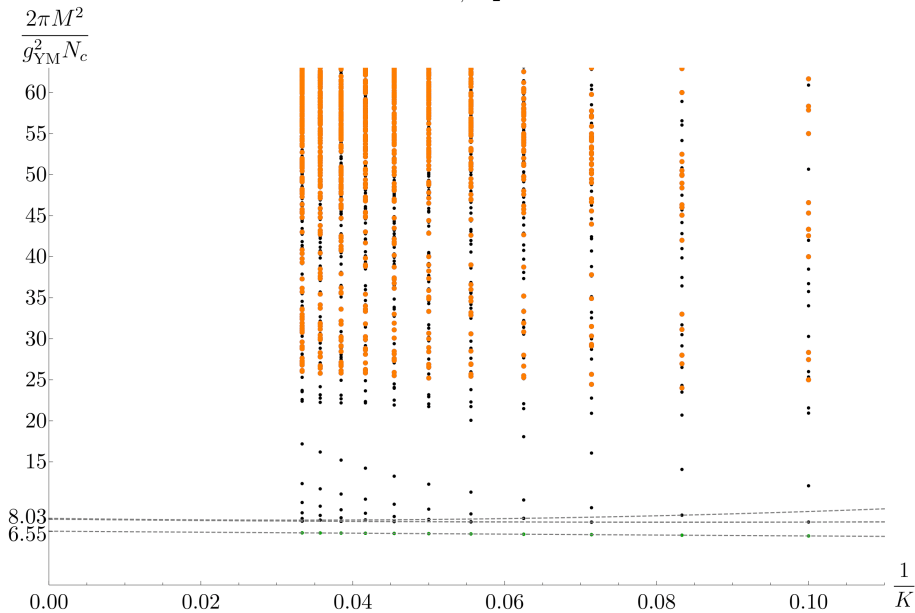
Fermions, \mathbb{Z}_2 odd



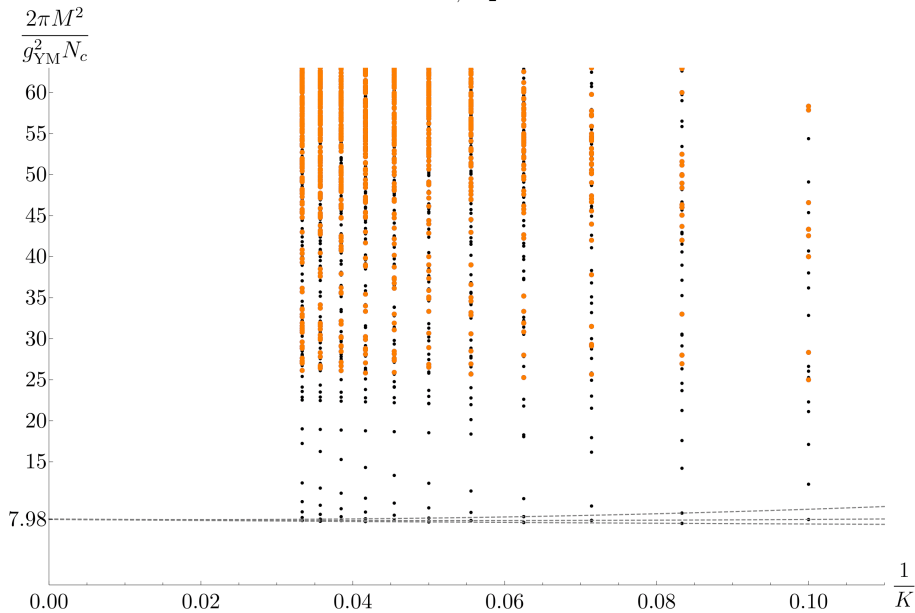
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Degeneracies when $m_{\text{fund}} > 0$

- Degeneracies: the following theories share P^- values

THEORY \mathcal{T}

$SU(N_c)$

+ 1 massless adjoint
+ 1 massive fundamental



THEORY \mathcal{T}'

$SU(N_c)$

+ N_c massless fundamentals
(L)
+ 1 massive fundamental (H)

Mesons in $\mathcal{T} \longleftrightarrow$ states in \mathcal{T}' of the form $[C^\dagger J \dots J D^\dagger][C^\dagger J \dots J D^\dagger] \dots |0\rangle$:

- $m = 0$: bosonic mesons in $\mathcal{T} \longleftrightarrow [H - H]$ in \mathcal{T}'
- $m = 1$: fermionic mesons in $\mathcal{T} \longleftrightarrow [H - L][L - H]$ in \mathcal{T}'
- $m = 2$: bosonic mesons in $\mathcal{T} \longleftrightarrow [H - L][L - L][L - H]$ in \mathcal{T}'
(same P^- as sum of $m = 1$ meson and $n = 1$ gluinoball in \mathcal{T})
- $m = 3$: fermionic mesons in $\mathcal{T} \longleftrightarrow [H - L][L - L][L - L][L - H]$ in \mathcal{T}'
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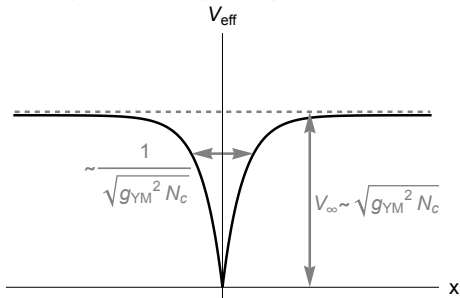
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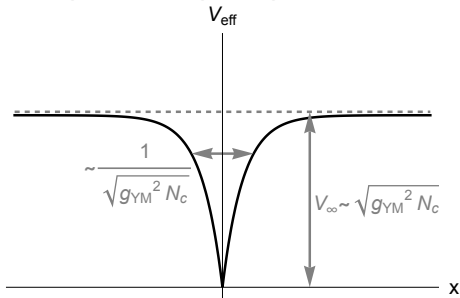
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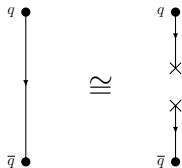
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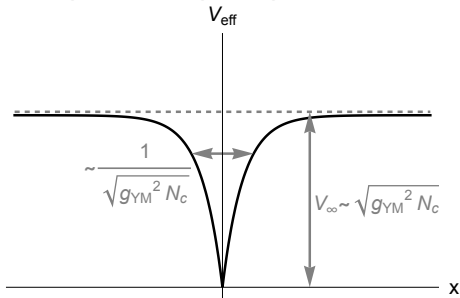
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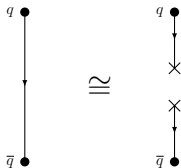
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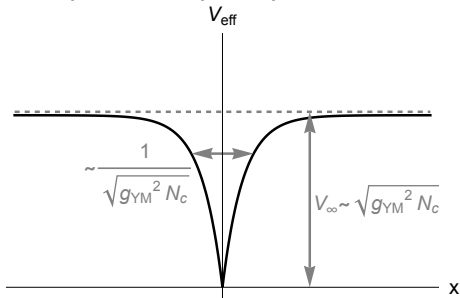
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Estimating V_∞

- Can estimate V_∞ from where the continuum starts. At large m_{fund} ,

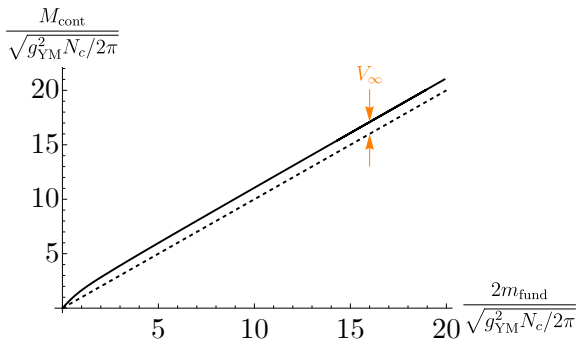
$$M_{\text{cont}} \approx 2m_{\text{fund}} + V_\infty,$$

where $M_{\text{cont}} = 2M_{[H-L]}$ in \mathcal{T}' .

($M_{[H-L]}$ and hence M_{cont} can be found more precisely w/ DLCQ directly in \mathcal{T}' .)

We find

$$V_\infty \approx 1.1 \sqrt{\frac{g_{\text{YM}}^2 N_c}{2\pi}}$$



Numerics at finite N_c

- **Finite N_c :** Must include multi-trace states, e.g. $(\text{tr}(B^\dagger(1)B^\dagger(3)))^2|0\rangle$ [Antonuccio, Pinsky '98]
- Also: there are $SU(N_c)$ trace relations (null states).
 - E.g. in $SU(2)$: $\text{tr}(B^\dagger(1)B^\dagger(1)B^\dagger(3)B^\dagger(3)) - (\text{tr}(B^\dagger(1)B^\dagger(3)))^2 = 0$.
 - Main challenge: determine the trace relations!
- For example, when $K = 35$:
There are **3,421,191** single trace + multi-trace states.
For $N_c = 2$, only **350** of them are not null.
For $N_c = 3$, only **19,954** of them are not null, etc.
- Very difficult to remove null states from basis via inner products, but we developed an efficient method that **avoids inner products** [Dempsey, Klebanov, Lin, SSP '21].

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Large N_c spectrum for massless theory

- To get oriented: **Single-trace** + **multi-trace states** at large N_c :

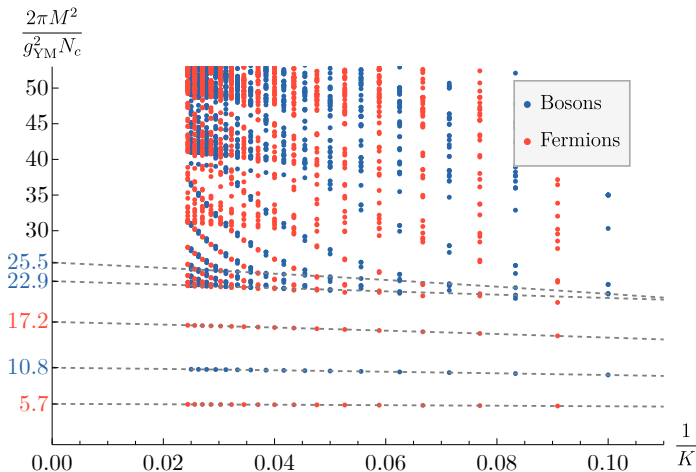
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Lightest fermion:

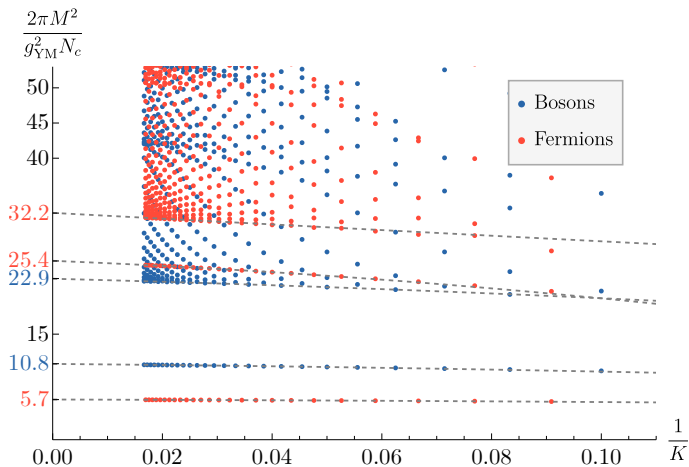
$$M_f^2 \approx 5.7 \frac{g_{\text{YM}}^2 N_c}{2\pi}$$

Lightest boson:

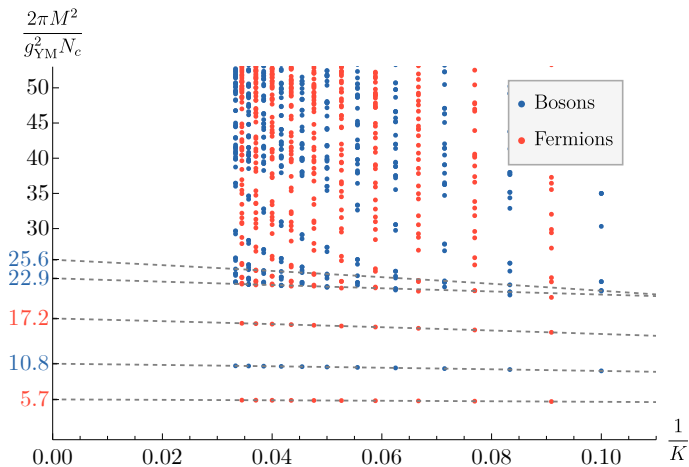
$$M_b^2 \approx 10.8 \frac{g_{\text{YM}}^2 N_c}{2\pi}$$



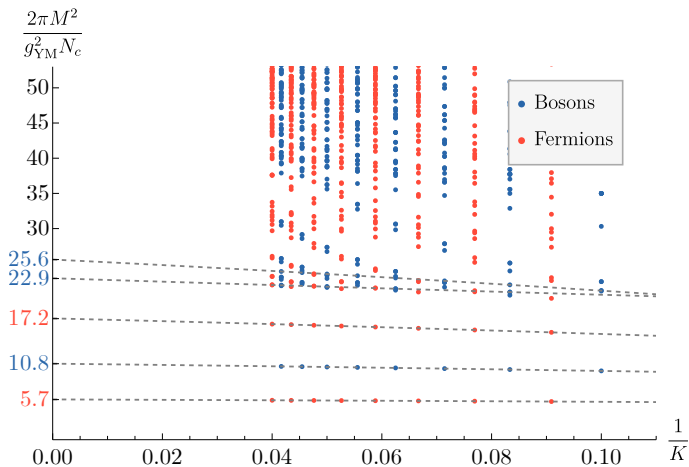
Gluinoball spectrum for $SU(2) + \text{adjoint}$



Gluinoball spectrum for $SU(3) + \text{adjoint}$



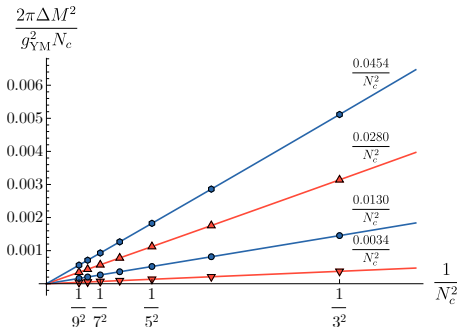
Gluinoball spectrum for $SU(4) + \text{adjoint}$



$1/N_c$ corrections

- Large N_c corrections are very small:

$$M^2 = \frac{g_{\text{YM}}^2 N_c}{2\pi} \left(a_0 + a_1/N_c^2 + O(N_c^{-4}) \right).$$

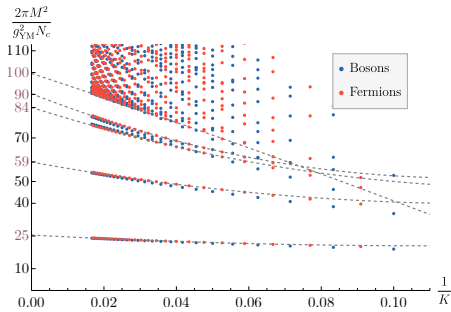
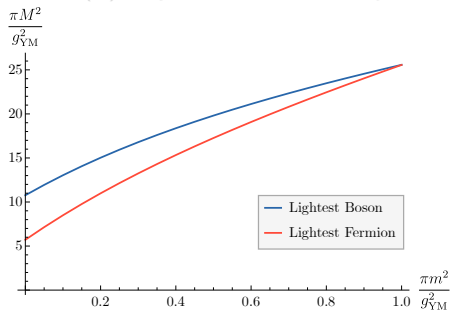


- For lowest state $a_0 \approx 5.72$ and $a_1 \approx 0.0034$.

Turning on mass for adjoint fermion

- Can turn on mass m for the adjoint fermion.
- At $m^2 = g_{\text{YM}}^2 N_c / (2\pi)$: **(1, 1) supersymmetry** [Kutasov '93; Boorstein, Kutasov '94; Popov '22]

In $SU(2)$ adjoint QCD₂ theory:

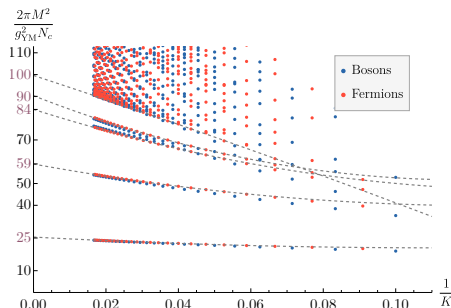
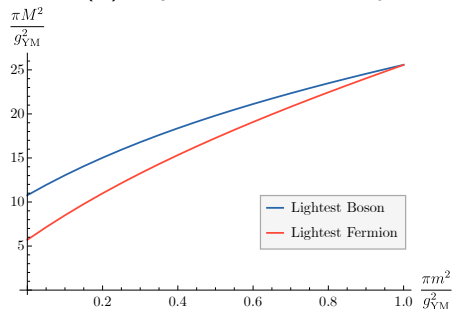


LEFT: Lightest fermion and boson mass for varying m for $N_c = 2$.
RIGHT: Spectrum of $N_c = 2$ theory at $m^2 = g_{\text{YM}}^2 / \pi$.

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Beyond DLCQ

- Potential problem: DLCQ does not distinguish b/w $SU(N_c)$ and $SU(N_c)/\mathbb{Z}_{N_c}$ gauge group, but spectra are different.
- For $SU(N_c)$, there are N_c distinct “universes”/flux tube sectors [Witten '79, ..., Komargdoski, Roumpedakis, Seifnashri '20].
- For $SU(N_c)/\mathbb{Z}_{N_c}$: choose one of the N_c flux sectors depending on the value of a discrete theta angle.
- For which theory/universe is DLCQ computing the spectrum??

Rest of the talk: Hamiltonian lattice gauge theory model.

Lagrangian LGT → discretize both space and Euclidean time

Hamiltonian LGT → discretize space, keep time continuous

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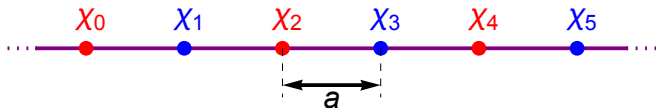
- First, let's consider one Majorana fermion Ψ with

$$L = \frac{i}{2} \bar{\Psi} \not{\partial} \Psi - \frac{m}{2} \bar{\Psi} \Psi.$$

- With $\gamma^0 = \sigma_2$, $\gamma^1 = -i\sigma_3$, $\gamma^5 = \gamma^0\gamma^1 = \sigma_1$, write $\Psi(x) = \begin{pmatrix} \psi_u(x) \\ \psi_d(x) \end{pmatrix}$ and discretize ψ_u and ψ_d in a staggered way:

$$\chi_n = \begin{cases} \sqrt{2a} \psi_u(x_n), & \text{if } n \text{ is even} \\ \sqrt{2a} \psi_d(x_n), & \text{if } n \text{ is odd} \end{cases}$$

where $x_n = na$ and a is the lattice spacing.



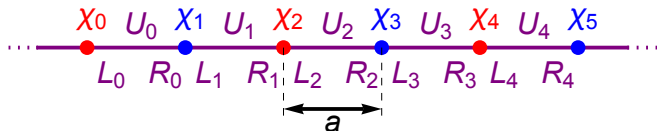
Hamiltonian lattice model

- The discretization gives the Hamiltonian for a **Majorana chain**:

$$H = \sum_{n=0}^{N-1} \left[-\frac{i}{a} \chi_n \chi_{n+1} - im(-1)^n \chi_n \chi_{n+1} \right]$$

where $n \sim n + N$ and the lattice fermions χ_n obey $\{\chi_n, \chi_m\} = \delta_{nm}$.

- For $SU(N_c)$ gauge theory w/ adj. Majorana, start w/ $N_c^2 - 1$ Majorana chains and add gauge d.o.f.'s.
- $A_1(x) \rightarrow$ group elements $U_n \in SU(N_c)$ on links
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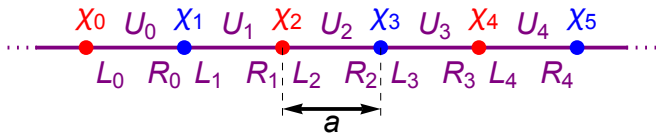
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- Lattice Hamiltonian (for $n = 0, \dots, N - 1$ and $A, B = 1, \dots, N_c^2 - 1$)

$$H_m = \sum_{n=0}^{N-1} \left[\frac{g_{\text{YM}}^2 a}{2} L_n^A L_n^A - \frac{i}{a} \chi_n^A U_n^{AB} \chi_{n+1}^B - im(-1)^n \chi_n^A U_n^{AB} \chi_{n+1}^B \right]$$

where $n \sim n + N$ and $U_n^{AB} \equiv 2 \text{tr}(T^A U_n T^B U_n^{-1})$ performs the parallel transport in the adjoint representation.

- Commutation relations (note $L_n^A = U_n^{AB} R_n^B$):

$$\{\chi_n^A, \chi_m^B\} = \delta_{nm} \delta^{AB}$$

$$[L_n^A, L_m^B] = -i \delta_{nm} f^{ABC} L_n^C, \quad [L_n, U_m] = \delta_{nm} T^A U_n,$$

$$[R_n^A, R_m^B] = i \delta_{nm} f^{ABC} R_n^C, \quad [R_n, U_m] = \delta_{nm} U_n T^A, \quad \text{etc.}$$

- Gauss law:

$$L_n^A - R_{n-1}^A = Q_n^A = -\frac{i}{2} f^{ABC} \chi_n^B \chi_n^C.$$

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- Gauss law:

$$L_n^A - R_{n-1}^A = Q_n^A = -\frac{i}{2} f^{ABC} \chi_n^B \chi_n^C.$$

Hamiltonian lattice model

- Lattice Hamiltonian (for $n = 0, \dots, N - 1$ and $A, B = 1, \dots, N_c^2 - 1$)

$$H_m = \sum_{n=0}^{N-1} \left[\frac{g_{\text{YM}}^2 a}{2} L_n^A L_n^A - \frac{i}{a} \chi_n^A U_n^{AB} \chi_{n+1}^B - im(-1)^n \chi_n^A U_n^{AB} \chi_{n+1}^B \right]$$

where $n \sim n + N$ and $U_n^{AB} \equiv 2 \text{tr}(T^A U_n T^B U_n^{-1})$ performs the parallel transport in the adjoint representation.

- Commutation relations (note $L_n^A = U_n^{AB} R_n^B$):

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$$[L_n^A, L_m^B] = -i \delta_{nm} f^{ABC} L_n^C, \quad [L_n, U_m] = \delta_{nm} T^A U_n,$$

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Symmetries

- Focus on $N_c = 2$ for concreteness and simplicity.
- Spectrum (from diagonalizing H) can be split into:
 - **Bosons and Fermions.**
Fermion Hilbert sp. of dim $2^{3N/2}$ is a rep. of the $\mathfrak{so}(3N)$ Clifford alg.
The $\mathfrak{so}(3N)$ chirality matrix = fermion parity operator.
 - **Two “universes”** (trivial flux tube and fundamental flux tube)
Roughly: gauge field irreps on links are integer / half-integer.
More precise: Fermionic states are doublets of $\mathfrak{su}(2)$ on each site.



with $|\ell_n - \ell_{n+1}| = 1/2$.

- **Translation by one lattice site** takes simultaneously $m \rightarrow -m$, bosons \leftrightarrow fermions, trivial universe \leftrightarrow non-trivial universe while preserving the energy! (Same as \mathbb{Z}_2 axial rotation in continuum.)

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Numerical exact diagonalization

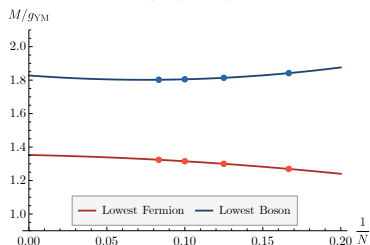
- Numerics: exact diagonalization of H restricted to gauge-invariant sector
- For cutoff $l_n \leq l_{\max}$, the number of **gauge-invariant states** is

$l_{\max} \setminus N$	4	6	8	10	12
2	40	224	1312	7808	46720
3	64	384	2432	15872	105472
4	88	544	3552	23936	164608

- Total # of states is much larger \implies find and work **only** with gauge-invariant states.

Numerics at $m = 0$

- To extract mass spectrum: diagonalization, then $N \rightarrow \infty$, $a \rightarrow 0$. (Careful, b/c behavior on small circle is very different.)
- First, $m = 0$. (We did $N = 6, 8, 10, 12$ for a range of a values.)



- Extrapolating lightest fermionic/bosonic states:

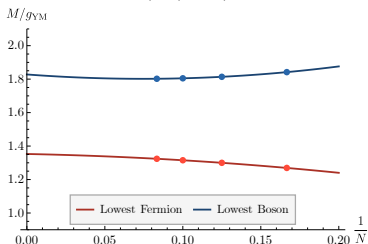
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Good agreement w/ DLCQ! ($M_f^2 \approx 5.7 g_{YM}^2 / \pi$, $M_b^2 \approx 10.8 g_{YM}^2 / \pi$)

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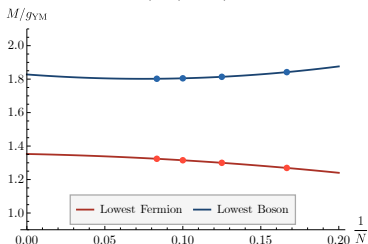
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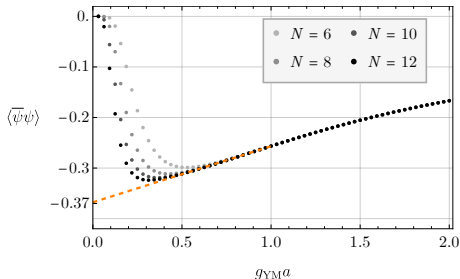
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Fermion bilinear condensate

- Can also compute $\langle \bar{\psi}\psi \rangle$.
- Trivial universe: Extrapolation gives $\langle \bar{\psi}\psi \rangle \approx -0.37g_{\text{YM}}$.



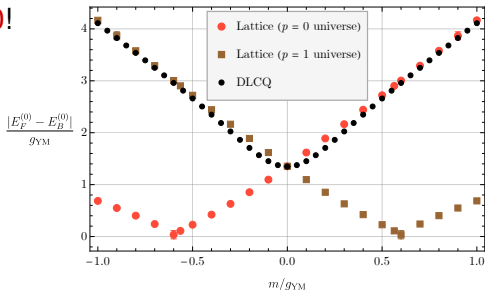
- $\langle \bar{\psi}\psi \rangle$ has opposite sign in the other universe.

Changing the fermion mass

- Plot difference b/w lowest fermionic and bosonic energy levels in each universe.
- Matches well the lowest fermionic gluinoball mass M_f obtained from DLCQ for $m \geq 0$!

Recall:

$$m_{\text{SUSY}} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{\pi}} g_{\text{YM}} \\ \approx 0.56 g_{\text{YM}}$$



- Gap vanishes at $m = -m_{\text{SUSY}}$ (in trivial universe) or at $m = m_{\text{SUSY}}$ (in non-trivial universe) \implies massless goldstino due to SUSY breaking by the flux tube.
- Agreement b/w lattice and DLCQ only for $m \geq 0$ in trivial universe and $m \leq 0$ in non-trivial universe.

Conclusion

- 2d gauge theories with adjoint matter are interesting toy models.
- **DLCQ** and **Hamiltonian lattice gauge theory** give good quantitative handles on the bound state spectrum and other observables.

For the future:

- More lattice numerics (for $N_c > 2$ and more precise studies, perhaps using DMRG).
- Add four-fermion interactions to adjoint QCD₂ (Gross-Neveu adjoint QCD₂) as in [Cherman, Jacobson, Tanizaki, Unsal '20; Komargodski, Ohmori, Roumpedakis, Seifnashri '20]
- Determine the precise quark-anti-quark potential in adjoint QCD₂.
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