# Probing QGP via local charge fluctuations in heavy-ion collisions

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# **INTERSECTIONS – CIPANP 2025**



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# **Phase Diagram of QCD Matter**





# The Main Idea

While hadrons carry *integer* electric charges, quarks carry *fractional* electric charges.



 $D_{QGP} < D_{HG} \rightarrow$  Distinct signal for QGP in heavy-ion collisions

Quantified by:

$$\begin{split} D &= 4 \frac{\kappa_2[Q]}{\langle N_{\rm ch} \rangle} \\ \text{Here } \kappa_2[Q] &= \langle Q^2 \rangle - \langle Q \rangle^2 \\ N_{\rm ch} &= N_+ + N_- \end{split}$$

Previous estimates using grand canonical ensemble (GCE) limit:

- $D_{HG} \approx 4$
- $D_{QGP} \approx 1$

No quantitative calculations have been done for QGP w/o GCE limit



Koch, Jeon, PRL (2000);

# **GCE vs Heavy-Ion Collisions**

#### In Grand Canonical Ensemble (GCE):

- Coordinate space measurements
- Subvolume much smaller than total volume,  $V_s \ll V_{tot}$ 
  - Charge conservation effects are neglected
  - Charges are free to fluctuate



#### In heavy-ion collisions:

- Momentum acceptance cuts
- $V_s$  is comparable to  $V_{tot}$ 
  - Global charge conservation effects present
- Presence of causally disconnected regions of fireball





Castorina, Satz, IJMPE Vol. 23 No. 4 (2014)

# **Overview**



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# Charge Susceptibility, $\chi_2^Q$ with Resonance Decays, $\gamma_Q$

$$\chi^Q_2 = \langle n^{
m prim}_{
m ch} 
angle + arphi^{Q, 
m prim}_2$$

Skellam baseline Correction

Before decays, strength of interactions is parametrized by  $\omega$ :

In GCE,  $\kappa_2[Q] = VT^3\chi_2^Q$ 

 $\chi_2^Q = \omega \langle n_{
m ch}^{
m prim} 
angle \qquad \omega = rac{\kappa_2[Q]}{\langle N_{
m ch}^{
m prim} 
angle} \qquad \qquad arphi_2^{Q, 
m prim} = (\omega - 1) \langle n_{
m ch}^{
m prim} 
angle$ 

After resonance decays, net charge remains conserved but multiplicities of + and – charges increase:

# **Grand-Canonical Fluctuations in Hadron Gas**

Electric charge fluctuations can freeze-out in the hadron gas phase or as early as in the QGP phase. Particles detected in experiment may contain the memory of where this occurs.

#### This distinguishes whether a signal is obtained for HG or QGP.

$$\omega = rac{\kappa_2[Q]}{\langle N_{
m ch}^{
m prim}
angle}$$
 —— charged hadron multiplicity

For hadron gas scenario,  $\omega$  can be estimated by Poisson statistics, with

$$\kappa_2[Q] \approx \langle N_{\rm ch}^{\rm prim} \rangle \rightarrow \omega_{HG} = 1$$

But  $\omega$  is enhanced by Bose-Einstein statistics for pions and the presence of multi-charged hadrons. An HRG model calculation (Thermal-FIST) gives

$$\omega_{HG} = 1.1$$
 Thermal FIST

But for QGP (quarks), we must take a closer look:

In GCE, 
$$\kappa_{2}[Q] = V\chi_{2}^{Q}$$
  $\omega = \frac{\kappa_{2}[Q]}{\langle N_{ch}^{prim} \rangle} = \frac{VT^{3}\chi_{2}^{Q}}{S} \frac{S}{\langle N_{ch} \rangle}$   
 $= \frac{\chi_{2}^{Q}}{s/T^{3}} \frac{S}{\langle N_{ch} \rangle} \frac{\langle N_{ch} \rangle}{\langle N_{ch}^{prim} \rangle}$   
Given by free QGP limit:  
 $(\chi_{2}^{Q})_{QGP} = 2/3 (s/T^{3})_{QGP} = \frac{19\pi^{2}}{9}$   
(Stefan-Boltzmann limit)  
 $S/N_{ch} = 6.7 \pm 0.8 \text{ at LHC energies}$   
P. Hanus, A. Mazeliauskas, K. Reygers, PRC (2019)  
 $\omega_{QGP} = 0.36 \pm 0.04$   
Compared to  $\omega_{HG} = 1.1$ 

# **Grand-Canonical Fluctuations (General Case)**

Using Lattice QCD data (first principles calculations), we can justify our estimates for  $\omega$ 



 $\omega_{QGP}$  approaches the Stefan-Boltzmann limit ( $\omega_{QGP} \approx 0.36$ ), justifying our value for  $\omega_{QGP}$ .

# Correlations and Charge Conservation Implementation, $C_2^Q$

To account for exact charge conservation, we use the 2-point density correlator,

 $\mathcal{C}_2^Q(\mathbf{r}_1, \mathbf{r}_2) \equiv \langle \delta \rho_Q(\mathbf{r}_1) \delta \rho_Q(\mathbf{r}_2) \rangle \quad \text{where} \quad \delta \rho_Q(\mathbf{r}_i) = \rho_Q(\mathbf{r}_i) - \langle \rho_Q(\mathbf{r}_i) \rangle$ 

V. Vovchenko, PRC (2024)

$$\mathcal{C}_{2}^{Q}(\mathbf{r}_{1},\mathbf{r}_{2}) = \chi_{2}^{Q} \left[ \delta(\mathbf{r}_{1}-\mathbf{r}_{2}) - \frac{\varkappa(\mathbf{r}_{1},\mathbf{r}_{2})}{V_{\text{tot}}} \right] \mathbf{r} = \eta$$
local correlation balancing contribution

Gaussian local charge conservation:

Global:

$$\varkappa(\eta_1,\eta_2) \propto \exp\left[-rac{(\eta_1-\eta_2)^2}{2\sigma_\eta^2}
ight]$$

$$\sigma_{\eta} \to \infty : \varkappa(\eta_1, \eta_2) \to 1$$
$$\mathcal{C}_2^Q(\eta_1, \eta_2) = \chi_2^Q \left[ \delta(\eta_1 - \eta_2) - \frac{1}{V} \right]$$

Integrating  $C_2^Q$  yields the net-charge variance

$$\kappa_2[Q]|_{|\eta|<\eta_{\rm cut}} = \int_{-\eta_{\rm cut}/2}^{\eta_{\rm cut}/2} d\eta_1 \int_{-\eta_{\rm cut}/2}^{\eta_{\rm cut}/2} d\eta_2 \mathcal{C}_2^Q(\eta_1,\eta_2)$$

Putting everything together we arrive at...

#### **Momentum Acceptance**

Combining the previous equations,

$$\kappa_{2}[Q]|_{|\eta| < \eta_{\rm cut}} = \int_{-\eta_{\rm cut}/2}^{\eta_{\rm cut}/2} d\eta_{1} \int_{-\eta_{\rm cut}/2}^{\eta_{\rm cut}/2} d\eta_{2} \mathcal{C}_{2}^{Q}(\eta_{1}, \eta_{2}) \\ \mathcal{C}_{2}^{Q}(\mathbf{r}_{1}, \mathbf{r}_{2}) = \chi_{2}^{Q} \left[ \delta(\mathbf{r}_{1} - \mathbf{r}_{2}) - \frac{\varkappa(\mathbf{r}_{1}, \mathbf{r}_{2})}{V_{\rm tot}} \right] \\ \chi_{2}^{Q} = \langle n_{\rm ch} \rangle + \left(\frac{\omega}{\gamma_{Q}} - 1\right) \langle n_{\rm ch} \rangle$$

However, fluctuations in heavy-ion collisions are measured in momentum acceptance coordinates rather than spatial coordinates. Incorporating this,

$$D = 4 \frac{\kappa_2[Q]}{\langle Q^+ + Q^- \rangle} = 4 \left\{ 1 - \left( 1 - \frac{\omega}{\gamma_Q} \right) \frac{\langle p^2(\eta) \rangle}{\langle p(\eta) \rangle} - \frac{\omega}{\gamma_Q} \frac{\langle p(\eta_1) p(\eta_2) \rangle_{\varkappa}}{\langle p(\eta) \rangle} \right\}$$
Skellam baseline
Iocal 2-particle correlations
1

where,

$$\langle p^n(\eta) 
angle = rac{1}{2\eta_{\max}} \int d\eta p^n(\eta)$$
 and  $p(\eta)$  is found using BW model calculations  
 $\langle p(\eta_1)p(\eta_2) 
angle_{\varkappa} = rac{1}{4\eta_{\max}^2} \iint d\eta_1 d\eta_2 p(\eta_1) p(\eta_2) \varkappa(\eta_1, \eta_2)$ 

Parra, RP, Koch, Ratti, Vovchenko, 2504.02085 (2025)

#### **Comparison to ALICE Run 1 Data**

$$D = 4 \left\{ 1 - \left( 1 - \frac{\omega}{\gamma_Q} \right) \frac{\langle p^2(\eta) \rangle}{\langle p(\eta) \rangle} - \frac{\omega}{\gamma_Q} \frac{\langle p(\eta_1) p(\eta_2) \rangle_{\varkappa}}{\langle p(\eta) \rangle} \right\}$$



Parameters used:

$$\omega_{HG} = 1$$
  $\omega_{QGP} = 0.36$ 

$$\gamma_Q$$
 = 1.67

• Vary  $\sigma_y$  for global and local charge conservation

Parra, RP, Koch, Ratti, Vovchenko, 2504.02085 (2025)



→ **Moderate** evidence for freeze-out of charge fluctuations in QGP phase ( $\omega$ ).

Bayes factor  $BF_{12}$  for  $H_1$  over  $H_2$  Evidence category

> 100	Extreme evidence for $H_1$ over $H_2$
30 - 100	Very strong evidence for $H_1$ over $H_2$
10 - 30	Strong evidence for $H_1$ over $H_2$
3 - 10	Moderate evidence for $H_1$ over $H_2$
1 - 3	Anecdotal evidence for $H_1$ over $H_2$
1	No evidence over $H_2$

Parra, RP, Koch, Ratti, Vovchenko, 2504.02085 (2025)

### LHC Run 2 predictions



# **Conclusion and Outlook**

- We performed quantitative calculations for charge fluctuations for QGP and hadronic scenario.
  - To do this, we incorporated global/local charge conservation effects, resonance decays, and momentum acceptance.
- We obtained moderate evidence for freeze-out of charge fluctuations in QGP phase.
- We presented predictions for ALICE Run 2 using our formalism.
- Looking forward to ALICE Run 2 data to obtain stronger evidence.
- This formalism can be extended to RHIC energies.

# **Conclusion and Outlook**

- We performed quantitative calculations for charge fluctuations for QGP and hadronic scenario.
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- Looking forward to ALICE Run 2 data to obtain stronger evidence.
- This formalism can be extended to RHIC energies.

# Thank you for your attention!

# **Backup Slides**

### Blast-Wave Model



To calculate acceptance probabilities, we use the blast-wave model:

$$\sqrt{s_{\rm NN}} = 2.76 \,\,{\rm TeV} \qquad p(\eta) \approx 0.84 p_{\pi}(\eta) + 0.12 p_K(\eta) + 0.04 p_p(\eta)$$

Single-particle momentum distribution:

$$\frac{d^3 N_i}{dp_T d\tilde{\eta}}(\eta) = \frac{E(\tilde{\eta}, \eta) p_T^2 \cosh \tilde{\eta}}{\sqrt{(p_T \cosh \tilde{\eta})^2 + m^2}} \int_0^1 \zeta d\zeta \exp\left[-\frac{E(\tilde{\eta}, \eta) \cosh \rho}{T}\right] I_0\left(\frac{p_T \sinh \rho}{T}\right)$$
$$E(\tilde{\eta}, \eta) \equiv m_T \cosh(y - \eta) = m_T \cosh\left(\operatorname{arcsinh}\left[\frac{p_T \sinh \tilde{\eta}}{m_T}\right] - \eta\right) \quad \begin{array}{l}\rho = \tanh^{-1}(\beta_s \zeta^{n_{\mathrm{BW}}})\\m_T = \sqrt{p_T^2 + m_i^2}\end{array}$$

Acceptance probability:

$$p_i(\eta) = rac{\int_{p_T^{\min}}^{p_T^{\max}} dp_T \int_{-\tilde{\eta}_{
m cut}}^{\tilde{\eta}_{
m cut}} d\tilde{\eta} rac{d^3N}{dp_T d\tilde{\eta}}(\eta)}{\int_0^{\infty} dp_T \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} d\tilde{\eta} rac{d^3N}{dp_T d\tilde{\eta}}(\eta)}$$

### **Truncated fireball vs Gaussian correlation**



From V. Vovchenko PHENOmenal talk

With Gaussian correlation, hadrons at forward/backward rapidities also contribute to the system



Moderate evidence for freeze-out of charge fluctuations in QGP ( $\omega$ ).

Bayes factor with uniform priors: 9.8

0.8

 $V_c = k dV / dy$ 

1.0

# Grand canonical net-charge susceptibility

Poisson baseline

#### correction (two-particle local correlations)

$$\chi_2^Q = \langle n_+ + n_- \rangle + \tilde{\chi}_2^Q$$

Parametrization: 
$$\chi^Q_2 = \omega \langle n_+ + n_- 
angle$$

$$\tilde{\chi}_2^Q = (\omega - 1) \langle n_+ + n_- \rangle$$

Resonance decays:

$$\chi_2^{Q,\text{after}} = \gamma_+ \langle n_+ \rangle + \gamma_- \langle n_- \rangle + \tilde{\chi}_2^{Q,\text{after}}$$

$$Q = \gamma_{+}n_{+} - \gamma_{-}n_{-} = n_{+} - n_{-}$$
$$\chi_{2}^{Q,\text{after}} = \chi_{2}^{Q,\text{before}}$$

$$\chi_2^Q = \gamma_+ \langle n_+ \rangle + \gamma_- \langle n_- \rangle + (\omega - \gamma_+) \langle n_+ \rangle + (\omega - \gamma_-) \langle n_- \rangle$$

$$\gamma_Q = \frac{\gamma_+ \langle n_+ \rangle + \gamma_- \langle n_- \rangle}{\langle n_+ \rangle + \langle n_- \rangle}$$

$$\chi_2^Q = \gamma_Q \langle n_+ + n_- \rangle + (\omega - \gamma_Q) \langle n_+ + n_- \rangle$$
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# Charge Susceptibility, $\chi_2^Q$ and Resonance Decays, $\gamma_Q$

Next, we take resonance decays into account.

Decays like  $ho^0 
ightarrow \pi^+\pi^-$  introduce correlations between charged particles

Charge susceptibility after decays:

$$\chi_2^{Q,\text{final}} = \gamma_+ \langle n_+ \rangle + \gamma_- \langle n_- \rangle + \tilde{\chi}_2^{Q,\text{final}}$$
$$= \langle n_+ + n_- \rangle_{\text{final}} + \tilde{\chi}_2^{Q,\text{final}},$$

But net electric charge density is conserved overall

$$n_Q = \gamma_+ n_+ - \gamma_- n_- = n_+ - n_-$$
$$\chi_2^{Q,\text{final}} = \chi_2^{Q,\text{prim}}$$

Implementing interaction parameter  $\omega$ :

$$\chi_2^Q = \gamma_+ \langle n_+ \rangle + \gamma_- \langle n_- \rangle + (\omega - \gamma_+) \langle n_+ \rangle + (\omega - \gamma_-) \langle n_- \rangle$$

$$\begin{split} \chi_2^Q &= \gamma_Q \langle n_+ + n_- \rangle + (\omega - \gamma_Q) \langle n_+ + n_- \rangle \\ &= \langle n_+ + n_- \rangle_{\text{final}} + \left(\frac{\omega}{\gamma_Q} - 1\right) \langle n_+ + n_- \rangle_{\text{final}} \end{split}$$





#### **Comparison to ALICE Run 1 Data**



**D**-measure Corrected for Experiment

$$rac{D'_{
m HG}+D''_{
m HG}}{2} \hspace{0.5cm} ext{and} \hspace{0.5cm} rac{D'_{
m QGP}+D''_{
m QGP}}{2}$$

Where,

$$D'_{\rm HG} = D_{\rm HG} + 4\langle p(\eta) \rangle, \quad D''_{\rm HG} = \frac{D_{\rm HG}}{1 - \langle p(\eta) \rangle},$$
  
 $D'_{\rm QGP} = D_{\rm QGP} + 4\langle p(\eta) \rangle, \quad D''_{\rm QGP} = \frac{D_{\rm QGP}}{1 - \langle p(\eta) \rangle}$ 

Parameters used:

$$\omega_{HG} = 1$$
  $\omega_{QGP} = 0.36$   $\gamma_Q = 5/3$ 

#### **Comparison to previous estimates**



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Regions where the sum,

 $\sum p(\omega, \sigma_{\eta} | \vec{D}) \Delta \omega \Delta \sigma_{\eta}$ 

reach 0.68 and 0.95.



$$p(\omega|ec{D}) = \int_{\sigma_\eta^{\min}}^{\sigma_\eta^{\max}} d\sigma_\eta \ p(\omega,\sigma_\eta|ec{D})$$

Found where the sum,

 $\sum p(\omega | \vec{D}) \Delta \omega$ 

reaches 0.68 and 0.95.



$$p(\sigma_{\eta}|\vec{D}) = \int_{\omega_{\min}}^{\omega_{\max}} d\omega \ p(\omega, \sigma_{\eta}|\vec{D})$$

Found where the sum,

$$\sum p(\sigma_{\eta}|ec{D})\Delta\sigma_{\eta}$$

reaches 0.68 and 0.95.

$$V_c = k dV/dy$$
  $k(\sigma_y) = \sqrt{2\pi}\sigma_y \operatorname{erf}\left(\frac{\eta_{\max}}{\sqrt{2}\sigma_y}\right) \approx \sqrt{2\pi}\sigma_y$ 



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$$V_c = k dV/dy$$
  $k(\sigma_y) = \sqrt{2\pi}\sigma_y \operatorname{erf}\left(\frac{\eta_{\max}}{\sqrt{2}\sigma_y}\right) \approx \sqrt{2\pi}\sigma_y$ 

#### **Non-uniform volume distribution**

$$\begin{split} \mathcal{C}_{2}^{Q}(\eta_{1},\eta_{2}) &= \frac{dV}{d\eta}(\eta_{1})\chi_{2}^{Q} \left[ \delta(\eta_{1}-\eta_{2}) - \frac{dV}{d\eta}(\eta_{2}) \frac{\varkappa(\eta_{1},\eta_{2})}{V_{\text{tot}}} \right] \\ &= \frac{dV}{d\eta}(\eta_{1})\langle n_{+} + n_{-}\rangle_{\text{final}}\delta(\eta_{1}-\eta_{2}) \\ &+ \frac{dV}{d\eta}(\eta_{1}) \left(\frac{\omega}{\gamma_{Q}} - 1\right) \langle n_{+} + n_{-}\rangle_{\text{final}}\delta(\eta_{1}-\eta_{2}) - \frac{dV}{d\eta}(\eta_{1})\frac{dV}{d\eta}(\eta_{2})\frac{\omega}{\gamma_{Q}}\langle n_{+} + n_{-}\rangle_{\text{final}}\frac{\varkappa(\eta_{1},\eta_{2})}{V_{\text{tot}}} \\ &\langle p^{n}(\eta) \rangle = \frac{1}{V_{\text{tot}}} \int d\eta \frac{dV}{d\eta}(\eta) p^{n}(\eta) \\ &\langle p(\eta_{1})p(\eta_{2}) \rangle_{\varkappa} = \frac{1}{V_{\text{tot}}^{2}} \int d\eta_{1}\frac{dV}{d\eta}(\eta_{1}) \int d\eta_{2}\frac{dV}{d\eta}(\eta_{2})p(\eta_{1})p(\eta_{2})\varkappa(\eta_{1},\eta_{2}) \\ V_{\text{tot}} &= \frac{dV}{dy}\sqrt{2\pi}\sigma_{V} \qquad \frac{dV}{d\eta}(\eta) = \frac{dV}{dy}\exp\left(-\frac{\eta^{2}}{2\sigma_{V}^{2}}\right) \\ &\sigma_{V} = 3.86 \end{split}$$