We present isovector nucleon observables: the axial, tensor, and scalar charges and the Dirac radius. Using the BMW clover-improved Wilson action and pion masses as low as 149 MeV, we achieve good control over chiral extrapolation to the physical point. Our analysis is done using three different source-sink separations in order to identify excited-state effects, and we make use of the summation method to reduce their size.
1. Introduction

Lattice QCD calculations of nucleon structure observables are now entering the stage where they are being seriously confronted with experiment, although resources are not sufficient for full control over all systematic errors. Thus, when predicting unobserved quantities, it is useful to know which sources of systematic error must be more carefully controlled in order to achieve agreement for experimentally observed quantities, and which sources of error are already well under control when using standard techniques.

We report on two experimentally measured observables, the isovector Dirac radius \((r_1^v)^2\) and the axial charge \(g_A\); and two predictions, the tensor and scalar charges, \(g_T\) and \(g_S\). Proton matrix elements of the vector current are parameterized by two form factors,

\[
\langle p(P')|\bar{q}\gamma^\mu q|p(P)\rangle = \bar{u}(P') \left(\gamma^\mu F_1^v(Q^2) + \frac{i\sigma^{\mu\nu}\Delta}{2m} F_2^v(Q^2)\right) u(P),
\]

where \(\Delta = P' - P\) and \(Q^2 = -\Delta^2\). The isovector Dirac radius is defined from the slope of the isovector \(F_1^v(Q^2)\) at zero momentum transfer:

\[
F_1^v(Q^2) = F_1^v(0)(1 - \frac{1}{6}(r_1^v)^2Q^2 + O(Q^4)).
\]

In terms of experimental observables, \((r_1^v)^2\) is related to the difference between proton and neutron charge radii, the former of which has a 7\(\sigma\) discrepancy between measurements from electron-proton scattering [1] and a recent result using a precise measurement of the Lamb shift in muonic hydrogen [2]. Lattice QCD calculations with a precision of a few percent could help to resolve this.

The axial, tensor, and scalar charges all have similar definitions from neutron-to-proton transition matrix elements at zero momentum transfer:

\[
\langle p|\bar{u}\gamma^\mu \gamma_5 d|n\rangle = g_A \bar{u}_p \gamma^\mu \gamma_5 u_n, \quad \langle p|\bar{u}\sigma^{\mu\nu} d|n\rangle = g_T \bar{u}_p \sigma^{\mu\nu} u_n, \quad \langle p|\bar{u}d|n\rangle = g_S \bar{u}_p u_n.
\]

The axial charge is a key benchmark observable, since it is a naturally isovector quantity (and thus not requiring disconnected diagrams to calculate it), measured via forward matrix elements, and it is also well-measured experimentally via beta decay of polarized neutrons.

The tensor and scalar charges have not been measured experimentally, but it has recently been shown [3] that they control the leading contributions to neutron beta decay from new (beyond the Standard Model) physics, and thus they provide a useful input to the analysis of experimental data.

2. Methodology

The main results presented are from calculations performed on ten Lattice QCD ensembles using 2 + 1 flavors of tree-level clover-improved Wilson fermions coupled to double HEX-smeared gauge fields [4]. We also compare with results from earlier 2 + 1 flavor calculations [5, 6, 7] using four ensembles with unitary domain wall fermions [8, 9], as well as five ensembles using a mixed-action scheme with domain wall valence quarks and Asqtad staggered sea quarks [10]. The ranges of parameters used in these calculations are summarized in Tab. 1 and Fig. 1.

On every ensemble with Wilson fermions, we compute nucleon three-point functions using three different source-sink separations \(T\). When matrix elements are computed using the traditional ratio-plateau method, the asymptotically dominant excited-state contaminations arise from transitions...
Table 1: Lattice actions and ranges of parameters used: lattice spacing, pion mass, spatial and temporal box size, source-sink separation, and number of measurements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>$a$ (fm)</th>
<th>$m_\pi$ (MeV)</th>
<th>$L_x/a$</th>
<th>$L_t/a$</th>
<th>$T/a$</th>
<th># meas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wilson</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>317(2)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>10, 13, 16</td>
<td>824</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilson</td>
<td>0.116</td>
<td>149–356</td>
<td>24, 32, 48</td>
<td>24, 48, 96</td>
<td>8, 10, 12</td>
<td>762–10032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domain wall</td>
<td>0.084</td>
<td>297–403</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4216–7056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domain wall</td>
<td>0.114</td>
<td>329(5)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>0.124</td>
<td>293–597</td>
<td>20, 28</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2176–5024</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

between the ground state and the lowest excited state, and these decay as $e^{-\Delta E T/2}$. The summation method requires combining more than one source-sink separation, but yields improved asymptotic behavior, with the leading contaminants to forward matrix elements decaying as $T e^{-\Delta E T}$ [11, 12].

This set of ensembles allows for control over, or study of, various sources of systematic error. In roughly decreasing order of the level of control that we can achieve:

**Quark masses** For all ensembles, the strange quark mass is near the physical value. Our smallest $m_{ud}$ corresponds to a pion mass of 149 MeV, which is just 10% above the physical pion mass. This allows for either a direct comparison of the $m_\pi = 149$ MeV ensemble with experiment, or a comparison after a mild chiral extrapolation to the physical pion mass.

**Excited states** Using the ratio-plateau method with three different source-sink separations allows for clear identification of observables where excited-state contamination is a problem. These three source-sink separations can also be combined using the summation method to get another result that may be less affected by excited states.

**Finite volume** In general, finite-volume effects are expected to be small with $m_\pi L \gtrsim 4$. Furthermore, we can perform controlled comparisons between the $24^3 \times 48$ and $32^3 \times 48$ Wilson ensembles near $m_\pi = 250$ MeV, where the spatial volume is changed while other parameters are fixed.

**Finite temperature** At our smallest pion masses, the lattice time extent is shorter than the typically used $L_t = 2 L_x$, and these ensembles may be particularly susceptible to thermal effects. On the other hand, the three different time extents $L_t/a \in \{24, 48, 96\}$ used for Wilson ensembles near $m_\pi = 250$ MeV are useful for identifying possible problems.

**Discretization** The use of different lattice actions and different lattice spacings allows for a consistency check, but this set of ensembles is insufficient for taking a continuum limit.
Figure 2: Isovector Dirac radius \( (r_v^2) \), as determined from dipole fits to \( F_1(Q^2) \). The two experimental points both use the PDG [1] value for \( (r_v^2) \), and \( (r_v^2) \) is taken from either the PDG or from the result from measurement of the Lamb shift in muonic hydrogen [2]. Left: Results from ensembles using the three different lattice actions. Wilson action points are taken from the middle source-sink separation. Right: The full set of Wilson action results. Measurements using the three source-sink separations and the summation method are slightly displaced horizontally. The points corresponding to the smallest source-sink separation are placed at the measured value of \( m_{\pi}^2 \), except for the ensembles with \( m_{\pi} \approx 250 \text{ MeV} \) and \( m_{\pi} \approx 350 \text{ MeV} \), where the different volumes are displaced horizontally and the dotted lines indicate the approximate measured values of \( m_{\pi}^2 \).

3. Results

For each of the observables, two plots are shown. The first includes the data from all three actions. In order to show results using similar techniques, the middle source-sink separation on the Wilson action ensembles is shown for this comparison. The second plot shows the dependence on source-sink separation and the summation result for each of the ten Wilson ensembles.

Figure 2 shows the isovector Dirac radius. This is extracted from measurements of the isovector Dirac form factor \( F_1(Q^2) \) via dipole fits \( F_1(Q^2) \sim \frac{F_1(0)}{1 + Q^2/M_0^2} \). The first plot shows a broad consistency among the three lattice actions in their region of overlapping pion masses, although the unitary domain wall data are systematically a bit higher than the mixed action data. There is a gentle rise as \( m_{\pi} \) approaches the physical value, but all of these data significantly undershoot the experimental results. The second plot shows that excited-state effects are responsible for a large part of this discrepancy with experiment. There is a general trend for the data on each ensemble to increase with source-sink separation, and on the lightest ensemble the summation point is near the experimental points. Chiral extrapolation of the summation data to the physical pion mass yields a result consistent with experiment [13]. As shown in Ref. [13], calculations of the isovector Pauli radius, magnetic moment, and quark momentum fraction behave similarly: results for the 149 MeV ensemble monotonically approach the experimental value with increasing source-sink separation, the summation point agrees with experiment, and a chiral extrapolation of the summation data to the physical pion mass yields results in agreement with experiment and having a smaller statistical uncertainty than the 149 MeV summation point. Further study will be needed to obtain full control over excited-state effects, but with presently available data we consider the summation method as our best approach for reducing their size, and it succeeds in producing agreement with experiment.
for these four observables. Comparing the summation data on the four different space-time volumes at $m_\pi \approx 250$ MeV, we see that there is no statistically significant dependence on spatial volume or time extent. The summation point on the fine ensemble at $m_\pi = 317$ MeV is also consistent with those on the nearby coarse ensembles, indicating the absence of discretization effects at this level of precision.

The axial charge $g_A$ is shown in Fig. 3. Again there is broad agreement among the different actions. There is no clear dependence on $m_\pi$, and (using the middle source-sink separation for the Wilson ensembles) the data undershoot experiment by about 10%. Looking at the second plot, we see that, on the lightest two ensembles, increasing the source-sink separation moves the data away from experiment. The opposite behavior is seen in a subset of the four $m_\pi \approx 250$ MeV ensembles. For the three with $L_t/a \geq 48$, increasing the source-sink separation moves the data toward experiment and the summation points are consistent with experiment. In contrast, the fourth with $L_t/a = 24$ behaves similarly to the lightest two ensembles, albeit with larger statistical uncertainty. This suggests that the decrease of $g_A$ with source-sink separation is caused by the influence of thermal pion states, since the three ensembles that show this behavior all have small $m_\pi L_t$.

Figures 4 and 5 show the tensor charge $g_T$ and the scalar charge $g_S$, respectively. Measurements of the latter are much noisier; note the significantly larger range of the vertical axis in Fig. 5.
Figure 5: Scalar charge \( g_s \). The physical pion mass is indicated by the vertical line. See caption of Fig. 2.

compared with Figs. 3 and 4. Neither \( g_S \) nor \( g_T \) shows a clear statistically significant dependence on source-sink separation, so using the middle source-sink separation should give better results than was the case for \( \langle r_T^2 \rangle_u \) and \( g_A \). At \( m_\pi \approx 250 \text{ MeV} \), there isn’t a significant dependence on the spatial volume, but the ensemble with small \( L_t \) shows a dependence on source-sink separation for both \( g_S \) and \( g_T \). This behavior isn’t seen on the ensembles with the smallest pion masses, so it is likely that they aren’t strongly affected by thermal states. From the middle source-sink separation on the \( m_\pi = 149 \text{ MeV} \) ensemble, we get \( g_S = 1.01(27) \) and \( g_T = 1.049(23) \). Extrapolation to the physical pion mass using either the coarse Wilson ensembles, or a global fit to all ensembles, yields results consistent with the lightest ensemble [14].

4. Conclusions

The importance of near-physical quark masses for nucleon structure calculations is illustrated by the isovector Dirac radius, where the rise toward experiment is only seen at our lightest pion masses, and for the axial charge, where new behavior was seen only below \( m_\pi \approx 250 \text{ MeV} \). In addition, it is essential that excited-state effects can be identified, as shown clearly for the isovector Dirac radius. This shows up even more dramatically for the isovector quark momentum fraction \( \langle x \rangle_{u-d} \) [15, 13]. More study of excited-state effects is required, and this may require large computing resources, since as the source-sink separation \( T \) is increased to reduce excited-state contamination, the signal-to-noise ratio is expected to decay as \( e^{-\langle n_N-\frac{1}{2}m_\pi \rangle T} \) [16]. We have identified finite-temperature effects as a possible source of the discrepancy with experiment for the axial charge.

As we obtain a better understanding of systematic errors, predictions of nucleon properties using Lattice QCD become more credible. Calculations of the nucleon scalar and tensor charge will provide useful input to searches for new physics.

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Nucleon structure with pion mass down to 149 MeV

Jeremy Green

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The Chroma software suite [17] was used for the mixed action and unitary domain wall calculations. The Wilson-clover calculations were performed with Qlua [18].

References