

Weinberg's Soft Theorem to Three Loops in QCD

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Soft Theorem

Soft theorem (QED)

The amplitude for the emission of soft photons takes the factorized form:
(Weinberg, QFTt Vol I)

$$\mathcal{M}(q_1, q_2, \dots; p_1, p_2, \dots) \simeq \prod_i \left[\sum_j \eta_j Q_j \frac{\varepsilon(q_i) \cdot p_j}{q_i \cdot p_j} \right] \mathcal{M}(p_1, p_2, \dots). \quad (1)$$

q_i : momenta of soft photons, p_i : momenta of hard-scattering particles

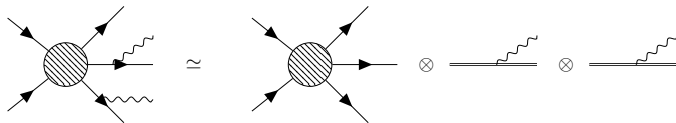


Figure: Soft factorization for the soft-photon emission.

Soft theorem holds to all orders in perturbation theory in massive QED.

Soft Factorization in QCD

$$\begin{aligned} & |\mathcal{M}_{s_1 s_2 \dots s_m, c_1 c_2 \dots c_m}^{\mu_1 \mu_2 \dots \mu_m}(q_1, q_2, \dots, q_m; p_1, p_2, \dots)\rangle \\ & \simeq (g_s \mu^\epsilon)^m \underbrace{J}_{\text{soft current}}(q_1, q_2, \dots, q_m) \underbrace{|\mathcal{M}\rangle}_{\text{hard-scattering amplitude}}(p_1, p_2, \dots). \end{aligned} \quad (2)$$

The soft current $J(q)$ is process independent and can be calculated perturbatively.

One-loop soft current for a single gluon emission: [Catani&Grazzini\(2000\)](#)

$$\begin{aligned} J_a = & - \frac{(g_s \mu^\epsilon)^3}{(4\pi)^2} \frac{1}{\epsilon^2} \frac{\Gamma^3(1-\epsilon)\Gamma^2(1+\epsilon)}{\Gamma(1-2\epsilon)} \\ & \times \underbrace{if_{abc}}_{\text{color factor}} \sum_{i \neq j} T_i^b T_j^c \left(\frac{\varepsilon(q) \cdot p_i}{p_i \cdot q} - \frac{\varepsilon(q) \cdot p_j}{p_j \cdot q} \right) \left[\frac{4\pi p_i \cdot p_j e^{-i\lambda_{ij}\pi}}{2p_i \cdot qp_j \cdot qe^{-i\lambda_{iq}\pi} e^{-i\lambda_{jq}\pi}} \right]^\epsilon. \end{aligned} \quad (3)$$

Phenomenological Applications

Why soft currents:

Provide the subtraction terms for fixed-order calculations

Necessary ingredients for the resummation of large logarithms

Serve as the "boundary conditions" of the full amplitudes

Soft currents with two hard partons:

$e^+e^- \rightarrow$ dijet, deep inelastic scattering, Drell-Yan, etc.

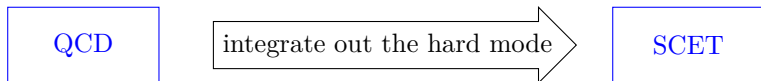
State-of-art calculations for the single-gluon emission:

- One loop:
Bern and Chalmers (1995), Bern et al. (1998), Bern et al. (1999),
Catani & Grazzini (2000)
- Two loops:
Li & Zhu (2013), Duhr & Gehrmann (2013) (double hard partons)
Dixon et al. (2020) (triple hard partons)

Soft Currents in SCET

soft collinear effective theory (SCET):

A effective theory for the soft can collinear modes.



single-gluon soft current in SCET:

$$J(q) = \langle g(q) | Y_n^\dagger Y_{\bar{n}} | \Omega \rangle. \quad (4)$$

Soft Wilson line:

$$Y_n^\dagger(x) \equiv \exp \left(i g_s T^a \int_0^\infty ds n \cdot A^a(x + sn) \right) \quad (5)$$

Feynman rules of the Wilson line:

$$-g_s n^\mu \frac{T^{a_1}}{-n \cdot q_1} \quad g_s^2 \frac{n^{\mu_1} n^{\mu_2}}{-n \cdot (q_1 + q_2)} \left(\frac{T^{a_1} T^{a_2}}{-n \cdot q_1} + \frac{T^{a_2} T^{a_1}}{-n \cdot q_2} \right) \quad \dots$$

The soft function can be calculated perturbatively in SCET:

$$J(q) = g_s \sum_{i=0}^{\infty} \left[(4\pi e^{-\gamma_E})^\epsilon \frac{\alpha_s}{4\pi} \right]^i \varepsilon(q) \cdot J^{(i)}(q). \quad (6)$$

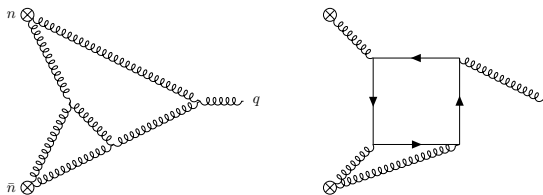
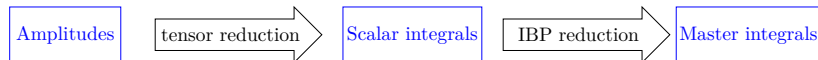


Figure: Representative diagrams for the three-loop soft current.

Reduction of Feynman Integrals



Integration by parts

- Momentum space [Tkachov \(1981\)](#), [Chetyrkin & Tkachov \(1981\)](#)
- Baikov representation [Baikov \(1997\)](#), [Larsen & Zhang \(2016\)](#)
- block-triangular form [Guan, Liu, Ma \(2020\)](#)
- **Parametric representation** [Lee \(2014\)](#), [Chen \(2020a, 2020b, 2021\)](#)

Advantages of the parametric representation:

- The tensor reduction is trivial
- No auxiliary propagators
- The symmetries under permutations of indices are transparent
- All the indices are nonnegative (for normal loop integrals)

Parametric Representation

Schwinger alpha parametrization

$$\frac{1}{D_i^{\lambda_i+1}} = \frac{e^{-\frac{\lambda_i+1}{2}i\pi}}{\Gamma(\lambda_i+1)} \int_0^\infty dx_i e^{ix_i D_i} x_i^{\lambda_i}, \quad \text{Im}\{D_i\} > 0.$$

parametrization of a scalar integral

$$\int d^d l_1 d^d l_2 \cdots d^d l_L \frac{1}{D_1^{\lambda_1+1} D_2^{\lambda_2+1} \cdots D_n^{\lambda_n+1}}$$

$\sum_i x_i D_i$

$$\rightarrow \int dx_1 dx_2 \cdots dx_n \prod_{i=1}^n x_i^{\lambda_i} \int d^d l_1 d^d l_2 \cdots d^d l_L \exp[i(A_{ij} l_i \cdot l_j + 2B_i \cdot l_i + C)]$$
$$\rightarrow \cdots \rightarrow \frac{\Gamma(-\lambda_0)}{\prod_{i=1}^{n+1} \Gamma(\lambda_i+1)} \int d\Pi^{(n+1)} \mathcal{F}^{\lambda_0} \prod_{i=1}^{n+1} x_i^{\lambda_i} \equiv \int d\Pi^{(n+1)} \mathcal{I}^{(-n-1)}.$$

integration measure: $d\Pi^{(n+1)} \equiv dx_1 dx_2 \cdots dx_n \delta(1 - E^{(1)})$

$E^{(n)}$: a positive definite homogeneous function of x_i of degree n .

Linear Reduction

parametric IBP

$$0 = \int d\Pi^{(n+1)} \frac{\partial}{\partial x_i} \mathcal{I}^{(-n)} + \delta_{\lambda_i 0} \int d\Pi^{(n)} \mathcal{I}^{(-n)} \Big|_{x_i=0}. \quad (7)$$

A Feynman integral of a specific topology can be understood as a function of the indices.

$$\mathcal{R}_i I(\lambda_0, \dots, \lambda_i, \dots, \lambda_n) = (\lambda_i + 1) I(\lambda_0, \dots, \lambda_i + 1, \dots, \lambda_n),$$

$$\mathcal{D}_i I(\lambda_0, \dots, \lambda_i, \dots, \lambda_n) = I(\lambda_0, \dots, \lambda_i - 1, \dots, \lambda_n),$$

$$\mathcal{A}_i I(\lambda_0, \dots, \lambda_i, \dots, \lambda_n) = \lambda_i I(\lambda_0, \dots, \lambda_i, \dots, \lambda_n).$$

$$A_{n+1} \equiv - (L + 1) A_0 - \sum_{i=1}^n (A_i + 1) - 1,$$

$$R_{n+1}^i \equiv (A_{n+1} + 1)(A_{n+1} + 2) \cdots (A_{n+1} + i).$$

$$\mathcal{D}_0 \left(\frac{\partial \mathcal{F}}{\partial \mathcal{R}_i} - \mathcal{D}_i \right) \mathcal{R}_{n+1} I = 0. \quad (8)$$

Reduction of Tensor Integrals

$$\int d^d l_1 d^d l_2 \cdots d^d l_L \frac{l_{i_1}^{\mu_1} l_{i_2}^{\mu_2} \cdots l_{i_r}^{\mu_r}}{D_1^{\lambda_1+1} D_2^{\lambda_2+1} \cdots D_n^{\lambda_n+1}} \quad (9)$$
$$\rightarrow [P_{i_1}^{\mu_1} P_{i_2}^{\mu_2} \cdots P_{i_r}^{\mu_r} I(\lambda_0, \lambda_1, \lambda_2, \cdots, \lambda_n)]_{p^\mu=0},$$

$$P_i^\mu(p) \equiv -\frac{\partial}{\partial p_{i,\mu}} - \tilde{B}_i^\mu + \frac{1}{2} \sum_{j=1}^L \tilde{A}_{ij} p_j^\mu, \quad (10)$$

$$\tilde{A}_{ij} \equiv \mathcal{D}_0 U(A^{-1})_{ij},$$

$$\tilde{B}_i^\mu \equiv \sum_{j=1}^L \tilde{A}_{ij} B_j^\mu$$

$$f_1(\tilde{A}, \tilde{B}) + f_2(\tilde{A}, \tilde{B}) \frac{\partial \mathcal{F}}{\partial x_i} = 0.$$

Integrals with Theta Functions

$$w_\lambda(D_i) \equiv e^{-\frac{\lambda+1}{2}i\pi} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} dx \frac{1}{x^{\lambda+1}} e^{ix D_i}. \quad (11)$$

$$w_0(u) = \theta(u), \quad w_{-1}(u) = \delta(u).$$

$$\begin{aligned} & \int d^d l_1 d^d l_2 \cdots d^d l_L \frac{w_{\lambda_1}(D_1) w_{\lambda_2}(D_2) \cdots w_{\lambda_m}(D_m)}{D_{m+1}^{\lambda_{m+1}+1} D_{m+2}^{\lambda_{m+2}+1} \cdots D_n^{\lambda_n+1}} \\ & \rightarrow \frac{\Gamma(-\lambda_0)}{\prod_{i=m+1}^{n+1} \Gamma(\lambda_i + 1)} \int d\Pi^{(n+1)} \mathcal{F}^{\lambda_0} \prod_{i=1}^{n+1} x_i^{\lambda_i}. \end{aligned} \quad (12)$$

$$\hat{x}_i = \begin{cases} \mathcal{D}_i & , \quad i = 1, 2, \dots, m, \\ \mathcal{R}_i & , \quad i = m+1, m+2, \dots, n+1, \end{cases}$$

$$\hat{z}_i = \begin{cases} -\mathcal{R}_i & , \quad i = 1, 2, \dots, m, \\ \mathcal{D}_i & , \quad i = m+1, m+2, \dots, n+1, \end{cases}$$

$$\hat{a}_i = \begin{cases} -\mathcal{A}_i - 1 & , \quad i = 1, 2, \dots, m, \\ \mathcal{A}_i & , \quad i = m+1, m+2, \dots, n+1. \end{cases}$$

$$\mathcal{D}_0 \left(\frac{\partial \mathcal{F}}{\partial \hat{x}_i} - \hat{z}_i \right) \hat{z}_{n+1} I = 0. \quad (13)$$

Representation Transformation

representation transformation **Chen (2023)**

$$u_i \equiv \frac{1}{\mathcal{F}} \frac{\partial \mathcal{F}}{\partial x_i} \quad (14a)$$

$$\mathcal{G} \equiv \frac{1}{\mathcal{F}}. \quad (14b)$$

duality

$$x_i = \frac{1}{\mathcal{G}} \frac{\partial \mathcal{G}}{\partial u_i} \quad (15a)$$

$$\mathcal{F} = \frac{1}{\mathcal{G}}. \quad (15b)$$

(rescaled) Baikov polynomial

$$\begin{aligned} P(v_1, v_2, \dots, v_n) &\equiv \frac{\det(q_i \cdot q_j)}{\det(p_i \cdot p_j)} \\ &= -\mathcal{G}(v_1, v_2, \dots, v_n, -1). \end{aligned} \quad (16)$$

Calculation of Master Integrals

- Mellin-Barnes method
- Sector decomposition
- Differential-equation method [Kotikov \(1991\)](#), [Remiddi \(1997\)](#)
 - Canonical basis [Henn \(2013\)](#)
 - Auxiliary mass flow [Liu, Ma, Wang \(2018\)](#), [Liu, Ma \(2023\)](#)
 - ...

Differential Equations in the Parametric Representation

$$\frac{\partial}{\partial y} I = -\mathcal{D}_0 \frac{\partial \mathcal{F}}{\partial y} I. \quad (17)$$

For soft integrals, the scale-dependence is trivial. An auxiliary scale can be introduced by inserting a delta function.

$$\begin{aligned} I(\lambda_0, \lambda_1, \dots, \lambda_n) &= \int dy d\Pi^{(n+1)} \delta(y - E^{(0)}(x)) \mathcal{I}^{(-n-1)} \\ &\equiv \int dy I_y. \end{aligned} \quad (18)$$

Equation (13) is a consequence of the homogeneity of the integrand. Thus it also holds for the integral I_y in eq. (18).

A simple choice of $E^{(0)}$:

$$E^{(1)} = \frac{x_i}{x_j}.$$

Asymptotic Expansion

convex-hull method Pak, Smirnov (2011)

$$\mathcal{F} = \sum_{a=1}^A \left(C_{\mathcal{F},a} \prod_i^{n+1} x_i^{\Lambda_{ai}} \right), \quad (19)$$

a region r is associated with a subset S_r of $\{1, 2, \dots, A\}$ and a vector \mathbf{k}_r , such that the number of elements of S_r is not less than n , and

$$\sum_{k=1}^{n+1} \Lambda_{ak} k_{r,k} = k_{r,0}, \quad a \in S_r, \quad (20a)$$

$$\sum_{k=1}^{n+1} \Lambda_{ak} k_{r,k} > k_{r,0}, \quad a \notin S_r. \quad (20b)$$

For the y -dependent integral I_y (Remember that \mathcal{F}' is obtained from \mathcal{F} through the replacement $x_i \rightarrow yx_j$.)

$$\mathcal{F}' = \sum_{a=1}^A \left(C_{\mathcal{F},a} \prod_i^{n+1} x_i^{\Lambda'_{ai}} \right). \quad (21)$$

$$\Lambda'_{aj} = \Lambda_{aj} + \Lambda_{ai}, \quad (22a)$$

$$\Lambda'_{ak} = \Lambda_{ak}, \quad k \neq j. \quad (22b)$$

Regions of the y -dependent integral:

$$\sum_{k=1}^{n+1} \Lambda'_{ak} k'_{r,k} = k_{r,0}, \quad a \in S_r, \quad (23a)$$

$$\sum_{k=1}^{n+1} \Lambda'_{ak} k'_{r,k} > k_{r,0}, \quad a \notin S_r, \quad (23b)$$

$$k'_{r,i} \equiv k_{r,i} - k_{r,j}, \quad (24a)$$

$$k'_{r,k} \equiv k_{r,k}, \quad k \neq i. \quad (24b)$$

Rules on choosing $E^{(0)}$

$$R_{ij} = \{r | k_{r,i} > k_{r,j}\}. \quad (25)$$

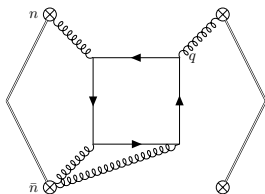
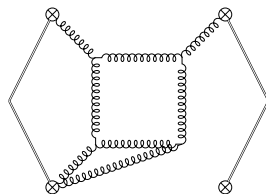
- (1) We choose the pair $\{i, j\}$ such that the cardinal number of R_{ij} is minimized, where R_{ij} is defined in eq. (25).
- (2) Among all the pairs satisfying the first rule, we choose the one such that $\max\{N_r | r \in R_{ij}\}$ is minimized, where N_r is the cardinal number of S_r .

$$\begin{aligned}
 I(\lambda_0, \lambda_1, \dots, \lambda_n) &= \frac{\Gamma(-\lambda_0)}{\prod_{i=1}^{n+1} \Gamma(\lambda_i + 1)} \int d\Pi^{(n+1)} \mathcal{F}^{\lambda_0} \prod_{i=1}^{n+1} x_i^{\lambda_i} \\
 &= \frac{(L+1) \prod_{a=1}^{n+1} [\Gamma(\bar{\lambda}_a) C_{\mathcal{F}, a}^{-\bar{\lambda}_a}]}{\|\Lambda\| \prod_{i=1}^{n+1} \Gamma(\lambda_i + 1)}.
 \end{aligned} \tag{26}$$

Result

QCD result

$$J_\mu^a(q) = -\frac{g_s}{2} \left(\frac{n_1^\mu}{n_1 \cdot q} - \frac{n_2^\mu}{n_2 \cdot q} \right) \left[(\mathbf{T}_1^a - \mathbf{T}_2^a) A_{12} + 2if^{abc} (\mathbf{T}_1^b \mathbf{T}_2^c - \mathbf{T}_2^b \mathbf{T}_1^c) B_{12} \right. \\ \left. - (\mathbf{T}_1^b \mathbf{T}_1^c \mathbf{T}_2^d - \mathbf{T}_2^b \mathbf{T}_2^c \mathbf{T}_1^d) (C_{12} d_A^{abcd} + D_{12} d_F^{abcd} N_f) \right] + \mathcal{O}(\alpha_s^4), \quad (27)$$

 $d_F^{abcd} d_F^{abcd}$  $d_F^{abcd} d_A^{abcd}$

$$S_{12}^{(l)}(q) = \frac{1}{4N_R C_R} \text{Tr} \left\{ \left[\varepsilon^\mu J_\mu^{a(l)} \right] \left[\varepsilon^\nu J_\nu^{a(0)} \right]^* (q) \right\}, \quad (28)$$

$$S_\epsilon = \left(4\pi S_{12}^{(0)} \mu^2 e^{-\gamma E} \frac{e^{-i\lambda_{12}\pi}}{e^{-i\lambda_{1q}\pi} e^{-i\lambda_{2q}\pi}} \right)^\epsilon,$$

$$S_{12}^{(l)}(q) = S_{12}^{(0)}(q) S_\epsilon^l r_{12}^{(l)},$$

$$B_{12}^{(l)} = S_\epsilon^l b_{12}^{(l)}, C_{12}^{(l)} = S_\epsilon^l c_{12}^{(l)}, D_{12}^{(l)} = S_\epsilon^l d_{12}^{(l)}.$$

$$\begin{aligned}
b_{12}^{(3)} = & C_A^2 \left\{ -\frac{1}{6\epsilon^6} + \frac{11}{12\epsilon^5} + \frac{1}{\epsilon^4} \left(\frac{119}{324} - \frac{3\zeta_2}{4} \right) + \frac{1}{\epsilon^3} \left(\frac{649\zeta_2}{216} + \frac{2\zeta_3}{3} - \frac{1517}{486} \right) \right. \\
& + \frac{1}{\epsilon^2} \left(\frac{2501\zeta_2}{648} - \frac{2101\zeta_3}{108} - \frac{1487\zeta_4}{288} - \frac{7271}{486} \right) \\
& + \frac{1}{\epsilon} \left(\frac{11\zeta_3\zeta_2}{18} + \frac{437\zeta_2}{972} + \frac{2575\zeta_3}{36} - \frac{22583\zeta_4}{576} + \frac{98\zeta_5}{5} - \frac{446705}{8748} \right) + \dots \left. \right\} \\
& + C_A N_f \left\{ -\frac{1}{6\epsilon^5} + \frac{43}{162\epsilon^4} + \frac{1}{\epsilon^3} \left(\frac{895}{486} - \frac{59\zeta_2}{108} \right) \right. \\
& + \frac{1}{\epsilon^2} \left(-\frac{31\zeta_2}{324} + \frac{239\zeta_3}{54} + \frac{2603}{486} \right) \\
& + \frac{1}{\epsilon} \left(\frac{3265\zeta_2}{972} - \frac{4945\zeta_3}{162} + \frac{2437\zeta_4}{288} + \frac{24169}{2187} \right) + \dots \left. \right\} \\
& + C_F N_f \left\{ \frac{1}{9\epsilon^3} + \frac{1}{\epsilon^2} \left(\frac{55}{54} - \frac{8\zeta_3}{9} \right) + \frac{1}{\epsilon} \left(\frac{\zeta_2}{6} - \frac{76\zeta_3}{27} - \frac{4\zeta_4}{3} + \frac{1819}{324} \right) + \dots \right\} \\
& + N_f^2 \left\{ -\frac{4}{81\epsilon^4} + -\frac{40}{243\epsilon^3} + \frac{1}{\epsilon^2} \left(-\frac{2\zeta_2}{27} - \frac{8}{27} \right) \right. \\
& + \frac{1}{\epsilon} \left(-\frac{20\zeta_2}{81} + \frac{260\zeta_3}{81} - \frac{704}{2187} \right) + \dots \left. \right\},
\end{aligned}$$

$$c_{12}^{(3)} = \frac{-32\zeta_2\zeta_3 - 16\zeta_5}{\epsilon} - 192\zeta_3^2 + \frac{64\zeta_3}{3} - 64\zeta_2 + \frac{1760\zeta_5}{3} - 940\zeta_6 + \dots,$$
$$d_{12}^{(3)} = 128\zeta_2 - \frac{128\zeta_3}{3} - \frac{640\zeta_5}{3} + \dots$$

$\mathcal{N} = 4$ SYM result

$$S_{12, \mathcal{N}=4}^{(3)}(q) = S_{12}^0(q) S_\epsilon^3 \left[C_A^3 \left\{ -\frac{1}{6\epsilon^6} - \frac{3\zeta_2}{4\epsilon^4} + \frac{2\zeta_3}{3\epsilon^3} - \frac{1487\zeta_4}{288\epsilon^2} \right. \right. \\ \left. \left. + \frac{1}{\epsilon} \left(\frac{284\zeta_5}{15} - \frac{13\zeta_2\zeta_3}{18} \right) + \frac{5\zeta_3^2}{36} + \frac{174959\zeta_6}{6912} + \dots \right\} \right. \\ \left. + \frac{3}{2} C_A \left\{ \frac{-32\zeta_2\zeta_3 - 16\zeta_5}{\epsilon} - 192\zeta_3^2 - 940\zeta_6 + \dots \right\} \right],$$

Bern-Dixon-Smirnov (BDS) ansatz

$$S_{12, \mathcal{N}=4}^{(l)}(q) = 2^l S_{12}^0(q) S_\epsilon^l C_A^l r_S^{(l)}(\epsilon) + \text{sub-leading color contribution},$$

$$r_S^{(3)}(\epsilon) = -\frac{1}{3} \left(r_S^{(1)}(\epsilon) \right)^3 + r_S^{(1)}(\epsilon) r_S^{(2)}(\epsilon) + f^{(3)}(\epsilon) r_S^{(1)}(3\epsilon) + \mathcal{O}(\epsilon), \quad (29)$$

$$f^{(3)}(\epsilon) = \frac{11\zeta_4}{2} + (5\zeta_2\zeta_3 + 6\zeta_5)\epsilon + a\epsilon^2 + \mathcal{O}(\epsilon^3),$$

$$a = 31\zeta_3^2 + \frac{1909\zeta_6}{48} \simeq 85.25374611,$$

Summary









We calculated the single-gluon soft current with two hard-scattering partons to three loops.

We developed a systematic method to calculate Feynman integrals recursively basing on the parametric representation.








We confirmed the prediction on the three-loop soft current in SYM based on the BDS ansatz.

Our results provide an indispensable ingredient for the N^4 LO QCD corrections.

Thanks for your attention!

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