The Hazy Sea of QCD

Christine A. Aidala University of Michigan

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Photo by Payton Bissell on Unsplash



Quantum Chromodynamics: Theory of strong interactions

- Fundamental field theory in hand since the early 1970s—BUT...
- Quark and gluon degrees of freedom in the theory cannot be observed or manipulated directly in experiment!

Color *confinement*—quarks and gluons are confined to color-neutral bound states

CLAS Collaboration PRL 113, 152004 (2014)

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How do we understand the visible matter in our universe in terms of the quark and gluon degrees of freedom of quantum chromodynamics?

How can studying QCD systems teach us more about fundamental aspects of QCD as a theory?



The proton as a "laboratory" for studying QCD

- Proton: simplest stable QCD bound state
- Different energy scales offer information on different aspects of proton internal structure















Generating the sea by gluon splitting

- Nucleon sea (was) naively assumed to be symmetric in the light flavors (u,d)
 - Gluons don't couple to flavor
 - Masses of u and d quarks are small and similar, compared to proton mass and probing energies
- Perturbative calculation differences between u and d are very small! ______D.A. Ross and C. T. Sachrajda, Nucl. Phys. B149, 497 (1979)





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But experiments have shown that the nucleon sea is not that simple!



Accessing sea quarks

In proton-proton collisions

- Drell-Yan process of quark-antiquark annihilation to dileptons
- W boson production





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In lepton-proton collisions

- Semi-inclusive deepinelastic scattering (DIS) with identified hadrons
 - Statistically enhance sensitivity to sea quarks by selecting certain hadrons, e.g. kaons to access strange quarks





Light quark (unpolarized, collinear) sea: Not simply gluon splitting



- Ratio deviates from 1 for (at least) momentum fractions x ~0.02-0.2
- One idea: meson cloud models suggest fluctuation of p into $n + \pi^+$, with d in π^+ at relatively large momentum



Parton distribution function fits



Light quark (unpolarized, collinear) sea: Not simply gluon splitting



Dynamics: Transverse momentum of valence vs. sea quarks



Data from E537 (pbar+W): PRD38, 1377 (1988) E439: (p+W): AIP Conf. Proc. 45, 93 (1978)

- p+W: (Valence) quark from p, (sea) antiquark from W
- pbar+W: (Valence) quark from W, (valence) antiquark from pbar
- (Valence × sea) spectrum harder
 → Larger mean k_T for sea than valence quarks?
 - Agrees with chiral soliton model predictions (e.g. Schweitzer, Strikman, Weiss 2013)
 - Consistent with work by Bacchetta et al.



...And nuclear effects seen in Drell-Yan that differ from DIS





No clear "antishadowing" in Drell-Yan

...And nuclear effects seen in Drell-Yan that differ from DIS

- Proton-beam Drell-Yan results shown vs. x_{target}, which is x of sea quark in nucleus
- If it's a relevant picture to think of nuclear binding mediated by pions, why no clear excess of antiquarks in nuclei??



No clear "antishadowing" in Drell-Yan



Sea quark spin-spin correlations (helicity distributions)

$\Delta q(x), \Delta \overline{q}(x)$



$$\begin{array}{c|c} u_L & W^+ \\ \hline d_R & u_R \end{array} \hspace{1cm} W^- \\ \hline u_R & W^- \end{array}$$

$$A_L^{W^+} \approx -\frac{\Delta u(x_1)\overline{d}(x_2) - \Delta \overline{d}(x_1)u(x_2)}{u(x_1)\overline{d}(x_2) - \overline{d}(x_1)u(x_2)}$$

$$A_L^{W^-} \approx -\frac{\Delta d(x_1)\overline{u}(x_2) - \Delta \overline{u}(x_1)d(x_2)}{d(x_1)\overline{u}(x_2) - \overline{u}(x_1)d(x_2)}$$

Parity violation of weak interaction + control over proton spin orientation at the Relativistic Heavy Ion Collider gives access to *flavor*-spin structure of proton



Large parity-violating single-helicity asymmetries



 Improve constraints on light antiquark helicity distributions

$$A_{L} = \frac{1}{P} \frac{N^{+} / L^{+} - N^{-} / L^{-}}{N^{+} / L^{+} + N^{-} / L^{-}}$$



And suggest flavor asymmetry in the sea helicity distributions



(DSSV08: Before RHIC W⁻ data pulled up the \bar{u} helicity distribution)



And suggest flavor asymmetry in the sea helicity distributions





0.35

Strangeness helicity distribution from inclusive vs. semi-inclusive DIS

- NNPDF fit an indirect extraction of strangeness using only inclusive DIS
- DSSV includes semiinclusive DIS kaon data
- Is the strange sea polarized, and if so, with or against the proton??
 - Need more data!





Theory: Transverse spin-spin correlations for sea quarks significant and flavor-asymmetric?

Transversity Distribution



Slide from Huey-Wen Lin, INT Workshop Oct 2017

Lattice calculation agrees with chiral quark-soliton model calculation

Spin-orbit coupling for sea quarks in unpolarized protons small? E866, PRL 99, 082301 (2007);

q j q l



Boer - Mulders function h_1^{\perp}

v(π -W \rightarrow μ + μ X)~ [valence h_1^{\perp}(\pi)] * [valence h_1^{\perp}(p)] v(pd \rightarrow μ + μ -X)~ [valence h_1^{\perp}(p)] * [sea h_1^{\perp}(p)]





- Suggests this spin-orbit correlation for sea quarks is small?
 - Boer-Mulders transversemomentum-dependent
 PDF: describes correlation
 between orbital motion of
 quark and the quark's own
 transverse spin, in an
 unpolarized hadron

Spin-orbit coupling for sea quarks in *transversely polarized* protons *not* small?



Spin-momentum correlation measurements from two semi-inclusive DIS experiments seem larger for K⁺ ($u\bar{s}$) than π^+ ($u\bar{d}$). \bar{s} effect??



COMPASS, PLB744, 250 (2015)

HERMES, PRL103, 152002 (2009) Note scale difference for π^+ vs. K⁺!

Aidala, Warwick EPP Seminar

Huge spin-momentum correlations observed in hadronic collisions involving transversely polarized protons



CAA, Bass, Hasch, Mallot, Rev. Mod. Phys. 85, 655 (2013)

Large asymmetries for more forward pion production with respect to polarized beam and opposite sign for π^+ and π^- suggest valence quark effect with opposite sign spin-momentum correlation for u vs. d



C. Aidala, W





Hyperon polarization from unpolarized collisions



- 1976 lambda polarization discovery: p+Be, 300 GeV beam
- Polarization transverse to production plane up to $\sim 20\%$ for forward-angle lambda production
- Confirmed 1977 at CERN, p+Pt, 24 GeV beam (and by various protonnucleus and proton-proton experiments afterwards . . .)



Observed for forward lambda production: large Feynman-x (x_F)



$$x_F = \frac{p_L}{|\max p_L|}$$
 in c.m. frame

Note that sign convention is reversed from original discovery on previous slide!



But also some polarized antibaryons from (unpolarized) proton beams!



No valence quarks in produced baryons same as valence quarks in proton beam, but polarization still observed for particles produced in the more forward region

K. Heller, Proceedings, 12th International Symposium on Spin Physics, Amsterdam, 1996





Baryon vs. meson sea

- Would naively expect dynamics of valence quarks in baryons vs. mesons to be different. Also dynamics of sea quarks?
 - Three-quark system vs. quark-antiquark pair
 - Baryons as fermions vs. mesons as bosons—different spins
- Is strangeness suppressed in the sea of the phi meson through Pauli blocking? Charm suppressed in the sea of the J/Psi? Does it even make sense to think of these resonances as having a "sea"?
- Do different binding energies e.g. of different heavy quarkonium states lead to different dynamics in the sea, or of the valence quarks?



Relationship between gluons and sea quarks

- What can be learned about gluons from sea quark distributions, and vice-versa, for
 - unpolarized, collinear PDFs?
 - helicity PDFs?
 - transversity PDFs and linearly polarized gluons?
 - transverse-momentum-dependent PDFs?
- Perturbative vs. nonperturbative interplay between sea quarks and gluons?
 - Do the nonperturbative mechanisms that must be generating the flavor asymmetry observed in the unpolarized, collinear sea affect gluon distributions at all?



Can we learn anything about the sea of hadrons by thinking about hadronization?

- How should we think about colored partons binding, color neutralizing, and "getting dressed" with their dynamical sea as they snap into a particular quantum state, i.e. hadron?
- Is thinking about hadronization via "string breaking" vs. "parton recombination" vs. threshold production vs. decay from another hadron helpful? Every possible mechanism has to lead to same final state.



What do we really mean by "valence" and "sea" anyway??

- At any given instant, the proton has a net up content of 2 and net down content of 1, which determines the +1 charge.
- It also determines the total spin somehow . . .


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- At any given instant, the proton has a net up content of 2 and net down content of 1, which determines the +1 charge.
- It also determines the total spin somehow . . .
- We talk about "the valence quarks" being at large momentum fraction x, but Fermilab E866 measured (sea) antiquarks up to x = 0.35. Is it meaningful to think also of sea *quarks* at these high x values, i.e. up or down sea quarks rather than antiup or antidown?
 - If we measure an up or down quark at $x \sim 0.35$, we call it "valence."
 - So what do hints of different dynamics for sea quarks than "valence" quarks mean? Should what we call "valence" vs. "sea" be associated with different processes/behavior within the proton?







New results on the light flavor asymmetry of the proton sea from SeaQuest



Article

The asymmetry of antimatter in the proton Nature **590**, 561 (2021)

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J. Dove¹, B. Kerns¹, R. E. McClellan¹¹⁸, S. Miyasaka², D. H. Morton³, K. Nagai^{2,4}, S. Prasad¹, F. Sanftl², M. B. C. Scott³, A. S. Tadepalli⁵¹⁸, C. A. Aidala³⁶, J. Arrington⁷¹⁸, C. Ayuso³²⁰, C. L. Barker⁸, C. N. Brown⁹, W. C. Chang⁴, A. Chen^{13,4}, D. C. Christian¹⁰, B. P. Dannowitz¹, M. Daugherty⁸, M. Diefenthaler¹¹⁸, L. El Fassi⁵¹¹, D. F. Geesaman⁷²¹, R. Gilman⁵, Y. Coto¹², L. Guo^{6,22}, R. Guo¹³, T. J. Hague⁶, R. J. Holt⁷²³, D. Isenhower⁸, E. R. Kinney¹⁴, N. Kitts⁶, A. Klein⁶, D. W. Kleinjan⁶, Y. Kudo¹⁵, C. Leung¹, P.-J. Lin¹⁴, K. Liu⁶, M. X. Liu⁶, W. Lorenzon³, N. C. R. Makins¹ M. Mesquita de Medeiros⁷, P. L. McGaughey⁶, Y. Miyachi¹⁸, I. Mooney^{3,24}, K. Nakahara^{10,25}, K. Nakano²¹², S. Nara¹⁵, J.-C. Peng¹, A. J. Puckett^{0,26}, B. J. Ramson^{3,27}, P. E. Reimer^{7/23}, J. G. Rubin^{3,7}, S. Sawada¹⁷, T. Sawada^{3,28}, T.-A. Shibata^{21,20}, D. Su⁴, M. Teo¹³⁰, B. G. Tice⁷, R. S. Towell⁸, S. Uemura^{6,31}, S. Watson⁶, S. G. Wang^{4,13,32}, A. B. Wickes⁶, J. Wu¹⁰, Z. Xi⁸ & Z. Ye⁷



Drell-Yan with a proton beam: Tag antiquarks in target

- Fixed-target kinematics:
 - Large $x_F (= x_{beam} x_{target})$
 - $M^2 = x_{beam} x_{target} s$ plays role of Q²

$$\frac{d^2\sigma}{dx_b dx_t} = \frac{4\pi\alpha^2}{9x_b x_t} \sum_q e_q^2 [q(x_b)\bar{q}(x_t) + q(x_t)\bar{q}(x_b)]$$

- Proton beam: antiquark density negligible at large x, so first term dominates
- Isolate antiquarks in the target
- Alter combinations of protons and neutrons—and therefore sea quark distributions—by changing targets
- Same strategy as Fermilab E866/NuSea, but different kinematics → access higher x



SeaQuest kinematics

- For invariant masses between J/Psi and upsilon, most statistics near peak of \bar{d}/\bar{u} (~0.15<x_{target}<~0.2)
- Max x_{target} ~0.45
 Compare to 0.35 for E866













Liquid hydrogen, liquid deuterium, and solid targets





Dimuon mass spectrum





Drell-Yan cross-section ratio: Deuterium to hydrogen



Cross-section ratio compared to E866/NuSea



Different kinematics suggest that SeaQuest should be slightly higher

SeaQuest's extraction of d/\bar{u}

Correct way to extract quark distributions is within the context of a global fit to all relevant world data!

$$\frac{\sigma^{D}}{2 \sigma^{H}} \approx \frac{1}{2} \left[1 + \frac{\bar{d}}{\bar{u}} \right]$$

What we have done in the meantime:

- Fix PDFs in a current global fit except for $d/_{\overline{u}}$
 - The sum $\overline{d}(x) + \overline{u}(x)$ is also fixed
 - Used CT10, CT14, CT18, MMHT2014, all NLO

• Compute

$$\frac{\sigma^{D}}{2\sigma^{H}} = \frac{\iint \frac{d\sigma^{D}_{NLO}}{dx_{1}dx_{2}} dx_{1} dx_{2}}{2 \iint \frac{d\sigma^{H}_{NLO}}{dx_{1}dx_{2}} dx_{1} dx_{2}} \text{ with } \overline{d}/_{\overline{u}}]_{i}$$

with the integrals over the experimental acceptance

• Compare with measured $\frac{\sigma^D}{2\sigma^H}$, and iterate on $\overline{d}/_{\overline{u}}]_{i+1}$



SeaQuest extracted \bar{d}/\bar{u} compared with E866 SeaQuest extraction starting from CT18 shown



SeaQuest ${d(x)}/{\overline{u}(x)} > 1$ for entire measured range. Some tension with E866. E866: $< M^2 > \sim 54 \text{ GeV}^2$ SeaQuest: $< M^2 > \sim 20 - 40 \text{ GeV}^2$

SeaQuest extracted $\overline{d}/\overline{u}$ compared with CT18NLO global PDF fit





SeaQuest extracted $\overline{d}/\overline{u}$ compared with nonperturbative models



Alberg and Miller – a pion cloud model from chiral effective perturbation theory – PRC100, 035205 (2019)

Basso et al. – based on a statistical model – Nuc. Phys. A948, 63, (2016)

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Graphic art from the media!



In Science News



The Proton Sea

Protons, the positively charged particles in atomic nuclei, seem simple from a distance, but their interiors are a swirling sea of quarks, antiquarks and gluons that physicists are still struggling to understand. Three unbalanced "valence" quarks give the proton its overall charge.





Conclusions and outlook

- Still trying to peer through the haze to understand the sea within hadrons!
- New SeaQuest results extend constraints on the light flavor nucleon sea to higher *x*
 - \bar{d} enhancement persists
 - No conclusive theoretical understanding thus far
- Future measurements from SeaQuest, LHC, SpinQuest, Relativistic Heavy Ion Collider, and Electron-Ion Collider, with the latter three polarized, will help shed further light on the sea of nucleons and nuclei
- Understanding in particular the *dynamics* of sea quarks, which probe beyond static pictures of antiquarks in the nucleon, will be crucial to understanding how the nucleon sea is generated (and what in fact it is!)







Issues with beam intensity fluctuations

- Slow-spill extraction from the Main Injector for 4 s every 60 s
- Bunch spacing 19 ns
- Saw bunch-to-bunch intensity fluctuations of factor >1000 during 2012 commissioning!



Beam Cherenkov detector to veto high-intensity bunches

- <16 ns time resolution
- Approx. 30 to 3×10¹⁶ protons/RF cycle
- Calibrated every minute against beam line SEM





Intensity dependence

Plot $\sigma_D/2\sigma_H$ as a function of the # of protons in the triggered bucket

- Trigger inefficiency at high rates
- Increased triggering on noise events
- Reconstruction inefficiency at high occupancy
-
- Cut on beam intensity
 - Lose statistical power of the data
- Model-based corrections
 - Fit data w/model of source
 - Monte Carlo to verify
 - Used by E866/NuSea
 - Becomes difficult with multiple effects



 \rightarrow Fit rate dependence and extract intercept at 0. (Technically want cross-section ratio for beam intensity at 1, i.e. 1 beam proton interacting with target)



Intensity extrapolation





Cross Check of Rate Dependence





Light flavor sea: Experimental surprises

• Drell-Yan process of $q\bar{q}$ annihilation to dimuons



 Proton-hydrogen and protondeuterium collisions

 $\frac{\sigma^{pd}(x_t)}{2\sigma_{pp}(x_t)} \approx \frac{1}{2} \left[1 + \frac{\bar{d}(x)}{\bar{u}(x)} \right]^2$

*simplest leading-order expression

• Indicates additional nonperturbative mechanism to generate sea quarks—not just gluon splitting!

$$\int \left(\bar{d}(x,Q^2) - \bar{u}(x,Q^2) \right) dx = 0.118 \pm 0.012$$



Fermilab E866 data: PRD64, 052002 (2001) CERN NA51 data: PLB332, 244 (1994)



How is the nucleon sea generated?



Complementarity of Drell-Yan and DIS



Both Drell-Yan and deep-inelastic scattering are tools to probe the quark and antiquark structure of hadrons



Long history of fixed-target Drell-Yan at Fermilab

- E288 200, 300, and 400 GeV p beams on Be, Cu, and Pt targets
- E325 200, 300, and 400 GeV p beams on Cu target
- $E326 225 \text{ GeV} \pi$ beam on W target
- E439 400 GeV p beam on W target
- E444 225 GeV, π +/-, K+, proton/antiproton beams on C, Cu, W targets
- E537 125 GeV antiproton and π^{-} beams on W target
- E605 800 GeV p beam on Cu target
- $E615 252 \text{ GeV} \pi$ beam on W target
- E772 800 GeV p beam on deuterium, C, Ca, Fe, W targets
- E866/NuSea 800 GeV p beam on hydrogen, deuterium targets
- E906/SeaQuest 120 GeV p beam on hydrogen, deuterium, C, Fe, W targets



No observed antilambda polarization



- 1978: No antilambda polarization
- And lambda polarization now measured up to $p_T = 2.2$ GeV, polarization ~25%. (Same sign convention as compilation of measurements in ATLAS paper)



Σ^+ polarized with opposite sign





MICHIGAN

Ξ^{0} polarization similar to Λ^{0}





1983: p+Be, 400 GeV beam
Similar results for p+Cu and p+Pb



Σ^{-} polarized similarly to Σ^{+} ; Ξ^{-} similarly to Ξ^{0}





Other hyperon polarization measurements





- p_T dependence for Σ^+ but not Λ^0 or Ξ^-
- Σ⁰ appears to have same sign polarization as Σ⁺, Σ⁻ but opposite from Λ (both uds)

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Sensitivity of Drell-Yan to sea antiquarks compared to inclusive DIS



(Very high Q shown)



Parton energy loss in cold nuclear matter

- Understanding parton energy loss in hot, dense nuclear matter (quark-gluon plasma) of great interest in heavy ion community
- Drell-Yan provides clean reference for energy loss in cold nuclear matter—only minimal final-state interactions





DIS data on nuclear targets



• Klaus Rith, *Present status of the EMC effect*. arXiv:1402.5000



EMC effect with antiquarks?




EMC effect with antiquarks?

- DIS results establish nuclear dependence of quark distributions.
- Expectations of large antiquark effects
- No effects were seen in E772 Drell-Yan experiment





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SeaQuest EMC effect nuclear dependence



- No enhancement seen as in the case of a pion excess model!
- Caveat—partonic energy loss is important
- In agreement with E772 results in the overlap region

