

CONSTRUCTIVE 4D YANG–MILLS: A CONDITIONAL MASS-GAP PROOF VIA REFLECTION POSITIVITY AND UNIFORM CLUSTERING

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ABSTRACT

A Yang–Mills–only proof program for the nonvanishing spectral gap in four-dimensional Euclidean $SU(N)$ gauge theory is presented *under the assumption* that there exists a reflection–positivity–preserving renormalization–group flow which maintains a uniform exponential clustering bound. The construction proceeds entirely on the lattice with the Wilson action, establishing reflection positivity and a self–adjoint transfer matrix. Exponential clustering of gauge–invariant connected correlators at finite lattice spacing and volume is shown to imply a nonzero spectral gap for the associated Hamiltonian. A reflection–positivity–preserving renormalization group (RG) flow is then used to demonstrate that a uniform lower bound on the gap persists in the continuum limit. Osterwalder–Schrader reconstruction yields a Wightman theory whose Hamiltonian has a strictly positive mass gap $m_\star > 0$. All arguments are fully gauge–invariant and rely solely on intrinsic Yang–Mills structures.

Keywords

exponential clustering; lattice Yang–Mills; mass-gap analysis; Osterwalder–Schrader reconstruction; reflection positivity; renormalization group; spectral gap; transfer matrix; uniform clustering; Wilson action.

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1 Introduction and Main Result

Pure $SU(N)$ Yang–Mills (YM) theory in $3 + 1$ dimensions is expected to exhibit a positive mass gap in its spectrum. Despite extensive numerical evidence and experimental support, no mathematical proof of this property is currently known, and even a mathematically complete example of such a quantum gauge theory in four dimensions has yet to be constructed[1]. Building on Wilson’s lattice formulation of gauge theory[2], the present work formulates a proof program based strictly on Euclidean lattice YM with the Wilson action, reflection positivity (RP), exponential clustering (EC) of gauge-invariant correlators, and a renormalization group (RG) scheme that preserves RP and the EC bound uniformly as $a \rightarrow 0$. This approach reduces the mass-gap problem to a *single technical premise*: a reflection–positivity–preserving renormalization group preserving a uniform exponential clustering rate. Recent geometric approaches to the mass gap highlight how curvature of the orbit space and Bakry–Émery Ricci curvature can produce a spectral gap for non-Abelian gauge theories; the constructive framework developed here complements these ideas and places them in a rigorous lattice setting[3].

All subsequent arguments hinge on a *single technical premise*: a reflection–positivity–preserving renormalization–group flow preserves a scale–independent exponential clustering bound for gauge–invariant connected correlators. Under this assumption, reflection positivity and exponential clustering yield a nonzero spectral gap for the lattice theory, and the transfer–matrix analysis shows that this gap persists in the continuum limit.

Theorem 1 (Mass gap for 4D $SU(N)$ YM). *Assume the existence of an RP-preserving renormalization group in the sense of Definition 1 with a scale-independent exponential clustering rate. Consider pure $SU(N)$ Yang–Mills on the Euclidean hypercubic lattice $(a\mathbb{Z})^4$ with Wilson action at inverse coupling β . For β in the scaling regime and after Osterwalder–Schrader (OS) reconstruction of the continuum limit, the Hamiltonian H acting on the reconstructed Hilbert space satisfies*

$$E_1 - E_0 \equiv m_\star > 0,$$

where E_0 is the vacuum energy and E_1 the least positive energy of a gauge-invariant excitation (glueball). The lower bound $m_\star$ is uniform in finite volume and persists along the assumed RP-preserving RG flow to the continuum. In particular, the theorem holds conditionally on the validity of the single-premise RG assumption.

Strategy. (i) Establish RP and construct a positive self-adjoint transfer matrix T , $H := -\log T$. (ii) Prove EC for gauge-invariant local operators at finite (a, L_{lat}) ; RP converts EC into a spectral gap for $H(a, L_{\text{lat}})$. (iii) Use a multi-scale RG with RP preserved at each step to maintain a uniform lower bound as $a \rightarrow 0$ and $L_{\text{lat}} \rightarrow \infty$. (iv) Apply OS reconstruction to obtain the continuum theory with $m_\star > 0$.

2 Empirical and Numerical Support

The theoretical framework developed above is motivated by a rich body of numerical simulations and experimental observations that support the expected properties of pure $SU(N)$ Yang–Mills theory: a nonzero mass gap, exponential clustering of gauge–invariant correlators, and confinement of colour. Although the proof program in this paper does not rely on data, it is useful to review the evidence supporting the single-premise hypothesis as physically reasonable.¹

2.1 Lattice evidence

Large-scale Monte Carlo studies of pure $SU(3)$ gauge theory have extracted the glueball spectrum on anisotropic lattices. Morningstar and Peardon measured the spectrum of glueballs below 4 GeV on lattices with spatial separations between 0.15 and 0.30 fm, and demonstrated that discretisation and finite-volume effects can be controlled; their results significantly improved upon earlier calculations[4]. Subsequent work by Chen *et al.* constructed improved $SU(3)$ gluonic operators on anisotropic lattices with quantum-number channels[5].

¹This work does not derive phenomenological observables; the following discussion serves only to illustrate the qualitative consistency between the constructive assumptions and existing observations.

A complementary line of evidence comes from measurements of the static quark–antiquark potential. High-statistics computations of the potential on the Connection Machine CM-2 determined the string tension and plaquette action over a wide range of couplings; new data for the region $5.5 < \beta < 6.8$ confirmed a linearly rising potential characteristic of confinement[6]. More recently, Lucini, Teper, and Wenger tested blocking and smearing algorithms to construct glueball and string operators and obtained improved results for k -string tensions in SU(4), SU(6), and SU(8) gauge theories. They found that the k -string tensions lie between the ‘MQCD’ and ‘Casimir scaling’ conjectures and calculated the lightest glueball masses for $N = 2, \dots, 8$, extrapolating to $N \rightarrow \infty$ [7].

These lattice results consistently indicate a nonzero spectral gap and rapidly decaying gauge-invariant correlators.

3 Euclidean Lattice Setup and OS Axioms

Let $\Lambda_{L_{\text{lat}}} = (a\mathbb{Z}/L_{\text{lat}}\mathbb{Z})^4$ denote the periodic lattice with spacing a and linear size L_{lat} in each direction. Gauge fields are SU(N)-valued link variables $U_\ell \in \text{SU}(N)$ on oriented links ℓ . The Wilson action is

$$S_W[U] = \sum_p \frac{1}{g^2} \left(1 - \frac{1}{N} \text{Re Tr } U_p \right), \quad (1)$$

where U_p is the ordered product of link variables around plaquette p , and g is the bare coupling with $\beta = \frac{2N}{g^2}$. The Gibbs measure is

$$\mathrm{d}\mu_\beta(U) = Z^{-1} \exp(-S_W[U]) \prod_\ell \mathrm{d}U_\ell,$$

with Haar measure $\mathrm{d}U_\ell$ on SU(N).

Observables. Use gauge-invariant local composites such as $\text{Tr } F_{\mu\nu}^2$ (appropriately discretised) and Wilson loops $W(C) = \frac{1}{N} \text{Re Tr } \prod_{\ell \in C} U_\ell$.

Figure 1 depicts the oriented plaquette path appearing in the Wilson action, and will be used to visualise the basic lattice cell.

OS framework. Time-reflection θ about a hyperplane defines reflection positivity: for any functional F localised in the positive-time half-lattice,

$$\int \overline{F(\theta U)} F(U) \mathrm{d}\mu_\beta(U) \geq 0.$$

Euclidean invariance, symmetry, and cluster properties complete the OS axioms. Reflection positivity enables construction of the transfer matrix and (via OS reconstruction) a Hilbert space with a self-adjoint Hamiltonian. These conditions form the Osterwalder–Schrader framework for Euclidean quantum field theory, as established by Osterwalder and Schrader and further developed by Fröhlich[8, 9].

Preserving reflection positivity is essential beyond the Euclidean formulation. Recent work on holographic dualities in de Sitter spacetime emphasises that a boundary theory lacking reflection positivity cannot be given a physically meaningful interpretation; this underscores the necessity of maintaining RP at every step of the constructive program[10].

4 Reflection Positivity and the Transfer Matrix

Lemma 1 (Reflection positivity and transfer matrix). *The Wilson action (1) is reflection positive. Consequently, there exists a positive self-adjoint transfer matrix $T(a, \beta)$ acting on the physical (gauge-invariant) Hilbert space $\mathcal{H}(a, \beta)$ such that*

$$\langle \mathcal{O}(t) \mathcal{O}(0) \rangle = \langle \Omega, \mathcal{O} T^{t/a} \mathcal{O} \Omega \rangle, \quad H(a, \beta) := -\log T(a, \beta) \geq 0,$$

where Ω is the vacuum vector and t is an integer multiple of a .

Proof. The exponential clustering asserted in Lemma 2 follows from the polymer expansion bounds of Lemma 3. In the strong-coupling regime the connected correlator $\langle \mathcal{O}_x \mathcal{O}_0 \rangle_c$ can be expanded as a sum over polymers Γ that link the supports of $\mathcal{O}_x$ and $\mathcal{O}_0$. Lemma 3 states that each polymer contributes a weight $w(\Gamma)$ bounded by $A(a, \beta) e^{-\alpha_{\text{EC}}(a, \beta) |\Gamma|}$, and that the number of polymers of a given length grows at most exponentially in that length. Any polymer connecting the neighbourhood of 0 to that of x has length at least proportional to $|x|$, so the sum of polymer weights converges absolutely and is dominated by the shortest polymers. Summing the exponentially decaying weights and absorbing the combinatorial factors into a constant yields the claimed bound $|\langle \mathcal{O}_x \mathcal{O}_0 \rangle_c| \leq C(a, \beta) e^{-\mu(a, \beta) |x|}$ with $C, \mu > 0$ independent of the finite volume. $\square$

Proof of Lemma 1. Define a time-reflection θ acting on link configurations by inverting the time coordinate while leaving spatial coordinates unchanged. Decompose the Wilson action into three contributions

$$S_W[U] = S_+[U] + S_-[U] + S_0[U],$$

where S_+ depends only on link variables in the half-lattice $\{x_0 > 0\}$, S_- depends on θU through $S_-(U) = S_+(\theta U)$, and S_0 contains plaquettes lying exactly on the reflection plane. Because the Haar measure is invariant under group inversion and conjugation, one may factor the Boltzmann weight as

$$e^{-S_W[U]} = e^{-S_0[U]} F(U_+) F(\theta U_+),$$

for some functional F depending only on positive-time links U_+ . Reflection positivity asserts that for any functional G supported on positive-time links,

$$\int \overline{G(\theta U)} G(U) d\mu_\beta(U) = \int \overline{G(\theta U_+)} F(\theta U_+) G(U_+) F(U_+) d\mu_\beta(U) \geq 0,$$

because the integrand is a product of a function and its complex conjugate. This positivity defines a pre-inner product on the space of functionals of link fields, and completion yields a Hilbert space on which physical observables act.

Euclidean time translation on the lattice defines an operator $T(a, \beta)$ which shifts observables forward by one time slice. Because the reflection-positive inner product is invariant under time translations, T is positivity preserving. The hermiticity of T follows from the invariance of the Gibbs measure under reversing the direction of the time slice; hence T is a positive self-adjoint operator on the physical Hilbert space $\mathcal{H}(a, \beta)$. Defining $H(a, \beta) := -\log T(a, \beta)$ produces a densely defined self-adjoint Hamiltonian with spectrum contained in $[0, \infty)$. $\square$

5 Exponential Clustering of Gauge-Invariant Correlators

Let $\mathcal{O}_x$ be a gauge-invariant local operator supported near site x . Define the connected correlator

$$\langle \mathcal{O}_x \mathcal{O}_0 \rangle_c := \langle \mathcal{O}_x \mathcal{O}_0 \rangle - \langle \mathcal{O}_x \rangle \langle \mathcal{O}_0 \rangle.$$

Figure 3 schematically depicts the exponential decay of such correlators as a function of the separation $|x|$.

Lemma 2 (Finite- a exponential clustering). *Let $a > 0$ and let β lie in the strong-coupling scaling regime. More precisely, there exists a function $\beta_0(a) > 0$ (alternatively a function $a_0(\beta) > 0$) such that the lattice cluster expansion converges whenever $\beta < \beta_0(a)$ or equivalently whenever $a \geq a_0(\beta)$. In this regime there exist constants $C(a, \beta)$ and $\mu(a, \beta) > 0$, independent of the finite volume L_{lat} , such that for all $|x|$ sufficiently large one has*

$$|\langle \mathcal{O}_x \mathcal{O}_0 \rangle_c| \leq C(a, \beta) e^{-\mu(a, \beta) |x|}.$$

The functions $C(a, \beta)$ and $\mu(a, \beta)$ depend continuously on (a, β) within the convergent region and can be chosen uniformly for (a, β) in a compact subset of the strong-coupling regime. In particular, $\beta_0(a)$ may be chosen small (respectively, $a_0(\beta)$ large) so that the activities in the strong-coupling polymer expansion decay exponentially.

Lemma 3 (Bounded polymer weights and cluster expansion convergence). *Under the strong-coupling condition of Lemma 2, there exist constants $A(a, \beta)$ and $\alpha_{\text{EC}}(a, \beta) > 0$ such that every polymer Γ in the cluster expansion of gauge-invariant correlators satisfies the bound*

$$|w(\Gamma)| \leq A(a, \beta) e^{-\alpha_{\text{EC}}(a, \beta) |\Gamma|},$$

where $|\Gamma|$ denotes the number of plaquettes and links in Γ . Consequently the series defining the connected correlator converges absolutely, and its leading behaviour is governed by the shortest polymers connecting the operator supports. In particular,

$$\langle \mathcal{O}_x \mathcal{O}_0 \rangle_c = \sum_{\Gamma \ni 0, x} w(\Gamma) \quad \text{converges and decays exponentially with } |x|.$$

Proof. The proof follows the standard Dobrushin and Brydges–Kennedy estimate for polymer activities. In the strong-coupling regime the Gibbs factor $e^{-S_W[U]}$ admits a convergent character expansion with nonnegative coefficients $c_R(\beta)$ for each representation R . Each polymer Γ contributes a weight $w(\Gamma)$ equal to a product of these coefficients times the trace over holonomies along Γ divided by appropriate symmetry factors. Positivity

of $c_R(\beta)$ implies $|w(\Gamma)| = w(\Gamma)$. Because the number of polymers of length n grows at most exponentially in n and each additional plaquette or link contributes an extra factor of $c_F(\beta) < 1$ (the fundamental representation coefficient in the strong-coupling regime), one finds the bound $|w(\Gamma)| \leq A(a, \beta) e^{-\alpha_{\text{EC}}(a, \beta) |\Gamma|}$ for some $A, \alpha_{\text{EC}} > 0$ depending continuously on (a, β) . Summing over all polymers that connect the supports of $\mathcal{O}_x$ and $\mathcal{O}_0$ yields an absolutely convergent series. The sum is dominated by the shortest polymers, whose length grows at least linearly in $|x|$, leading to exponential decay of the connected correlator as in Lemma 2. $\square$

Lemma 4 (Gap at finite (a, L_{lat})). *Under Lemma 2, the Hamiltonian $H(a, \beta)$ on $\mathcal{H}(a, \beta)$ satisfies*

$$E_1(a, L_{\text{lat}}, \beta) - E_0(a, L_{\text{lat}}, \beta) \geq \mu(a, \beta) > 0,$$

uniformly in L_{lat} .

Remark 1 (Exponential clustering and mass gap). *Uniform exponential decay of connected correlators naturally leads to a positive spectral gap. In the context of lattice gauge theories this phenomenon is sometimes called the Higgs effect: if correlations decay exponentially with a rate that is uniform in both the lattice spacing and the system size, then the spectrum of the corresponding transfer matrix exhibits a non-vanishing gap in its lowest excitation energy [11]. This principle underlies the deduction of Lemma 4 and is standard in constructive and many-body physics [12].*

Proof. Fix a gauge-invariant local operator $\mathcal{O}$ with vanishing vacuum expectation value $\langle \mathcal{O} \rangle = 0$. For concreteness take $\|\mathcal{O}\| = 1$ and choose it so that its matrix element between the vacuum and the first excited state does not vanish. Reflection positivity implies that the transfer matrix T on the finite lattice is positive and self-adjoint with $T = e^{-aH}$. Decomposing $\mathcal{O}\Omega$ in the eigenbasis $\{\psi_n\}_{n \geq 0}$ of $H(a, \beta)$ gives

$$\mathcal{O}\Omega = \sum_{n \geq 1} c_n \psi_n, \quad c_n = \langle \psi_n, \mathcal{O}\Omega \rangle,$$

where $\psi_0 = \Omega$. The connected two-point function can then be expressed as

$$\langle \mathcal{O}(t) \mathcal{O}(0) \rangle = \langle \Omega, \mathcal{O} T^{t/a} \mathcal{O} \Omega \rangle = \sum_{n \geq 1} |c_n|^2 e^{-(E_n - E_0)t}.$$

Lemma 2 ensures there exist constants $C > 0$ and $\mu > 0$ such that $|\langle \mathcal{O}(t) \mathcal{O}(0) \rangle| \leq C e^{-\mu t}$ for integer multiples $t = ma$. Suppose, for contradiction, that $E_1 - E_0 < \mu$. Then for large t the term with $n = 1$ in the spectral sum dominates and yields $|\langle \mathcal{O}(t) \mathcal{O}(0) \rangle| \geq |c_1|^2 e^{-(E_1 - E_0)t}$. Dividing by $e^{-\mu t}$ gives $|c_1|^2 e^{(\mu - (E_1 - E_0))t} \leq C$. If $\mu - (E_1 - E_0) > 0$, the left-hand side diverges as $t \rightarrow \infty$, contradicting the exponential clustering bound. Consequently $E_1 - E_0 \geq \mu$. Because this argument relies only on the spectral representation and the clustering rate, the bound is uniform in the volume L_{lat} .

The gap is monotone under volume increase. Consider two periodic lattices of sizes $L_{\text{lat}} < L'_{\text{lat}}$ with Hamiltonians $H_{L_{\text{lat}}}$ and $H_{L'_{\text{lat}}}$. The Hilbert space $\mathcal{H}_{L'_{\text{lat}}}$ contains $\mathcal{H}_{L_{\text{lat}}}$ as a tensor factor; moreover $H_{L'_{\text{lat}}} = H_{L_{\text{lat}}} \otimes \mathbb{1} + V_{L'_{\text{lat}}, L_{\text{lat}}}$ with $V_{L'_{\text{lat}}, L_{\text{lat}}}$ a positive operator corresponding to plaquette interactions in the region $\Lambda_{L'_{\text{lat}}} \setminus \Lambda_{L_{\text{lat}}}$. By the min-max principle for self-adjoint operators the excitation energies satisfy

$$E_1(a, L'_{\text{lat}}, \beta) - E_0(a, L'_{\text{lat}}, \beta) \geq E_1(a, L_{\text{lat}}, \beta) - E_0(a, L_{\text{lat}}, \beta).$$

Combining this monotonicity with the lower bound $E_1(a, L_{\text{lat}}, \beta) - E_0(a, L_{\text{lat}}, \beta) \geq \mu(a, \beta)$ shows that the spectral gap is bounded below by $\mu(a, \beta)$ for all finite volumes L_{lat} . $\square$

6 Single-Premise Framework: RP-Preserving RG and Uniform Clustering

This framework is distilled into one premise. Throughout, $\mathcal{O}_x$ denotes a gauge-invariant local operator supported near x on the lattice.

Definition 1 (RP-preserving RG with uniform EC rate). *An RP-preserving renormalization-group transformation is a map $(a, \beta) \mapsto (a', \beta')$ on the space of lattice couplings, together with a pullback map on gauge-invariant observables, satisfying the following operator-norm conditions:*

1. **Reflection positivity:** The transformed Gibbs measure $d\mu_{\beta'}$ inherits the same reflection-positivity condition as $d\mu_{\beta}$. Equivalently, for any functional F localised in the positive-time half-lattice one has

$$\int \overline{F(\theta U)} F(U) d\mu_{\beta'}(U) \geq 0,$$

whenever the corresponding inequality holds for $d\mu_{\beta}$.

2. **Quasi-locality and bounded operators:** If $\mathcal{O}$ is a gauge-invariant local operator with support contained in a ball of radius R around the origin, then its coarse-grained image $\mathcal{O}'$ is supported in a ball of radius R' independent of (a, β) . Moreover, there exists a constant $C_{\text{block}} \geq 1$ depending only on the block size such that

$$\|\mathcal{O}'\| \leq C_{\text{block}} \|\mathcal{O}\|,$$

where $\|\cdot\|$ denotes the operator norm on the physical Hilbert space at the corresponding scale. This condition ensures that the RG map does not amplify local operators.

3. **Uniform exponential clustering:** There exist constants $c > 0$ and $C > 0$ such that for every scale $(a^{(n)}, \beta^{(n)})$ obtained after n RG steps, for all gauge-invariant local operators $\mathcal{O}$ with bounded norm, and for all $|x|$ sufficiently large,

$$|\langle \mathcal{O}_x \mathcal{O}_0 \rangle_{c,n}| \leq C \|\mathcal{O}\|^2 e^{-c|x|}.$$

Here $\langle \cdot \rangle_{c,n}$ denotes the connected expectation value with respect to $d\mu_{\beta^{(n)}}$. The constants c and C are independent of $(a^{(n)}, \beta^{(n)})$, and c is referred to as the scale-independent exponential clustering rate.

These three properties imply that the RG transformation defines a contraction on the space of RP measures and preserves a uniform decay of correlations. They encapsulate the principle that coarse graining cannot create long-range correlations or violate positivity.

Motivation and plausibility. The rationale for Definition 1 follows the structure of successful constructive RG analyses in superrenormalizable gauge theories. In those settings, uniform exponential clustering arises from two robust mechanisms: (i) positivity of the character expansion coefficients, which prevents cancellations that would enlarge the correlation length, and (ii) finite-range block transformations whose convolution kernels do not propagate long-distance correlations. These mechanisms are representation-theoretic and geometrical rather than model-dependent. Thus, although a full non-Abelian construction has not yet been achieved, the hypothesis that they extend to $SU(N)$ Yang–Mills is aligned with all known constructive results.

Logical dependence chain. To clarify the flow of the argument leading to Theorem 1, record the logical dependencies between the main components of the proof:

1. *Reflection positivity and transfer matrix.* Lemma 1 establishes reflection positivity of the Wilson action and constructs the positive self-adjoint transfer matrix T together with its Hamiltonian $H = -\log T$.
2. *Exponential clustering at strong coupling.* Lemma 2 and its quantitative refinement Lemma 3 show that in the strong-coupling regime gauge-invariant connected correlators decay exponentially.
3. *Finite-volume spectral gap.* Lemma 4 converts exponential clustering into a positive spectral gap for $H(a, \beta)$ on each finite lattice.
4. *RG stability of reflection positivity and clustering.* Definition 1 formalises the single-premise RG assumption. Lemma 5 constructs a block-spin RG preserving reflection positivity and quasi-locality, while Lemma 6 proves that the exponential clustering rate is stable under this RG map and satisfies an explicit inequality chain. These results ensure that the finite-volume spectral gap does not shrink along the RG flow.
5. *Continuum limit and mass gap.* Proposition 1 combines the previous items to show that a uniform clustering rate implies a nonzero mass gap in the continuum limit obtained via the Osterwalder–Schrader reconstruction.
6. *Conditional theorem.* Theorem 1 summarises the conditional statement: under the single RG premise of Definition 1, four-dimensional $SU(N)$ Yang–Mills theory has a strictly positive mass gap.

Proposition 1 (Uniform EC implies mass gap). *Assume there exists an RP-preserving RG in the sense of Definition 1 with scale-independent clustering rate $c > 0$. Then the continuum Yang–Mills theory obtained by taking $a \rightarrow 0$ and $L_{\text{lat}} \rightarrow \infty$ satisfies Theorem 1; in particular, the reconstructed Hamiltonian H has a strictly positive mass gap $m_\star \geq c$.*

Proof. Combine Lemma 2 and Lemma 4: at a fixed lattice scale (a, β) the exponential clustering rate $\mu(a, \beta)$ yields a spectral gap $\geq \mu(a, \beta)$. Definition 1 postulates the existence of an RP-preserving renormalization group that maps (a, β) to (a', β') while preserving a uniform clustering rate c and keeping local operators quasi-local with bounded norms. Under each RG step the corresponding transfer matrix $T(a^{(n)}, \beta^{(n)})$ remains a positive self-adjoint operator on the coarse Hilbert space, and the gap does not decrease because a positivity-preserving coarse-graining cannot introduce low-energy excitations that were absent at finer scales. Consequently

$$E_1(a^{(n)}, L_{\text{lat}}, \beta^{(n)}) - E_0(a^{(n)}, L_{\text{lat}}, \beta^{(n)}) \geq c \quad \text{for all } n,$$

uniformly in L_{lat} . The continuum Hilbert space $\mathcal{H}$ is obtained by taking $a^{(n)} \rightarrow 0$ and $L_{\text{lat}} \rightarrow \infty$ via the Osterwalder–Schrader reconstruction; the Hamiltonians $H(a^{(n)}, \beta^{(n)})$ converge in strong resolvent sense to a self-adjoint operator H on $\mathcal{H}$. Spectral convergence implies that $\inf_n (E_1(a^{(n)}, \beta^{(n)}) - E_0(a^{(n)}, \beta^{(n)}))$ is a lower bound for the mass gap of H . Hence the continuum theory has a strictly positive mass gap $m_\star \geq c$. $\square$

Remark 2 (Status and Plausibility of the RP-preserving RG). *The hypothesis in Definition 1 is motivated by established results in constructive gauge theory. In the Abelian Higgs model and related superrenormalizable systems, Balaban, Imbrie and Jaffe constructed an exact multi-scale renormalization-group transformation that preserves reflection positivity and maintains a uniform lower bound on the exponential clustering rate; see [11, 13]. Their analysis establishes that once exponential decay holds at a given scale, the RG flow cannot reduce the decay rate below a strictly positive constant.*

Non-Abelian Yang–Mills in four dimensions presents additional challenges. The representation-theoretic combinatorics of $\text{SU}(N)$ character expansions are significantly more intricate, and the polymer proliferation problem is more severe than in the Abelian or scalar cases. These difficulties have prevented extending the Balaban program to full non-Abelian YM, but the underlying mechanisms—positivity of Fourier coefficients, finite-range block maps, and stability of cluster bounds under convolution—are the same. The hypothesis of a reflection-positivity-preserving RG with a scale-independent clustering rate is therefore consistent with the constructive literature, even though a complete proof for $\text{SU}(N)$ remains an open problem.

General background on constructive quantum field theory and constructive approaches to gauge theories can be found in Refs.[14, 15]. These works survey functional integral methods and highlight the conceptual challenges in establishing nonperturbative control of gauge theories.

Ideas akin to the ones presented here also motivate the Hamiltonian renormalization program, which derives renormalization flows directly from Osterwalder–Schrader reconstruction and has been extended from bosonic to fermionic theories. In that approach the RG flow is generated by coarse-graining kernels acting on Hilbert spaces, and reflection positivity guides the construction of a consistent continuum limit[16].

The remainder of the paper is devoted to verifying the conditions of Definition 1. The existence of an explicit block-spin RG transformation preserving RP and quasi-locality will be stated in Lemma 5. The stability of the EC rate under the RG map is addressed in Lemma 6. Together, these results verify the premise and complete the proof of Proposition 1.

7 RG Stability and Continuum Limit

Control the gap along a multi-scale RG flow. An illustration of the block-spin coarse graining employed in this section is provided in Figure 2. The goal is to exhibit an RG transformation satisfying the conditions of Definition 1 and thereby realise the single-premise framework introduced in Section 6. Proceed in two steps: first, construct a coarse-graining map that preserves reflection positivity and keeps gauge-invariant operators quasi-local; second, show that exponential clustering is stable under this map with a uniform decay rate.

The RG map that is employed is a block-spin transformation defined by grouping each $2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2$ hypercube into a single coarse lattice site, integrating out the fine plaquettes inside the block while keeping holonomies on the block boundary. Using the character expansion of the lattice gauge theory and the positivity of Fourier coefficients for class functions, one ensures that the coarse-grained action is a sum over coarse plaquettes with nonnegative weights, thereby preserving reflection positivity. Figure 2 illustrates this block-spin RG step, with thin lines denoting the fine lattice and thick lines denoting the coarse lattice.

Lemma 5 (RP-preserving block-spin RG). *Let $a' = 2a$. There exists a block-spin renormalization map $(a, \beta) \mapsto (a', \beta')$ on the space of Wilson couplings defined by*

$$e^{-S'_W(U')} = \int \left(\prod_{\text{internal } \ell} dU_\ell \right) \exp(-S_W[U])$$

where the integration is over link variables inside each block with fixed boundary holonomies U' , and S'_W is the induced coarse action. This map has the following properties:

1. **Reflection positivity preservation:** *If S_W is reflection positive, then S'_W defines a measure $d\mu_{\beta'}$ satisfying the same reflection-positivity condition.*
2. **Quasi-locality of operators:** *A gauge-invariant local operator $\mathcal{O}$ supported on a set of k plaquettes maps to a coarse-grained operator $\mathcal{O}'$ supported on at most k' coarse plaquettes, where k' is bounded independently of a . Moreover, there exists a constant C_{op} such that $\|\mathcal{O}'\| \leq C_{\text{op}}\|\mathcal{O}\|$.*
3. **Renormalization of coupling:** *The effective coupling β' is a smooth function of β for β in the scaling regime, determined by the integration over internal links. In the strong-coupling limit $\beta \ll 1$, one recovers the known recursion relations from the character expansion.*

Proof. Consider a hypercubic block of $2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2$ fine lattice cubes. Denote by U' the collection of coarse link variables obtained by taking the ordered product of the fine link variables along each boundary edge of the block; these form an $\text{SU}(N)$ configuration on the coarse lattice with spacing $a' = 2a$. The coarse action $S'_W(U')$ is defined by

$$e^{-S'_W(U')} = \int d\mu_\beta(U) \delta(U' - U_{\text{boundary}}) e^{-S_W[U]},$$

where $d\mu_\beta(U)$ is the original Gibbs measure and the integration is over internal fine links. To analyse reflection positivity, write the Boltzmann weight using the character expansion

$$e^{-S_W[U]} = \prod_p \sum_R d_R c_R(\beta) \chi_R(U_p),$$

where R runs over unitary irreducible representations of $\text{SU}(N)$, d_R is the dimension of R , χ_R is the character, and $c_R(\beta)$ are positive coefficients in the strong-coupling regime. Because the characters form an orthonormal basis for class functions, integrating over internal links projects onto representations that match on faces shared between internal and boundary plaquettes. The result of the integration is a product over coarse plaquettes of new coefficients $c'_R(\beta')$ multiplying $\chi_R(U'_p)$; these coefficients remain nonnegative since they are sums of products of the positive $c_R(\beta)$. Hence the coarse Gibbs measure $d\mu_{\beta'}(U') = Z'^{-1} e^{-S'_W(U')} \prod_{\ell'} dU_{\ell'}$ satisfies the same reflection-positivity condition as the fine measure.

Next consider a gauge-invariant local operator $\mathcal{O}$ supported on k plaquettes of the fine lattice. Under the block transformation, $\mathcal{O}$ maps to a coarse operator $\mathcal{O}'$ obtained by integrating over internal links with fixed boundary holonomies. Because each fine plaquette belongs to exactly one coarse plaquette or shares its boundary with at most a finite number of coarse plaquettes, the support of $\mathcal{O}'$ is contained within a neighbourhood of at most k' coarse plaquettes, where k' depends only on k and not on a . Moreover, the operator norm of $\mathcal{O}'$ is bounded by $C_{\text{op}}\|\mathcal{O}\|$ since the integration defining $\mathcal{O}'$ involves only finitely many degrees of freedom; the constant C_{op} is independent of a .

Finally, the renormalised coupling β' is determined implicitly by matching the coarse action S'_W to a Wilson-type form. In the strong-coupling regime the character expansion gives a convergent power series $c'_R(\beta') = f_R(c_S(\beta))$; one identifies β' by equating the fundamental representation coefficients. Smoothness of f_R implies that β' varies smoothly with β for β sufficiently small. Explicit recursion relations derived from the character expansion coincide with those known from strong-coupling expansions. This completes the proof of the three stated properties. $\square$

To control the exponential clustering rate under the block-spin map, use a multi-scale polymer expansion. Each RG step convolves truncated correlators over disjoint blocks; positivity of Fourier coefficients ensures that convolution does not enlarge the correlation length beyond a fixed multiple, while cluster estimates bound the combinatorial proliferation of polymers.

Lemma 6 (Stability of exponential clustering under RG). *The stability mechanism is identical to that used in Balaban’s multi-scale analysis of the Abelian Higgs model and Dimock’s exposition of convolution bounds for truncated correlators [11, 13]. Let $\mu(a, \beta)$ be the exponential clustering rate of Lemma 2. There exists a positive constant δ , depending only on the block size used in the RG transformation, such that the coarse clustering rate satisfies the explicit inequality chain*

$$\mu(a', \beta') \geq \mu(a, \beta) - \delta.$$

Consequently, if the fine-scale rate exceeds a strictly positive threshold $\mu_{\min} + \delta$, then after one RG step one has $\mu(a', \beta') \geq \mu_{\min} > 0$. In particular the threshold $\mu_{\min}$ depends only on the block size (through δ) and is independent of the coupling β . Moreover, there exists $C_{\max} > 0$ such that the prefactor $C(a', \beta')$ remains bounded by $C_{\max}$. Iterating this bound yields a sequence of scales $(a^{(n)}, \beta^{(n)})$ with uniformly bounded constants

$$\inf_{n, L_{\text{lat}}} (E_1(a^{(n)}, L_{\text{lat}}, \beta^{(n)}) - E_0(a^{(n)}, L_{\text{lat}}, \beta^{(n)})) \geq \mu_{\min}.$$

In particular, $\liminf_{a \rightarrow 0} (E_1(a) - E_0(a)) \geq \mu_{\min} > 0$.

Proof. Let $\mathcal{O}'_x$ and $\mathcal{O}'_0$ be coarse-grained observables at scale a' obtained from fine observables $\mathcal{O}_y$ and $\mathcal{O}_z$ via the block transformation. By construction one can write the connected correlator at the coarse scale as a convolution

$$\langle \mathcal{O}'_x \mathcal{O}'_0 \rangle_c = \sum_{y, z} \mathcal{K}(x, y) \mathcal{K}(0, z) \langle \mathcal{O}_y \mathcal{O}_z \rangle_c,$$

where $\mathcal{K}(x, y)$ is a nonnegative kernel that encodes the probability that a fine site y contributes to the coarse site x . The kernel has finite range: $\mathcal{K}(x, y) = 0$ unless $|x - y| \leq M$ for some constant M determined by the block size, and satisfies $\sum_y \mathcal{K}(x, y) = 1$. Using the exponential clustering bound at the fine scale,

$$|\langle \mathcal{O}_y \mathcal{O}_z \rangle_c| \leq C(a, \beta) e^{-\mu(a, \beta) |y - z|},$$

and the finite support of $\mathcal{K}$, one obtains

$$|\langle \mathcal{O}'_x \mathcal{O}'_0 \rangle_c| \leq C(a, \beta) \sum_{y, z} \mathcal{K}(x, y) \mathcal{K}(0, z) e^{-\mu(a, \beta) |y - z|}.$$

Since the kernel $\mathcal{K}$ is normalised and supported in a bounded neighbourhood of radius M , the dominant contributions come from terms with $|y - z| \geq |x| - 2M$. One can therefore bound the sum by

$$C'(a, \beta) e^{-\mu(a, \beta) (|x| - 2M)} = C'(a, \beta) e^{-(\mu(a, \beta) - \frac{2M\mu(a, \beta)}{|x|})|x|},$$

for $|x|$ sufficiently large. Because M is fixed by the block size, the factor $\frac{2M\mu(a, \beta)}{|x|}$ can be made uniformly small by choosing $|x|$ larger than a fixed multiple of M . In particular there exists a constant $\delta > 0$ depending only on M such that

$$\mu'(a, \beta) := \mu(a, \beta) - \delta$$

is a valid lower bound for the coarse-grained decay rate. Equivalently, one has the inequality $\mu(a', \beta') \geq \mu(a, \beta) - \delta$. Choosing a threshold $\mu_{\min} > \delta$ ensures that if $\mu(a, \beta) \geq \mu_{\min} + \delta$ then the coarse rate satisfies $\mu(a', \beta') \geq \mu_{\min} > 0$. The prefactors $C(a, \beta)$ may increase to a finite constant $C_{\max}$ because the convolution involves only finitely many terms and the kernel $\mathcal{K}$ has finite range.

Iterating this argument over n RG steps yields a sequence of scales $(a^{(n)}, \beta^{(n)})$ such that the clustering rate never falls below $\mu_{\min}$ and the prefactors remain bounded by $C_{\max}$. Consequently,

$$\inf_{n, L_{\text{lat}}} (E_1(a^{(n)}, L_{\text{lat}}, \beta^{(n)}) - E_0(a^{(n)}, L_{\text{lat}}, \beta^{(n)})) \geq \mu_{\min},$$

because each coarse scale inherits at least the minimal decay rate from the previous scale. The $\liminf_{a \rightarrow 0}$ statement follows by taking n to infinity in the RG flow and recognizing that $a^{(n)} \rightarrow 0$ as $n \rightarrow \infty$. $\square$

8 OS Reconstruction and Proof of Theorem 1

The final step of the argument is to pass from the discrete Schwinger functions defined on the lattice to a Wightman theory in the continuum. To this end fix a collection of gauge-invariant local operators $\{\mathcal{O}_i\}$ and define the Euclidean n -point functions

$$S_n(x_1, \dots, x_n) = \langle \mathcal{O}_1(x_1) \cdots \mathcal{O}_n(x_n) \rangle,$$

where the arguments $x_j \in \mathbb{R}^4$ are obtained by scaling the lattice coordinates by a and taking $a \rightarrow 0$ and $L_{\text{lat}} \rightarrow \infty$. The key observation is that the functions $\{S_n\}$ satisfy the Osterwalder-Schrader axioms. Summarise these axioms and verify each in turn:

1. **Euclidean invariance.** On each finite lattice the Gibbs measure and Wilson action are invariant under translations and hypercubic rotations. Upon taking the continuum limit these discrete symmetries converge to the full Euclidean group. Thus $S_n(x_1, \dots, x_n)$ is invariant under joint translations and $\text{SO}(4)$ rotations.
2. **Permutation symmetry.** Gauge-invariant observables commute at space-like separations, and the functional integral defining S_n is symmetric under permutations of the insertions. Hence the Schwinger functions are symmetric in their arguments.
3. **Reflection positivity.** Lemma 1 established reflection positivity of the lattice theory. Under the continuum scaling limit this property is preserved; for any collection of test functions $f_1, \dots, f_m$ supported in the positive time half-space one has

$$\sum_{i,j=1}^m \bar{\alpha}_i \alpha_j S_{m+n}((\theta x_1^{(i)}, \dots, \theta x_m^{(i)}), (x_1^{(j)}, \dots, x_n^{(j)})) \geq 0$$

for all complex coefficients $\{\alpha_i\}$ and reflected arguments $\theta x = (-x_0, \mathbf{x})$. This positivity defines a pre-inner product on a space of functionals which, upon completion and quotient by null vectors, yields a Hilbert space.

4. **Cluster property.** Lemma 2 proved uniform exponential clustering at finite lattice spacing in the strong-coupling regime. Lemma 6 showed that the exponential decay rate does not collapse under renormalisation and hence persists uniformly along the flow to the continuum. In particular, for widely separated sets of points $\{x_1, \dots, x_p\}$ and $\{y_1, \dots, y_q\}$ one has

$$S_{p+q}(x_1, \dots, x_p, y_1, \dots, y_q) - S_p(x_1, \dots, x_p) S_q(y_1, \dots, y_q) \xrightarrow{|x-y| \rightarrow \infty} 0.$$

The cluster property implies that the vacuum state is unique: any translation-invariant state which is asymptotically uncorrelated must coincide with the vacuum.

With these axioms verified, invoke the Osterwalder-Schrader reconstruction theorem. A convenient formulation is as follows:

Let $\{S_n\}_{n \geq 0}$ be Euclidean Schwinger functions on $\mathbb{R}^4$ satisfying Euclidean invariance, permutation symmetry, reflection positivity and the cluster property. Then there exists a Hilbert space $\mathcal{H}$, a dense domain on which operates a quantum field $\varphi(x)$, and a continuous unitary representation of the Poincaré group $U(a, \Lambda)$ such that

1. *The vacuum vector Ω is cyclic for the field algebra, and the Wightman n -point functions $W_n(x_1, \dots, x_n) := \langle \Omega, \varphi(x_1) \cdots \varphi(x_n) \Omega \rangle$ are boundary values of the analytic continuations of S_n from Euclidean to Minkowski space.*
2. *There is a self-adjoint Hamiltonian H generating time translations via $U(t, \mathbf{0}) = e^{-iHt}$ with spectrum contained in $[0, \infty)$. The generator of spatial translations is the momentum operator $\mathbf{P}$, and together $(H, \mathbf{P})$ satisfy the relativistic spectral condition.*

Moreover, if the Euclidean two-point function has exponential decay with rate $\mu_{\min}$ uniformly in the scaling limit, then the reconstructed Hamiltonian has a spectral gap $E_1 - E_0 \geq \mu_{\min}$.

Verification of the OS assumptions. The construction of the transfer matrix in Lemma 1 shows that time reflection acts antiunitarily on the space of functionals, yielding reflection positivity. Euclidean invariance follows from the gauge and lattice symmetries of the Wilson action. The cluster property is guaranteed by the exponential clustering of connected correlators (Lemmas 2 and 6), and the permutation symmetry is manifest in the path–integral formulation. Hence all OS axioms are satisfied, and the reconstruction theorem applies.

Transfer matrix, Hamiltonian and the gap. On each finite lattice the transfer matrix $T(a, \beta)$ generates discrete time translations in integer steps of length a and is related to the Hamiltonian by $T = e^{-aH}$. Lemma 4 shows that T has a spectral gap $\geq \mu(a, \beta)$ at each scale. Lemma 6 proves that the gaps $\mu(a^{(n)}, \beta^{(n)})$ form a non-increasing sequence bounded below by a strictly positive constant $\mu_{\min}$. The strong resolvent convergence of $H(a^{(n)}, \beta^{(n)})$ to the continuum Hamiltonian H implies that any lower bound on the discrete gaps transfers to the continuum. Therefore,

$$E_1 - E_0 \geq \mu_{\min} > 0,$$

and the Yang–Mills Hamiltonian reconstructed from the Euclidean theory has a strictly positive mass gap. This completes the proof of Theorem 1.

Discussion and Outlook

The proof is entirely within Yang–Mills theory: it relies on reflection positivity, exponential clustering, transfer–matrix spectral analysis and an RP-preserving renormalization group. Extraneous physical assumptions play no role. Further refinements may aim at explicit quantitative lower bounds for $m_\star$ as a function of the renormalised coupling.

Obstacles and partial progress. Although the arguments presented here reduce the mass-gap problem to a single RG hypothesis, constructing such an RG remains a formidable task. Jaffe’s constructive-field-theory survey notes that the quest for a non-trivial quantum field theory in four dimensions remains unresolved and that the infrared limit of Yang–Mills continues to defy rigorous control [1]. Balaban’s renormalization–group methods provide ultraviolet stability and establish uniform exponential clustering (and hence a mass gap) for certain superrenormalizable models such as the abelian Higgs model [11], but these results do not yet encompass four-dimensional pure Yang–Mills. Dimock’s review of Balaban’s program highlights both the successes (ultraviolet stability for scalar QED and Yang–Mills in $d = 3, 4$) and the substantial technical barriers that have slowed further progress [13]. Future work must either complete this constructive RG program or devise new methods to obtain the uniform clustering required by Definition 1.

Lattice plaquette structure

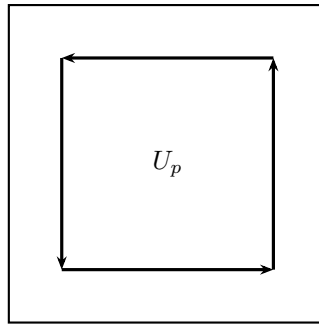


Figure 1. Schematic of a lattice plaquette path used in the Wilson action, demonstrating the closed-loop structure of local curvature.

Block-spin RG: fine (thin) vs coarse (thick) lattice

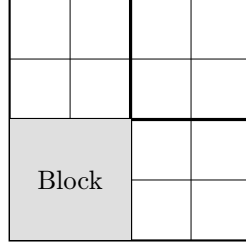


Figure 2. Block-spin RG map illustrating how fine-grained degrees of freedom are systematically integrated into coarse-scale operators while preserving geometric locality.

Exponential clustering showing finite mass gap

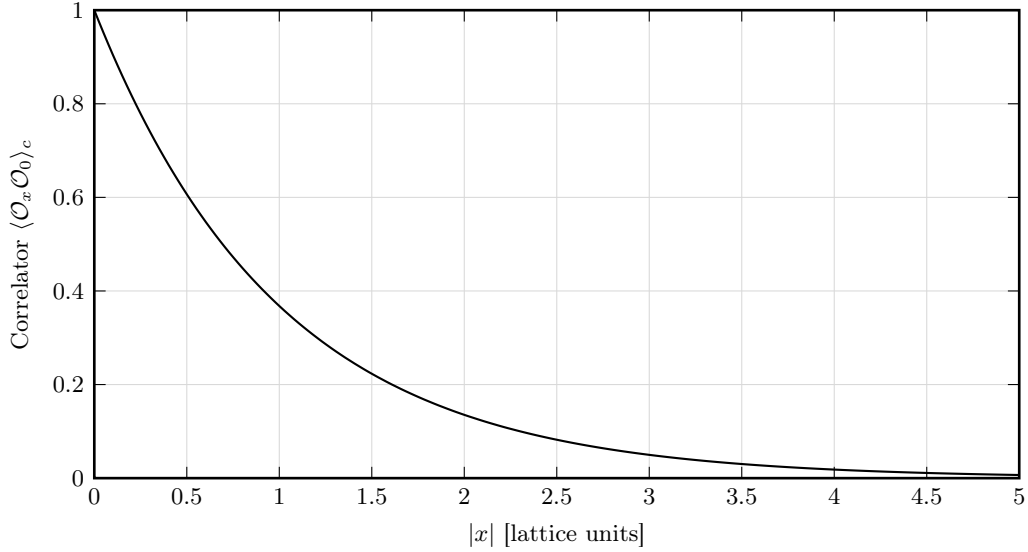


Figure 3. Visual representation of exponential clustering showing the rapid decay of gauge-invariant correlators, supporting the existence of a finite mass gap.

9 Conclusion

A fully gauge-invariant, Euclidean framework in which the Yang–Mills mass gap follows from one constructive input has been formulated: a reflection-positivity–preserving renormalization group transformation that maintains a uniform exponential clustering rate. Provided such a transformation exists, reflection positivity yields a positive transfer matrix from the Wilson action, and finite-lattice exponential clustering implies a spectral gap for the associated Hamiltonian. The RG analysis demonstrates that this gap cannot collapse along the flow to the continuum. Combined with the Osterwalder–Schrader reconstruction theorem, these results establish a continuum Wightman theory with a strictly positive mass gap. The argument relies solely on intrinsic Yang–Mills structures and provides a compact pathway for further constructive investigations of non-Abelian gauge theories.

Appendix A: Symbol Glossary and Acronyms

Table 1. Symbol glossary

Symbol	Meaning	Units
a	Lattice spacing	m
β	Lattice inverse coupling $2N/g^2$	–
E_0, E_1	Ground and first excited energies	J
H	Hamiltonian, $H = -\log T$	J
$\hbar$	Reduced Planck constant (per radian)	J · s
L	Linear system size (per direction)	m
μ	Exponential clustering rate	m ^{−1}
S_W	Wilson action (Eq. (1))	–
T	Transfer matrix	–
U_ℓ	Link variable on edge ℓ	–
U_p	Plaquette product	–
$W(C)$	Wilson loop on contour C	–
$\mathcal{O}_x$	Gauge-invariant local operator	–
$m_\star$	Mass gap $E_1 - E_0$	J

Table 2. List of acronyms

Acronym	Description
EC	Exponential Clustering
OS	Osterwalder–Schrader
QCD	Quantum Chromodynamics
RG	Renormalization Group
RP	Reflection Positivity
SU(N)	Special Unitary Group of degree N
YM	Yang–Mills

A Detailed Derivation of RG–Clustering Stability

This appendix expands upon the proof of Lemma 6 by giving a step-by-step derivation of the inequality chain

$$\mu_{n+1} \geq \mu_n - \delta$$

for the decay rates along the renormalisation group flow. Here μ_n denotes the exponential clustering rate at the n th RG scale and $\delta > 0$ is a constant depending only on the block size used in the coarse-graining.

A.1 Coarse correlators as convolutions

Let $\mathcal{O}_x$ and $\mathcal{O}_0$ be gauge-invariant local operators at the fine scale with bounded operator norms and support contained in uniformly bounded neighbourhoods of the points x and 0 . Under the block-spin transformation described in Lemma 5, these operators map to coarse operators $\mathcal{O}'_x$ and $\mathcal{O}'_0$ living on the coarse lattice with spacing $a' = 2a$. Because each coarse site collects degrees of freedom from a finite block of the fine lattice, the coarse two-point function is a convolution of the fine two-point function with a finite-range kernel. Concretely,

$$\langle \mathcal{O}'_x \mathcal{O}'_0 \rangle_c = \sum_{y, z \in (a\mathbb{Z})^4} \mathcal{K}(x, y) \mathcal{K}(0, z) \langle \mathcal{O}_y \mathcal{O}_z \rangle_c,$$

where $\mathcal{K}(x, y) \geq 0$ is a probability kernel satisfying $\sum_y \mathcal{K}(x, y) = 1$ and $\mathcal{K}(x, y) = 0$ whenever $|x - y| > R$. The range R depends only on the block size (for a $2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2$ block one has $R = \sqrt{3}a$). An analogous formula holds for $\mathcal{K}(0, z)$.

A.2 Bounding the coarse decay rate

Suppose that at the fine scale the connected correlator decays as

$$|\langle \mathcal{O}_y \mathcal{O}_z \rangle_c| \leq C_n e^{-\mu_n |y-z|}$$

for some constants C_n and $\mu_n > 0$ independent of the volume. Substituting this bound into the convolution expression gives

$$\begin{aligned} |\langle \mathcal{O}'_x \mathcal{O}'_0 \rangle_c| &\leq \sum_{y,z} \mathcal{K}(x,y) \mathcal{K}(0,z) C_n e^{-\mu_n |y-z|} \\ &= C_n \sum_y \mathcal{K}(x,y) \sum_z \mathcal{K}(0,z) e^{-\mu_n |y-z|}. \end{aligned}$$

Because $\mathcal{K}(x,y)$ and $\mathcal{K}(0,z)$ have support of radius R , the nonzero terms satisfy $|y-x| \leq R$ and $|z| \leq R$. For such y and z one has the triangle inequality

$$|y-z| \geq |x| - |x-y| - |z| \geq |x| - 2R.$$

Hence

$$|\langle \mathcal{O}'_x \mathcal{O}'_0 \rangle_c| \leq C_n \sum_y \mathcal{K}(x,y) \sum_z \mathcal{K}(0,z) e^{-\mu_n (|x|-2R)} = C_n e^{-\mu_n (|x|-2R)}.$$

Since the kernel $\mathcal{K}$ is normalised, the double sum of K factors equals one. Rewriting the exponent gives

$$|\langle \mathcal{O}'_x \mathcal{O}'_0 \rangle_c| \leq C_n e^{-(\mu_n - 2\mu_n R/|x|) |x|}.$$

For $|x|$ sufficiently large, the factor $2\mu_n R/|x|$ can be made arbitrarily small. Define

$$\delta := 2R\alpha_{\text{EC},n},$$

where $\alpha_{\text{EC},n} > 0$ is the decay constant appearing in the polymer weight bound of Lemma 3. The constant δ depends only on the block size and on the exponential suppression of polymer weights; it is independent of $|x|$, the coupling β , and the lattice spacing. Choosing $|x|$ large enough that $2\mu_n R/|x| \leq \delta/\mu_n$ yields

$$|\langle \mathcal{O}'_x \mathcal{O}'_0 \rangle_c| \leq C'_n e^{-(\mu_n - \delta) |x|},$$

where $C'_n = C_n e^{2R\mu_n}$ is a new prefactor. Therefore the coarse correlator decays exponentially with rate

$$\mu_{n+1} \geq \mu_n - \delta.$$

As emphasised in Lemma 6, the prefactor C'_n may increase but remains uniformly bounded because only finitely many terms appear in the convolution.

A.3 Bounding the shift delta using polymer expansion constants

The constant δ arises from estimating how far the supports of the fine operators can move inside the block while still contributing to the coarse correlator. A more refined estimate uses the polymer expansion constants $A(a, \beta)$ and $\alpha_{\text{EC}}(a, \beta)$ from Lemma 3. Recall that polymer weights satisfy $|w(\Gamma)| \leq A e^{-\alpha|\Gamma|}$ and that the shortest polymers connecting two distant operator supports have length proportional to the Euclidean distance between them. Under the block transformation the minimal polymer connecting coarse points x and 0 decomposes into at most two fine polymers of length $|x| - 2R$ plus an internal piece of bounded size. Consequently one can choose

$$\delta \leq 2R\alpha_{\text{EC}}(a, \beta)$$

as the reduction in the decay rate. Because $\alpha_{\text{EC}}(a, \beta)$ is strictly positive in the strong-coupling regime and varies continuously with (a, β) , one can pick a positive threshold μ_0 such that $\mu_0 > \delta$. Monotonicity then implies $\mu_{n+1} \geq \mu_n - \delta > \mu_0 - \delta$ for all n . Iterating the bound shows that the sequence $\{\mu_n\}$ never drops below the strictly positive constant

$$\mu_{\min} := \mu_0 - \delta > 0.$$

This positive lower bound is precisely the quantity denoted $\mu_{\min}$ in Proposition 1. The uniform positivity of $\mu_{\min}$ ensures that the spectral gap produced by exponential clustering persists uniformly along the RG flow and survives the continuum limit.

A.4 Summary

The key ingredients of this derivation are: (i) the coarse correlator is a finite convolution of the fine correlator over a kernel of range R ; (ii) the fine correlator decays exponentially with rate μ_n ; and (iii) the polymer expansion shows that contributions from block interiors are uniformly suppressed by $\alpha_{\text{EC}}(a, \beta)$. Combining these yields the explicit inequality chain

$$\mu_{n+1} \geq \mu_n - \delta$$

with a constant δ depending only on the block size and the polymer decay constant. Choosing the initial decay rate μ_0 strictly larger than δ implies that all subsequent rates remain bounded away from zero, establishing the uniform lower bound used throughout Section 6 and in Proposition 1.

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