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**QCD RUNNING COUPLING: FREEZING VERSUS  
ENHANCEMENT IN THE INFRARED REGION**

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## Abstract

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We discuss whether or not "freezing" of the QCD running coupling constant in the infrared region is consistent with the Schwinger – Dyson (SD) equations. Since the consistency of the "freezing" was not found, the conclusion is made that the "analytization" method does not catch an essential part of nonperturbative contributions. Proceeding from the results on consistency of the infrared enhanced behaviour of the gluon propagator with SD equations, the running coupling constant is modified taking into account the minimality principle for the nonperturbative contributions in the ultraviolet region and convergence condition for the gluon condensate. It is shown that the requirements of asymptotic freedom, analyticity, confinement and the value of the gluon condensate are compatible in the framework of our approach. Possibilities to find an agreement of the enhanced behaviour of the running coupling constant with integral estimations in the infrared region are also discussed.

## Аннотация

Алексеев А.И. Бегущая константа связи КХД: "замораживание" или усиление в инфракрасной области: Препринт ИФВЭ 97-90. – Протвино, 1997. – 9 с., 2 рис., библиогр.: 33.

Обсуждается вопрос о согласованности гипотезы "замораживания" бегущей константы связи КХД в инфракрасной области с уравнением Швингера-Дайсона (ШД) для глюонного пропагатора. Поскольку согласованность "замораживания" не обнаружена, сделан вывод о том, что метод "аналитизации" не ухватывает существенную часть непертурбативных вкладов. Выражение для бегущей константы связи КХД модифицировано с учетом согласованности усиления инфракрасного поведения глюонного пропагатора с уравнением ШД, принципа минимальности непертурбативных вкладов в ультрафиолетовой области и условия конечности глюонного конденсата. В рамках рассматриваемого подхода удается согласовать требования асимптотической свободы, аналитичности, конфайнмента и оценки величины глюонного конденсата. Обсуждаются также возможности согласования инфракрасного усиления бегущей константы связи с интегральными оценками в инфракрасной области.

The phenomenon of asymptotic freedom [1] called forth an impressive success of perturbative QCD in the description of experimental data plethora. However, there is wide scope of phenomena which is intractable in the framework of perturbation theory. Nonperturbative effects modify the infrared behaviour of the quark and gluon Green's functions. With  $q^2$  decreases the renormalization group improved one-loop running coupling constant

$$\bar{\alpha}_s(q^2) = \frac{4\pi}{b_0 \ln(q^2/\Lambda^2)}. \quad (1)$$

( $b_0 = 11C_2/3 - 2N_f/3$ ) increases, which may indicate a tendency of unlimited growth of the interaction at large distances, leading to a confinement of coloured objects. However, at  $q^2 = \Lambda^2$  in (1) the pole is present, which is nonphysical, at least, due to the fail of the perturbation theory, and the account of nonperturbative effects becomes obligatory.

In recent papers [2] the solution of the problem of a ghost pole was proposed with the condition of analyticity in  $q^2$  being imposed. The idea of "forced analyticity" goes back to [3,4] of the late 50s. They were dedicated to the problem of Landau-Pomeranchuk pole [5] in QED. Using for  $\bar{\alpha}_s(q^2)$  a spectral representation without subtractions, the following expression for the running coupling constant was obtained in [2]

$$\bar{\alpha}_s^{(1)}(q^2) = \frac{4\pi}{b_0} \left[ \frac{1}{\ln(q^2/\Lambda^2)} + \frac{\Lambda^2}{\Lambda^2 - q^2} \right]. \quad (2)$$

This expression is analytic in the infrared region due to nonperturbative contributions and it has a finite limit at zero (although the derivative is infinite).

Nowadays a possibility of "freezing" the coupling constant at low energies is under discussion [6] in the framework of some scheme of approximate calculations ( $(16\frac{1}{2} - N_f)$  - expansion). In the approach [7] with confining background field, "freezing" was also obtained,

$$\bar{\alpha}_s(q^2) = \frac{4\pi}{b_0 \ln((m_B^2 + q^2)/\Lambda^2)}. \quad (3)$$

Here  $m_B$  is a process-dependent constant of the order of 1 GeV.

In the present paper we follow the approach of Refs. [8,9]. We discuss the problem of consistency of the constant behaviour of the running coupling constant in the infrared

region with Schwinger-Dyson (SD) equation for a gluon propagator. Further we include into consideration additional nonperturbative terms, in particular, the singular in the infrared region term  $\sim 1/q^2$ , the necessity of renormalization invariance being taken into account. Then we consider possibilities to fulfill the demands of confinement, asymptotic freedom, analyticity, correspondence with estimates of the gluon condensate and integral estimates for  $\bar{\alpha}_s(q^2)$  in the infrared region.

Let us consider the integral SD equation for the gluon propagator in ghost-free axial gauge [10]  $A_\mu^a \eta_\mu = 0$ ,  $\eta_\mu$  — gauge vector,  $\eta^2 \neq 0$ . In this gauge the running coupling constant is directly connected with the gluon propagator and Slavnov-Taylor identities [11] have the simplest form. An important preference of the axial gauge consists in a possibility to exclude the term from the SD equation, which contains a full four-gluon vertex, by means of contraction of the equation with tensor  $\eta_\mu \eta_\nu / \eta^2$ . We work in the Euclidean momentum space, where smallness of the momentum squared means smallness of all its components. For the gluon propagator  $D_{\mu\nu}(p)$ , we suppose the approximation  $D_{\mu\nu}(p) = Z(p^2)D_{(0)\mu\nu}(p)$  to be appropriate for studying the infrared region.  $D_{(0)\mu\nu}(p)$  is a free gluon propagator. In the first paper of Ref. [9] the possibility of the infrared behaviour for renormalized function  $Z_R(p^2) = Z(p^2)/Z(\mu^2)$  being of the form

$$Z_R(x) = Z_R(0) + o(1), \quad x \rightarrow +0, \quad (4)$$

has been studied ( $Z_R(0)$  is nonzero constant) in the framework of nonperturbative approach of Baker - Ball - Zachariasen (BBZ) [12]. The approximations of the BBZ approach as well as the condition  $y = 0$  imposed on gauge parameter  $y = (p\eta)^2/p^2\eta^2$  seems to be adequate to studying the possibility of the infrared behaviour which is not too singular. With the assumption (4) the equation for function  $Z_R(p^2)$  takes the form

$$Z_R^{-1}(p^2) = 1 + Z_R(0) \frac{g^2 C_2}{16\pi^2} \frac{11}{3} \ln p^2 + o(\ln p^2), p^2 \rightarrow 0. \quad (5)$$

We see, that the behaviour  $Z_R(p^2) \simeq Z(0) \neq 0$  for  $p^2 \rightarrow 0$  does not agree with the SD equation.

This conclusion encourages us to look for the possibilities different from the assumption on the finiteness of the coupling constant at zero. Recently a possibility of the soft singular power infrared behaviour of the gluon propagator has been discussed [13],  $D(q) \sim (q^2)^{-\beta}$ ,  $q^2 \rightarrow 0$ , where  $\beta$  is a small positive non-integer number. In Ref. [14] the consistency of such behaviour with the same equation was studied. A characteristic equation for the exponent  $\beta$  was obtained and this equation was shown to have no solutions in the region  $0 < \beta < 1$ . The authors of Ref. [15] also came to the conclusion on the inconsistency of the soft singular infrared behaviour of the gluon propagator. The case of possible interference of power terms was studied in Ref. [16] and it was shown that in a rather wide interval  $-1 < \beta < 3$  of the non-integer values of the exponent the characteristic equation had no solutions <sup>1</sup>. At present a more singular, in comparison with free case, infrared behaviour of the form  $D(q) \simeq M^2/(q^2)^2$ ,  $q^2 \rightarrow 0$  seems to be most justified [17,12,18].

<sup>1</sup>Note that this interval contains values  $-1 < \beta < 0$  for which the propagator vanishes at zero.

The models based on this assumption are widespread and rather attractive. In this way it is possible to describe the dynamical chiral symmetry breaking, to solve the  $U(1)$  problem, to evaluate the topological susceptibility [19,20], to calculate the condensates of gluon and quark fields [21], etc. The physical consequences of such enhancement of zero modes are discussed in reviews [22,23]. Bearing in mind the remarks stated above, let us turn to the problem of nonperturbative contributions. The "analytized" expression (2) without nonphysical singularity will be a starting point of our further consideration. We see that this expression has a nonperturbative tail with the behaviour  $1/q^2$  at  $q^2 \rightarrow 0$ . To answer the question if this behaviour is admissible, let us consider the important physical quantity, namely, the gluon condensate  $K = \langle vac | \alpha_s/\pi : G_{\mu\nu}^a G_{\mu\nu}^a : | vac \rangle$ . According to the definition (see e.g., [22]) up to the quadratic approximation in the gluon fields, one has after the Wick rotation

$$\begin{aligned} K &= -\frac{\delta^{aa}}{\pi} \int \frac{d^4 k}{(2\pi)^4} (\delta_{\mu\nu} k^2 - k_\mu k_\nu) D_{\mu\nu}^{(0)}(k) \frac{g^2}{2\pi} (Z(k) - Z^{pert}(k)) = \\ &= \frac{48}{\pi} \int \frac{d^4 k}{(2\pi)^4} (\bar{\alpha}_s(k^2) - \bar{\alpha}_s^{pert}(k^2)) = \frac{3}{\pi^3} \int_0^\infty \bar{\alpha}_s^{np}(y) y dy, \end{aligned} \quad (6)$$

where  $\bar{\alpha}_s^{np}$  is a nonperturbative part of the running coupling constant. The one-loop "analytized" behaviour of Eq. (2) leads to the quadratic divergence in Eq. (6) at infinity and this is true for two- and three-loop expressions [2] of the analytization approach. Note that at large  $q^2$ , "frozen" behaviour (3) and known enhanced in the infrared region Richardson's running coupling constant [24] (coinciding formally with (3) at  $m_B = \Lambda$ ) do not ensure the convergence of the integral (6) at infinity. According to the results of Refs. [17,12,18] let us add in Eq. (2) the isolated infrared singular term of the form  $1/q^2$ . This term is harmless at zero and it can improve the behaviour of the integrand at infinity and make the integral logarithmically divergent. To make integral (6) convergent at infinity, it is sufficient to add one more isolated singular term of a pole type with parameters chosen appropriately. In this sense the model we come to is minimal. The expression, we obtain for the running coupling constant, is the following:

$$\bar{\alpha}_s(q^2) = \frac{4\pi}{b_0} \left( \frac{1}{\ln(q^2/\Lambda^2)} + \frac{\Lambda^2}{\Lambda^2 - q^2} + \frac{c\Lambda^2}{q^2} + \frac{(1-c)\Lambda^2}{q^2 + m_g^2} \right), \quad (7)$$

with mass parameter  $m_g$ ,

$$m_g^2 = \Lambda^2/(c-1). \quad (8)$$

It is worth noting that an account of nonperturbative contributions in Eq. (7) preserves a perturbative time-like cut of Eq. (2). With the given value of the QCD scale parameter  $\Lambda$ , the parameter  $c$  can be fixed by the string tension  $\kappa$  or the Regge slope  $\alpha' = 1/(2\pi\kappa)$  assuming the linear confinement  $V(r) \simeq \kappa r = a^2 r$  at  $r \rightarrow \infty$ . We define the potential  $V(r)$  of static  $q\bar{q}$  interaction [25,26] by means of three-dimensional Fourier transform of  $\bar{\alpha}_s(\vec{q}^2)/\vec{q}^2$  with the contributions of only one dressed gluon exchange taken into account. This gives the following relation

$$c\Lambda^2 = (3b_0/8\pi)a^2 = (b_0/16\pi^2)g^2 M^2. \quad (9)$$

Taking  $a \simeq 0.42 \text{ GeV}$ , one obtains  $c = \Lambda_1^2/\Lambda^2$  where  $\Lambda_1^2 = 3b_0\kappa/8\pi \simeq 0.434 \text{ GeV}$  ( $b_0 = 9$  in the case of 3 light flavours). From Eq. (8) one obtains

$$m_g = \frac{\Lambda^2}{\sqrt{\frac{27}{8\pi}a^2 - \Lambda^2}}, \quad (10)$$

and the tachion absence condition limits the parameter  $\Lambda$ ,  $\Lambda < 434 \text{ MeV}$ . With Eq. (9) taken into account, the parameters in Eq. (7) are only  $\Lambda$  and  $b_0$ . For  $SU_c(3)$  colour group ( $C_2 = 3$ ),  $N_f = 3$  and  $\Lambda = 300 \text{ MeV}$ , the behaviour of running coupling constant is represented in Fig. 1 for the cases under discussion.

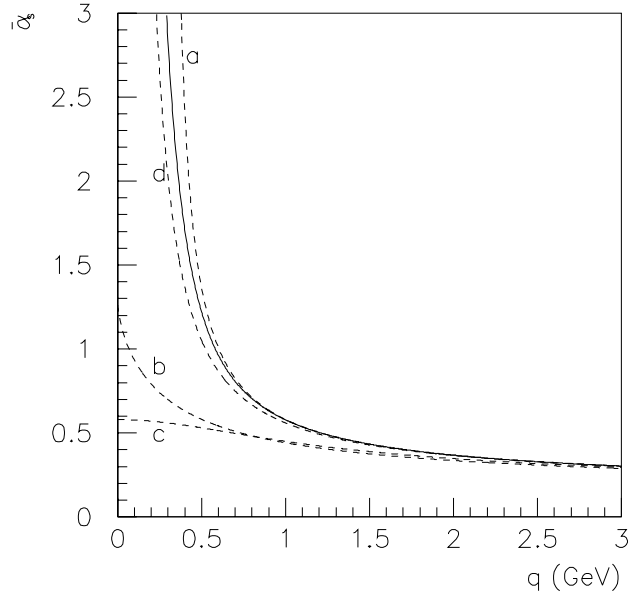


Fig. 1. Momentum behaviour of the running coupling constant. Continuous curve corresponds to our Eq. (7); the curve (a) is one-loop Eq. (1); the curve (b) shows "analytized" Eq. (2); the curve (c) is "frozen" behaviour Eq. (3) where  $m$  is taken 1 GeV; the curve (d) corresponds to Richardson parameterization for the running coupling constant (Eq. (3) with  $m_B = \Lambda$ ). Here  $\Lambda = 300 \text{ MeV}$ ,  $b_0 = 9$ .

It should be noted that at sufficiently large  $q$  the curves in Fig. 1 seem to be indistinguishable, but the presence of amplifying multiplier  $y$  in Eq. (6) allows one to distinguish the ultraviolet behaviour of the nonperturbative contributions.

Let us represent expression (7) in explicitly renormalization invariant form. It can be done without solving the differential renormalization group equations. In this order we write  $\bar{\alpha}_s(q^2) = \bar{g}^2(q^2/\mu^2, g^2)/4\pi$  and use the normalization condition  $\bar{g}^2(1, g^2) = g^2$ . Then we obtain the equation for the wanted dependence of the parameter  $\Lambda^2$  on  $g^2$  and  $\mu^2$ :

$$g^2/4\pi = \frac{4\pi}{b_0} \left[ \frac{1}{\ln(\mu^2/\Lambda^2)} + \frac{\Lambda^2}{\Lambda^2 - \mu^2} + c \frac{\Lambda^2}{\mu^2} + \frac{(1-c)\Lambda^2}{\mu^2 + m_g^2} \right].$$

From dimensional reasons  $\Lambda^2 = \mu^2 \exp\{-\varphi(x)\}$ , where  $x = b_0 g^2 / 16\pi^2 = b_0 \alpha_s / 4\pi$ , and for function  $\varphi(x)$  we obtain the equation:

$$x = \frac{1}{\varphi(x)} + \frac{1}{1 - e^{\varphi(x)}} + c e^{-\varphi(x)} - \frac{(c-1)^2}{(c-1)e^{\varphi(x)} + 1}.$$

The solution of this equation at  $c > 1$  is function  $\varphi(x)$ , which has the behaviour  $\varphi(x) \simeq 1/x$  at  $x \rightarrow 0$  and  $\varphi(x) \simeq -\ln(x/c)$  at  $x \rightarrow +\infty$ . The relation obtained ensures the renormalization invariance of  $\bar{\alpha}_s(q^2)$ . At low  $g^2$ , we obtain  $\Lambda^2 = \mu^2 \exp\{-4\pi/(b_0 \alpha_s)\}$ , which indicates the essentially nonperturbative character of three last terms in Eq. (7) and these terms are absent in the usual perturbation theory.

The acceptance of the cancellation mechanism for the nonphysical perturbation theory singularity in Eq. (1) by the nonperturbative contributions leads to the necessity of supplementary definition of integral (6) near point  $k^2 = \Lambda^2$ . This problem can be reformulated as a problem of dividing perturbative and nonperturbative contributions in  $\bar{\alpha}_s$  resulting in the introduction of some parameter  $k_0 \approx 1$  GeV. This provides the absence of the pole at  $k^2 = \Lambda^2$  in both perturbative and nonperturbative parts<sup>2</sup> Nonperturbative contributions in Eq. (7) decrease at infinity as  $1/q^6$ , the integral in Eq. (6) converges and we can obtain

$$K(\Lambda, k_0) = \frac{4}{3\pi^2} \left\{ \Lambda^4 \ln \left[ \left( \frac{\Lambda_1^2}{\Lambda^2} - 1 \right) \left( \frac{k_0^2}{\Lambda^2} - 1 \right) \right] + k_0^2 \Lambda^2 \right\}. \quad (11)$$

Phenomenology gives the positive value of the gluon condensate  $K$  in the interval  $(0.32 \text{ GeV})^4 - (0.38 \text{ GeV})^4$  [28,29]. If one takes the value of gluon condensate  $K^{1/4} = 0.33 \text{ GeV}$  and consider formula (11) as equation for  $\Lambda$  at different values of  $k_0$ , the picture will be the following. At  $k_0 < \bar{k}_0 = 0.777 \text{ GeV}$  there are no solutions in the interval  $\Lambda = 0.1 \text{ GeV} - 0.434 \text{ GeV}$ . At  $k_0 = \bar{k}_0$  there is a single solution  $\Lambda = 375 \text{ MeV}$  corresponding to  $m_g = \bar{m}_g \simeq 0.6 \text{ GeV}$ . At  $k_0 > \bar{k}_0$  for  $\Lambda$  two solutions appear to whom two values  $m_g$  correspond, one of them increases with the increase of  $k_0$  and other decreases with increase of  $k_0$ . This situation is illustrated in Fig. 2 where we used Eq. (10) to connect the parameters  $\Lambda$  and  $m_g$ .

It is seen from Eq. (7) that the pole singularities are situated at two points  $q^2 = 0$  and  $q^2 = -m_g^2$ . It corresponds to the two effective gluon masses, 0 and  $m_g$ . Therefore, the physical meaning of the parameter  $m_g$  is not the constituent gluon mass, but rather the mass of the excited state of the gluon.

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<sup>2</sup>See also Ref. [27] where the problem of perturbative and nonperturbative contributions to  $\bar{\alpha}_s$  is discussed and the definition of infrared finite regularized perturbative part of  $\bar{\alpha}_s$  is suggested.

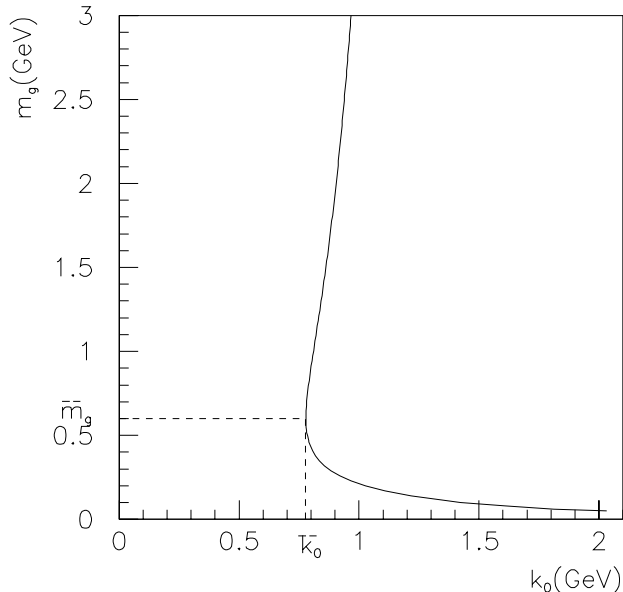


Fig. 2. The dynamical gluon mass  $m_g$  corresponding to the nonperturbative scale  $k_0$  for fixed value of the gluon condensate  $K^{1/4} = 0.33$  GeV.

In a number of cases of the QCD calculations it is necessary to estimate integrals of the form

$$F(q^2) = \int_0^{q^2} \bar{\alpha}_s(k^2) f(k^2) dk, \quad (12)$$

where  $f(k^2)$  is some smooth function and integration includes the infrared region where the usual perturbation theory is inapplicable. In this cases the infrared matching scale  $\mu_I$  can be introduced ( $\Lambda \ll \mu_I \ll q$ ) and the contribution to integral (12) from the region  $k > \mu_I$  can be calculated perturbatively. To estimate the contribution of the region  $k < \mu_I$  in Ref. [30] the running coupling constant is assumed to be regular at zero and power terms are extracted using dimensional arguments. In this connection the nonperturbative parameters  $\alpha_p$  are introduced,

$$\alpha_p(\mu_I) = \frac{p+1}{\mu_I^{p+1}} \int_0^{\mu_I} dk \bar{\alpha}_s(k) k^p, \quad (13)$$

which should be found from experiment. In the approach connected with infrared renormalons [31], the analogous ambiguity arises when evaluating integral (12). This ambiguity can be understood in the following way. Expanding  $\bar{\alpha}_s(k^2)$  in the series of powers of  $\bar{\alpha}_s(q^2)$  and integrating in  $k^2$  one obtains an asymptotic series with terms growing as factorial which can be estimated by the finite number of terms up to power corrections. The characteristic integral  $\bar{A}(\mu) \equiv \alpha_0(\mu)/\pi$  (zero moment) has been estimated [30,32] with the



result  $\alpha_0(2GeV)/\pi = 0.18 \pm 0.02$ . This integral turned out to be not only stable with respect to the choice of the infrared regularization (fit-invariance) but also relative to different approximations of the high energy tail of the running coupling (number of active quarks, one- or two-loop approximation). It is shown in Refs. [2] that the behaviour (2) complies with integral estimations of Refs. [30,32]. Let us see whether the behaviour (7) is compatible with these estimations. In this case we also encounter the problem of definition in expressions of form (12) and the necessity to fix the corresponding ambiguity. The following method seems to be highly convenient and universal,

$$\frac{1}{(k^2)^m} \implies \lim_{\epsilon' \rightarrow 0} \frac{d}{d\epsilon'} \frac{\epsilon'}{(k^2)^m} \left( \frac{\mu^2}{k^2} \right)^{\epsilon'} . \quad (14)$$

The finite arbitrariness described by the constant  $\mu^2$  arises only if we integrate the logarithmic singularities (which are usually connected with physics). In the case of local integrability ( $n > 2m$ , here  $n$  is the dimension of integration space) the rule (14) runs idle and at  $n < 2m$  it corresponds [33] to analytic continuation in  $m$ . In accordance with the rule (14), the contribution of the singular term of Eq. (7) to the moments (13) is the following:

$$\Delta^{sing} \alpha_p(\mu_I) = \frac{p+1}{p-1} \frac{3a^2}{2\mu_I^2}, p \neq 1, \quad \Delta^{sing} \alpha_1(\mu_I) = -\frac{3a^2}{2\mu_I^2} \ln \frac{\mu^2}{\mu_I^2}. \quad (15)$$

Thus, at  $p \leq 1$  the singular term of Eq. (7) should be considered as a distribution and fit-invariance of the lowest moment  $\bar{\alpha}_0(\mu_I)$  for different variants of infrared behaviour can probably indicate the absence of "freezing" the running coupling constant and universality of ambiguity fixing. In favour of "freezing" the coupling could indicate the equality of moments  $\alpha_p(\mu_I)$  for different  $p$ . For contribution of the last two terms of Eq. (7) to zero moment one obtains:

$$\Delta \alpha_0(\mu_I)/\pi = -\frac{4c\Lambda^2}{9\mu_I^2} - \frac{4\Lambda}{9\mu_I} (c-1)^{3/2} \text{arctg} \left( \frac{\mu_I}{\Lambda} \sqrt{c-1} \right). \quad (16)$$

Taking  $a \simeq 0.42GeV$ ,  $\mu_I = 2GeV$  one finds rather small contribution of the singular term,  $\Delta^{sing} \alpha_0(\mu_I)/\pi = -(3a^2)/(2\pi\mu_I^2) \simeq -0.021$ . At  $\Lambda \rightarrow \Lambda_1$  the second term of Eq. (16) vanishes as  $-(16/9)(\Lambda_1 - \Lambda)^2/\Lambda_1^2$  and it can be made small by a corresponding choice of  $\Lambda$ . For example, at  $\Lambda = 0.375GeV$  (in this case  $c = 1.3476$ ) this term equals  $-0.0216$ . Having in mind the results of Refs. [2] where the contribution of the first two terms of Eq. (7) has been evaluated, we conclude that the running coupling constant Eq. (7) can be consistent with integral estimations in the infrared region. Note, that if we compare Eq. (5) and Eq. (12) of the second of Ref. [2], we find that "analytization" procedure in two-loop case leads, at large momentum, to the half nonperturbative contribution of one-loop case. It can point to the tendency of minimization of nonperturbative contributions in the ultraviolet region.

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