

**Reviewer #1:** This is a carefully written competent paper on the statistical mechanics of some systems described by a certain type of Hamiltonian studied by Witten and others. In particular, exponential decay of correlations is proved for certain models. The paper is interesting and deserves to be published in J. Stat. Phys. Since this paper comes from a PhD thesis, it gives perhaps more details than a typical research paper, and could in principle be shortened, but I am not sure that this would be a good idea.