

EXPLORING TOPOLOGY AND SYMMETRY PROTECTION IN QUANTUM HALL NEMATICS

References: arXiv: 1809.09616 (review); 1807.10293 (theory)
Nature 566, 363 (2019) (experiments)
PRB 82, 035428; 88, 045133; 93, 014442.
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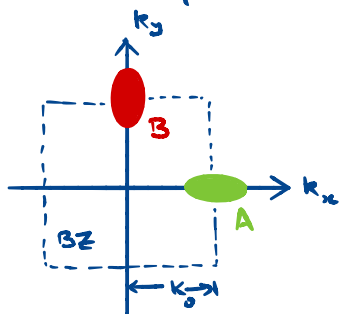
Goal: explain some of the physics of QH states w/ broken symmetry
+ make contact with SPT ideas.

Plan: Lecture 1: basic theory of the bulk + topological terms.
Lecture 2: theory of domain walls + symmetry protection.

I. Introduction

Setting: Integer QH in "multivalley" semiconductors.

Minimal model: $H = \sum_{\alpha} \frac{(p_x - \hbar k_x - e A_x)^2}{2m_x^{\alpha}} + \frac{(p_y - \hbar k_y - e A_y)^2}{2m_y^{\alpha}}$
(\sim AIs quantum wells)



$$m_x^A = m_y^B = M; \quad m_x^B = m_y^A = m$$

$$\frac{m}{M} = \lambda^2 \neq 1 \text{ in general}; \quad \vec{K}^A = (0, K_0) \\ \vec{K}^B = (K_0, 0).$$

$$K_0 \sim 1/a; \quad a \sim \text{lattice spacing}$$

Exercise: work out LL orbitals in each valley.

In "Landau gauge" $\vec{A} = (0, -Bx)$ we have

$$\psi_{x,\alpha}^{(n)}(\vec{r}) = \frac{e^{i x y / \ell_B^2}}{\sqrt{L_y \ell_B}} \phi_n(x - x_0; u_\alpha) \cdot e^{i \vec{K}_\alpha \cdot \vec{r}}; \quad E_n = (n + \frac{1}{2}) \hbar \omega_c$$

$$\ell_B = \left(\frac{\hbar}{eB} \right)^{1/2} \sim \text{magnetic length}; \quad \omega_c = \frac{eB}{\sqrt{mM}};$$

$\phi_n \sim n^{\text{th}}$ harmonic oscillator wavefunction.

Landau levels (LLs) are each twofold degenerate b/c valley

\Rightarrow without interactions, only predict QH plateaus at $\sigma_{xy} = 2n \frac{e^2}{h}$.

Interaction effects remove this degeneracy by spontaneously breaking valley symmetry.

Basic Idea is simple: think of Pauli exclusion.

$$\psi_{\alpha}^{(n)}(\vec{r}_1, \dots, \vec{r}_N) \equiv \langle \vec{r}_1 \dots \vec{r}_N | \prod_x c_{x, \alpha, n}^{\dagger} | 0 \rangle$$

fill all states in LL in same valley.

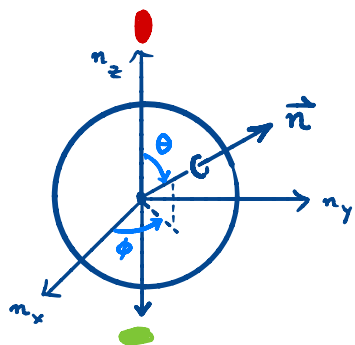
For repulsive interactions: energy is minimized by this choice, since $\psi_{\alpha}^{(n)}$ vanishes whenever two electrons come together

\Rightarrow ground state is a QH ferromagnet. (originally developed for spins in GaAs)

QH FMS \sim combine broken symmetry + topological aspects.

First: what is the "effective action"?

Basic idea: "pseudospin" order parameter: parametrize on valley Bloch sphere
 $\vec{n} = (\sin\theta \cos\phi, \sin\theta \sin\phi, \cos\theta)$



$$|\psi(\vec{n})\rangle = \prod_x \left(\cos \frac{\theta}{2} c_{x,A}^{\dagger} + \sin \frac{\theta}{2} e^{i\phi} c_{x,B}^{\dagger} \right) |0\rangle$$

\sim variational trial state (good approx at $\nu = 1$).

\sim fix LL index

\sim need to determine Hamiltonian by projecting to LL.

Can easily compute matrix elements of interactions in Landau basis.

$$V_{\beta\gamma', \alpha\gamma}^{\gamma\gamma', \delta\gamma'} = \int d^2r d^2r' \psi_{\alpha\gamma}^*(\vec{r}) \psi_{\beta\gamma'}^*(\vec{r}') V(\vec{r} - \vec{r}') \psi_{\delta\gamma'}(\vec{r}') \psi_{\gamma\gamma}(\vec{r})$$

Assume Coulomb interactions: $V(r) = \frac{e^2}{\epsilon|r|}$ Coulomb.

Generically, expect:




$$H = \frac{1}{2} \sum_{\alpha, \beta} \sum_{\gamma, \delta} \sum_{x, x'} V_{\beta x', \alpha x}^{\alpha \gamma, \beta \gamma'} c_{\gamma \gamma}^\dagger c_{\delta \gamma'}^\dagger c_{\beta x'} c_{\alpha x} + \text{background}.$$

But: $V(q) = \frac{2\pi e^2}{\epsilon|\vec{q}|} \sim \text{small for large momentum transfer}.$

\Rightarrow matrix elements between valleys suppressed ("small parameter $\sim 1/k_0 l_B \sim a/l_B$)

Hierarchy of scales:

Label interactions in valley space by arrows starting at c , ending on c^\dagger .

- ① $\sim \frac{e^2}{\epsilon l_B}$: set $\gamma = \alpha, \delta = \beta$
- ② $\sim \frac{e^2}{\epsilon l_B} \cdot \left(\frac{a}{l_B}\right)^2$: set $\delta = \alpha \neq \beta = \gamma$
- ③ $\sim \frac{e^2}{\epsilon l_B} e^{-l_B/a}$ set $\delta = \gamma = A$
 $\beta = \alpha = B$
- Diagrams: 

 } we'll ignore these terms.

For a first pass: only take H_0 . (N.B. $\vec{n} \neq$ nematic director \sim discrete nematic).

$$\langle \psi(\vec{n}) | \hat{H}_0 | \psi(\vec{n}) \rangle \sim - (E_s + E_a n_z^2) \quad E_{s,a} \sim O(1) \cdot \frac{e^2}{\epsilon l_B} > 0$$

* minimized for $n_z = \pm 1 \sim$ all electrons fill one or other valley.

"Ising-like" order b/c $E_a > 0$.] This breaks $C_4 \rightarrow C_2$
 \sim "nematic" order.

[N.B. Can have other possibilities: $\alpha, \beta \sim \uparrow, \downarrow$ spin $E_a = 0$ "Heisenberg"
 \sim layer index $E_a < 0$ "XY".]

II. Effective Theory

So far we've obtained the g.s. energy.

We'd also like an effective action for low-energy fluctuations.

Various ways to derive this:

- 1) Chern-Simons + Landau-Ginzburg theory.
- 2) "Guess" answer:

$$\text{Split} \quad \mathcal{L} = \mathcal{L}_{\text{kin}}[\vec{n}] - \mathcal{E}[\vec{n}]$$

Gradient expansion (but can compute coefficients exactly in Hartree-Fock + spin wave)

$$\mathcal{E}[\vec{n}] \approx \frac{1}{2} \int d^2r \left\{ \rho_s (\nabla \vec{n})^2 - \beta n_z^2 + \dots \right\} \quad (\rho_s \propto E_s, \beta \propto E_a)$$

\mathcal{L}_{kin} is more subtle b/c need to capture (pseudo) spin precession.

* Simpler problem: single spin -s in B field. ($\hbar=1$ units)

$$H = -\vec{B} \cdot \vec{S} \quad ; \quad \frac{d}{dt} \vec{S} = i[H, \vec{S}] = -\vec{B} \times \vec{S} \quad (\text{precession})$$

$$\text{Want to get this from} \quad \frac{d}{dt} \frac{\delta \mathcal{L}_k}{\delta \dot{n}^\mu} = \frac{\delta \mathcal{L}_k}{\delta n^\mu}$$

General rule: for first-order-in-time equation of motion, need a vector potential. Ansatz:

$$\mathcal{L}_k = s \left\{ -\dot{n}_\mu A^\mu[\vec{n}] + B_\mu n^\mu \right\} \quad + \quad \vec{n}^2 = 1 \text{ constraint.}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{EOMs:} \quad \frac{d}{dt} \left\{ -A^\mu[\vec{n}] \right\} &= +B_\mu - \dot{n}_\nu \frac{\partial A^\nu[\vec{n}]}{\partial n_\mu} \\ -\frac{\partial A^\mu}{\partial n_\nu} \cdot \dot{n}^\nu &= +B_\mu - \dot{n}_\nu \frac{\partial A^\nu[\vec{n}]}{\partial n_\mu} \end{aligned}$$

$$\overset{\text{"flux in } \vec{n}\text{-space"}}{\nearrow} \quad \mathcal{F}_{\mu\nu}[\vec{n}] \dot{n}^\nu = +B_\mu.$$

Choose $\lambda_\mu[\vec{n}]$ so that $F_{\mu\nu} = \frac{\partial \lambda_\nu}{\partial x^\mu} - \frac{\partial \lambda_\mu}{\partial x^\nu} = \epsilon^{\mu\nu\lambda} n^\lambda$.

Then

$$(\epsilon^{\mu\rho\sigma} n^\rho) \epsilon^{\mu\nu\lambda} n^\lambda \dot{n}^\nu = B_\mu \cdot (\epsilon^{\mu\rho\sigma} n^\rho)$$

$$\underbrace{n^\rho \dot{n}^\rho}_{\frac{d}{dt} \vec{n}^2 = 0} n^\sigma - \underbrace{n_\rho n_\rho}_{1} \dot{n}^\sigma = (\vec{B} \times \vec{n})^\sigma \quad (\epsilon^{\mu\rho\sigma} \epsilon^{\mu\nu\lambda} = \delta_{\rho\nu} \delta_{\sigma\lambda} - \delta_{\rho\lambda} \delta_{\sigma\nu})$$

$$\Rightarrow \dot{\vec{S}} = -\vec{B} \times \vec{S} \quad (\vec{S} = s \vec{n} \text{ as before}).$$

Can view $\lambda[\vec{m}]$ as vector potential of a magnetic monopole in spin space ~ various aspects follow from this (cf arXiv:cond-mat/9907002).

For many spins: the field $\vec{m}[\vec{r}]$ sees such a term.

So, find an effective Lagrangian

$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{FM}} = s \frac{N}{A} \int d^2\vec{r} \left\{ \dot{n}^\mu \lambda_\mu[\vec{n}] - \underbrace{\Delta_v(\vec{r}, t) n_z(\vec{r}, t)}_{\text{"magnetic field" on valleys (from uniform/random strain)}} \right\} - \frac{1}{2} \int d^2\vec{r} \left\{ \beta_s (\nabla \vec{n})^2 - \beta n_z^2 \right\}$$

* Could have just written this down for any (easy-axis) FM.

Where did QM physics go?

II.B Topological Terms

Consider dragging an electron through the system.

Since system is FM, 'pseudospin' tracks the local \vec{n}

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{L}_e &= -e \dot{x}^\mu A^\mu + s \dot{n}^\nu A^\nu[\vec{n}] \\ &= -e \dot{x}^\mu (A^\mu + a^\mu) \quad \text{where} \quad a^\mu = -\frac{\Phi_0}{2\pi} s \frac{\partial n^\nu}{\partial x^\mu} \lambda^\nu[\vec{n}] \\ &\quad \Phi_0 = \frac{h}{e} \sim \frac{2\pi}{e} \quad \text{if } \hbar=1. \end{aligned}$$

"Additional" fictitious magnetic field seen by test electron:

$$\begin{aligned}
 b &= \epsilon^{\alpha\beta} \partial_\alpha a_\beta = -\frac{\Phi_0}{2\pi} s \epsilon^{\alpha\beta} \frac{\partial}{\partial x^\alpha} \left\{ \frac{\partial n^\nu}{\partial x^\beta} A^\nu[\vec{n}] \right\} \\
 &= -\frac{\Phi_0}{2\pi} s \epsilon^{\alpha\beta} \left\{ \cancel{\frac{\partial^2 n^\nu}{\partial x^\alpha \partial x^\beta}} A^\nu + \frac{\partial n^\nu}{\partial x^\beta} \underbrace{\frac{\partial A^\nu}{\partial x^\alpha}}_{= \frac{\partial A^\nu}{\partial n^\mu} \cdot \frac{\partial n^\mu}{\partial x^\alpha}} \right\} \\
 &= -\frac{\Phi_0}{2\pi} s \epsilon^{\alpha\beta} \underbrace{\frac{\partial n^\mu}{\partial x^\alpha} \frac{\partial n^\nu}{\partial x^\beta} \frac{\partial A^\nu}{\partial n^\mu}}_{\text{antisymmetric in } \mu \leftrightarrow \nu} \\
 &= -\frac{\Phi_0}{2\pi} s \epsilon^{\alpha\beta} \frac{\partial n^\mu}{\partial x^\alpha} \frac{\partial n^\nu}{\partial x^\beta} \frac{1}{2} F^{\mu\nu} \stackrel{= \epsilon^{\mu\nu\sigma} n^\sigma}{=} -\Phi_0 \tilde{\rho}_{\text{top}}
 \end{aligned}$$

Where, for $s = 1/2$ we define

$$\tilde{\rho}_{\text{top}} = \frac{1}{8\pi} \epsilon^{\alpha\beta} \epsilon^{abc} n^a \partial_\alpha n^b \partial_\beta n^c \sim \text{Pontryagin density.}$$

As electron moves past texture, sees adiabatically varying a_μ
 \Rightarrow sees an effective field b .

\Rightarrow extra charge density from this is $\delta\rho = \sigma_{xy} \cdot b = v \frac{e^2}{h} \cdot \frac{h}{e} \tilde{\rho}_{\text{top}} = v e \tilde{\rho}_{\text{top}}$
 \hookrightarrow Laughlin argument.

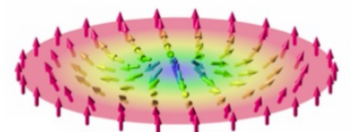
Define "topological charge" $Q_{\text{top}} = \int d^2r \tilde{\rho}_{\text{top}}$

\Rightarrow Extra charge $\delta Q = v e Q_{\text{top}}$

Spin textures w/ nonzero topological charge carry electrical charge.

A $Q_{\text{top}} = 1$ texture is a Skyrmion.

A more complex term ('Hopf term') gives the skyrmion Fermi statistics.



Effective field theory must incorporate these (+ terms $\int V(\vec{r}-\vec{r}') \delta\tilde{\rho}_{\text{top}}(\vec{r}) \delta\tilde{\rho}_{\text{top}}(\vec{r}')$)

[Basic reason: charge + valley don't commute within the Landau level],

III Domain Wall Physics

Recall we have an Ising anisotropy of our order parameter

Natural topological defects: not skyrmions, but domain walls.



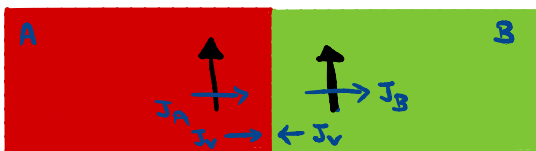
Domain walls carry topologically-protected edge modes (unsurprising!)

One slick way to see this + get quantum numbers: use $\sigma_{xy} \neq 0$.

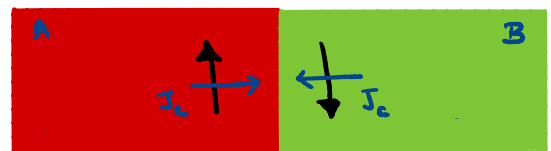
Observe 2 conserved U(1) charges: total charge $\propto \rho_A + \rho_B$
" valley $\propto \rho_A - \rho_B$

Apply \vec{E} field

Apply valley \vec{E} -field.
($+\vec{E}$ on A, $-\vec{E}$ on B).



valley inflow to DW



charge inflow to DW.

\Rightarrow at $\nu=1$, DW must have gapless charge/valley modes.

Goal: derive an effective theory + understand symmetry protection.

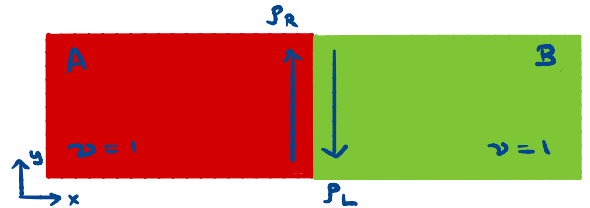
Intuitively: 2 counterpropagating modes \sim Luttinger liquid
(Luttinger parameter not set by bulk filling, unlike chiral Luttinger liquids at QH edges).

\sim but b/c counterpropagating, why is there protection of gaplessness?

Strategy: use bosonization: represent R/L moving densities in terms of phase fields ϕ, θ [cf Giamarchi's book]
 "right movers" from valley A, "left movers" from valley B.

Trick: in Landau level, $X \sim P_y$ (coordinate \perp^r wall \sim momentum parallel to it).

$$\begin{aligned} \rho_R(q_y) &\sim \sum_x C_{x+q_y, A}^\dagger C_{x, A} \\ \rho_L(q_y) &\sim \sum_x C_{x+q_y, B}^\dagger C_{x, B} \end{aligned} \left. \begin{array}{l} \text{only nontrivial} \\ \text{near the} \\ \text{DW.} \\ \text{(standard bosoniz.)} \end{array} \right\}$$



$\rightarrow \rho_{R,L}(y)$ by Fourier transform.

Keeping only H_0 :

$$H_{DW} \sim v_F^0 \int dy [(\rho_R + \rho_L)^2 + (\rho_R - \rho_L)^2]$$

most general density-density terms from H_0 , $v_F^0 \sim e^2/\epsilon$.

Position of DW is not specific $\Rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} \rho_A \rightarrow \rho_A + \epsilon \\ \rho_B \rightarrow \rho_B - \epsilon \end{bmatrix}$ is a symmetry (transl. \perp^r to wall).

\Rightarrow can't write any term of the form $(\rho_R - \rho_L)^2$

$$H_{DW} \sim \frac{\pi}{2} v_F^0 \int dy (\rho_R + \rho_L)^2 \rightarrow \text{singular Luttinger liquid } \textcircled{!}.$$

\rightarrow Actually, to create DW, have "valley field" gradient Γ , of form.

$$\underline{\delta H_0} \sim v_F^0 \sum_x \Gamma \cdot X \cdot (C_{x,A}^\dagger C_{x,A} - C_{x,B}^\dagger C_{x,B}). \quad (\text{breaks shift symmetry}).$$

Since $X \sim q_y$, this is like the usual fermion kinetic energy.

A standard result is that for linear dispersion, have

$$\delta H_{DW} \sim \pi \Gamma \int dy (\rho_R^2(y) + \rho_L^2(y)) = \pi \Gamma \int dy \left\{ \frac{1}{2} (\rho_R + \rho_L)^2 + \frac{1}{2} (\rho_R - \rho_L)^2 \right\}$$

$$H_{DW} + \delta H_{DW} \sim \frac{1}{2} \pi \int dy \left\{ (v_F^0 + \Gamma) (\rho_R + \rho_L)^2 + \Gamma (\rho_R - \rho_L)^2 \right\}$$

Bosonization: $\rho_R + \rho_L \equiv -\frac{1}{\pi} \nabla \phi \quad \rho_R - \rho_L \equiv \frac{1}{\pi} \nabla \theta.$

$$[\phi(y), \nabla \theta(y')] = i \delta(y - y')$$

$$H_{DW} + \delta H_{DW} = \frac{1}{2\pi} \int dy \left\{ (v_F^0 + \Gamma) (\nabla \phi)^2 + \Gamma (\nabla \theta)^2 \right\}$$

$$= \frac{v_F}{2\pi} \int dy \left\{ \frac{1}{K} (\nabla \phi)^2 + K (\nabla \theta)^2 \right\}$$

where $\frac{v_F}{K} = v_F^0 + \Gamma$; $v_F K = \Gamma \Rightarrow v_F = \sqrt{(v_F^0 + \Gamma)\Gamma}$, $K = \sqrt{\frac{\Gamma}{v_F^0 + \Gamma}}$

Note $v_F, K \rightarrow 0$ as $\Gamma \rightarrow 0$ (singular limit) mentioned earlier.
for $\Gamma \ll 1$, $K < 1 \sim$ repulsive interactions.

So far: only considered H_0 terms. what about H_1 ?  + h.c.

\sim renormalizes couplings, but could induce backscattering ($\cos \theta, \cos \phi$).

[in bosonization: "forward" scattering changes v_F, K ;
"backscattering" generates cosine terms (try to gap system)]

Conserved quantities: total particle #: $N = N_A + N_B$; pseudospin $I^z = \frac{1}{2} (N_A - N_B)$.

Recall $\nabla \phi \sim -\pi [p_R + p_L] \sim -\pi [p_A + p_B]$
 $\nabla \theta \sim -\pi [p_R - p_L] \sim -\pi [p_A - p_B]$

$U(1)$ generators of our symmetries linked to fields via:

$$N = \int dy (p_A + p_B) \sim -\frac{1}{\pi} \int dy \nabla \phi$$

$$I^z = \int dy \left(\frac{p_A - p_B}{2} \right) \sim -\frac{1}{2\pi} \int dy \nabla \theta.$$

Use the commutation relation and $[A, e^{iB}] = i[A, B] e^{iB}$
(valid if $[[A, B], B] = 0$) then

$$[N, e^{\pm i\phi}] = \mp e^{\pm i\phi} ; [I^z, e^{\pm i\phi}] = \mp e^{\pm i\phi}$$

$\sim \left. \begin{array}{l} e^{\mp i\theta} \text{ are raising / lowering operators for } N \\ e^{\mp i\phi} \text{ are raising / lowering operators for } I^z \end{array} \right\} \text{forbidden by } U(1) \text{ symmetry.}$

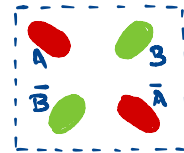
\Rightarrow "defects" of one field (e.g. $e^{i\theta}$ creates defect of ϕ and vice-versa) carry quantum numbers of the other field.

\Rightarrow as long as charge conservation + valley $U(1)$ are preserved, domain wall is gapless (since cosines are forbidden).

Topological symmetry protection \sim similar to $U(1) \times U(1)$ limit of TI (see by "folding" at DW).

IV. A richer example

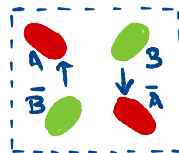
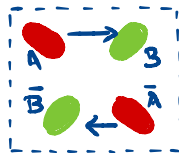
Consider a 4-valley system



Can build $v=2$ DW between

$A\bar{A}$ and $B\bar{B}$ regions (this is natural b/c strain acts the same way on $A\bar{A}$ and on $B\bar{B}$)

Hierarchy of scales: leading terms same as before, but new terms appear at $O((a/a_B)^2)$:



Nominally: 4 conserved $U(1)$ s ($N_A, N_{\bar{A}}, N_B, N_{\bar{B}}$).

But the new terms violate conservation of $N_A + N_{\bar{A}} - N_B - N_{\bar{B}}$.

So rearrange as

$$N = N_A + N_B + N_{\bar{B}} + N_{\bar{A}}$$

$$Q^z = \frac{1}{2} (N_A + N_B - N_{\bar{A}} - N_{\bar{B}})$$

$$P^z = \frac{1}{2} (N_A - N_B - N_{\bar{A}} + N_{\bar{B}})$$

$$I^z = \frac{1}{2} (N_A - N_B + N_{\bar{A}} - N_{\bar{B}})$$

✓ } all conserved!
✓
✓

X not conserved

Can derive a 2-channel Luttinger liquid [$\uparrow\uparrow\downarrow\downarrow \sim \uparrow\uparrow\downarrow\downarrow$].

$$\mathcal{H}_{\text{eff}} = \sum_{j=p,\sigma} \frac{u_j}{2\pi} \int dy \left[\frac{1}{K_j} (\nabla \phi_j)^2 + K_j (\nabla \theta_j)^2 \right].$$

with

$$\begin{aligned} \nabla \phi_p &\sim p_A + p_B + p_{\bar{A}} + p_{\bar{B}} & \nabla \theta_p &\sim p_A - p_B + p_{\bar{A}} - p_{\bar{B}} \\ \nabla \phi_{\sigma} &\sim p_A + p_B - p_{\bar{A}} - p_{\bar{B}} & \nabla \theta_{\sigma} &\sim p_A - p_B - p_{\bar{A}} - p_{\bar{B}}. \end{aligned}$$

so

$$\mathcal{N} \sim \int dy \nabla \phi_p; \quad \mathcal{Q}^z \sim \int dy \nabla \phi_{\sigma}; \quad \mathcal{P}^z \sim \int dy \nabla \theta_{\sigma}; \quad \mathcal{I}^z \sim \int dy \nabla \theta_p$$

$$\begin{aligned} [\mathcal{N}, e^{\pm i\theta_p/\sqrt{2}}] &= \mp e^{\pm i\theta_p/\sqrt{2}} & [\mathcal{P}^z, e^{\pm i\sqrt{2}\phi_{\sigma}}] &= \mp e^{\pm i\sqrt{2}\phi_{\sigma}} \\ [\mathcal{Q}^z, e^{\pm i\sqrt{2}\theta_{\sigma}}] &= \mp e^{\pm i\sqrt{2}\theta_{\sigma}} & [\mathcal{I}^z, e^{\pm i\sqrt{2}\phi_p}] &= \mp e^{\pm i\sqrt{2}\phi_p}. \end{aligned}$$

But \mathcal{I}^z only conserved modulo 2!

$\Rightarrow \cos(2\sqrt{2}\phi_p)$ is an allowed perturbation.

$$\mathcal{H}_{\text{eff}} \rightarrow \mathcal{H}_{\text{eff}} + g \int dy \cos(2\sqrt{2}\phi_p).$$

For $K \ll 1$, $g \rightarrow \infty$, "pins" ϕ_p . Since ϕ_p is conjugate to θ_p , when ϕ_p orders, θ_p is disordered.

$$\Rightarrow \langle e^{\frac{i}{2}\theta_p(y)} e^{-\frac{i}{2}\theta_p(y')} \rangle \sim e^{-|y-y'|/\xi} \quad \text{charge gap!}$$

But gapless valley mode persists \sim valley charge separation.

[EXPERIMENTAL DATA].

If time: field theoretic derivation for $\nu = 1$.