

Bulk Localized Collective Excitations in Strongly Disordered Superconductors

The 17th of July, 2026

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with: Thibault Charpentier, Mikhail Feigel'man, Nicolas Roch, and Benjamin Sacépé



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Conclusions and Outlook

A bulk superconductor* = ?

**in equilibrium at given T*

... for a physicist:

- Zero DC resistance
- Meissner effect
- Flux quantization

A bulk superconductor* = London equations

**in equilibrium at given T*

... for a physicist:

- Zero DC resistance
- Meissner effect
- Flux quantization

... in equations:

$$\underset{\substack{\text{Current} \\ \text{density}}}{\mathbf{j}} = \frac{c}{4\pi \underset{\substack{\text{London penetration} \\ \text{depth}}}{\lambda_L^2}} \left(\frac{\hbar c}{2e} \nabla \underset{\substack{\text{Superconducting phase}}}{\varphi} - \underset{\substack{\text{Vector potential}}}{\mathbf{A}} \right)$$

A bulk superconductor* = London equations

**in equilibrium at given T*

... for a physicist:

- Zero DC resistance
- Meissner effect
- Flux quantization

- Spectral gap
- Exponential dependence on temperature
- Anderson theorem
- ...

... in equations:

$$\mathbf{j} = \frac{c}{4\pi\lambda_L^2} \left(\frac{\hbar c}{2e} \nabla \varphi - \mathbf{A} \right)$$

Semiclassical (BCS) theory

A bulk superconductor* = London equations

**in equilibrium at given T*

$$\mathbf{j} = \frac{c}{4\pi\lambda_L^2} \left(\frac{\hbar c}{2e} \nabla \varphi - \mathbf{A} \right)$$

applies to *all* bulk superconductors

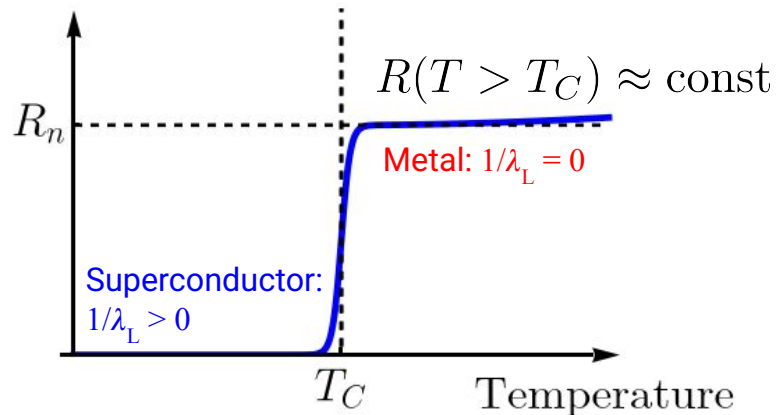
Semiclassical (BCS) theory

applies only to *moderately* disordered superconductors

Semiclassical theory of superconductors*

*s-wave

Resistance

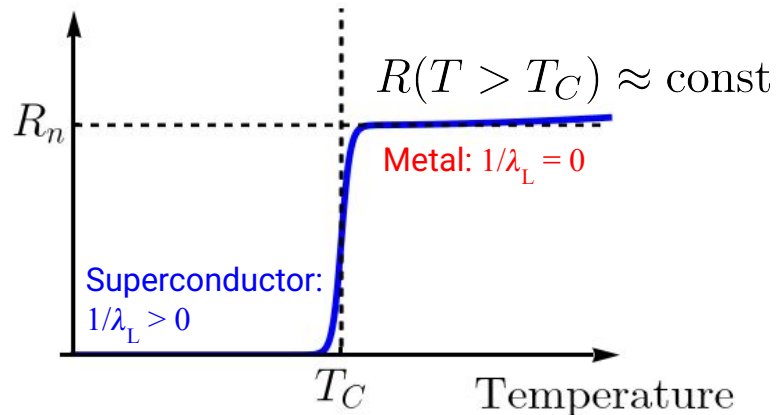


A.A. Abrikosov, L.P. Gor'kov, I.E. Dzyaloshinskii, *Quantum Field Theoretical Methods in Statistical Physics*
A. V. Svidzinsky, *Spatially Non-Uniform Problems in the Theory of Superconductivity*
P.-G. De Gennes, *Superconductivity of metals and alloys*

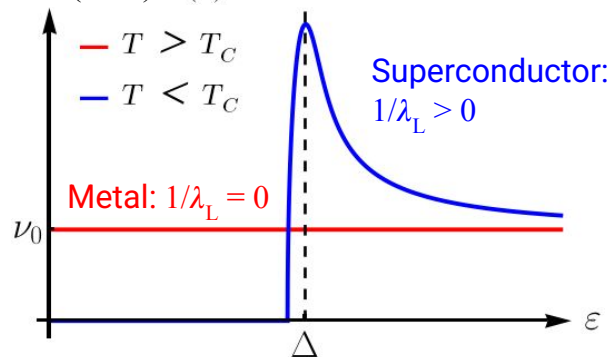
Semiclassical theory of superconductors*

*s-wave

Resistance



Single-particle density of states (DoS) $\nu(\varepsilon)$

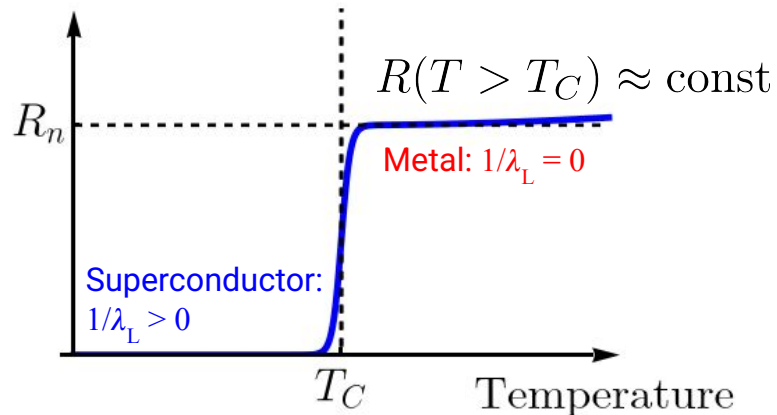


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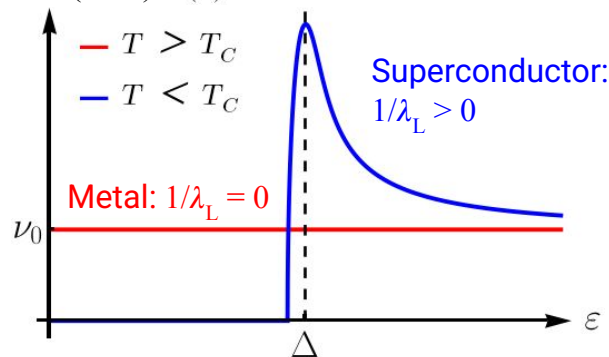
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Resistance



Single-particle density of states (DoS) $\nu(\varepsilon)$



Exponential temperature dependencies:

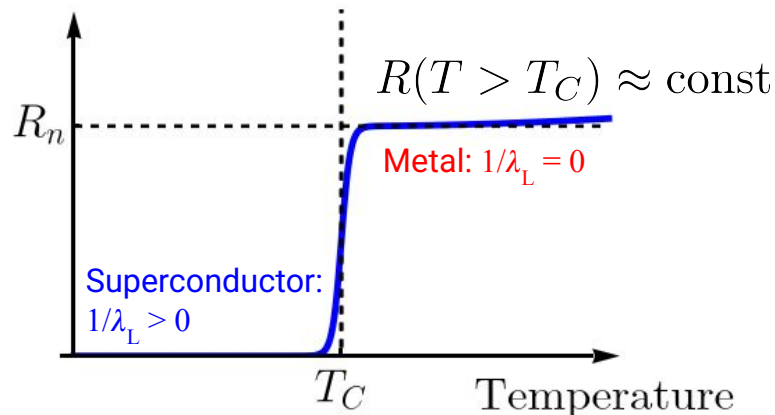
$$4\pi\lambda_L^2/d = \frac{\hbar c^2}{\pi\Delta} R_{\square} \coth \frac{\Delta}{2T} \propto 1 + 2 \exp \left\{ -\frac{\Delta}{T} \right\} \quad (T \ll \Delta)$$

Normal state sheet resistance

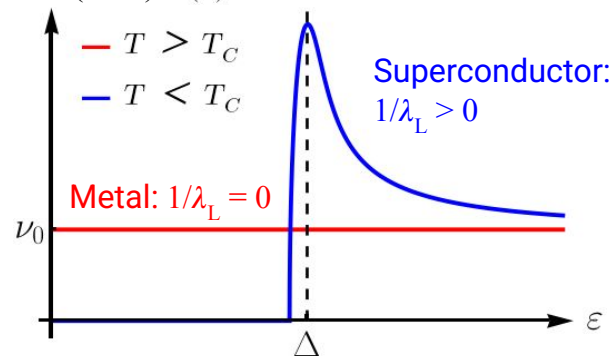
Semiclassical theory of superconductors*

*s-wave

Resistance



Single-particle density of states (DoS) $\nu(\varepsilon)$



Applicable if $k_F l \gg 1$, $k_F \xi_0 \gg 1$ ($\xi_0 \sim \sqrt{\hbar D / \Delta}$)

Fermi wave number

mean free path

coherence length

Exponential temperature dependencies:

$$4\pi\lambda_L^2/d = \frac{\hbar c^2}{\pi\Delta} R_{\square} \coth \frac{\Delta}{2T} \propto 1 + 2 \exp \left\{ -\frac{\Delta}{T} \right\} \quad (T \ll \Delta)$$

Normal state sheet resistance

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$$\cancel{k_F l} \gg 1$$

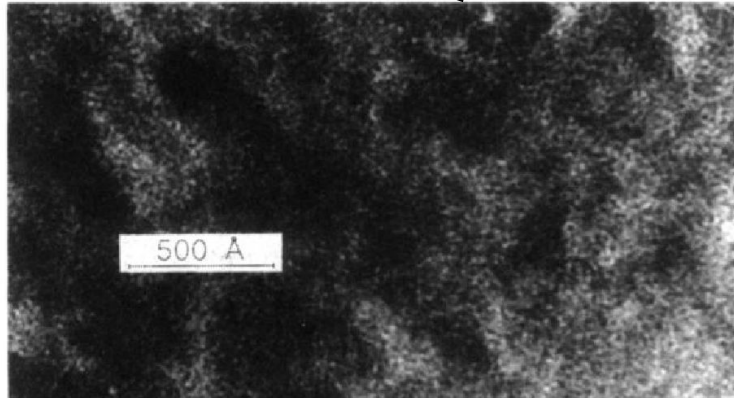
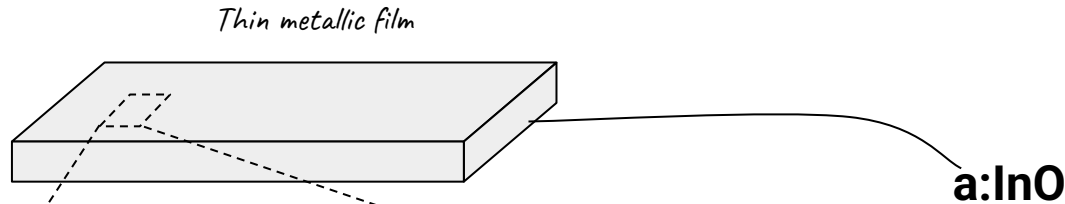
What happens to λ_L at strong disorder?

Grows with disorder

???

$$4\pi\lambda_L^2/d = \frac{\hbar c^2}{\pi\Delta} R_{\square} \coth \frac{\Delta}{2T} \propto 1 + 2 \exp \left\{ -\frac{\Delta}{T} \right\} \quad (T \ll \Delta)$$

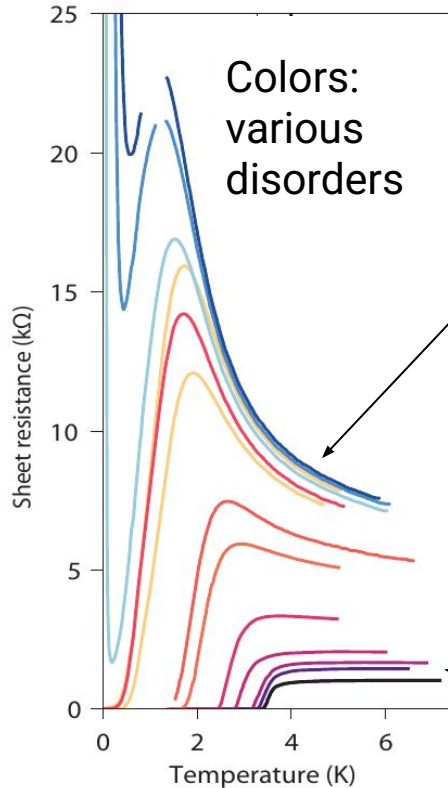
Films of amorphous Indium oxide (α :InO)



Micrograph

Disorder: atomically homogeneous,
no grains!
(oxygen vacancies)

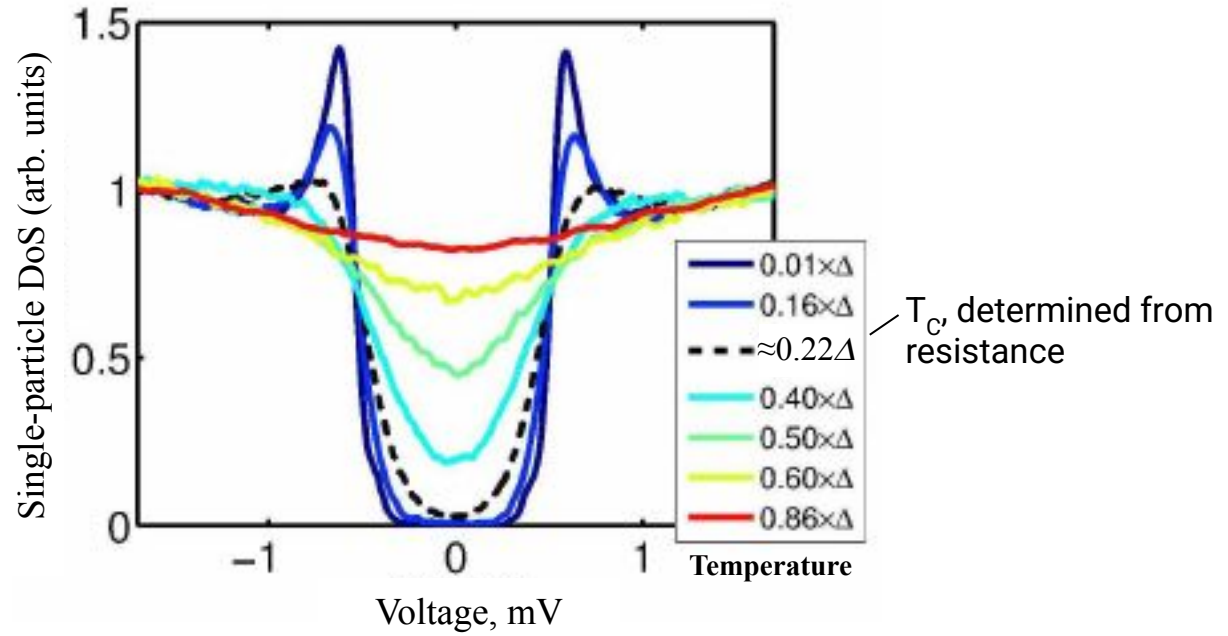
Sheet resistance of α :InO films



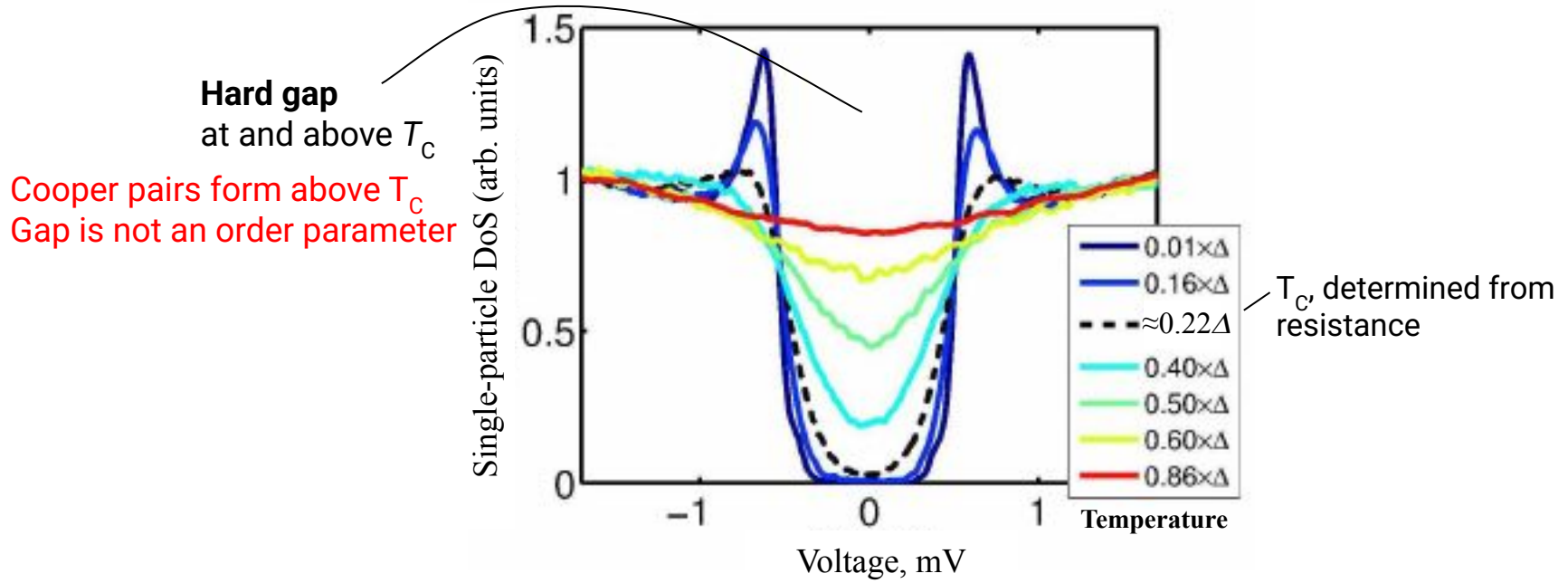
Strong disorder:
Not a good metal at $T > T_C$
Semiclassics not applicable

Weak disorder:
Metallic at $T > T_C$

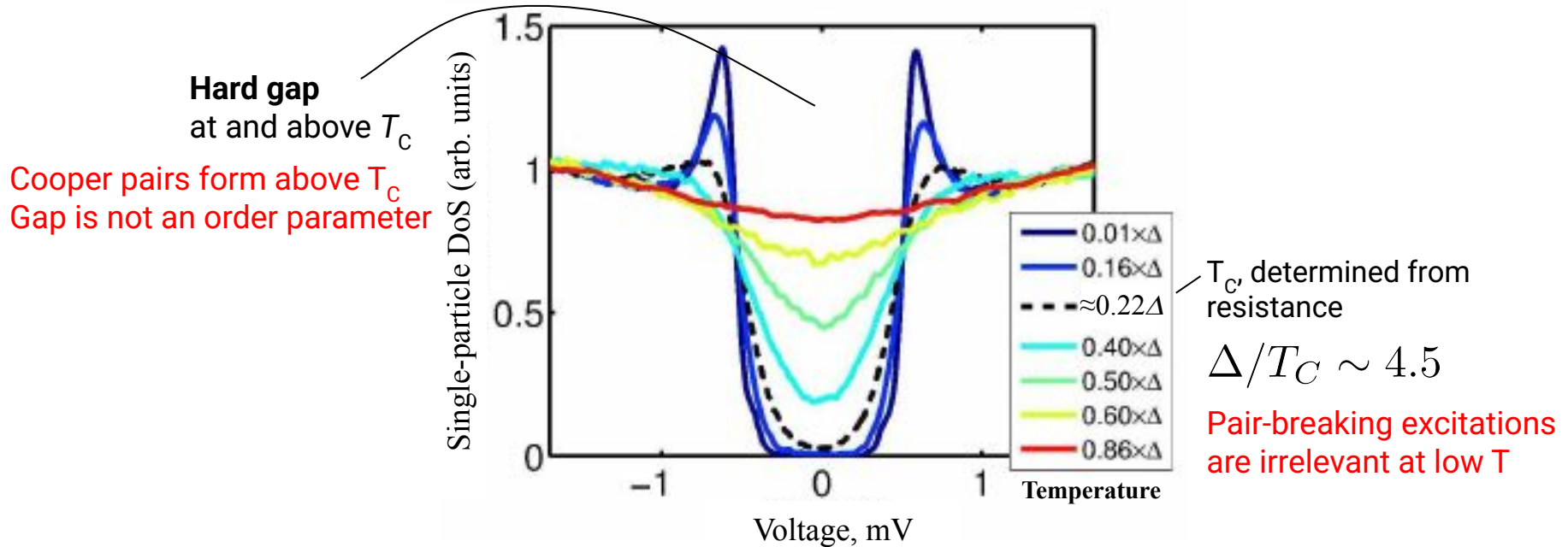
Single-particle DoS for various T



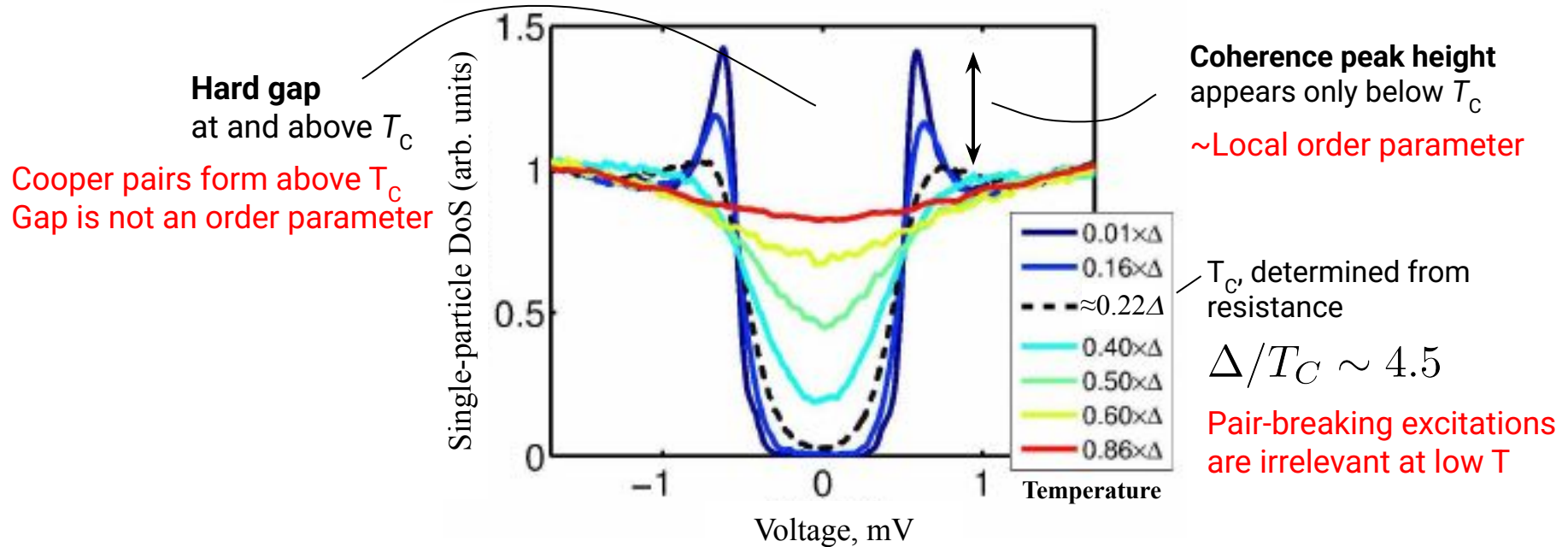
Single-particle DoS for various T



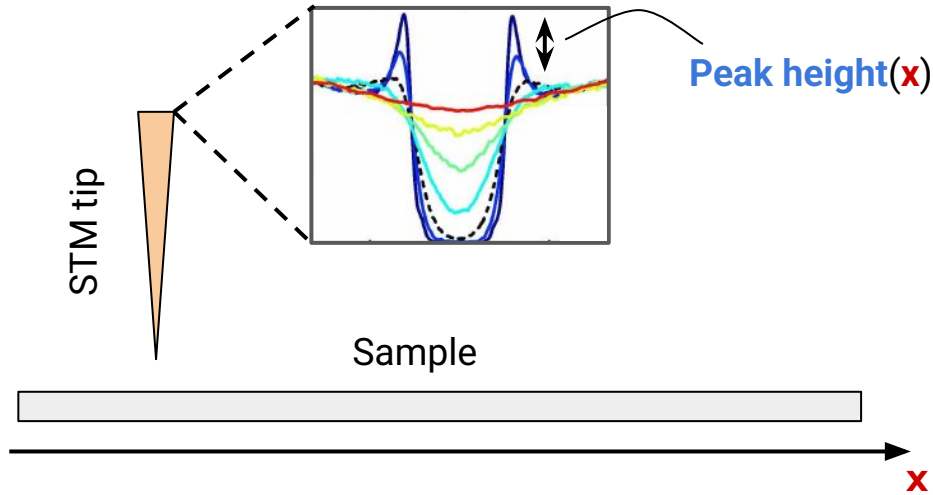
Single-particle DoS for various T



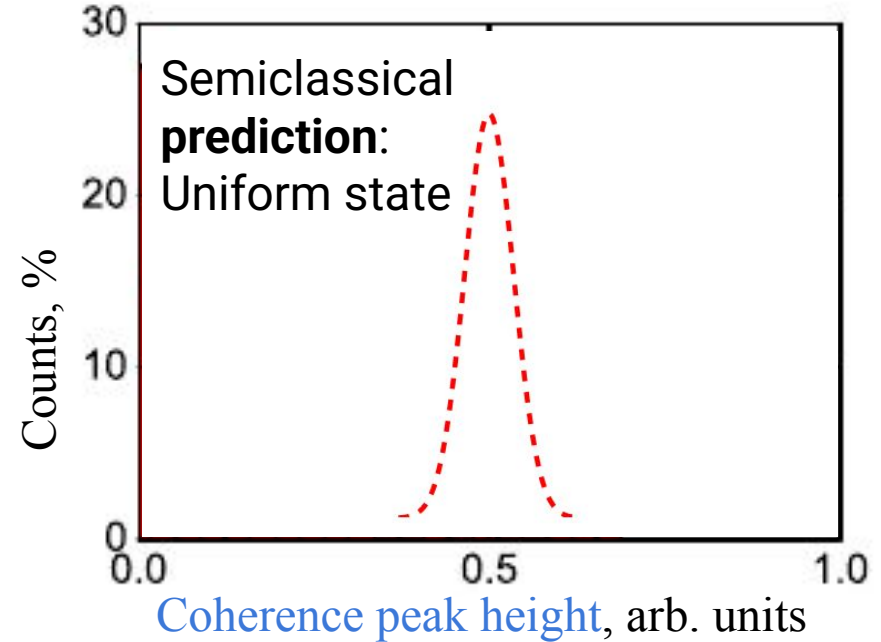
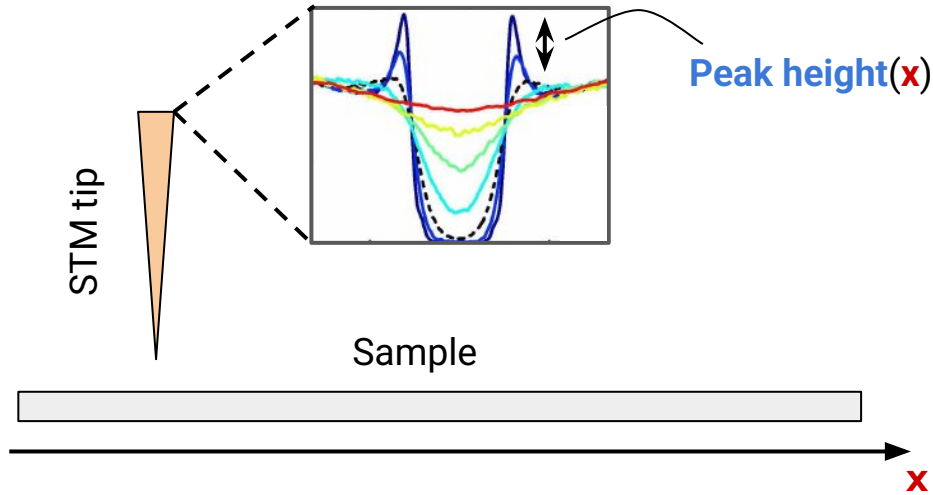
Single-particle DoS for various T



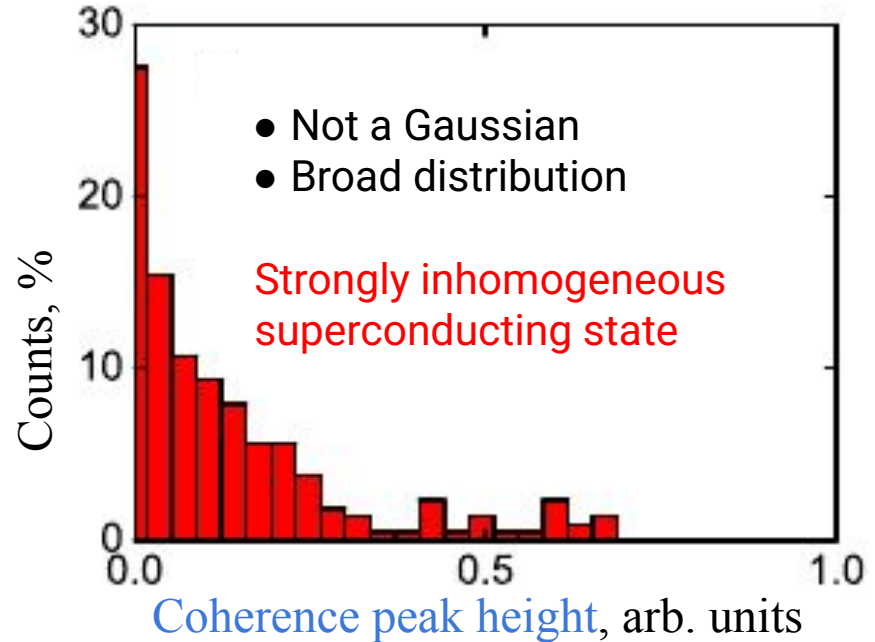
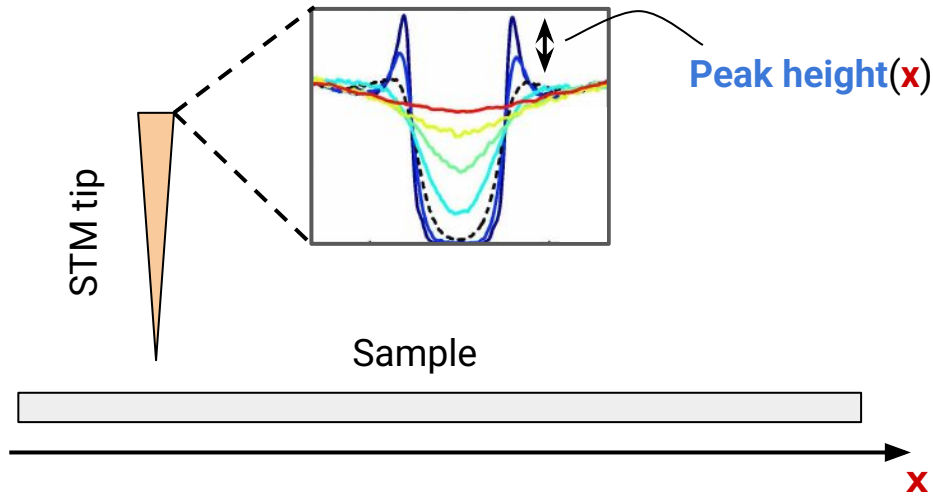
Statistics of spatially resolved DoS features



Statistics of spatially resolved DoS features



Statistics of spatially resolved DoS features



α :InO needs a different microscopic theory

- Zero DC resistance
- Meissner effect
- Flux quantization

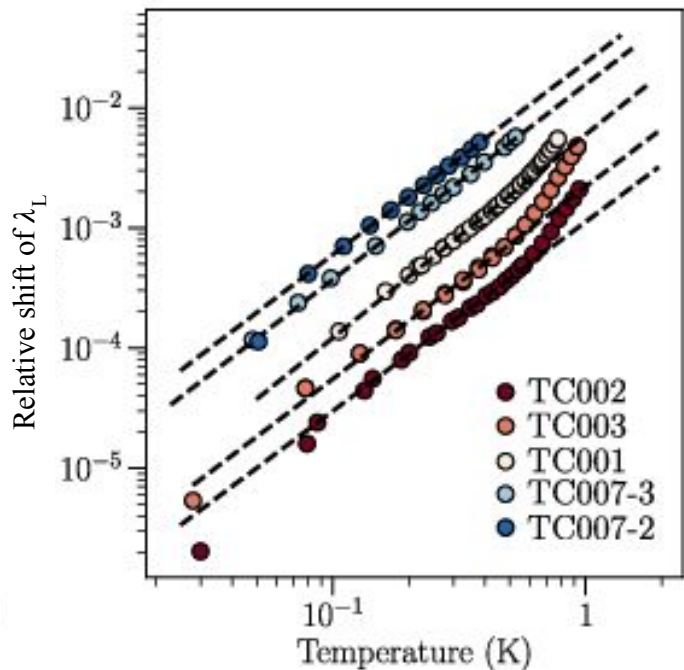
$$\mathbf{j} = \frac{c}{4\pi\lambda_L^2} \left(\frac{\hbar c}{2e} \nabla \varphi - \mathbf{A} \right)$$

**The only reliable signature of superconductivity.
Need to measure that!**

- Spectral gap
- Exponential dependence on temperature
- Anderson theorem
- ...

Semiclassical (BCS) theory

T-dependence of λ_L



Dashed lines: **power law**

$$\frac{\lambda_L^2(T)}{\lambda_L^2(0)} - 1 = \left(\frac{T}{T_0}\right)^b$$

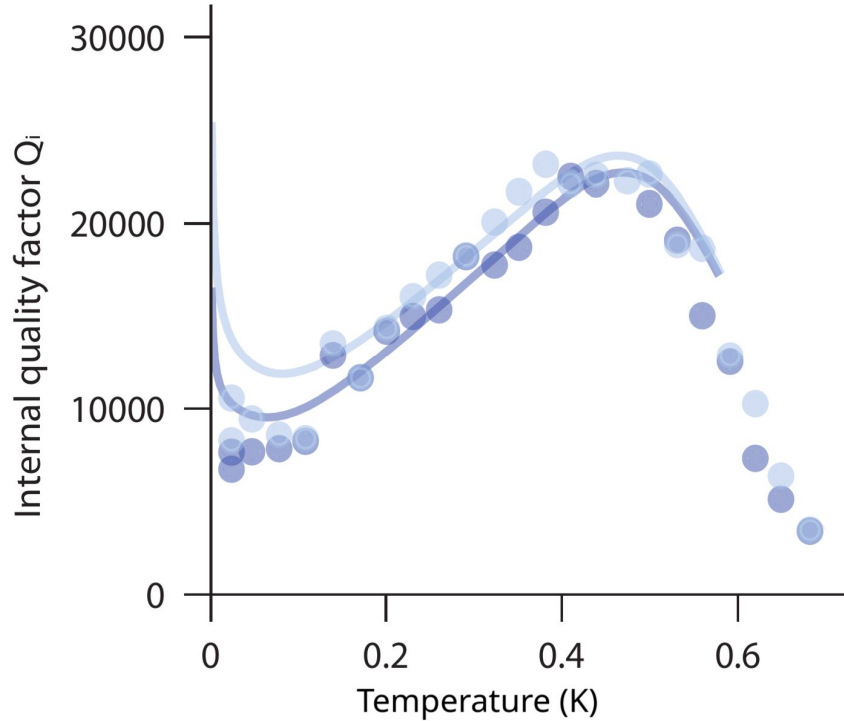
The effect is **pronounced**:

$$b \sim 1.6, \quad T_0 \sim 10^1 - 10^2 \text{ K}$$

~~$$\exp\left\{-\frac{\Delta}{T}\right\} \quad (T \ll \Delta)$$~~

Pair breaking (BCS), collective modes, surface contaminants, etc. cannot explain this

T-dependence of dissipation



$Q \propto 1/\sigma_1(T)$ **grows with T**

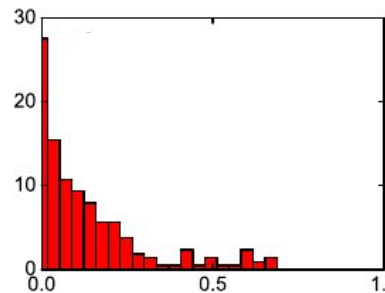
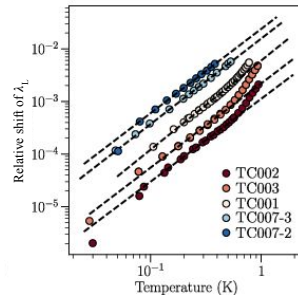
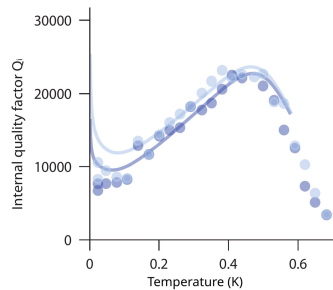
~~$\exp\left\{-\frac{\Delta}{T}\right\} (T \ll \Delta)$~~

Pair breaking (BCS), collective modes, surface contaminants, etc. cannot explain this

Q: What physical mechanism causes this?

Low-energy theory

A: inhomogeneity of the superconducting state.



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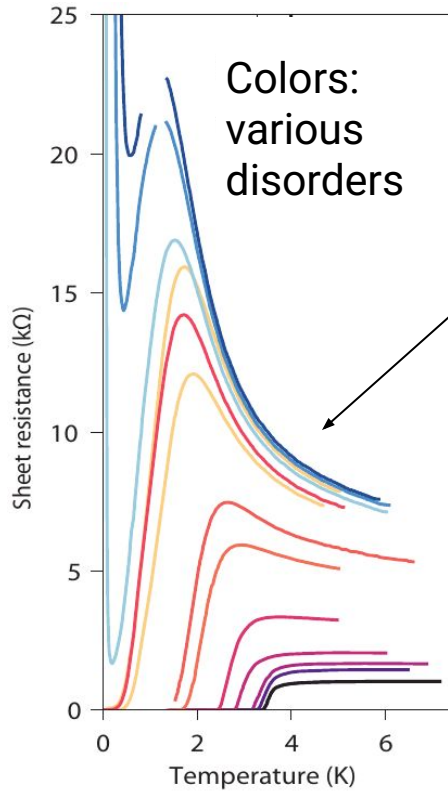
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Temperature and frequency dependence of
electromagnetic response

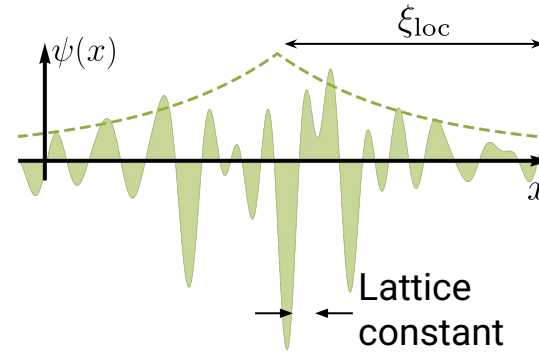
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Phase diagram near SIT
Conclusions and Outlook

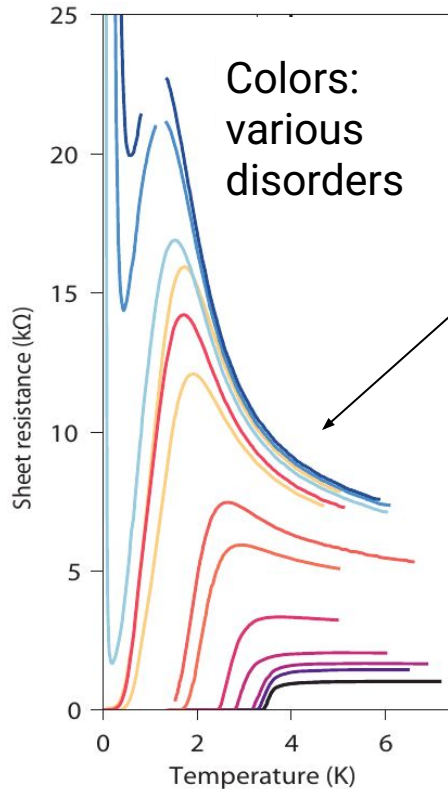
Localized superconductors



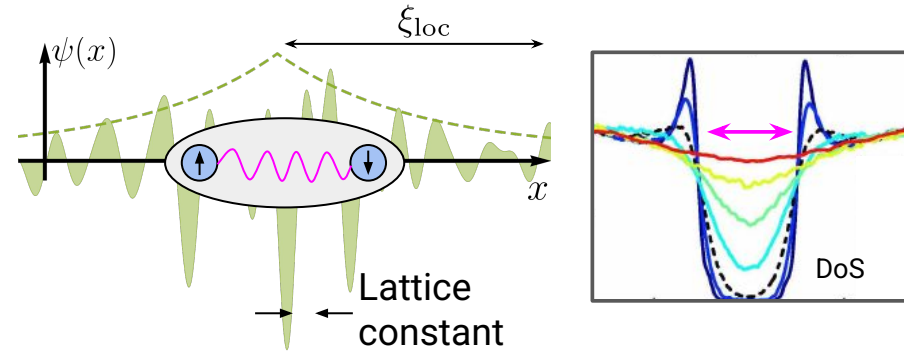
Large disorder:
Anderson insulator with large ξ_{loc}



Localized superconductors

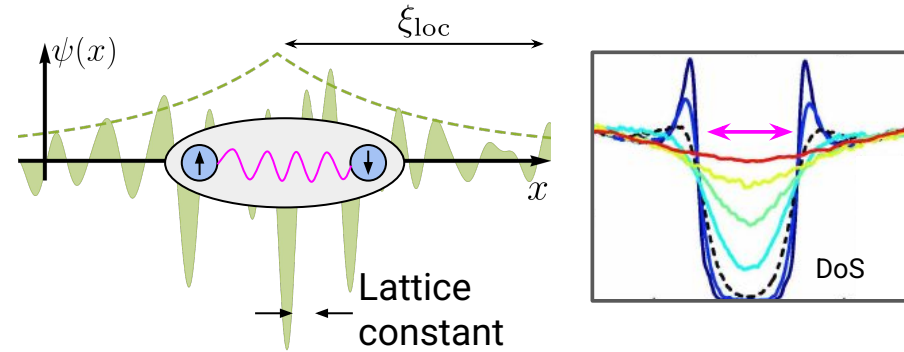


Large disorder:
Anderson insulator with large ξ_{loc}
and **preformed** Cooper pairs



Localized superconductors

$$H = ?$$



Localized Cooper pairs

$$H = ?$$

No quasiparticles:

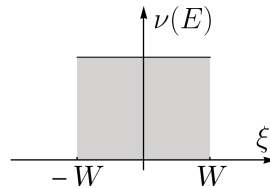
$$\sum_{\sigma=\uparrow,\downarrow} a_{i\sigma}^\dagger a_{i\sigma} |\text{state}\rangle = \{0 \text{ or } 2\} |\text{state}\rangle$$

Localized Cooper pairs

$$H = - \sum_{i, \sigma=\downarrow, \uparrow} \xi_i a_{i\sigma}^\dagger a_{i\sigma}$$

Index of localized
single-particle state

Random energies,
DoS $\nu(\xi)$, scale W



No quasiparticles:

$$\sum_{\sigma=\uparrow, \downarrow} a_{i\sigma}^\dagger a_{i\sigma} |\text{state}\rangle = \{0 \text{ or } 2\} |\text{state}\rangle$$

Hopping of localized Cooper pairs

$$H = - \sum_{i, \sigma=\downarrow, \uparrow} \xi_i a_{i\sigma}^\dagger a_{i\sigma} - \sum_{i \neq j} \left(D_{ij} a_{i\downarrow}^\dagger a_{i\uparrow}^\dagger a_{j\uparrow} a_{j\downarrow} + \text{h.c.} \right)$$

No quasiparticles:

$$\sum_{\sigma=\uparrow, \downarrow} a_{i\sigma}^\dagger a_{i\sigma} |\text{state}\rangle = \{0 \text{ or } 2\} |\text{state}\rangle$$

Hopping of localized Cooper pairs

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Structure of the matrix elements?

No quasiparticles:

$$\sum_{\sigma=\uparrow, \downarrow} a_{i\sigma}^\dagger a_{i\sigma} |\text{state}\rangle = \{0 \text{ or } 2\} |\text{state}\rangle$$

Hopping of localized Cooper pairs

$$H = - \sum_{i, \sigma=\downarrow, \uparrow} \xi_i a_{i\sigma}^\dagger a_{i\sigma} - \sum_{i \neq j} \left(D_{ij} a_{i\downarrow}^\dagger a_{i\uparrow}^\dagger a_{j\uparrow} a_{j\downarrow} + \text{h.c.} \right)$$

Energy dependence at
the scale of ω_D

Wave function overlap

$$D_{ij} \approx \mathcal{D}(\xi_i - \xi_j; 0) \int d^3 \mathbf{r} \bar{\psi}_i^2(\mathbf{r}) \psi_j^2(\mathbf{r})$$

Phonon-induced attraction

No quasiparticles:

$$\sum_{\sigma=\uparrow, \downarrow} a_{i\sigma}^\dagger a_{i\sigma} |\text{state}\rangle = \{0 \text{ or } 2\} |\text{state}\rangle$$

$$T_c \ll (\nu_0 \xi_{\text{loc}}^3)^{-1} \ll \omega_D$$

*Large but finite
localization volume*

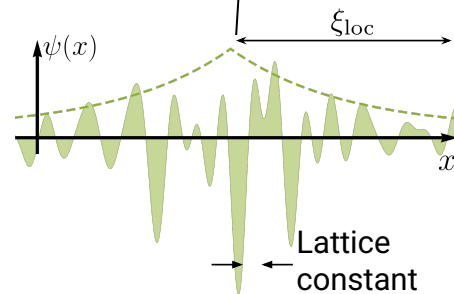
Matrix elements in an **Anderson insulator**

$$D_{ij} \approx \mathcal{D}(\xi_i - \xi_j; 0) \int d^3\mathbf{r} \bar{\psi}_i^2(\mathbf{r}) \psi_j^2(\mathbf{r})$$

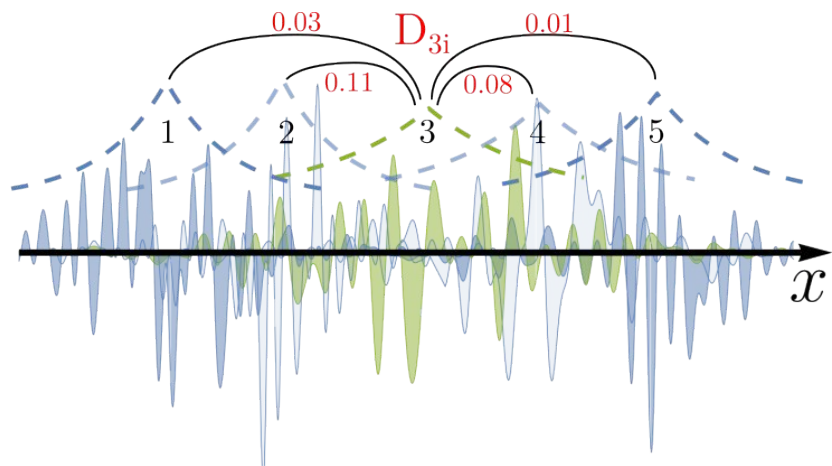
Matrix elements in an Anderson insulator

$$D_{ij} \approx \mathcal{D}(\xi_i - \xi_j; 0) \int d^3\mathbf{r} \bar{\psi}_i^2(\mathbf{r}) \psi_j^2(\mathbf{r})$$

- Decay with distance
- Fluctuate strongly



Matrix elements in an Anderson insulator

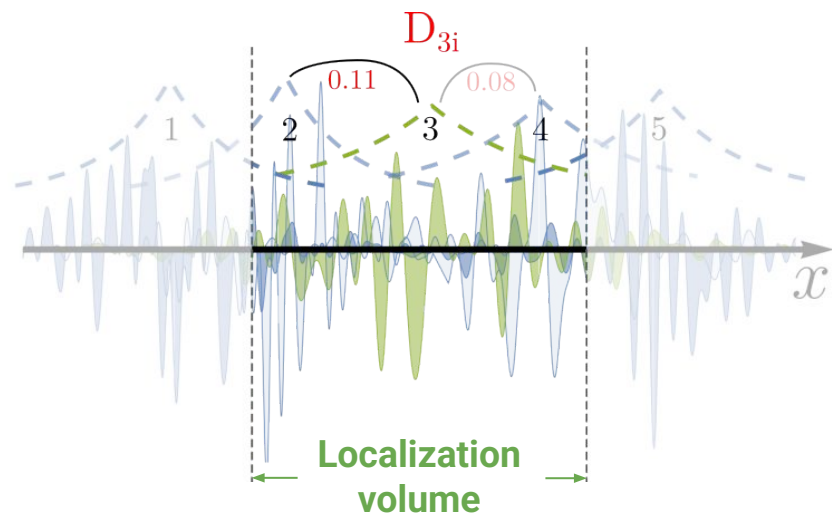


Single-particle wave functions

$$D_{ij} \approx \mathcal{D}(\xi_i - \xi_j; 0) \int d^3\mathbf{r} \bar{\psi}_i^2(\mathbf{r}) \psi_j^2(\mathbf{r})$$

- Decay with distance (between i, j)
- Fluctuate strongly

Matrix elements inside localization volume with binary distribution



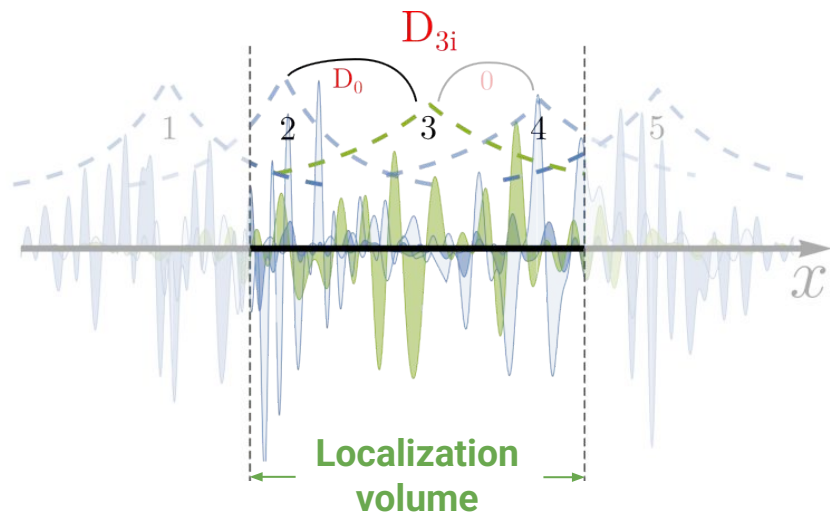
$$D_{ij} = \begin{cases} E_F \frac{\lambda}{K}, & \text{"strong",} \\ 0, & \text{"weak"} \end{cases}$$

Dimensionless Cooper coupling constant

- Neighbors chosen randomly in the **localization volume**
- *Constant* number of neighbors $K + 1$

Do not spoil the physics

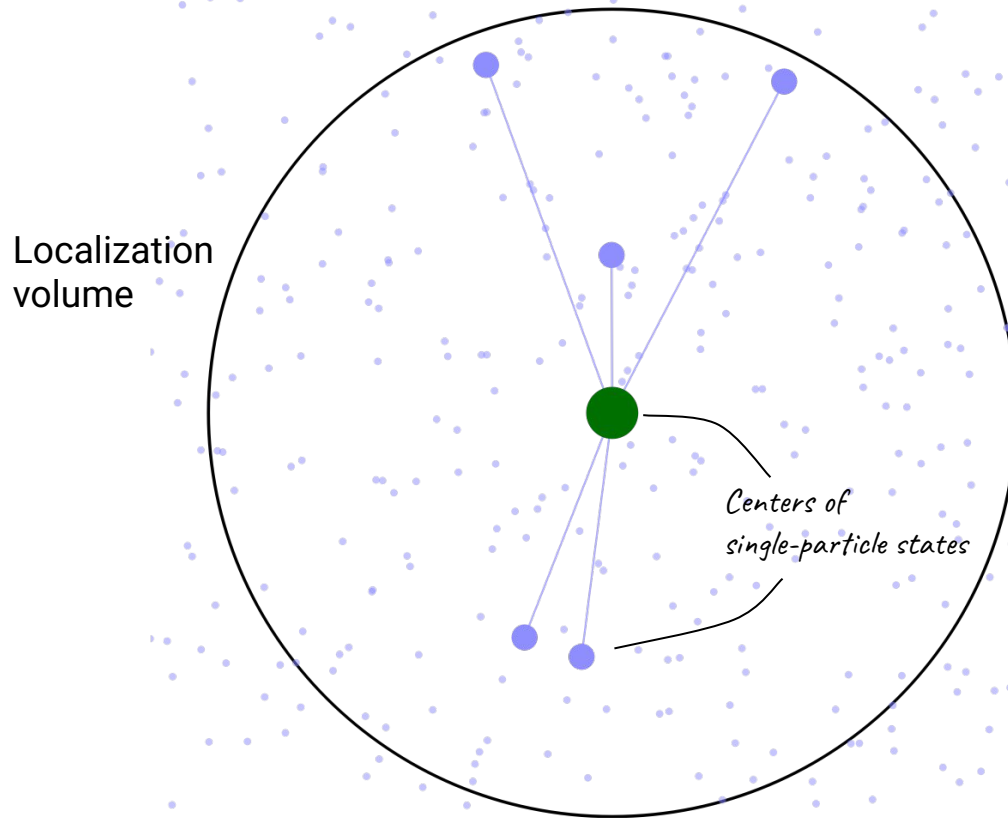
Matrix elements inside localization volume with binary distribution



$$D_{ij} = \begin{cases} E_F \frac{\lambda}{K}, & \text{"strong"}, \\ 0, & \text{"weak"} \end{cases}$$

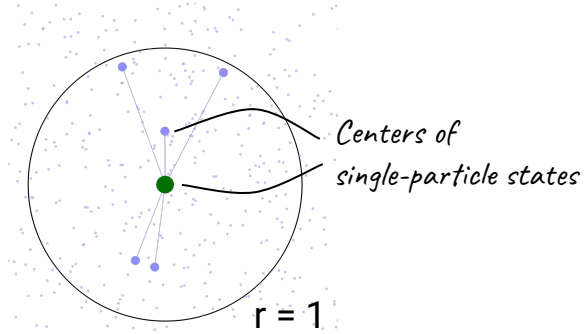
- ✓ notion of a **graph** embedded in real space
- ✓ **locally tree-like** structure of D_{ij}

Structure of the matrix elements

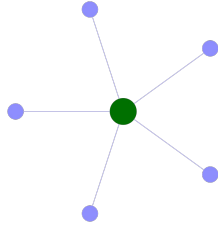


Structure of the matrix elements

Real space:

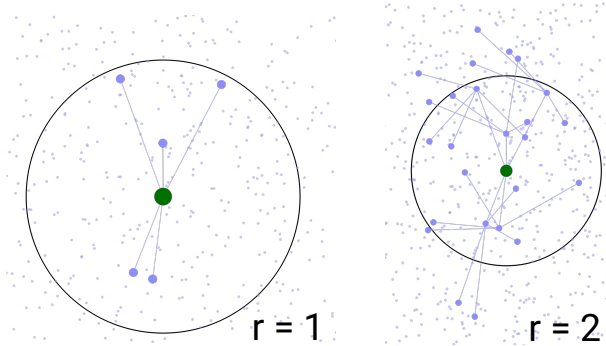


Topology:

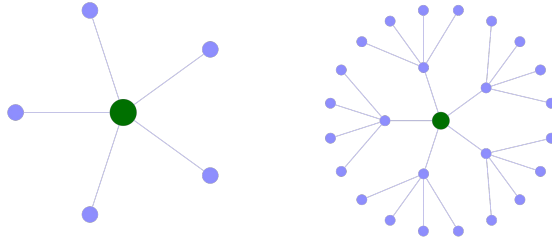


Tree-like structure of the matrix elements

Real space:

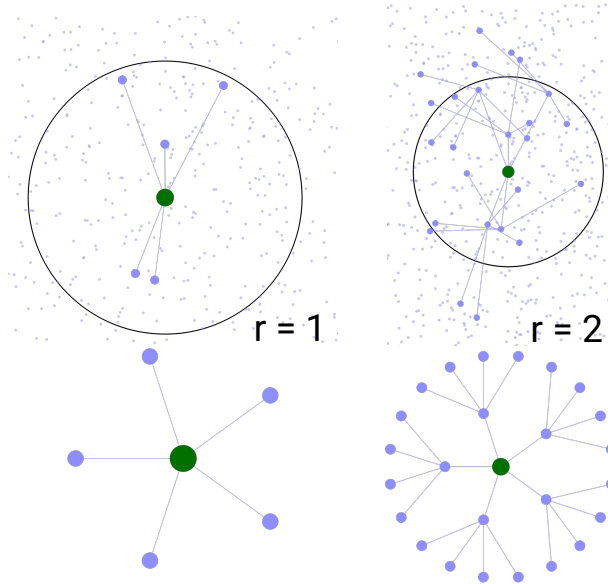


Topology:



Tree-like structure of the matrix elements

Real space:

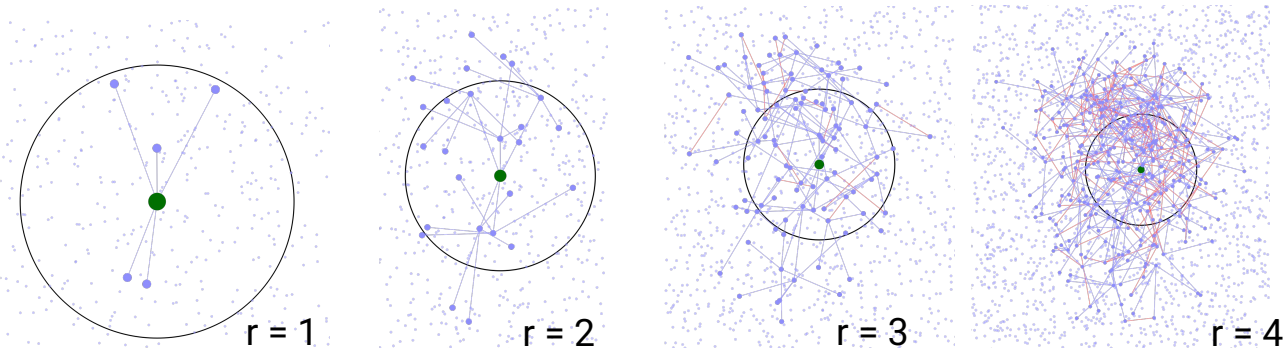


This structure allows for powerful theoretical methods (e.g., Belief Propagation)

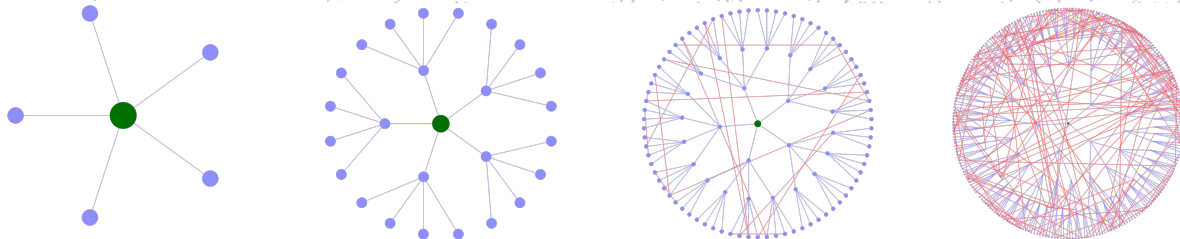
... but this is only at small scales!

Locally tree-like structure of the matrix elements

Real space:



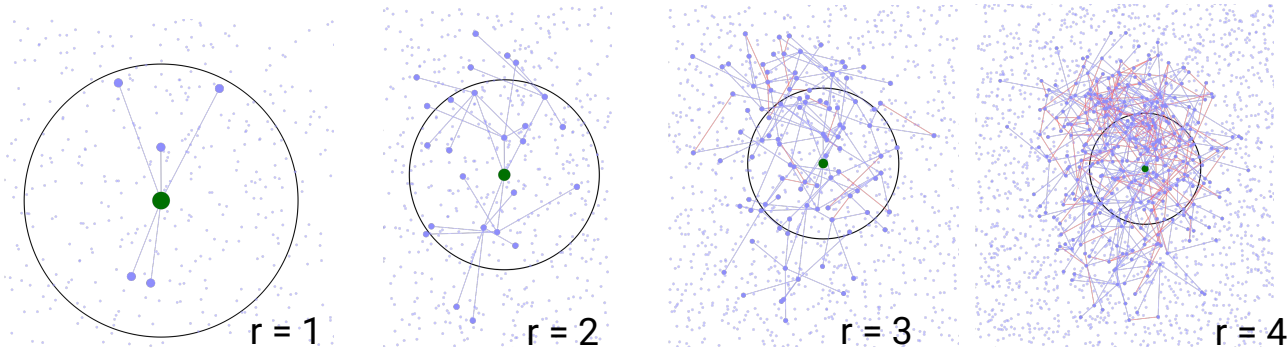
Topology:



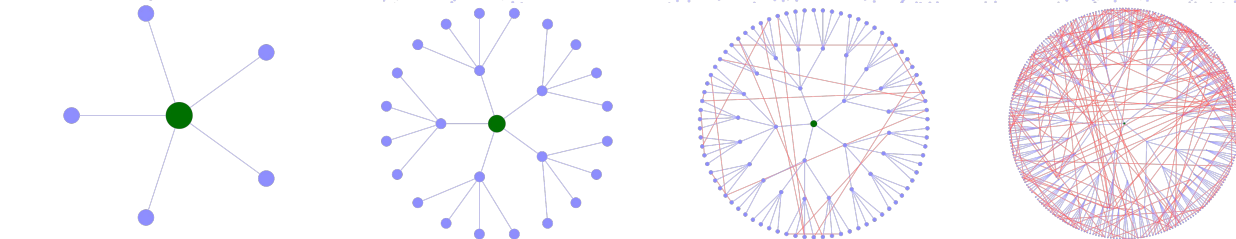
Loops proliferate
only at large
scales

Locally tree-like structure of the matrix elements

Real space:



Topology:

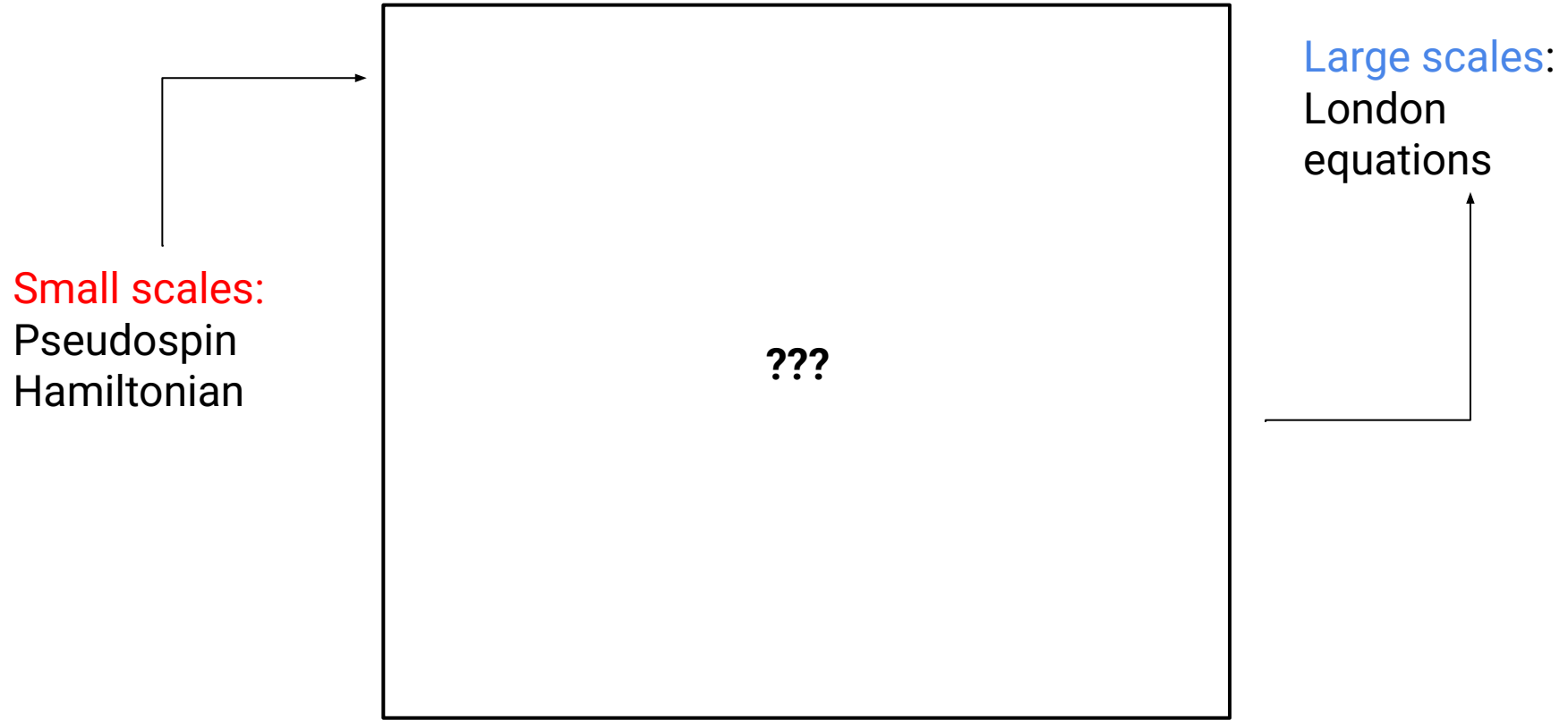


Loops proliferate only at large scales

← Small scales →

← Large scales →

The problem of macroscopic response



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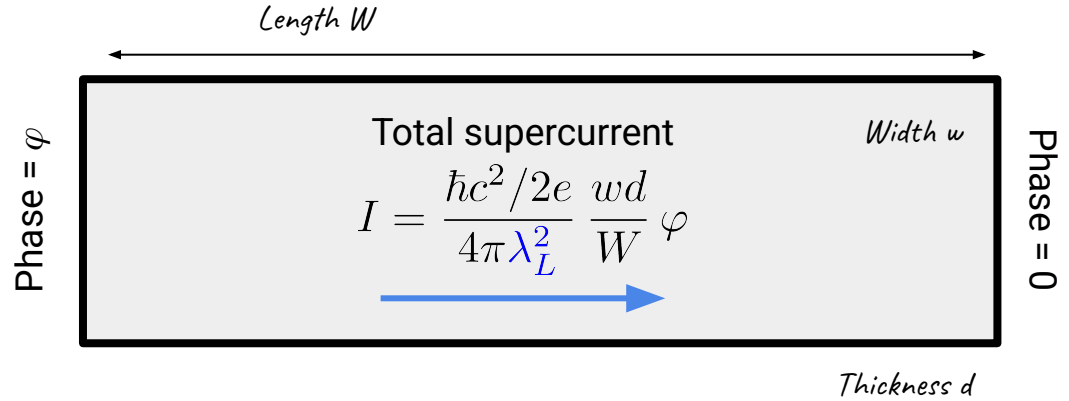
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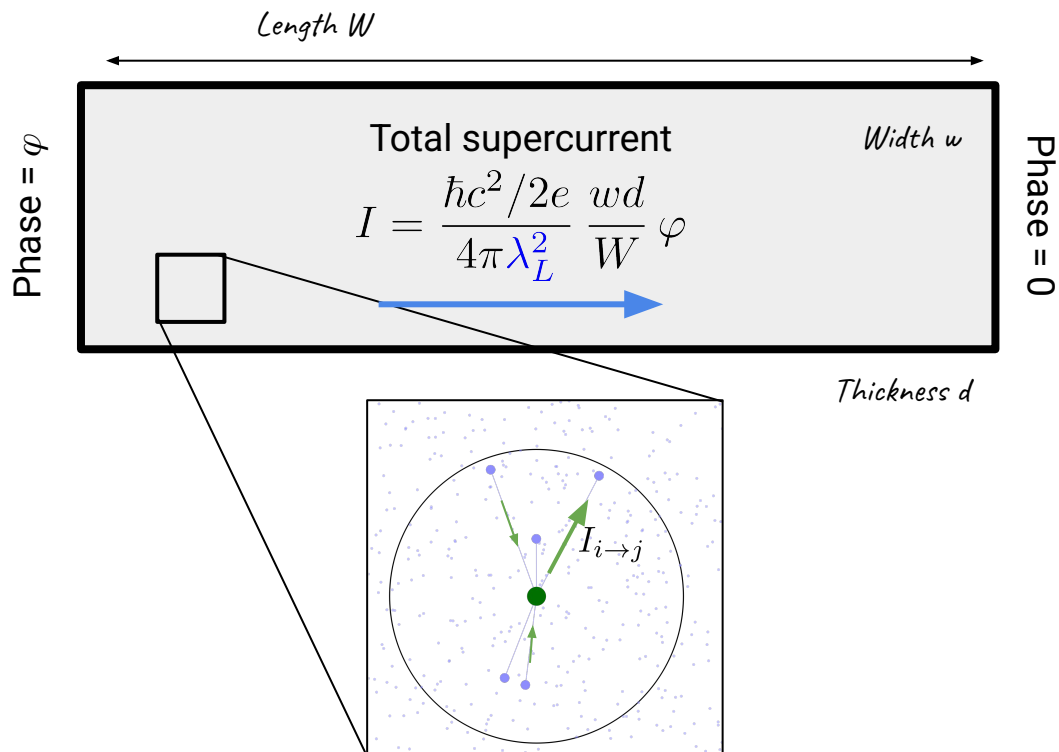
Network model at $\omega = 0$



Network model at $\omega = 0$

$$\sum_j I_{i \rightarrow j} = 0$$

$$\sum_{\text{boundary}} I_{i \rightarrow j} = I$$



Network model at $\omega = 0$

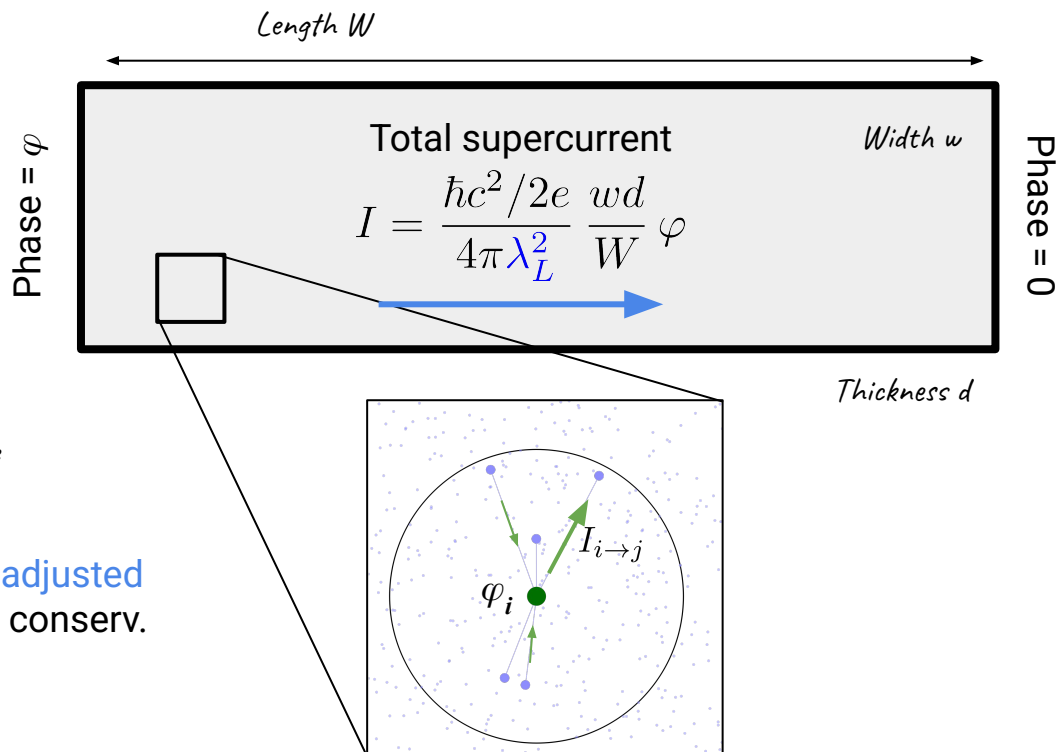
$$\sum_j I_{i \rightarrow j} = 0$$

$$\sum_{\text{boundary}} I_{i \rightarrow j} = I$$

$$I_{i \rightarrow j} = -R_{ij} \frac{\hbar}{2e} (\varphi_j - \varphi_i) \quad \text{Linear response}$$

Random, strongly disordered,
determined from **microscopics**

Phases φ_i **adjusted**
for charge conserv.



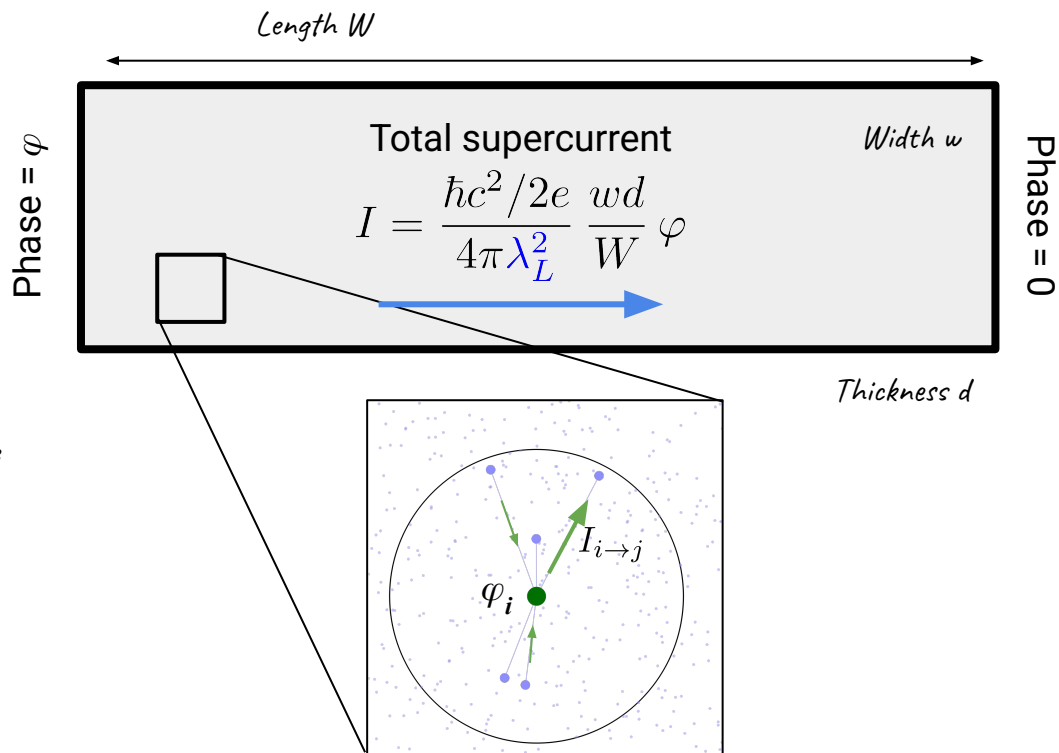
Network model at $\omega = 0$

$$\sum_j I_{i \rightarrow j} = 0$$

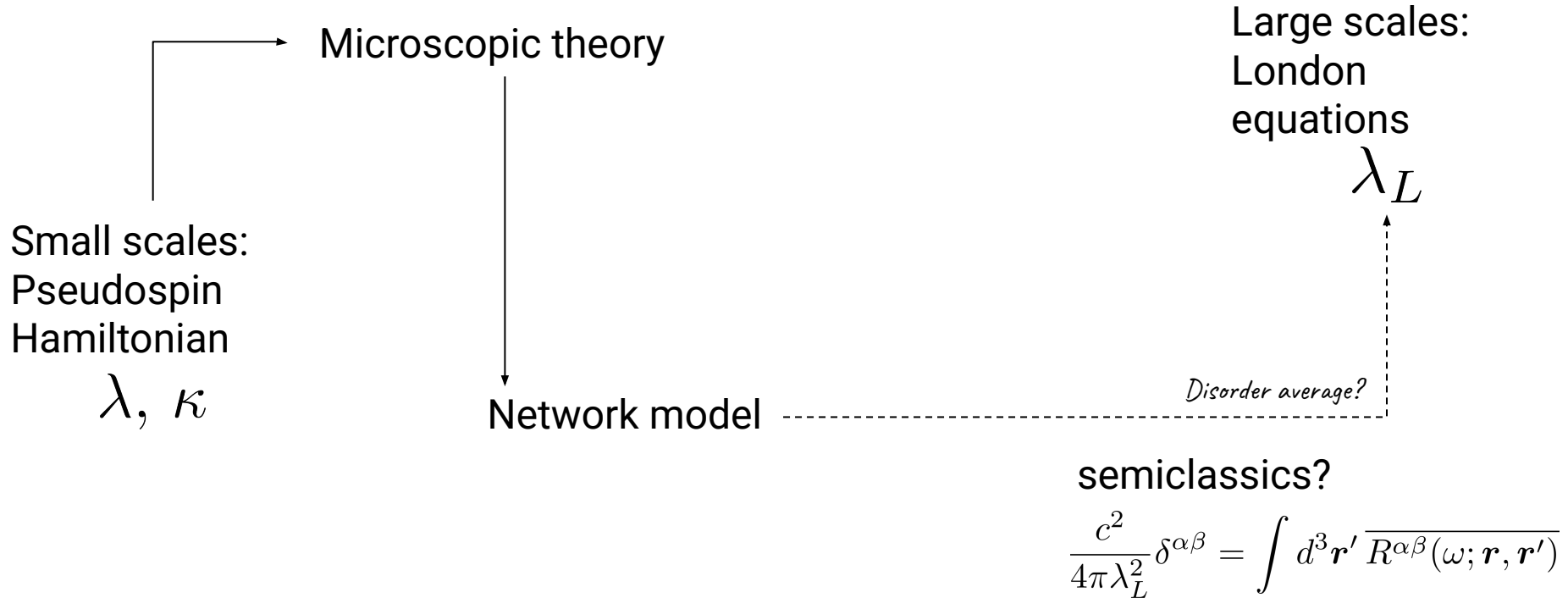
$$\sum_{\text{boundary}} I_{i \rightarrow j} = I$$

$$I_{i \rightarrow j} = -R_{ij} \frac{\hbar}{2e} (\varphi_j - \varphi_i) \quad \text{Linear response}$$

**Applies only at $\omega = 0$.
Derivation: NOT JJ model,
but microscopics (PRB 2024)**



The problem of macroscopic response



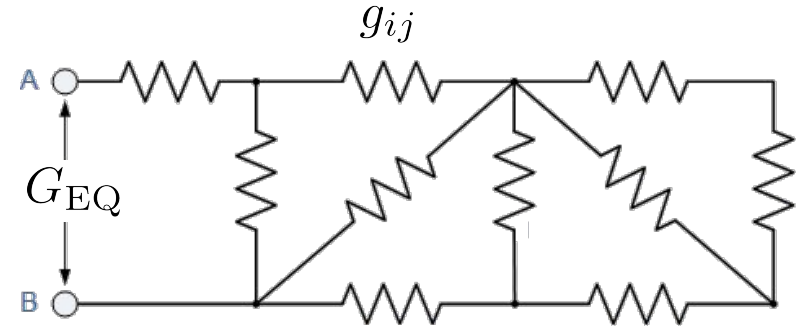
Mathematical equivalence: network of conductances

$$\sum_j I_{i \rightarrow j} = 0 \quad \text{Kirchoff's law}$$

$$\sum_{\text{boundary}} I_{i \rightarrow j} = I \quad \text{Charge conservation}$$

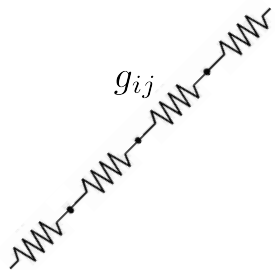
$$I_{i \rightarrow j} = -R_{ij} \frac{\hbar}{2e} (\varphi_j - \varphi_i) \quad \text{Ohm's law (linear response)}$$

$$I = \frac{\hbar c^2 / 2e}{4\pi \lambda_L^2} \frac{wd}{W} \varphi \quad \text{Global Ohm's law}$$



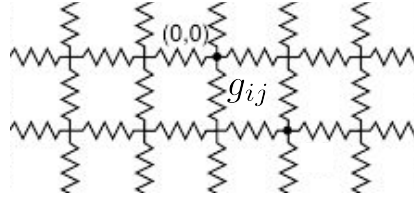
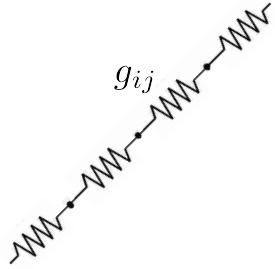
$$G_{\text{EQ}} = \frac{\text{cross section area}}{\text{length}} \sigma_{\text{EQ}}$$

Conductivity in thermodynamic limit



$$\sigma_{\text{EQ}} = \frac{1}{n_{1D}} \frac{1}{1/g_{ij}}$$

Conductivity in thermodynamic limit

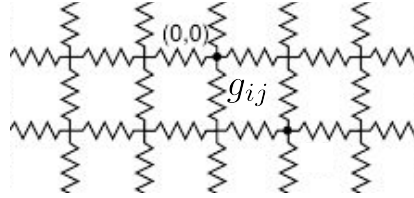
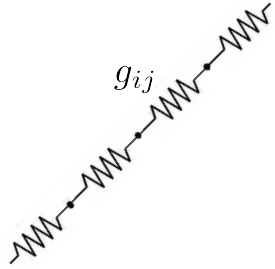


symmetric distrib. of $\ln g_{ij}$

$$\sigma_{\text{EQ}} = \exp \left\{ \overline{\ln g_{ij}} \right\} \overline{n_{2D} (\mathbf{r}_i - \mathbf{r}_j)^2}$$

$$\sigma_{\text{EQ}} = \frac{1}{n_{1D}} \frac{1}{\overline{1/g_{ij}}}$$

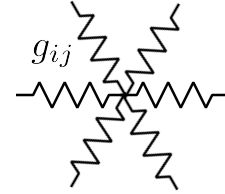
Conductivity in thermodynamic limit



symmetric distrib. of $\ln g_{ij}$

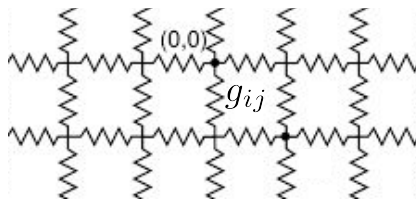
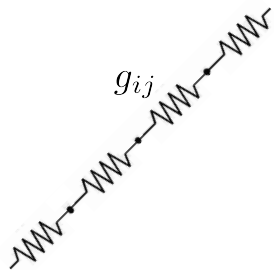
$$\sigma_{\text{EQ}} = \exp \left\{ \overline{\ln g_{ij}} \right\} \overline{n_{2D} (\mathbf{r}_i - \mathbf{r}_j)^2}$$

$$\sigma_{\text{EQ}} = \frac{1}{n_{1D}} \frac{1}{\overline{1/g_{ij}}}$$



Large coordination number Z

$$\sigma_{\text{EQ}} = \frac{\overline{Z}}{2} \overline{g_{ij}} \times \overline{n (\mathbf{r}_i - \mathbf{r}_j)^2}$$



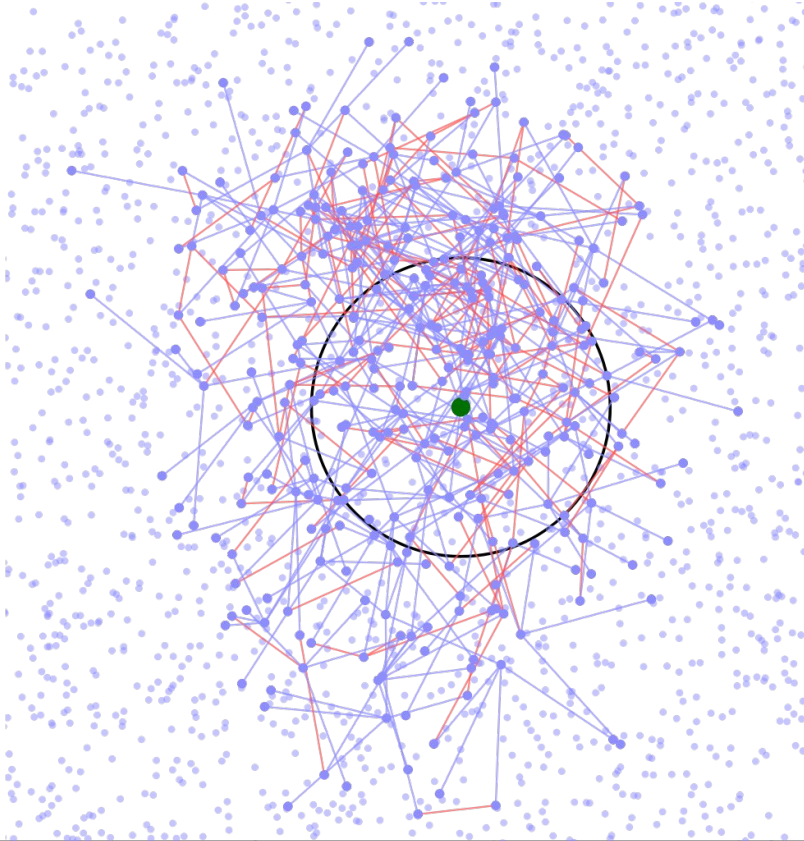
symmetric distrib. of $\ln g_{ij}$



Large coordination
number Z

Conductivity = graph structure + distribution!

Network model:



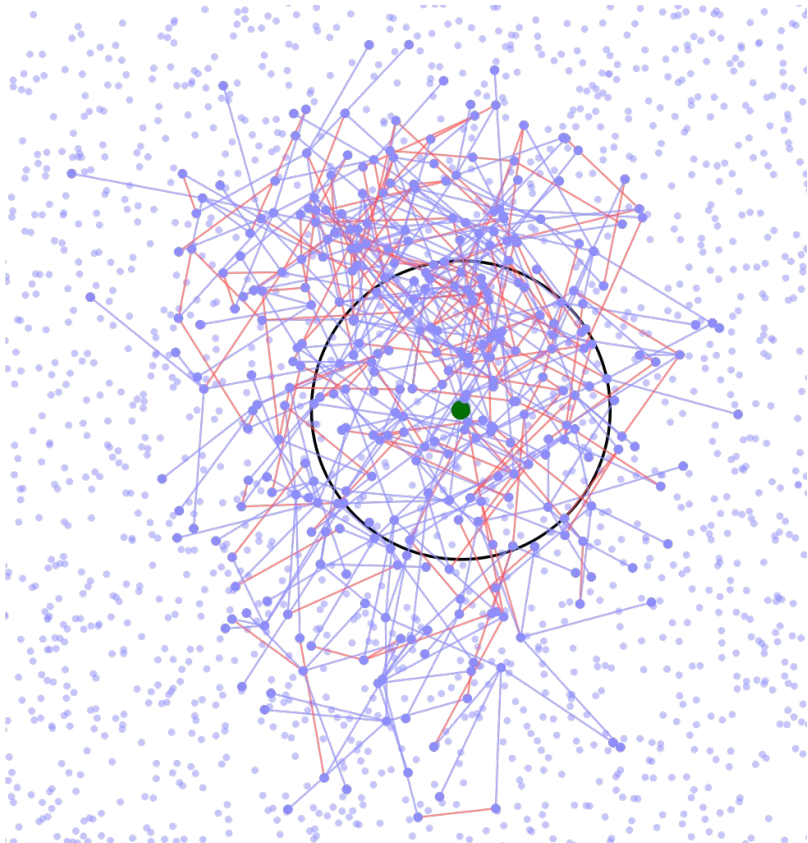
$$\frac{1}{n_{1D}} \frac{1}{\overline{1/g_{ij}}} \quad ?$$

$$\frac{\overline{Z}}{2} \overline{g_{ij}} \times n \overline{(\mathbf{r}_i - \mathbf{r}_j)^2} \quad ?$$

$$\sigma_{\text{EQ}} = \exp \left\{ \overline{\ln g_{ij}} \right\} n_{2D} \overline{(\mathbf{r}_i - \mathbf{r}_j)^2} \quad ?$$

Another weird expression ?

Network model: **Hard Problem**



$\sigma_{\text{EQ}} =$

in semiclassics:

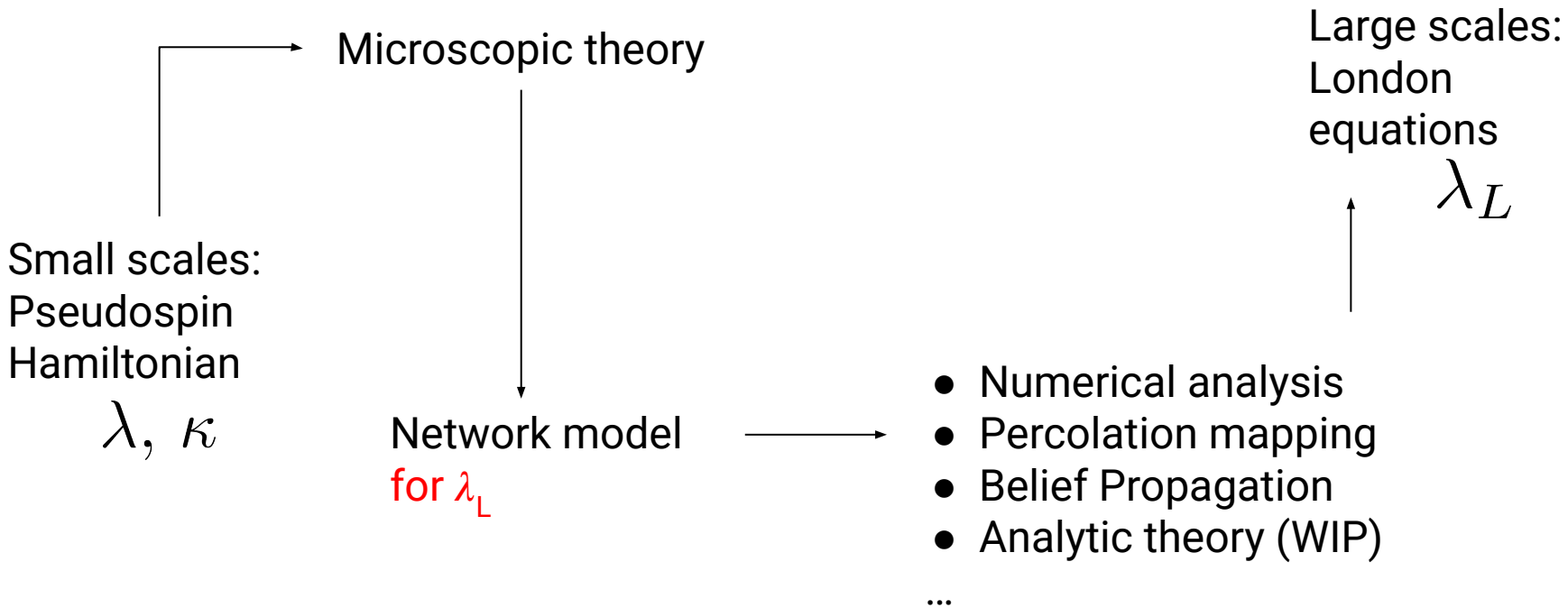
$$\frac{c^2}{4\pi\lambda_L^2}\delta^{\alpha\beta} = \int d^3\mathbf{r}' \overline{R^{\alpha\beta}(\omega; \mathbf{r}, \mathbf{r}')} /$$

$$\frac{\overline{Z}}{2} \overline{g_{ij}} \times n(\mathbf{r}_i - \mathbf{r}_j)^2 \quad (\text{weak disorder})$$

Hard problem! (strong disorder)

A.A. Abrikosov , L.P. Gor'kov, I.E. Dzyaloshinskii, *Quantum Field Theoretical Methods in Statistical Physics*

The problem of macroscopic response



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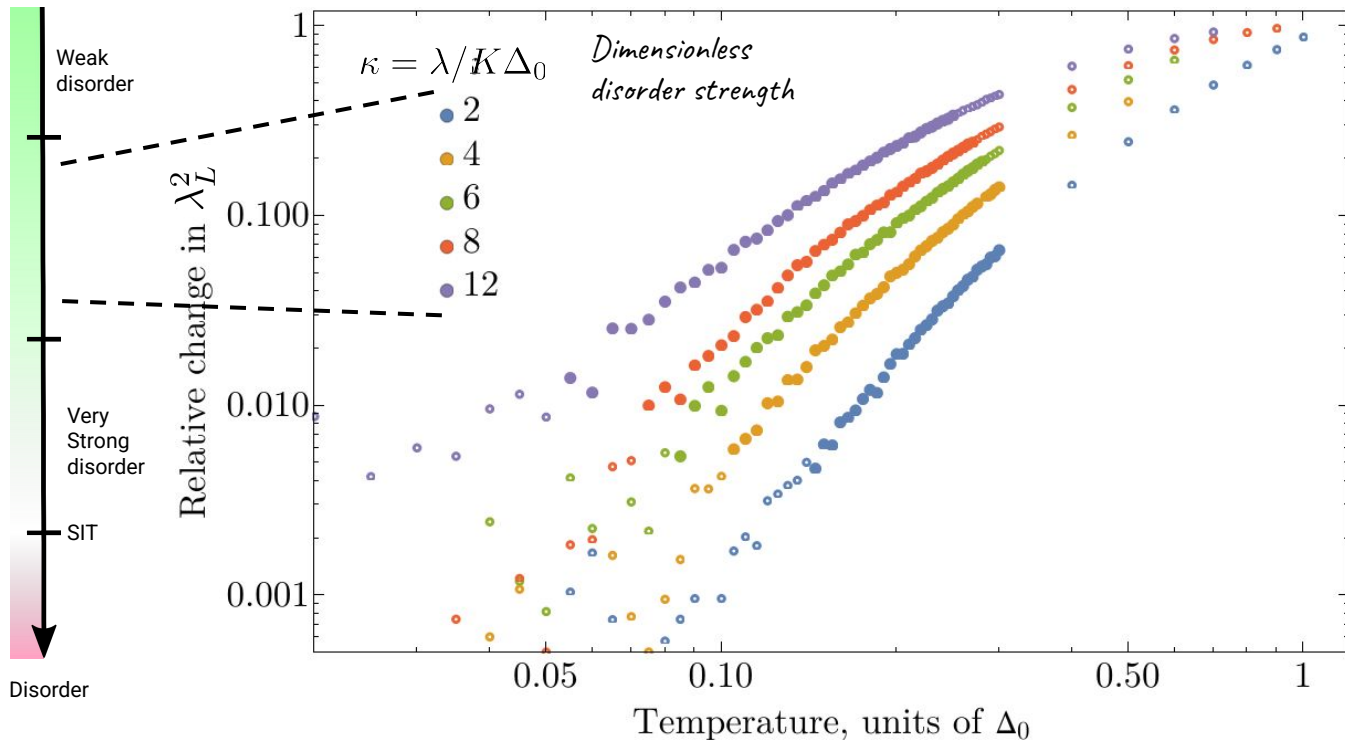
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Temperature and frequency dependence of
electromagnetic response

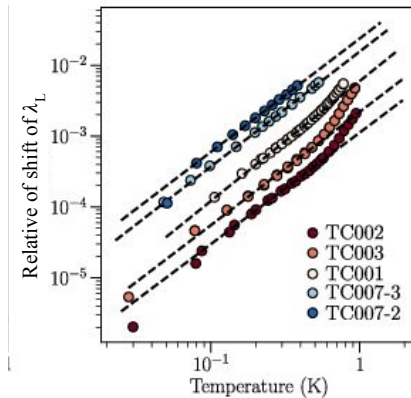
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Phase diagram near SIT
Conclusions and Outlook

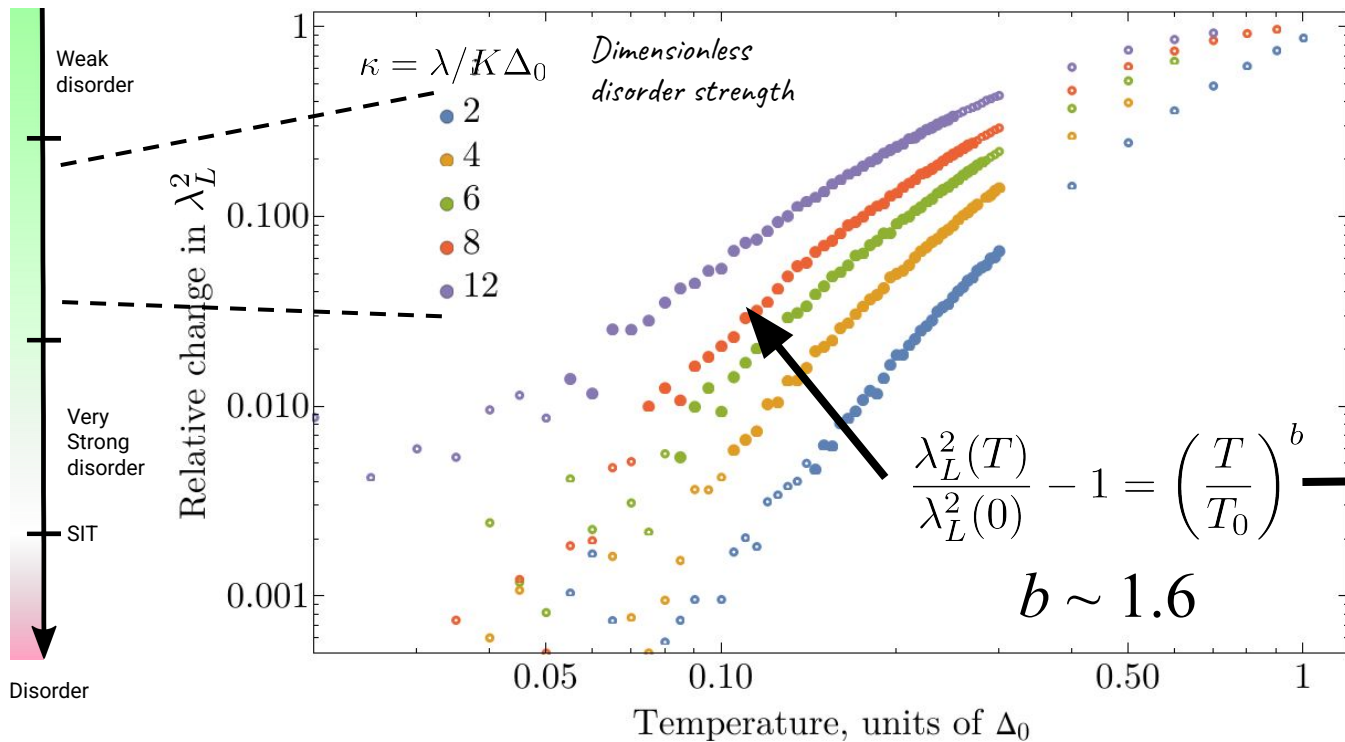
Results for strong disorder



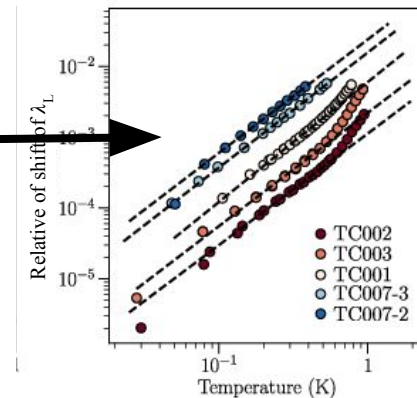
Looks like power law,
similar to experiment



Results for strong disorder



Looks like power law,
similar to experiment



Results for strong disorder ($T \ll \Delta_0$)

$$\frac{\lambda_L^2(T)}{\lambda_L^2} - 1 \propto -T^2 \frac{\partial}{\partial T} \int_0^\infty dh P_T(h) \int_{2h/T}^{+\infty} dx K_0(x)$$

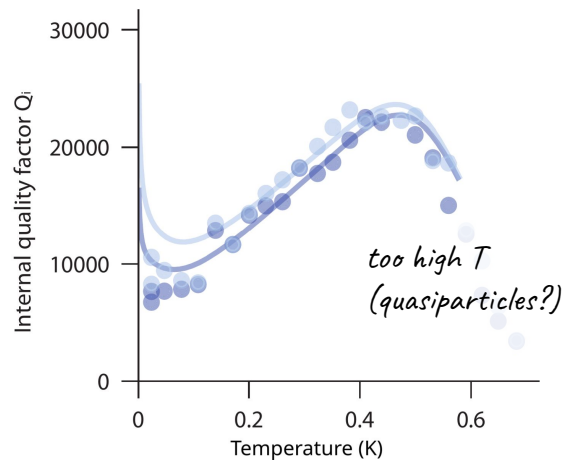
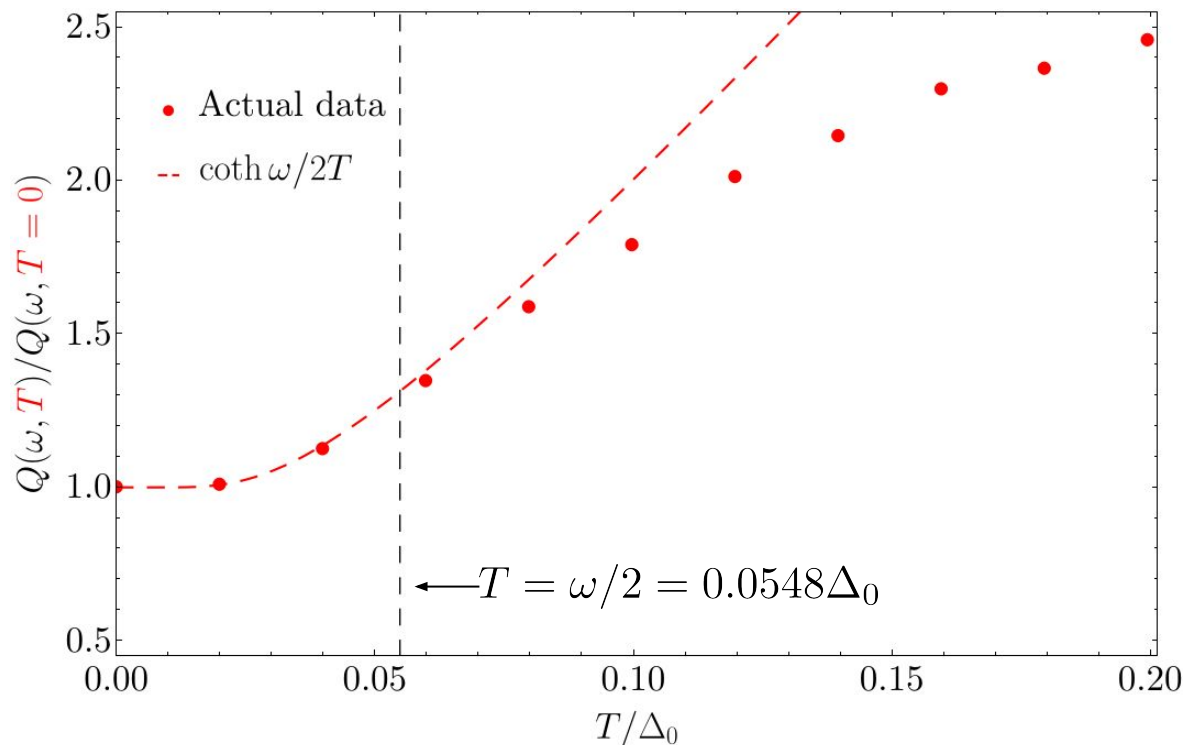
Disorder-dependent coefficient
Modified Bessel function
 Selects low-value tail $\Delta < T$
 Order parameter distribution (T -dependent)

Results for strong disorder ($\omega/2, T \ll \Delta_0$)

$$\begin{aligned}
 \frac{\lambda_L^2(T)}{\lambda_L^2} - 1 &\propto -T^2 \frac{\partial}{\partial T} \int_0^\infty dh P_T(h) \int_{2h/T}^{+\infty} dx K_0(x) \\
 \frac{1}{Q(\omega, T)} &\propto \frac{\omega}{2\Delta_0} \tanh \frac{\omega}{2T} \int_0^{\omega/2} dh P_T(h) \arccos \frac{2h}{\omega}
 \end{aligned}$$

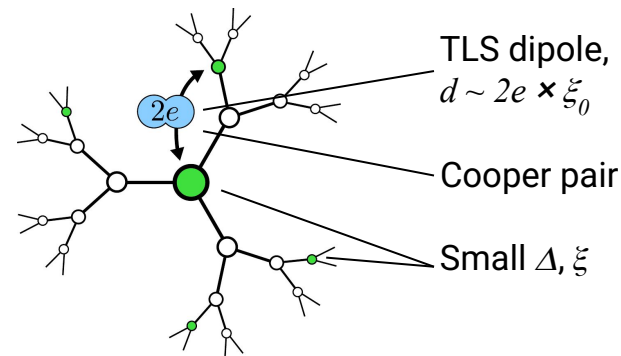
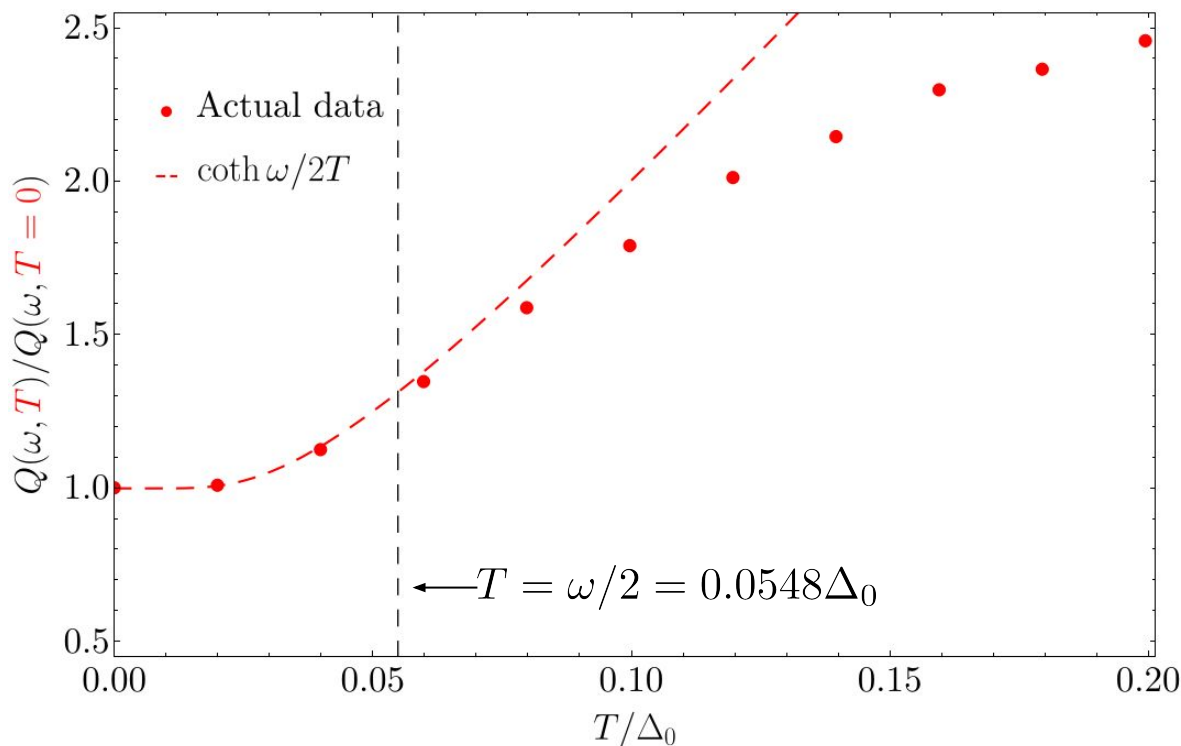
Disorder-dependent coefficient
Modified Bessel function
 Selects low-value tail $\Delta < T$ or $\omega/2$
 Order parameter distribution (T -dependent)

Q(T): temperature-dependent TLS



$K = 10,$
 $\kappa = 10,$
 $\lambda = 0.1373$

Q(T): temperature-dependent TLS

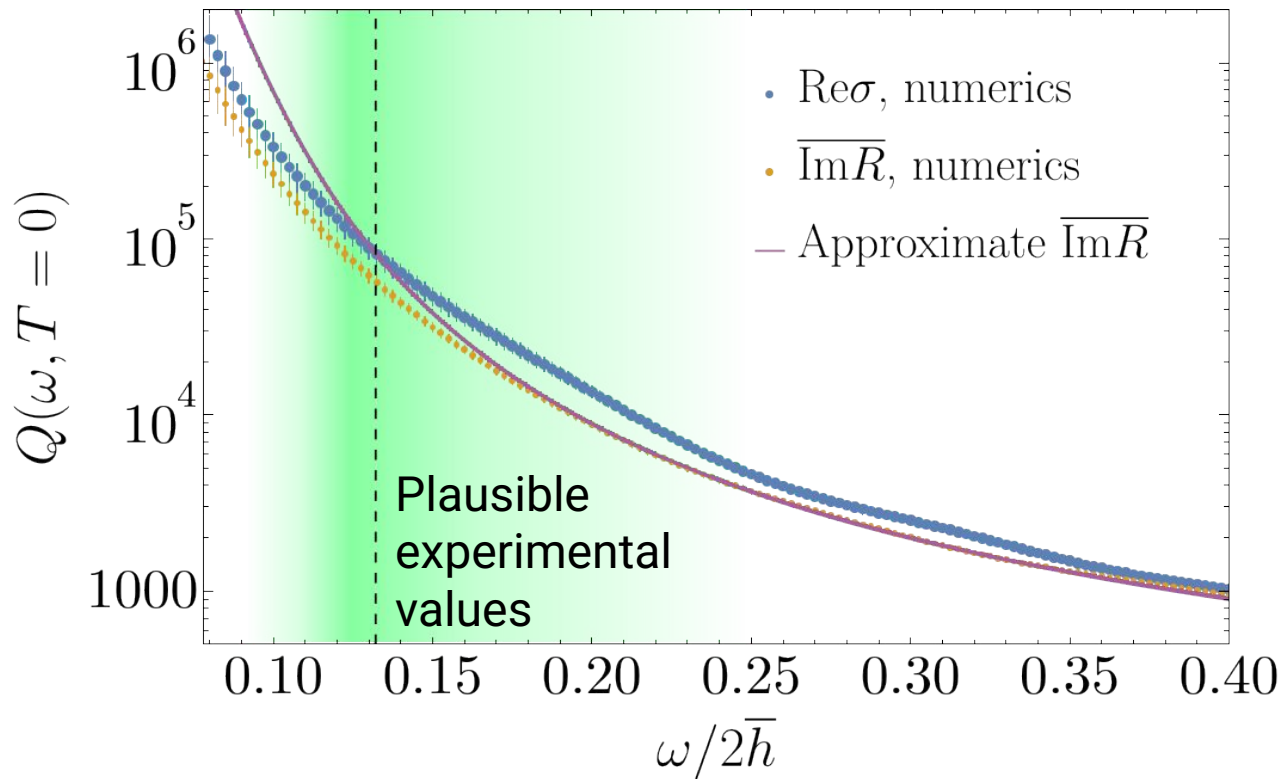


TLS-like interpretation:

1. TLS saturation at low temperature
2. Higher TLS spectral density at higher T

$$\begin{aligned} K &= 10, \\ \kappa &= 10, \\ \lambda &= 0.1373 \end{aligned}$$

Strong frequency dependence of Q



$K = 10,$
 $\kappa = 10,$
 $\lambda = 0.1373$

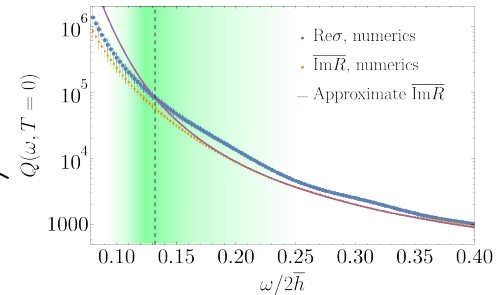
Probing the tails of Δ distribution

$$\frac{1}{Q(\omega, T)} \propto \frac{\omega}{2\Delta_0} \tanh \frac{\omega}{2T} \int_0^{\omega/2} dh P_T(h) \arccos \frac{2h}{\omega}$$



Only measurable quantities!

$$P(h \lesssim \langle h \rangle) \propto \frac{d}{dh} \int_0^{2h} d\omega \frac{h}{\sqrt{h^2 - (\omega/2)^2}} \frac{d}{d\omega} \frac{\coth \omega/2T}{\omega Q(\omega)}$$



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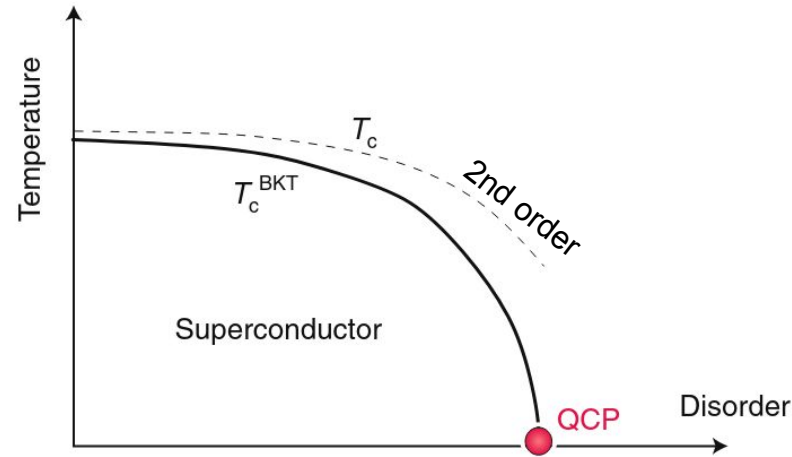
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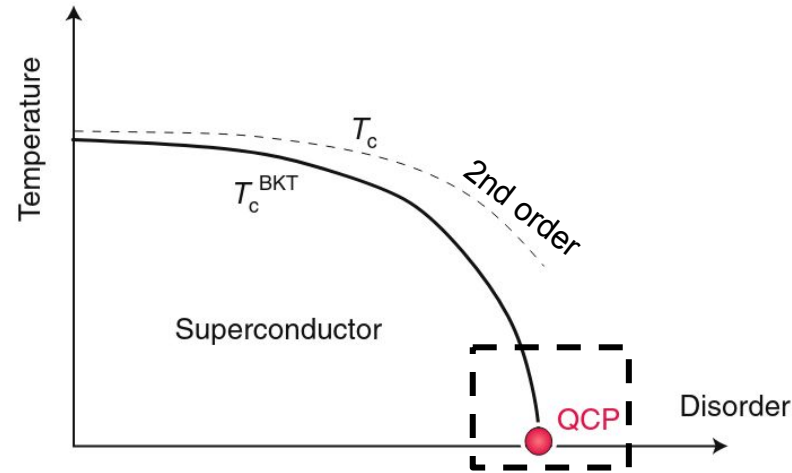
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Phase diagram near SIT
Conclusions and Outlook

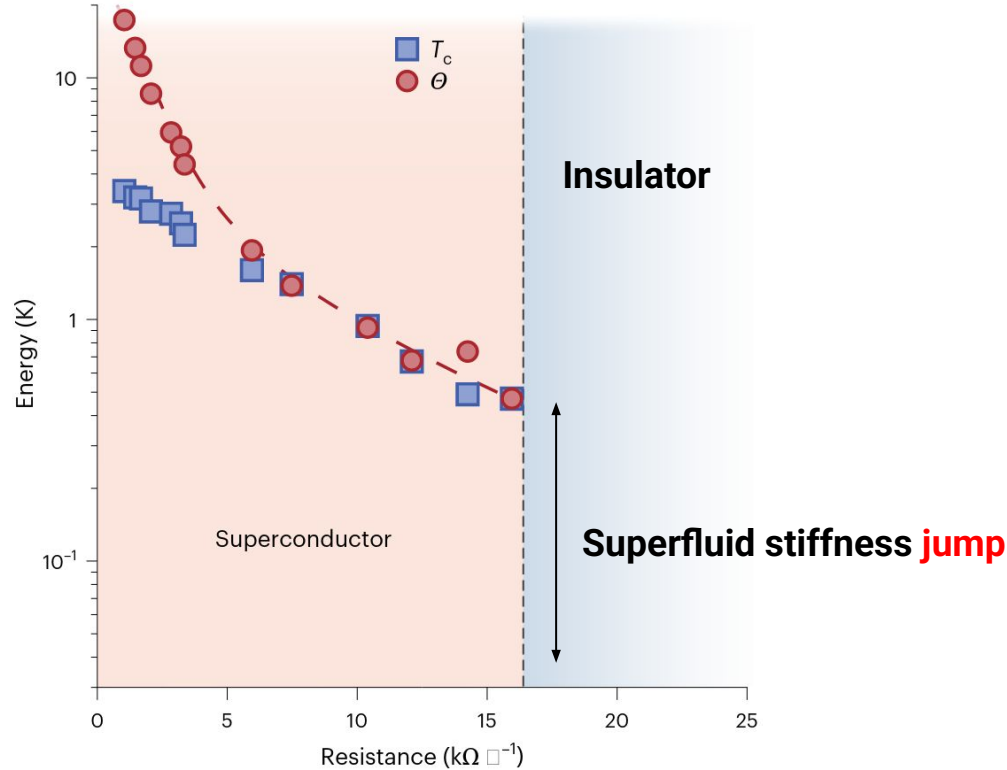
Superconductor-insulator phase diagram



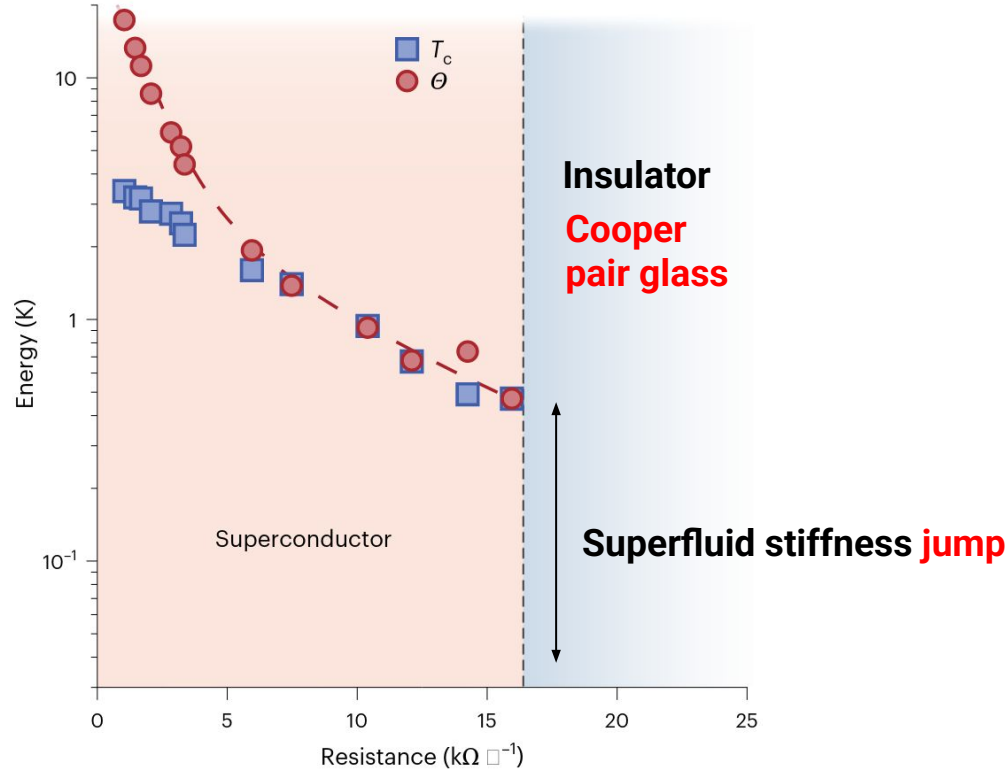
Superconductor-insulator phase diagram



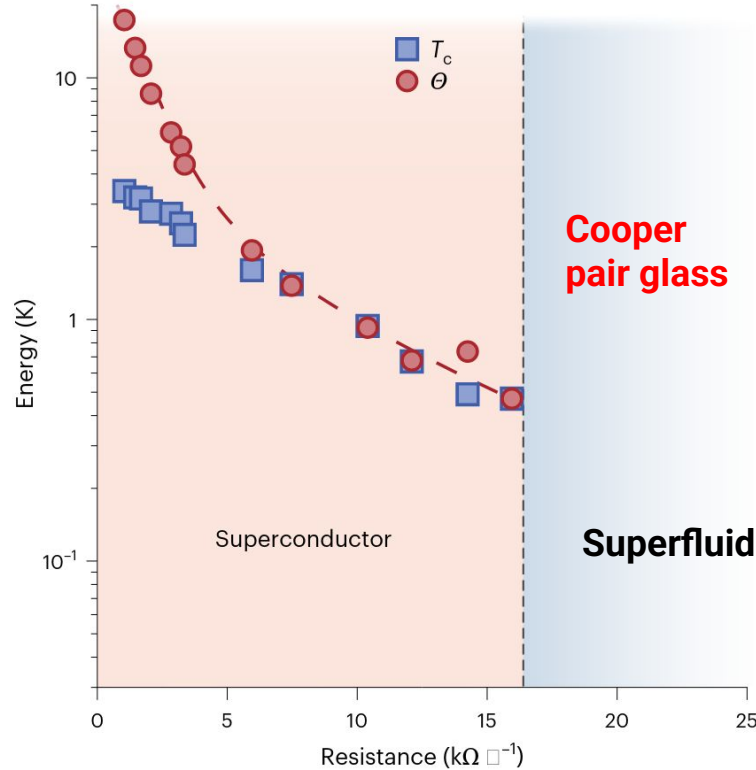
First-order quantum breakdown of supercond.



First-order quantum breakdown of supercond.



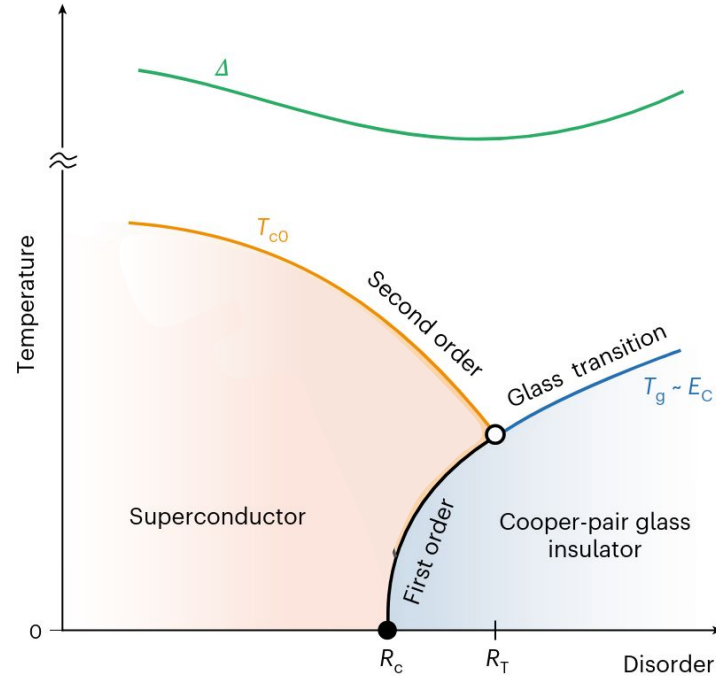
First order: supercond. to **Cooper pair glass**



Incompatible
orders
↓
1st order phase transition

Unconventional shape of the transition line

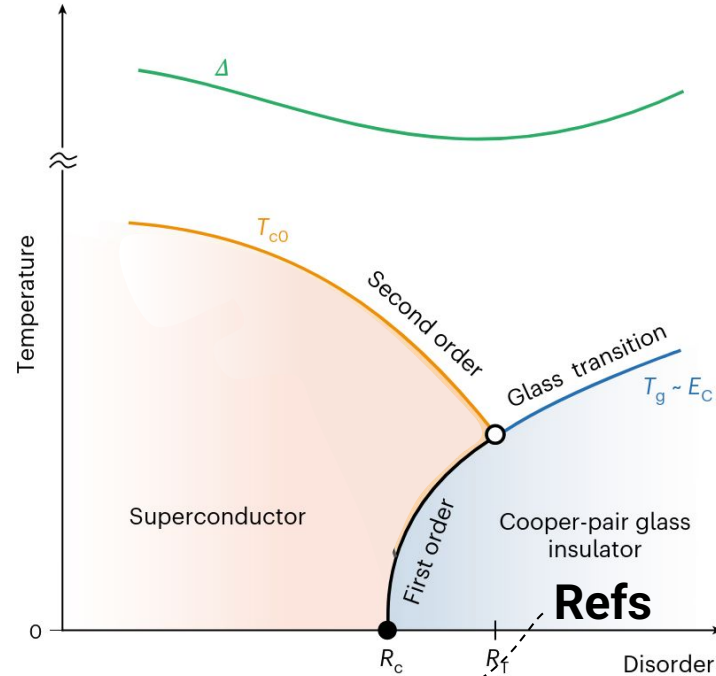
$$F_{\text{SC}}(\text{disorder}, T) = F_{\text{Cooper pair glass}}(\text{disorder}, T)$$



Unconventional shape of the transition line

$$F_{\text{SC}}(\text{disorder}, T) = F_{\text{Cooper pair glass}}(\text{disorder}, T)$$

$$F_{\text{CPG}}(T) - F_{\text{CPG}}(0) \sim -E_C (T/E_C)^4$$



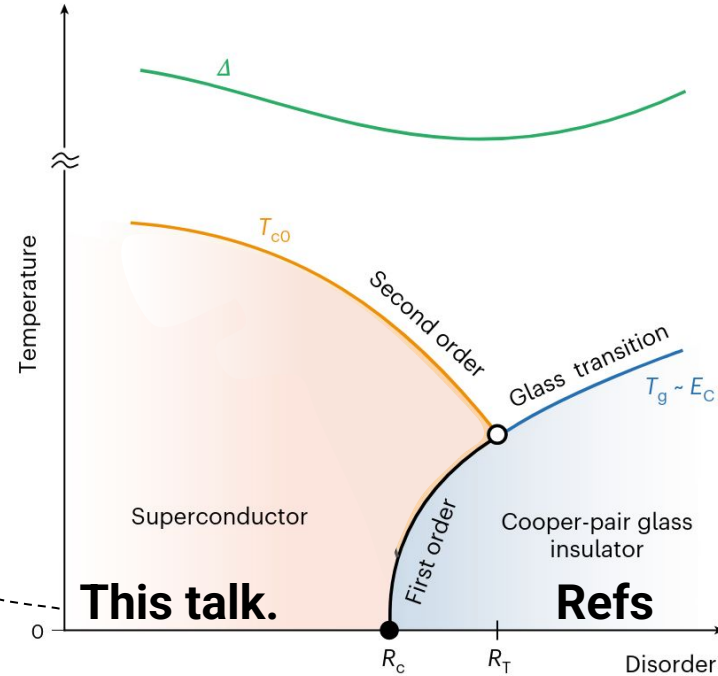
Unconventional shape of the transition line

$$F_{\text{SC}}(\text{disorder}, T) = F_{\text{Cooper pair glass}}(\text{disorder}, T)$$

$$F_{\text{CPG}}(T) - F_{\text{CPG}}(0) \sim -E_C (T/E_C)^4$$

$$F_{\text{SC}}(T) - F_C(0) \propto \exp\{-\Delta/T\} \approx 0$$

$$F_{\text{SC}} \sim -T_0 (T/T_0)^{\beta+1}, \quad \beta \sim 1.6 < 3$$



Unconventional shape of the transition line

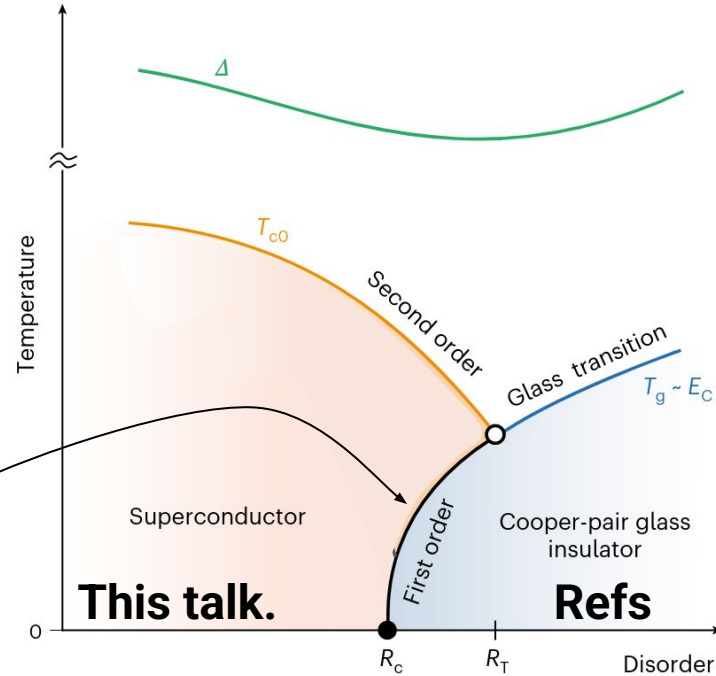
$$F_{\text{SC}}(\text{disorder}, T) = F_{\text{Cooper pair glass}}(\text{disorder}, T)$$

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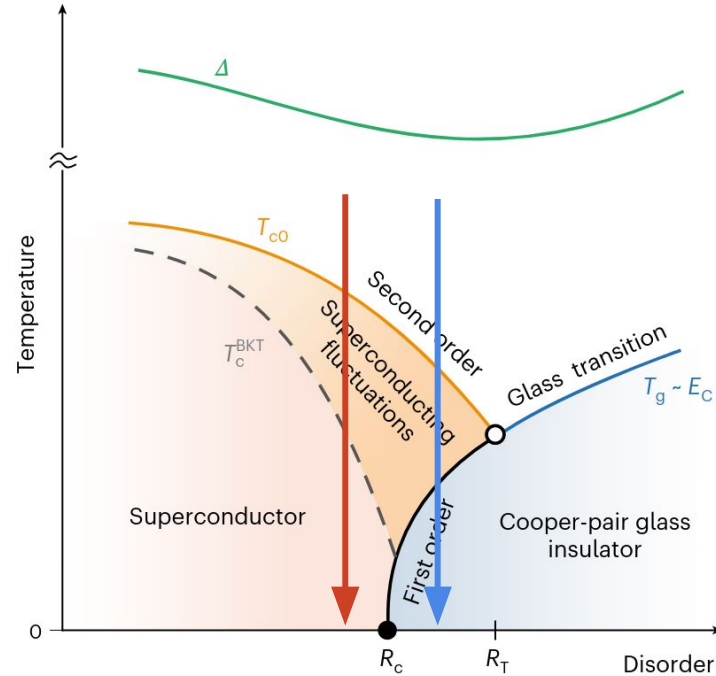
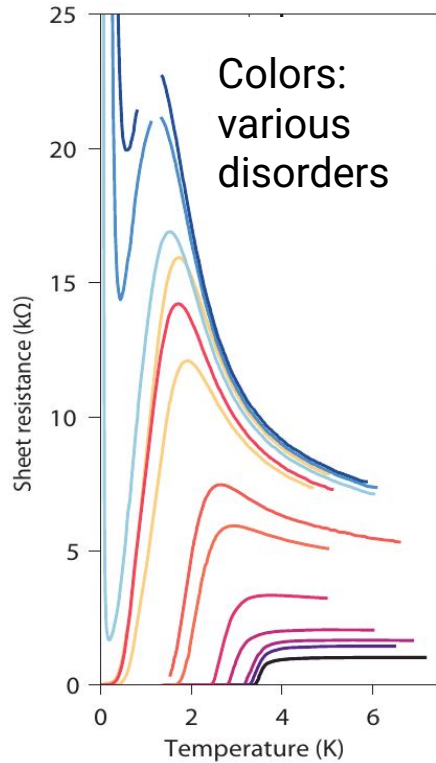
$$F_{\text{SC}}(T) - F_C(0) \propto \exp\{-\Delta/T\} \approx 0$$

$$F_{\text{SC}} \sim -T_0 (T/T_0)^{\beta+1}, \quad \beta \sim 1.6 < 3$$

$$\frac{dT_c}{d\text{disorder}} = -\frac{\partial_{\text{dis}}(F_{\text{CPG}} - F_{\text{SC}})}{\partial_T(F_{\text{CPG}} - F_{\text{SC}})} > 0$$

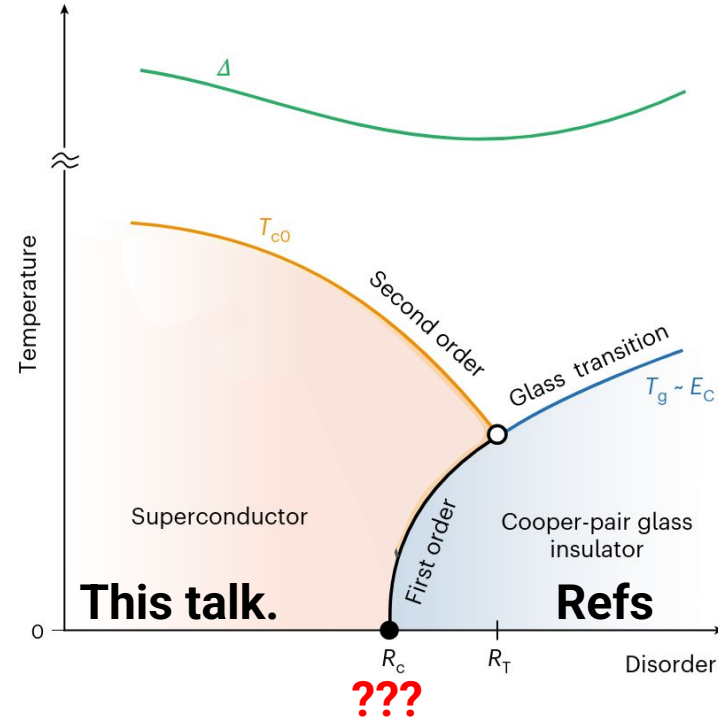


Re-entrant resistance curves



Unconventional shape of the transition line

No good theory!



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A novel physical mechanism:

1. The **inhomogeneity** of the superconducting state creates **bulk collective TLS-like excitations**,

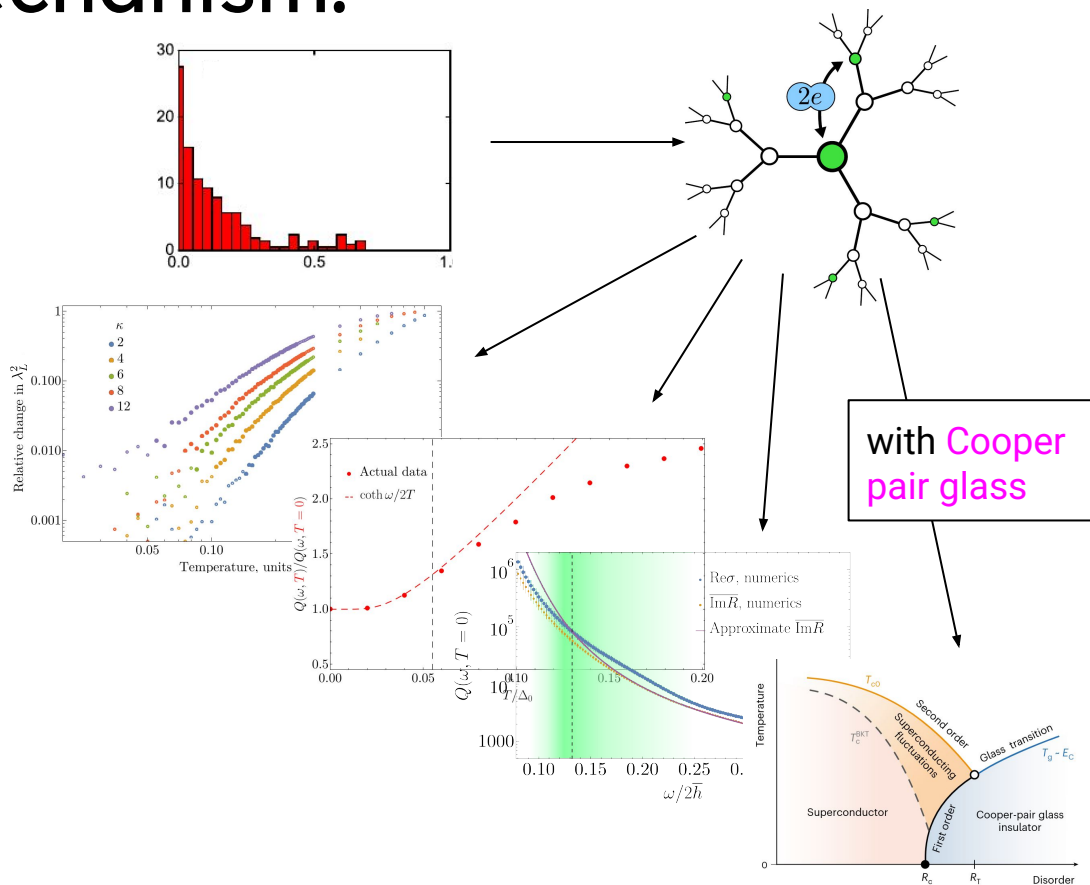
which:

2. cause **power-law increase** of λ_L with T

3. contribute to **dissipation at finite ω**

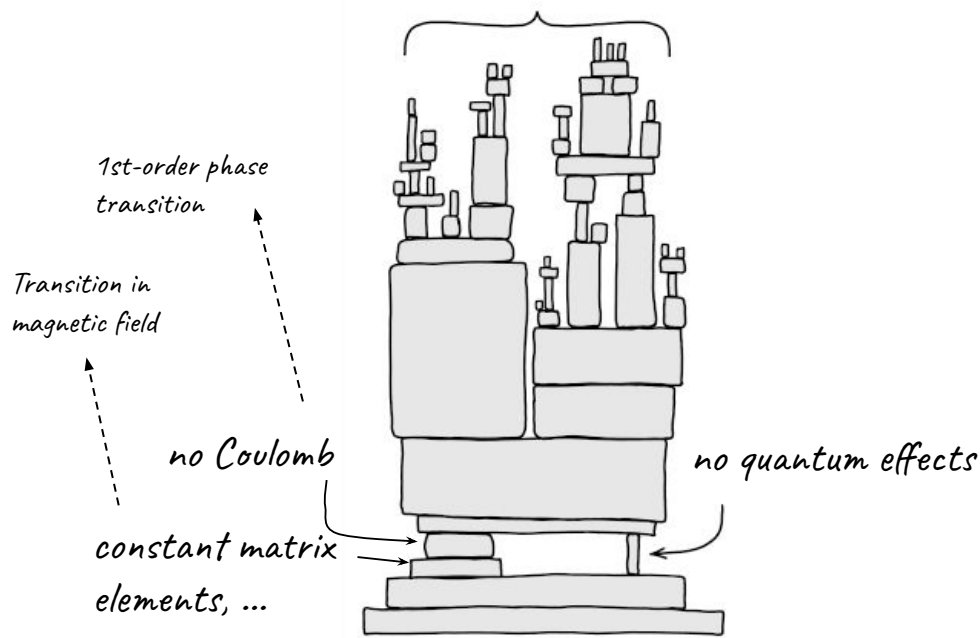
4. enable a probe of the **extreme value statistics of the order parameter**

5. conspire with **competing spin-glass order** to form an **unconventional phase diagram**

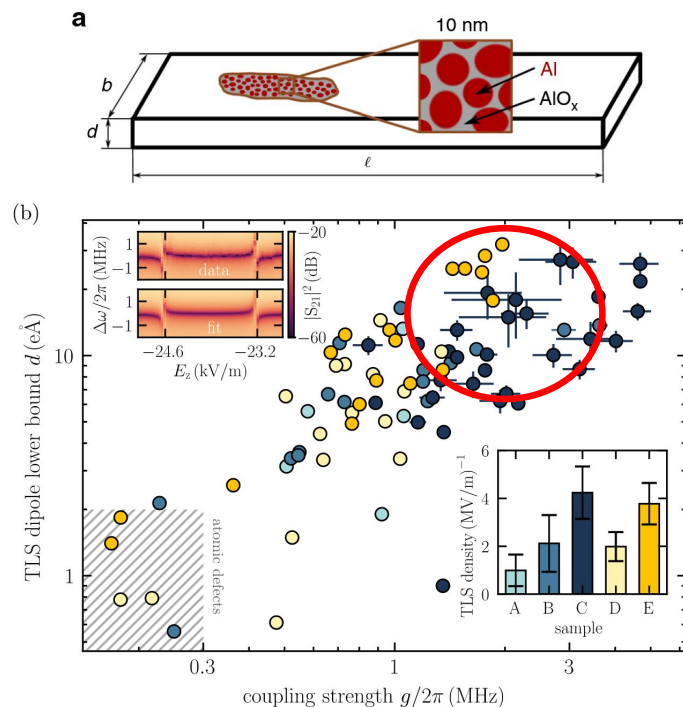


Outlook

This talk: Low-energy theory of strongly disordered superconductors



Granular Aluminum films: similar phenomenology



>2e xnm dipoles