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Transport properties of helical edge states



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Outline

- What are helical edge states?
- Backscattering at a helical edge
 - the role of phonons
 - the role of electron-electron interaction
- Proximity effect with superconductors

QSH effect and helical edge state

• QSH state: two copies of quantum Hall state with time reversal (TR) symmetry

Quantum Hall Effect Quantum Spin Hall Effect



Luttinger-liquid description of helical edge states



kinetic energy:

$$H_0 = -v_F \int dx \left(\psi^\dagger_{R\uparrow} i \partial_x \psi_{R\uparrow} - \psi^\dagger_{L\downarrow} i \partial_x \psi_{L\downarrow}
ight)$$

forward scattering Coulomb interaction terms:

$$H_{int} = \frac{\lambda_4}{2} \int dx \left(\rho_{R\uparrow}^2(x) + \rho_{L\downarrow}^2(x) \right) + \lambda_2 \int dx \rho_{R\uparrow}(x) \rho_{L\downarrow}(x)$$

 $ho_{R\uparrow(L\downarrow)}(x)=\psi^{\dagger}_{R\uparrow(L\downarrow)}(x)\psi_{R\uparrow(L\downarrow)}(x)$ chiral charge density

bosonization (like for spinless LL): $\psi_{R\uparrow(L\downarrow)} \propto \eta_{R\uparrow(L\downarrow)} e^{\mp i\sqrt{4\pi}\phi_{R\uparrow(L\downarrow)}}$

$$H = \frac{v}{2} \int dx \left(g(\partial_x \theta)^2 + \frac{1}{g} (\partial_x \varphi)^2 \right) \quad \begin{array}{l} \text{conjugate momentum:} \\ \Pi_{\varphi} = -\partial_x \theta \end{array}$$

$$v = v_F \sqrt{\left(1 + \frac{\lambda_4}{2\pi v_F}\right)^2 - \left(\frac{\lambda_2}{2\pi v_F}\right)^2} \qquad g = \sqrt{\frac{2\pi v_F + \lambda_4 - \lambda_2}{2\pi v_F + \lambda_4 + \lambda_2}}$$

 $arphi=\phi_{R\uparrow}+\phi_{L\downarrow}$ $heta=\phi_{R\uparrow}-\phi_{L\downarrow}$ non-chiral bosonic phase fields



usual backscattering absent \Rightarrow ballistic

 $V_b \psi^\dagger_\downarrow \psi_\uparrow + h.c.$ (not allowed by TRS)

Xu and Moore, PRB (2006) Wu et al., PRL (2006)

Topological protection in formulae

$$\begin{split} |\psi\rangle &= T |\phi\rangle \qquad [H,T] = 0 \\ \langle\psi|H|\phi\rangle &= \langle\phi|H|\psi\rangle^* = \langle T\phi|TH|\psi\rangle = \\ \langle\psi|HT|\psi\rangle &= \langle\psi|HT^2|\phi\rangle = -\langle\psi|H|\phi\rangle \\ \Rightarrow \langle\psi|H|\phi\rangle = 0 \quad \Box \end{split}$$

Xu and Moore, PRB (2006) Wu et al., PRL (2006)

Protection against backscattering for...

- TRS preserving single particle Hamiltonians
- Elastic processes since Kramers partners degenerate

Experimental evidence of edge states

prediction:

observation:



G = 0.01 e²/h 20 r Πİ T = 0.03 K 107 15 G = 2 e²/ R_{14,23} / kΩ 10 T = 30 mK 10⁶ T = 1.8 K 5 $R_{14,23}/\Omega$ п 0 -1.0 -0.5 0.0 0.5 1.0 10⁵ ---- (V_g - V_{thr}) / V G = 0.3 e²/h ш 10⁴ $G = 2 e^{2}/h$ IV 10³ 0.5 -1.0 -0.5 0.0 1.0 1.5 2.0 $(V_q - V_{thr}) / V$

Bernevig et al., Science 2006

Koenig et al., Science 2007

Presence of Rashba Hamiltonian in the helical liquid

$$\Psi = \begin{pmatrix} \psi_+ \\ \psi_- \end{pmatrix} \qquad \overleftarrow{\qquad} +$$

$$H_R = \frac{1}{2} \int \Psi^{\dagger} \left(\{ \alpha_1, p \} + \{ \alpha_3, p^3 \} \right) \sigma_y \Psi$$

linear Rashba: α_1 qubic Rashba: α_3

 $[H_R,T] = 0 \implies$ no elastic single-particle scattering

Can Rashba-interaction do anything ?

HLL in presence of Rashba-impurity and phonon-bath



J.C. Budich, F. Dolcini, PR, B. Trauzettel, PRL 2012

The helical wire with Rashba SOC and phonons

$$\begin{split} H_{\rm hl} &= \int \Psi^{\dagger} p \sigma_z \Psi \\ H_R &= \frac{1}{2} \int \Psi^{\dagger} \left(\{ \alpha_1, p \} + \{ \alpha_3, p^3 \} \right) \sigma_y \Psi \\ H_p &= \frac{1}{2} \int \Pi_d^2 + c^2 d'^2 \\ H_{\rm ep} &= \lambda \int \Psi^{\dagger} \sigma_0 \Psi d' \\ H &= H_{\rm hl} + H_p + H_R + H_{\rm ep} = H_0 + H_I \end{split}$$

Results for inelastic single electron backscattering





Interference of two scattering processes

Results up to second order in H_I

$$\begin{split} M_{\rm if} &= \langle p_f -, q_{\rm ph} | H_I G_0 H_I | p_i + \rangle \\ M_{\rm if} &= 0 \ \text{ due to linear Rashba +HLL-dispersion} & \text{ for } \alpha_1 \text{-Rashba} \\ |M_{\rm if}|^2 &= \frac{\lambda^2 c}{16\pi} \tilde{\alpha}_3^2 \left(q_{\rm ph} + p_f^- - p_i^+ \right) |q_{\rm ph}|^5 & \text{ for } \alpha_3 \text{-Rashba} \\ I_{\rm BS} &= \frac{\alpha_3^2 \lambda^2 e}{672\pi^2 c^5} V^7 & \text{ with Golden-Rule approach at T=0} \end{split}$$

We have shown that

- inelastic single particle backscattering not forbidden by symmetry
- most relevant contribution vanishes
- robustness of quantized conductivity beyond topological protection

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Integrating out phonons exactly will change $\, arphi \,$ propagator

$$\left(G_e^{-1}(k,\omega)\right)_{\varphi\varphi} \to \left(G_e^{-1}(k,\omega)\right)_{\varphi\varphi} - \frac{\lambda^2 k^4}{\omega^2 - c^2 k^2}$$

Martin and Loss, PRB (1994) in imaginary-time

Doing a calculation on Keldysh contour shows absence of leading order backscattering in α_1 -Rashba even with Coulomb interactions

J.C. Budich, F. Dolcini, PR, B. Trauzettel, PRL 2012

RG treatment of the Rashba impurity

F. Crepin, J.C. Budich, F. Dolcini, PR, B. Trauzettel, arXiv:1205.0374 Helical liquid:

$$\mathcal{H}_0 = \frac{v}{2\pi} \int dx \, \left[K(\partial_x \theta)^2 + \frac{1}{K} (\partial_x \phi)^2 \right] \quad K \le 1 \quad \text{LL-Parameter}$$

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Linear Rashba-term:

$$H_R = \int dx \ \alpha(x) \left[(\partial_x \Psi_+^{\dagger}) \Psi_- - \Psi_+^{\dagger} (\partial_x \Psi_-) \right] (x) + \text{H.c.}$$

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 \Rightarrow bosonize

$$H_R = i\kappa_+\kappa_- \int dx \frac{\alpha(x)}{\pi a} \left(\frac{2\pi a}{L}\right)^K \times \\ \times : \partial_x \theta(x) \left(: e^{-i2\phi(x)} : e^{i2k_F x} + : e^{i2\phi(x)} : e^{-i2k_F x}\right):$$

Generated two-particle backscattering term (in a point):

$$H_{2p}^{\text{in}} = \gamma_{2p}^{\text{in}} \left[(\partial_x \Psi_+^{\dagger}) \Psi_+^{\dagger} (\partial_x \Psi_-) \Psi_- \right] (x_0) + \text{H.c.}$$



generic form (most relevant):

Wu et al. PRL 2006 Ström et al. PRL 2010

• conserves time-reversal symmetry

Expand partition function to second-order in Rashba and first order in two-particle term with coupling $~\gamma_{2p}^{in}$

$$\mathcal{Z} = \mathcal{Z}_0 \left[1 - \int_0^\beta d\tau \ \langle \hat{\mathcal{H}}_R(\tau_1) \rangle_0 + \frac{1}{2} \int_0^\beta d\tau_1 \int_0^\beta d\tau_2 \ \langle \mathcal{T}\hat{\mathcal{H}}_R(\tau_1)\hat{\mathcal{H}}_R(\tau_2) \rangle_0 + o(\alpha^3) \right]$$

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Flow-equation based on perturbative RG approach:

 $a
ightarrow a' = (1+d\ell)a$ + scale Invariance of partition function



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• backscattering conductance:

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Conclusions:

- Two-particle backscattering generated by Rashba interaction in 2nd order
- Term becomes relevant if K < 1/4, Wu et al. 2006, Ström et al. 2010
- As K ightarrow 1, $\delta G \sim T^4$

Homogeneous Rashba-interaction in the HLL

• Spin-rotation in HgTe-based edge states

Superconducting proximity effect

2D-treatment of edge states within 4-band model of HgTe QWs

Bernevig et al., Science (2006), Rothe et al., NJP (2010)

$$H = H_0 + \sum_{\alpha\beta=\pm} \int dx \, \Gamma_{\alpha\beta}(x) \psi_{\alpha}(x) \psi_{\beta}(x+a) + \text{h.c.}$$

P. Virtanen, PR, PRB 2012





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P. Virtanen, PR, PRB 2012





Scattering at scalar potential $V_{bs} = (\rho_{\uparrow} + \rho_{\downarrow})V$

e-e interaction only perturbatively

 $\delta G \sim T^4$ T. Schmidt et al., PRL (2012)

Introduction

2D-TI edge states & s-wave superconductor



[Kane & Mele, *PRL* (2005); Bernevig et al., *Science* (2006); König et al., *Science* (2007)]

Basic s-wave SC coupling [Fu and Kane, PRL (2008)] A.M. Black-Schaffer, PRB 2011

$$H = \int \mathrm{d}x \left[v_F(\psi_+^{\dagger} \partial_x \psi_+ - \psi_-^{\dagger} \partial_x \psi_-) + \Gamma_{+-}(x) \psi_+(x) \psi_-(x) + \mathrm{h.c.} \right]$$

Q: Effects in addition to Γ_{+-} (and can you observe them)?

Cooper pair injection to the same mode?



Effective Hamiltonian: Perturbative RG

$$\begin{split} H_{\text{eff}} &= H_0 + H_T + H_{T2} \\ H_T &= \sum_{\alpha = \pm, \sigma' = \uparrow, \downarrow} \int \mathrm{d}x \, \mathrm{d}^3 r' \, t_{\alpha \sigma'}(x, \vec{r}') \psi^{\dagger}_{\alpha}(x) \psi_{S \sigma'}(\vec{r}') + \text{h.c.} \\ H_{T2} &= \sum_{\alpha \beta} \int \mathrm{d}x \, \Gamma_{\alpha \beta}(x) \psi_{\alpha}(x) \psi_{\beta}(x + a_0) + \text{h.c.} \end{split}$$

Scaling equations, $x \mapsto xe^{t}$

$$egin{aligned} t_{lpha\sigma'}(I=0) &= t^0_{lpha\sigma'}\,, & rac{\mathrm{d}t_{lpha\sigma'}}{\mathrm{d}I} &= [2-\eta_1]t_{lpha\sigma'}\ &\Gamma_{lphaeta}(I=0) &= 0\,, & rac{\mathrm{d}\Gamma_{lphaeta}}{\mathrm{d}I} &= [2-\eta_{2,lphaeta}]\Gamma_{lphaeta} + S_{lphaeta}(I)\ &\eta_1 &= (g+g^{-1})/4 & \eta_{2,lphalpha} &= g+g^{-1}\ &\eta_{2,lpha,-lpha} &= g^{-1} \end{aligned}$$

Tunnelling elements

$$t_{\alpha\sigma'}(x,\vec{r}') \equiv \langle \alpha,x|\hat{h}_T|\sigma',\vec{r}'\rangle$$

Tunnelling assumed to be ...

- Local (in real space; e.g. tight-binding model): $\langle \sigma \vec{r} | \hat{h}_T | \sigma' \vec{r}' \rangle \propto \delta(\vec{r} - \vec{r}')$
- Spin-conserving: $\langle \sigma \vec{r} | \hat{h}_T | \sigma' \vec{r}' \rangle \propto \delta_{\sigma \sigma'}$
- Time-reversal invariant: $\mathfrak{T}\hat{h}_T\mathfrak{T}^{-1} = \hat{h}_T$



Effective 2-particle tunnelling

Solution leads to an effective low-energy model.

- New cutoff $a\gtrsim v_F\Delta^{-1}$
- Known: $\psi_1(z)\psi_2(z') \propto :e^{i\phi_1(z)+i\phi_2(z)}:u(z-z');$ $F^{\dagger}(\vec{r_1},\tau_1;\vec{r_2},\tau_2) = \langle T[\psi^{\dagger}_{S\downarrow}(\vec{r_1},\tau_1)\psi^{\dagger}_{S\uparrow}(\vec{r_2},\tau_2)] \rangle$
- Need to find out: $P_{\alpha\beta}$ (contains tunnel amplitudes $t_{\alpha\sigma}(x, \vec{r'})$) $P_{\alpha\beta}(x_1, \vec{r'}_1; x_2, \vec{r'}_2) = t_{\alpha\downarrow}(x_1, \vec{r'}_1)t_{\beta\uparrow}(x_2, \vec{r'}_2) - t_{\alpha\uparrow}(x_1, \vec{r'}_1)t_{\beta\downarrow}(x_2, \vec{r'}_2) + [\vec{r'}_1 \leftrightarrow \vec{r'}_2]$

Singlet pair tunnelling amplitudes?



$$P_{++}(k_1, \vec{r}_1'; k_2, \vec{r}_2') = \langle +, -k_1 | \hat{Z}(\vec{r}_1', \vec{r}_2') \mathfrak{T} | +, -k_2 \rangle$$

Z: some TR-invariant spin-conserving operator describing tunnelling

Estimating amplitudes

Rewrite using TR symmetry (and Fourier transform):

$$P_{\alpha_1\alpha_2}(k_1,\vec{r}_1';k_2,\vec{r}_2') = \langle \alpha_1,-k_1 | \hat{Z}(\vec{r}_1',\vec{r}_2')\mathfrak{T} | \alpha_2,-k_2 \rangle$$
$$\hat{Z}(\vec{r}_1',\vec{r}_2') \equiv \hat{h}_T[\mathbf{1}_{\sigma} \otimes (|\vec{r}_1'\rangle\langle\vec{r}_2'|+|\vec{r}_2'\rangle\langle\vec{r}_1'|)] \hat{h}_T, \ t_{\alpha\sigma'}(k,\vec{r}') \equiv \langle \alpha,-k|\hat{h}_T|\sigma',\vec{r}'\rangle$$

Example

Edge states with constant spin axis (eg. Kane-Mele model):

$$|+, {m k}
angle = |\! \uparrow
angle \otimes |{m k}
angle_+ , \quad |-, {m k}
angle = |\! \downarrow
angle \otimes |{m k}
angle_-$$

so that

$$P_{++} = \langle +, -k_1 | \hat{Z} \mathfrak{T} | +, -k_2 \rangle = \langle \uparrow | | \downarrow \rangle \times {}_+ \langle -k_1 | \hat{Z} | k_2 \rangle_- = 0$$
$$P_{+-} = \langle +, -k_1 | \hat{Z} \mathfrak{T} | -, -k_2 \rangle = \langle \uparrow | | \uparrow \rangle \times {}_+ \langle -k_1 | \hat{Z} | +k_2 \rangle_+ \neq 0$$

Concrete model system: HgTe/CdTe quantum wells

4-band model

in terms of quantum well $k_{x/y} = 0$ states: $|E1+\rangle$, $|E1-\rangle$, $|H1+\rangle$, $|H1-\rangle$. 4-band Hamiltonian

$$egin{aligned} & H_{BHZ}\hat{\Psi}=E\hat{\Psi}\,,\ & H_{BHZ}=egin{pmatrix}h(k)&0\0&h(-k)^*\end{pmatrix}\,,\quad h(k)=\epsilon(k)\sigma_0+ec d(k)\cdotec \sigma\,,\ & \epsilon(k)=C-Dk^2\,, ec d(k)=(Ak_x,-Ak_y,M-Bk^2)\,. \end{aligned}$$

[Bernevig, Hughes, Zhang, Science (2006)]

Tunable spin rotation by Rashba spin orbit

$$\begin{aligned} H_{BHZ} &\mapsto \begin{pmatrix} h(k) & h_R(k) \\ h_R(k)^{\dagger} & h(-k)^* \end{pmatrix} \\ h_R &= i \begin{pmatrix} -R_0(k_x - ik_y) & iS_0(k_x - ik_y)^2 \\ -iS_0(k_x - ik_y)^2 & T_0(k_x - ik_y)^3 \end{pmatrix} \end{aligned}$$



- h_R mixes the + and Kramers blocks
- $\blacksquare R_0, S_0, T_0 \propto E_z$
- BIA can also be included

[Rothe et al., New J. Phys. (2010)]

Tunable spinor rotation by Rashba spin orbit interaction



Tunnel amplitudes from 4-band model

Amplitudes

$$P_{\alpha_1\alpha_2}(k_1,\vec{r}_1';k_2,\vec{r}_2') = \langle \alpha_1,-k_1 | \hat{Z}(\vec{r}_1',\vec{r}_2')\mathfrak{T} | \alpha_2,-k_2 \rangle$$

Simplify: length scale separation & parameterize by symmetries

$$P_{lpha_1 lpha_2} \propto \hat{\Psi}^{\dagger}_{lpha_1, -k_1} egin{pmatrix} \mathcal{A} & \mathcal{C} & 0 & \mathcal{D} \ \mathcal{C}^* & \mathcal{B} & -\mathcal{D} & 0 \ 0 & -\mathcal{D}^* & \mathcal{A} & \mathcal{C}^* \ \mathcal{D}^* & 0 & \mathcal{C} & \mathcal{B} \end{pmatrix} \mathfrak{T} \hat{\Psi}_{lpha_2, -k_2}$$

Order of magnitude (localized contacts):

$$egin{aligned} P_{++}(k_1,k_2) &\sim i(k_1-k_2)rac{z_0}{|M|}P_{+-}\,, \ &z_0 = ext{Rashba} ext{ strength} = 1\, ext{eV} imes (E_z/500\, ext{mV/nm}) \end{aligned}$$

Low-energy Hamiltonian

Low-energy model for 2-particle tunnelling

$$\begin{split} H &= H_0 + \sum_{\alpha\beta = \pm} \int \mathrm{d}x \, \Gamma_{\alpha\beta}(x) \psi_{\alpha}(x) \psi_{\beta}(x+a) + \mathrm{h.c} \\ \Gamma_{+-} &\simeq (a\Delta)^{\frac{g-1}{g}} (a_0 \Delta)^{\frac{g+g^{-1}}{2} - 1} \mathcal{K} \,, \\ \Gamma_{++} &\simeq i (a\Delta)^{\frac{g-g^2-1}{g}} (a_0 \Delta)^{\frac{g+g^{-1}}{2} - 1} \frac{z_0 \Delta}{v_F |M|} \mathcal{K} \end{split}$$

■ *a*⁰ interaction cutoff

• $a > \Delta^{-1}$ low-energy cutoff

Noninteracting case (g = 1): $\Gamma_{+-} \sim \frac{\hbar v_F}{w} \frac{R_K}{4R_N}$, where w is contact length

 $z_0 = \text{Rashba strength} \sim 1 \,\text{eV} \times (E_z/500 \,\text{mV/nm})$

Transport features



• Assume no quasiparticle current (suppressed as $e^{-|\Delta|/T}$).

High-resistance contacts

Simple perturbation theory:

$$\partial_t \hat{N} = i[\hat{H}_{\text{eff}}, \hat{N}] = \hat{l}_1 + \hat{l}_2$$

 $\langle \hat{l}(t) \rangle \simeq \int^t \mathrm{d}t' \, i \langle [\hat{V}(t'), \hat{l}(t)] \rangle_0$

DC conductance (oscillations)

Noninteracting case (g = 1): Component of DC current oscillating with $\varphi = 2\pi \frac{\Phi}{\Phi_0}$



Exclusion principle

 $\propto V^2$, T^2 : finite energy required in ++ channel [cf. Fisher, *PRB* (1994)] $|\Gamma_{++}|^2(aT)^2 = (T/E_r)^2 |\Gamma_{+-}|^2$, $E_{r,HgTe-QW} = |M|v_F/z_0$

Increasing contact separation d

• ++ channel:
$$\propto \cos(2Vd + 4k_Fd)$$

• +- channel: $\propto e^{-2\pi T d/v_F}$ [for low transparency $w|\Gamma_{+-}| < 1$]

$$\delta I_{NS} = \frac{2|w\Gamma_{++}|^2}{3\pi} V \cos(2Vd + 4k_Fd) \cos(\varphi) [(aV)^2 + 4\pi^2 (aT)^2] + 4|w\Gamma_{+-}|^2 \sin(2Vd) \cos(\varphi) \frac{T}{v_F \sinh(2\pi Td/v_F)}$$

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- F. Dolcini (Uni Torino)
- F. Crepin (Uni Würzburg)
- B. Trauzettel (Uni Würzburg)
- P. Virtanen (TU Braunschweig)











and group of L. Molenkamp for numerous discussions

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- Combination of potential scattering + Rashba S.O.
 SC proximity effect