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# Vortex pinning in a spin-triplet superfluid

Riku Rantanen, Rida Alrahmanlokman Shahin, and Vladimir Eltsov

# Aalto University (Helsinki, Finland)



## ROTA group – Topological Quantum Fluids

- Superfluid  $^3\text{He}$  and  $^4\text{He}$
- Unique **rotating cryostat** with temperatures as low as  $140\mu\text{K}$
- **Vortices**, quantum turbulence, magnon BECs, time crystals



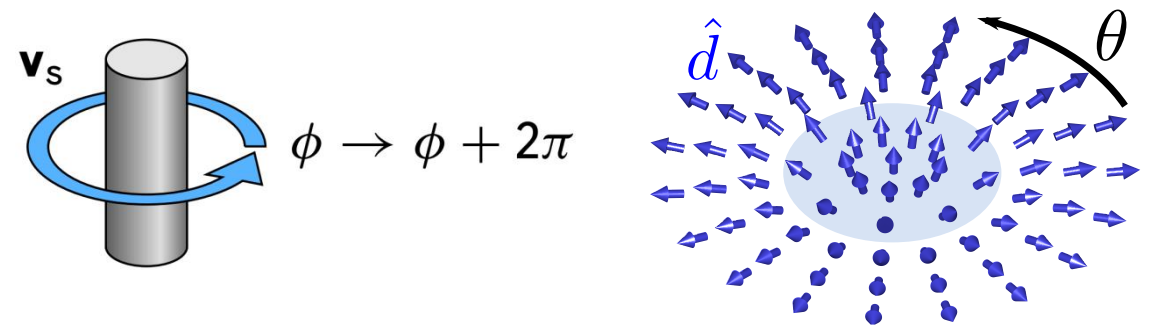
Vladimir Eltsov



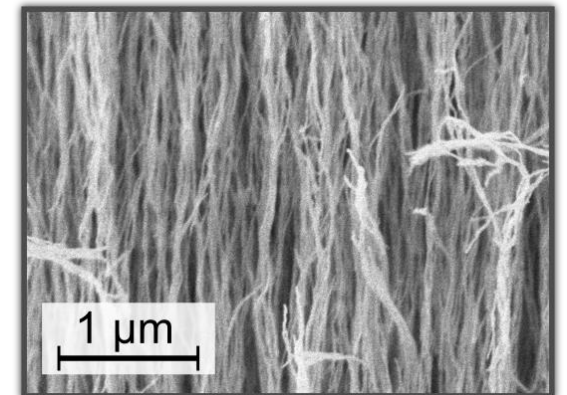
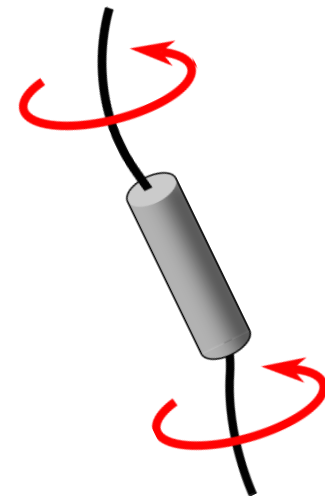
# Outline

## Introduction: Superfluid $^3\text{He}$

### Part 1: Vortices in superfluid $^3\text{He}$



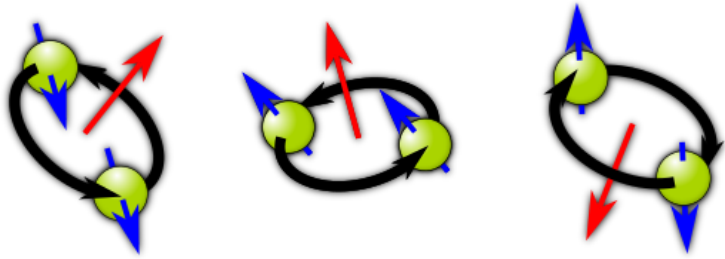
### Part 2: Vortex pinning in $^3\text{He}$



# Superfluid $^3\text{He}$

Fermionic superfluid

**Spin-triplet p-wave** Cooper pairs

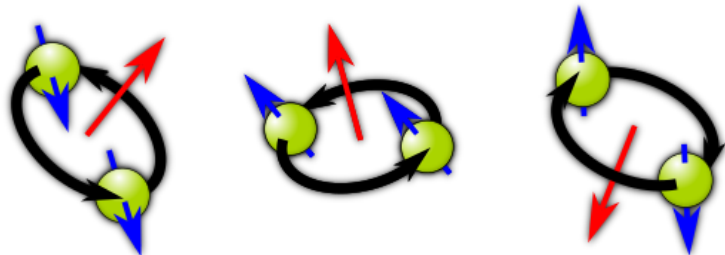


**A!**

# Superfluid $^3\text{He}$

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**Spin-triplet p-wave** Cooper pairs



In addition to phase coherence,  
pairing breaks rotational symmetry

SO(3) in **orbital** and **spin** space

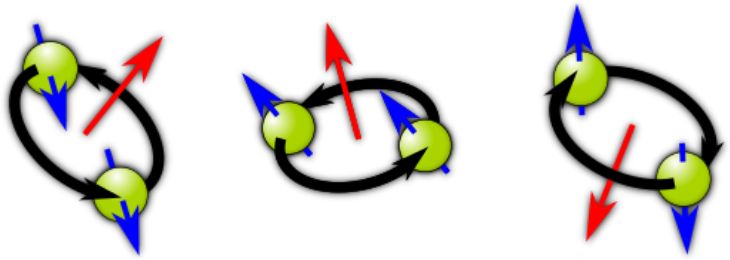
$$\begin{aligned} S_z &= -1, 0, 1 \\ L_z &= -1, 0, 1 \end{aligned} \quad A = \begin{bmatrix} A_{xx} & A_{xy} & A_{xz} \\ A_{yx} & A_{yy} & A_{yz} \\ A_{zx} & A_{zy} & A_{zz} \end{bmatrix}$$

Broken symmetry state described by a  
**3 x 3** complex order parameter matrix

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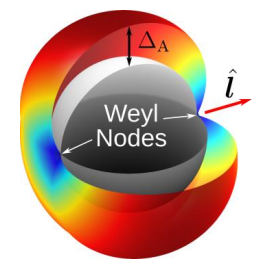
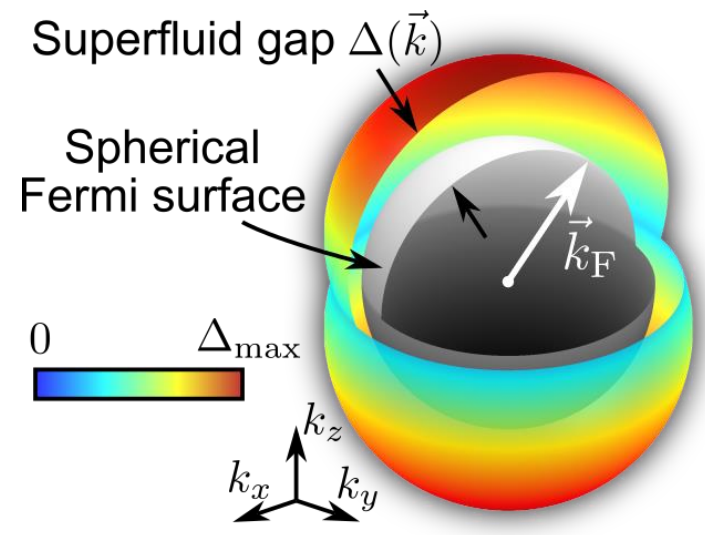
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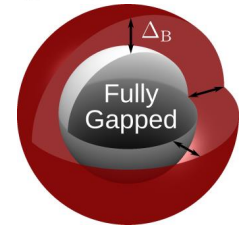
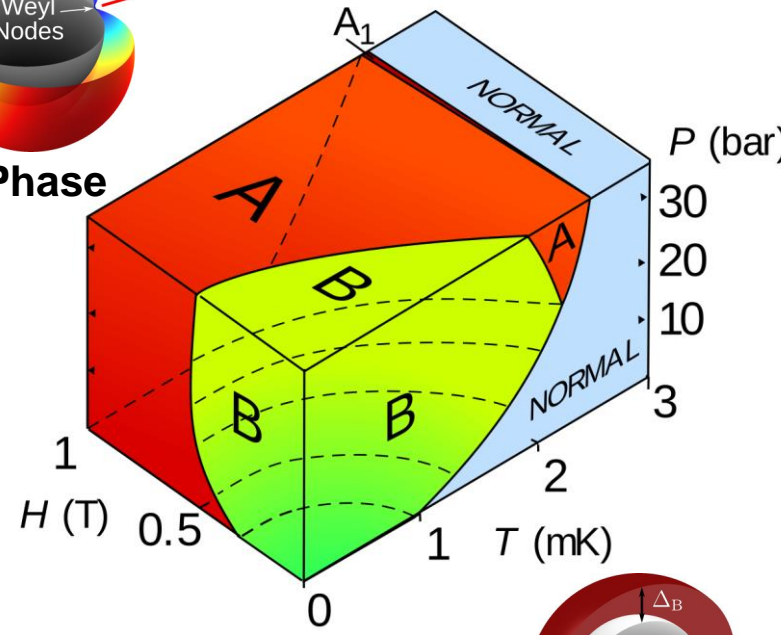
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**A!**

Broken symmetry state described by a **3 x 3** complex order parameter matrix



**A Phase**

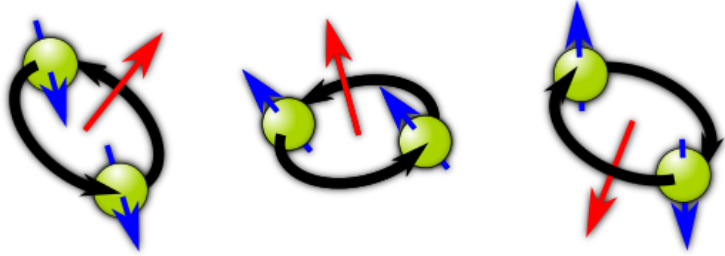


**B Phase**

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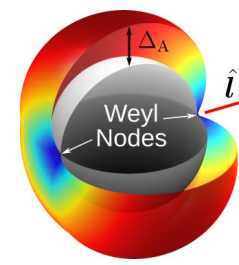
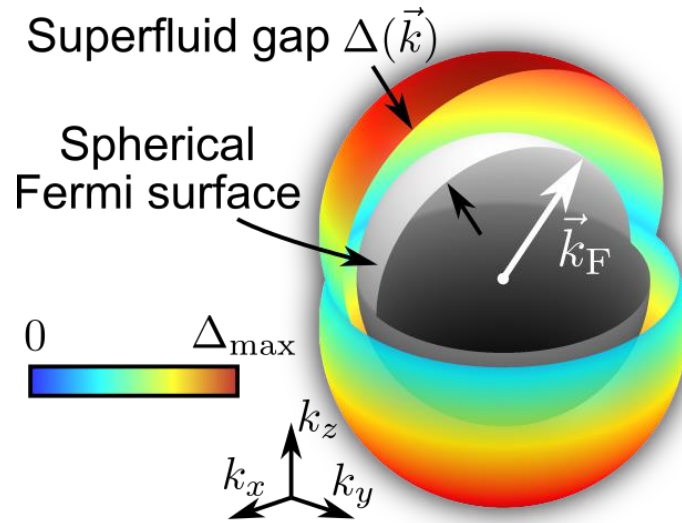
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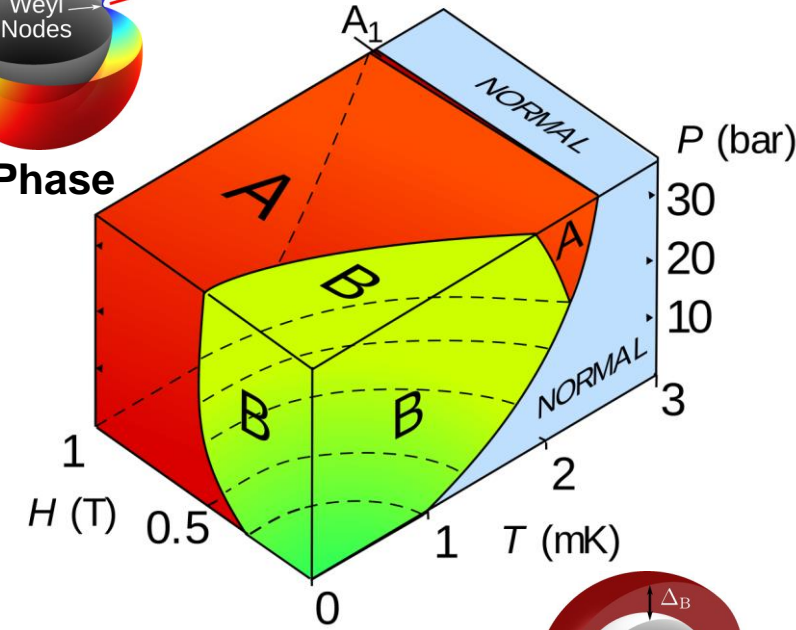
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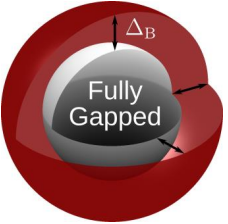
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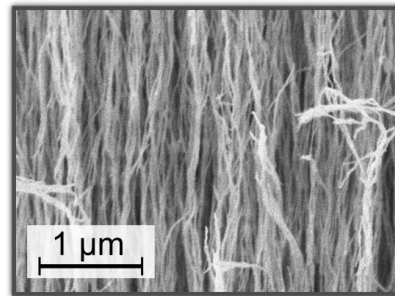
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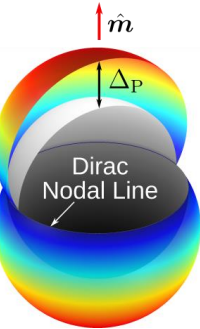
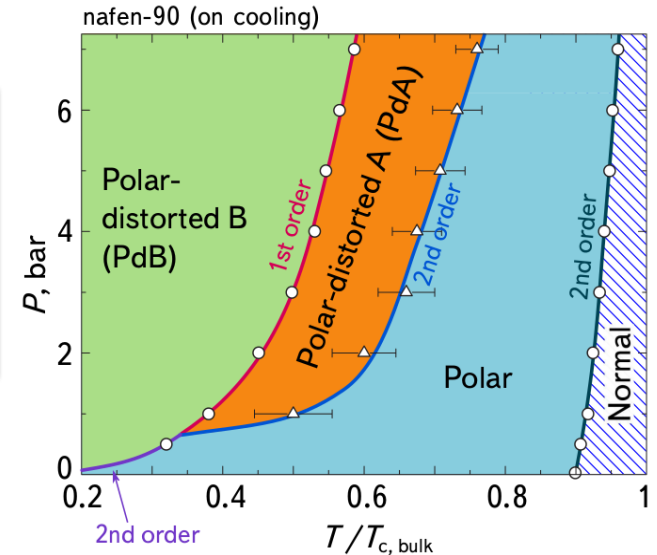
New phases stabilized in **confinement**:



**B Phase**



"nafen"



**Polar phase**

# Part 1: Vortices in superfluid $^3\text{He}$

**A!**

# Quantized vortices

## Conventional superfluids:

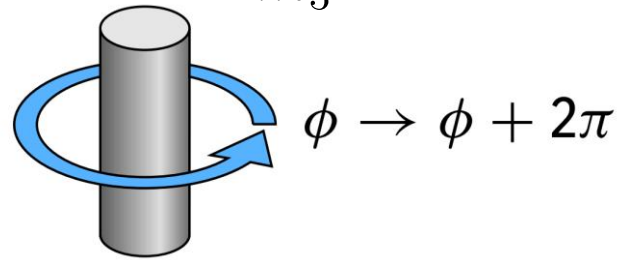
(<sup>4</sup>He, s-wave superconductors, etc.)

Order parameter is a single scalar  $\Psi = |\Psi|e^{i\phi}$

Superfluid velocity  $v_s = \frac{\hbar}{2m_3} \nabla \phi$

Irrotational

$$\nabla \times v_s = 0$$



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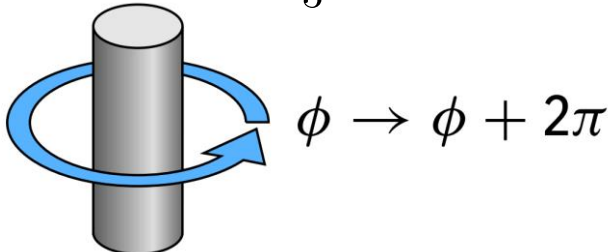
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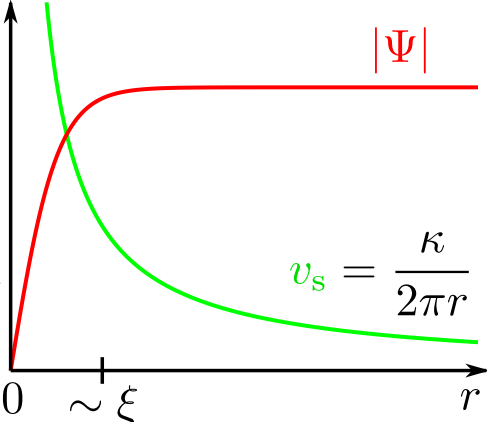
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Superfluid suppression in the core costs energy!



**A!** Only one type of vortex possible!

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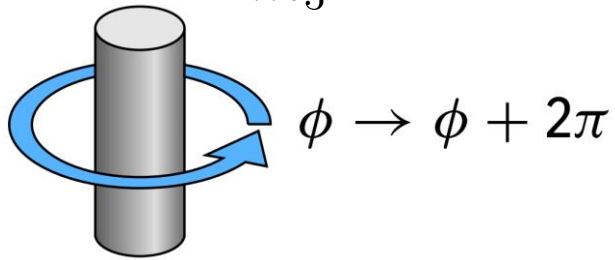
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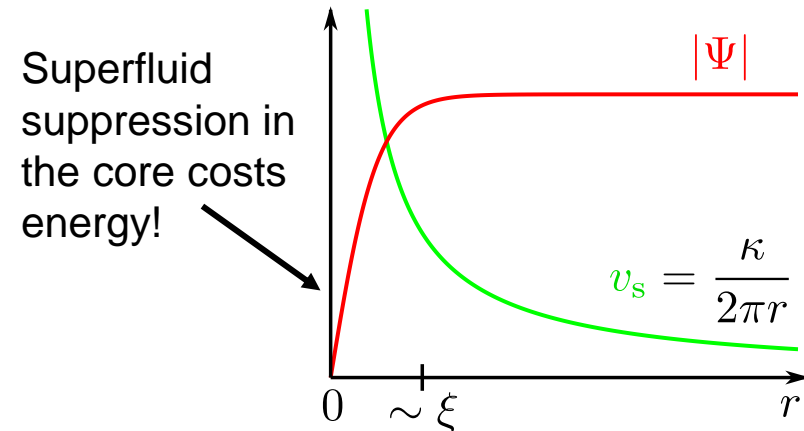
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## Multicomponent order parameter:

(<sup>3</sup>He, unconventional superconductors, neutron stars?)

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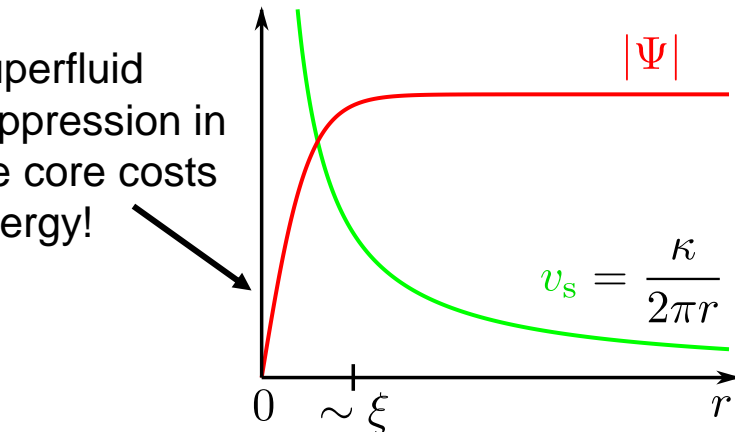
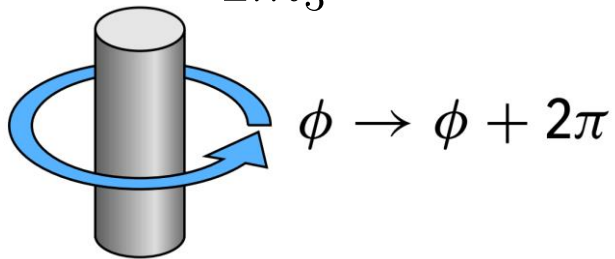
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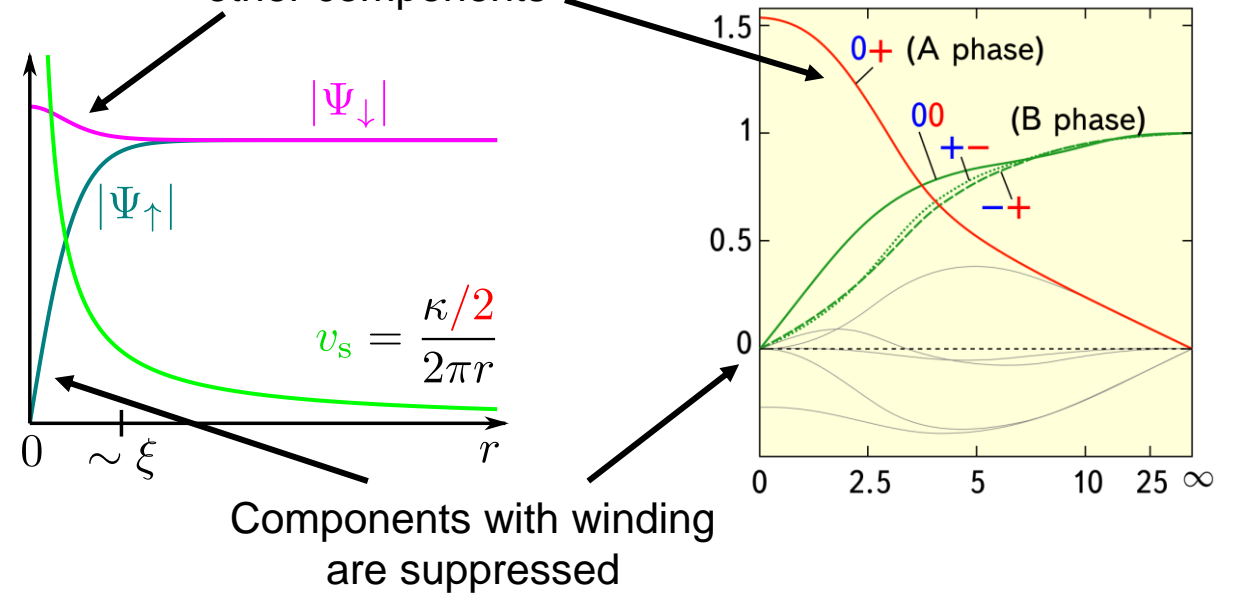
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Cores are generally **not singular**

Suppression compensated by other components



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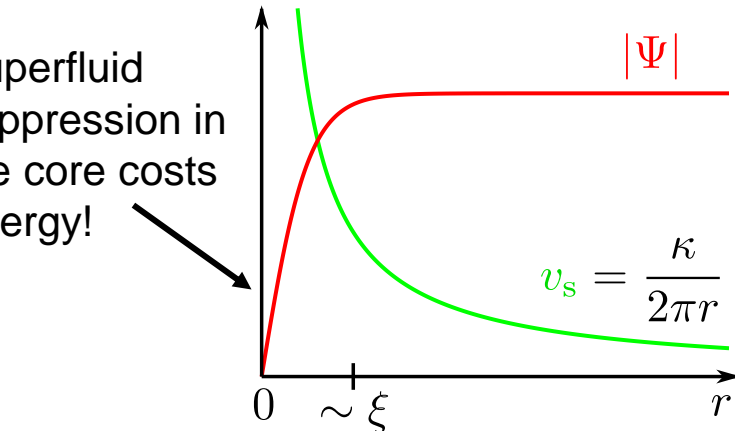
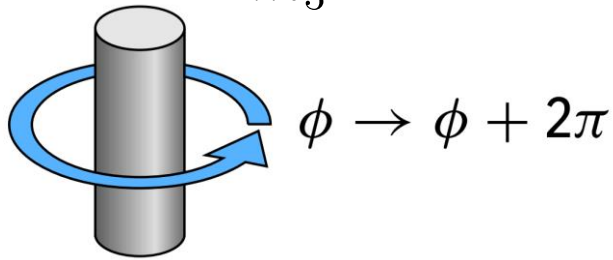
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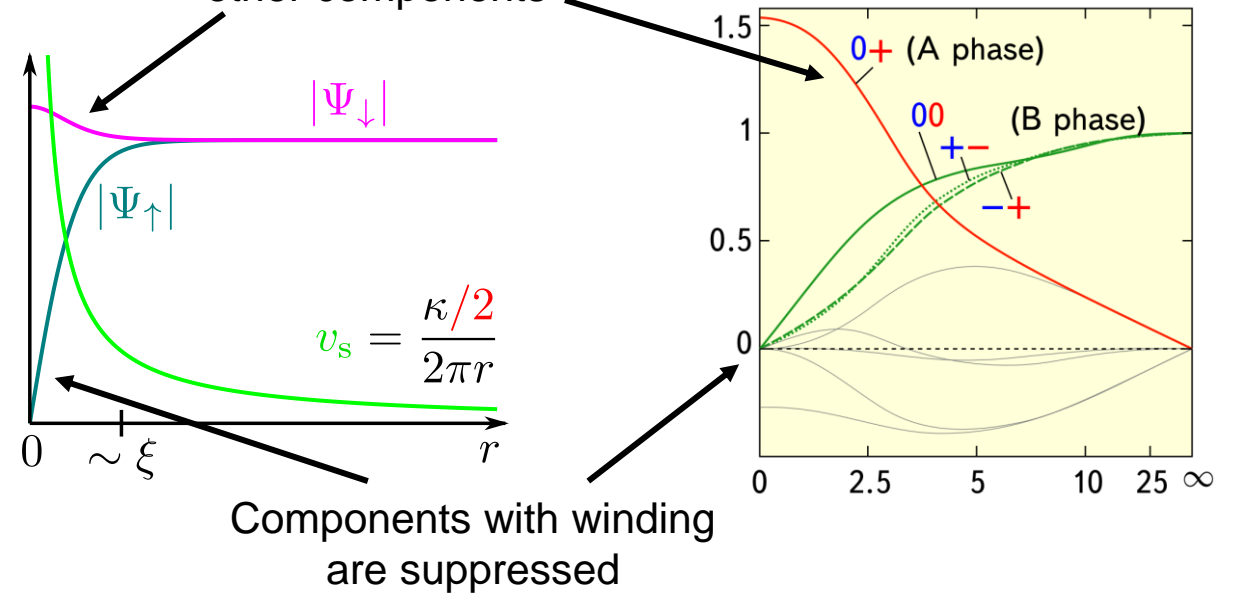
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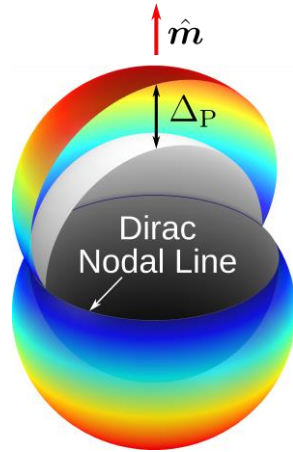
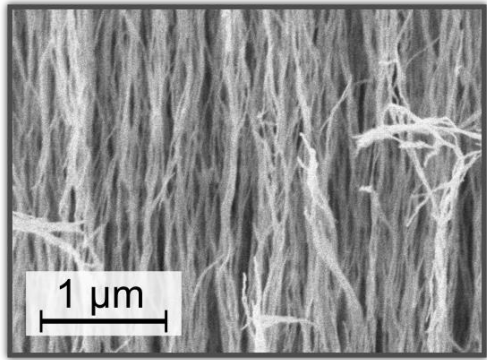


Superflow **not necessarily irrotational**  $\nabla \times v_s \neq 0$

# Vortices in the Polar phase

**A!**

# Vortices in the Polar phase



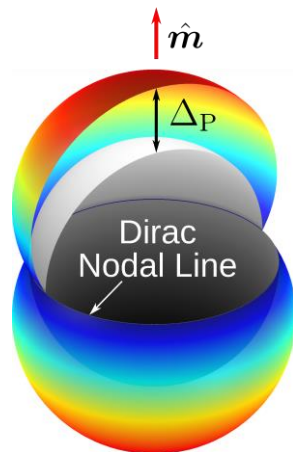
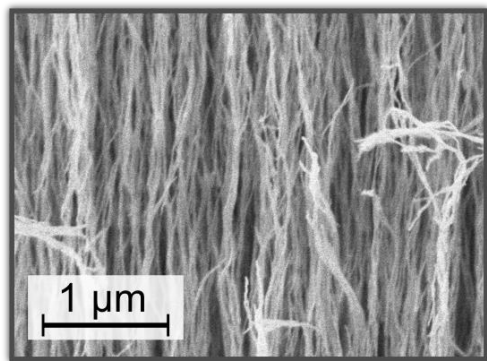
$$A_{\mu j} = \Delta_P e^{i\phi} \hat{d}_\mu \hat{m}_j$$

Strands fix direction of  $\hat{m} = \hat{z}$

$\hat{d}$  weakly oriented by **magnetic field**  
and **spin-orbit** interaction  $\hat{d} \perp \hat{H}, \hat{m}$

**A!**

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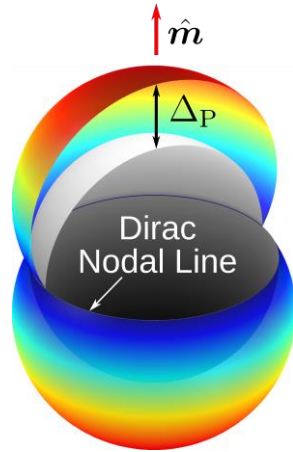
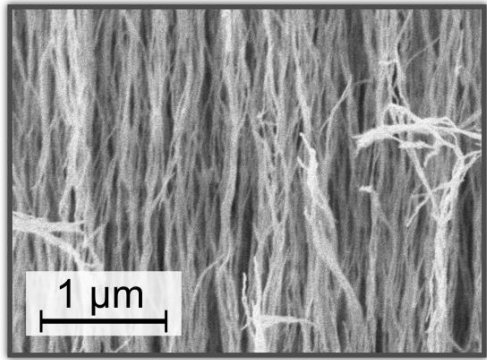
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**Two degrees of freedom:**

Phase  $\phi$  and angle  $\theta$  of  $\hat{d}$  in the  
plane perpendicular to  $\hat{H}$

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Split into **spin up** and **spin down** superfluids:

$$\Psi_\uparrow = |\Psi_\uparrow| e^{i\phi_\uparrow}$$

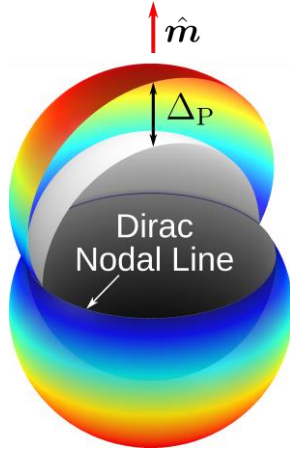
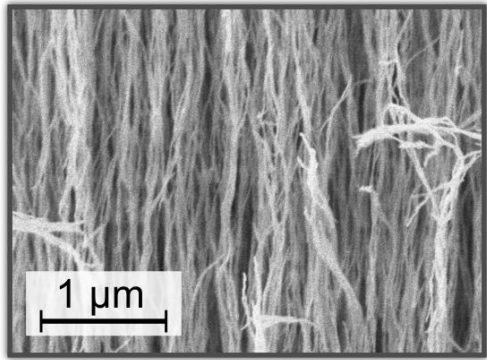
$$\Psi_\downarrow = |\Psi_\downarrow| e^{i\phi_\downarrow}$$

Phase:  $\phi = \frac{\phi_\uparrow + \phi_\downarrow}{2}$

Angle of  $\hat{d}$ :  $\theta = \frac{\phi_\uparrow - \phi_\downarrow}{2}$

**A!**

# Vortices in the Polar phase



$$A_{\mu j} = \Delta_P e^{i\phi} \hat{d}_\mu \hat{m}_j$$

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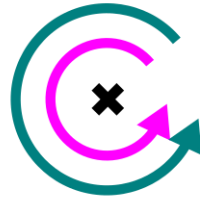
**Four possibilities:**

$$\Delta\phi_\uparrow = 2\pi$$

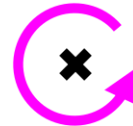
$$\Delta\phi_\uparrow = 0$$

$$\Delta\phi_\uparrow = 2\pi$$

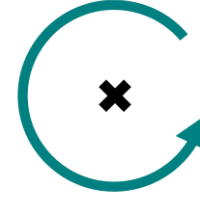
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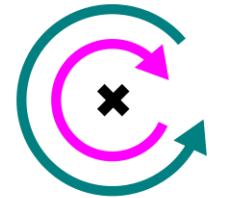
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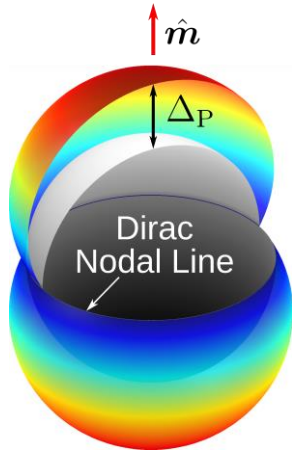
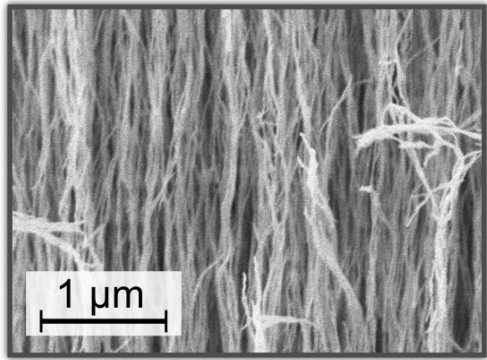


$$\Delta\phi_\downarrow = 0$$



$$\Delta\phi_\downarrow = -2\pi$$

# Vortices in the Polar phase



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Split into **spin up** and **spin down** superfluids:

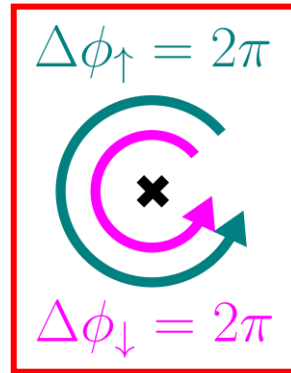
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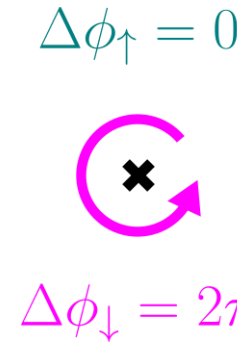
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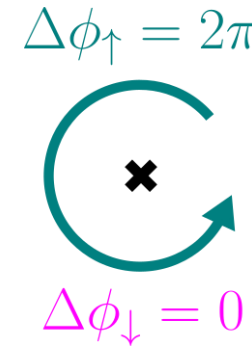
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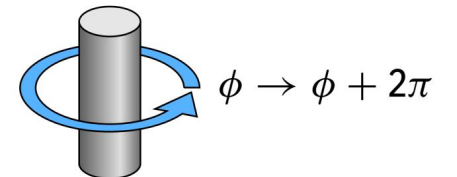
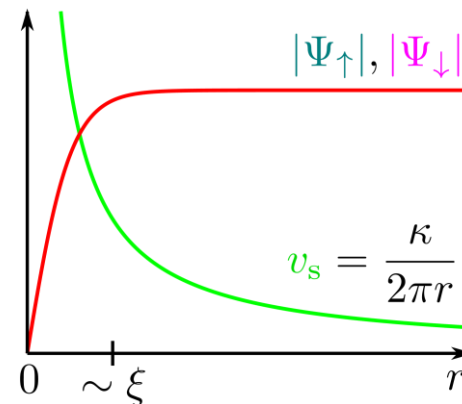
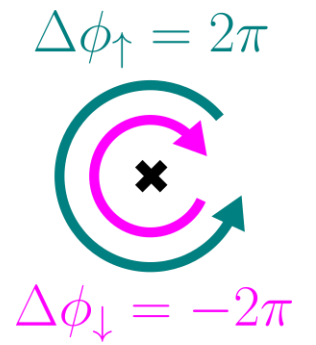
Single-quantum vortex



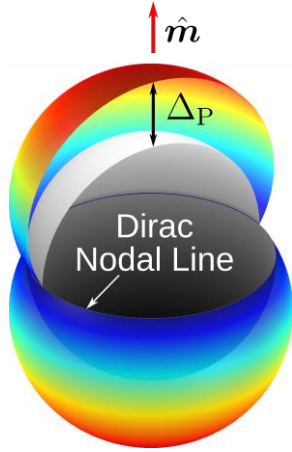
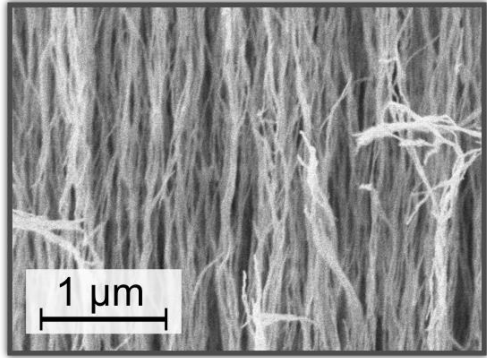
Singular, no superfluidity in the core



Equal winding in both components:  
Phase winds by  $2\pi$   
Uniform  $\hat{d}$



# Vortices in the Polar phase



$$A_{\mu j} = \Delta_P e^{i\phi} \hat{d}_\mu \hat{m}_j$$

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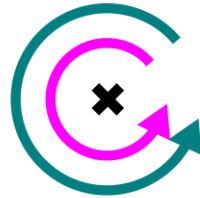
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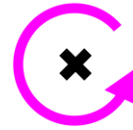
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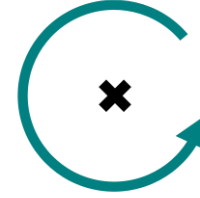
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$$\Delta\phi_\uparrow = 0$$



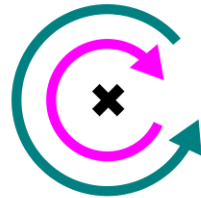
$$\Delta\phi_\downarrow = 2\pi$$

$$\Delta\phi_\uparrow = 2\pi$$



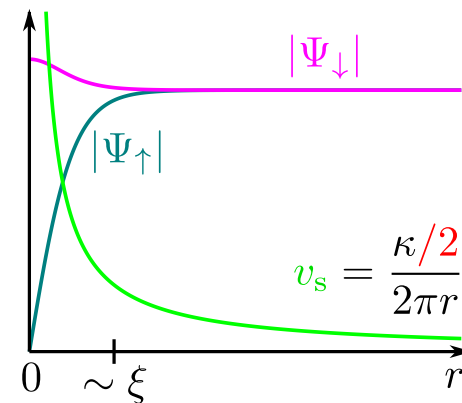
$$\Delta\phi_\downarrow = 0$$

$$\Delta\phi_\uparrow = 2\pi$$



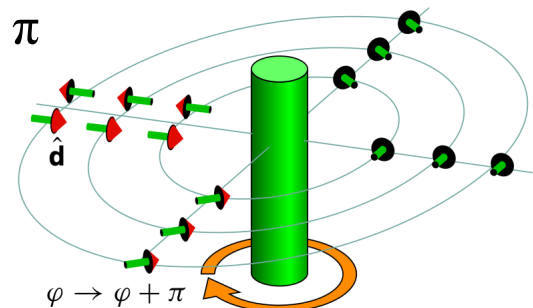
$$\Delta\phi_\downarrow = -2\pi$$

Half-quantum vortex

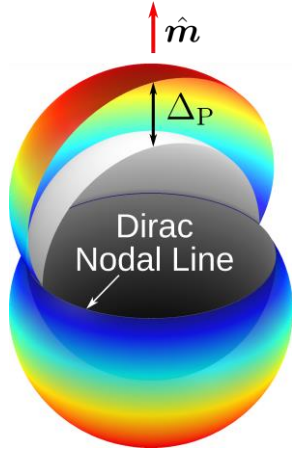
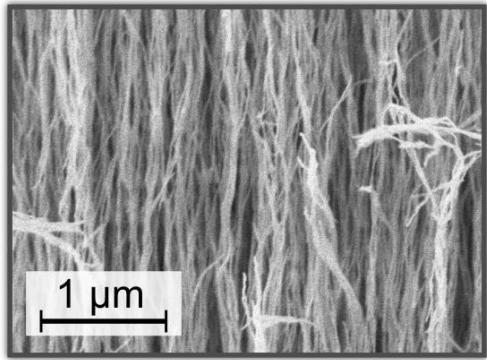


Non-singular

Winding in only one component:  
Phase winds by  $\pi$   
 $\hat{d}$  rotates by  $\pi$



# Vortices in the Polar phase



$$A_{\mu j} = \Delta_P e^{i\phi} \hat{d}_\mu \hat{m}_j$$

Strands fix direction of  $\hat{m} = \hat{z}$

$\hat{d}$  weakly oriented by **magnetic field** and **spin-orbit** interaction  $\hat{d} \perp \hat{H}, \hat{m}$

**Two degrees of freedom:**

Phase  $\phi$  and angle  $\theta$  of  $\hat{d}$  in the plane perpendicular to  $\hat{H}$

**A!**

Split into **spin up** and **spin down** superfluids:

$$\Psi_\uparrow = |\Psi_\uparrow| e^{i\phi_\uparrow}$$

$$\Psi_\downarrow = |\Psi_\downarrow| e^{i\phi_\downarrow}$$

Phase:  $\phi = \frac{\phi_\uparrow + \phi_\downarrow}{2}$

Angle of  $\hat{d}$ :  $\theta = \frac{\phi_\uparrow - \phi_\downarrow}{2}$

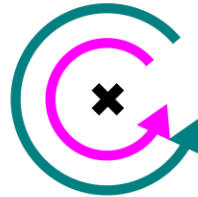
**Four possibilities:**

$$\Delta\phi_\uparrow = 2\pi$$

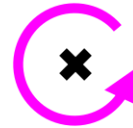
$$\Delta\phi_\uparrow = 0$$

$$\Delta\phi_\uparrow = 2\pi$$

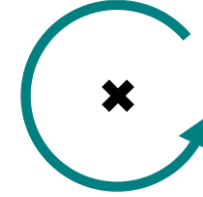
$$\Delta\phi_\uparrow = 2\pi$$



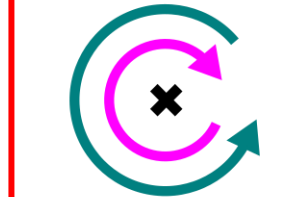
$$\Delta\phi_\downarrow = 2\pi$$



$$\Delta\phi_\downarrow = 2\pi$$



$$\Delta\phi_\downarrow = 0$$



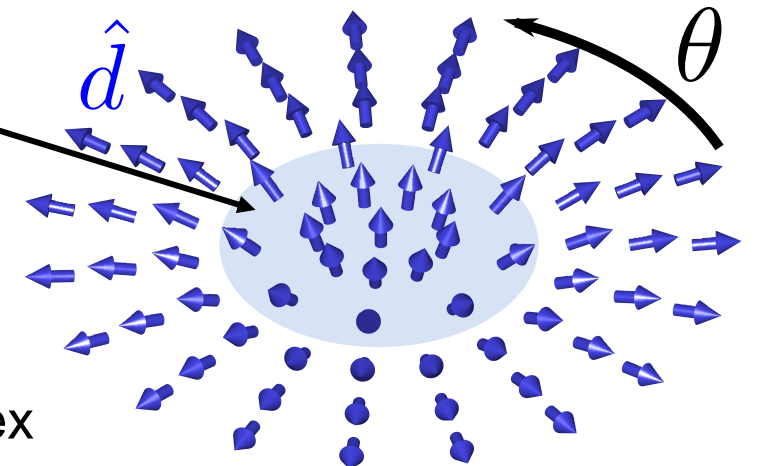
$$\Delta\phi_\downarrow = -2\pi$$

**Spin vortex**

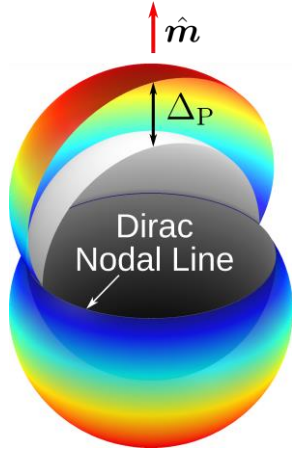
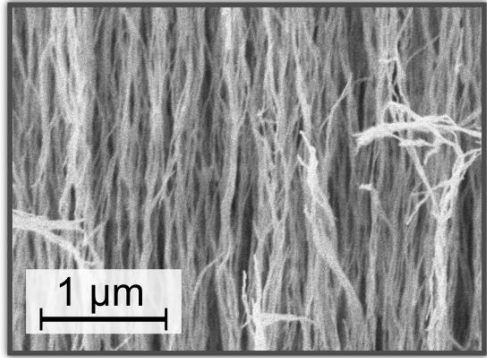
Non-singular, "**Soft core**"

No phase winding  
 $\hat{d}$  winds by  $2\pi$

**Spin currents** around vortex



# Vortices in the Polar phase



$$A_{\mu j} = \Delta_P e^{i\phi} \hat{d}_\mu \hat{m}_j$$

Strands fix direction of  $\hat{m} = \hat{z}$

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**Two degrees of freedom:**

Phase  $\phi$  and angle  $\theta$  of  $\hat{d}$  in the plane perpendicular to  $\hat{H}$

**A!**

Split into **spin up** and **spin down** superfluids:

$$\Psi_\uparrow = |\Psi_\uparrow| e^{i\phi_\uparrow}$$

$$\Psi_\downarrow = |\Psi_\downarrow| e^{i\phi_\downarrow}$$

Phase:  $\phi = \frac{\phi_\uparrow + \phi_\downarrow}{2}$

Angle of  $\hat{d}$ :  $\theta = \frac{\phi_\uparrow - \phi_\downarrow}{2}$

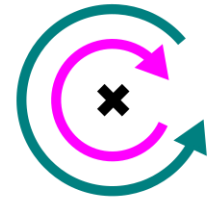
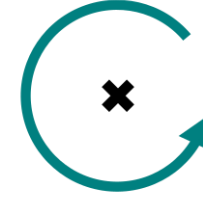
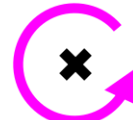
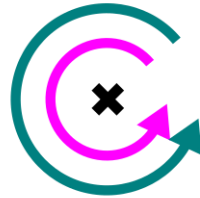
**Four possibilities:**

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$$\Delta\phi_\uparrow = 2\pi$$

$$\Delta\phi_\uparrow = 2\pi$$



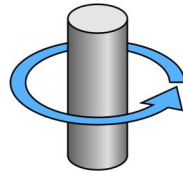
$$\Delta\phi_\downarrow = 2\pi$$

$$\Delta\phi_\downarrow = 2\pi$$

$$\Delta\phi_\downarrow = 0$$

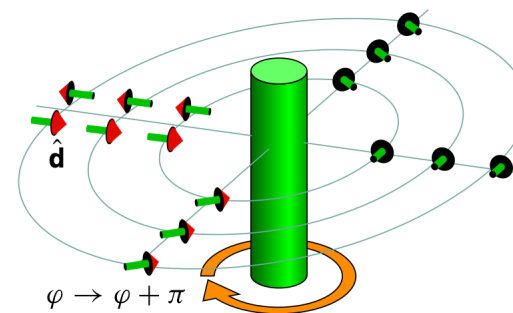
$$\Delta\phi_\downarrow = -2\pi$$

Single-quantum vortex



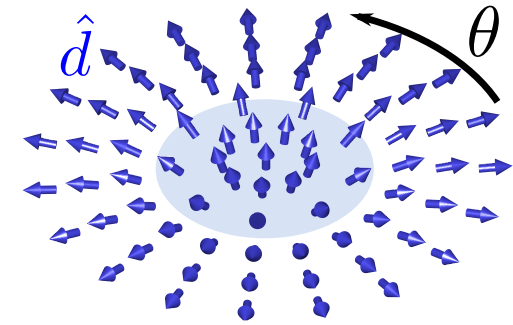
$$\phi \rightarrow \phi + 2\pi$$

Half-quantum vortex



$$\phi \rightarrow \phi + \pi$$

Spin vortex



# Vortices in the B phase

**A!**

# Vortices in the B phase

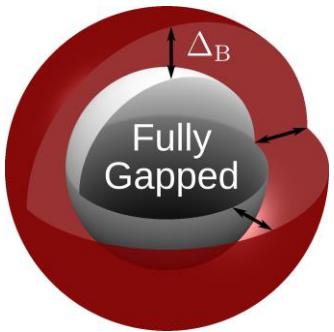
Cooper pair total angular momentum

$$J = L + S = 0$$

$$|S_z L_z\rangle = |+-\rangle, |00\rangle, |-+\rangle$$

Order parameter describes relative orientation of **spin** and **orbital** spaces

$$A_{\mu j} = \Delta_B e^{i\phi} R_{\mu j}(\hat{n}, \theta)$$



**A!**

# Vortices in the B phase

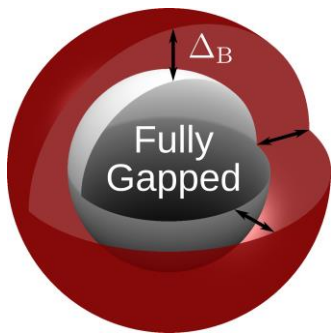
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**Leggett angle:**

$$\theta = \cos^{-1}(-1/4)$$

$\hat{n}$  only weakly oriented by **magnetic field** and **surfaces**

**A!**

# Vortices in the B phase

Cooper pair total angular momentum

$$J = L + S = 0$$

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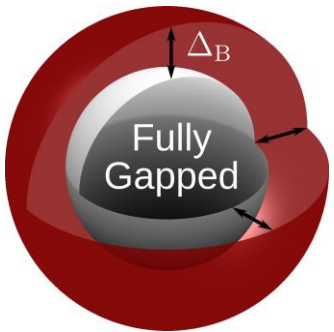
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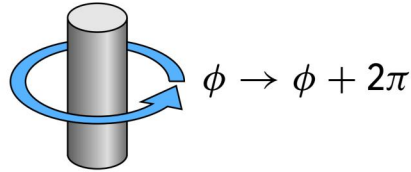
$$\theta = \cos^{-1}(-1/4)$$

$\hat{n}$  only weakly oriented by **magnetic field** and **surfaces**



**A!**

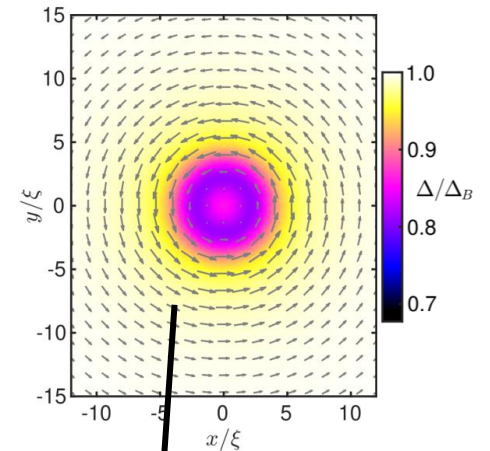
## Two distinct single-quantum vortices:



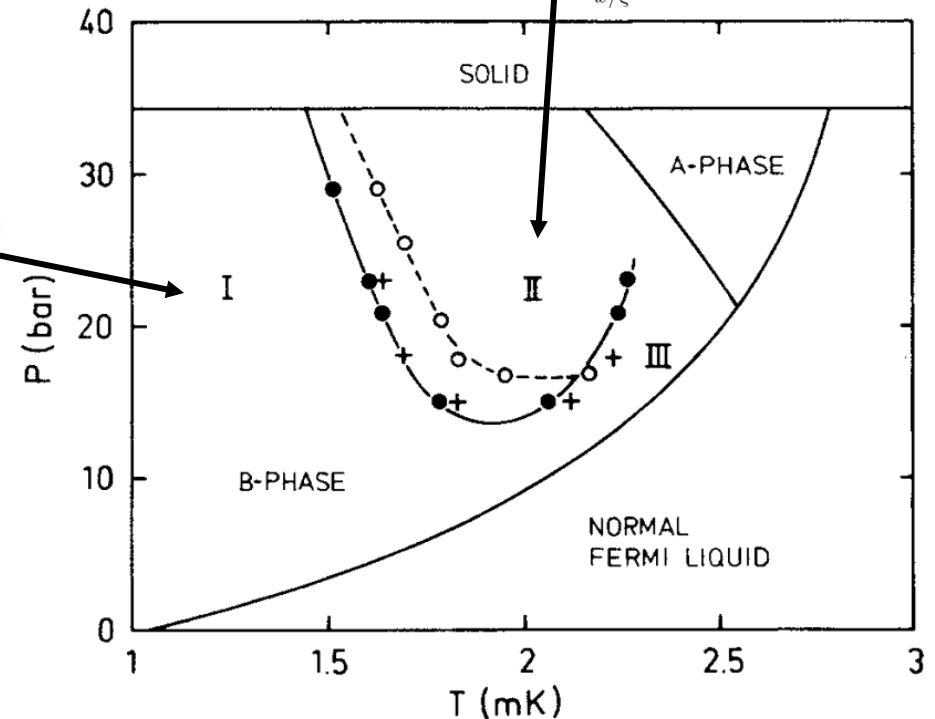
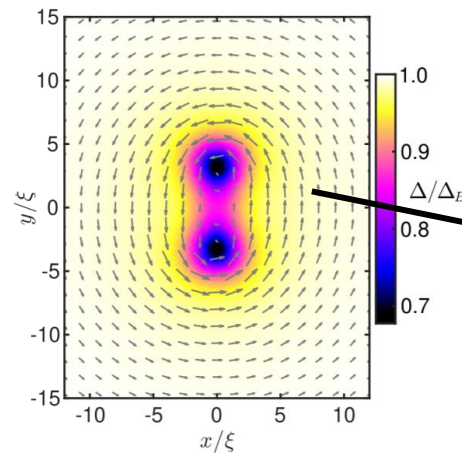
2π phase winding

Different core structures

“A-phase-core” vortex



“Double-core” vortex



# Vortices in the B phase

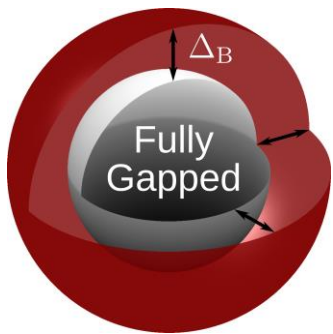
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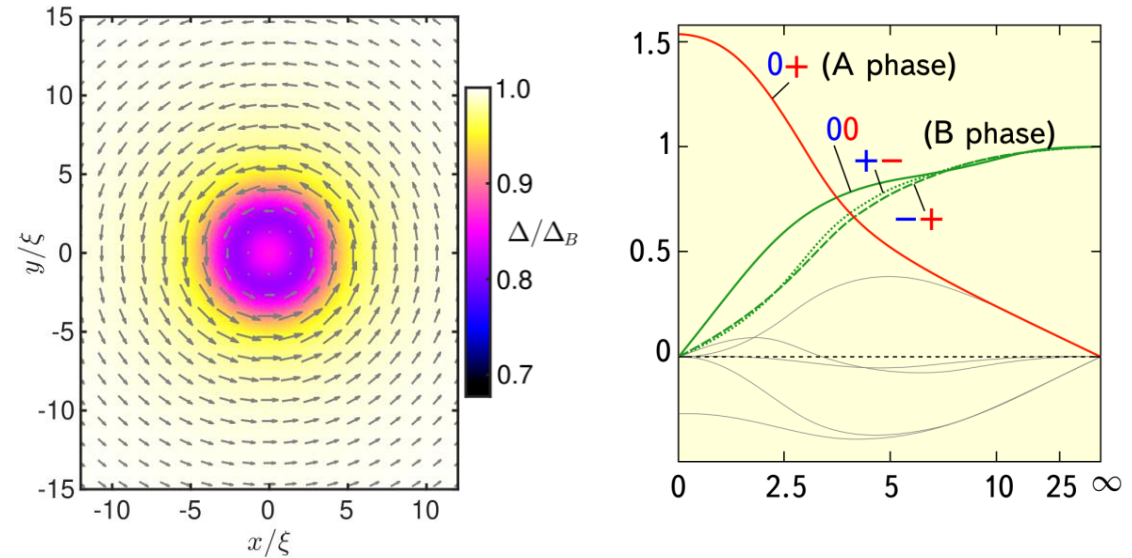
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**A!**

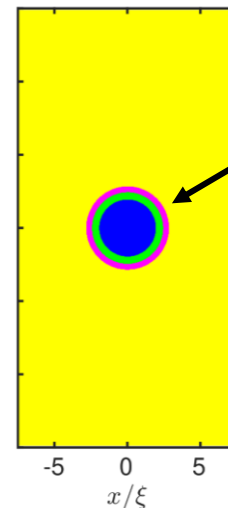
# Two distinct single-quantum vortices:

“A-phase-core” vortex



Axially symmetric, core filled with **A phase**

■ B    ■ A  
■ Planar    ■ Axiplanar



**Interface** between bulk B and core

A phase energetically expensive

Only stable at high temperatures and pressures

# Vortices in the B phase

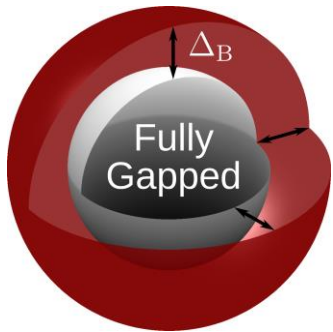
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**Leggett angle:**

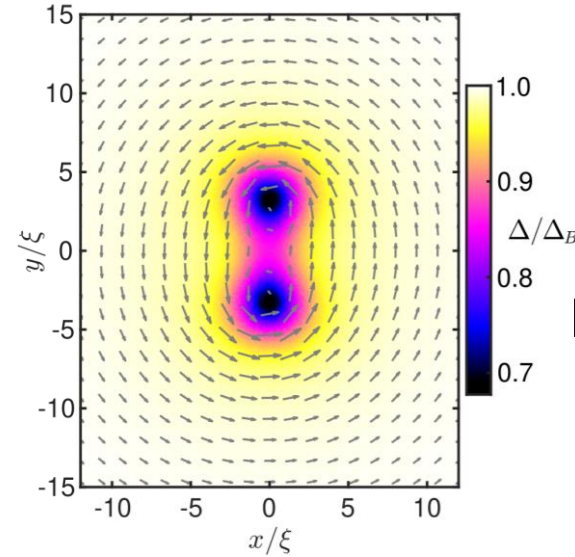
$$\theta = \cos^{-1}(-1/4)$$

$\hat{n}$  only weakly oriented by **magnetic field** and **surfaces**

**A!**

## Two distinct single-quantum vortices:

“Double-core” vortex



Core splits into two subcores

Can be thought of as  
**a bound pair of HQVs**

Lone HQVs are not stable in the B phase due to presence of **spin-0** component

# Vortices in the B phase

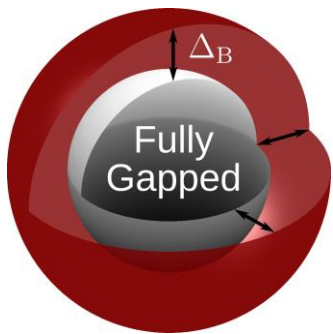
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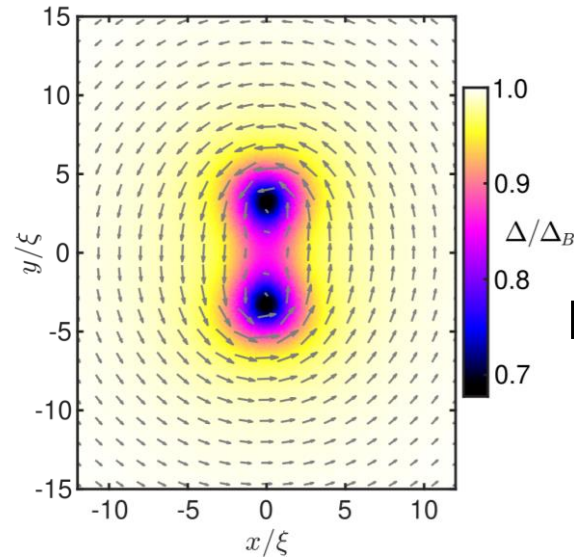
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**A!**

## Two distinct single-quantum vortices:

“Double-core” vortex



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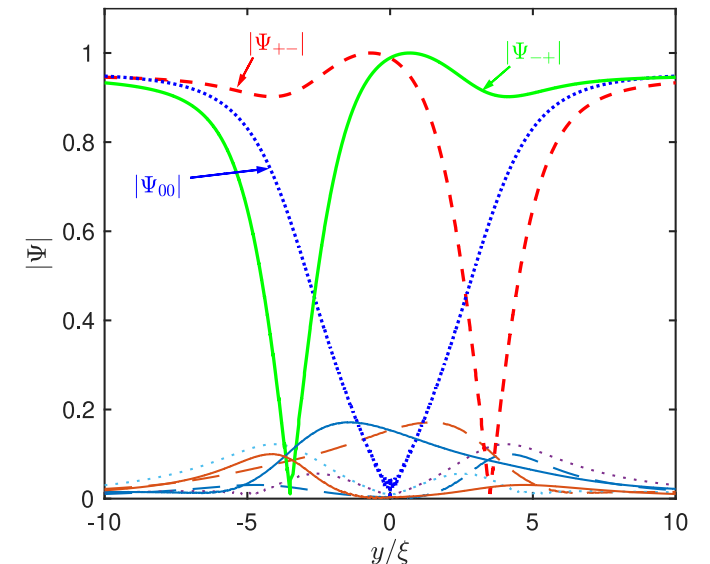
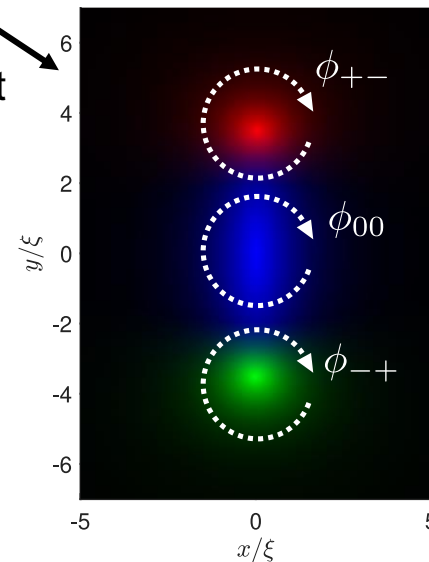
Lone HQVs are not stable in the B phase due to presence of **spin-0** component

$$|+-\rangle, |00\rangle, |-+\rangle$$

Colors indicate suppression

**Spin-0** component acts as “glue” preventing further splitting

Three-core structure



# Vortices in the B phase

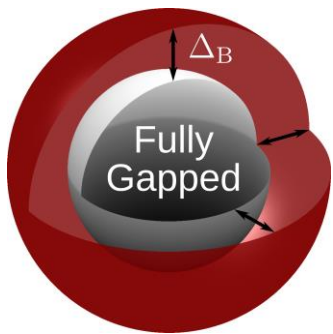
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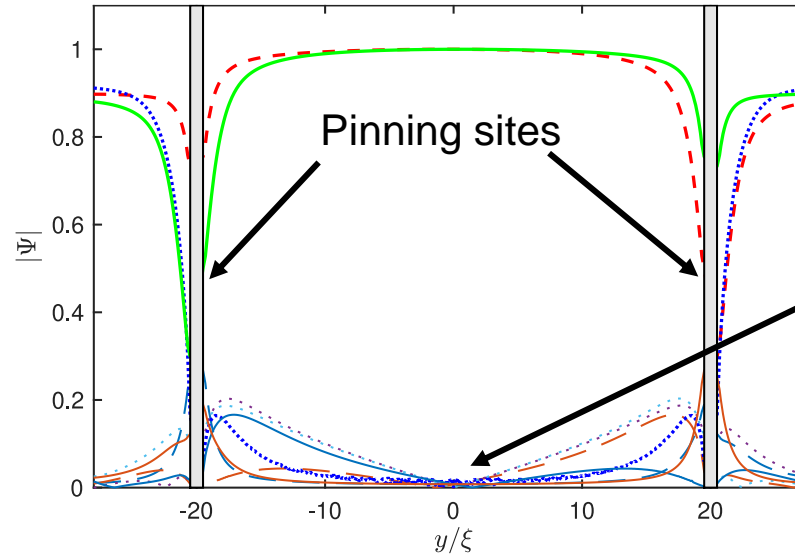
**Leggett angle:**

$$\theta = \cos^{-1}(-1/4)$$

$\hat{n}$  only weakly oriented by **magnetic field** and **surfaces**

**A!**

## Two distinct single-quantum vortices: “Double-core” vortex



Extended structures possible with **pinning**

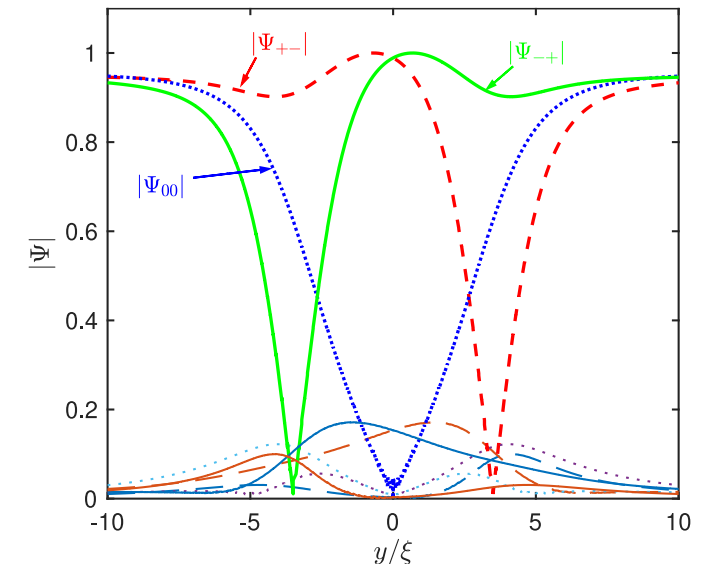
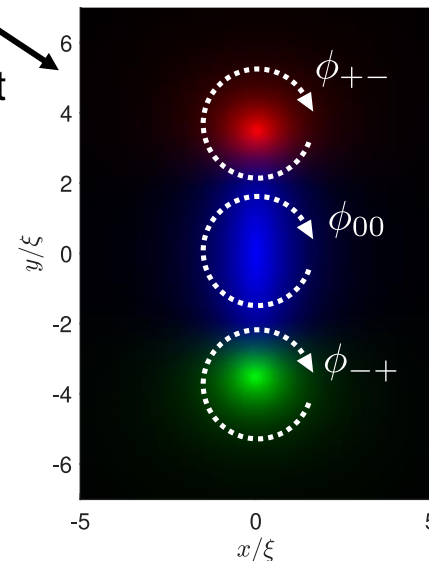
“**Kibble wall**” instead of point-like vortex in **spin-0** component

$$|+-\rangle, |00\rangle, |-+\rangle$$

Colors indicate suppression

**Spin-0** component acts as “glue” preventing further splitting

Three-core structure



# Vortices in the B phase

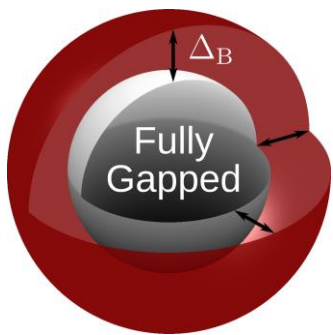
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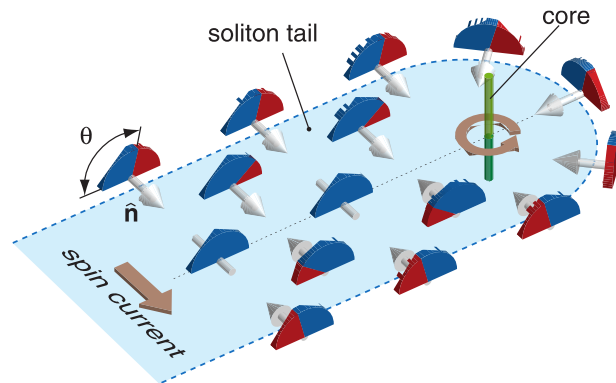
**Leggett angle:**

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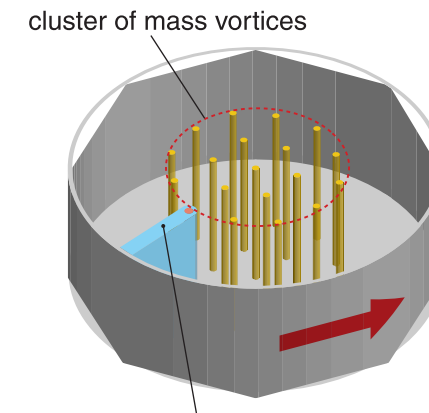
$\hat{n}$  only weakly oriented by **magnetic field** and **surfaces**

**A!**

## Spin and spin-mass vortices



No phase winding, either  $\theta$  or  $\hat{n}$  (or both) rotate around axis



Combined spin-mass vortex

**Spin vortex** gets “pinned” on phase vortex

# Vortices in the B phase

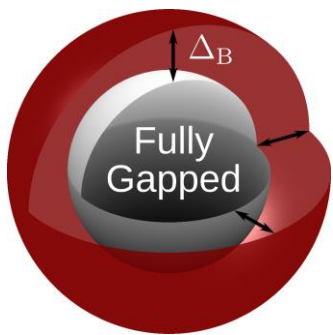
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Order parameter describes relative orientation of **spin** and **orbital** spaces

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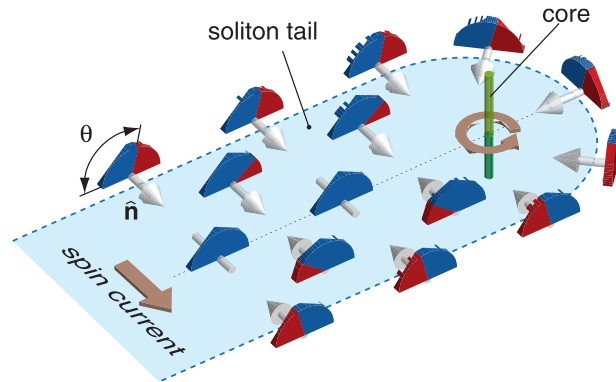
Leggett angle:

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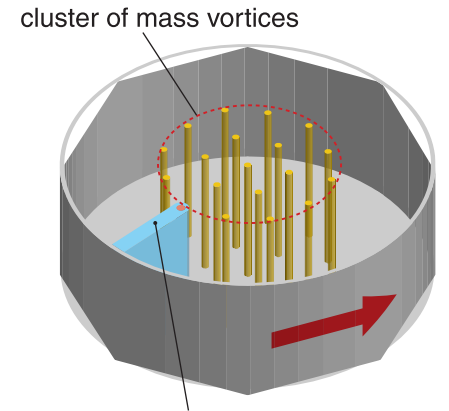
$\hat{n}$  only weakly oriented by **magnetic field** and **surfaces**

**A!**

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No phase winding, either  $\theta$  or  $\hat{n}$  (or both) rotate around axis



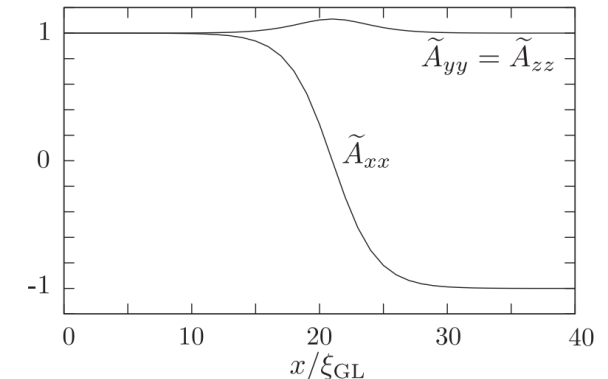
Combined spin-mass vortex

**Spin vortex** gets “pinned” on phase vortex

# Domain walls

Name	$n$	$\phi$	$\psi_{\perp}$	$\psi_{\parallel}$	$\tilde{A}^R$	$H_P$	Type	$H_S$
12	0	0	1	2	$\begin{bmatrix} +1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & +1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & +1 \end{bmatrix}$	$\infty, m, T$	Bulk (no interface)	$\infty, m, T$
10	2.3	$\pi$	-1	0	$\begin{bmatrix} +1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & -1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & +1 \end{bmatrix}$	$2_x, m_y, m_z, T, 2_y^o$	Single	$2_x, m_y, m_z, T, 2_y^o$
$\bar{1}2$	1	$\pi$	1	-2	$\begin{bmatrix} -1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & +1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & +1 \end{bmatrix}$	$\infty_x, m_y, m_z, T, m_z^o$	Mixed	$T$
$1\bar{2}$	6	0	1	-2	$\begin{bmatrix} +1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & -1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & -1 \end{bmatrix}$	$\infty_x, m_y, m_z, T, m_x^o$	Double Texture	$2_y, m_y, m_z, T, \infty_x, T$
$\bar{1}0$	4.5	0	-1	0	$\begin{bmatrix} -1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & -1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & +1 \end{bmatrix}$	$2_x, m_y, m_z, T, 2_z^o$	Mixed double Mixed Texture	$m_y, T, 2_x, m_y, m_z, m_z, T$
$1\bar{2}$	7	$\pi$	1	2	$\begin{bmatrix} -1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & -1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & -1 \end{bmatrix}$	$\infty_x, m_y, m_z, T, m_x$	Mixed triple Mixed 2 Texture	$T, T, \infty_x, m_y, m_z$

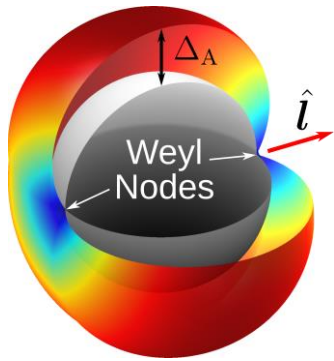
Variety of different types of domain walls are possible



# Vortices in the A phase

**A!**

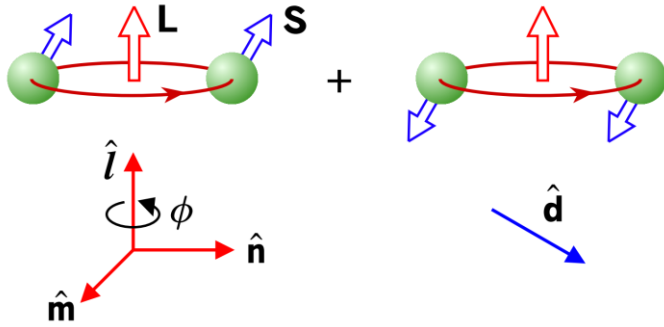
# Vortices in the A phase



Chiral phase with defined angular momentum direction  $|S_z L_z\rangle = |0+\rangle$

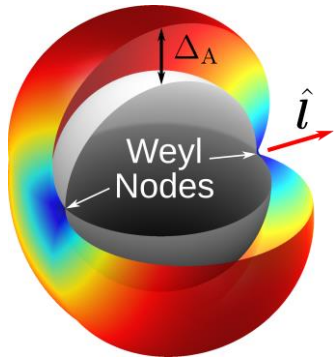
$$A_{\mu j} = \Delta_A \hat{d}_\mu (\hat{m}_j + i \hat{n}_j)$$

$$\hat{l} = \hat{m} \times \hat{n}$$



**A!**

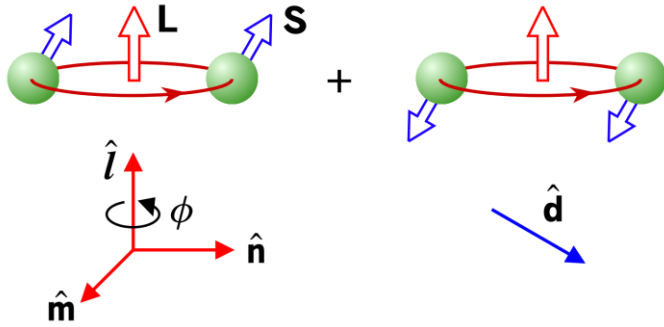
# Vortices in the A phase



Chiral phase with defined angular momentum direction  $|S_z L_z\rangle = |0+\rangle$

$$A_{\mu j} = \Delta_A \hat{d}_\mu (\hat{m}_j + i \hat{n}_j)$$

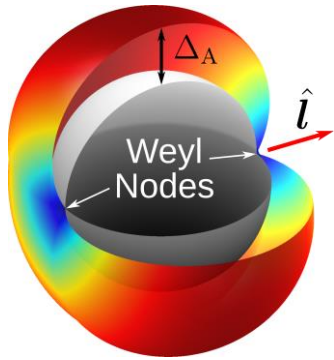
$$\hat{l} = \hat{m} \times \hat{n}$$



$$\mathbf{v}_s = \frac{\hbar}{2m_3} \nabla \phi \longrightarrow \nabla \times \mathbf{v}_s = 0$$

**A!**

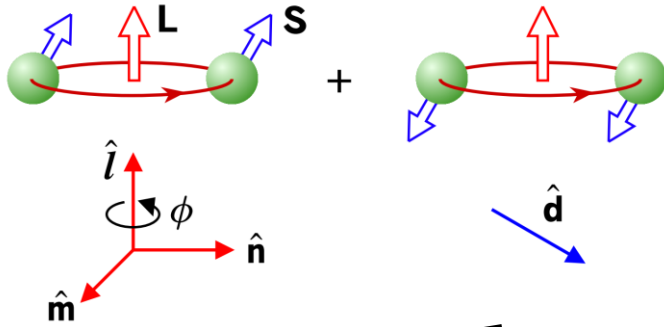
# Vortices in the A phase



Chiral phase with defined angular momentum direction  $|S_z L_z\rangle = |0+\rangle$

$$A_{\mu j} = \Delta_A \hat{d}_\mu (\hat{m}_j + i \hat{n}_j)$$

$$\hat{l} = \hat{m} \times \hat{n}$$



~~$$v_s = \frac{\hbar}{2m_3} \nabla \phi \quad \nabla \times v_s = 0$$~~

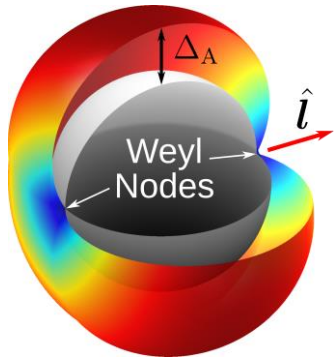
$$v_s = \frac{\hbar}{2m_3} \sum_i \hat{m}_i \nabla \hat{n}_i \quad \longrightarrow \quad \nabla \times v_s \neq 0$$

Mermin-Ho relation:

$$(\nabla \times v_s)_i = \frac{\hbar}{2m_3} \epsilon_{ijk} \hat{l} \cdot (\nabla_j \hat{l} \times \nabla_k \hat{l})$$

**A!**

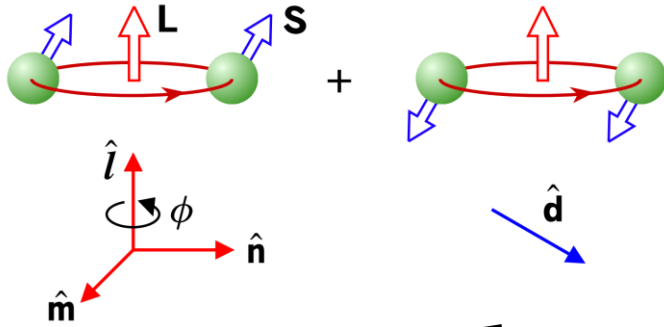
# Vortices in the A phase



Chiral phase with defined angular momentum direction  $|S_z L_z\rangle = |0+\rangle$

$$A_{\mu j} = \Delta_A \hat{d}_\mu (\hat{m}_j + i \hat{n}_j)$$

$$\hat{l} = \hat{m} \times \hat{n}$$

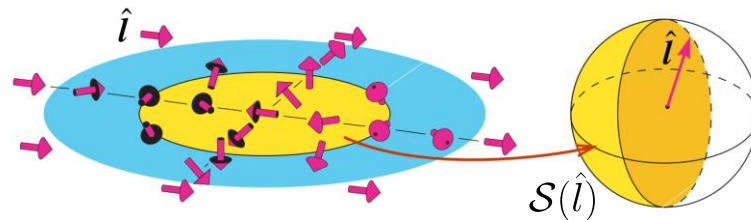


~~$$v_s = \frac{\hbar}{2m_3} \nabla \phi \quad \nabla \times v_s = 0$$~~

$$v_s = \frac{\hbar}{2m_3} \sum_i \hat{m}_i \nabla \hat{n}_i \longrightarrow \nabla \times v_s \neq 0$$

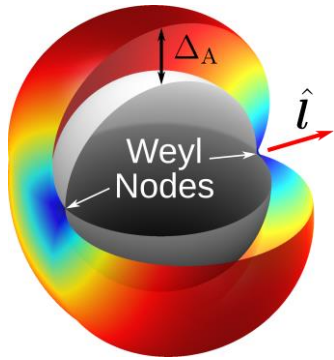
**A!** Mermin-Ho relation:

$$(\nabla \times v_s)_i = \frac{\hbar}{2m_3} \epsilon_{ijk} \hat{l} \cdot (\nabla_j \hat{l} \times \nabla_k \hat{l})$$



$$\int (\nabla \times v_s) dS = \frac{\hbar}{2m_3} \mathcal{S}(\hat{l})$$

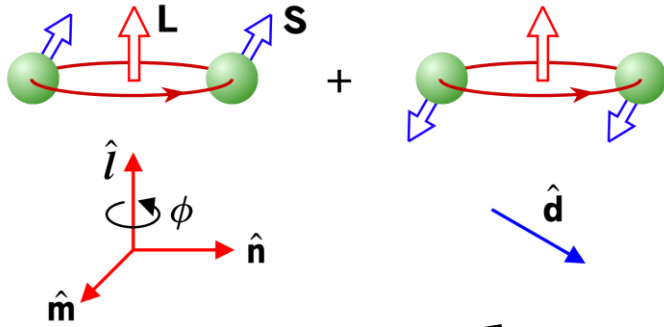
# Vortices in the A phase



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$$A_{\mu j} = \Delta_A \hat{d}_\mu (\hat{m}_j + i \hat{n}_j)$$

$$\hat{l} = \hat{m} \times \hat{n}$$



~~$$v_s = \frac{\hbar}{2m_3} \nabla \phi \quad \nabla \times v_s = 0$$~~

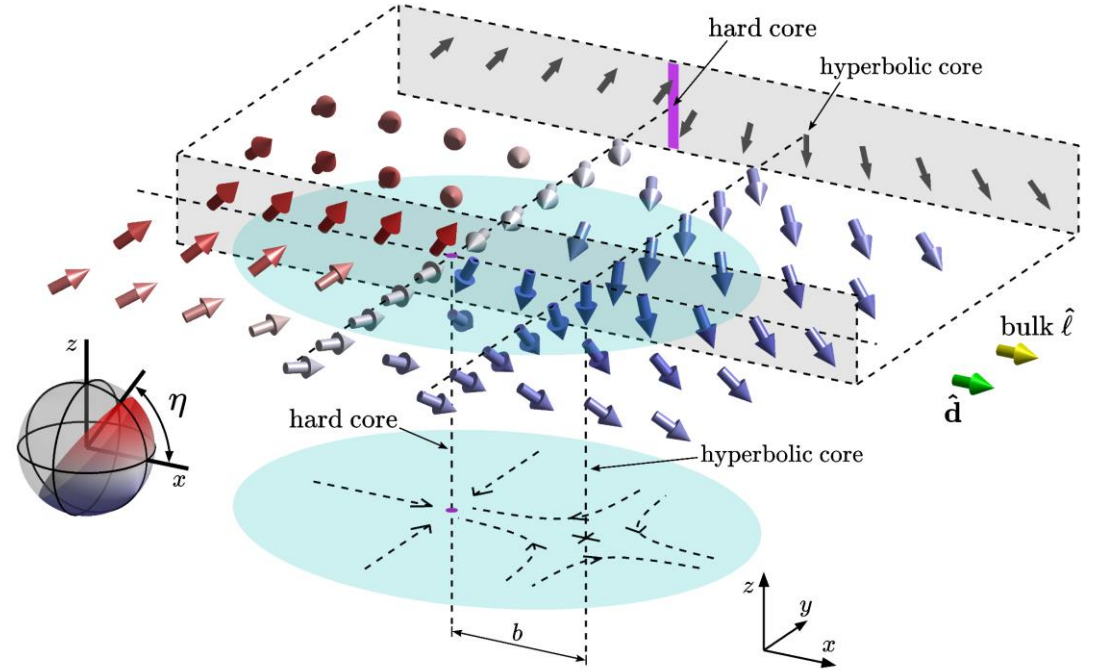
$$v_s = \frac{\hbar}{2m_3} \sum_i \hat{m}_i \nabla \hat{n}_i \quad \longrightarrow \quad \nabla \times v_s \neq 0$$

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**A!**

# Single-quantum vortex:



Rantanen et al., JLTTP 220, 88 (2025)

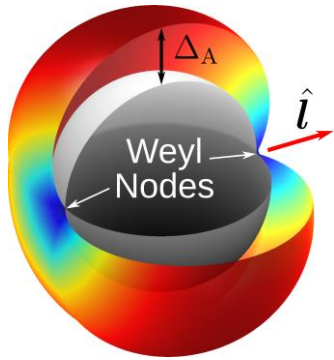
Vorticity carried in  $\hat{l}$  vector texture

Only observed when rotating during transition

Diagram of a vortex core with a vector texture and a sphere representing the texture. The sphere is labeled  $\mathcal{S}(\hat{l})$ .

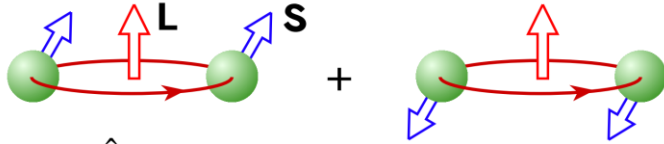
$$\int (\nabla \times v_s) dS = \frac{\hbar}{2m_3} \mathcal{S}(\hat{l})$$

# Vortices in the A phase

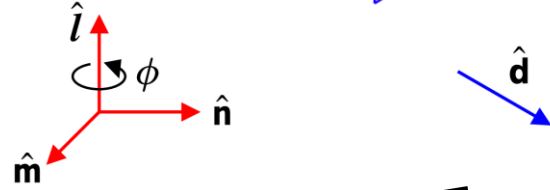


Chiral phase with defined angular momentum direction  $|S_z L_z\rangle = |0+\rangle$

$$A_{\mu j} = \Delta_A \hat{d}_\mu (\hat{m}_j + i \hat{n}_j)$$



$$\hat{l} = \hat{m} \times \hat{n}$$



~~$$\mathbf{v}_s = \frac{\hbar}{2m_3} \nabla \phi$$~~
~~$$\nabla \times \mathbf{v}_s = 0$$~~

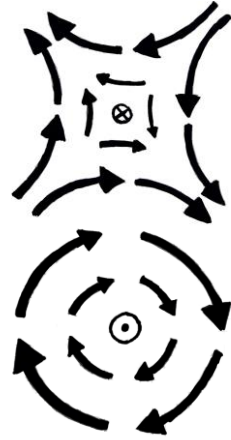
$$\mathbf{v}_s = \frac{\hbar}{2m_3} \sum_i \hat{m}_i \nabla \hat{n}_i \longrightarrow \nabla \times \mathbf{v}_s \neq 0$$

Mermin-Ho relation:

$$(\nabla \times \mathbf{v}_s)_i = \frac{\hbar}{2m_3} \epsilon_{ijk} \hat{l} \cdot (\nabla_j \hat{l} \times \nabla_k \hat{l})$$

**A!**

## Double-quantum vortex:

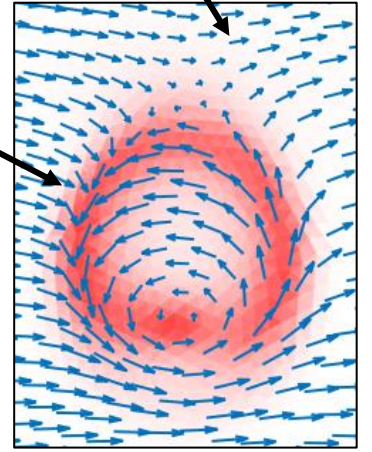


“merons”

Each meron carries one quantum of circulation

Arrows:  $\hat{l}$

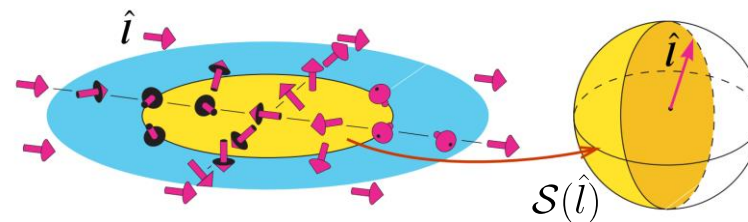
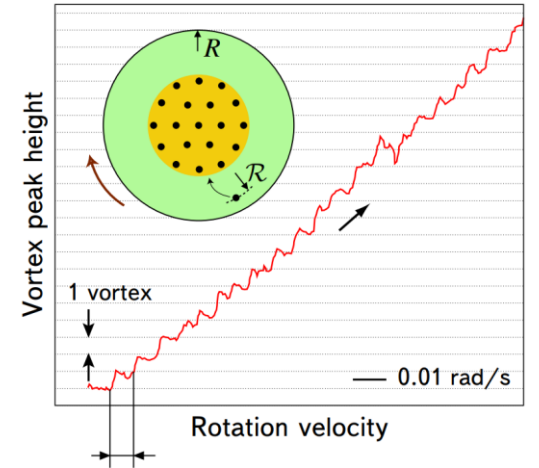
Color:  $\nabla \times \mathbf{v}_s$



Rantanen & Eltsov., PRB 107, 104505 (2023)

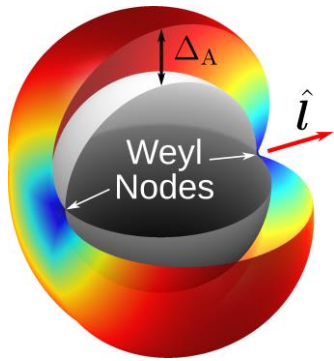
Higher energy than SQVs, but easier to nucleate

“Skyrmion” or “Bimeron”



$$\int (\nabla \times \mathbf{v}_s) dS = \frac{\hbar}{2m_3} \mathcal{S}(\hat{l})$$

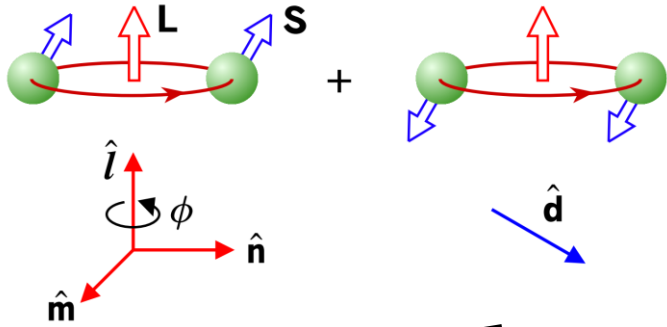
# Vortices in the A phase



Chiral phase with defined angular momentum direction  $|S_z L_z\rangle = |0+\rangle$

$$A_{\mu j} = \Delta_A \hat{d}_\mu (\hat{m}_j + i \hat{n}_j)$$

$$\hat{l} = \hat{m} \times \hat{n}$$



~~$$v_s = \frac{\hbar}{2m_3} \nabla \phi$$

$$\nabla \times v_s = 0$$~~

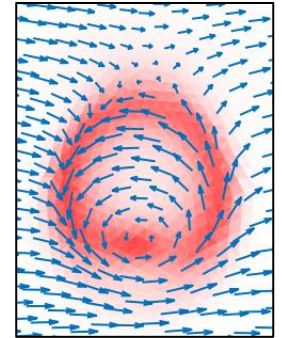
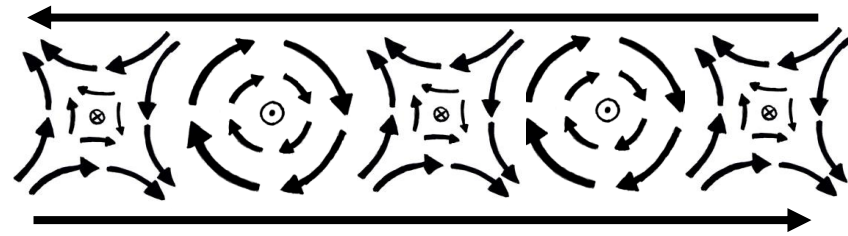
$$v_s = \frac{\hbar}{2m_3} \sum_i \hat{m}_i \nabla \hat{n}_i \longrightarrow \nabla \times v_s \neq 0$$

Mermin-Ho relation:

$$(\nabla \times v_s)_i = \frac{\hbar}{2m_3} \epsilon_{ijk} \hat{l} \cdot (\nabla_j \hat{l} \times \nabla_k \hat{l})$$

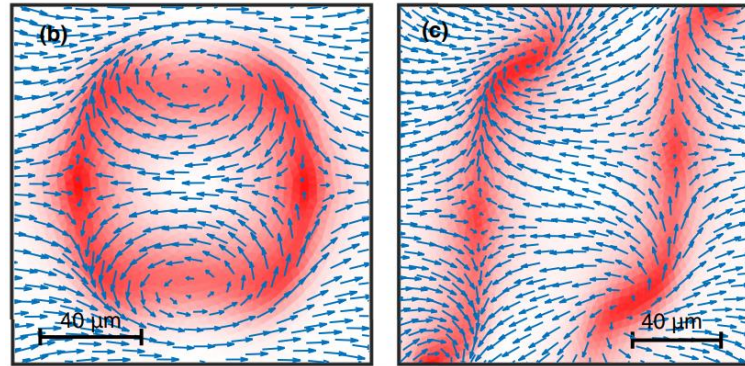
**A!**

Vortex sheet: Planar object carrying vorticity



DQV: smallest sheet

Chain of merons

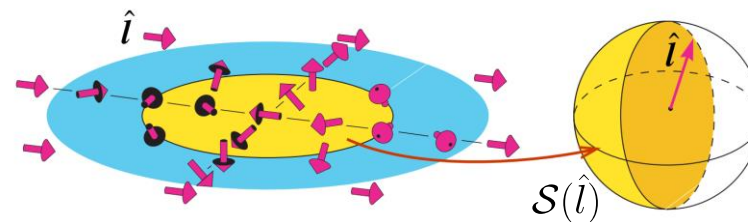
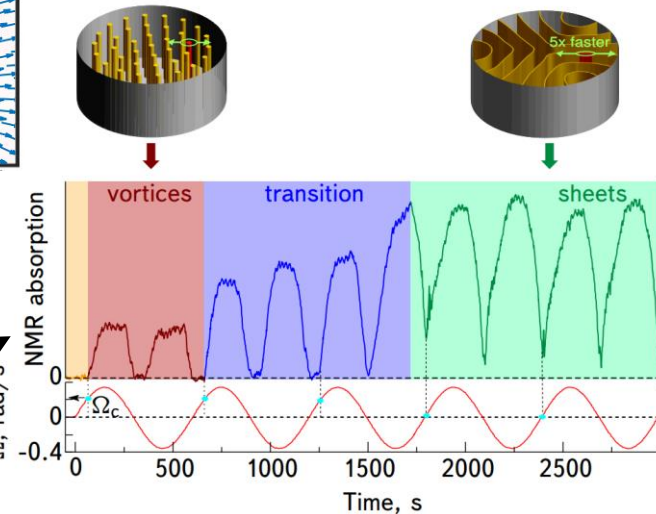


Closed

Open

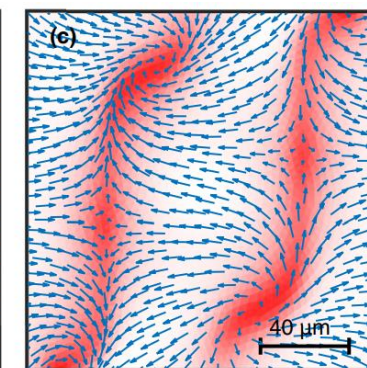
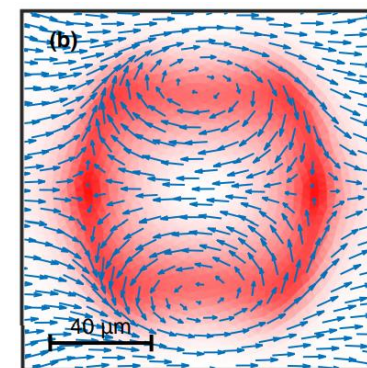
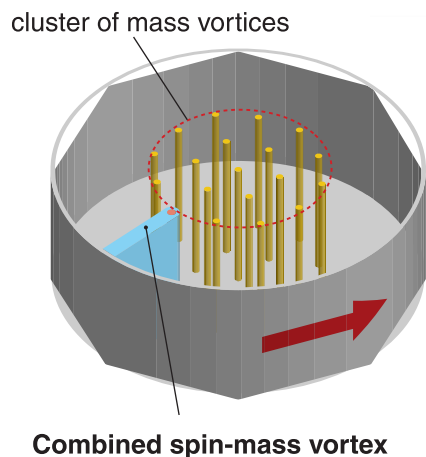
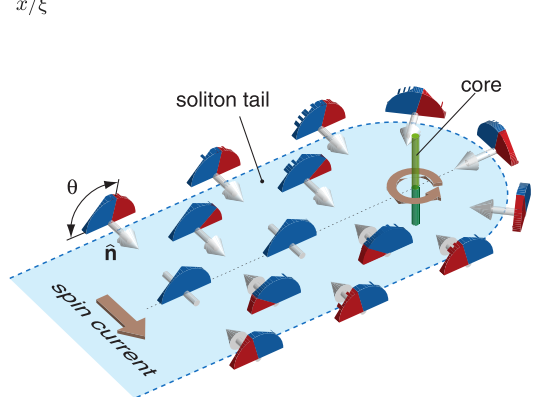
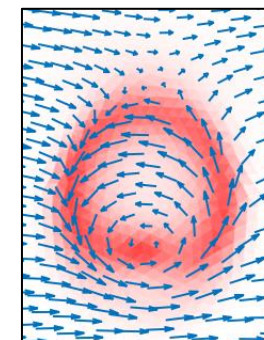
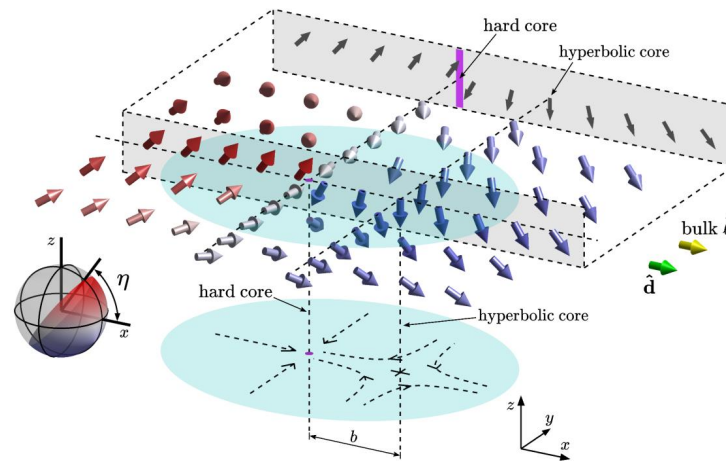
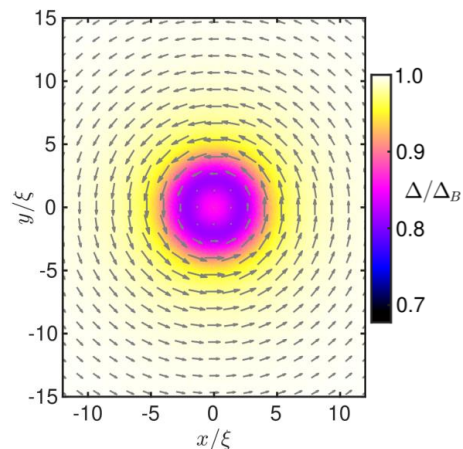
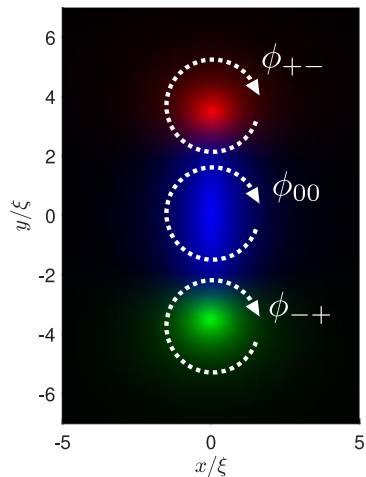
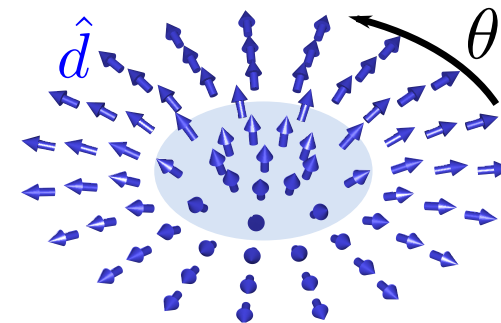
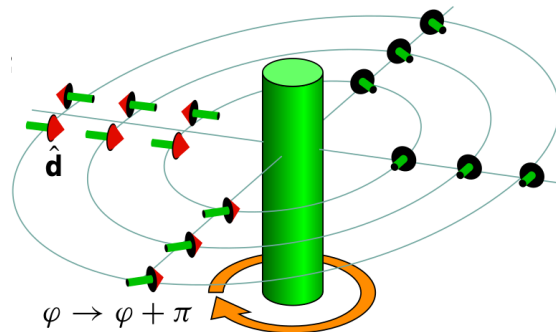
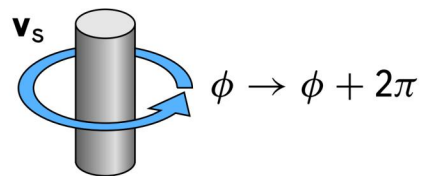
Rantanen & Eltsov., PRB 107, 104505 (2023)

Created by rapidly oscillating rotation



$$\int (\nabla \times v_s) dS = \frac{\hbar}{2m_3} \mathcal{S}(\hat{l})$$

# Vortices in superfluid $^3\text{He}$



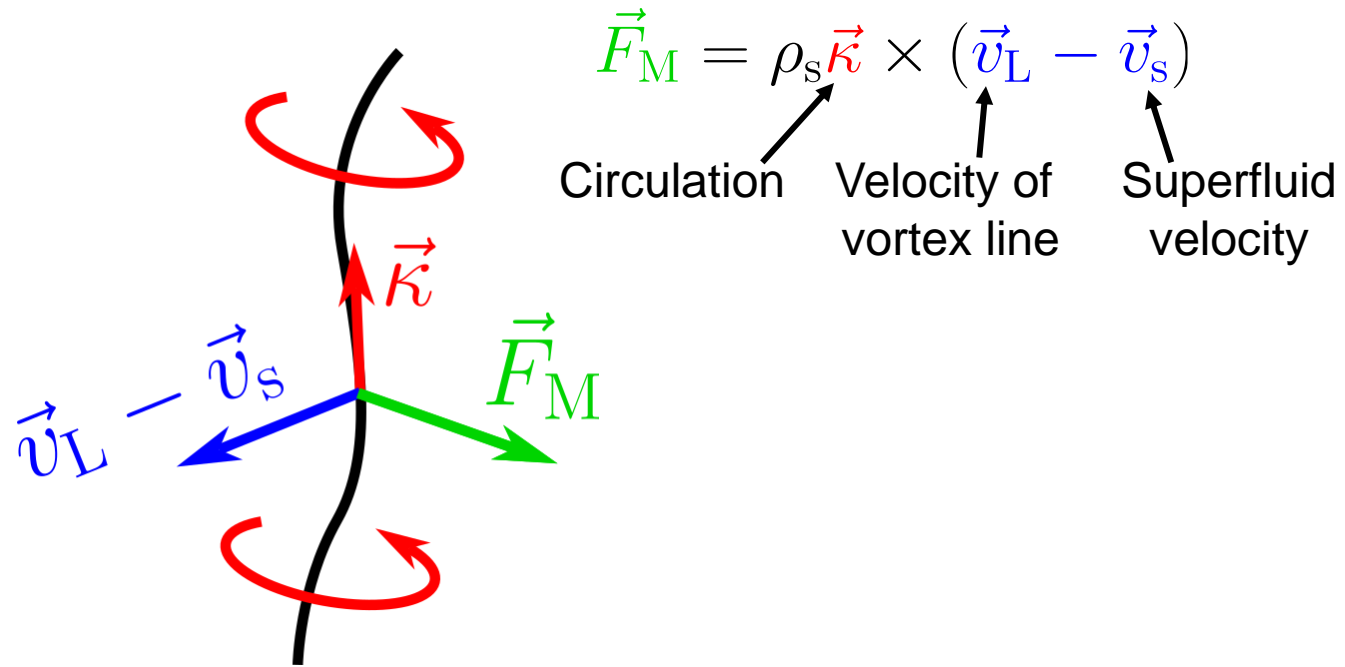
**A!**

## **Part 2: Vortex pinning in superfluid $^3\text{He}$**

**A!**

# Vortex pinning

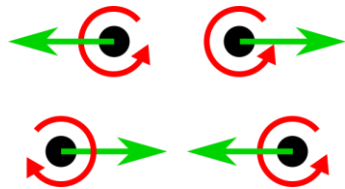
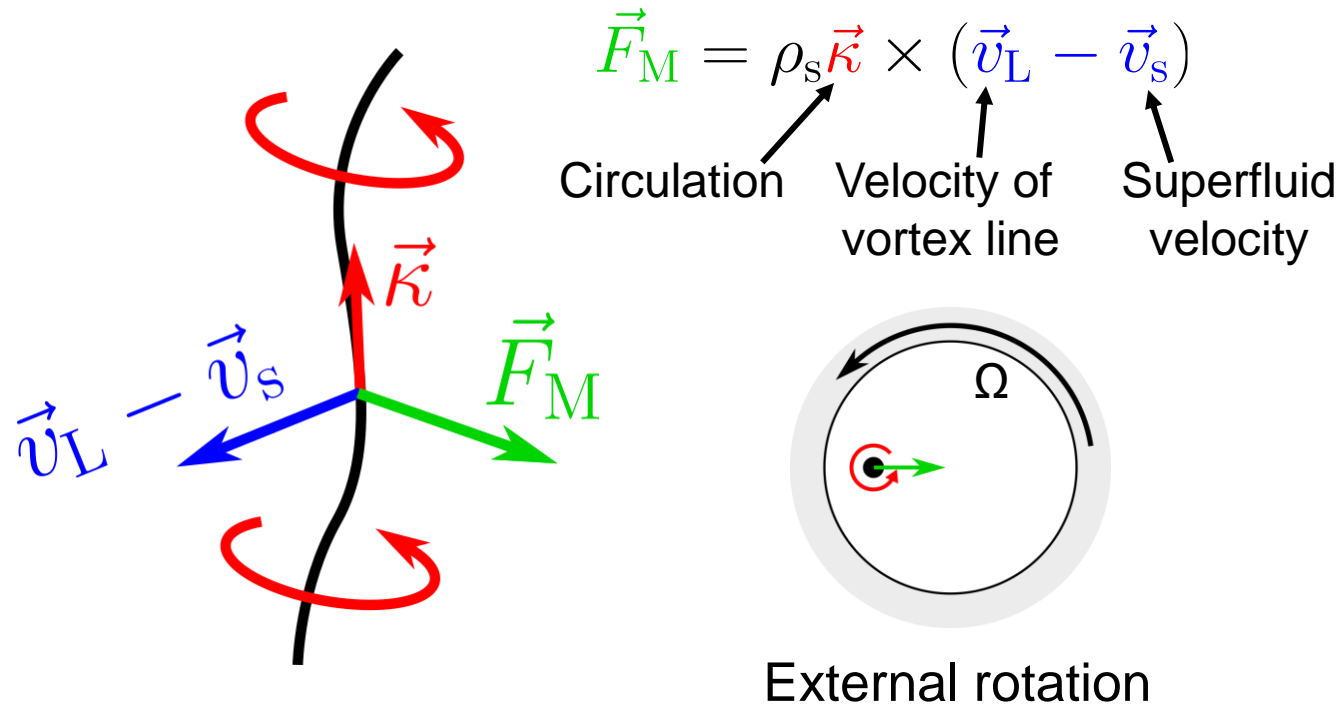
Free vortices move, pushed by the Magnus force



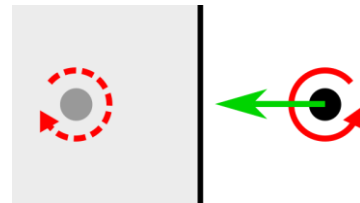
**A!**

# Vortex pinning

Free vortices move, pushed by the Magnus force



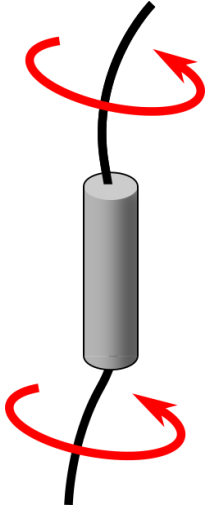
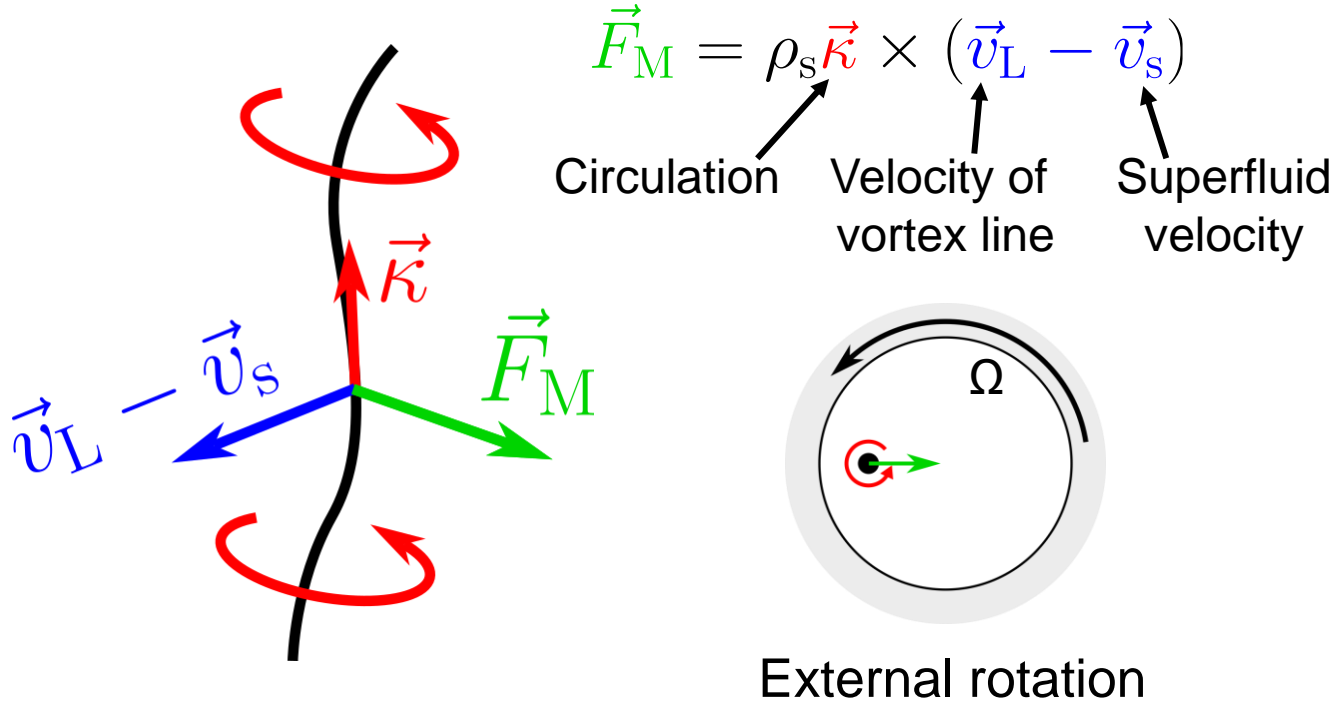
**A!** Interaction between vortices



Attraction to images

# Vortex pinning

Free vortices move, pushed by the Magnus force

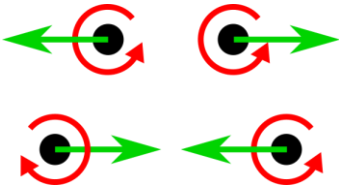


Vortices can be **pinned** on objects

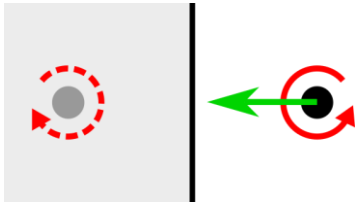
Vortex is unable to move until force exceeds a critical threshold

**A!**

Interaction between vortices

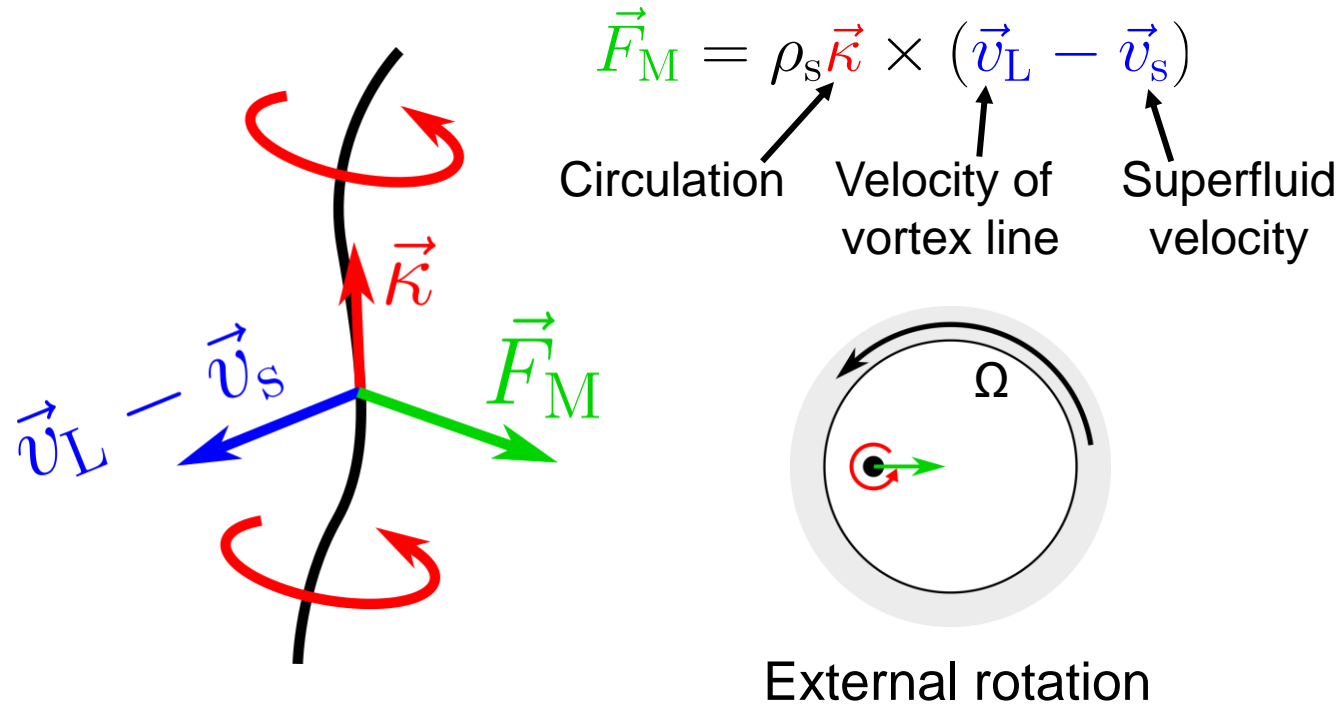


Attraction to images



# Vortex pinning

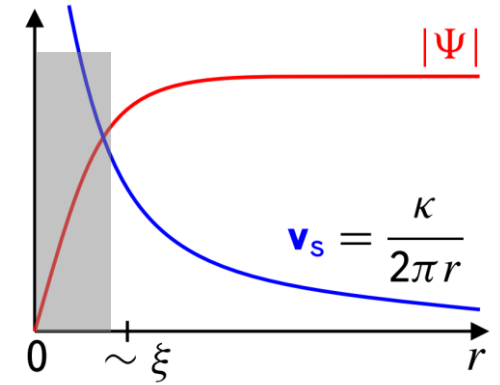
Free vortices move, pushed by the Magnus force



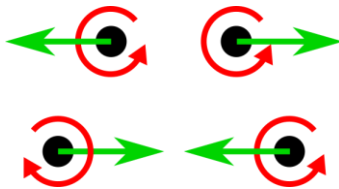
Vortices can be **pinned** on objects

Vortex is unable to move until force exceeds a critical threshold

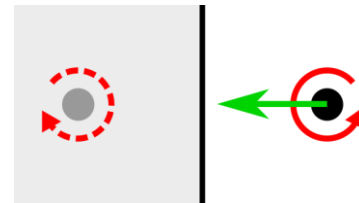
**Simple picture:**  
Part of the core is displaced by pinning site



**A!** Interaction between vortices

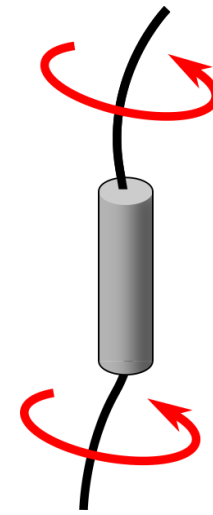
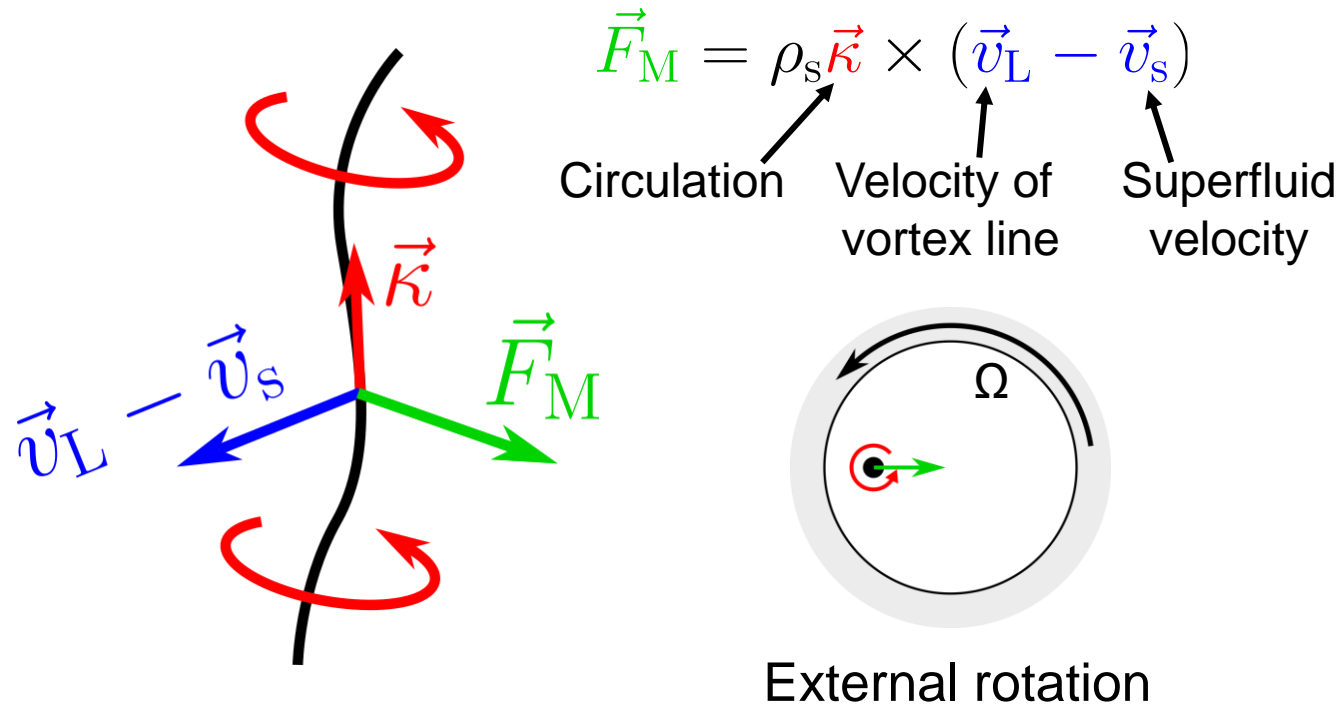


Attraction to images



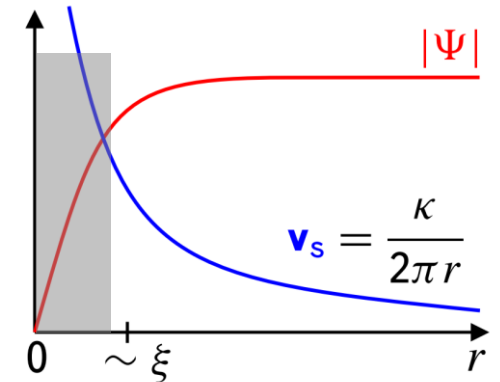
# Vortex pinning

Free vortices move, pushed by the Magnus force



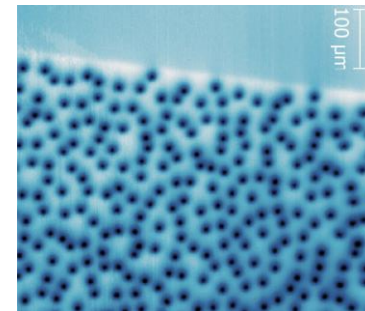
Vortices can be **pinned** on objects

Vortex is unable to move until force exceeds a critical threshold

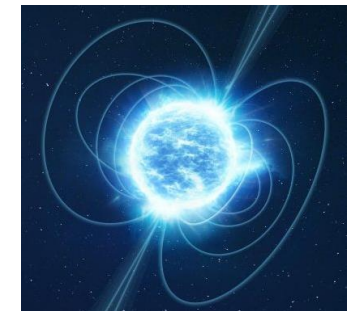


**Simple picture:**  
Part of the core is displaced by pinning site

**Relevance:**

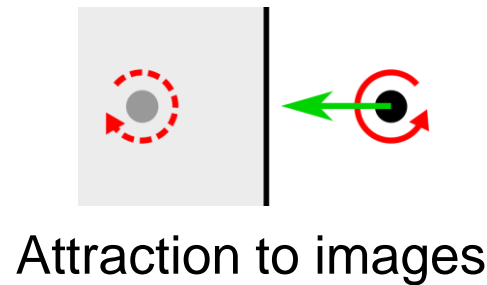
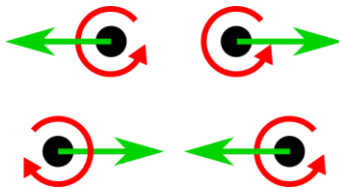


Superconductors



Neutron star glitches

**A!** Interaction between vortices

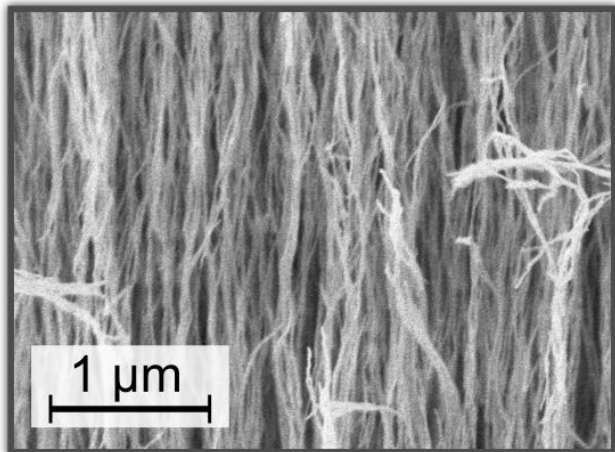


Attraction to images

# Pinning in $^3\text{He}$

## Microscopic:

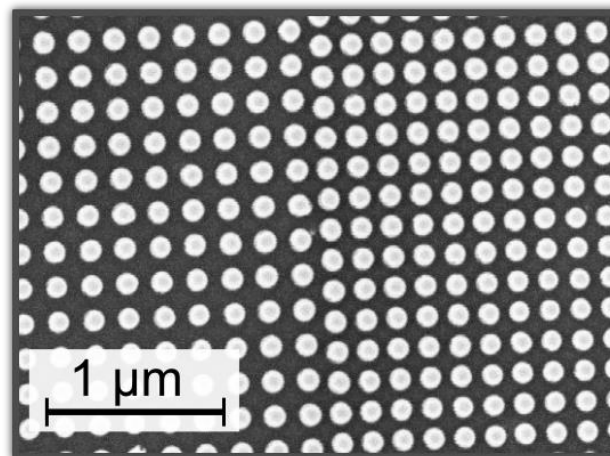
Chemically grown nanomaterials



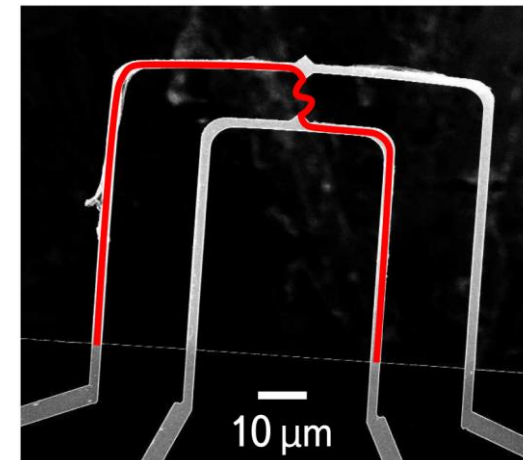
“nafen”  $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$  strands with ~8 nm diameters

## Mesoscopic:

Nanofabricated substrates and devices



Silicon pillars less than 100 nm in diameter



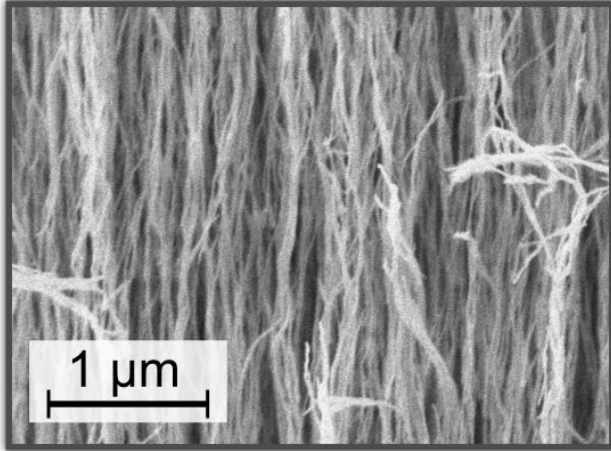
Nanomechanical devices micrometers in size

**A!**

# Pinning in $^3\text{He}$

## Microscopic:

Chemically grown nanomaterials



“nafen”  $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$  strands  
with ~8 nm diameters

Energy from  
point impurities:  $A_{\alpha i} I_{ij}(\vec{r}) A_{\alpha j}^*$

$$I_{ij} \propto \sigma_{\perp} (\delta_{ij} - \hat{n}_i \hat{n}_j) + \sigma_{\parallel} \hat{n}_i \hat{n}_j$$

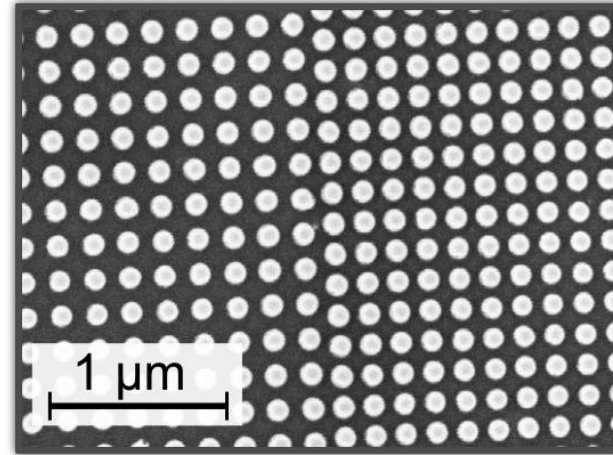
**A!**

Scattering cross sections

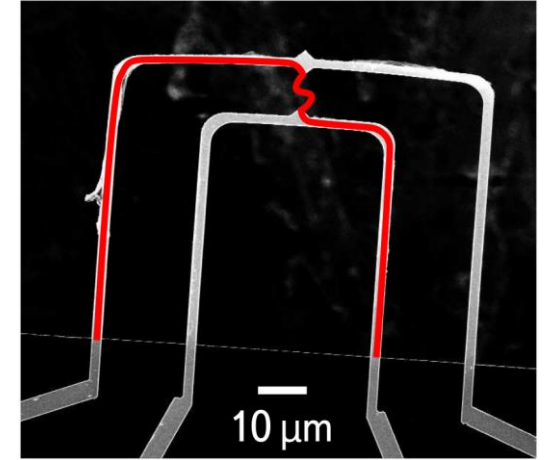
Strand direction

## Mesoscopic:

Nanofabricated substrates and devices



Silicon pillars less than  
100 nm in diameter

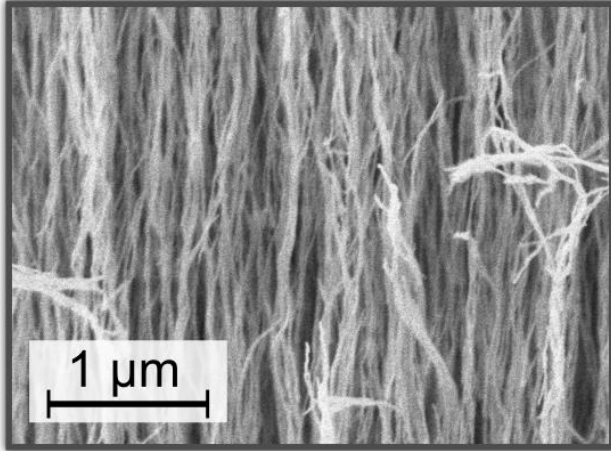


Nanomechanical devices  
micrometers in size

# Pinning in $^3\text{He}$

## Microscopic:

Chemically grown nanomaterials



“nafen”  $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$  strands with  $\sim 8$  nm diameters

Energy from point impurities:

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$$I_{ij} \propto \sigma_{\perp} (\delta_{ij} - \hat{n}_i \hat{n}_j) + \sigma_{\parallel} \hat{n}_i \hat{n}_j$$

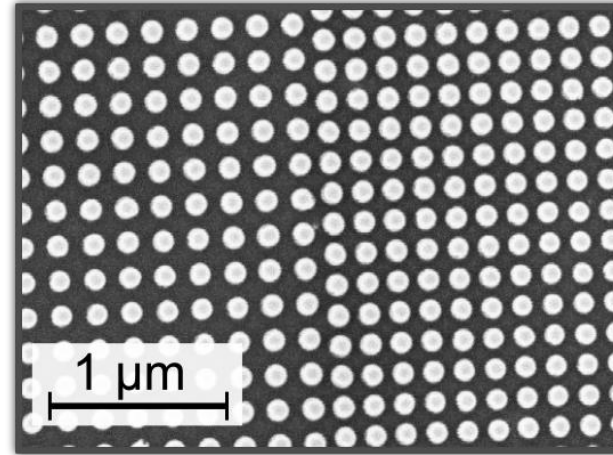
**A!**

Scattering cross sections

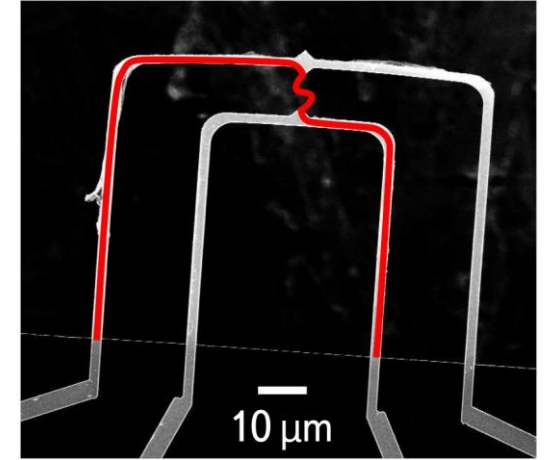
Strand direction

## Mesoscopic:

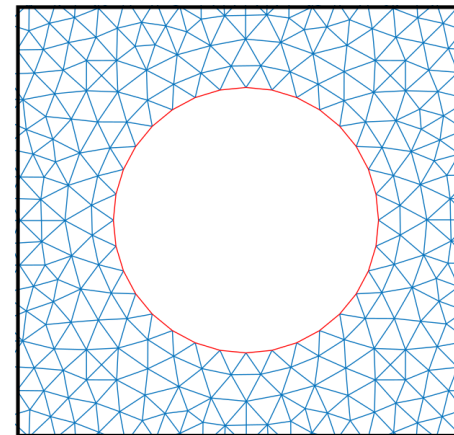
Nanofabricated substrates and devices



Silicon pillars less than 100 nm in diameter



Nanomechanical devices micrometers in size



Objects modeled as actual geometry

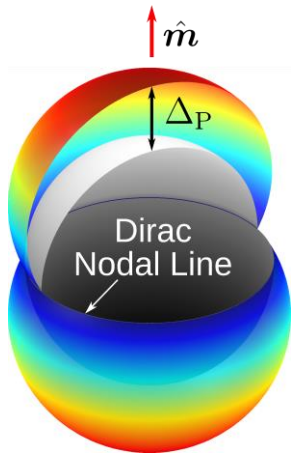
Specular boundary conditions

# Point impurity model

Randomly generated impurities

Denser regions can  
**pin** topological objects

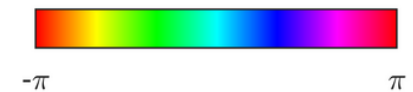
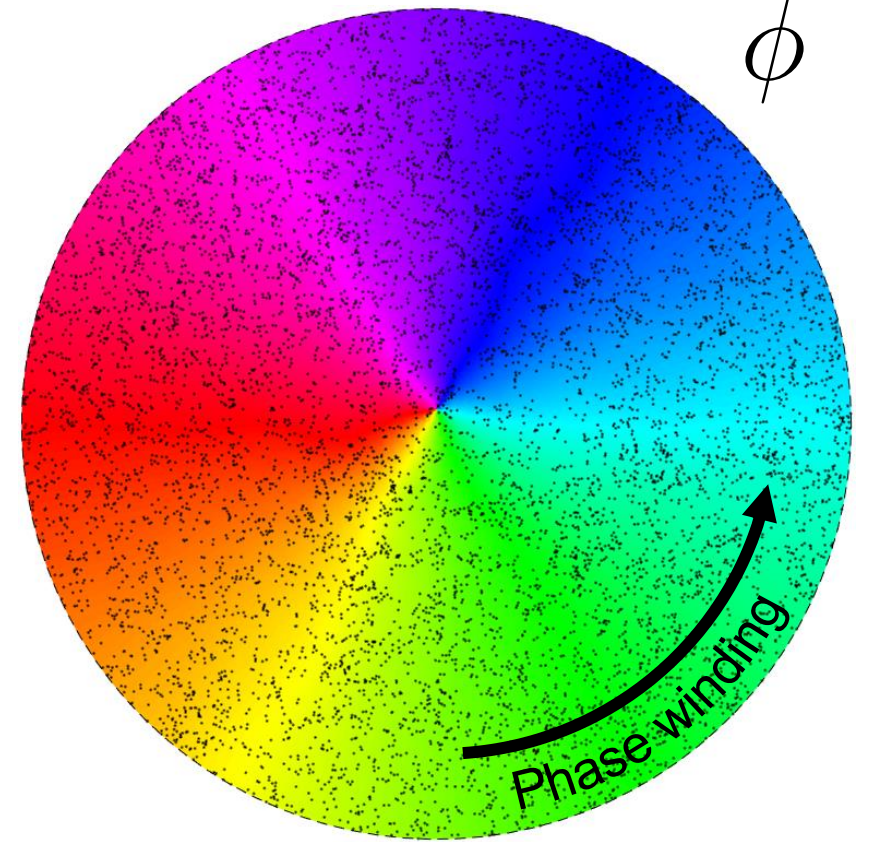
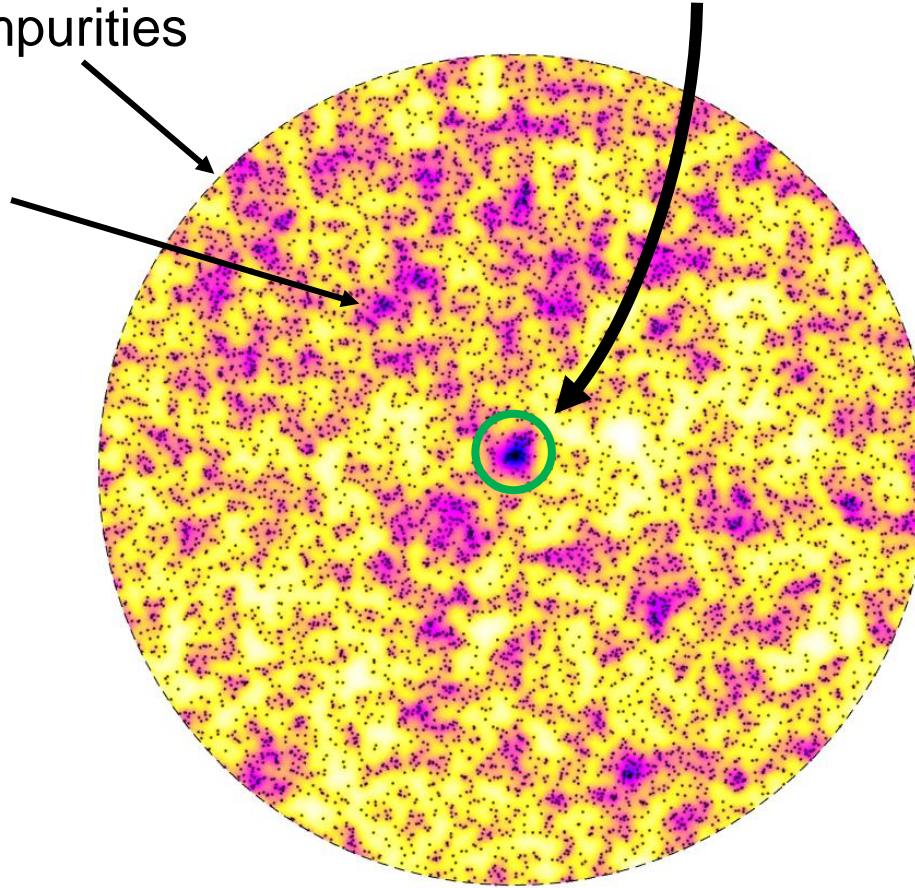
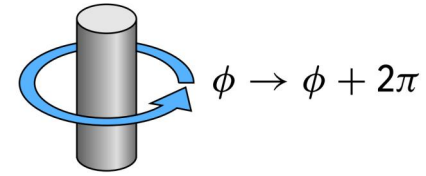
$$A_{\mu j} = \Delta_P e^{i\phi} \hat{d}_\mu \hat{m}_j$$



Polar phase

**A!**

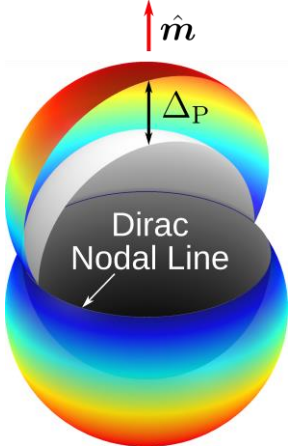
Single-quantum  
vortex



# Point impurity model

Phase transitions can generate **spin vortices** in Polar phase

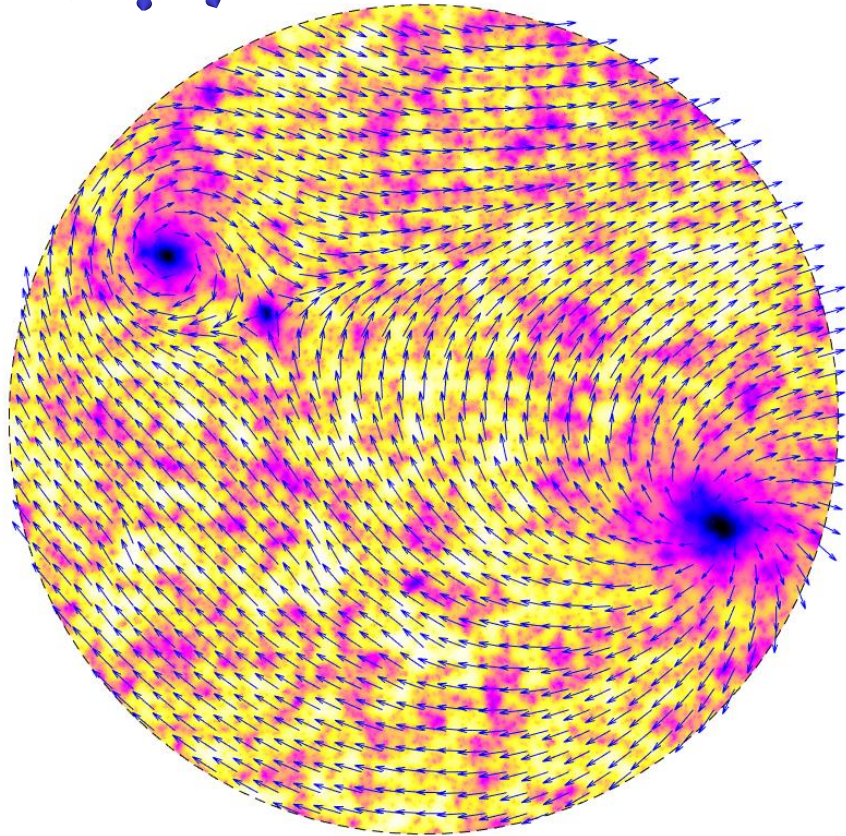
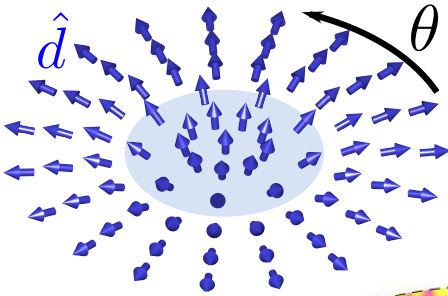
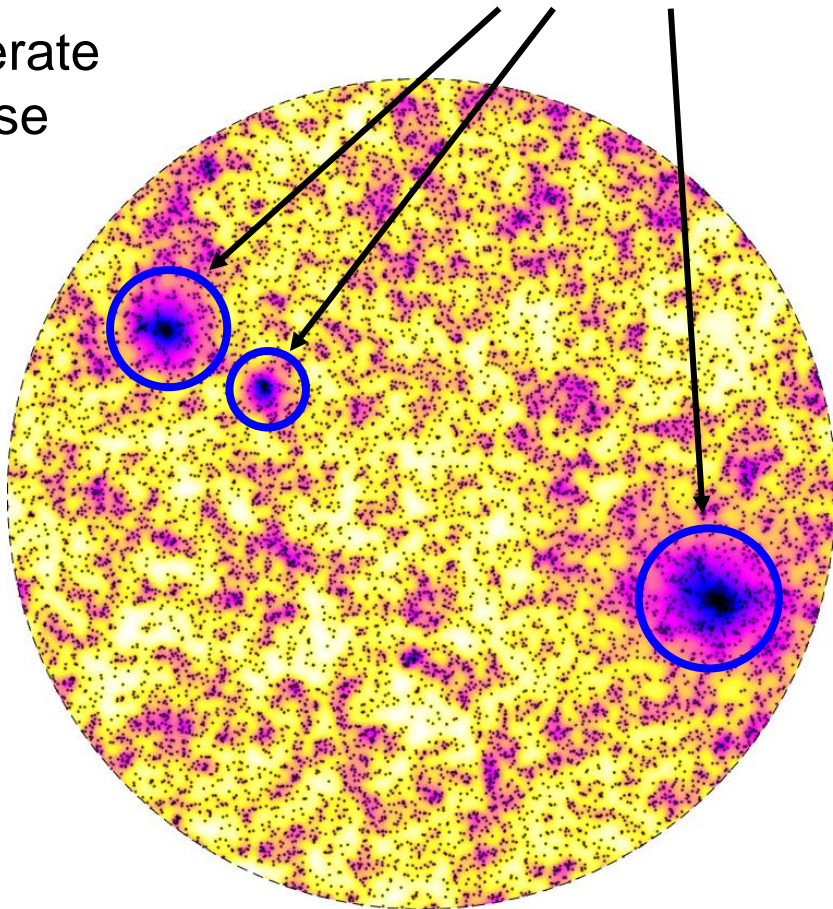
$$A_{\mu j} = \Delta_P e^{i\phi} \hat{d}_\mu \hat{m}_j$$



Polar phase

**A!**

Spin vortices



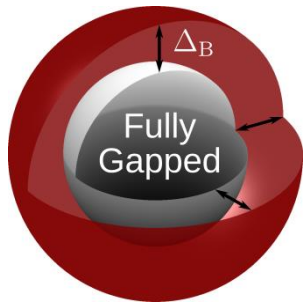
Arrows show direction of  $\hat{d}$

# Point impurity model

After cooling to B phase, domain walls form

Just like vortices, domain walls are **strongly pinned**

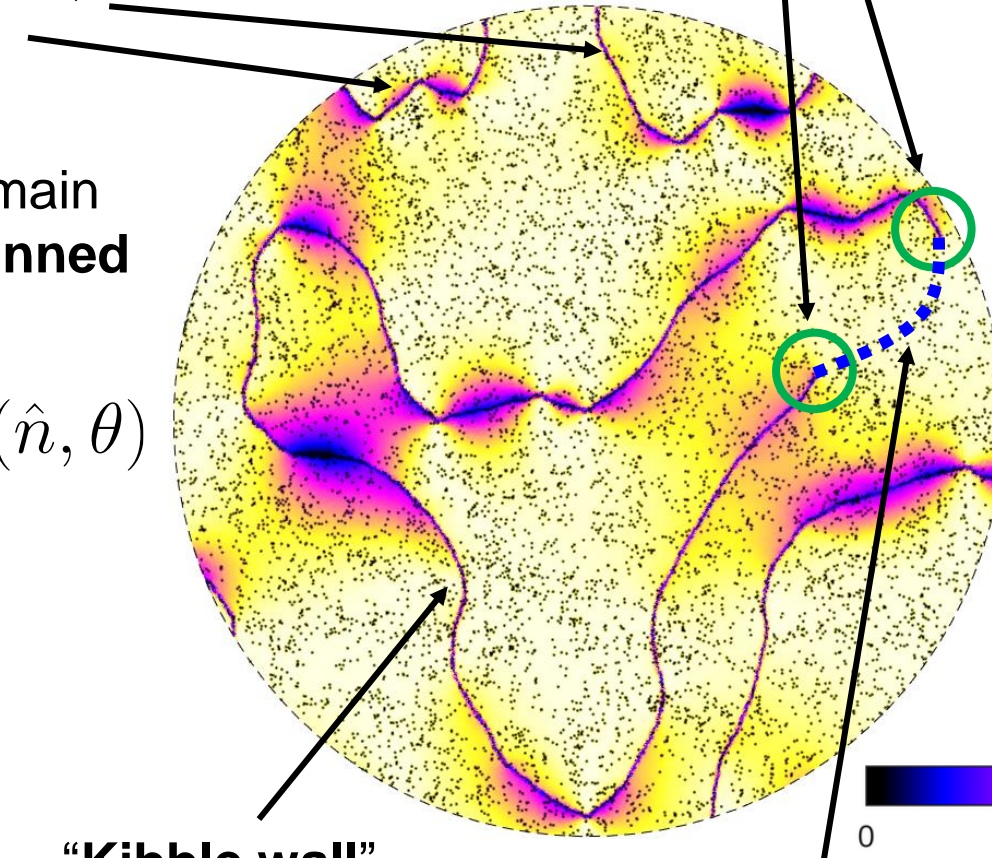
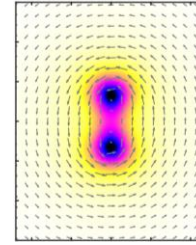
$$A_{\mu j} = \Delta_B e^{i\phi} R_{\mu j}(\hat{n}, \theta)$$



**B phase**

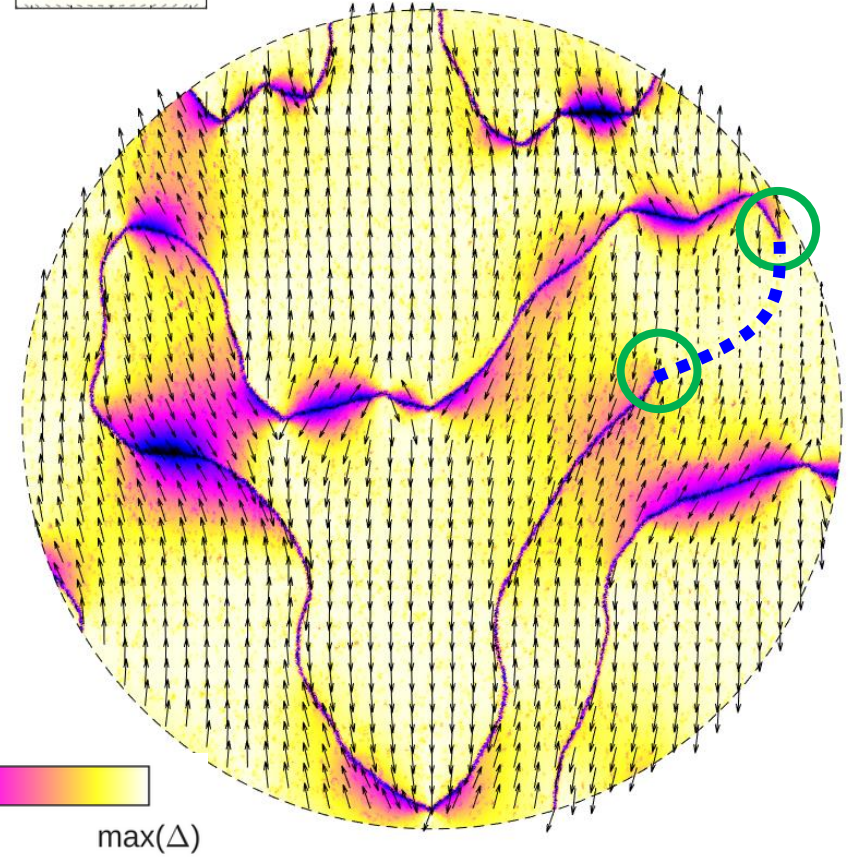
**A!**

Two half-quantum vortices



“Kibble wall”  
connecting HQVs

**Spin soliton**  
between HQVs



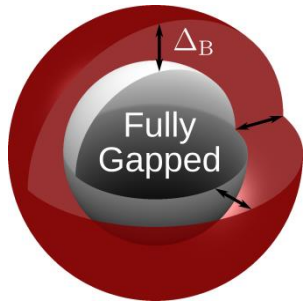
Arrows show direction of  $\hat{n}$

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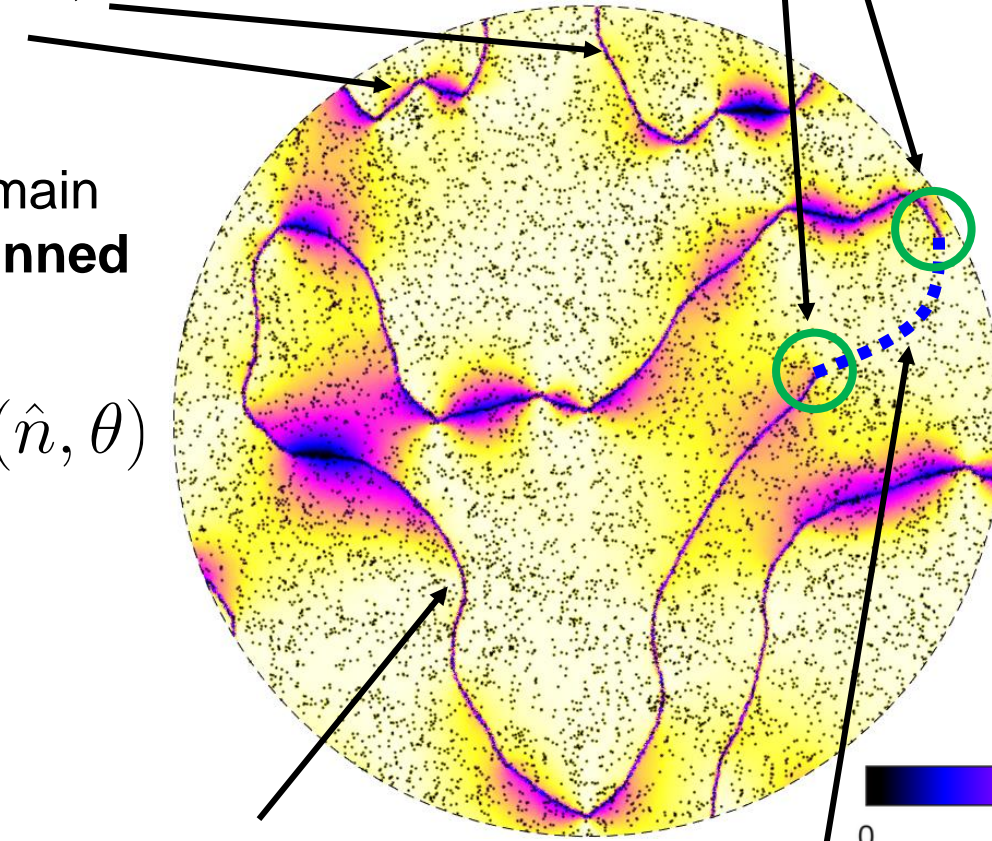
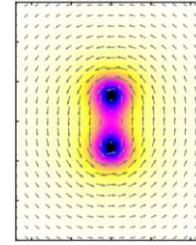
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**B phase**

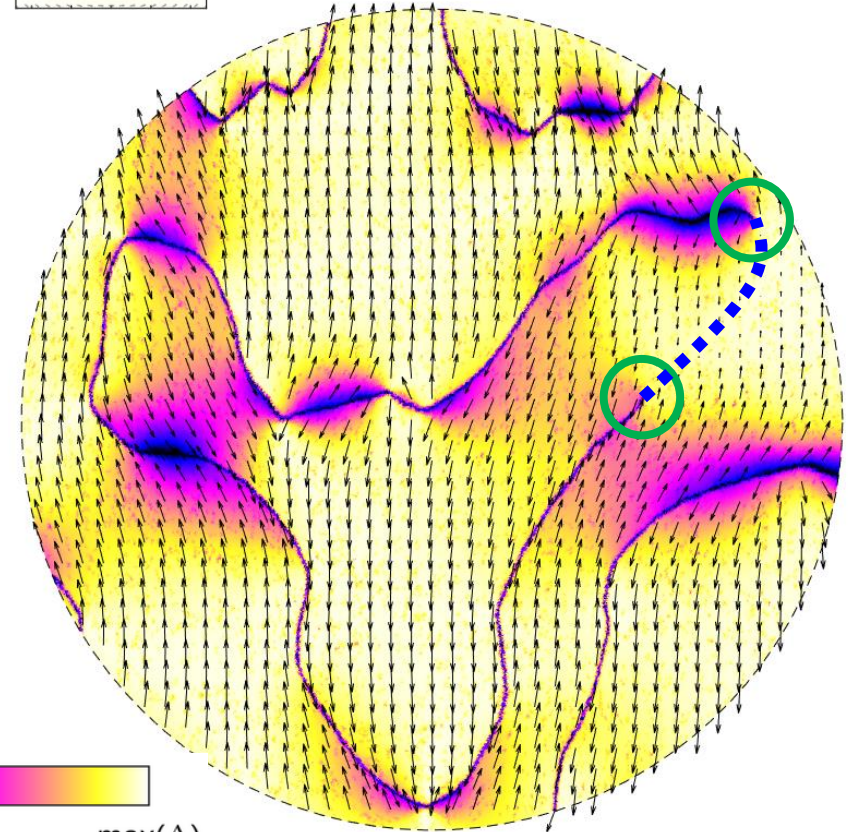
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Two **half-quantum vortices**



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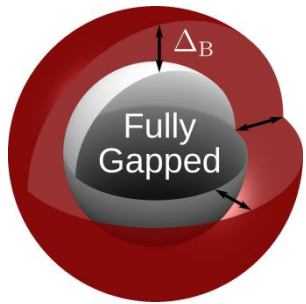
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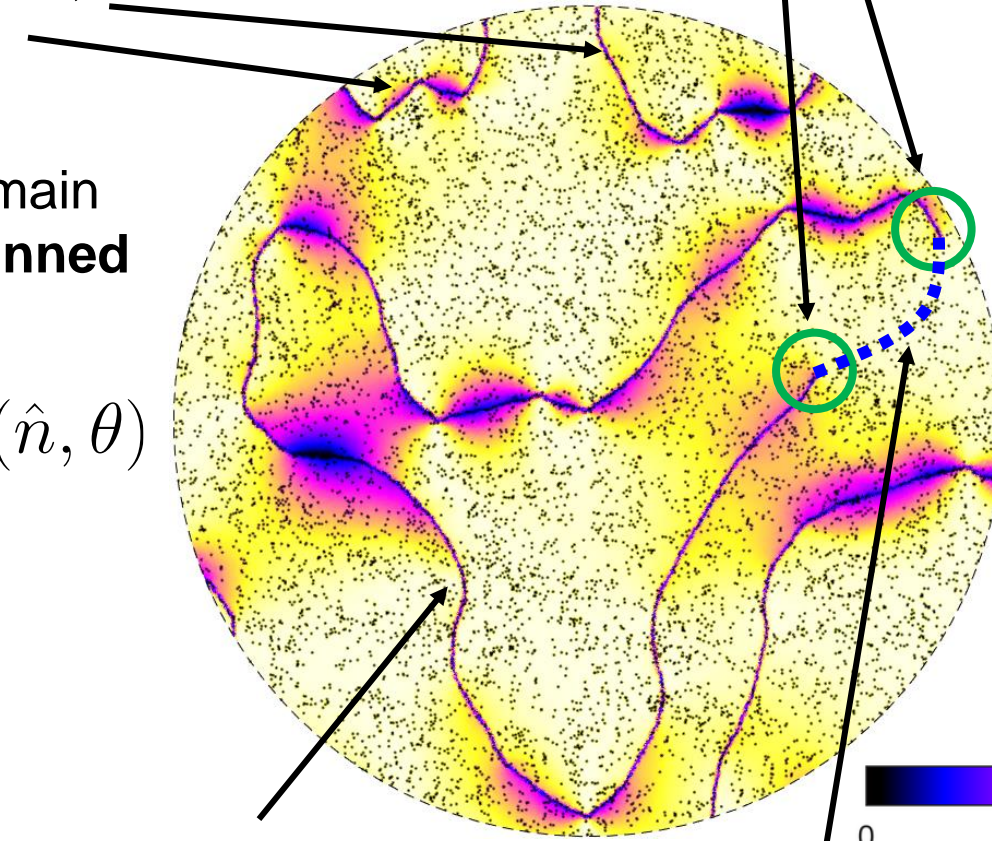
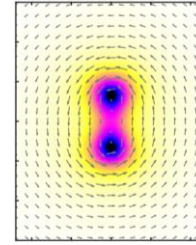
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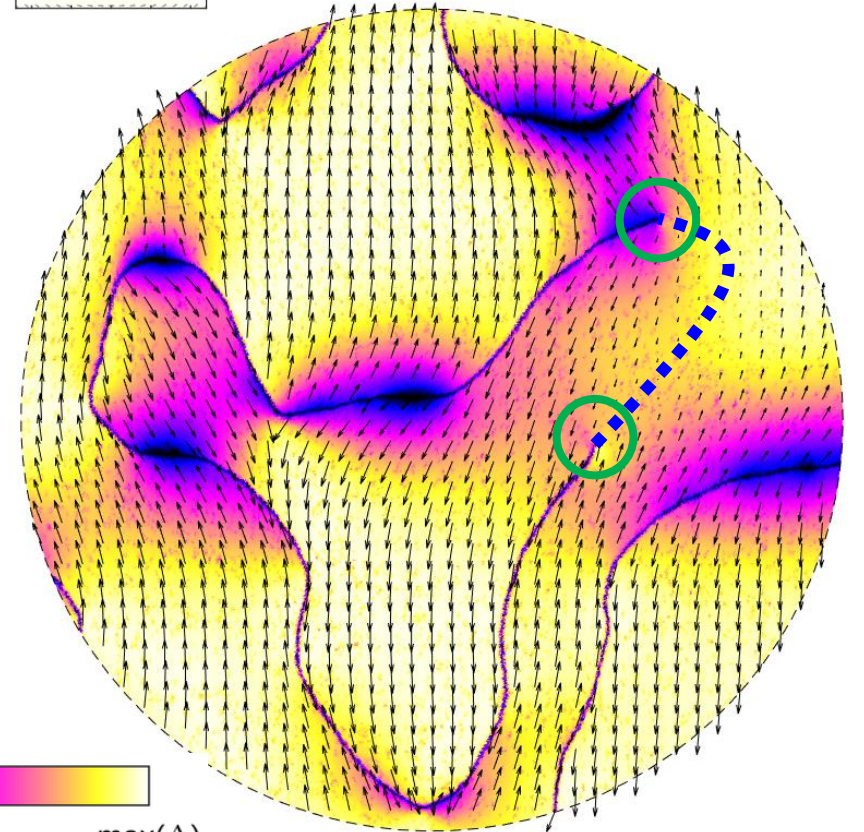
**A!**

Two half-quantum vortices



“Kibble wall” connecting HQVs

**Spin soliton** between HQVs



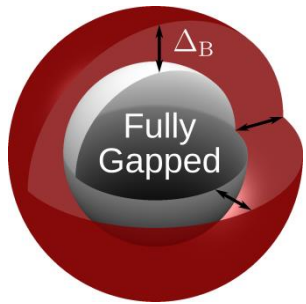
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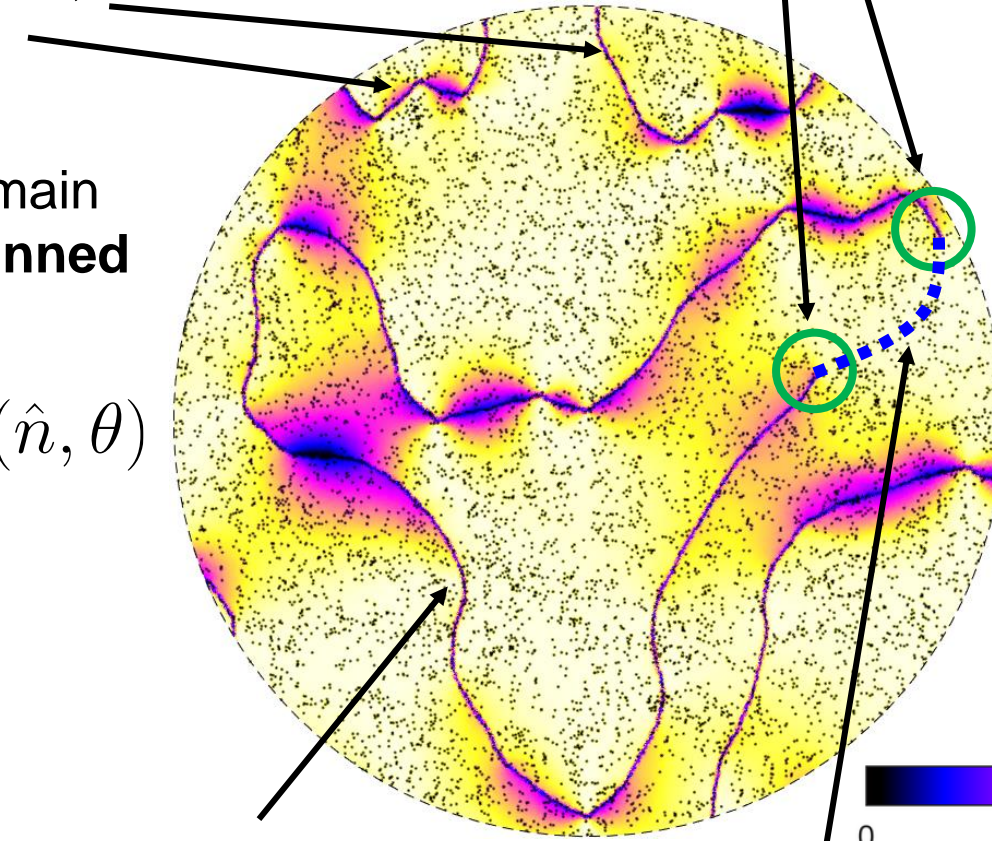
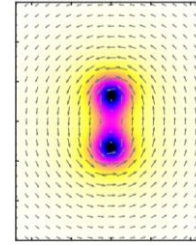
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**B phase**

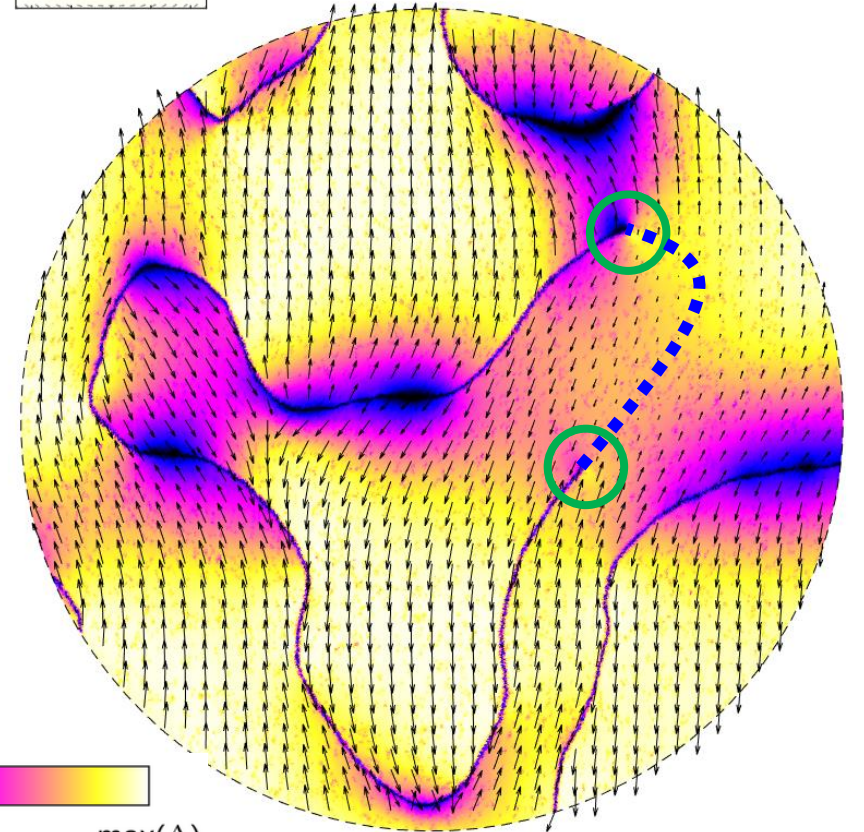
**A!**

Two half-quantum vortices



“Kibble wall”  
connecting HQVs

**Spin soliton**  
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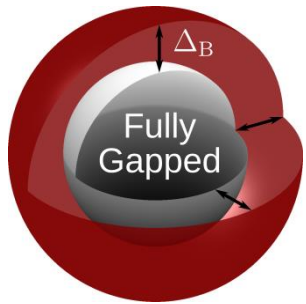
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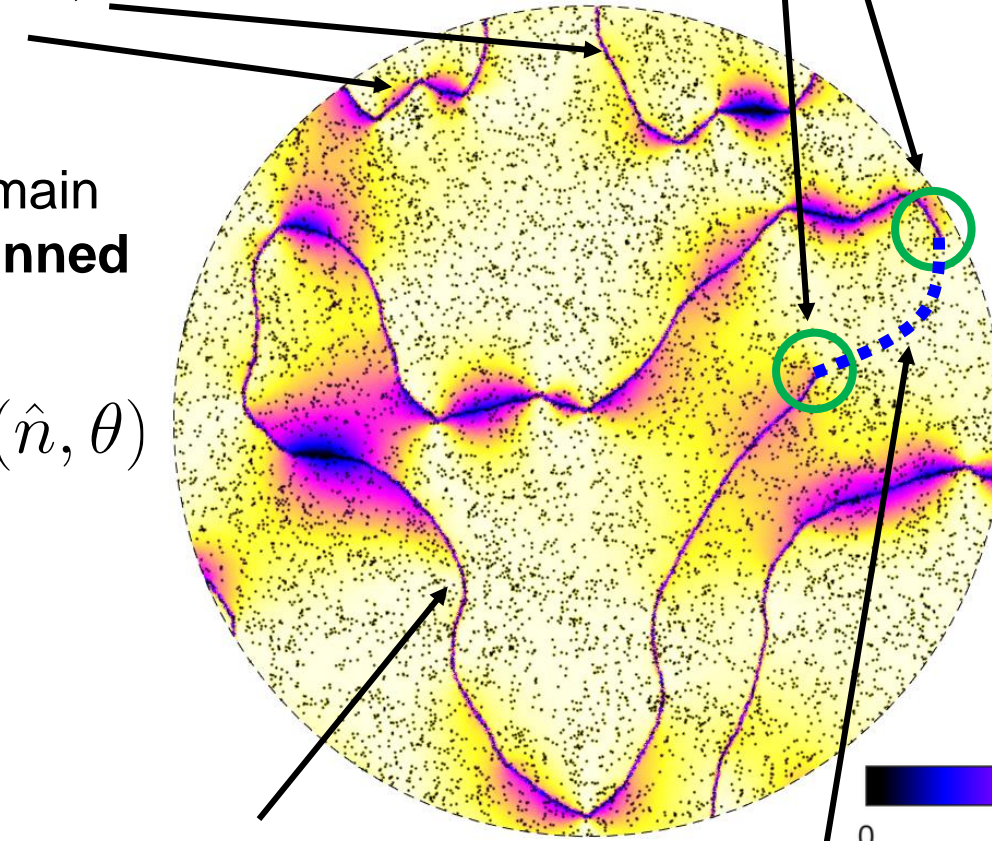
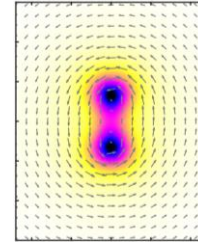
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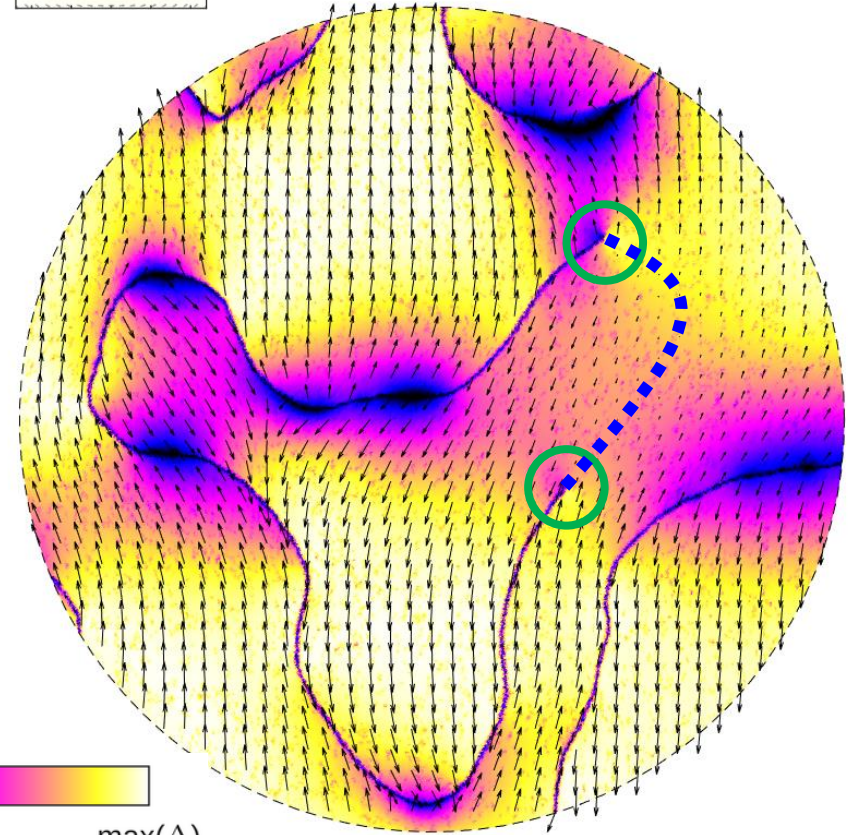
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Two half-quantum  
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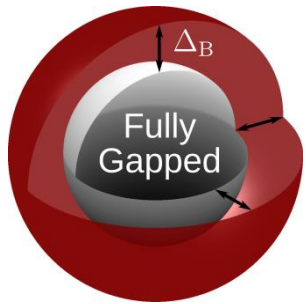
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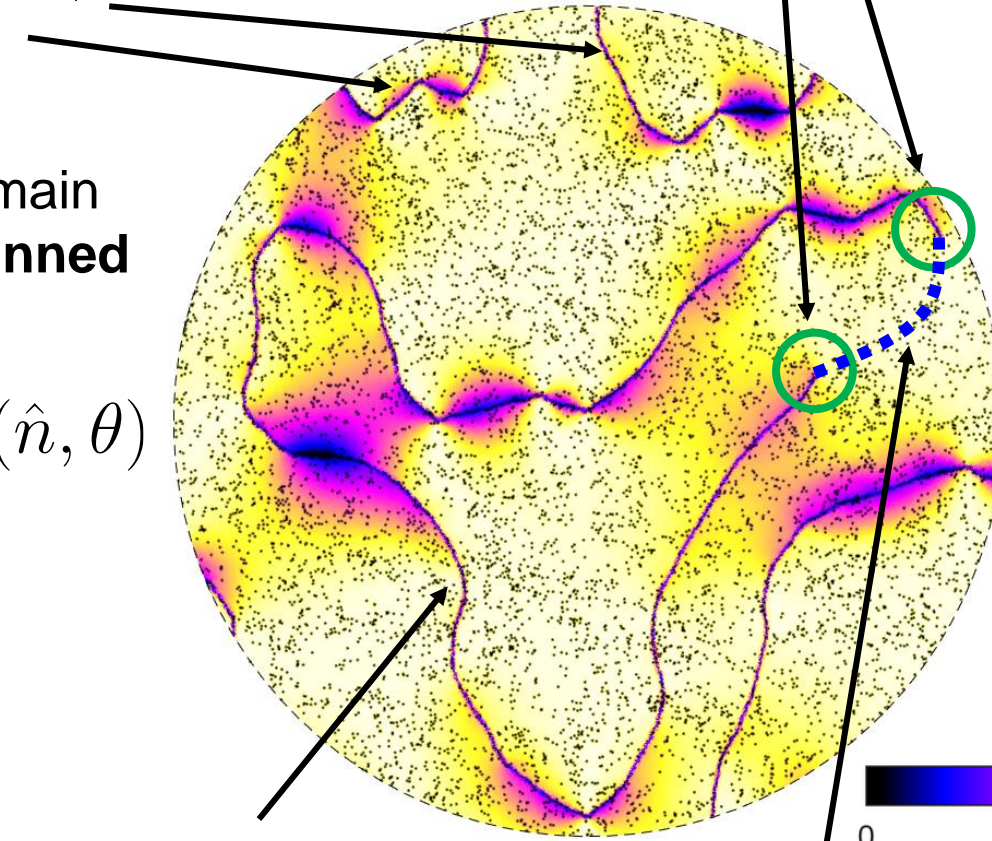
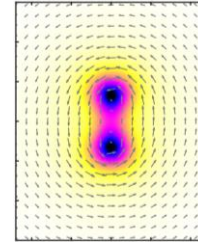
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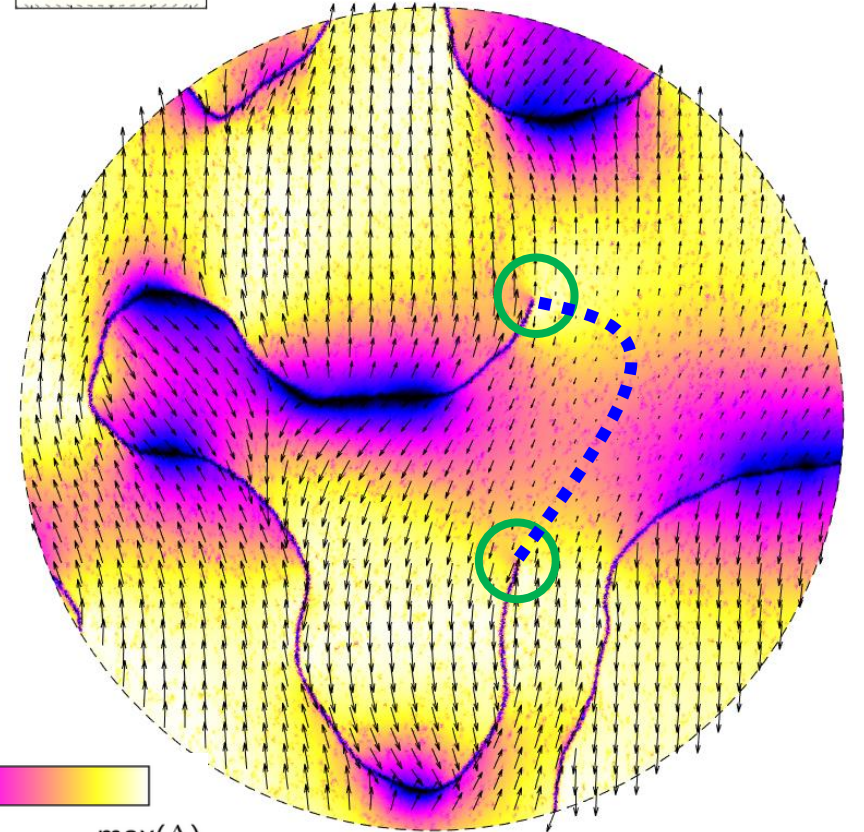
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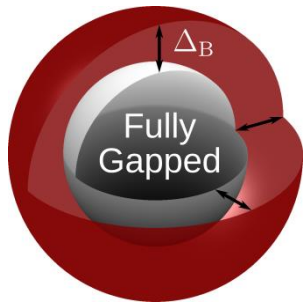
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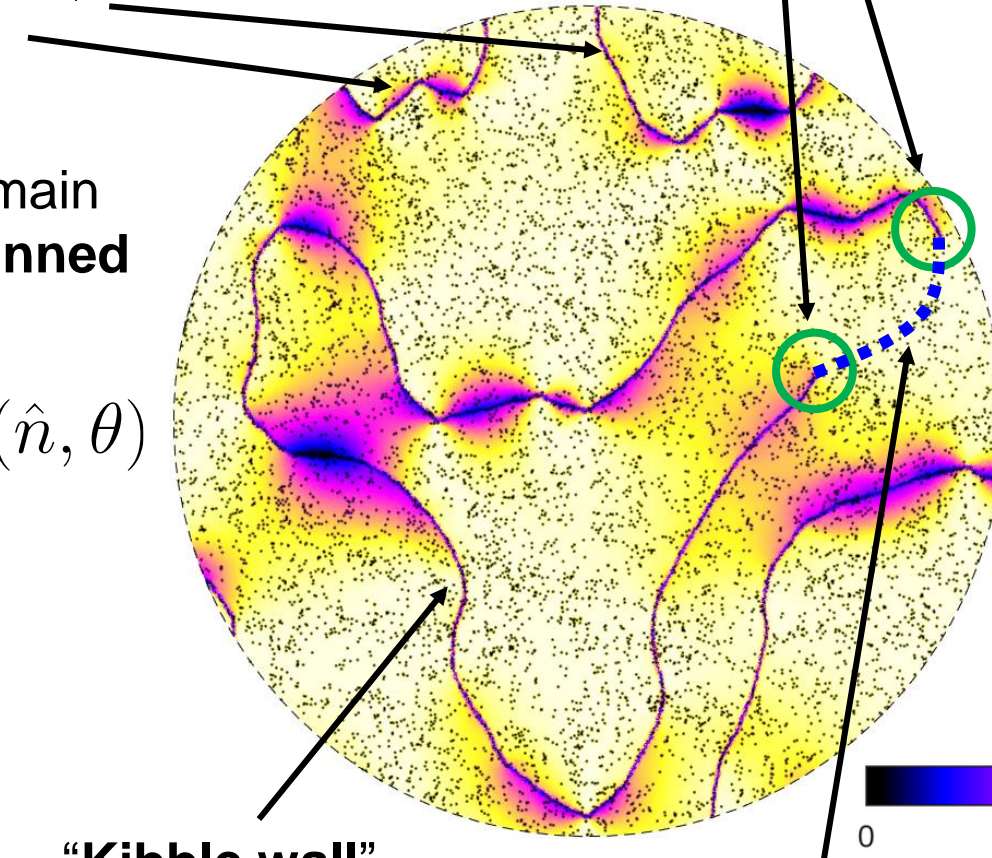
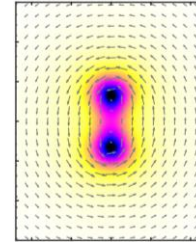
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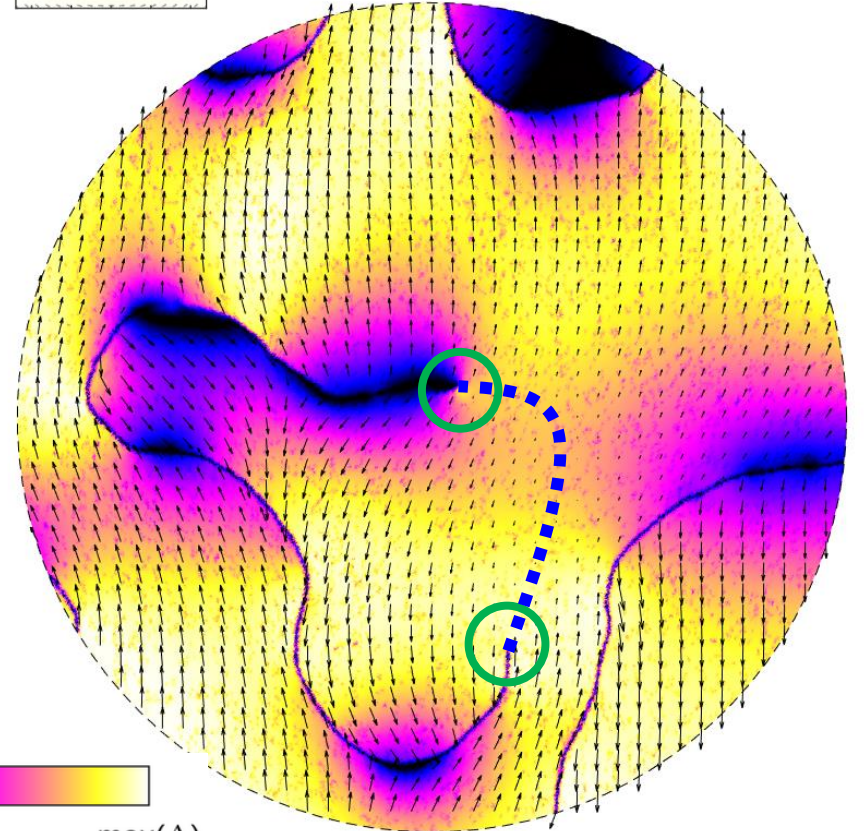
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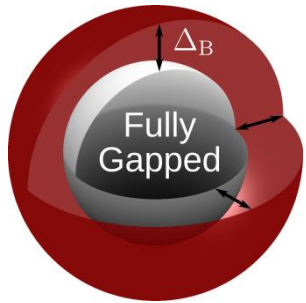
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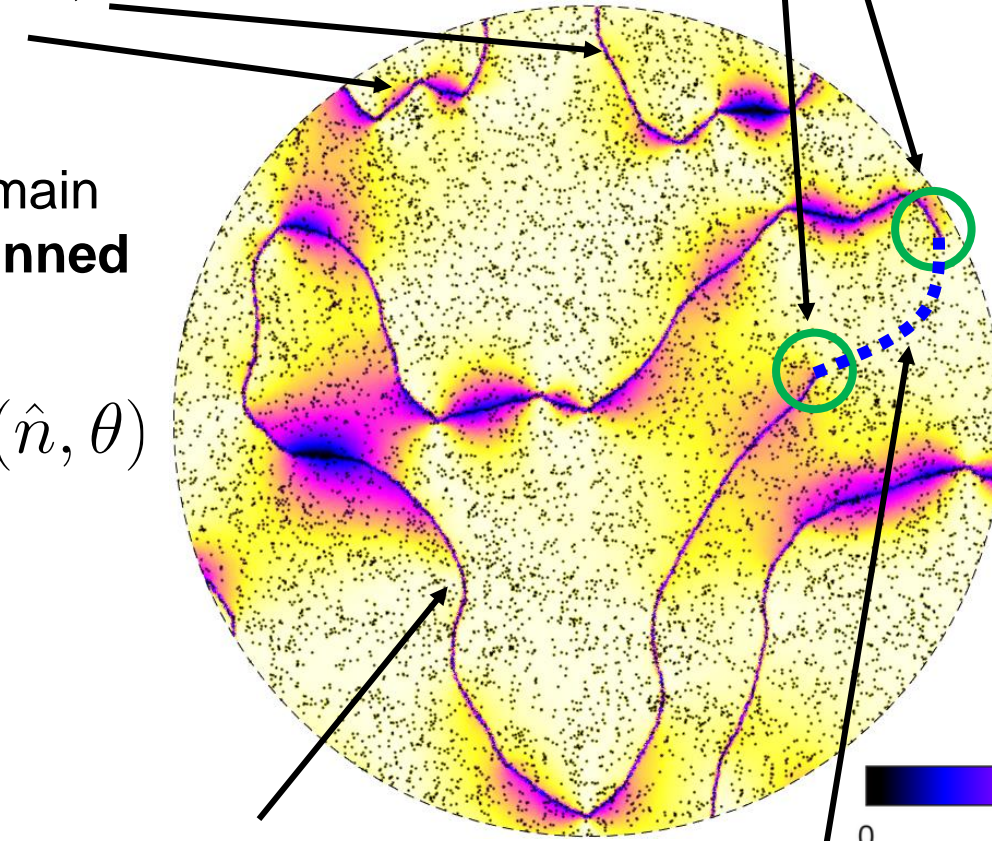
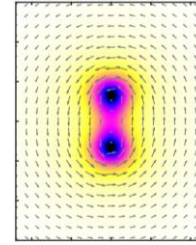
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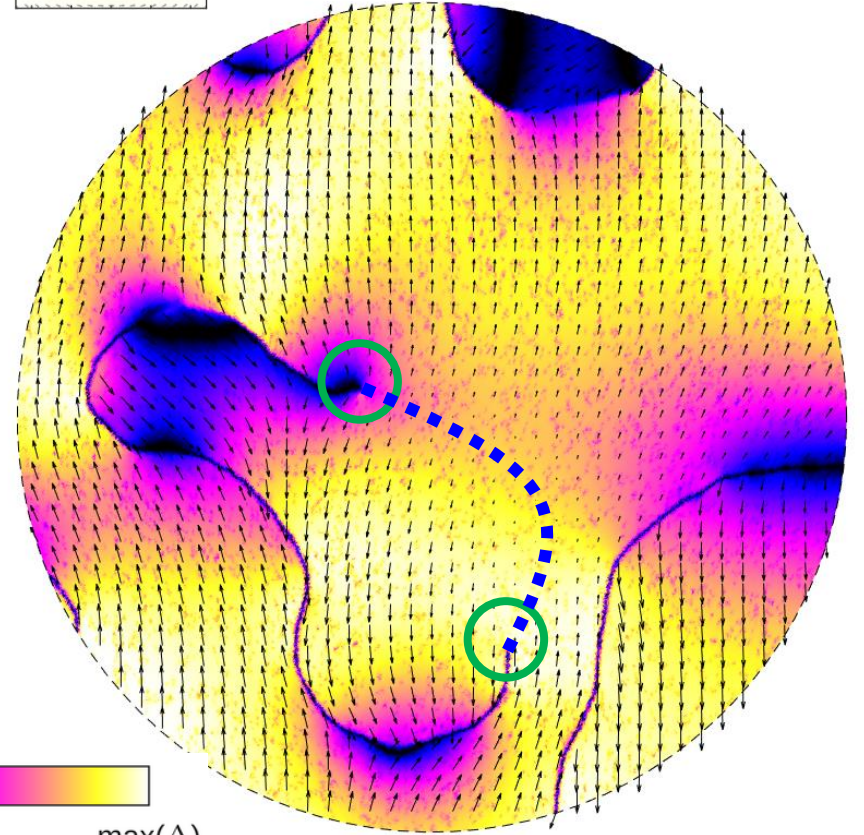
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**Spin soliton**  
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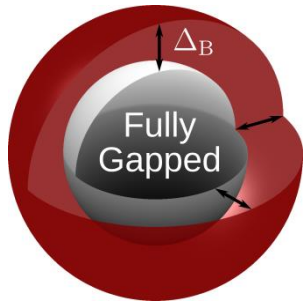
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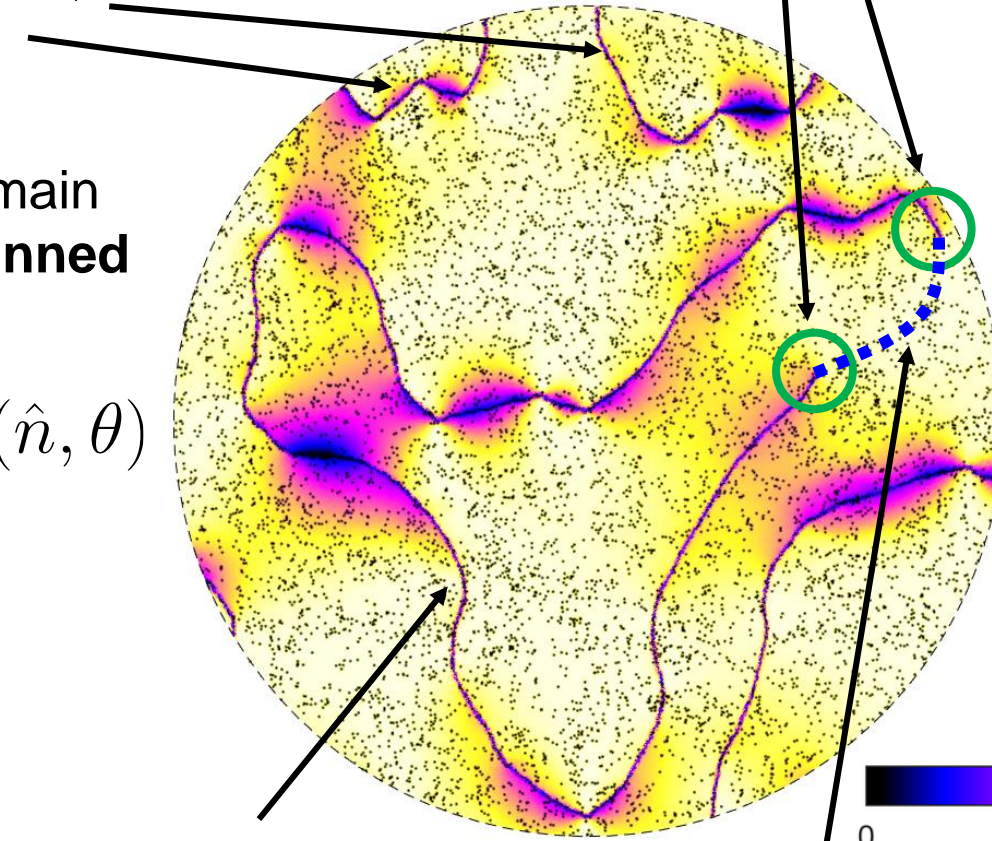
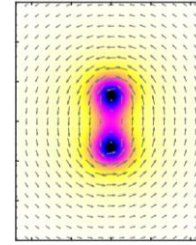
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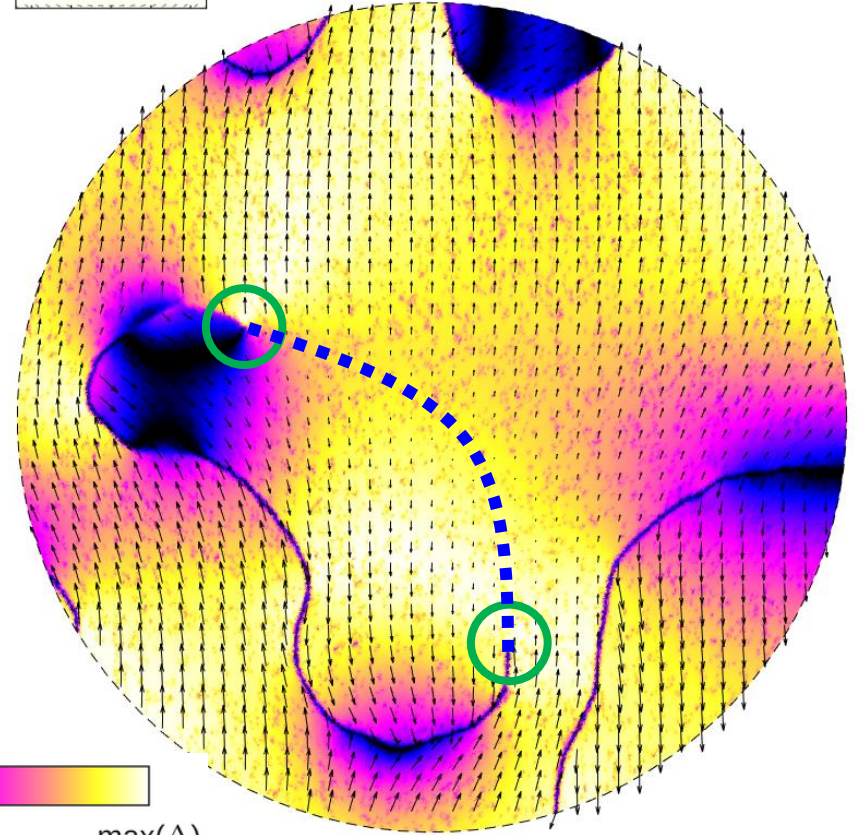
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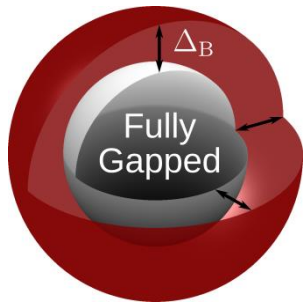
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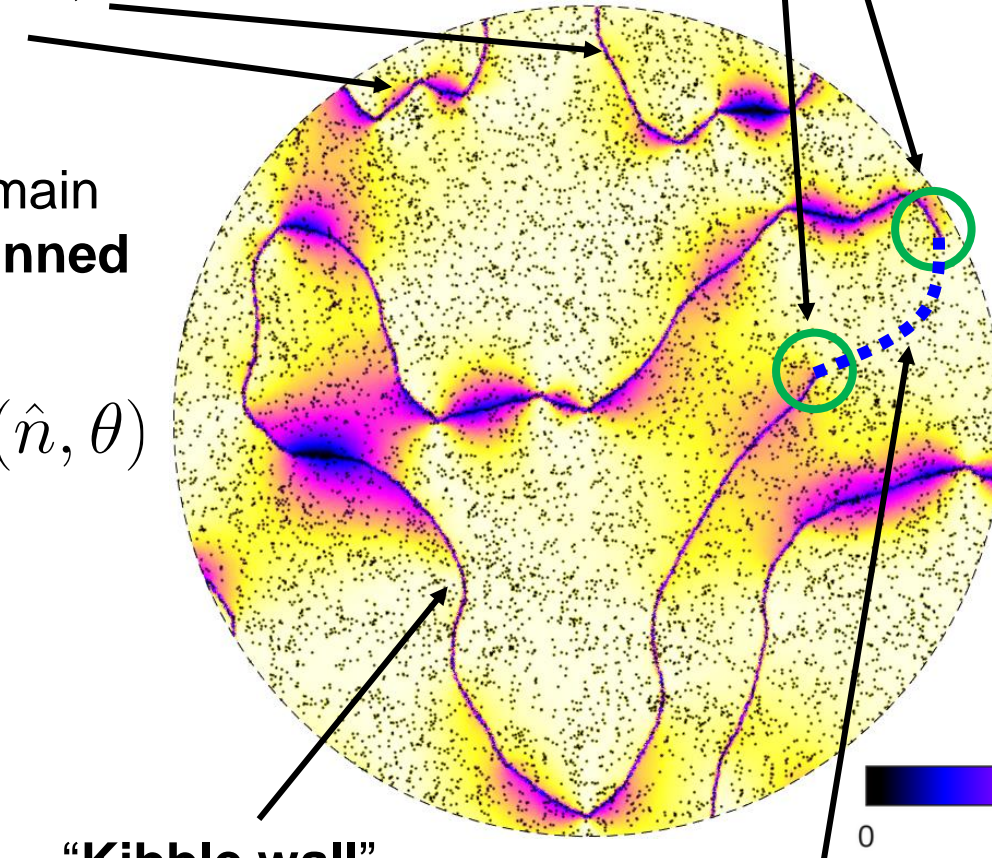
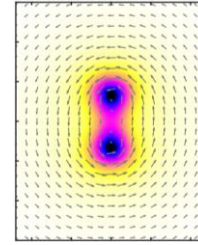
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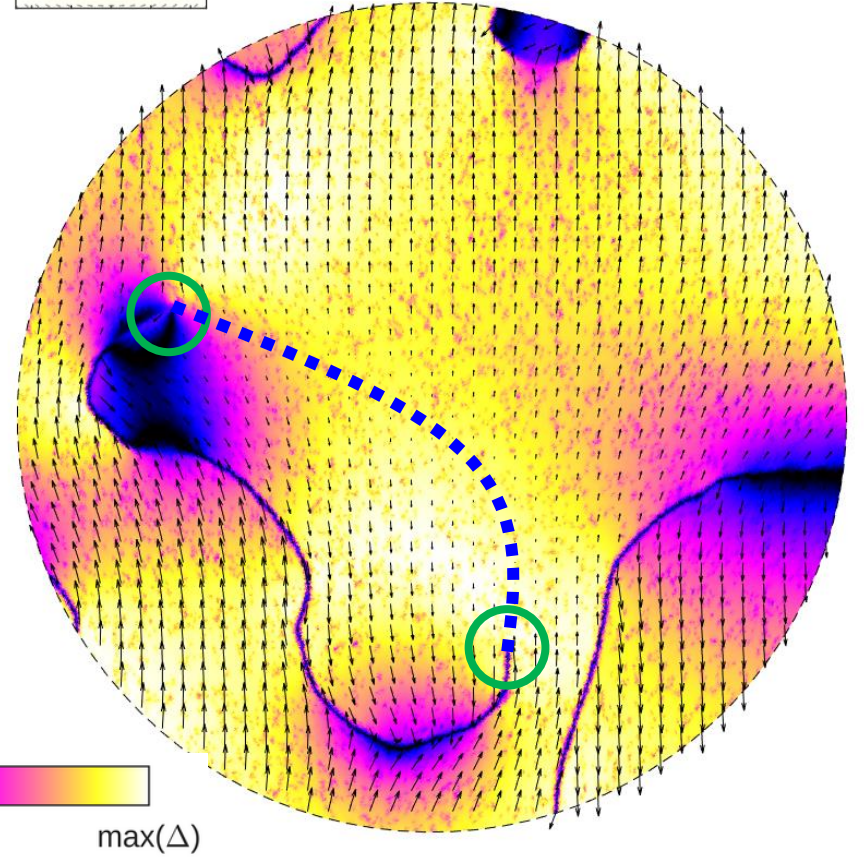
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Two half-quantum  
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“Kibble wall”  
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**Spin soliton**  
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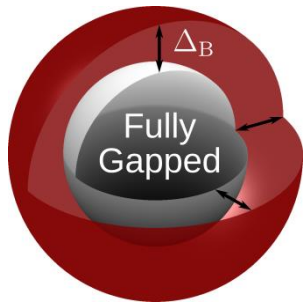
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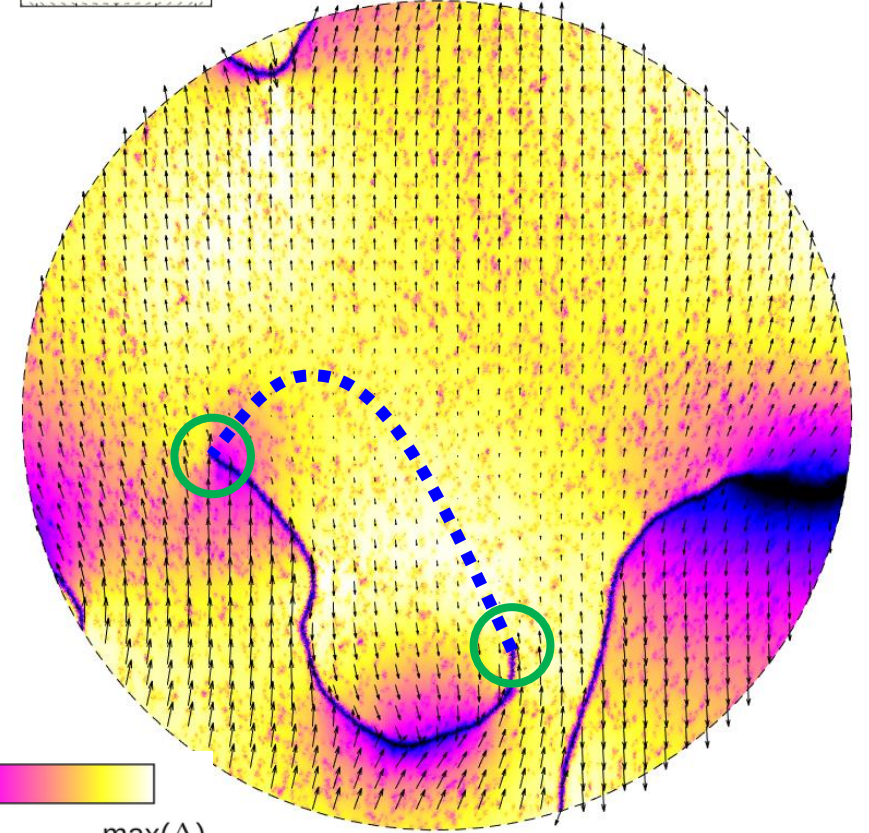
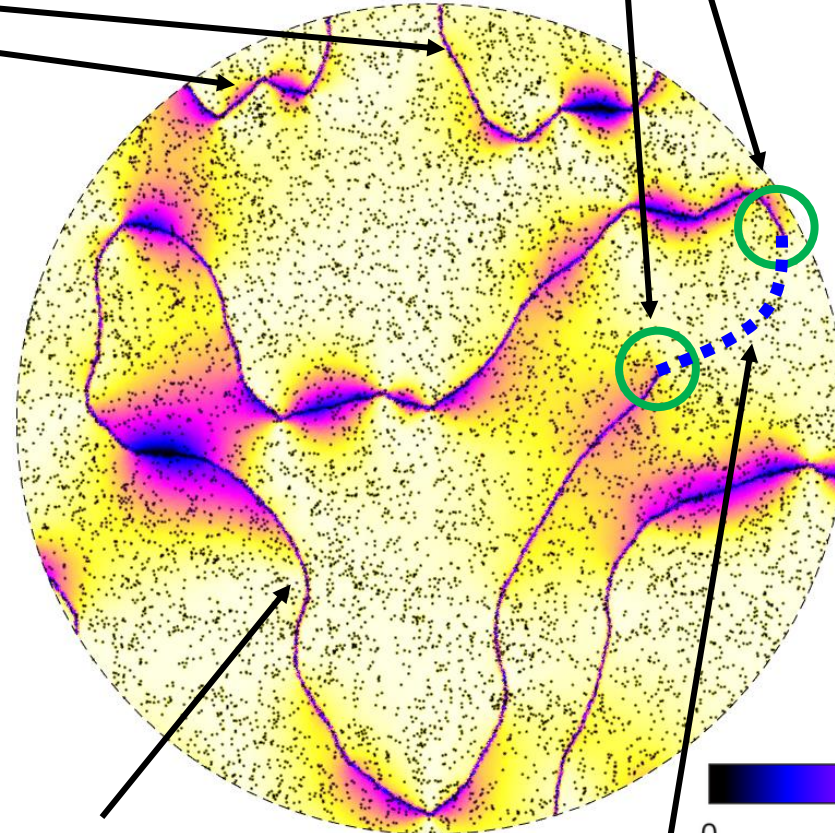
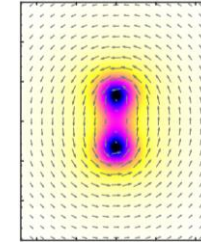
**B phase**

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**Spin soliton**  
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Two half-quantum  
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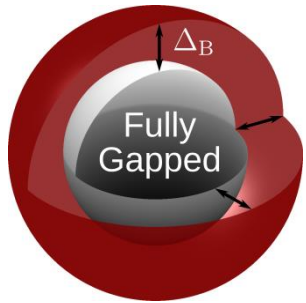
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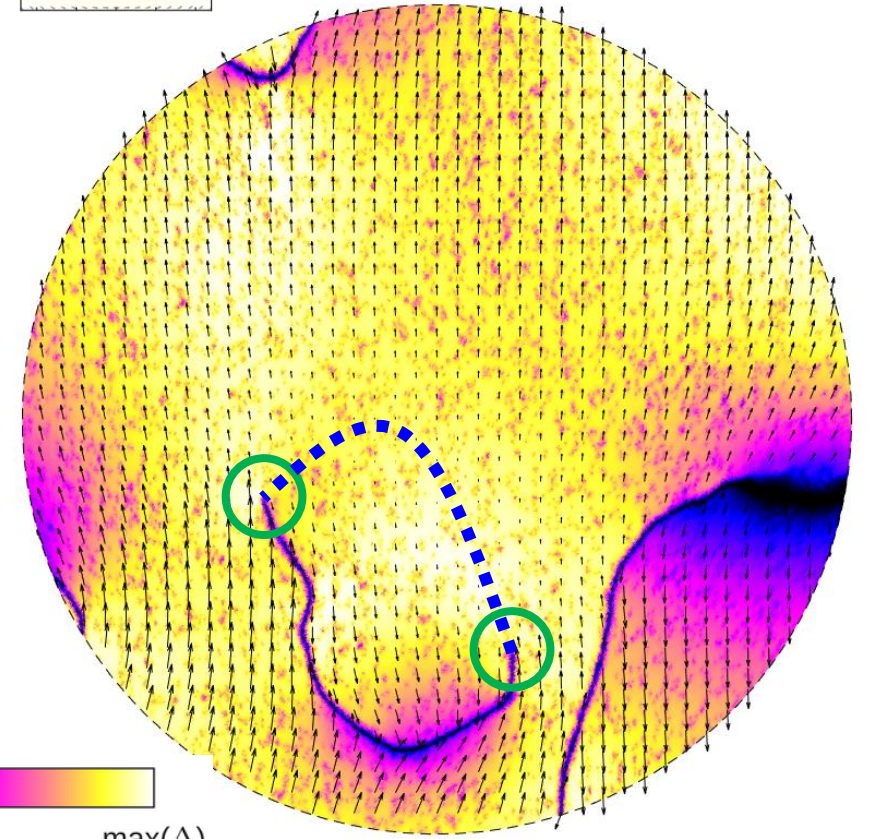
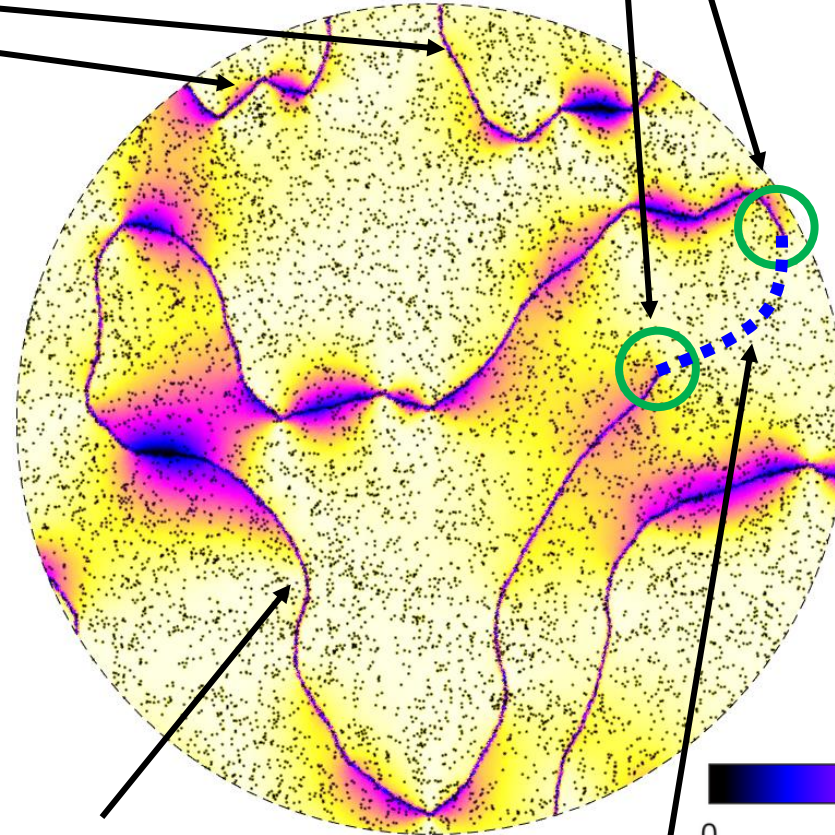
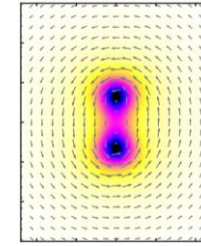
**B phase**

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“Kibble wall”  
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**Spin soliton**  
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Two half-quantum  
vortices



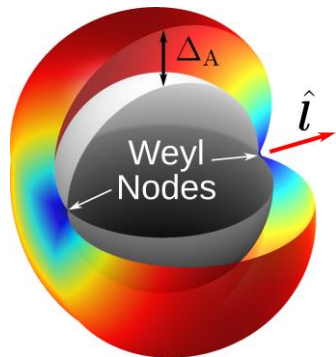
Arrows show direction of  $\hat{n}$

# Point impurity model

In the A phase, impurities orient  $\hat{l}$

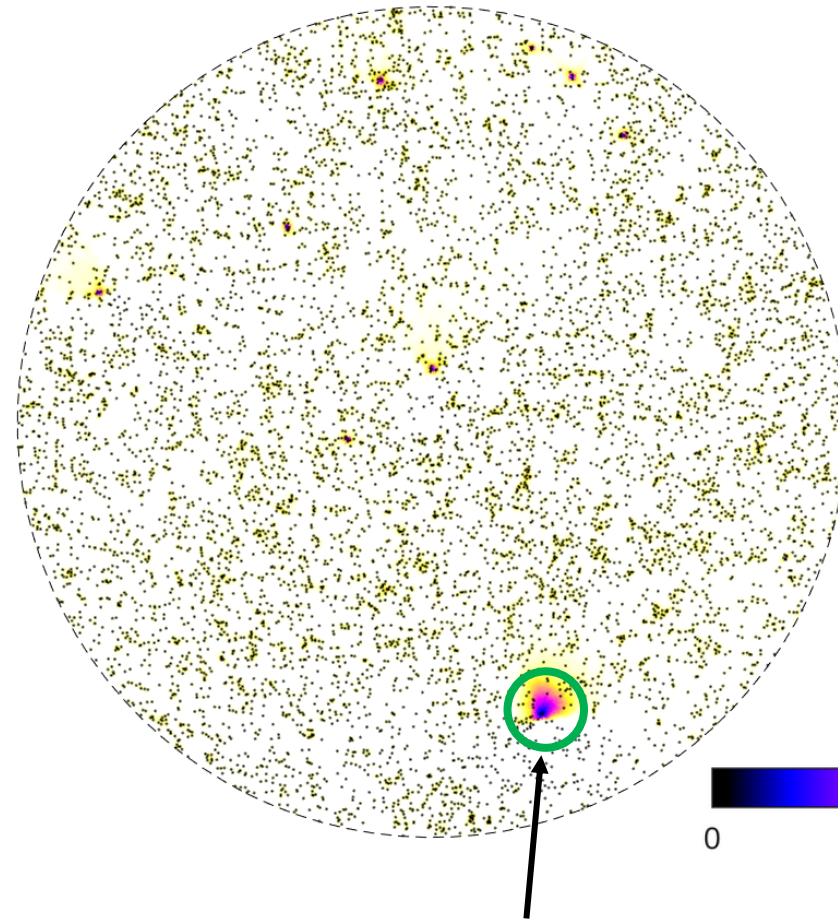
Defects in  $\hat{l}$  texture don't carry phase winding, but are pinned by impurities

$$A_{\mu j} = \Delta_A \hat{d}_\mu (\hat{m}_j + i \hat{n}_j)$$



A phase

**A!**



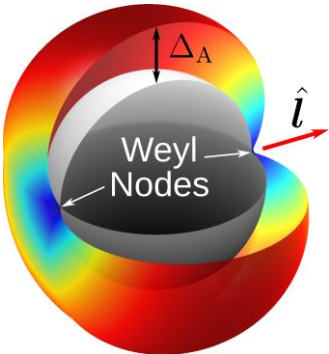
Single-quantum  
vortex

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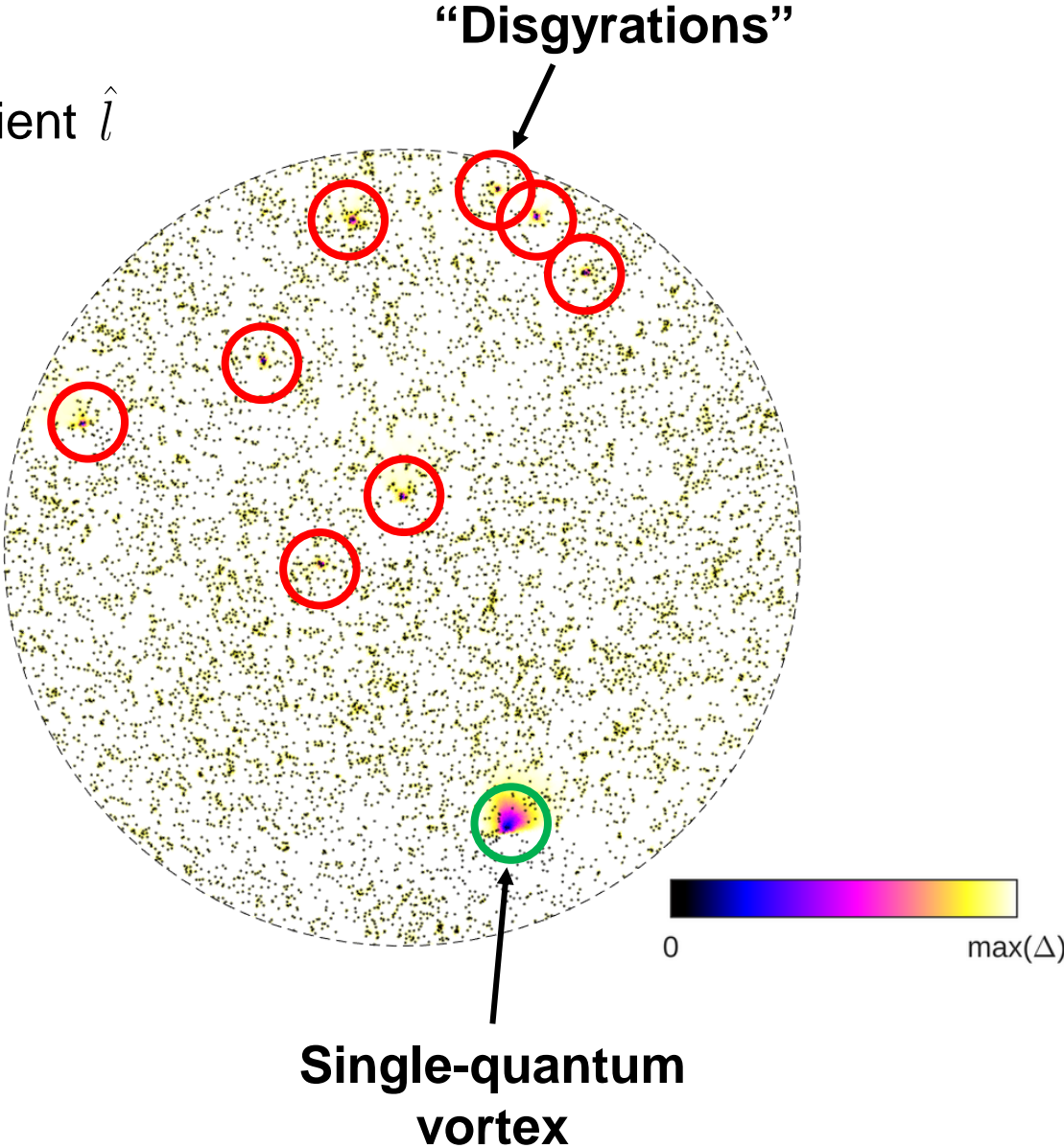
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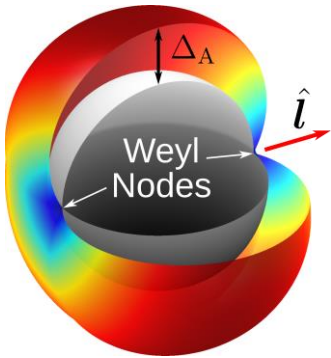


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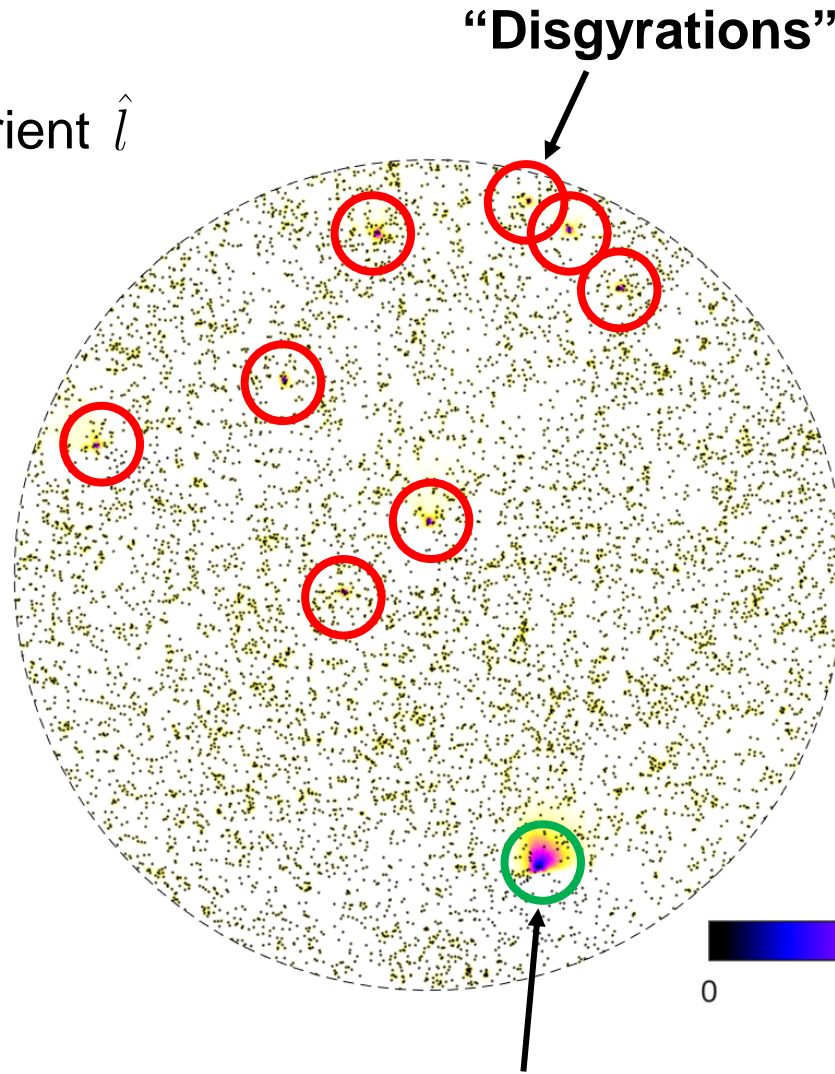
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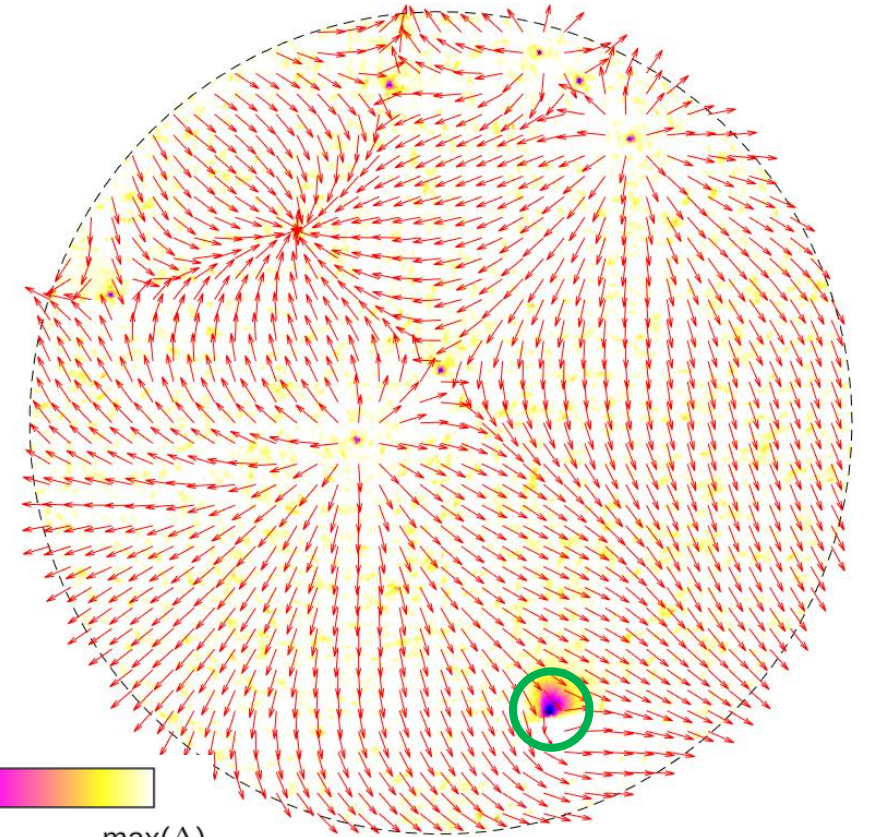


A phase

**A!**



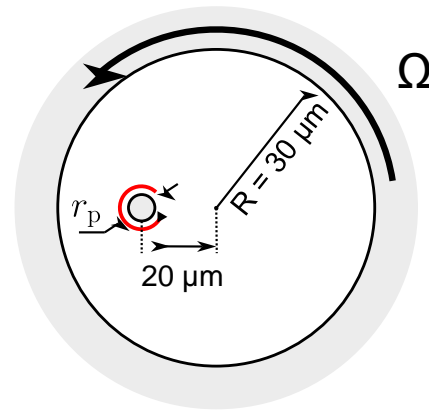
Single-quantum vortex



Arrows show direction of

$$\hat{l} = \hat{m} \times \hat{n}$$

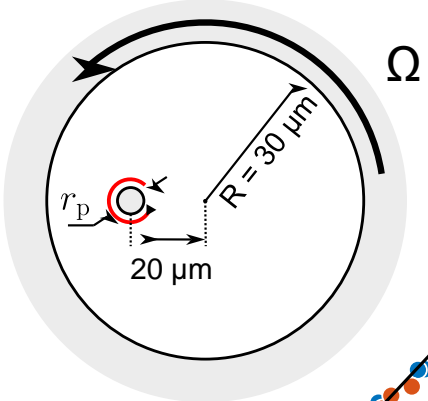
# Mesoscopic pinning



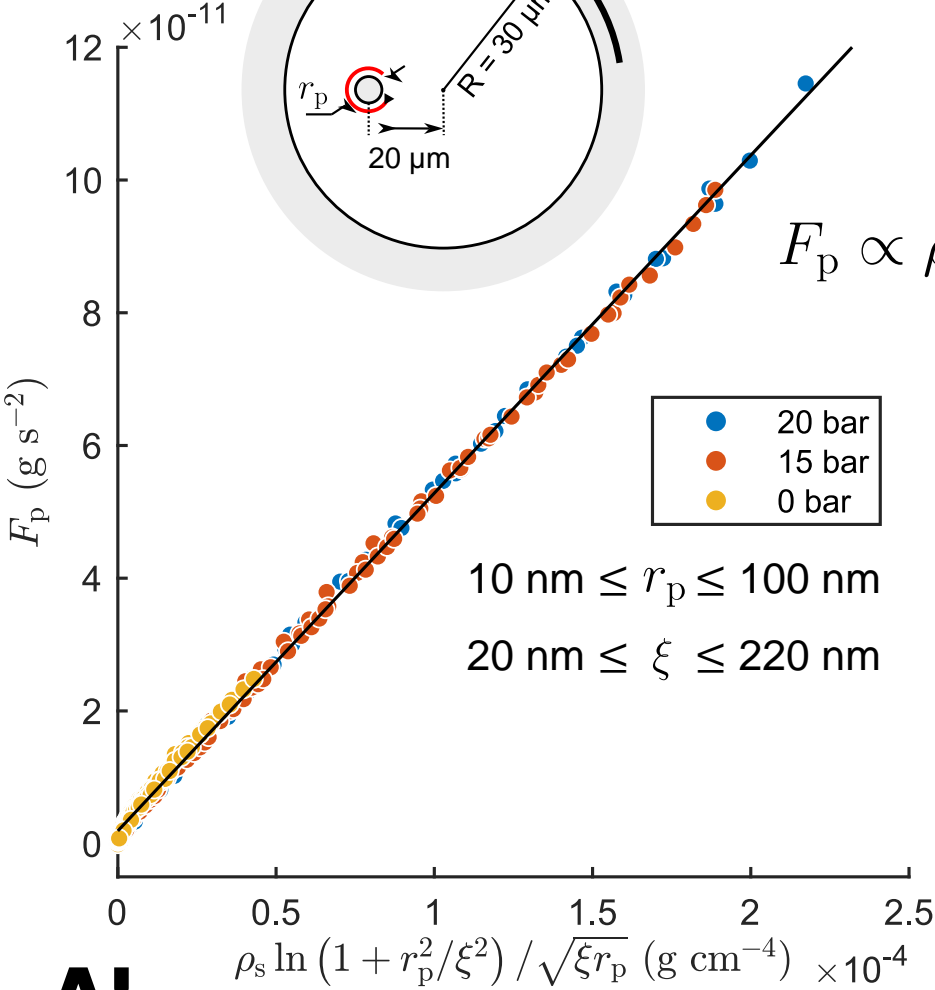
Depinning from a single pillar  
with increasing  $\Omega$

**A!**

# Mesoscopic pinning



Depinning from a single pillar with increasing  $\Omega$



$$F_p \propto \rho_s \frac{\ln(1 + r_p^2 / \xi^2)}{\sqrt{\xi r_p}}$$

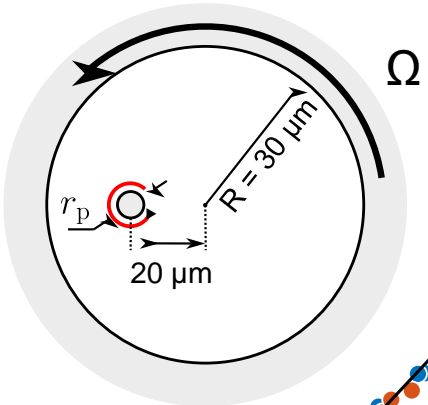
- 20 bar
- 15 bar
- 0 bar

$10 \text{ nm} \leq r_p \leq 100 \text{ nm}$

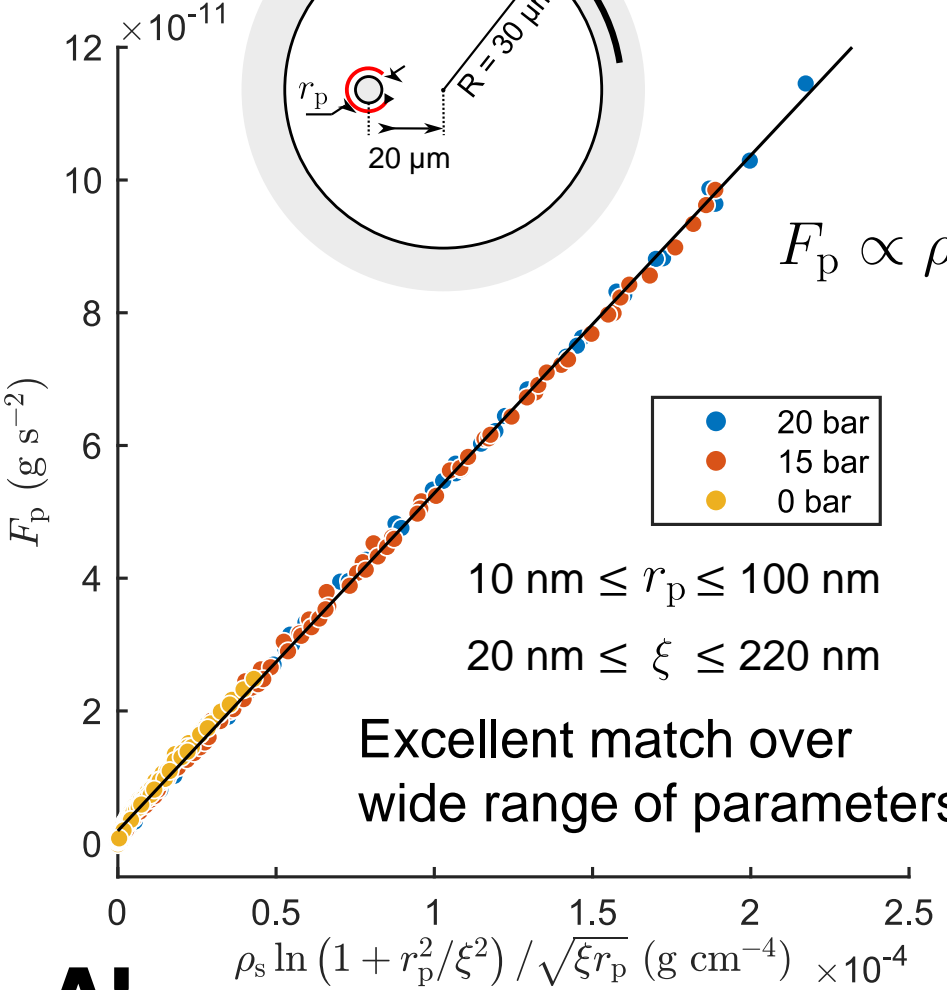
$20 \text{ nm} \leq \xi \leq 220 \text{ nm}$

**A!**

# Mesoscopic pinning



Depinning from a single pillar with increasing  $\Omega$



$$F_p \propto \rho_s \frac{\ln(1 + r_p^2/\xi^2)}{\sqrt{\xi r_p}}$$

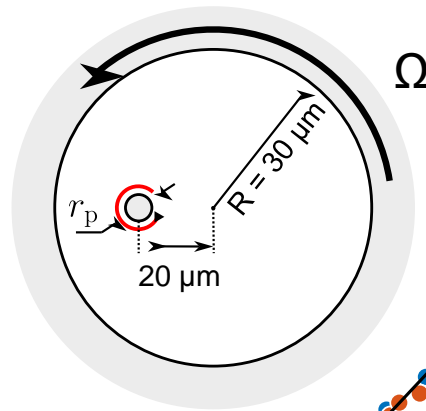
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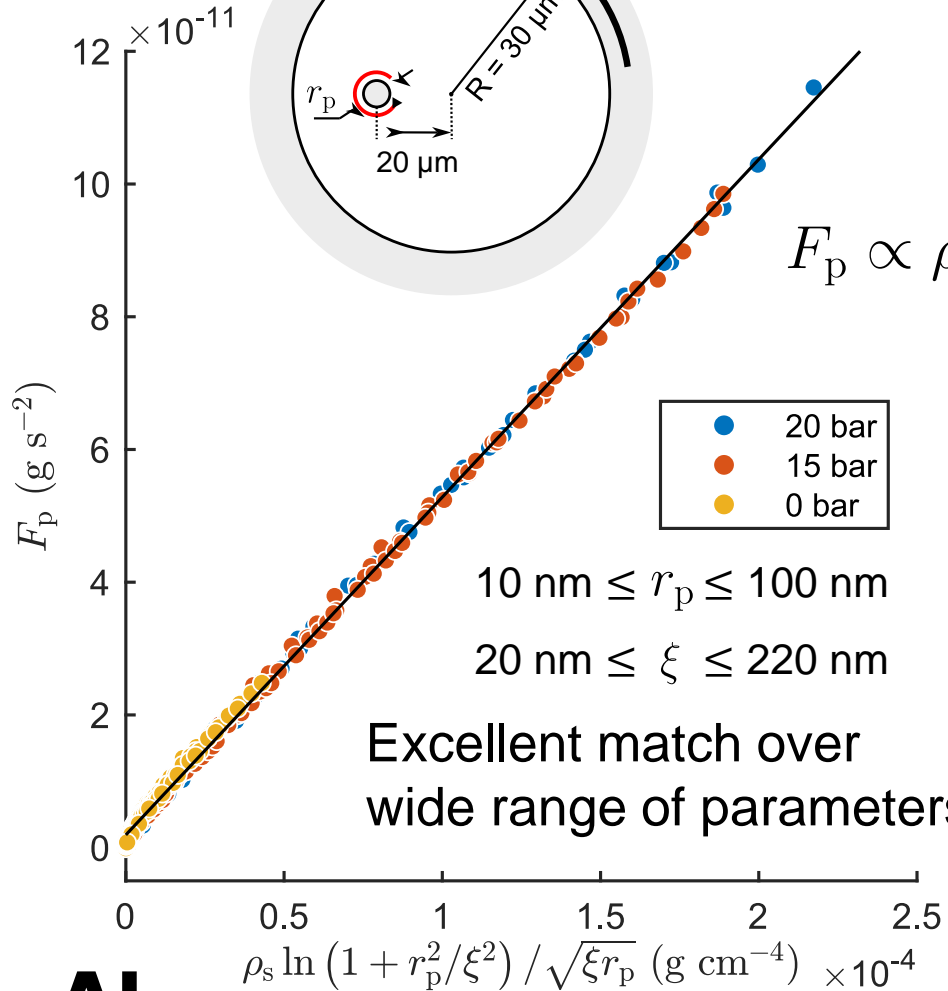
Excellent match over wide range of parameters!

**A!**

# Mesoscopic pinning

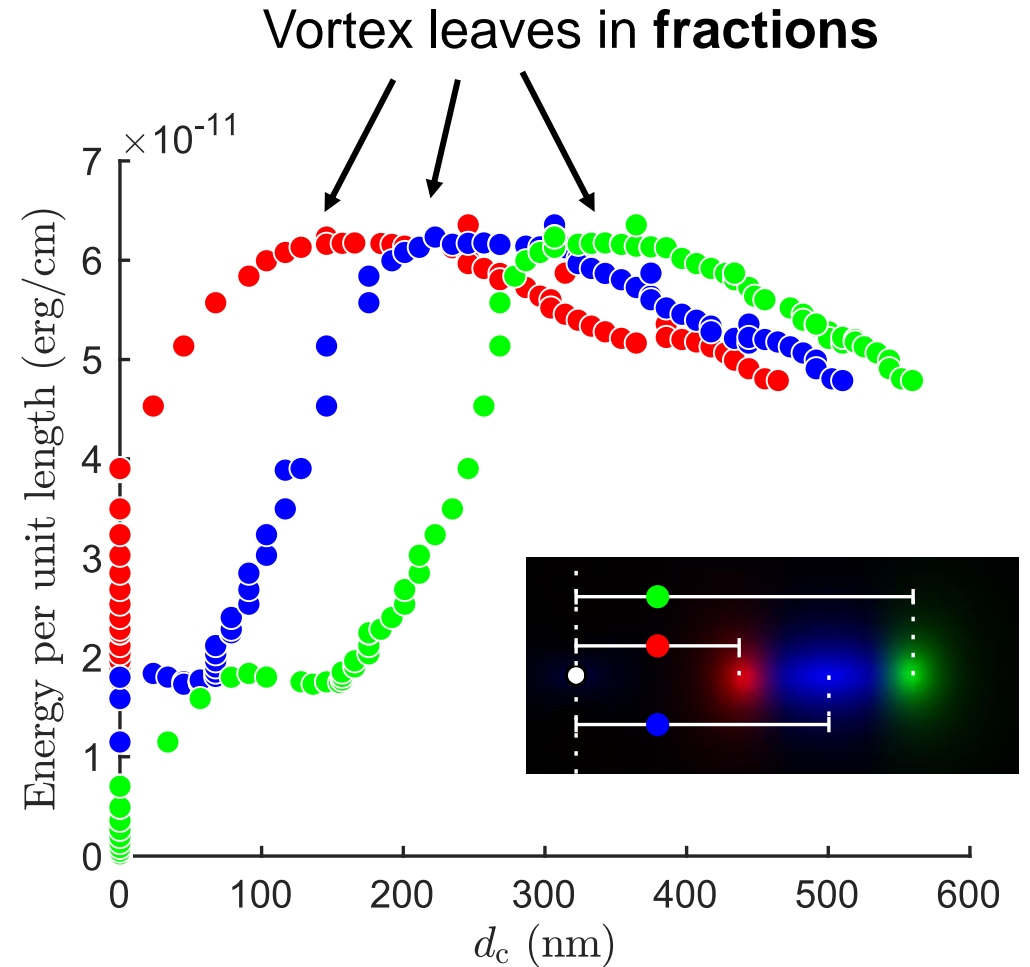


Depinning from a single pillar with increasing  $\Omega$

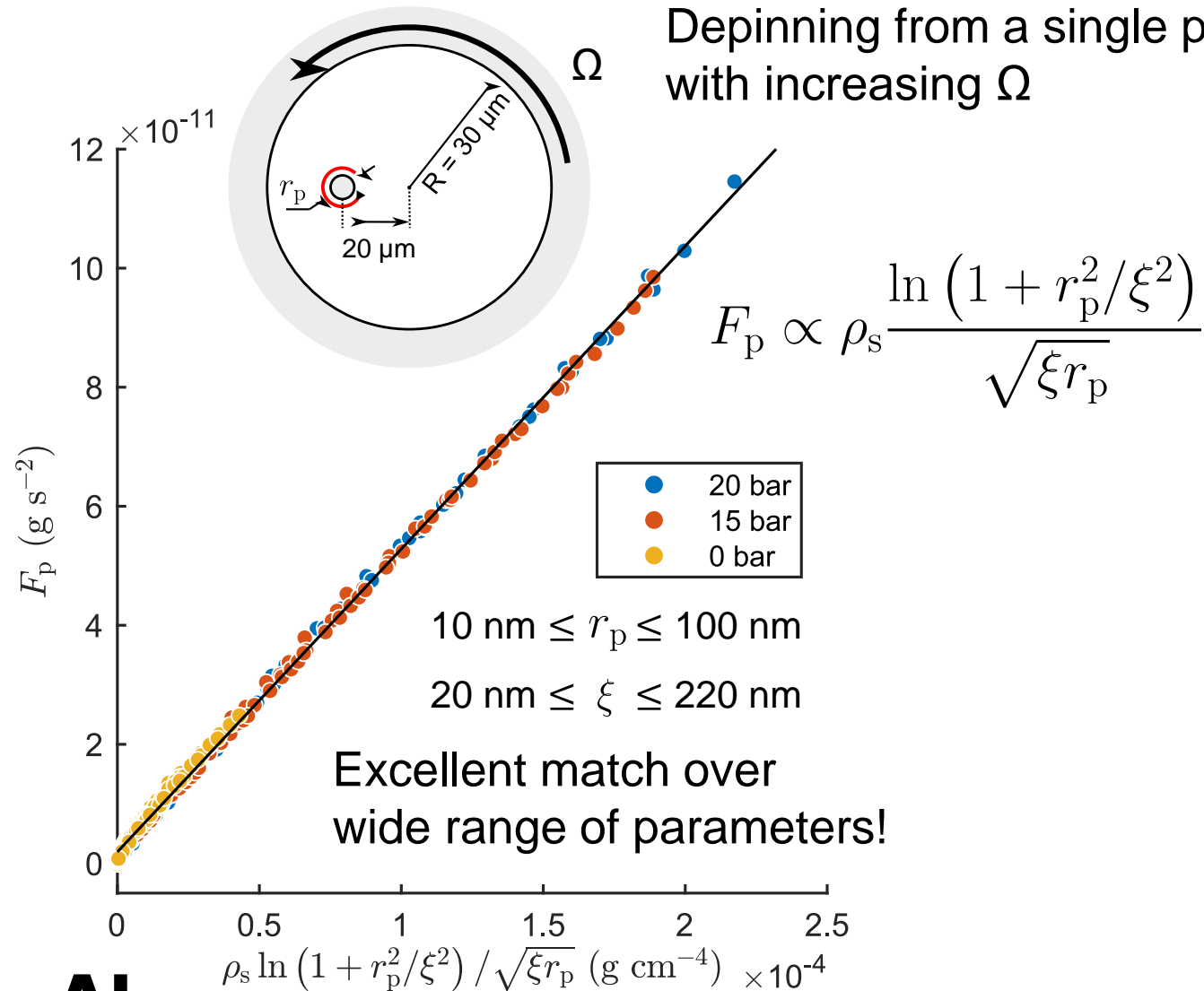


**A!**

Calculated energy barriers using the **Nudged Elastic Band** method

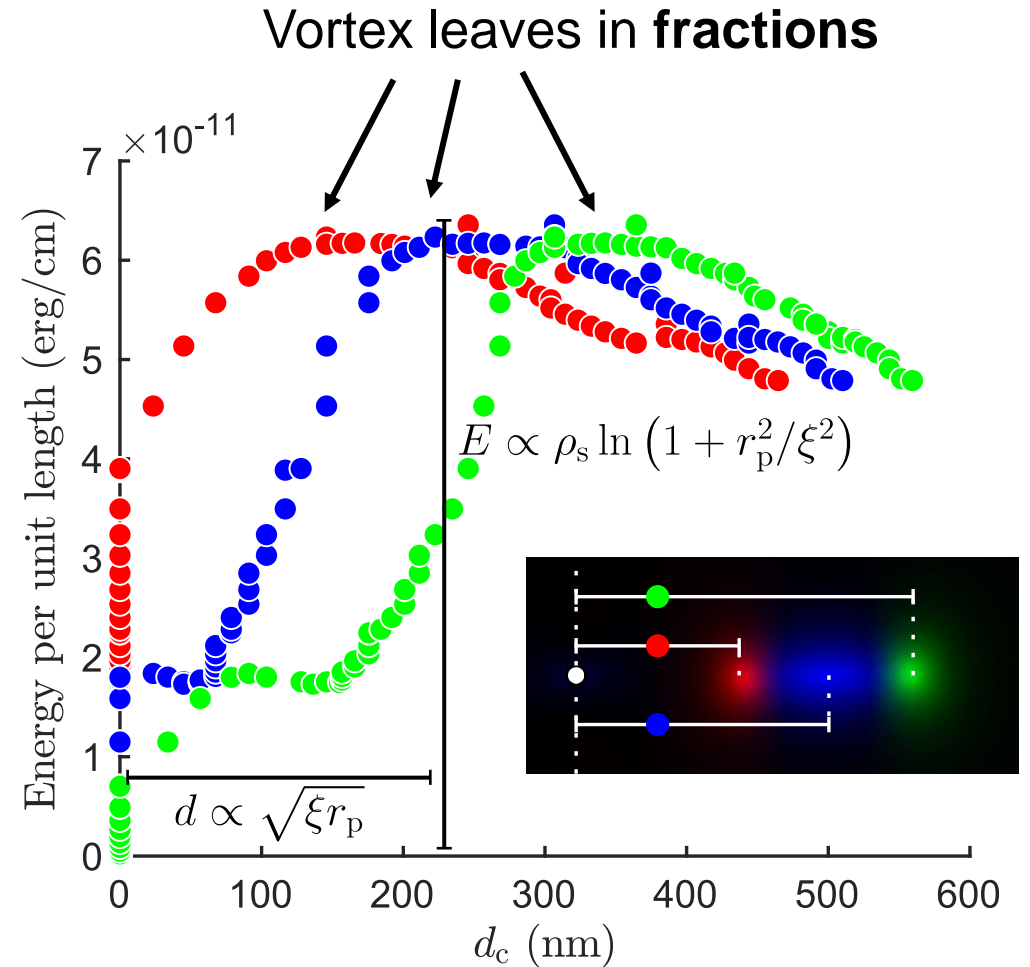


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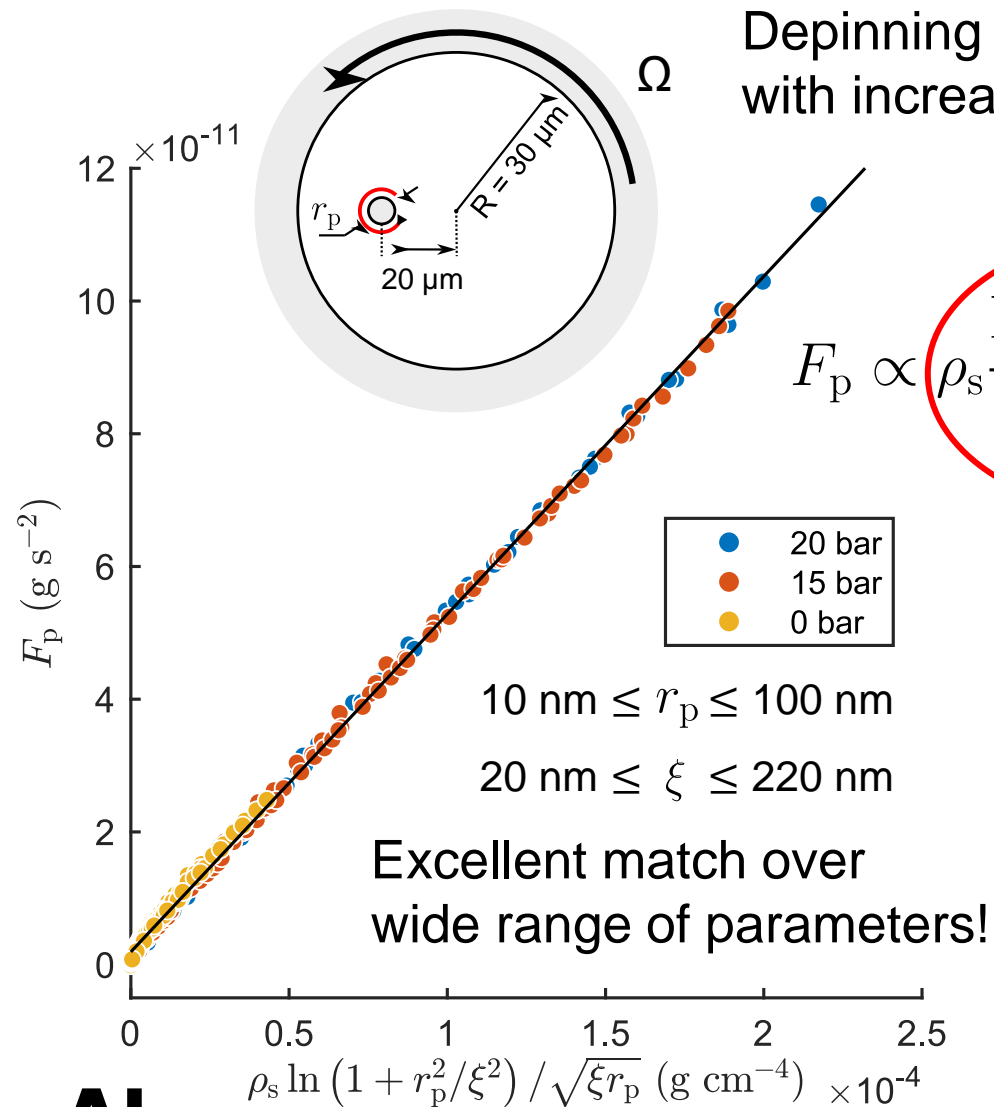


**A!**

Calculated energy barriers using the **Nudged Elastic Band** method

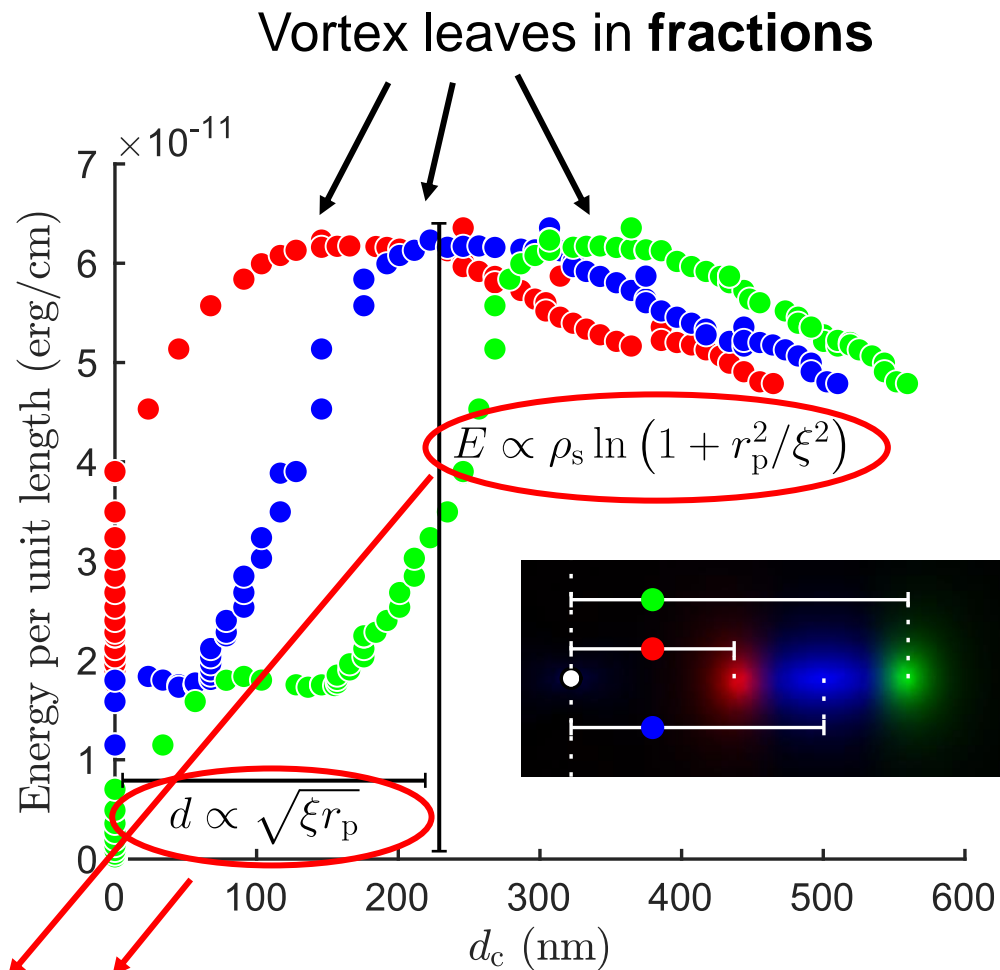


# Mesoscopic pinning



**A!**

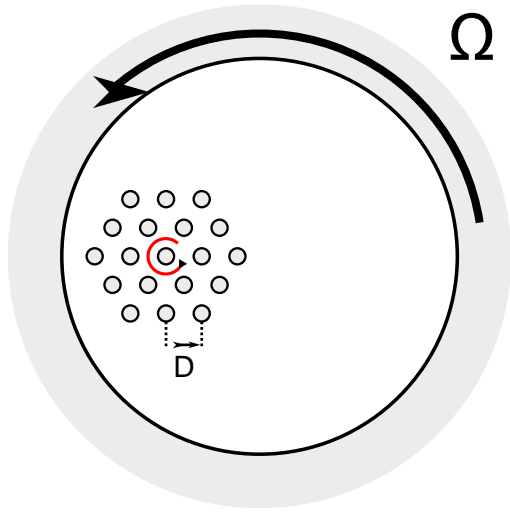
Calculated energy barriers using the **Nudged Elastic Band** method



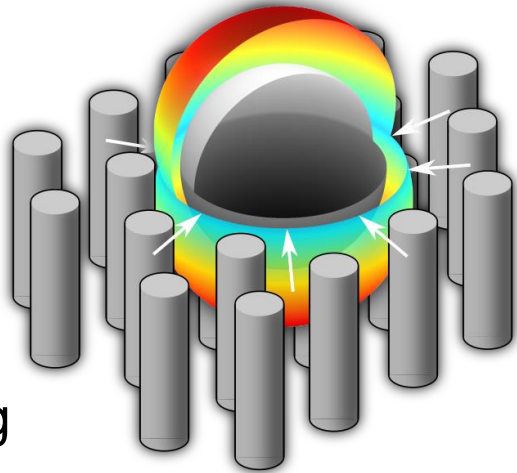
$F_p \propto E/d$

Strange scaling for length scale, triplet physics?

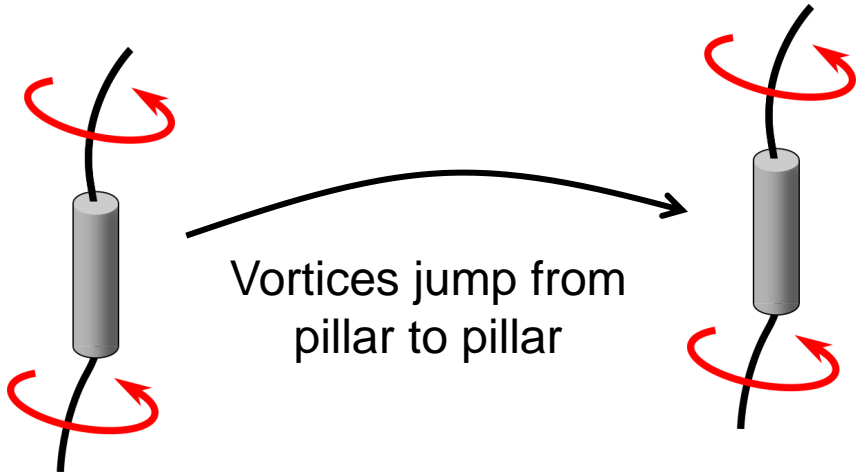
# Mesoscopic pinning



Depinning in an array of pillars with spacing  $D$

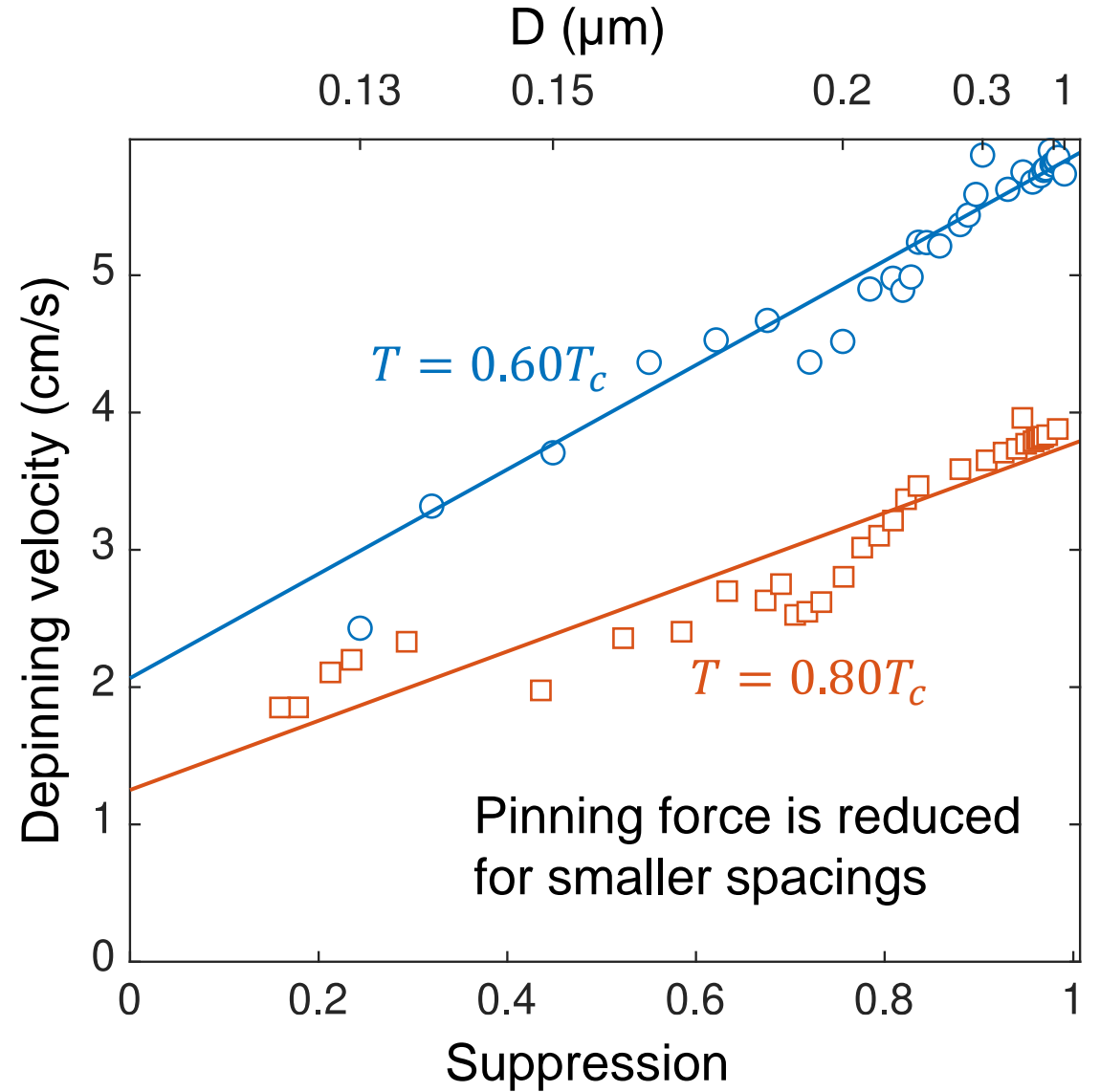


Decreasing pillar spacing suppresses gap in plane



Vortices jump from pillar to pillar

**A!**



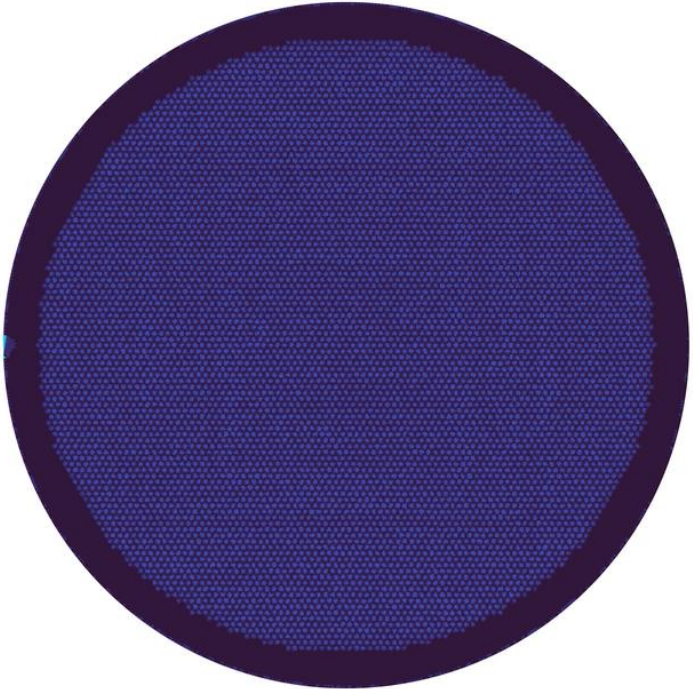
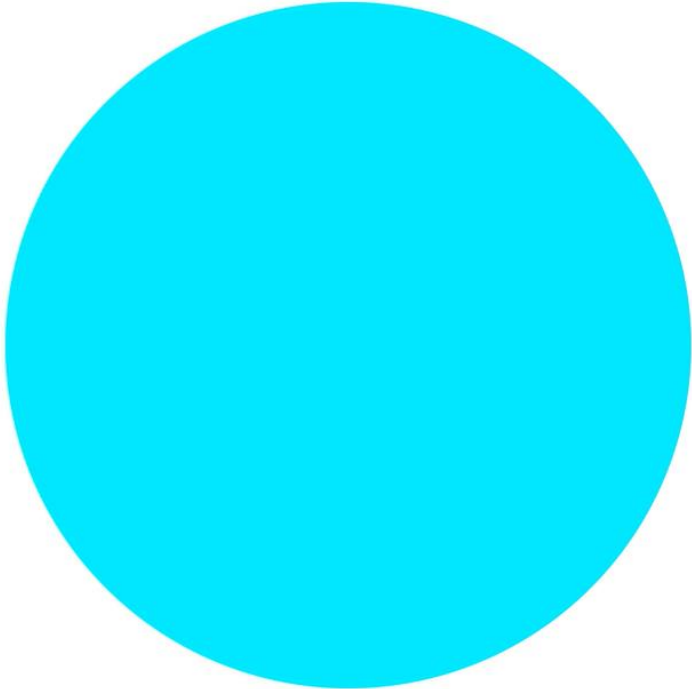
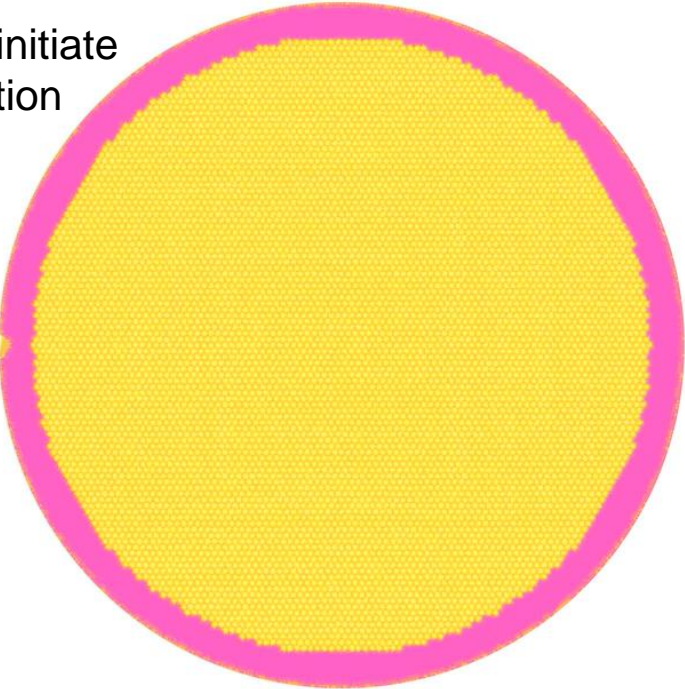
# Rotation sweep

Cylinder filled with ~8000 pillars

Increasing rotation rapidly up to 20 krad/s, then decreasing back to 0 krad/s

$\Omega = 0$  krad/s

Defect to initiate nucleation



**A!**

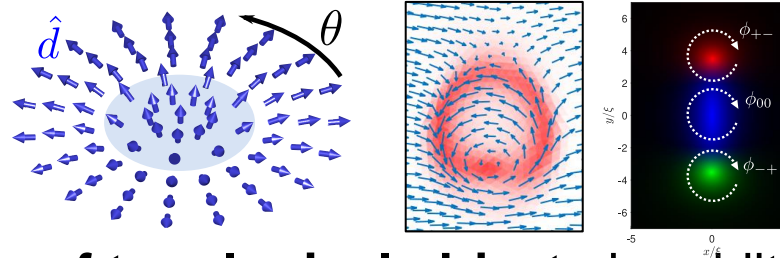
Amplitude of 00 component

Phase of 00 component

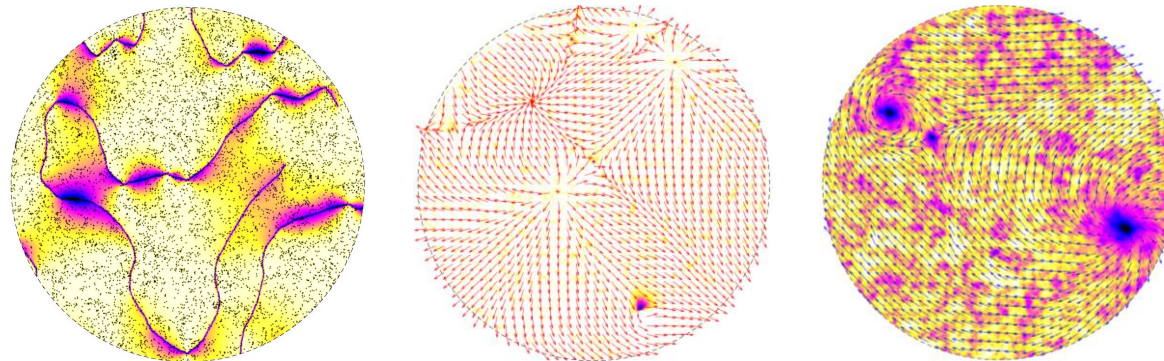
Blue = B phase  
Red = A phase

# Summary

- Superfluid  $^3\text{He}$  is an excellent model system for studying topology
- A multicomponent order parameter can support a **wide variety of different vortex structures**



- Impurities can pin **other kinds of topological objects** in addition to regular vortices



- **Pinning force** depends on coherence length and size of object:

$$F_p \propto \rho_s \frac{\ln(1 + r_p^2/\xi^2)}{\sqrt{\xi r_p}}$$

**A!**

