

New anomalies in lattice models of fermions

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CTQM Theory Colloquium



Cultural background

One of the most elementary questions in the quantum physics of many degrees of freedom:

- Given a fixed **microscopic** set up, which **macroscopic** phenomena can arise?
- Central to various areas of cond-mat, hep-th, and math-ph

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Prototypical example: quantum phases of matter

Microscopic



Macroscopic

Spatial dimension

{Quantum phases}

Degrees of freedom

Symmetries

:

A first organization of quantum phases

The set {Quantum phases} is generally *very* complicated

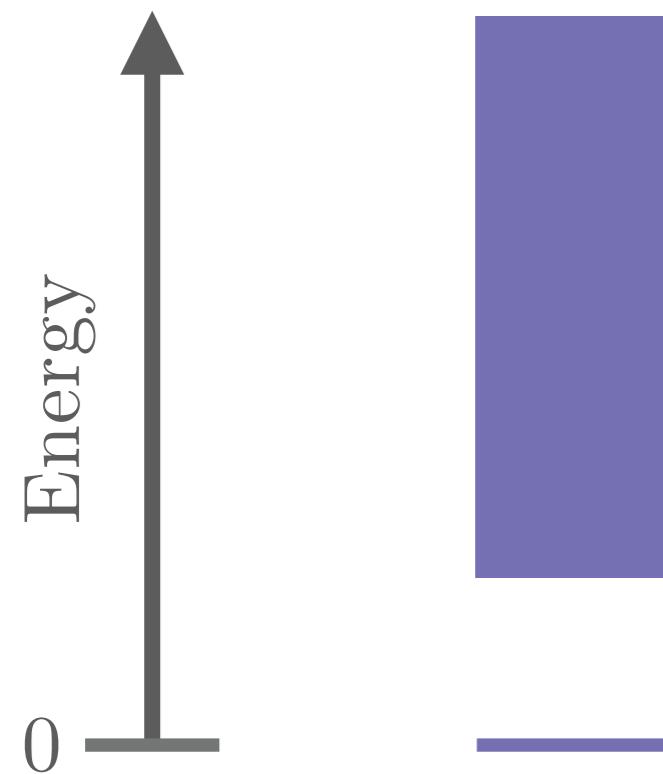
- Partition it based on the phases' **low-energy spectra**

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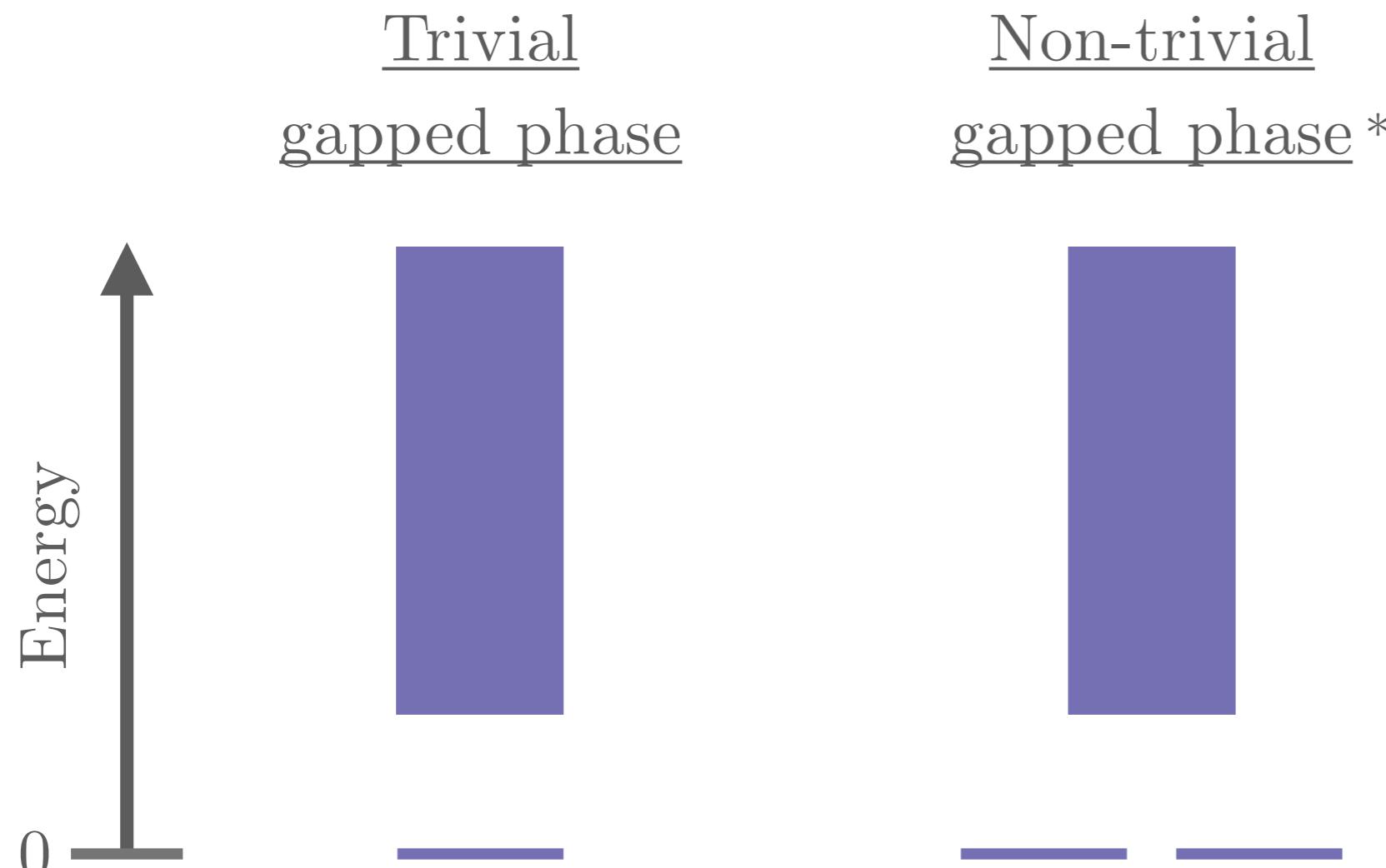
Trivial
gapped phase



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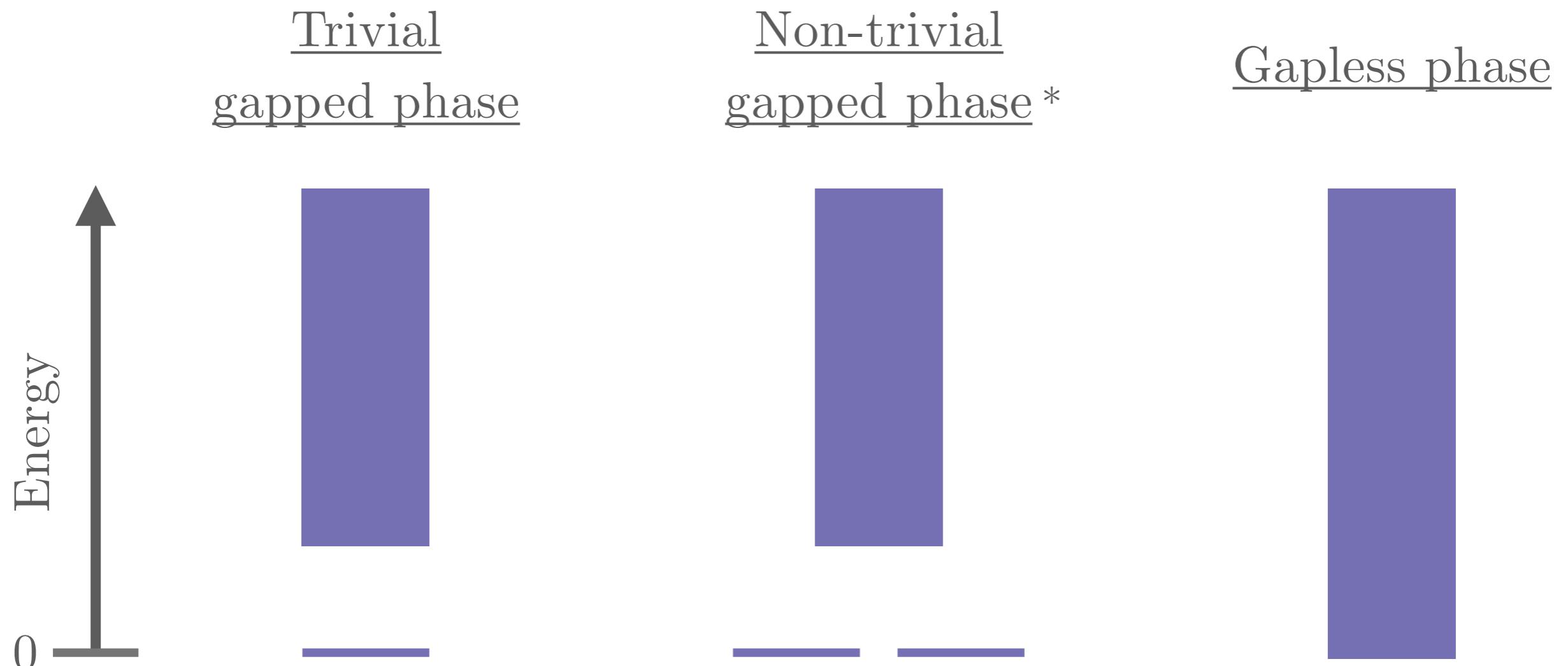


*Includes topological order

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Gifts from anomalies

Definition: the **microscopic data** has an anomaly if there exists an **obstruction** to realizing a trivial gapped phase

- Every **quantum phase** is then non-trivial: has long-range order, topological order, is gapless, *etc.*

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Definition: the **microscopic data** has an anomaly if there exists an **obstruction** to realizing a trivial gapped phase

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Anomalous symmetries are **symmetries** that are incompatible with a trivial gapped **symmetric phase**.

- To realize a trivially gapped phase, the **anomalous symmetry** must be explicitly broken

Gifts from anomalies

.....

~~Definition: the microscopic data has an anomaly if there~~

Important disclaimers

1. This **definition** is different from the “classical symmetry fails to be a quantum symmetry” type **anomaly**
2. It is a generalization of ’t Hooft **anomalies** in QFT, which are obstructions to **gauging** a symmetry.
3. It is a popular **definition** for **anomalous** spacetime and generalized symmetries

[C.-M. Chang, Y.-H. Lin, S.-H. Shao, Y. Wang, X. Yin '18; X.-G. Wen '18; R. Thorngren, Y. Wang '19; Y. Choi, C. Córdova, P.-S. Hsin, H.T. Lam, S.-H. Shao '21; ... ; W. Shirley, C. Zhang, W. Ji, M. Levin '25]

Anomalies in quantum mechanics

Consider QM model with Hilbert space \mathcal{H} and Hamiltonian H

- Assume there is a unitary G symmetry: $[U_g, H] = 0$, $g \in G$
- Symmetry has an **anomaly** if, for $|\psi\rangle \in \mathcal{H}$,

$$U_g U_h |\psi\rangle = e^{i\theta(g,h)} U_{gh} |\psi\rangle \quad e^{i\theta(g,h)} \neq e^{i(f(g)+f(h)-f(gh))}$$

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Proof:

1. Assume $|\text{gs}\rangle \in \mathcal{H}$ is a **unique gapped ground state** of H
2. Therefore, $U_g U_h |\text{gs}\rangle = e^{if(h)} U_g |\text{gs}\rangle = e^{i(f(g)+f(h))} |\text{gs}\rangle$
3. However, $U_g U_h |\text{gs}\rangle = e^{i\theta(g,h)} U_{gh} |\text{gs}\rangle = e^{i(\theta(g,h)+f(gh))} |\text{gs}\rangle$
4. Requires $e^{i\theta(g,h)} = e^{i(f(g)+f(h)-f(gh))} \implies \text{contradiction}$

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Example:

- A qubit, $\mathcal{H} = \text{span}_{\mathbb{C}}\{|\uparrow\rangle, |\downarrow\rangle\}$, with $\mathbb{Z}_2 \times \mathbb{Z}_2$ symmetry

$$U_{(n,m)} = X^n Z^m \quad (n, m) \in \mathbb{Z}_2 \times \mathbb{Z}_2$$

- $U_{(n,m)} U_{(n',m')} = (-1)^{mn'} U_{(n+n', m+m')} \implies \text{anomaly}$

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- Explicit check: $[U_{(n,m)}, H] = 0 \implies H \propto \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$

Anomalies in quantum mechanics

Consider QM model with Hilbert space \mathcal{H} and Hamiltonian H

- Assume there is a unitary G symmetry: $[U_g, H] = 0, g \in G$

- Symmetry has an anomaly if for $|e/\lambda| \in \mathcal{H}$

Anomalies in >(0+1)D are much richer

- Include the anomalies from QM (i.e., projective representations) and much more due to locality.

$$U_{(n,m)} = X^n Z^m \quad (n, m) \in \mathbb{Z}_2 \times \mathbb{Z}_2$$

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Emergent vs emanant

UV model

symmetries
anomalies



IR model

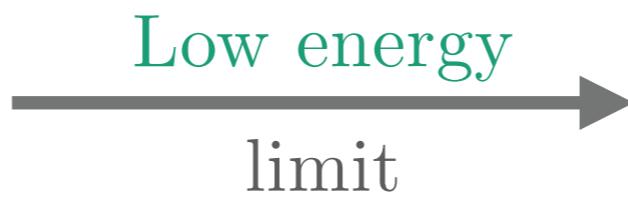
symmetries
anomalies

The symmetries and anomalies in the IR are generally different from those in the UV

Emergent vs emanant

UV model

symmetries
anomalies



IR model

symmetries
anomalies

The symmetries and anomalies in the **IR** are generally different from those in the **UV**

- For a given **UV** model, there are two types of **IR** symmetries and anomalies:
 - 1) **Emergent**: have no **UV** counterpart
 - 2) **Emanant**: have a **UV** counterpart [M. Cheng, N. Seiberg '22]

Emergent vs emanant

What is the definition of emergent?

Emergent (adjective): Arising or coming into being; newly appearing or developing.

What is the definition of emanant?

Emanant (adjective): Flowing out, issuing forth, or radiating from a source.

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Emergent vs emanant

Five possibilities

Emergent symmetry with no anomaly

Emergent symmetry with emergent anomaly

Emanant symmetry with no anomaly

Emanant symmetry with emanant anomaly

► For symmetry with emanant anomaly

1) Emergent: have no UV counterpart

2) Emanant: have a UV counterpart [M. Cheng, N. Seiberg '22]

Lattice vs QFT anomalies

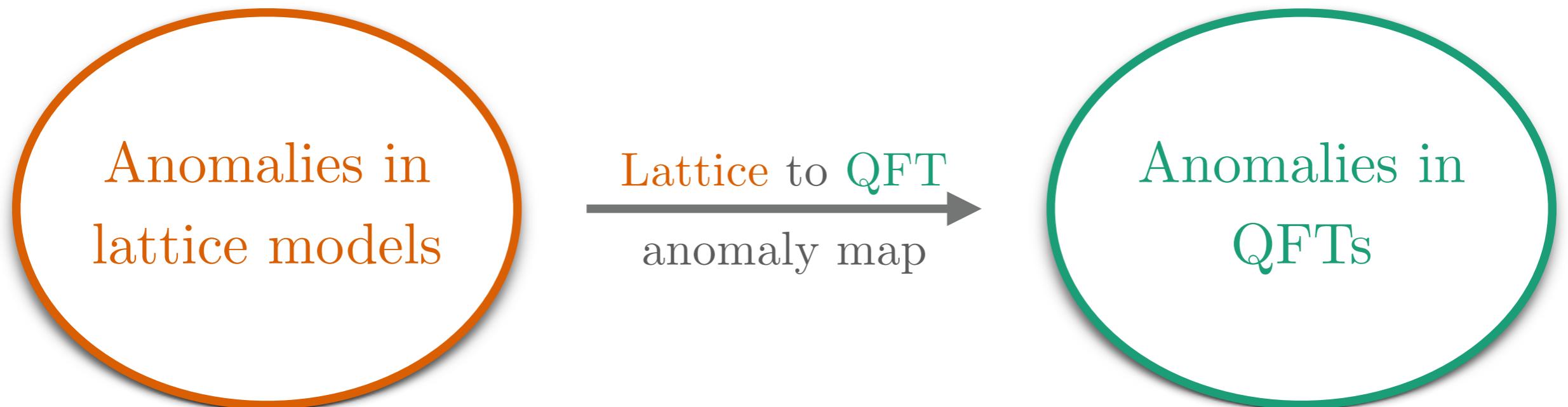
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- More precisely, can **emanate** from **lattice** anomalies

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- Surjectivity is not obvious, many elusive **QFT** anomalies

Lattice vs QFT anomalies

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Why care?

Practical reason: a better “**lattice laboratory**” for **QFTs** to do numerics and have an intrinsic UV cutoff

Conceptual reason: the interplay between **lattice models** and **QFTs** continually push each other forward.

Knowledge

Lattice

Continuum



New anomalies in lattice models of fermions

- 1) Lattice chiral anomaly: gateway to **Onsager symmetries**

[Arkya Chatterjee, **Sal Pace**, Shu-Heng Shao, PRL '25 (arXiv:2409.12220)]

- 2) Lattice parity anomaly: symmetry-enforced **Dirac cones**

[**Sal Pace**, Luke Kim, Arkya Chatterjee, Shu-Heng Shao, arXiv:2505.04684]

- 3) Lattice LU(1) anomaly: symmetry-enforced **Fermi surfaces**

[Luke Kim, **Sal Pace**, Shu-Heng Shao, *to appear*]



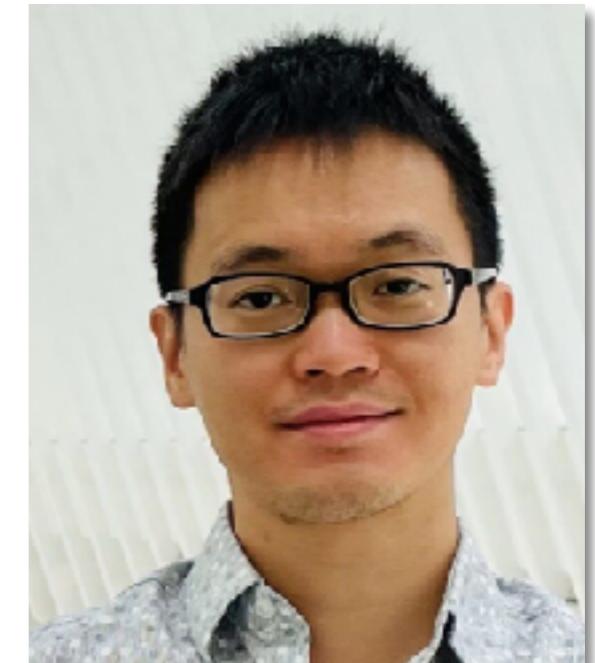
Arkya Chatterjee

MIT → Stony Brook



Luke Kim

MIT



Shu-Heng Shao

MIT

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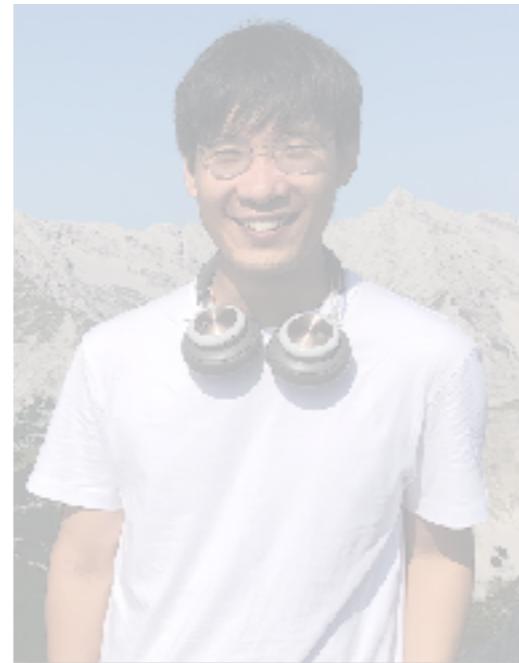
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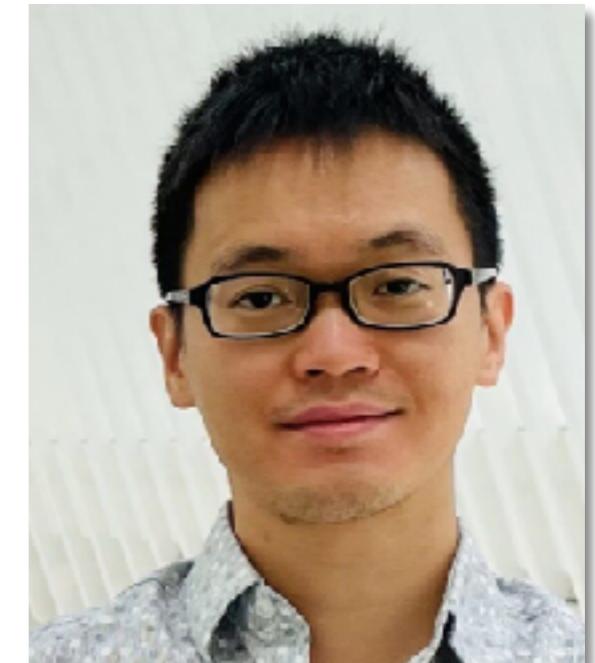
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Dirac fermion field theory

Free, massless **Dirac fermion** $\Psi = (\Psi_L, \Psi_R)^T$ in 1 + 1D:

$$\mathcal{L} = i \Psi_L^\dagger (\partial_t + \partial_x) \Psi_L + i \Psi_R^\dagger (\partial_t - \partial_x) \Psi_R$$

- Ψ_L (Ψ_R) is a left (right) moving complex Weyl fermion

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Chiral $(U(1)^V \times U(1)^A)/\mathbb{Z}_2$ symmetry

vector $U(1)^V$: $\Psi_L^\dagger \mapsto e^{+i\theta} \Psi_L^\dagger$ $\Psi_R^\dagger \mapsto e^{+i\theta} \Psi_R^\dagger$

axial $U(1)^A$: $\Psi_L^\dagger \mapsto e^{+i\alpha} \Psi_L^\dagger$ $\Psi_R^\dagger \mapsto e^{-i\alpha} \Psi_R^\dagger$

► Axial charge $Q^A = C_R Q^V C_R^\dagger$, where $C_R: \Psi_R \mapsto \Psi_R^\dagger$

The chiral anomaly

$$\mathcal{L} = i \Psi_L^\dagger (\partial_t + \partial_x) \Psi_L + i \Psi_R^\dagger (\partial_t - \partial_x) \Psi_R$$

The **chiral anomaly** is an anomaly of $(U(1)^V \times U(1)^A)/\mathbb{Z}_2$

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Manifests through anomalous current conservation

$$\partial^\mu J_\mu^A = 0 \xrightarrow{\text{turn on } A_\mu} \partial^\mu J_\mu^A = \frac{1}{\pi} E$$

- The obstruction to a trivial gapped phase follows from
 1. Formally: 't Hooft's anomaly matching argument
 2. Physically: **threading 2π flux** creates $Q^A = 2$ charge—a left-moving particle and right-moving hole

The chiral anomaly

Can the **chiral anomaly** be realized in a **lattice** model
with **finite-dimensional*** local Hilbert spaces?

*Bosonized version has been realized in infinite dim local Hilbert spaces [M. Cheng, N. Seiberg '22]

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$$[J_t^V(t, x), J_t^A(t, x')] \sim i \partial_x \delta(x - x')$$

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Yes! [Arkya Chatterjee, Sal Pace, Shu-Heng Shao, PRL '25 (arXiv:2409.12220)]

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A simple lattice model

Complex fermions c_j on sites j of length L 1d spatial lattice*

$$\mathcal{H} = \bigotimes_{j=1}^L \mathbb{C}^2$$

$$\{c_j, c_{j'}^\dagger\} = \delta_{j,j'}$$

$$\{c_j, c_{j'}\} = 0$$

$$H = i \sum_{j=1}^L \left(c_j^\dagger c_{j+1} - c_{j+1}^\dagger c_j \right)$$

Becomes free, massless **Dirac fermion** theory in IR

*Assume L is even and periodic boundary conditions

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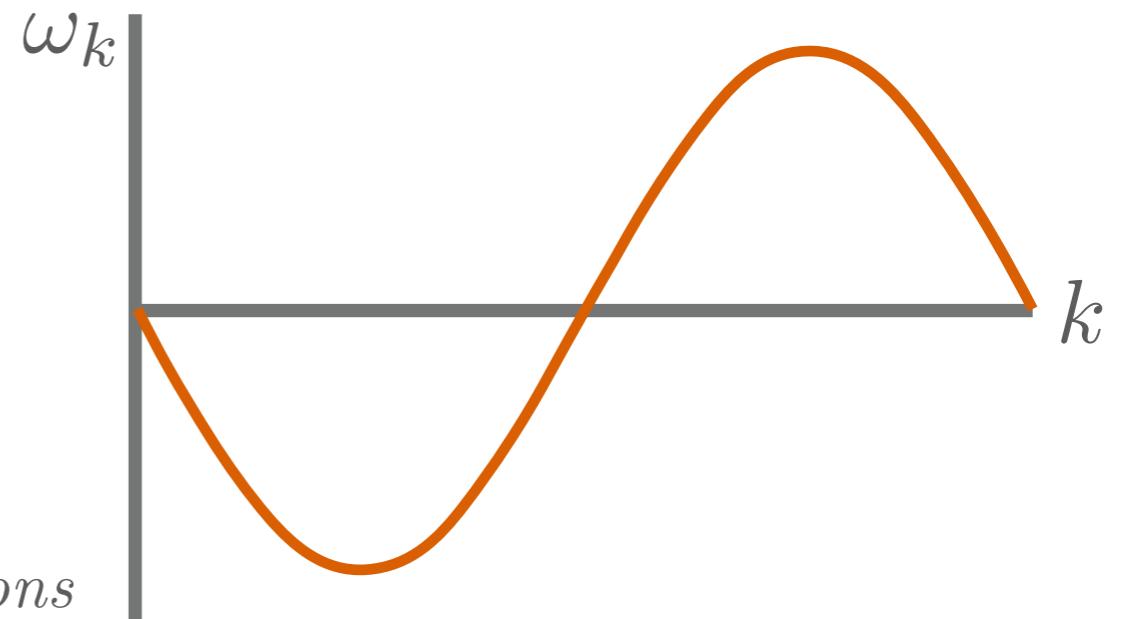
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- In momentum space

$$H = \sum_{k \in \text{BZ}} \omega_k c_k^\dagger c_k$$

$$\omega_k = -2 \sin(k)$$



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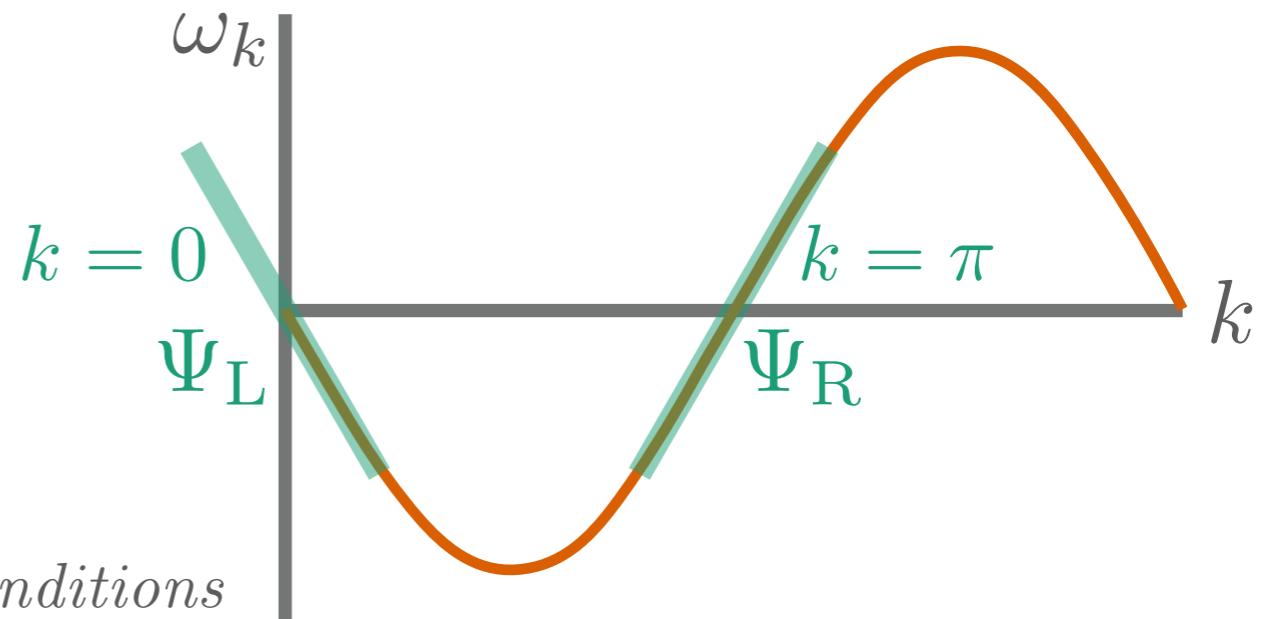
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In

If the **chiral anomaly** emanates from a **lattice** anomaly,
the chiral $(U(1)^V \times U(1)^A)/\mathbb{Z}_2$ symmetry must
emanate from a **lattice** symmetry.

We need to build a **UV** to **IR** symmetry dictionary!

*Assume L is even

Emanant symmetries I

$$H = i \sum_{j=1}^L \left(c_j^\dagger c_{j+1} - c_{j+1}^\dagger c_j \right)$$

$$c_k = \frac{1}{\sqrt{L}} \sum_{j=1}^L e^{ikj} c_j$$

U(1) fermion number symmetry $N = \sum_{j=1}^L c_j^\dagger c_j$

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U(1) fermion number symmetry $Q_0 = \sum_{j=1}^L \left(c_j^\dagger c_j - \frac{1}{2} \right)$

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$$\text{U}(1) \text{ fermion number symmetry } Q_0 = \sum_{j=1}^L \left(c_j^\dagger c_j - \frac{1}{2} \right)$$

► Real space transformation

$$e^{i\theta Q_0} : c_j^\dagger \mapsto e^{i\theta} c_j^\dagger$$

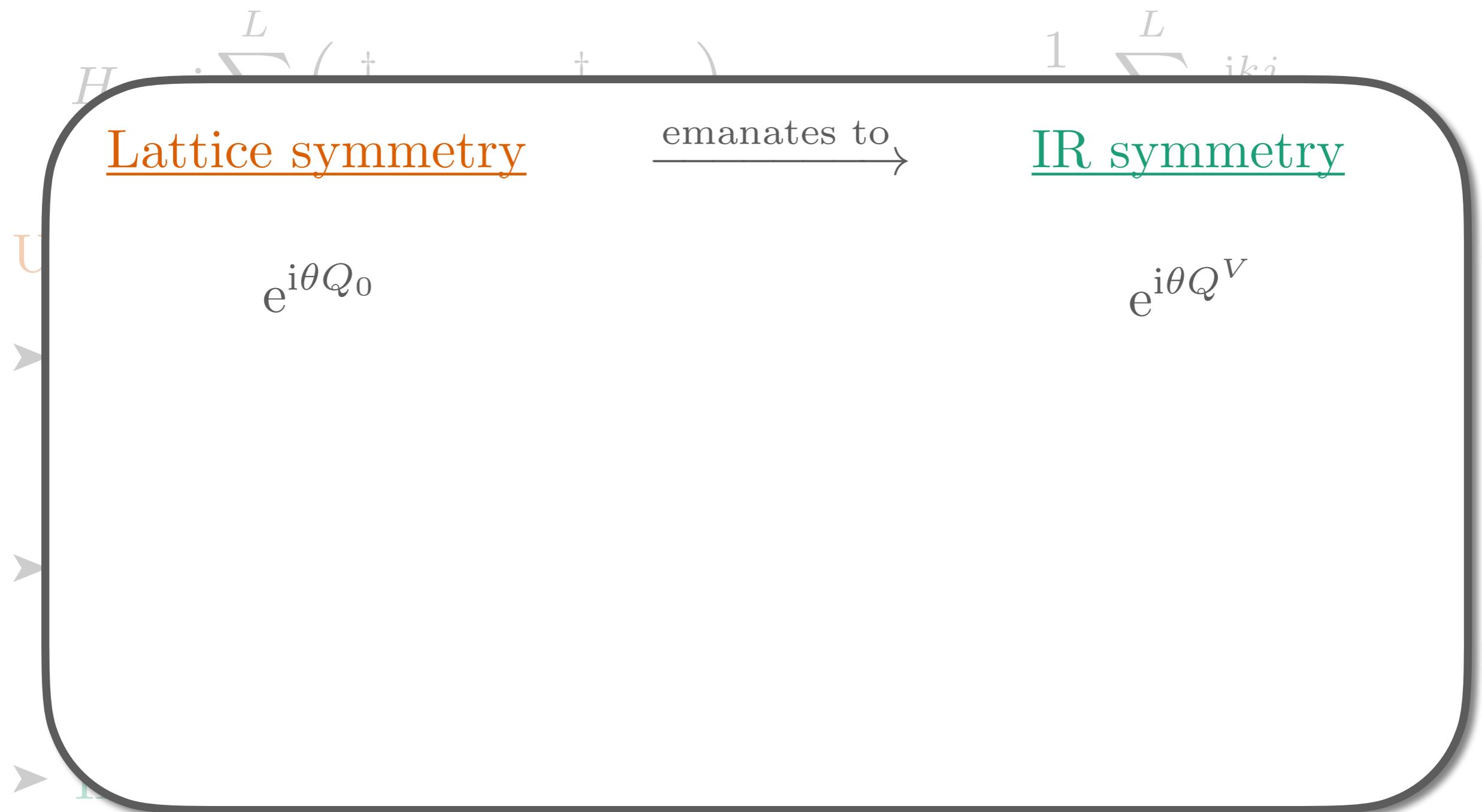
► Momentum space transformation

$$e^{i\theta Q_0} : c_k^\dagger \mapsto e^{i\theta} c_k^\dagger$$

► IR symmetry (look at $k = 0$ and $k = \pi$)

$$e^{i\theta Q_0} : \Psi_{L,R}^\dagger \mapsto e^{i\theta} \Psi_{L,R}^\dagger$$

Emanant symmetries I



$$e^{i\theta Q_0} : \Psi_{L,R}^\dagger \mapsto e^{i\theta} \Psi_{L,R}^\dagger$$

Emanant symmetries II

$$H = i \sum_{j=1}^L (c_j^\dagger c_{j+1} - c_{j+1}^\dagger c_j)$$

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Lattice translation symmetry:

- Real space transformation

$$T: c_j \mapsto c_{j+1}$$

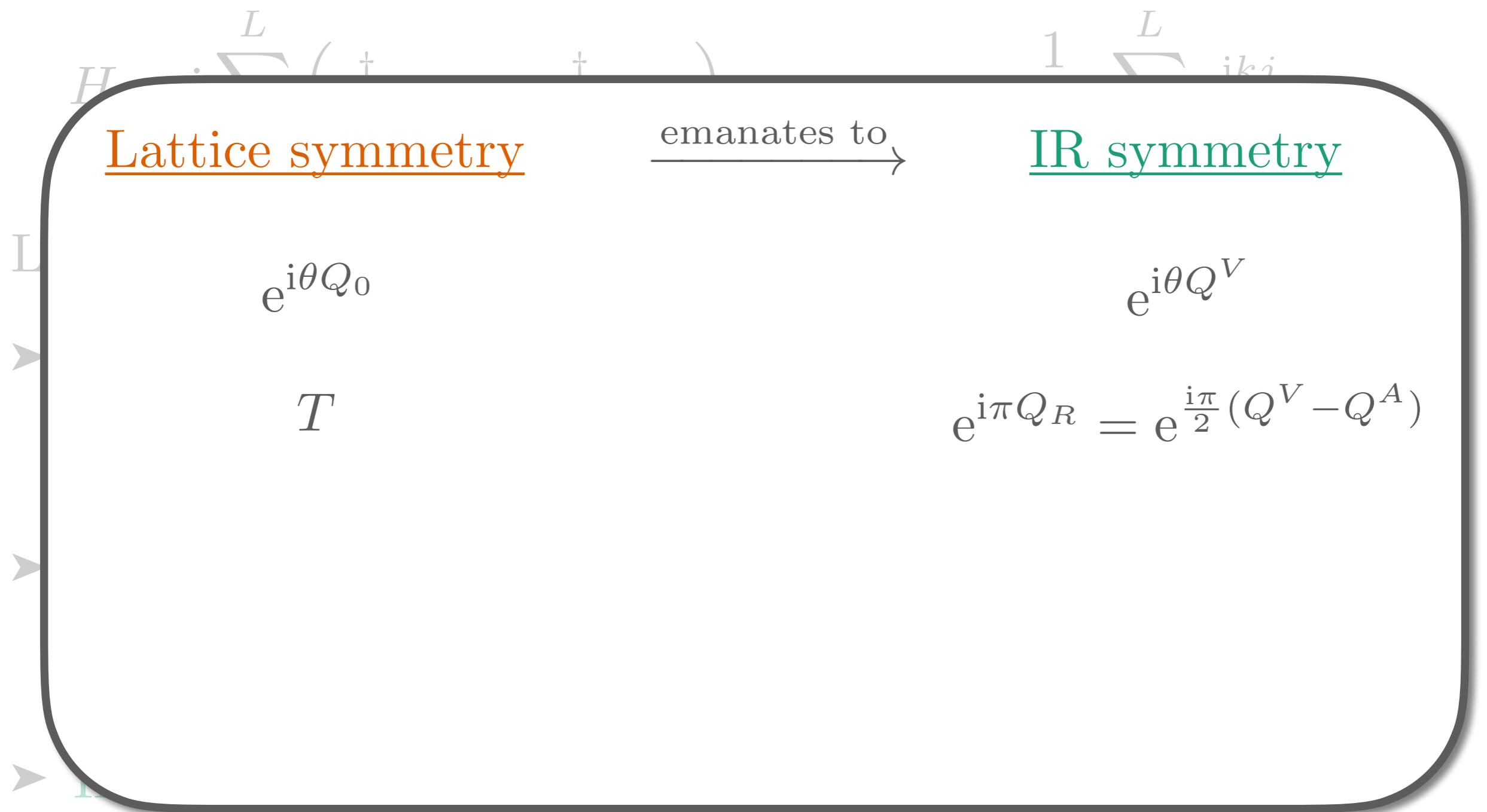
- Momentum space transformation

$$T: c_k \mapsto e^{-ik} c_k$$

- IR symmetry (look at $k = 0$ and $k = \pi$)

$$T: \Psi_L, \Psi_R \mapsto \Psi_L, -\Psi_R$$

Emanant symmetries II



$$T: \Psi_L, \Psi_R \mapsto \Psi_L, -\Psi_R$$

Emanant symmetries II



L
↳

$$e^{i\theta Q_0}$$

$$T$$

$$e^{i\theta Q^V}$$

$$e^{i\pi Q_R} = e^{\frac{i\pi}{2}(Q^V - Q^A)}$$

$e^{i\pi Q_R}$ generates an anomalous **chiral symmetry** in the IR

► \mathbb{Z}_2^R emanates from lattice translations

► But T is **anomaly-free**: this IR anomaly is **emergent**

↳

$$T: \Psi_L, \Psi_R \mapsto \Psi_L, -\Psi_R$$

Be real 😎

Let's decompose c_j into real (Majorana) fermions $a_j = a_j^\dagger$ and $b_j = b_j^\dagger$ to search for other useful **symmetries**

$$c_j = \frac{1}{2}(a_j + i b_j) \quad \{a_j, a_{j'}\} = 2\delta_{j,j'} \quad \{b_j, b_{j'}\} = 2\delta_{j,j'}$$

Hamiltonian becomes $H = \frac{i}{2} \sum_{j=1}^L (a_j a_{j+1} + b_j b_{j+1})$

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- The a_j and b_j Majoranas are **decoupled!**
- The model has **Majorana translation symmetries**

$$T_a : a_j, b_j \mapsto a_{j+1}, b_j$$

$$T_b : a_j, b_j \mapsto a_j, b_{j+1}$$

Emanant symmetries III

$$H = \frac{i}{2} \sum_{j=1}^L (a_j a_{j+1} + b_j b_{j+1}) \quad c_j = \frac{1}{2}(a_j + i b_j)$$

The b Majorana lattice translation symmetry

- Real space transformation:

$$T_b : c_j \mapsto \frac{1}{2} (a_j + i b_{j+1})$$

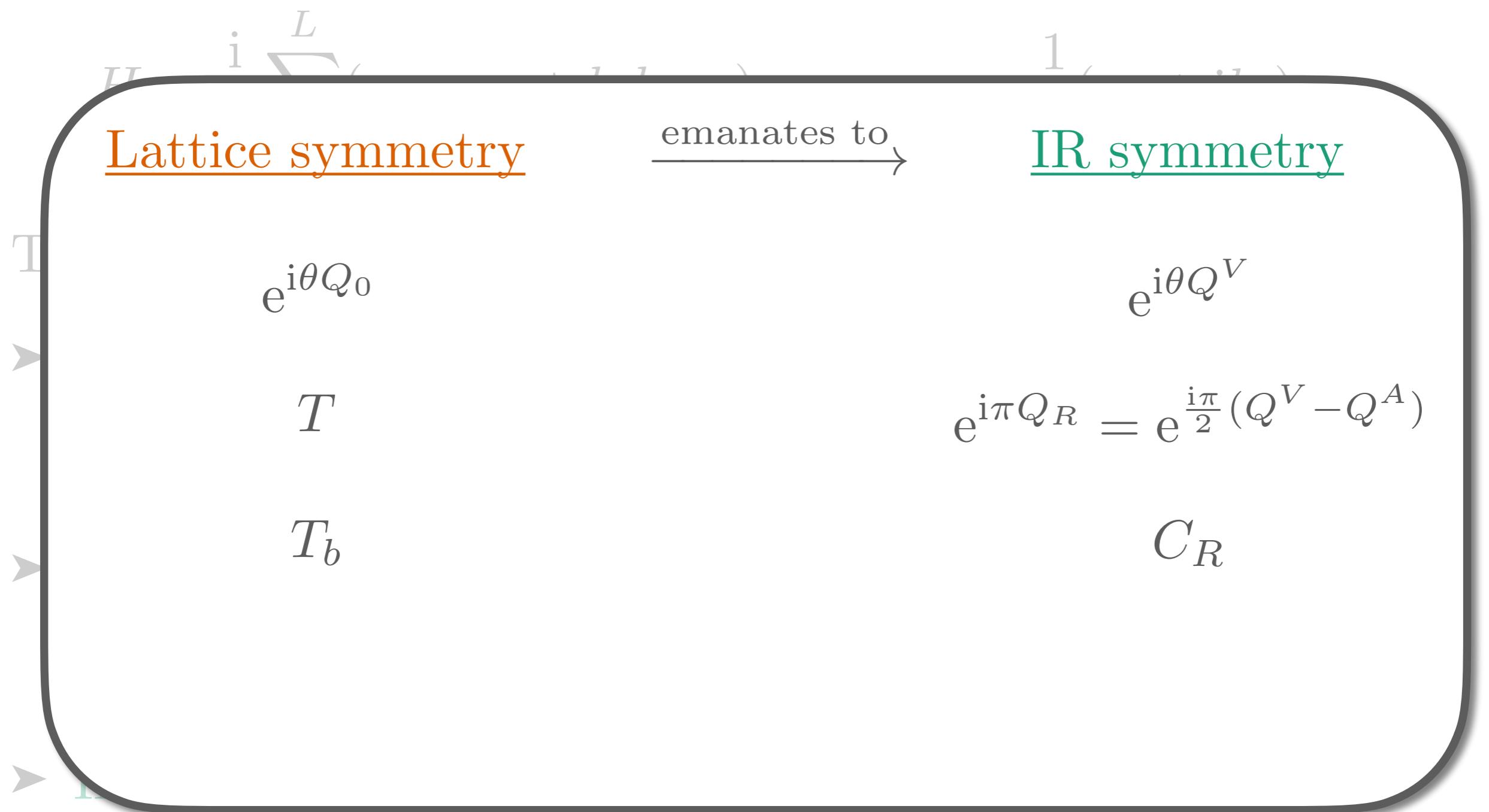
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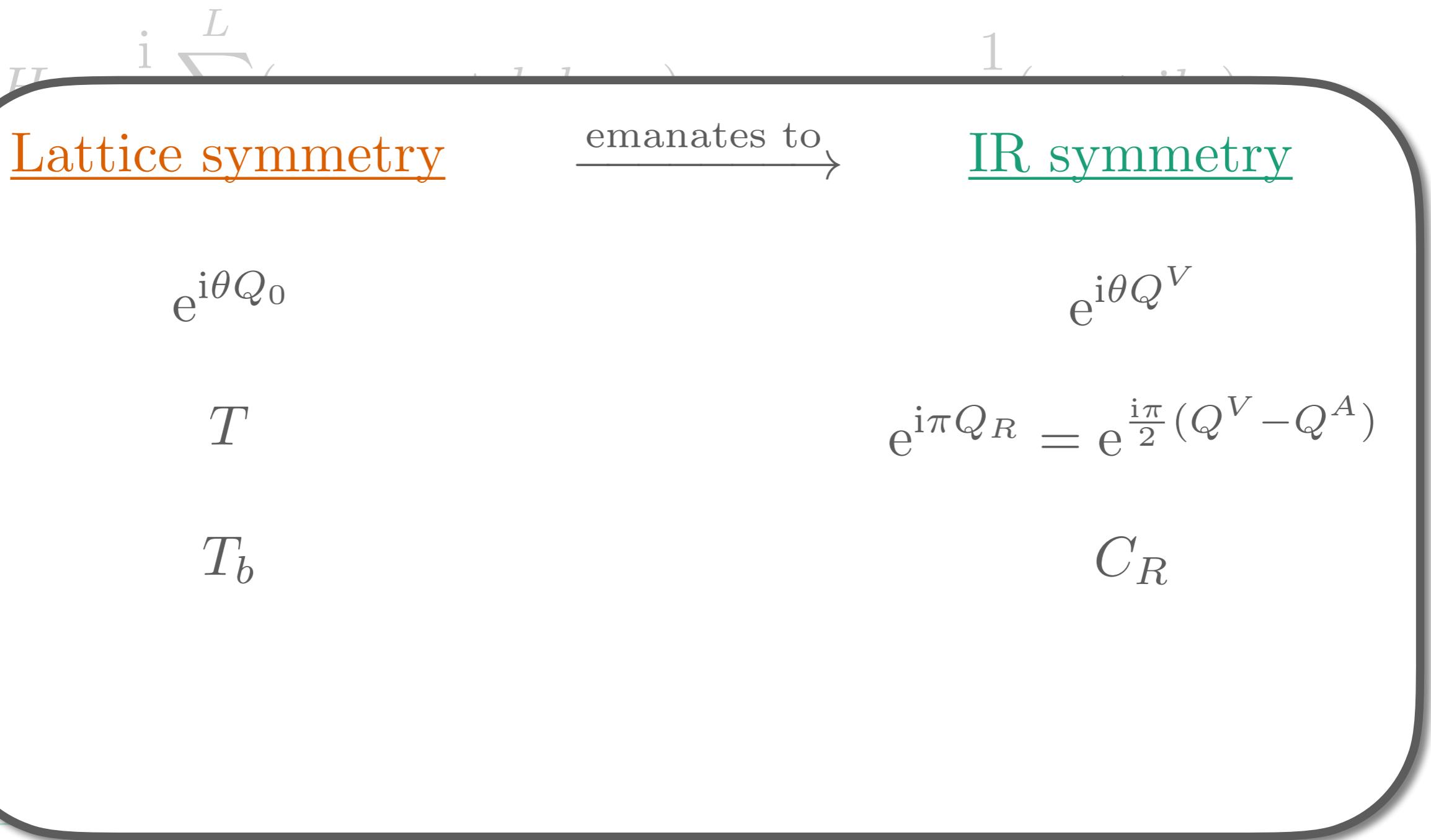
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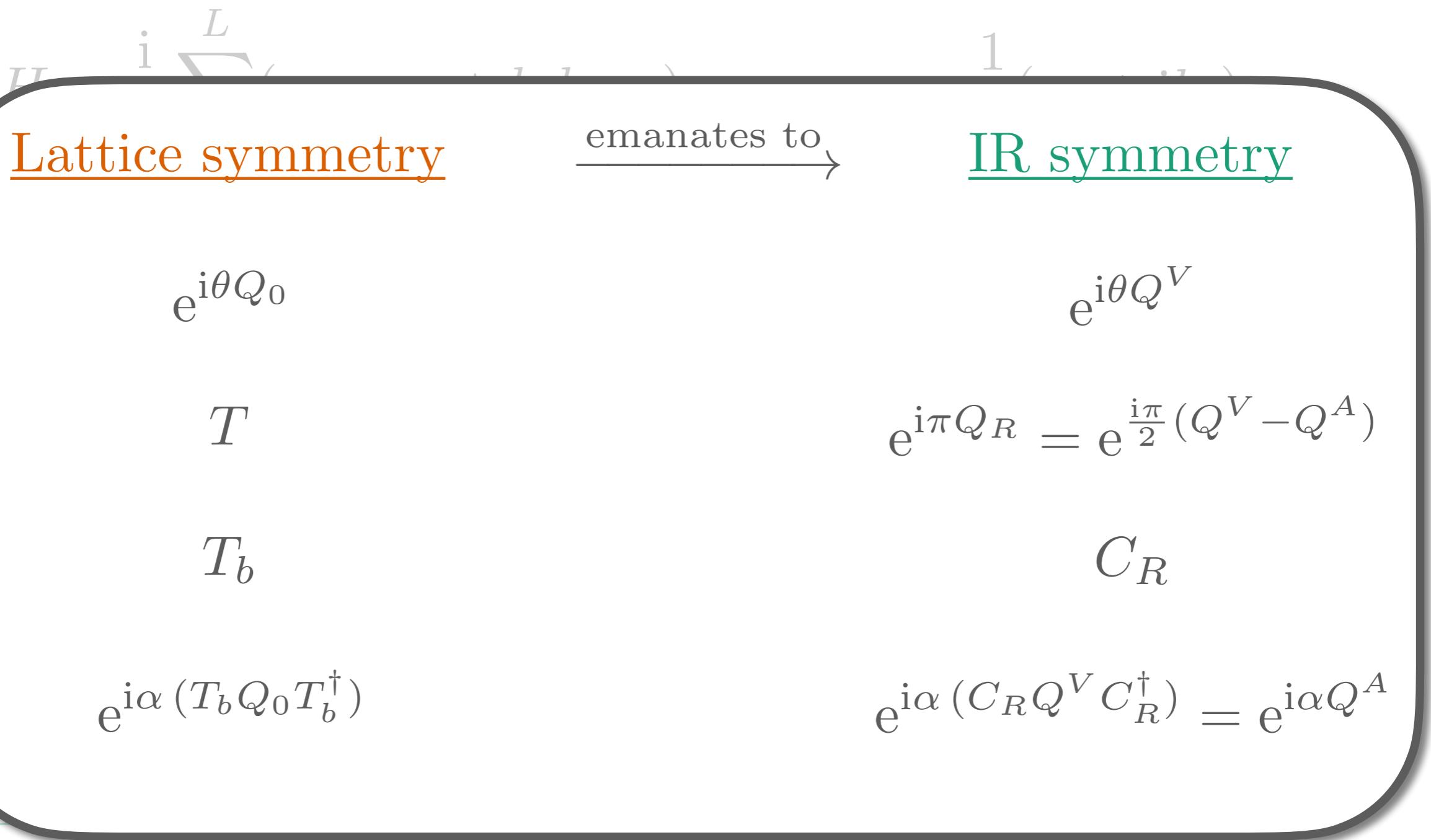
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$$Q^A = C_R Q^V C_R^\dagger$$

Emenant symmetries III



$$T_b : \Psi_L, \Psi_R \mapsto \Psi_L, \Psi_R^\dagger$$

Lattice vector and axial charges

The **IR vector** and **axial** charges emanate from the conserved charges

- Lattice **vector** charge $Q_0 = \frac{i}{2} \sum_{j=1}^L a_j b_j$
- Lattice **axial** charge $Q_1 \equiv T_b Q_0 T_b^{-1} = \frac{i}{2} \sum_{j=1}^L a_j b_{j+1}$
- 1. Sum of **local** terms
- 2. Have integer-quantized eigenvalues
- 3. Generate locality preserving **U(1)** symmetries

Onsager symmetry

The lattice **vector** and **axial** charges do not commute

$$[Q_0, Q_1] \neq 0 \xrightarrow{\text{IR limit}} [Q^V, Q^A] = 0$$

Q_0 and Q_1 generate the **Onsager algebra** [**Onsager '44**]

- Let $Q_n = \frac{i}{2} \sum_{j=1}^L a_j b_{j+n}$ and $G_n = \frac{i}{2} \sum_{j=1}^L (a_j a_{j+n} - b_j b_{j+n})$

$$[Q_n, Q_m] = iG_{m-n} \quad [G_n, G_m] = 0$$

$$[Q_n, G_m] = 2i(Q_{n-m} - Q_{n+m})$$

Onsager symmetry

The lattice **vector** and **axial** charges do not commute

The **chiral** $(U(1)^V \times U(1)^A)/\mathbb{Z}_2$ symmetry **emanates** from the Onsager symmetry $\langle e^{i\theta Q_0}, e^{i\alpha Q_1} \rangle$

$$Q_n \xrightarrow{\text{IR limit}} \begin{cases} Q^V & n \text{ even} \\ Q^A & n \text{ odd} \end{cases}$$

$$G_n \xrightarrow{\text{IR limit}} 0$$

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Does the Onsager symmetry have a **lattice anomaly** that matches the **chiral anomaly**?

Onsager symmetric Hamiltonians

We assume the Hamiltonian is local:

$$H_g = \sum_n \sum_{j=1}^L g_{j,n} H_j^{(n)}$$

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1. $e^{-i\frac{\pi}{2}Q_1} e^{i\frac{\pi}{2}Q_0} : (a_j, b_j) \mapsto (a_{j-1}, b_{j+1})$ invariance requires $H_j^{(n)}$ to not have terms **mixing** a_j and b_j and $g_{j,n} = g_n$

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2. Under the $e^{i\theta Q_0}$ transformation

$$a_j \rightarrow \cos(\theta)a_j + \sin(\theta)b_j \quad b_j \rightarrow \cos(\theta)b_j - \sin(\theta)a_j$$

\implies Symmetric $H_j^{(n)}$ are quadratic

$$H_j^{(n)} = ia_j a_{j+n} + ib_j b_{j+n}$$

Lattice anomaly: enforced gaplessness

$$H_g = i \sum_n \sum_{j=1}^L g_n (a_j a_{j+n} + b_j b_{j+n})$$

- H_g commutes with the entire **Onsager symmetry** — it is the most general Onsager symmetric **Hamiltonian**

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Every Onsager symmetric **Hamiltonian** H_g is **gapless**

- In momentum space:

$$H_g = \sum_{k \in \text{BZ}} \omega_k c_k^\dagger c_k \quad \omega_k = 4 \sum_n g_n \sin(nk)$$

- H_g is never in a trivial gapped phase
- This Onsager symmetry has a **lattice anomaly**

Lattice anomaly: enforced gaplessness

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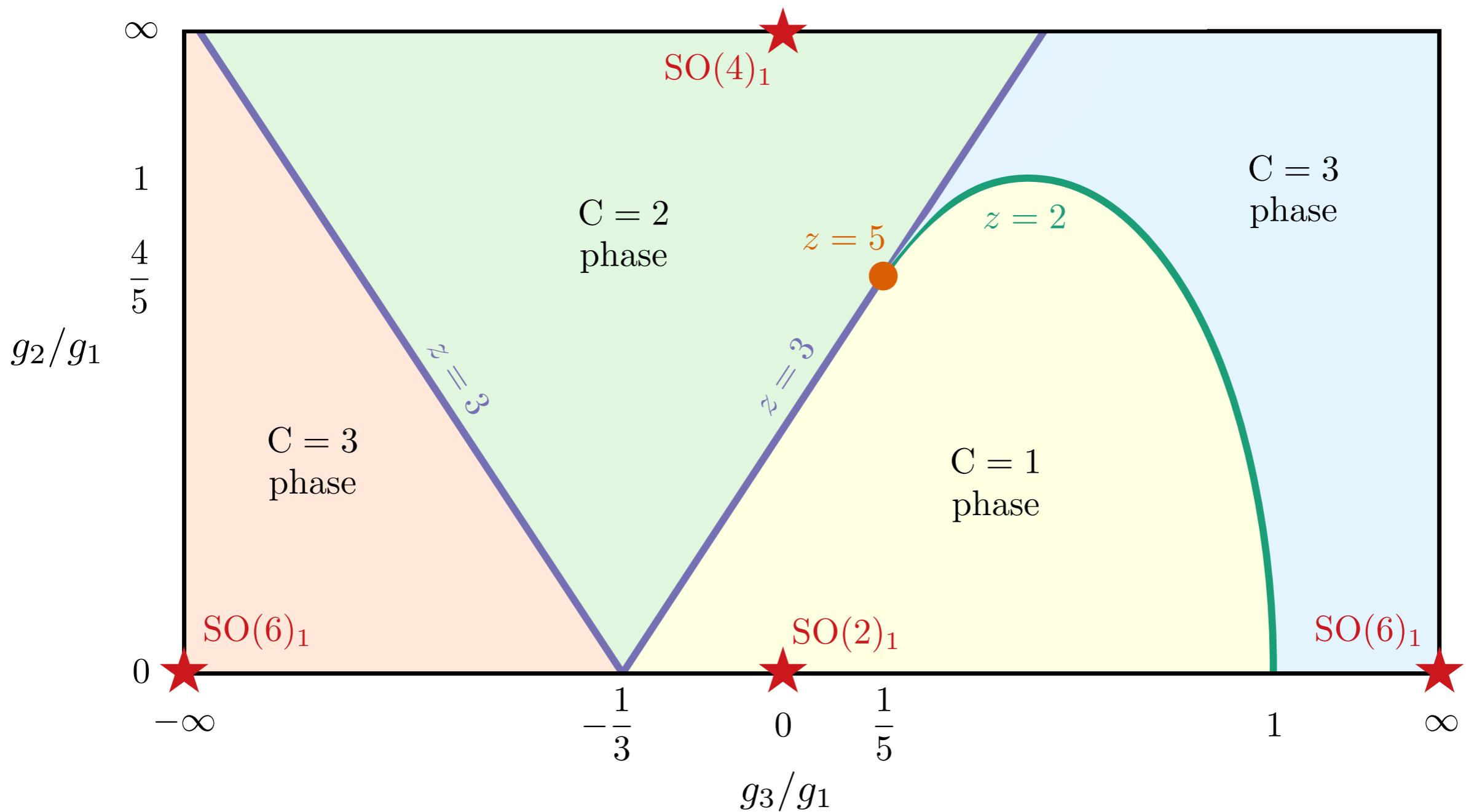
The **chiral anomaly** emanates from the Onsager symmetry's **lattice anomaly**

- The fact that the **lattice anomaly** enforces gaplessness is consistent—the **chiral anomaly** is a **local anomaly** and enforces gaplessness in QFT

- H_g is never in a trivial gapped phase
- This Onsager symmetry has a **lattice anomaly**

Gapless phase diagram

$$H = i \sum_{n=1}^3 \sum_{j=1}^L g_n (a_j a_{j+n} + b_j b_{j+n})$$



Summary

Anomalies 101

1. Anomalies as obstructions to trivial gapped phases
2. Emergent vs emanant anomalies

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Lattice chiral anomaly [Arkya Chatterjee, Sal Pace, Shu-Heng Shao, PRL '25 (arXiv:2409.12220)]

The simple **tight-binding model** $H = i \sum_{j=1}^L (c_j^\dagger c_{j+1} - c_{j+1}^\dagger c_j)$

1. Has a lattice vector and axial symmetry, which form the Onsager algebra
2. Has a **lattice anomaly** that enforces gaplessness, from which the **chiral anomaly** emanates

Summary

Anomalies 101

Other lattice anomalies from Onsager-like symmetries:

- Compact boson CFT anomalies in spin chains

[**Sal Pace**, Arkya Chatterjee, Shu-Heng Shao, SciPost Phys '25 (arXiv:2412.18606)]

- Witten's $SU(2)$ anomaly on the lattice

[L. Gioia, R. Thorngren, arXiv:2503.07708]

- Lattice parity anomaly: symmetry-enforced Dirac cones

[**Sal Pace**, Luke Kim, Arkya Chatterjee, Shu-Heng Shao, arXiv:2505.04684]

- Lattice $LU(1)$ anomaly: symmetry-enforced Fermi surfaces

[Luke Kim, **Sal Pace**, Shu-Heng Shao, *to appear*]

which the chiral anomaly emanates

Back-up slides

Lattice vector and axial charges II

In terms of **complex fermions**

► Lattice **vector** charge $Q_0 = \sum_{j=1}^L \left(c_j^\dagger c_j - \frac{1}{2} \right)$

► Lattice **axial** charge

$$Q_1 = \frac{1}{2} \sum_{j=1}^L \left(c_j^\dagger c_{j+1} - c_j c_{j+1}^\dagger + c_j c_{j+1} - c_j^\dagger c_{j+1}^\dagger \right)$$

► Generate locality preserving **U(1)** symmetries

$$e^{i\theta Q_0} : c_j \mapsto e^{-i\theta} c_j$$

$$e^{i\alpha Q_1} : c_j \mapsto \cos(\alpha) c_j - \frac{i}{2} \sin(\alpha) (c_{j-1}^\dagger + c_{j-1} - c_{j+1}^\dagger + c_{j+1})$$

An anomaly in quantum spin chains

Consider model with a **qubit** on each site j of a length L ring

$$\mathcal{H} = \bigotimes_{j=1}^L \mathbb{C}^2 \quad X_j = X_{j+L} \quad Z_j = Z_{j+L}$$

Anomalous $\mathbb{Z}_2^X \times \mathbb{Z}_2^Z \times$ (lattice translations) **symmetry**

$$U_X = \prod_{j=1}^L X_j \quad U_Z = \prod_{j=1}^L Z_j \quad T: j \mapsto j + 1$$

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Manifestations of the **anomaly**:

- U_X and U_Z have a QM **anomaly** in each unit cell
- $U_X U_Z = (-1)^L U_Z U_X$

An anomaly in quantum spin chains

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Every **symmetric Hamiltonian** cannot have a trivial gapped phase

- e.g., XX chain $H = \sum_{j=1}^L (X_j X_{j+1} + Y_j Y_{j+1})$
- Called a Lieb-Schultz-Mattis (LSM) **anomaly**

An anomaly in field theory

The **compact boson CFT** at radius R is a 1 + 1D CFT with

$$\mathcal{L}_R = \frac{R^2}{4\pi} \partial_\mu \Phi \partial^\mu \Phi \quad \Phi \sim \Phi + 2\pi$$

- Has a $(U(1)^M \times U(1)^W) \rtimes \mathbb{Z}_2^C$ symmetry:

$$J_\mu^M = \frac{R^2}{2\pi} \partial_\mu \Phi \quad J_\mu^W = \frac{1}{2\pi} \epsilon_{\mu\nu} \partial^\nu \Phi \quad C: \Phi \mapsto -\Phi$$

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Anomalous symmetries:

- $U(1)^M \times U(1)^W$ and $\mathbb{Z}_2^M \times \mathbb{Z}_2^W \times \mathbb{Z}_2^C$
- Manifestation of $U(1)^M \times U(1)^W$ **anomaly**:

$$\partial^\mu J_\mu^W = 0 \xrightarrow{\text{turn on } A_\mu^M} \partial^\mu J_\mu^W = \frac{1}{2\pi} E^M$$

Anomaly matching

Anomalies of the effective IR theory either emerge from nothing or emanate from an anomaly of the UV

Anomaly matching

Anomalies of the effective **IR** theory either emerge from nothing or emanate from an **anomaly** of the **UV**

Example: **XX spin chain** $\longrightarrow R = \sqrt{2}$ boson CFT

$$\mathbb{Z}_2^X$$

$$\mathbb{Z}_2^C$$

$$\mathbb{Z}_2^Z$$

$$\mathbb{Z}_2^M$$

Translations

$$\mathbb{Z}_2^{\text{diag}} \subset \mathbb{Z}_2^M \times \mathbb{Z}_2^W$$

[M. A. Metlitski, Thorngren '17; M. Cheng, N. Seiberg '22]

- **Anomaly** of $\mathbb{Z}_2^{\text{diag}}$ is emergent
- **Anomaly** of $\mathbb{Z}_2^M \times \mathbb{Z}_2^W \times \mathbb{Z}_2^C$ emanates from **LSM anomaly**