Altermagnetism: from spintronics to unconventional magnetic phases

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The search for unconventional quantum phases that break the symmetries of the crystal lattice has been a focus in physics since the early days of quantum theory, driven by both fundamental interest and potential applications. Prominent examples include cuprate superconductors, which are known for their unconventional d-wave Cooper pairing, and dissipationless transport.

In this presentation, we will discuss our recent discovery[1] of an unconventional magnetic phase motivated by our earlier predictions and observations of unconventional spintronics

effects [2,3,4]. This unconventional phase, altermagnetism (see Figure), unlike common ferromagnetism and antiferromagnetism, breaks the symmetries of the crystal lattice, and features d, g, or i-partial wave characteristics simultaneously in its spin and electronic structure[1]. D-wave altermagnetism thus represents magnetic analogue of d-wave superconductivity.



We identified altermagnetism by employing and developing a symmetry framework that considers paired transformations involving electron spin and the crystal lattice. This framework is emerging as a new paradigm in the study of magnetic crystals. We will demonstrate its

usefulness by discussing (i) the altermagnetic band structure of the semiconductor MnTe, which we recently experimentally observed through collaborative work using photoemission spectroscopy[5], and (ii) our identification of more than 240 realistic altermagnetic candidates.

Additionally, we will explore the rapid expansion of altermagnetic concepts to many fields with focus on ultrafast spintronics memories[6], dissipationless transport [2-4] and twodimensional band topology [7]. Finally, we will outline the latest developments in the field, including the theoretical identification of the magnetic analog of superfluid helium-3 and we will propose transport experiments which can be used for its detection[8].

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