

# A Quantum Link Model with Heavy Hex Topology

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Hamiltonian Lattice Gauge Theories:  
Status, Novel Developments  
and Applications  
ECT\* Trento, September 2, 2025

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# Outline

From Wilson's Lattice Gauge Theory to Quantum Link Models

$U(1)$  Quantum Link Model on a Triangular Lattice

Quantum Computation on IBM's Heavy Hex Architecture

Conclusions

Additional Material:

$SU(N)$  Quantum Links and D-Theory Formulation of QCD

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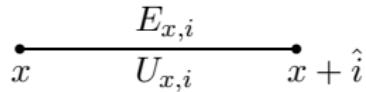
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## Hamiltonian formulation of Wilson's $U(1)$ lattice gauge theory



$$U = \exp(i\varphi), \quad U^\dagger = \exp(-i\varphi) \in U(1)$$

### Electric field operator $E$

$$E = -i\partial_\varphi, \quad [E, U] = U, \quad [E, U^\dagger] = -U^\dagger, \quad [U, U^\dagger] = 0$$

### Generator of $U(1)$ gauge transformations

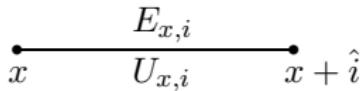
$$G_x = \sum_i (E_{x-\hat{i},i} - E_{x,i}), \quad [H, G_x] = 0$$

### $U(1)$ gauge invariant Hamiltonian

$$H = \frac{e^2}{2} \sum_{x,i} E_{x,i}^2 - \frac{1}{2e^2} \sum_{x,i \neq j} (U_{x,i} U_{x+\hat{i},j} U_{x+\hat{j},i}^\dagger U_{x,j}^\dagger + \text{h.c.})$$

operates in an infinite-dimensional Hilbert space per link

## Quantum link formulation of $U(1)$ lattice gauge theory



$$U = S^+, \quad U^\dagger = S^-$$

Electric field operator  $E$

$$E = S^3, \quad [E, U] = U, \quad [E, U^\dagger] = -U^\dagger, \quad [U, U^\dagger] = 2E$$

Generator of  $U(1)$  gauge transformations

$$G_x = \sum_i (E_{x-\hat{i}, i} - E_{x, i}), \quad [H, G_x] = 0$$

$U(1)$  gauge invariant Hamiltonian

$$H = \frac{e^2}{2} \sum_{x,i} E_{x,i}^2 - \frac{1}{2e^2} \sum_{x,i \neq j} (U_{x,i} U_{x+\hat{i},j} U_{x+\hat{j},i}^\dagger U_{x,j}^\dagger + \text{h.c.})$$

operates in a finite-dimensional Hilbert space per link

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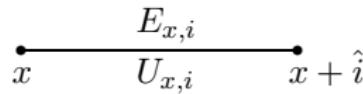
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$U(1)$  quantum links from spins  $\frac{1}{2}$

$$U = S^1 + iS^2 = S^+, \quad U^\dagger = S^1 - iS^2 = S^-$$



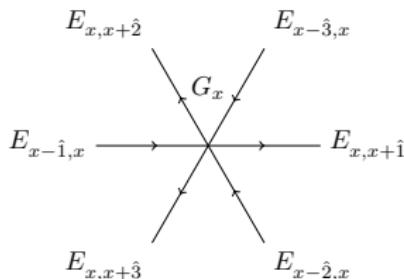
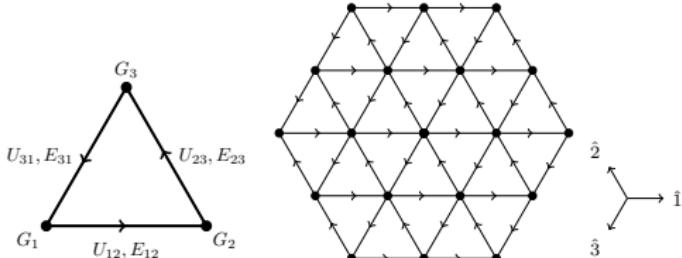
Electric flux operator  $E$

$$E = S^3, \quad [E, U] = U, \quad [E, U^\dagger] = -U^\dagger, \quad [U, U^\dagger] = 2E$$

Ring-exchange plaquette Hamiltonian

$$H = -\frac{1}{2e^2} \sum_{\Delta} (U_{\Delta} + U_{\Delta}^\dagger), \quad U_{\Delta} = U_{12} U_{23} U_{31}$$

Triangular lattice and Gauss law



D. Horn, Phys. Lett. B100 (1981) 149

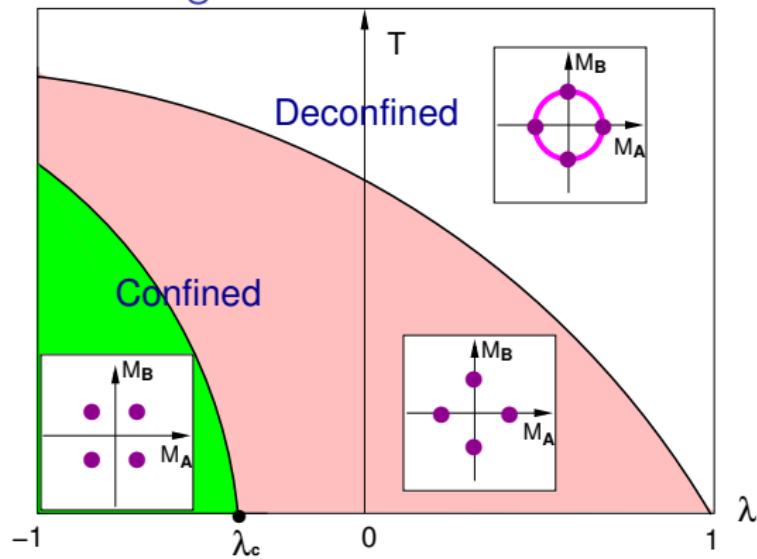
P. Orland, D. Rohrlich, Nucl. Phys. B338 (1990) 647

S. Chandrasekharan, UJW, Nucl. Phys. B492 (1997) 455

# Hamiltonian with Rokhsar-Kivelson term

$$H = -\frac{1}{2e^2} \left[ \sum_{\Delta} (U_{\Delta} + U_{\Delta}^{\dagger}) - \lambda \sum_{\Delta} (U_{\Delta} + U_{\Delta}^{\dagger})^2 \right]$$

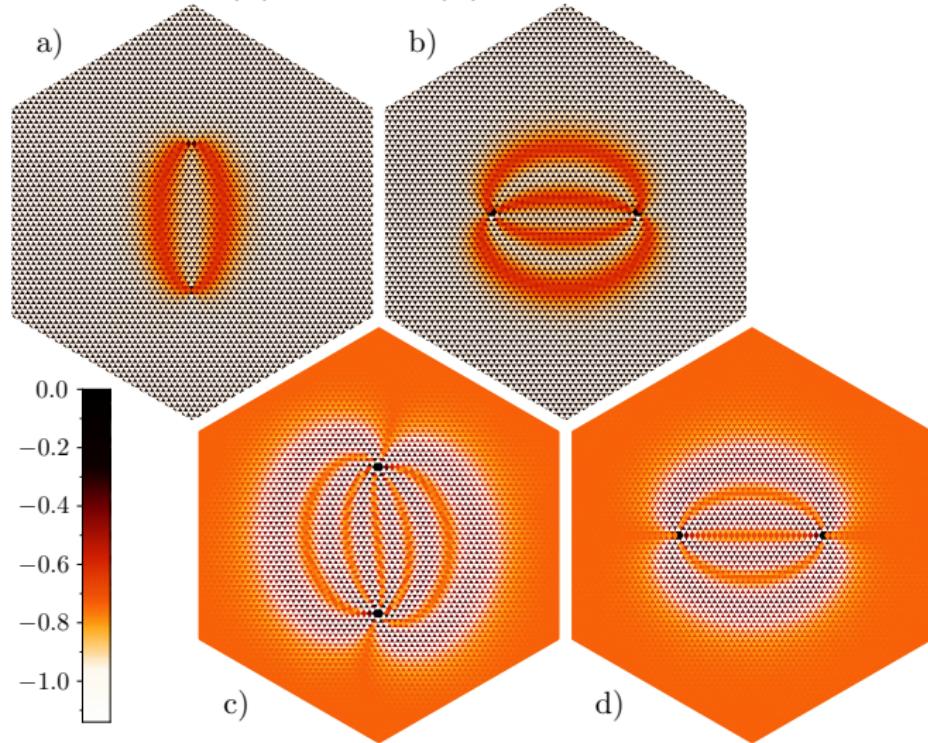
## Phase diagram



D. Banerjee, S. Caspar, F.-J. Jiang, J.-H. Peng, UJW, Phys. Rev. Research 4 (2022) 023176

# Energy distribution for the strings connecting external charges

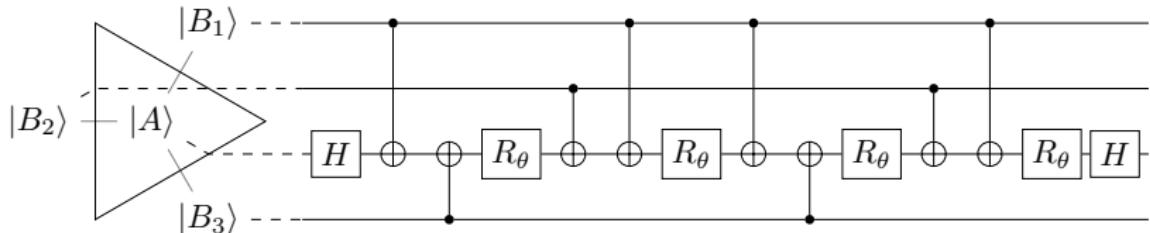
Charges  $\pm 1$  (a) and  $\pm 2$  (b) for  $\lambda > \lambda_c$



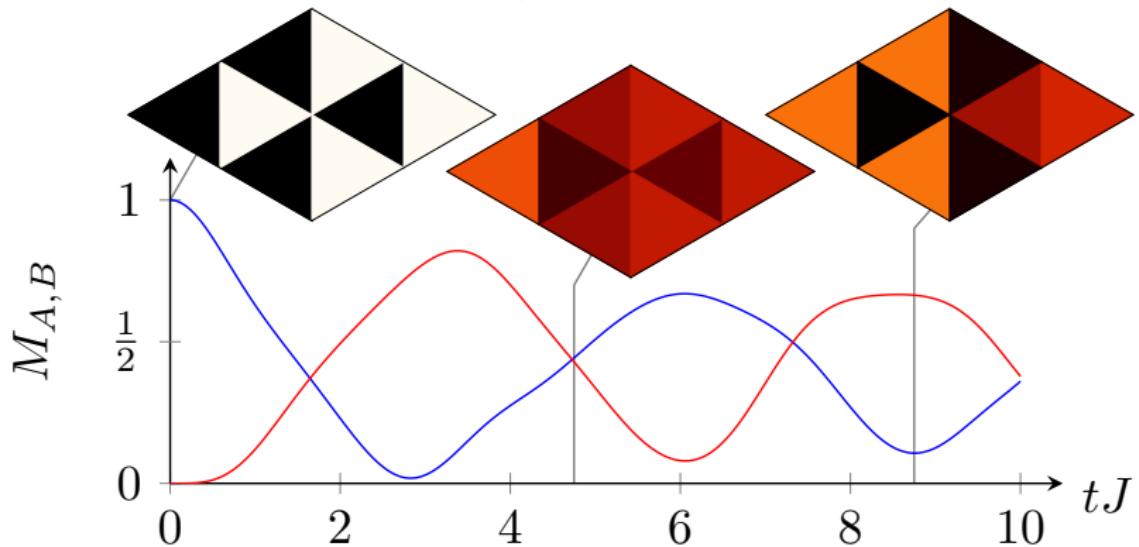
Charges  $\pm 3$  (c) and  $\pm 2$  (d) for  $\lambda < \lambda_c$

D. Banerjee, S. Caspar, F.-J. Jiang, J.-H. Peng, UJW, Phys. Rev. Research 4 (2022) 023176

## Circuit decomposition of the time-evolution operator



## Time-evolution of the order parameters



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**Collaboration:** Debasish Banerjee, Anthony Gandon,  
Emilie Huffman, Gurtej Kanwar, Alessandro Mariani,  
Francesco Tacchino, Ivano Tavernelli, UJW

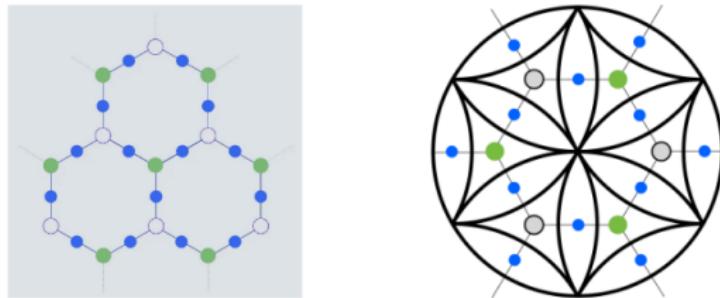
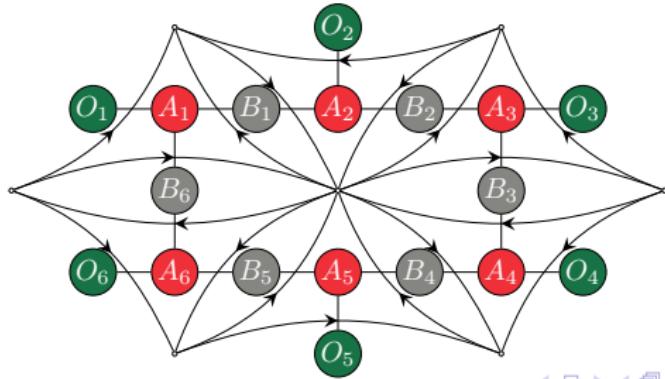


FIGURE 1: Left: Heavy hex topology. Right: Hexafoil lattice, the dual of the heavy hex topology.



# Dynamics in the dual height formulation

Trotter decomposition into triangle and petal and steps:

$$\exp(i(H_{\Delta} + H_{\diamond})t) = \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} (\exp(iH_{\Delta}t/n) \exp(iH_{\diamond}t/n))^n$$

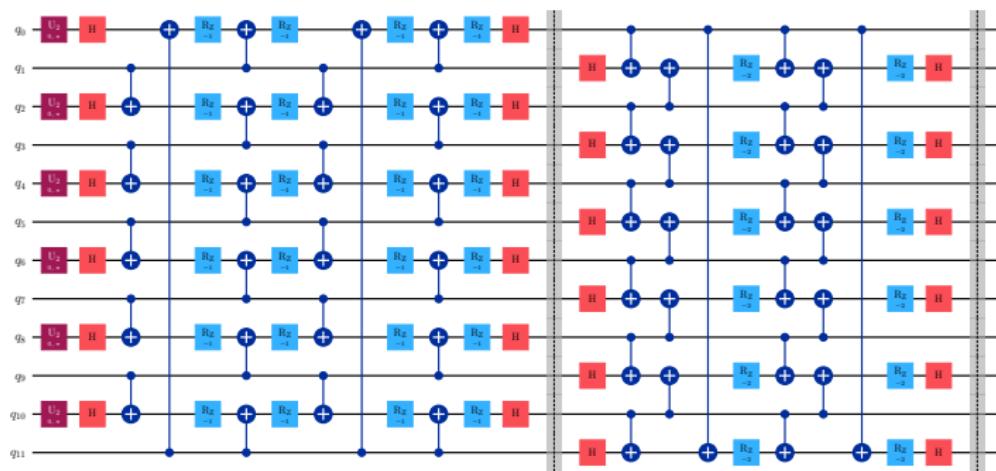
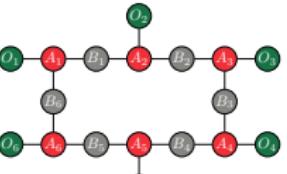
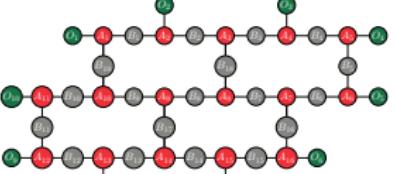
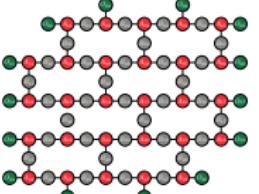


Figure: Quantum circuit for one Trotter step.

There are no long-range interactions. All CNOTs are local.

Lattice	Qubits	CNOTs/Trotter
	12	48
	35	164
	63	308

**Table:** Depths for a single Trotter step and different system sizes.

## 4-hexagon results: picking the best qubit loops

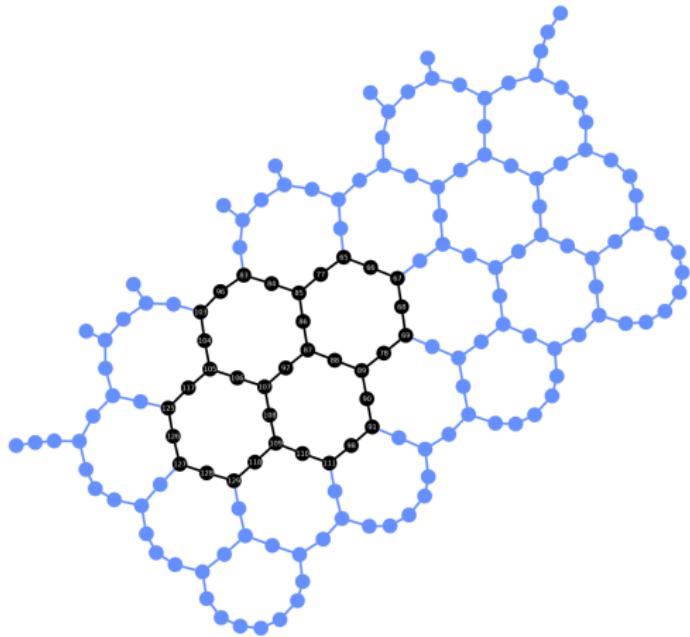


Figure: Best loop:  $\prod_{2q} \mathcal{F}_{2q} = 77.2\%$ ,  $\min(\mathcal{F}_{readout}) = 87.4\%$ , entangling gate fidelity (averaged over 114 qubits):  $\mathcal{F}_{2q} = 99.5\%$ .

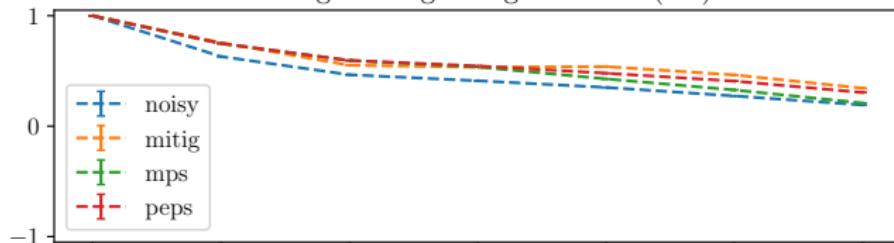
## 4-hexagon results

Error mitigation by twirling, Clifford perturbation theory in  $\Delta t$ .

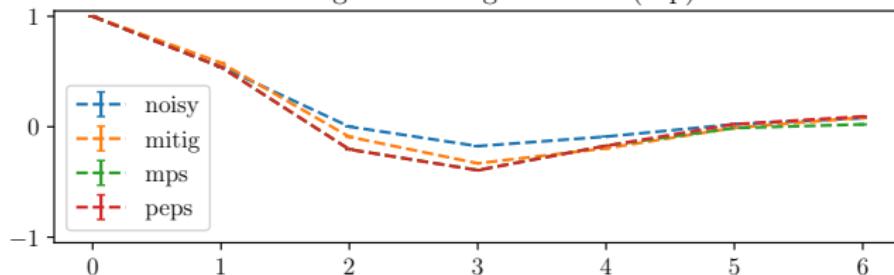
Successful strategy: reduce bias at the cost of increased variance.

Order parameters

Average Triangle magnetization (Mt)



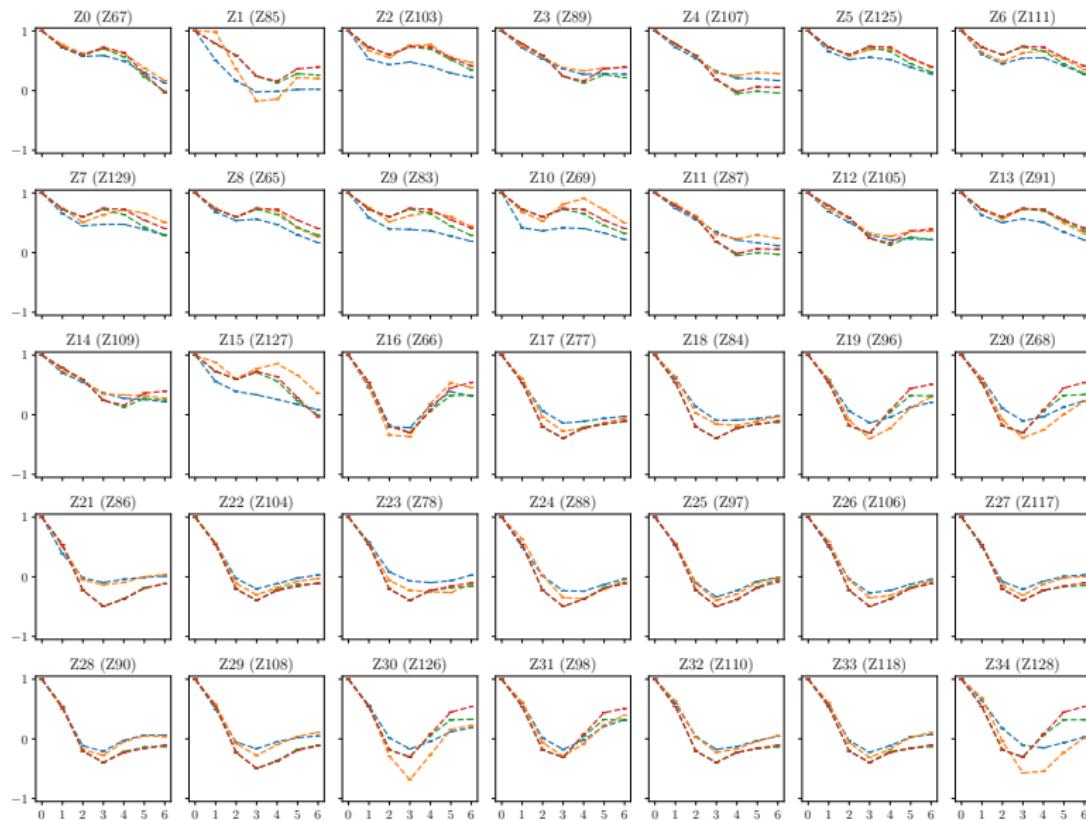
Average Petal magnetization (Mp)



# 4-hexagon results: local magnetization per dual site

noisy    mitig    mps    peps

Local Magnetization vs Space (NEC local mitigation, D1)



## Flux strings connecting external charges

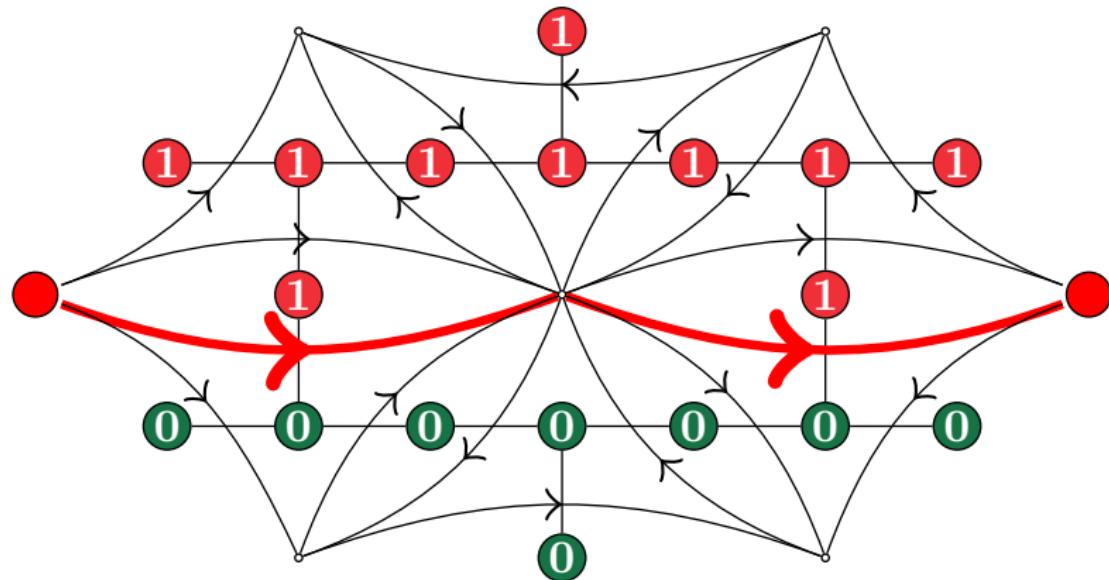
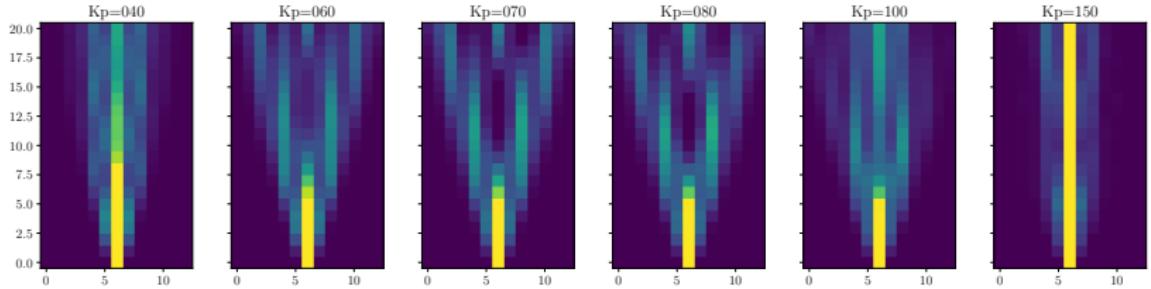
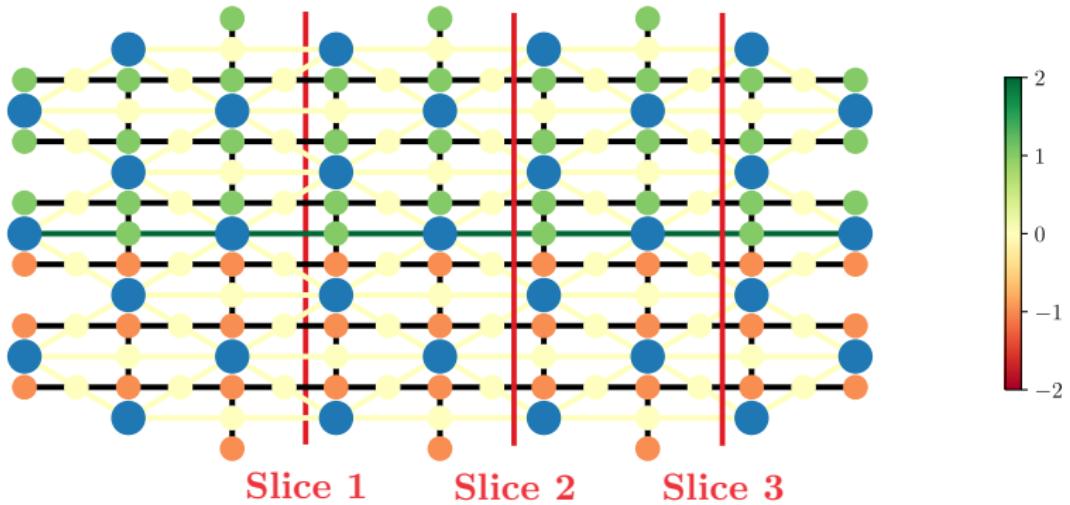


Figure: Initial configuration with external charges at the boundary

# PEPS results for 42 triangles and 72 petals

$\langle Z_i \rangle$ , PEPS, T=0dt



# IBM Heron results for 16 triangles and 29 petals

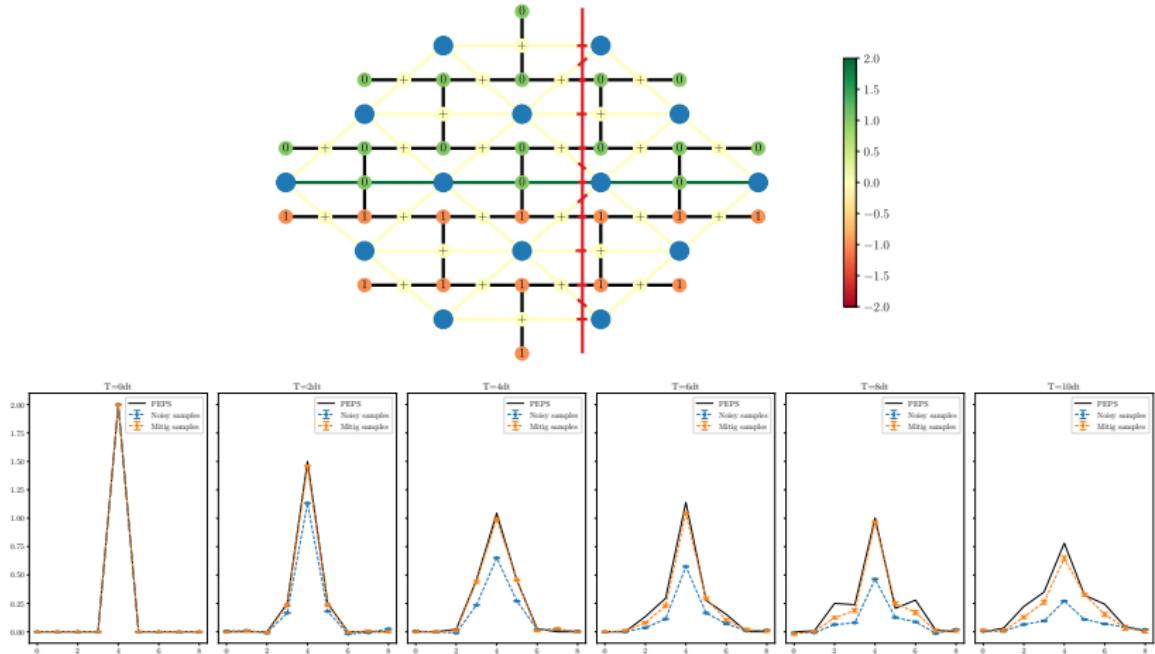


Figure: Lattice geometry of initial state and time evolution.

# IBM Heron results for 42 triangles and 72 petals

$\langle Z_i \rangle$ , PEPS, T=0dt

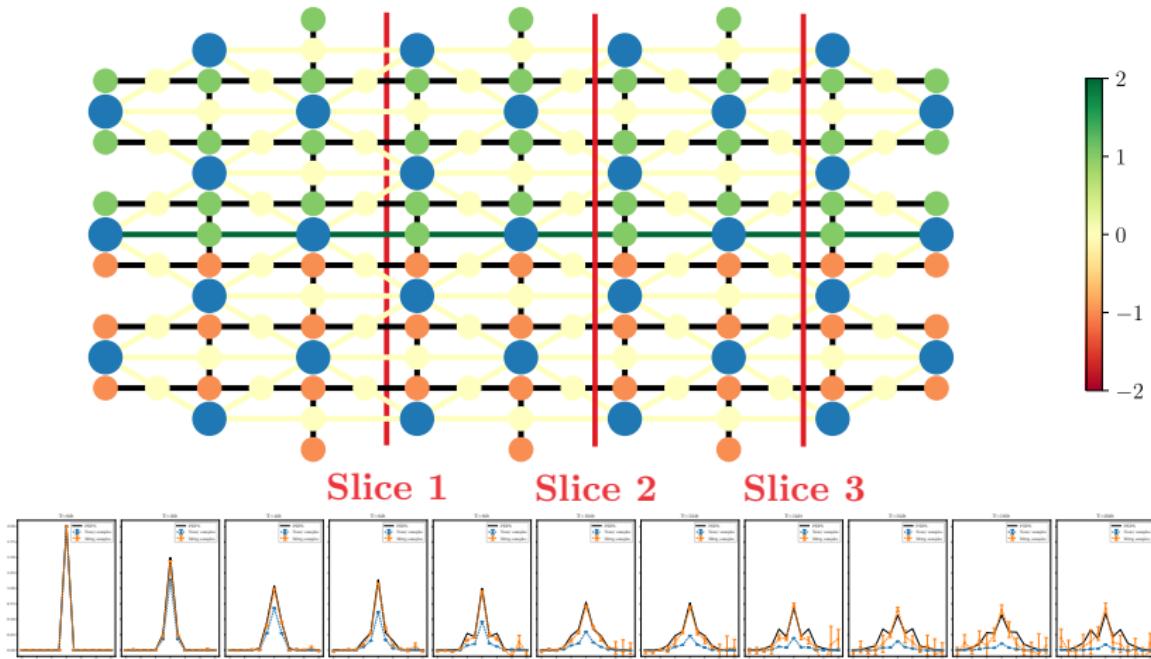


Figure: Lattice geometry of initial state and time evolution.

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## Conclusions

- Quantum link models provide a generalization of Wilson's lattice gauge theory with a finite-dimensional Hilbert space per link, which allows their resource-efficient realization in quantum computations.
- The hexafoil quantum link model is taylor-made for IBM's heavy hex qubit topology. It has a rich dynamics with quantum phase transitions separating distinct confined phases. The corresponding strings are interfaces separating different phases.
- This allows quantum computations of string dynamics, in particular, of the real-time evolution of string fluctuation and fractionalization.
- Properly error-mitigated quantum computations are consistent with PEPS results for moderate system sizes. Computations have been performed with up to 114 qubits over 20 Trotter steps, corresponding to a large number of CNOT gates.
- Quantum links can be used to regularize asymptotically free gauge theories including QCD. The continuum limit is then not pursued a la Wilson, but is taken efficiently via dimensional reduction.
- The path towards quantum computation of QCD will be a long one. However, with a lot of interesting physics along the way.

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$U(N)$  quantum link operators

$$U^{ij} = S_1^{ij} + iS_2^{ij}, \quad U^{ij\dagger} = S_1^{ij} - iS_2^{ij}, \quad i, j \in \{1, 2, \dots, N\}, \quad [U^{ij}, (U^\dagger)^{kl}] \neq 0$$

$SU(N)_L \times SU(N)_R$  gauge transformations of a quantum link

$$[L^a, L^b] = if_{abc}L^c, \quad [R^a, R^b] = if_{abc}R^c, \quad a, b, c \in \{1, 2, \dots, N^2 - 1\}$$

$$[L^a, R^b] = [L^a, E] = [R^a, E] = 0$$

Infinitesimal gauge transformations of a quantum link

$$[L^a, U] = -\lambda^a U, \quad [R^a, U] = U\lambda^a, \quad [E, U] = U$$

Algebraic structures of different quantum link models

$U(N)$  :  $U^{ij}$ ,  $L^a$ ,  $R^a$ ,  $E$ ,  $2N^2 + 2(N^2 - 1) + 1 = 4N^2 - 1$   $SU(2N)$  generators

$SO(N)$  :  $O^{ij}$ ,  $L^a$ ,  $R^a$ ,  $N^2 + 2\frac{N(N-1)}{2} = N(2N-1)$   $SO(2N)$  generators

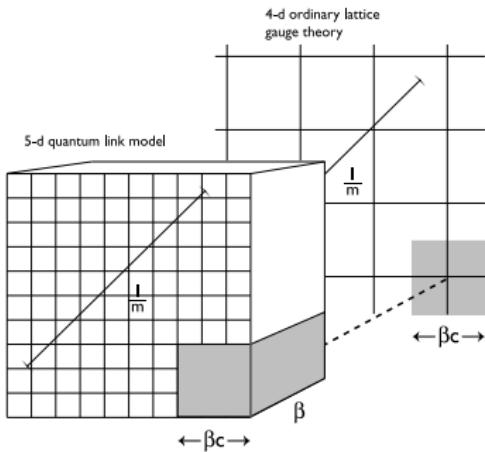
$Sp(N)$  :  $U^{ij}$ ,  $L^a$ ,  $R^a$ ,  $4N^2 + 2N(2N+1) = 2N(4N+1)$   $Sp(2N)$  generators

# Low-energy effective action for a quantum link model in a (4 + 1)-d massless non-Abelian Coulomb phase

$$S[G_\mu] = \int_0^\beta dx_5 \int d^4x \frac{1}{2e^2} \left( \text{Tr } G_{\mu\nu}G_{\mu\nu} + \frac{1}{c^2} \text{Tr } G_{\mu 5}G_{\mu 5} \right),$$

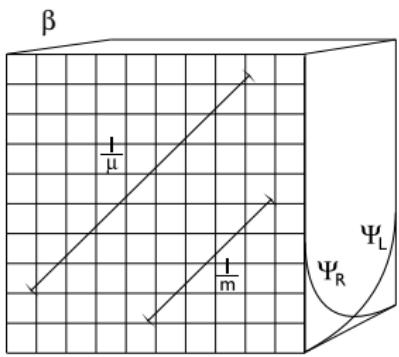
undergoes dimensional reduction from  $4 + 1$  to 4 dimensions

$$S[G_\mu] \rightarrow \int d^4x \frac{1}{2g^2} \text{Tr } G_{\mu\nu}G_{\mu\nu}, \quad \frac{1}{g^2} = \frac{\beta}{e^2}, \quad \frac{1}{m} \sim \exp\left(\frac{24\pi^2\beta}{11Ne^2}\right)$$



# Quarks as Domain Wall Fermions

$$\begin{aligned}
H = & J \sum_{x,\mu \neq \nu} \text{Tr}[U_{x,\mu} U_{x+\hat{\mu},\nu} U_{x+\hat{\nu},\mu}^\dagger U_{x,\nu}^\dagger] + J' \sum_{x,\mu} [\det U_{x,\mu} + \det U_{x,\mu}^\dagger] \\
& + \frac{1}{2} \sum_{x,\mu} [\Psi_x^\dagger \gamma_0 \gamma_\mu U_{x,\mu} \Psi_{x+\hat{\mu}} - \Psi_{x+\hat{\mu}}^\dagger \gamma_0 \gamma_\mu U_{x,\mu}^\dagger \Psi_x] + M \sum_x \Psi_x^\dagger \gamma_0 \Psi_x \\
& + \frac{r}{2} \sum_{x,\mu} [2\Psi_x^\dagger \gamma_0 \Psi_x - \Psi_x^\dagger \gamma_0 U_{x,\mu} \Psi_{x+\hat{\mu}} - \Psi_{x+\hat{\mu}}^\dagger \gamma_0 U_{x,\mu}^\dagger \Psi_x].
\end{aligned}$$



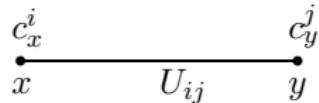
4-d lattice

$$\mu = 2M \exp(-M\beta), \frac{1}{m} \propto \exp\left(\frac{24\pi^2\beta}{(11N - 2N_f)e^2}\right), M > \frac{24\pi^2}{(11N - 2N_f)e^2}$$

## Fermionic rishons at the two ends of a link

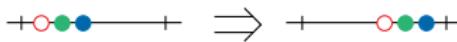
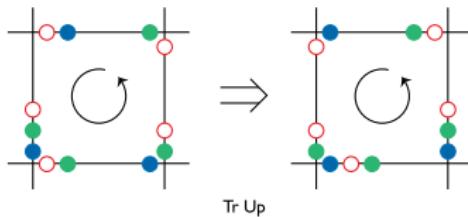
$$\{c_x^i, c_y^{j\dagger}\} = \delta_{xy} \delta_{ij}, \quad \{c_x^i, c_y^j\} = \{c_x^{i\dagger}, c_y^{j\dagger}\} = 0$$

## Rishon representation of link algebra



$$U_{xy}^{ij} = c_x^i c_y^{j\dagger}, \quad L_{xy}^a = c_x^{i\dagger} \lambda_{ij}^a c_x^i, \quad R_{xy}^a = c_y^{i\dagger} \lambda_{ij}^a c_y^i, \quad E_{xy} = \frac{1}{2}(c_y^{i\dagger} c_y^i - c_x^{i\dagger} c_x^i)$$

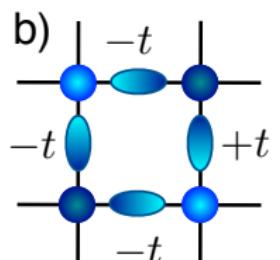
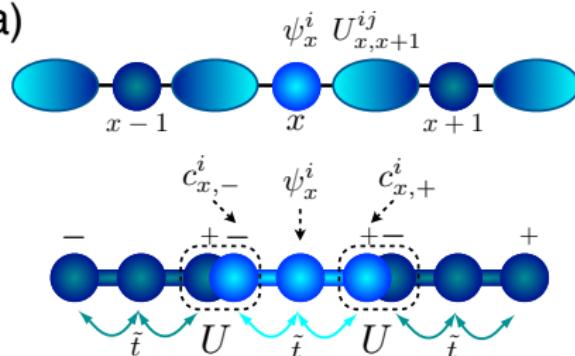
Can a “rishon abacus” implemented with ultra-cold atoms be used as a quantum simulator?



$$\det U_{x,y}$$

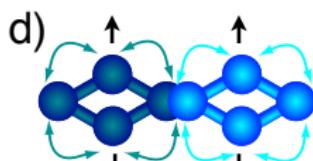
# Optical lattice with ultra-cold alkaline-earth atoms ( $^{87}\text{Sr}$ or $^{173}\text{Yb}$ ) with color encoded in nuclear spin

a)

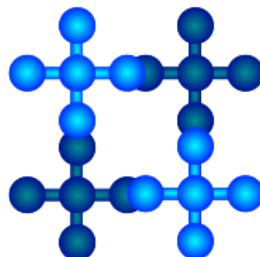


c)

$$\underbrace{|\uparrow\rangle_{-3/2}|\downarrow\rangle_{-1/2}}_{\text{Color 1}} \quad \underbrace{|\uparrow\rangle_{1/2}|\downarrow\rangle_{3/2}}_{\text{Color 2}}$$



e)



D. Banerjee, M. Bögli, M. Dalmonte, E. Rico, P. Stebler, UJW, P. Zoller,  
Phys. Rev. Lett. 110 (2013) 125303