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New Perspective on Disorder-Driven Metal-Insulator Transitions

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Abstract

Disorder driven metal-insulator transitions have long defied proper understanding, despite representing one of the basic phenomena in solid state physics. Here we provide a broad overview of the available theoretical ideas and methods, as well as the experimental results providing guidance. We then present a new theoretical approach that makes it possible to formulate Landau-like order parameter theory at the saddle-point level, capturing most experimental puzzles. It also allows an investigation of systematic fluctuation corrections, suggesting a finite upper critical dimension, and a formulation of an appropriate Landau-Ginzburg description of spatial correlations currently studied by scanning probes.