Atomic-scale electronic structure of the cuprate pair density wave state coexisting with superconductivity

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Contributed by J. C. Séamus Davis, April 22, 2020 (sent for review February 20, 2020; reviewed by Erez Berg and Hermann Suderow)

The defining characteristic of hole-doped cuprates is \(d\)-wave high temperature superconductivity. However, intense theoretical interest is now focused on whether a pair density wave state (PDW) could coexist with superconductivity [D. F. Agterberg et al., \textit{Annu. Rev. Condens. Matter Phys.} 11, 231 (2020)]. Here, we use a strong-coupling mean-field theory of cuprates, to model the atomic-scale electronic structure of an eight-unit-cell periodic, \(d\)-symmetry form factor, pair density wave (PDW) state coexisting with \(d\)-wave superconductivity (DSC). From this PDW + DSC model, the atomically resolved density of Bogoliubov quasiparticle states \(N(r,E)\) is predicted at the terminal BiO surface of Bi\(_2\)Sr\(_2\)CaCu\(_2\)O\(_8\) and compared with high-precision electronic visualization experiments using spectroscopic imaging scanning tunneling microscopy (STM). The PDW + DSC model predictions include the intraunit-cell structure and periodic modulations of \(N(r,E)\), the modulations of the coherence peak energy \(\Delta_{p}(r)\), and the characteristics of Bogoliubov quasiparticle interference in scattering-wavevector space \((q - \text{space})\). Consistency between all these predictions and the corresponding experiments indicates that lightly hole-doped Bi\(_2\)Sr\(_2\)CaCu\(_2\)O\(_8\) does contain a PDW + DSC state. Moreover, in the model the PDW + DSC state becomes unstable to a pure DSC state at a critical hole density \(p^*\), with empirically equivalent phenomena occurring in the experiments. All these results are consistent with a picture in which the cuprate translational symmetry-breaking state is a PDW, the observed charge modulations are its consequence, the antinodal pseudogap is that of the PDW state, and the cuprate critical point at \(p^* \approx 19\%\) occurs due to disappearance of this PDW.

Cuprate pseudogap | pair density wave state | quasiparticle interference

In the elementary undoped CuO\(_2\) plane, each Cu \(d_{x^2-y^2}\) orbital is occupied by a single electron and, because the energy required to doubly occupy this orbital is \(U \approx 3\ eV\), a Mott insulator (MI) state develops (1, 2). The superexchange spin–spin interaction energy between neighboring \(d_{x^2-y^2}\) electrons is \(J \approx 150\ \text{meV}\), leading to a robust antiferromagnetic (AF) phase (3, 4) (Fig. 1A). However, this AF insulating state vanishes with the removal of as little as 3% of the electrons per Cu site (hole density \(p \approx 3\%\)), to reveal the pseudogap (PG) state in a region of the phase diagram bounded by \(p < p^*\) and temperatures \(T < T^*(p)\) (Fig. 1A). Key characteristics of the PG state include (3, 4) a steep drop in both magnetic susceptibility and \(\chi\)-axis conductivity; an apparently incomplete Fermi surface consisting of coherent quasiparticle states on four \(k\)-space arcs neighboring \(k \approx (\pm \pi/2a, \pm \pi/2a)\); an energy gap \(\Delta\) in the spectrum of quasiparticle states near \(k \approx (\pm \pi/a, 0); (0, \pm \pi/a)\); and the depletion of the average density of electronic states \(N(E)\) for \(|E| < \Delta\) where \(\Delta(p)\) diminishes to zero at \(p = p^*\) (Fig. 1A). A mean-field energy gap in the spectrum of coherent \(k\)-space quasiparticles occurring only near \(k \approx (\pm \pi/a, 0); (0, \pm \pi/a, 0)\) could provide a simple phenomenological explanation for virtually all these PG characteristics, but no comprehensive microscopic theory for the PG phase has yet been established.

Extensive evidence has recently emerged for electronic symmetry breaking within the PG phase (Fig. 1A). Bulk probes of charge density find translational symmetry breaking in a density wave (DW) state with axial wavevectors \(Q = (Q_x, 0, 0)\) parallel to the CuO\(_2\) axes (1, 2, 5). Similarly, direct visualization with subunit-cell resolution using single-electron tunneling in Bi\(_2\)Sr\(_2\)CaCu\(_2\)O\(_8\) and Ca\(_2\)Sr\(_2\)Cu\(_2\)O\(_4\) reveals intense electronic structure modulations (6, 7) that are locally unidirectional (7, 8), exhibit lattice-commensurate periodicity (9, 10) for all \(p < p^*\) (11), have a \(d\)-symmetry form factor (8, 12), and are concentrated at particle-hole symmetric energies (13) \(|E| \approx \Delta(p)\). The spatial configurations consist of nanoscale regions within which the modulations are commensurate and unidirectional along either (7, 8, 10, 12) \((Q_x, 0, 0)\) or \((0, Q_y)\). A complete theoretical explanation for the microscopic origin of these complex atomic-scale electronic structures (6–10, 12) has never been elucidated. Fig. 1B shows a representative example of \(Z(r, E = \Delta) = N(r, +\Delta)/N(r, -\Delta)\) for this state at \(p \approx 8\%\), along with the simultaneously measured topograph \(T(r)\) at the BiO layer with the Cu sites indicated by crosses. Fig. 1C

**Significance**

By making a variety of quantitative comparisons between electronic visualization experiments and a theory describing coexisting pair density wave and superconductive states in cuprates, we find striking correspondence throughout. Our model can thus explain the microscopic origins of many key atomic-scale phenomena of the cuprate broken-symmetry state. These observations are consistent with the possibility that a short-range pair density wave (PDW) state coexists with superconductivity below a critical hole density in Bi\(_2\)Sr\(_2\)CaCu\(_2\)O\(_8\), that the charge density wave modulations in cuprates are a consequence of the PDW state, that the cuprate pseudogap is the antinodal gap of the PDW, and that the critical point in the cuprate phase diagram occurs due to disappearance of the PDW.


Reviewers: E.B., Weizmann Institute of Science; and H.S., Universidad Autónoma de Madrid.

The authors declare no competing interest.

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This article contains supporting information online at https://www.pnas.org/lookup/suppl/doi:10.1073/pnas.2002429117/-/DCSupplemental.

www.pnas.org/cgi/doi/10.1073/pnas.2002429117

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shows the measured differential tunneling conductance \( g(E) \) averaged over the whole field of view (FOV) of Fig. 1B, and identifies the two characteristic energies \( \Delta_I \) and \( \Delta_0 \). Thus, a key challenge for cuprate studies is to identify microscopically the broken-symmetry state in Fig. 1B and C that coexists with the DSC phase and to determine its relationship to the pseudogap.

Because the strong electron–electron interactions subtending the MI state persist even when the long-range AF order disappears (Fig. 1A), strong-coupling theory also seems necessary in the PG phase. One frequently recurring consequence (14–22) of such theories is the existence of a state that breaks translational symmetry by modulating the electron-pairing field as

\[
\Delta_I(r) = F_P \Delta_0 [e^{i \theta(r)} + e^{-i \theta(r)}].
\]

This is a pair density wave (PDW) state for which \( \Delta_I \) is the magnitude of the PDW order parameter and \( F_P \) is its form-factor symmetry. Moreover, such a strong-coupling PDW state intertwines (23) the modulations of electron-pair field, of the site/bond charge density, and of spin density. Focus on whether such a PDW state exists in the ground state of cuprates has been further motivated by growing experimental evidence (24–30) that is consistent therewith. Obviously, if this PDW state occurs, it must coexist in the \( T \rightarrow 0 \) ground state together with the robust 2D wave superconductivity (Fig. 1A). Therefore, an urgent research priority is to understand the atomic-scale electronic structure of a PDW coexisting with a DSC state. This is quite challenging because it requires a theoretical description of PDW + DSC electronic structure at the intraunit-cell scale in \( r \)-space, and simultaneously throughout a Brillouin zone in \( k \)-space that is strongly altered by the PDW’s existence.

**Theory for Cuprate PDW and Coexisting Superconductivity**

A classic theory for hole-doped CuO\(_2\) plane electronic structure is based on the \( t-J \) model, in which electrons hop with matrix element \( t \) between Cu \( d_{x^2−y^2} \) orbitals, onsite Coulomb energy \( U \rightarrow \infty \) to completely prevent their double occupancy, resulting in strong AF exchange interactions \( J = 4t^2/U \). Its Hamiltonian is:

\[
\hat{H} = -\sum_{\langle ij \sigma \sigma' \rangle} P_G c_{i \sigma} c_{j \sigma'} + h.c. + \frac{1}{2} \sum_{\langle \sigma \sigma' \rangle} J \langle \sigma \rangle \cdot \langle \sigma' \rangle, \]

where the operator \( P_G \) projects out all doubly occupied orbitals from the Hilbert space (SI Appendix, section A). A renormalized mean-field theory (RMFT) approximation to this \( t-J \) model is then of great utility in describing the CuO\(_2\) plane physics (31); it replaces the exact projection \( P_G \) operation with renormalization factors \( g_i \) and \( g_\sigma \) determined by the average number of charge and spin configurations permissible at every Cu site. The resulting Hamiltonian can be decoupled into a simpler but diagonalizable approximation by using the mean fields describing on-site hole density \( \delta_i \), Cu–Cu bond field \( \chi_{\delta \delta} \), and electron-pair field \( \Delta_0 \) (SI Appendix, section A). Subsequent variational minimization of the ground-state energy with respect to the unprojected wavefunction \( |\Psi_0> \) leads to a set of Bogoliubov–de Gennes (BdG) equations, together with self-consistency conditions on the mean fields. To allow breaking of translational symmetry within RMFT, site-specific and bond-specific renormalization factors \( g_i \) and \( g_\sigma \) for charge and spin are introduced (17). To obtain a PDW + DSC solution, the BdG equations are initialized with a set of order-parameter fields modulating at wavevector \( \mathbf{Q}_P = (1/8,0,2\pi/a) \), and a self-consistent solution is found. From the consequent many-body wavefunction \( |\Psi_0(r)> \) of this broken-symmetry state, the net charge on each Cu site

\[
\delta_i = 1 - \sum_{\sigma} n_{i \sigma} |\Psi_0>,
\]

the bond field between adjacent Cu sites \( i,j \)

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**Fig. 1.** Broken-symmetry phase coexisting with cuprate superconductivity. (A) Schematic phase diagram of lightly hole-doped CuO\(_2\). The Mott insulator phase with long-range AF order disappears quickly with increasing hole doping \( p \) to be replaced by the PG phase. The DSC coexists with PG phase below some critical hole density \( p^* \), and persists as a unique state at \( p > p^* \). Within the PG phase, the DW modulations have been reported. (B) Measured \( Z(r,E = \Delta_I) \) at the BiO termination layer of \( \text{Bi}_2\text{Sr}_2\text{CaCu}_2\text{O}_8 \) for \( p \approx 0.08 \). The locations of Cu atoms of the CuO\(_2\) plane in the same field of view are shown on the topograph \( T(r) \) above it. (C) Measured differential conductance averaged over the same field of view as \( B \). The black dashed lines identify two characteristic energies \( \Delta_I \) and \( \Delta_0 \).
and the electron-pair field on the bond between adjacent Cu sites $i,j$

$$\Delta_{ij} = \sigma <\Psi|c_{i\sigma}c_{j\sigma}^\dagger|\Psi_0>.$$  \[4\]

can all be calculated. We note that the commensurate PDW + DSC studied here is not the ground state of the cuprate RMFT Hamiltonian, but that its energy above the homogeneous ground state is so tiny (17, 20, 21) (~1 meV per Cu as discussed in SI Appendix, section A) that it may be stabilized by a variety of means, including disorder.

**Comparison of PDW plus Superconductivity Theory with Experiment**

Using this model, we explore the atomic-scale characteristics of a unidirectional, $\lambda = 8a_0$ PDW state coexisting with uniform DSC. Fig. 2A shows the predicted hole density $\delta_i$ on the Cu sites exhibiting dominant $\lambda = 4a_0$ modulations, together with the projected $d$-wave superconducting order parameter amplitude $\Delta_i$ on the same sites. The corresponding Fourier components of the hole density $\delta(q)$ and electron-pair field $\Delta(q)$ are shown in Fig. 2B. Here it is important to note that the PDW-induced charge modulation amplitude at $\lambda = 8a_0$ is extremely weak for our standard set of parameters (see caption of Fig. 2), whereas the induced charge modulation amplitude at $\lambda = 4a_0$ is dominant. Next, in Fig. 2C, we exhibit the projection of the $8a_0$ periodic charge modulations onto the three symmetry-allowed channels $s$, $s'$, and $d$, utilizing the same definitions as, e.g., in ref. 12 (SI Appendix, section A). The charge distribution over the Cu and O sites is clearly characterized by a pronounced $d$-symmetry form factor (dFF), as has been observed directly in experiments (8, 12).

For comparison with underdoped Bi$_2$Sr$_2$CaCu$_2$O$_8$ measurements, we next use the RMFT PDW + DSC model and evaluate its quasiparticle states with intraunit-cell resolution using a Wannier function-based method (21, 22). This is designed to allow quantitative predictions of electronic structure in $r$-space, $q$-space, and $k$-space of a PDW + DSC state. The band structure parameterization is $t = 400$ meV, $t' = -0.3t$, and $J = 0.3t$, all representing Bi$_2$Sr$_2$CaCu$_2$O$_8$ at $p \approx 0.08$. For this parameter set, we calculate the quasiparticle Green’s functions in the self-consistently obtained PDW + DSC state, with the unidirectional PDW wavevector $Q_p = (1/8,0,2\pi/a_0)$ that is modulating parallel to the $x$ axis but lattice-periodic along the $y$ axis, and find the PDW spectral gap $\Delta \approx 0.3t \approx 100$ meV, and gaps associated with uniform DSC $\Delta \approx 0.07t \approx 25$ meV (SI Appendix, section A). Moreover, while almost all previous RMFT studies of cuprates yield only the Cu site-specific Green’s function matrix $G_{\mu
u}(E)$ within the Cu$_2$O$_2$ plane, the experimental measurements of electron-tunneling probability are actually made at a continuum of locations just above the crystal termination BiO layer of Bi$_2$Sr$_2$CaCu$_2$O$_8$ (Fig. 1B). Therefore, we use first-principles Cu $d_{x^2-y^2}$ Wannier functions $W_i(r)$ to make quantitative predictions of the $r$-space Green’s functions $G_{\mu
u}(r,E) = \sum E G_{\mu
u}(E)W_i(r)W_j^*(r)$ of a PDW + DSC state, everywhere at a height 0.4 nm above BiO terminal plane (32, 33) (SI Appendix, section B). We emphasize that none of the mean fields $\delta_i$, $\chi_{\mu
u}$, and $\Delta_{ij}$ are related simply to the local quasiparticle density of states $N_i(r,E) = \sum \frac{1}{\pi} \text{Im} G_{\mu
u}(E)$, which must instead be determined from the Bogoliubov quasiparticle eigenstates (20, 21, 24, 25, 28, 34) that enter the lattice Green’s function $G_{\mu
u}$. Fig. 2D shows the theoretical $N_i(r,E)$ for the PDW + DSC state at various points in the modulated state, as identified in the inset. Note that a shoulderlike feature is present at nearly identical particle-hole symmetric energies $\pm \Delta_1$ for all Cu sites, such that we associate it with the uniform $d$-wave superconducting condensate DSC. By contrast, this model predicts that the energy $\Delta_2$ at which the “coherence peak” occurs ($E > 0$) varies from atom to atom in real space; its largest magnitude may be associated with the PDW amplitude $\Delta_1$.

The bias dependence of $Z_i(r,E) = N_i(r,E) + N_i(r,-E)$ from our PDW + DSC model are then predicted for comparison with experiment. Fig. 3 A–F show these $Z_i(r,E)$ data focusing on the energy range $0.3\Delta_1 \leq E \leq 1.5\Delta_1$, within which they exhibit a comprehensive dFF (SI Appendix, section B). This effect can be seen directly by the model $Z_i(r,E)$ has intraunit-cell precision. Consider the three sublattices making up the topological features of the $Z_i(r,E)$ image: Cu(r,E) containing only $Z_i(r,E)$ at copper sites and $O_i(r,E)$ and $O_j(r,E)$, containing only $Z_i(r,E)$ at the $x$-$y$ axis oxygen sites. By definition, in a dFF charge density wave, modulations on the $O_i(r,E)$ and $O_j(r,E)$ sites are out of phase by $\pi$. In our PDW + DSC model, such phenomena occur at $2Q_p$, first appear near $E \approx \Delta_1/2$, are intense surrounding $E \approx \Delta_1$, and eventually disappear near $E \approx \Delta_2$ (SI Appendix, section B and ref. 8). This energy dependence, including both the dominance of the dFF in a wide range of energies surrounding $\Delta_1$, as well as the low-energy dominance of the $s'$ form factor, were demonstrated earlier using the same theory (21) but for an incommensurate wavevector.

For experimental comparison with our PDW + DSC model, we visualize the electronic structure (37) using spectroscopic

Fig. 2. Characteristic features of our model for a unidirectional PDW + DSC state. (A) Variation of hole density ($\delta$) and $d$-wave gap order parameter ($\Delta$) with lattice sites $i$ as obtained from the self-consistent solution of the extended t-J model for parameter set doping $x = 0.125$, next-nearest-neighbor (NNN) hopping $t' = -0.3t$, exchange interaction $I = 0.3$, and temperature $T = 0.04$. Energy scale is presented in units of nearest-neighbor (NN) hopping $t$. (B) Variation of hole density ($\delta$) and $d$-wave gap-order parameter ($\Delta$) with wavevector $q$ obtained by Fourier transforming corresponding lattice-space quantities shown in A. Hole density and gap-order parameter show largest modulating components at $|q| = 0.25$ and $|q| = 0.125$, respectively. But, the predicted $|q| = 0.125$ component of charge density modulation $\delta(q)$ is extremely small, due to the small uniform component of the gap-order parameter. Wavevectors are presented in units of $2\pi/a_0$, where $a_0$ is the lattice constant in the CuO$_2$-$a$-$b$ plane. (C) dFFs obtained from the hole-density and NN bond-order parameter ($\chi$). The dFF is dominant at all wavevectors, with predominant intensity at $|q| = 0.25$. (D) Continuum local density of states $N_i(r,E)$ at Cu positions along Cu-O$_2$ direction per a period of PDW (Ba$_2$). Here $\Delta_i \approx 0.3$ and $\Delta_i \approx 0.07t$ correspond to the gap scale associated with the PDW component and uniform DSC component of the PDW + DSC state, respectively. Inset shows $N_i(r,E = \Delta_1)$ map, where Cu positions are marked with crosses.
We study the terminal BiO layer of Bi$_2$Sr$_2$CaCu$_2$O$_8$ for a range of tip-sample voltage differences \( V \), and show why the cross-correlation value of each pair of theory: experiment \( Z(r,E) \) images and experimental images throughout the energy range. Therefore, predictions of PDW + DSC theory, on distance scales ranging from \( 8a_0 \) down to subunit cell, correspond strongly and in detail to the complex patterns of quasiparticle states observed in the broken-symmetry state of \( p < p^* \) Bi$_2$Sr$_2$CaCu$_2$O$_8$.

Next, as seen in Fig. 2D, the theory predicts that coherence peak energy \( \Delta_\parallel \) varies substantially from one unit cell to the next within the \( \lambda = 8a_0 \) PDW. In Fig. 4A we show the theoretical gap map for the PDW + DSC state obtained by identifying the coherence peak energy \( \Delta_\parallel(r) \) for \( E > 0 \) at all intraunit-cell points over an area of 8 x 12 unit cells, while Fig. 4B shows the gap map obtained by using the same algorithm to determine \( \Delta_\parallel(r) \) from measured \( \text{d}I/\text{d}V \) spectra. Both theory and experiment show \( 8a_0 \) periodic \( \Delta_\parallel(r) \) modulations within which there are smaller atomically resolved variations that exhibit common characteristics but are not identical, most likely because of inadequacies in the density functional theory-derived Wannier functions in representing underdoped cuprates.

Finally, we consider the effects of a PDW + DSC state on Bogoliubov quasiparticle scattering interference (38) (BQPI). This occurs when an impurity atom scatters quasiparticles, which then interfere to produce characteristic modulations of \( N(r,E) \) surrounding each impurity atom. Local maxima in \( Z(q,E) \), the power-spectral-density Fourier transform of \( Z(r,E) \), reveal the sets of energy-dispersive wavevectors \( q(E) \) generated by the scattering interference (11). A BQPI data set thus consists of a sequence of \( Z(q,E) \) images spanning the energy range of interest, from which an efficient synopsis over all of the QPI modulations can be achieved (11) using \( \Lambda(q,\Delta) = \sum_{E=0}^{E_\Delta} Z(q,E) \). The key utility here is that \( \Lambda(q,\Delta) \) provides an efficient and characteristic “fingerprint” of whatever ordered state(s) controls the \( q(E) \) of the BQPI processes. For our PDW + DSC model, we calculate \( Z(q,E) \) using a simple pointlike scatterer within the RMFT framework (SI Appendix, section C). From these model \( Z(q,E) \) images, the predicted \( \Lambda(q,\Delta_0) = \sum_{E=0}^{E_\Delta} Z(q,E) \) is determined and shown in Fig. 5A. This contains the overall \( \Lambda(q,\Delta_0) \) fingerprint expected of the BQPI in this PDW + DSC state. For comparison, Fig. 5B includes the predicted \( \Lambda(q,\Delta_0) \) of a simple \( d \)-wave superconductor with a Fermi surface at \( p = 23\% \). It reflects the familiar peaks characteristic of dispersing Bogoliubov quasiparticles, including the tracing of the Fermi surface by the peak conventionally labeled \( q_0 \) as bias voltage is varied (11). Clearly, the PDW + DSC \( \Lambda(q,\Delta_0) \) in Fig. 5A is very different, exhibiting very weak dispersion and thus producing sharper \( q \)-space spots, as well as the absence of any \( q_0 \) scattering interference near edges of \( q \)-space reciprocal unit cell. To compare these predictions for \( \Lambda(q,\Delta_0) \) with and without the PDW order to experiments, we show measured \( \Lambda(q,\Delta_0) = \sum_{E=0}^{E_\Delta} Z(q,E) \) for both low \( p \) and high \( p \).
form factor symmetry, and on how the commensurate, unidirectional electronic-structure patterns proliferate throughout real space (10). Thus, the coexistence of a local maximum at incommensurate wavevector in X-ray or FSTM measurements, with commensurate electronic structures distributed throughout real space, is a demonstrable characteristic of Bi$_2$Sr$_2$CaCu$_2$O$_8$ electronic structure (10). The most likely resolution is that the measured incommensurate behavior in X-ray or FSTM experiments represent quite discommensurate behavior, where commensurate, unidirectional DWs are coupled by random phase slips. Indeed, by using advanced techniques, these phase slips are identifiable directly in the $N(r,E)$ modulations of Bi$_2$Sr$_2$CaCu$_2$O$_8$ (9). Another interesting and related issue is the existence or nonexistence of an X-ray scattering peak at $Q = 2\pi/d_0(1/8,0)$, because this is one of the indications that charge density wave (CDW) modulations are induced by $\lambda = 8d_0$ PDW order in the presence of DSC. Although such a peak has been observed for $N(r,E)$ both within vortex halos (30) and at zero field (42) in Bi$_2$Sr$_2$CaCu$_2$O$_8$, attempts to detect it by X-ray measurements on YBa$_2$Cu$_3$O$_7$ at zero field have not yet succeeded. Importantly, one of the revelations of our PDW + DSC model is that only a tiny $Q = 2\pi/d_0(1/8,0)$ charge modulation peak is predicted (black in Fig. 2B), whose intensity may be below present X-ray detection limits. Alternatively, the PDW in YBa$_2$Cu$_3$O$_7$ may be fluctuating and thus unobservable (43). A distinct point is that a uniform DSC + PDW state should have clear spectroscopic signatures visible in angle-resolved photoemission spectroscopy (ARPES) (24, 28). And, to first order, the PDW + DSC model and ARPES correspond well, because the strong antinodal gap due to the PDW is empirically indistinguishable from the antinodal “pseudogap” reported by virtually all ARPES studies. But, some fine features the PDW + DSC model predicts for $A(k,\omega)$ have not yet been seen by ARPES, presumably due to the short-range nature and high $p$ in Fig. 5 C and D. The very distinct characteristics of $\Lambda(q,\Delta_0)$ observed at low $p$ and high $p$, are in striking agreement with the PDW + DSC model predictions for $\Lambda(q,\Delta_0)$ with and without the PDW state, respectively. Moreover, the empirical BOPI phenomena in Fig. 5C are a characteristic of the pseudogap region of the phase diagram (11), whereas the PDW + DSC model that predicts them (Fig. 5A) does not require a separate pseudogap to be introduced because the $k$-space structure of the PDW is what gaps antinodes (34). Finally, in our PDW + DSC model, we find that increasing $p$ leads to an instability of the PDW order toward a uniform DSC state via a weak first-order transition at $p \approx 0.18$ (SI Appendix, section A), whereas the experimentally observed disappearance of translational symmetry breaking simultaneous with the reappearance of low-energy quasiparticles at the antinodes (11), occurs at $p \approx 0.19$.

**PDW plus Superconductivity Theory and Other Techniques**

We note that NMR and X-ray studies (primarily of YBa$_2$Cu$_3$O$_7$ and La$_2$BaCuO$_4$) (39) appear consistent with SISTM visualizations of incommensurate electronic density modulations (primarily of Bi$_2$Sr$_2$CaCu$_2$O$_8$ and Ca$_2$Cu$_2$O$_2$Cl$_2$) (37), and to have a common microscopic cause (40, 41). But in our current study, we have compared carefully to atomic scale studies of Bi$_2$Sr$_2$CaCu$_2$O$_8$ that manifest short-range commensurate periodicity in electronic structure images (7, 9, 10, 12). These two phenomenologies may appear mutually contradictory. However, the X-ray and Fourier transform STM (FSTM) studies focus only on a specific wavevector, and this procedure discards all of the other information distributed throughout $q$-space. In Bi$_2$Sr$_2$CaCu$_2$O$_8$, those data actually contain the extremely complex information on the effects of

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**Fig. 4.** Gap map $\Delta_p(r)$ derived from coherence-peak energy in PDW + DSC state. (A) Gap map in PDW + DSC state obtained by identifying coherence peak energy $\Delta_p(r)$ for $E > 0$ at all intraunit-cell points over an area of 8 × 12 unit cells. Color bar is given in the units of $\Delta_p$. (B) Gap map $\Delta_p(r)$ obtained by following the same procedure as in A, but for experimentally measured $g(r,V)$ spectra of a representative domain as shown. (C) Gap $\Delta_p(r)$ averaged along $y$ direction obtained in the PDW + DSC model. (D) Gap $\Delta_p(r)$ averaged along $y$ direction obtained from the $g(r,V)$ spectra.

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**Fig. 5.** Comparison of $\Lambda(q,\Delta_0)$ predictions/data in PDW + DSC and pure DSC states. (A) Predicted $\Lambda(q,\Delta_0)$ in pure DSC state at doping $x = 0.125$. (B) Predicted $\Lambda(q,\Delta_0)$ in a uniform $d$-wave superconductor state at doping $x = 0.23$. (C) Experimental $\Lambda(q,\Delta_0)$ map for underdoped Bi$_2$Sr$_2$CaCu$_2$O$_8$ at $p = 0.08 \pm 0.01$. In principle $T(q,E=\Delta_0)$, the Fourier transform of a topographic image $T(r,E=\Delta_0)$, would be logarithmically sensitive to the same information as $\Lambda(q,\Delta_0)$. But, because it also contains such intense signals from a variety of other phenomena, is has proven difficult to use that approach for QPI studies. (D) Experimental $\Lambda(q,\Delta_0)$ map for overdoped Bi$_2$Sr$_2$CaCu$_2$O$_8$ at $p = 0.23$. 

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of the static PPD + DSC patches. Future theoretical modeling studies of disordered PDWs will be necessary to explore these issues. Lastly, one may wonder whether a \( \Delta_{pdw} \) periodic CDW state coexisting with a \( d \)-wave superconductor could reproduce the \( N(E) \) and \( Z(E) \) data or the \( \Delta(q, \Delta_0) \) OPI signatures, as well as our PPD + DSC model. In that regard, we find that one must initialize the RMFT equations with a modulating pair field to converge to a nonuniform state and that any other type of initialization, for example a \( \Delta_{pdw} \) periodic CDW, converges only to a uniform DSC. More generally, Ginsburg–Landau models based on a large DSC order parameter coexisting with a CDW of wavevector \( q_{CDW} \) (and possibly an induced PDW at \( q_{CDW}/2 \), do not have PDW at \( q_{CDW}/2 \). Moreover, when we use our RMFT approach to study such CDW + DSC driven states, we find in two cases that the predicted \( Z(E) \) spectra show very poor correlation with equivalent experiments (SI Appendix, section D). Therefore, the observation of \( \Delta_{pdw} \) periodic modulations in \( Z(E) \) and \( \Delta_{p}(\Delta) \) along with a particle-hole symmetric kink at low energies, all of which are characteristics of the RMFT-based PDW + DSC model but not of the others, favor the interpretation based on a PPD coexisting with superconductivity.

**Discussion and Conclusions**

To recapitulate, we have developed a strong-coupling mean-field theory for a coexisting \( d \)-wave superconductor and PDW (\( \lambda = \lambda_{pdw} \)) and made detailed comparisons of its predictions with experimental SISTM data from Bi\(_{2}\)Sr\(_{2}\)CaCu\(_{2}\)O\(_{8}\). To allow valid quantitative comparison to such experiments, the atomic-scale tunneling characteristics of the PPD + DSC state at the BiO termination layer of the crystal were predicted utilizing a recently broken-symmetry state, including the microscopic origins of many enigmatic characteristics of this \( Bi_{2}Sr_{2}CaCu_{2}O_{8} \). Indeed, the PDW + DSC model explains simply experimental SISTM data from \( Bi_{2}Sr_{2}CaCu_{2}O_{8} \). To allow valid quantification, for example a \( \lambda \) periodic charge density modulations throughout the \( \Delta_{pdw} \) field (and possibly an induced PDW at \( q_{CDW}/2 \), do not have PDW at \( q_{CDW}/2 \). Moreover, when we use our RMFT approach to study such CDW + DSC driven states, we find in two cases that the predicted \( Z(E) \) spectra show very poor correlation with equivalent experiments (SI Appendix, section D). Therefore, the observation of \( \Delta_{pdw} \) periodic modulations in \( Z(E) \) and \( \Delta_{p}(\Delta) \) along with a particle-hole symmetric kink at low energies, all of which are characteristics of the RMFT-based PDW + DSC model but not of the others, favor the interpretation based on a PPD coexisting with superconductivity.

**Data Availability.** All data used in this study are available upon request from the corresponding author.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.** The authors acknowledge and thank D. Agterberg, E.-A. Kim, M. Norman, S.A. Kivelson, and Y. Wang for very helpful discussions and advice. P.C. and P.J.H. acknowledge support from research grant NSF-DMR-1849751. P.C. acknowledges the research grant PDF/2017/002242 from Science and Engineering Research Board, Department of Science and Technology (SERB, DST), India. S.U. and H.E. acknowledge support from a Grant-in-aid for Scientific Research from the Ministry of Science and Education (Japan) and the Global Centers of Excellence Program for Japan Society for the Promotion of Science. S.H.J. and J.L. acknowledge support from the Institute for Basic Science in Korea (Grant IBS-R009-G2), the Institute of Applied Physics of Seoul National University, National Research Foundation of Korea grant funded by the Korea government Ministry of Science, ICT and Future Planning (MSIP) (2017R1A2B3009576). S.H.J. also acknowledges support from the BK21 Plus Project. K.D. and Z.D. acknowledge support from the US Department of Energy, Office of Basic Energy Sciences, under Contract DEAC02-98CH10886; J.C.S.D. acknowledges support from the Moore Foundation’s Emergent Phenomena in Quantum Systems (EPiQS) Initiative through Grant GBFM9457, from Science Foundation Ireland under Award SFI 17/RC/4545, and from the European Research Council under Award DLY-788932.

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