

Electrons in a weak periodic potential

Outline

- 1 General approach to the Schrödinger equation
- 2 Energy levels near a single Bragg plane
- 3 Brillouin zones

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Electrons in a weak periodic potential

Applicability

Motivation

- Appropriate assumption for metals of I–IV groups
 - s and p electrons outside a noble gas closed-shell configuration
 - **nearly** free-electron metals
- Justification:
 - valence electrons are excluded (Pauli exclusion principle) from the core region
 - electron's mobility **screen** the field due to the ionic cores

General approach to the TISE

Case of a weak periodic potential

Summary: wave function of a Bloch level

- Expand the Bloch wave function in plane waves:

$$\psi_{\mathbf{k}}(\mathbf{r}) = \sum_{\mathbf{K}} c_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}} e^{i(\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K})\cdot\mathbf{r}}$$

- sum over **all** \mathbf{K}
- Coefficients $c_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}}$ and energy ε determined by

$$\left[\frac{\hbar^2}{2m} (\mathbf{k} - \mathbf{K})^2 - \varepsilon \right] c_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}} + \sum_{\mathbf{K}'} U_{\mathbf{K}'-\mathbf{K}} c_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}'} = 0$$

- For fixed \mathbf{k} there is an equation for **every** \mathbf{K}

General approach to the TISE

Case of a weak periodic potential

Free electron case

- $U_{\mathbf{K}} = 0, \forall \mathbf{K}$, therefore:

$$(\varepsilon_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}}^0 - \varepsilon)c_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}} = 0 \implies \begin{cases} c_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}} = & 0 \\ \varepsilon_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}}^0 - \varepsilon = & 0 \end{cases}$$

- $\varepsilon_q^0 = \frac{\hbar^2}{2m}q^2$
- We have **two possibilities**:
 - $\exists! \mathbf{K}$ such that $\varepsilon_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}}^0 = \varepsilon$
 - \exists several $\mathbf{K}, \mathbf{K}_1, \dots, \mathbf{K}_m$ such that $\varepsilon_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}_i}^0 = \varepsilon$

General approach to the TISE

Case of a weak periodic potential

Free electron case

- $\exists! \mathbf{K}$ such that $\varepsilon_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}}^0 = \varepsilon \implies \psi_{\mathbf{k}} \propto e^{i(\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K})\cdot\mathbf{r}}$
 - free electron solutions
- \exists several $\mathbf{K}, \mathbf{K}_1, \dots, \mathbf{K}_m$ such that $\varepsilon_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}_i}^0 = \varepsilon$
 - m independent plane-wave solutions: $e^{i(\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}_i)\cdot\mathbf{r}}, i = 1, 2, \dots, m$
 - complete freedom in choosing the coefficients $c_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}_i}, i = 1, 2, \dots, m$
- Two similar situations arise when considering a **very weak** potential U

General approach to the TISE

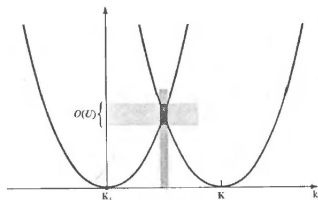
Case of a weak periodic potential

Non-degenerate case

- Fix \mathbf{k} and $\mathbf{K} = \mathbf{K}_1$ such that $\forall \mathbf{K} \neq \mathbf{K}_1$

$$|\varepsilon_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}_1}^0 - \varepsilon_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}}^0| \gg U$$

- Investigate the effect on the corresponding **free-electron level** $\varepsilon_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}_1}^0$,
 $\psi_{\mathbf{k}} \propto e^{i(\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}_1)\cdot\mathbf{r}}$



$$|\varepsilon_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}_1}^0 - \varepsilon_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}}^0| \sim O(U)$$

General approach to the TISE

Case of a weak periodic potential

Non-degenerate case

- Put $\mathbf{K} = \mathbf{K}_1$:

$$(\varepsilon - \varepsilon_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}_1}^0) c_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}_1} = \sum_{\mathbf{K}} U_{\mathbf{K}-\mathbf{K}_1} c_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}}$$

- The r.h.s. is of order $O(U^2)$:
 - $\mathbf{K} \neq \mathbf{K}_1$ on the r.h.s. ($U_0 = 0$)
 - for $\mathbf{K} \neq \mathbf{K}_1$, $c_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}} \rightarrow 0$ when $U \rightarrow 0$
- Explicitly:

$$c_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}} = \frac{U_{\mathbf{K}_1-\mathbf{K}} c_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}_1}}{\varepsilon - \varepsilon_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}}^0} + \sum_{\mathbf{K}' \neq \mathbf{K}_1} \frac{U_{\mathbf{K}'-\mathbf{K}} c_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}'}}{\varepsilon - \varepsilon_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}}^0}$$

General approach to the TISE

Case of a weak periodic potential

Non-degenerate case

- Therefore, in case of **no degeneracy**, for $\mathbf{K} \neq \mathbf{K}_1$:

$$c_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}} = \frac{U_{\mathbf{K}_1-\mathbf{K}} c_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}_1}}{\varepsilon - \varepsilon_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}}^0} + O(U^2)$$

- The Eq. for $c_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}_1}$ becomes:

$$(\varepsilon - \varepsilon_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}_1}^0) c_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}_1} = \sum_{\mathbf{K}} \frac{U_{\mathbf{K}-\mathbf{K}_1} U_{\mathbf{K}_1-\mathbf{K}}}{\varepsilon - \varepsilon_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}}^0} c_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}_1} + O(U^3)$$

- Finally, to order U^2 :

$$\varepsilon - \varepsilon_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}_1}^0 = \sum_{\mathbf{K}} \frac{U_{\mathbf{K}-\mathbf{K}_1} U_{\mathbf{K}_1-\mathbf{K}}}{\varepsilon_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}_1}^0 - \varepsilon_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}}^0} + O(U^3)$$

General approach to the TISE

Case of a weak periodic potential

Non-degenerate case

$$\varepsilon - \varepsilon_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}_1}^0 = \sum_{\mathbf{K}} \frac{U_{\mathbf{K}-\mathbf{K}_1} U_{\mathbf{K}_1-\mathbf{K}}}{\varepsilon_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}_1}^0 - \varepsilon_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}}^0} + O(U^3)$$

- Weakly perturbed non-degenerate bands **repel** each-other
- The perturbation is of order U^2 , hence **very small**
- To order U only nearly-degenerate levels are affected

General approach to the TISE

Case of a weak periodic potential

Degenerate case: $|\varepsilon_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}_i}^0 - \varepsilon_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}_j}^0| \sim O(U)$, $i, j = 1, \dots, m$

- $\forall \mathbf{K} \neq \mathbf{K}_i$, $i = 1, \dots, m$

$$|\varepsilon_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}_i}^0 - \varepsilon_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}}^0| \gg U$$

- Coefficients $c_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}_i}$ **do not necessarily vanish** in the limit $U \rightarrow 0$
- For all other coefficients $c_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}} \rightarrow 0$
- For $c_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}_i}$, $i = 1, 2, \dots, m$ we can write:

$$(\varepsilon - \varepsilon_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}_i}^0) c_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}_i} = \sum_{j=1}^m U_{\mathbf{K}_j-\mathbf{K}_i} c_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}_j} + \sum_{\mathbf{K} \neq \mathbf{K}_1, \dots, \mathbf{K}_m} U_{\mathbf{K}-\mathbf{K}_i} c_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}}$$

General approach to the TISE

Case of a weak periodic potential

Degenerate case: $|\varepsilon_{k-K_i}^0 - \varepsilon_{k-K_j}^0| \sim O(U)$, $i, j = 1, \dots, m$

- $\forall K \neq K_i$, $i = 1, \dots, m$

$$c_{k-K} = \frac{1}{\varepsilon - \varepsilon_{k-K}^0} \left(\sum_{j=1}^m U_{K_j-K} c_{k-K_j} + \sum_{K' \neq K_1, \dots, K_m} U_{K'-K} c_{k-K'} \right)$$

- Since $c_{k-K} \sim O(U)$ we have:

$$c_{k-K} = \frac{1}{\varepsilon - \varepsilon_{k-K}^0} \left(\sum_{j=1}^m U_{K_j-K} c_{k-K_j} \right) + O(U^2)$$

General approach to the TISE

Case of a weak periodic potential

Degenerate case: $|\varepsilon_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}_i}^0 - \varepsilon_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}_j}^0| \sim O(U)$, $i, j = 1, \dots, m$

- Putting everything together:

$$\begin{aligned}
 (\varepsilon - \varepsilon_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}_i}^0) c_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}_i} &= \sum_{j=1}^m U_{\mathbf{K}_j-\mathbf{K}_i} c_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}_j} \\
 &+ \sum_{j=1}^m \left(\sum_{\mathbf{K} \neq \mathbf{K}_1, \dots, \mathbf{K}_m} \frac{U_{\mathbf{K}-\mathbf{K}_i} U_{\mathbf{K}_j-\mathbf{K}}}{\varepsilon - \varepsilon_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}}^0} \right) c_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}_j} + O(U^3)
 \end{aligned}$$

- For leading order corrections in U we have:

$$(\varepsilon - \varepsilon_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}_i}^0) c_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}_i} = \sum_{j=1}^m U_{\mathbf{K}_j-\mathbf{K}_i} c_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}_j}$$

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Energy levels near a single Bragg plane

Degenerate case with $m = 2$

Mathematical treatment

- For $m = 2$ the equations (to leading order U) are

$$\begin{cases} (\varepsilon - \varepsilon_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}_1}^0) c_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}_1} &= U_{\mathbf{K}_2-\mathbf{K}_1} c_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}_2} \\ (\varepsilon - \varepsilon_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}_2}^0) c_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}_2} &= U_{\mathbf{K}_1-\mathbf{K}_2} c_{\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{K}_1} \end{cases}$$

- Put $\mathbf{q} = \mathbf{k} - \mathbf{K}_1$, $\mathbf{K} = \mathbf{K}_2 - \mathbf{K}_1$:

$$\begin{cases} (\varepsilon - \varepsilon_{\mathbf{q}}^0) c_{\mathbf{q}} &= U_{\mathbf{K}} c_{\mathbf{q}-\mathbf{K}} \\ (\varepsilon - \varepsilon_{\mathbf{q}-\mathbf{K}}^0) c_{\mathbf{q}-\mathbf{K}} &= U_{-\mathbf{K}} c_{\mathbf{q}} = U_{\mathbf{K}}^* c_{\mathbf{q}} \end{cases}$$

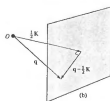
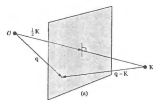
- With the assumption that $\varepsilon_{\mathbf{q}}^0 \sim \varepsilon_{\mathbf{q}-\mathbf{K}}^0$, $|\varepsilon_{\mathbf{q}}^0 - \varepsilon_{\mathbf{q}-\mathbf{K}'}^0| \gg U$ for $\mathbf{K}' \neq \mathbf{K}, \mathbf{0}$

Energy levels near a single Bragg plane

Degenerate case with $m = 2$

Mathematical treatment

- $\varepsilon_{\mathbf{q}}^0 = \varepsilon_{\mathbf{q}-\mathbf{K}}^0 \implies |\mathbf{q}| = |\mathbf{q}-\mathbf{K}|$:
 - \mathbf{q} must lie on a Bragg plane
- If $\varepsilon_{\mathbf{q}}^0 = \varepsilon_{\mathbf{q}-\mathbf{K}'}^0$ only for $\mathbf{K}' = \mathbf{K}$:
 - \mathbf{q} must lie only on this Bragg plane
- Therefore \mathbf{q} is close to only one Bragg plane



(a) \mathbf{q} lie in the Bragg plane determined by \mathbf{K}

(b) $\mathbf{q} - \frac{1}{2}\mathbf{K}$ is parallel to the plane

Energy levels near a single Bragg plane

Degenerate case with $m = 2$

Mathematical treatment

- For two **nearly degenerate** levels, the electron's wave vector (nearly) satisfy the condition for a single Bragg scattering
- For m nearly degenerate levels, \mathbf{q} lies nearby the intersection with m different Bragg planes
- As a general rule:
 - a weak periodic potential has its major effects on only those free electron levels whose wave vectors are close to ones at which Bragg reflections can occur

Energy levels near a single Bragg plane

Degenerate case with $m = 2$

Mathematical treatment

- The linear system has **non-trivial** solutions only if:

$$\begin{vmatrix} \varepsilon - \varepsilon_{\mathbf{q}}^0 & -U_{\mathbf{K}} \\ -U_{\mathbf{K}}^* & \varepsilon - \varepsilon_{\mathbf{q}-\mathbf{K}}^0 \end{vmatrix} = 0$$

- Leading to a quadratic equation

$$(\varepsilon - \varepsilon_{\mathbf{q}}^0)(\varepsilon - \varepsilon_{\mathbf{q}-\mathbf{K}}^0) - |U_{\mathbf{K}}|^2 = 0$$

- With roots:

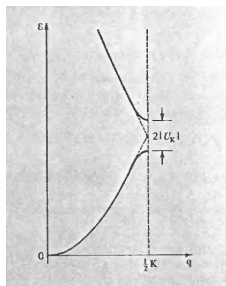
$$\varepsilon = \frac{1}{2}(\varepsilon_{\mathbf{q}}^0 + \varepsilon_{\mathbf{q}-\mathbf{K}}^0) \pm \left[\left(\frac{\varepsilon_{\mathbf{q}}^0 - \varepsilon_{\mathbf{q}-\mathbf{K}}^0}{2} \right)^2 + |U_{\mathbf{K}}|^2 \right]^{1/2}$$

Energy levels near a single Bragg plane

Degenerate case with $m = 2$

Mathematical treatment

- For \mathbf{q} on the Bragg plane, the two roots are $\varepsilon = \varepsilon_{\mathbf{q}}^0 \pm |U_{\mathbf{K}}|^2$
- Also $\frac{\partial \varepsilon}{\partial \mathbf{q}} = \frac{\hbar^2}{m} (\mathbf{q} - \frac{1}{2} \mathbf{K})$
 - the gradient is parallel to the plane
 - constant energy surfaces at Bragg's planes are \perp to the plane



plot of the two roots for \mathbf{q} parallel to \mathbf{K}

Energy levels near a single Bragg plane

Degenerate case with $m = 2$

Mathematical treatment

- For \mathbf{q} on the Bragg plane $c_{\mathbf{q}} = \pm \text{sgn}(U_{\mathbf{K}})c_{\mathbf{q}-\mathbf{K}}$
- If $U_{\mathbf{K}} > 0$:

$$\begin{cases} |\psi(\mathbf{r})|^2 \propto (\cos \frac{1}{2} \mathbf{K} \cdot \mathbf{r})^2 & \varepsilon = \varepsilon_{\mathbf{q}}^0 + |U_{\mathbf{K}}| \\ |\psi(\mathbf{r})|^2 \propto (\sin \frac{1}{2} \mathbf{K} \cdot \mathbf{r})^2 & \varepsilon = \varepsilon_{\mathbf{q}}^0 - |U_{\mathbf{K}}| \end{cases}$$

- If $U_{\mathbf{K}} < 0$:

$$\begin{cases} |\psi(\mathbf{r})|^2 \propto (\sin \frac{1}{2} \mathbf{K} \cdot \mathbf{r})^2 & \varepsilon = \varepsilon_{\mathbf{q}}^0 + |U_{\mathbf{K}}| \\ |\psi(\mathbf{r})|^2 \propto (\cos \frac{1}{2} \mathbf{K} \cdot \mathbf{r})^2 & \varepsilon = \varepsilon_{\mathbf{q}}^0 - |U_{\mathbf{K}}| \end{cases}$$

- **p -like solutions:** $|\psi(\mathbf{r})|^2 \propto (\sin \frac{1}{2} \mathbf{K} \cdot \mathbf{r})^2$
- **s -like solutions:** $|\psi(\mathbf{r})|^2 \propto (\cos \frac{1}{2} \mathbf{K} \cdot \mathbf{r})^2$

Energy levels near a single Bragg plane

Degenerate case with $m = 2$

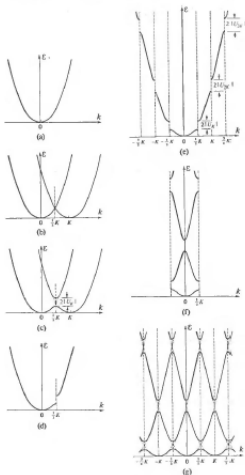
Energy bands in one dimension

- **Free electron case:** electronic levels are a parabola in k
 - limit of no interaction
 - to $O(U)$ the levels are correct in the presence of U , **except** near Bragg points
- Nearby the point $\frac{1}{2}K$ the **degeneracy is split** by $2U_K$
 - the slope of the two curves must be zero at $\frac{1}{2}K$
 - the free electron curve is modified as **Fig. (d)**
- **Extended-zone scheme:** repeat the procedure near every Bragg point
 - for the corresponding Fourier component (**Fig. (e)**)
 - emphasises continuity with the free electron levels
- **Reduced-zone scheme:** all levels are specified by $k \in 1\text{st BZ}$
 - translate all pieces through the appropriate K to stay in the 1st BZ (**Fig. (f)**)
- **Repeated-zone scheme:** shows the periodicity of labelling in k -space

Energy levels near a single Bragg plane

Degenerate case with $m = 2$

Energy bands in one dimension

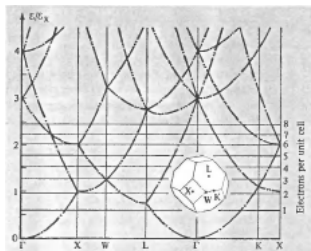


Energy levels near a single Bragg plane

Degenerate case with $m > 2$

Energy-wave-vector curves in three dimensions

- Plot ε vs \mathbf{k} along straight lines in k -space
 - Uses a reduced-zone scheme
 - Most curves are highly degenerate
 - Introduction of a periodic potential lowers the degeneracy
 - Very complex curves also in the free-electron approximation



free-electron energy levels for a fcc Bravais lattice

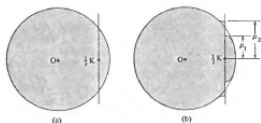
- 1 General approach to the Schrödinger equation
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Brillouin zones

Procedures used to draw the Fermi surface

Drawing the Fermi surface

- Draw the free-electron Fermi sphere centered at $\mathbf{k} = 0$
- It will be deformed in a simple manner when it crosses Bragg planes
 - constant energy surfaces are \perp to Bragg planes
- Consider the effect of **all** Bragg planes intersecting the sphere
 - **fractured sphere** in the **extended-zone scheme**



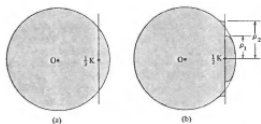
deformation of the free-electron sphere near the Bragg plane when $U_{\mathbf{k}} \neq 0$

Brillouin zones

Procedures used to draw the Fermi surface

Drawing the Fermi surface

- Similar construction with spheres centered on each lattice point to get the **repeated-zone scheme**
- Translate all pieces back into the first zone to get the surface in the **reduced-zone scheme**



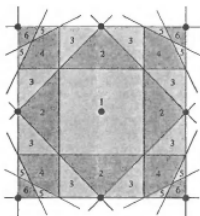
deformation of the free-electron sphere near the Bragg plane when $U_{\mathbf{k}} \neq 0$

Brillouin zones

Procedures used to draw the Fermi surface

Brillouin zones

- All are set of points in k -space that can be reached:
 - 1st BZ: from the origin without crossing any Bragg plane
 - 2nd BZ: from the 1st BZ crossing one Bragg plane
 - $n + 1$ BZ: from the n BZ crossing one Bragg plane (not in the $n - 1$ BZ)
- Each BZ is a primitive cell

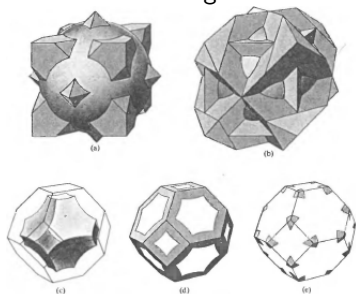


BZs for a 2D square Bravais lattice of side b . Only BZs 1 2 3 are entirely contained in the square of side $2b$

Brillouin zones

Branches of the Fermi surface in the repeated-zone scheme

- Draw the free-electron Fermi sphere
- Deform it in the vicinity of **every** Bragg plane
- Translate the portion within the n -th BZ through all \mathbf{K}
 - **Branch** of the Fermi surface assigned to the n th band



free-electron Fermi sphere for a fcc metal of valence 4. (c) 2nd zone Fermi surface.

(d) 3rd zone Fermi surface. (e) 4th zone Fermi surface.

Geometrical structure factor

Monoatomic lattice with a basis

- For a basis of identical ions at positions \mathbf{d}_j :

$$U(\mathbf{r}) = \sum_{\mathbf{R}} \sum_j \phi(\mathbf{r} - \mathbf{R} - \mathbf{d}_j):$$

- atomic potentials $\phi(\mathbf{r})$ centered at the ions positions
- Then we have:

$$\begin{aligned} U_{\mathbf{K}} &= \frac{1}{V} \int_C d\mathbf{r} e^{-i\mathbf{K}\cdot\mathbf{r}} U(\mathbf{r}) \\ &= \frac{1}{V} \int_V d\mathbf{r} e^{-i\mathbf{K}\cdot\mathbf{r}} \sum_j \phi(\mathbf{r} - \mathbf{d}_j) \\ &= \frac{1}{V} \phi(\mathbf{K}) S_{\mathbf{K}}^* \end{aligned}$$

- If $S_{\mathbf{K}} = 0 \implies U_{\mathbf{K}} = 0$
 - lowest-order splitting of free-electron levels **disappears**