

UC5

Two-Particle Systems and quantum applications

UC5 contents:

- Identical particles and introduction to two-particle systems.
- Exchange interactions and covalent bonds
- Atoms and the periodic table
- Applications of quantum mechanics

IDENTICAL PARTICLES

Two-particle systems:

For a *single* particle, $\Psi(\mathbf{r}, t)$ is a function of the spatial coordinates, \mathbf{r} , and the time, t (we will ignore spin, for the moment).

The state of a *two*-particle system is a function of the coordinates of particle one (\mathbf{r}_1), the coordinates of particle two (\mathbf{r}_2), and the time:

$$\Psi(\mathbf{r}_1, \mathbf{r}_2, t).$$

Its time evolution is determined by the Schrödinger equation:

$$i\hbar \frac{\partial \Psi}{\partial t} = \hat{H} \Psi,$$

where \hat{H} is the Hamiltonian:

$$\hat{H} = -\frac{\hbar^2}{2m_1} \nabla_1^2 - \frac{\hbar^2}{2m_2} \nabla_2^2 + V(\mathbf{r}_1, \mathbf{r}_2, t)$$

the subscript on ∇ indicates differentiation with respect to the coordinates of particle 1 or particle 2, as the case may be.

IDENTICAL PARTICLES

Two-particle systems:

The statistical interpretation indicates that the probability of finding particle 1 in the volume $d^3\mathbf{r}_1$ and particle 2 in the volume $d^3\mathbf{r}_2$ is:

$$|\Psi(\mathbf{r}_1, \mathbf{r}_2, t)|^2 d^3\mathbf{r}_1 d^3\mathbf{r}_2$$

Ψ must be normalised:

$$\int |\Psi(\mathbf{r}_1, \mathbf{r}_2, t)|^2 d^3\mathbf{r}_1 d^3\mathbf{r}_2 = 1.$$

For time-independent potentials, we obtain a complete set of solutions by separation of variables:

$$\Psi(\mathbf{r}_1, \mathbf{r}_2, t) = \psi(\mathbf{r}_1, \mathbf{r}_2)e^{-iEt/\hbar},$$

where the spatial wave function (ψ) satisfies the time-independent Schrödinger equation:

$$-\frac{\hbar^2}{2m_1}\nabla_1^2\psi - \frac{\hbar^2}{2m_2}\nabla_2^2\psi + V\psi = E\psi,$$

where E is the total energy of the system.

IDENTICAL PARTICLES

Two-particle systems:

Solving this is difficult, but two special cases can be reduced to one-particle problems:

1. Noninteracting particles: Suppose the particles do not interact with one another, but each is subject to some external force. For example, they might be attached to two different springs. In that case the total potential energy is the *sum* of the two:

$$V(\mathbf{r}_1, \mathbf{r}_2) = V_1(\mathbf{r}_1) + V_2(\mathbf{r}_2),$$

Using separation of variables: $\psi(\mathbf{r}_1, \mathbf{r}_2) = \psi_a(\mathbf{r}_1)\psi_b(\mathbf{r}_2)$.

we find that $\psi_a(\mathbf{r}_1)$ and $\psi_b(\mathbf{r}_2)$ each satisfy the one-particle Schrödinger equation:

$$\begin{aligned} -\frac{\hbar^2}{2m_1}\nabla_1^2\psi_a(\mathbf{r}_1) + V_1(\mathbf{r}_1)\psi_a(\mathbf{r}_1) &= E_a\psi_a(\mathbf{r}_1), \\ -\frac{\hbar^2}{2m_2}\nabla_2^2\psi_b(\mathbf{r}_2) + V_2(\mathbf{r}_2)\psi_b(\mathbf{r}_2) &= E_b\psi_b(\mathbf{r}_2), \end{aligned}$$

and $E = E_a + E_b$.

IDENTICAL PARTICLES

Two-particle systems:

In this case the two-particle wave function is a simple *product* of one-particle wave functions:

$$\begin{aligned}\Psi(\mathbf{r}_1, \mathbf{r}_2, t) &= \psi_a(\mathbf{r}_1)\psi_b(\mathbf{r}_2)e^{-i(E_a+E_b)t/\hbar} \\ &= \left(\psi_a(\mathbf{r}_1)e^{-iE_at/\hbar}\right) \left(\psi_b(\mathbf{r}_2)e^{-iE_bt/\hbar}\right) = \Psi_a(\mathbf{r}_1, t)\Psi_b(\mathbf{r}_2, t),\end{aligned}$$

Particle 1 is in state a , and particle 2 is in state b .

Any linear combination of such solutions will still satisfy the (time-dependent) Schrödinger:

$$\Psi(\mathbf{r}_1, \mathbf{r}_2, t) = \frac{3}{5}\Psi_a(\mathbf{r}_1, t)\Psi_b(\mathbf{r}_2, t) + \frac{4}{5}\Psi_c(\mathbf{r}_1, t)\Psi_d(\mathbf{r}_2, t).$$

The state of particle 1 depends on that of particle 2, and vice versa.

If we measured the energy of particle 1, we might get E_a (with probability 9/25), then the energy of particle 2 is definitely E_b , or you might get E_c (probability 16/25), in which case the energy of particle 2 is E_d .

We say that the two particles are **entangled: an entangled state is one that *cannot* be written as a product of single-particle states.**

IDENTICAL PARTICLES

Two-particle systems:

2. Central potentials: Suppose the particles interact *only* with one another, via a potential that depends on their separation:

$$V(\mathbf{r}_1, \mathbf{r}_2) \rightarrow V(|\mathbf{r}_1 - \mathbf{r}_2|).$$

The hydrogen atom would be an example, if you include the motion of the proton. In this case the two-body problem reduces to an equivalent one-body problem.

In general, though, the two particles will be subject both to external forces *and* to mutual interactions, and this makes the analysis more complicated.

Example: potential of the two electrons in a helium atom: each feels the Coulomb attraction of the nucleus (charge $2e$), and at the same time they repel one another:

$$V(\mathbf{r}_1, \mathbf{r}_2) = \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \left(-\frac{2e^2}{|\mathbf{r}_1|} - \frac{2e^2}{|\mathbf{r}_2|} + \frac{e^2}{|\mathbf{r}_1 - \mathbf{r}_2|} \right).$$

IDENTICAL PARTICLES

Bosons and Fermions

Suppose we have two noninteracting particles, number 1 in the (one-particle) state $\psi_a(\mathbf{r})$, and number 2 in the state $\psi_b(\mathbf{r})$. In that case $\psi(\mathbf{r}_1, \mathbf{r}_2)$ is the product:

$$\psi(\mathbf{r}_1, \mathbf{r}_2) = \psi_a(\mathbf{r}_1)\psi_b(\mathbf{r}_2).$$

This assumes that we can tell the particles apart—otherwise it wouldn't make any sense to claim that number 1 is in state ψ_a and number 2 is in state ψ_b ; all we could say is that *one* of them is in the state ψ_a and the other is in state ψ_b , but we wouldn't know which is which.

All electrons are *identical*, in a way that no two classical objects can ever be. It's not just that we don't know which electron is which.

Quantum mechanics neatly accommodates the existence of particles that are *indistinguishable in principle*: We simply construct a wave function that is *noncommittal* as to which particle is in which state. There are actually two ways to do it:

$$\psi_{\pm}(\mathbf{r}_1, \mathbf{r}_2) = A [\psi_a(\mathbf{r}_1)\psi_b(\mathbf{r}_2) \pm \psi_b(\mathbf{r}_1)\psi_a(\mathbf{r}_2)];$$

IDENTICAL PARTICLES

Bosons and Fermions

$$\psi_{\pm}(\mathbf{r}_1, \mathbf{r}_2) = A [\psi_a(\mathbf{r}_1)\psi_b(\mathbf{r}_2) \pm \psi_b(\mathbf{r}_1)\psi_a(\mathbf{r}_2)] ;$$

(Symmetrisation requirement)

The theory admits two kinds of identical particles:

- **bosons** (the plus sign), and
- **fermions** (the minus sign).

Boson states are **symmetric** under interchange, $\psi_+(\mathbf{r}_2, \mathbf{r}_1) = \psi_+(\mathbf{r}_1, \mathbf{r}_2)$; fermion states are **antisymmetric** under interchange, $\psi_-(\mathbf{r}_2, \mathbf{r}_1) = -\psi_-(\mathbf{r}_1, \mathbf{r}_2)$. It so happens that:

{ all particles with *integer* spin are bosons, and
all particles with *half integer* spin are fermions.

This **connection between spin and statistics** (bosons and fermions have quite different statistical properties) can be *proved* in *relativistic* quantum mechanics.

IDENTICAL PARTICLES

Bosons and Fermions: Pauli exclusion principle

Two identical fermions (for example, two electrons) cannot occupy the same state.

For if $\psi_a = \psi_b$, we are left with no wave function at all:

$$\psi_{-}(\mathbf{r}_1, \mathbf{r}_2) = A [\psi_a(\mathbf{r}_1)\psi_a(\mathbf{r}_2) - \psi_a(\mathbf{r}_1)\psi_a(\mathbf{r}_2)] = 0,$$

This is the **Pauli exclusion principle**, which is a consequence of the rules for constructing two-particle wave functions, applying to *all* identical fermions.

IDENTICAL PARTICLES

Exchange Forces

Suppose one particle is in state $\psi_a(x)$, and the other is in state $\psi_b(x)$, and these two states are orthogonal and normalised.

If the two particles are distinguishable, and number 1 is the one in state ψ_a , then the combined wave function is:

$$\psi(x_1, x_2) = \psi_a(x_1)\psi_b(x_2);$$

Identical bosons:
$$\psi_+(x_1, x_2) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} [\psi_a(x_1)\psi_b(x_2) + \psi_b(x_1)\psi_a(x_2)];$$

Identical fermions:
$$\psi_-(x_1, x_2) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} [\psi_a(x_1)\psi_b(x_2) - \psi_b(x_1)\psi_a(x_2)].$$

The expectation value of the square of the separation distance between the two particles:

$$\langle (x_1 - x_2)^2 \rangle = \langle x_1^2 \rangle + \langle x_2^2 \rangle - 2\langle x_1 x_2 \rangle.$$

IDENTICAL PARTICLES

Exchange Forces:

Case 1: Distinguishable particles.

$$\langle x_1^2 \rangle = \int x_1^2 |\psi_a(x_1)|^2 dx_1 \int |\psi_b(x_2)|^2 dx_2 = \langle x^2 \rangle_a$$

(the expectation value of x^2 in the one-particle state ψ_a),

$$\langle x_2^2 \rangle = \int |\psi_a(x_1)|^2 dx_1 \int x_2^2 |\psi_b(x_2)|^2 dx_2 = \langle x^2 \rangle_b,$$

and

$$\langle x_1 x_2 \rangle = \int x_1 |\psi_a(x_1)|^2 dx_1 \int x_2 |\psi_b(x_2)|^2 dx_2 = \langle x \rangle_a \langle x \rangle_b.$$

In this case, then,

$$\left\langle (x_1 - x_2)^2 \right\rangle_d = \langle x^2 \rangle_a + \langle x^2 \rangle_b - 2 \langle x \rangle_a \langle x \rangle_b.$$

(Incidentally, the answer would—of course—be the same if particle 1 had been in state ψ_b , and particle 2 in state ψ_a .)

IDENTICAL PARTICLES

Exchange Forces:

Case 2: Identical particles.

$$\begin{aligned}\langle x_1^2 \rangle &= \frac{1}{2} \left[\int x_1^2 |\psi_a(x_1)|^2 dx_1 \int |\psi_b(x_2)|^2 dx_2 \right. \\ &\quad + \int x_1^2 |\psi_b(x_1)|^2 dx_1 \int |\psi_a(x_2)|^2 dx_2 \\ &\quad \pm \int x_1^2 \psi_a(x_1)^* \psi_b(x_1) dx_1 \int \psi_b(x_2)^* \psi_a(x_2) dx_2 \\ &\quad \left. \pm \int x_1^2 \psi_b(x_1)^* \psi_a(x_1) dx_1 \int \psi_a(x_2)^* \psi_b(x_2) dx_2 \right] \\ &= \frac{1}{2} \left[\langle x^2 \rangle_a + \langle x^2 \rangle_b \pm 0 \pm 0 \right] = \frac{1}{2} \left(\langle x^2 \rangle_a + \langle x^2 \rangle_b \right).\end{aligned}$$

Similarly,

$$\langle x_2^2 \rangle = \frac{1}{2} \left(\langle x^2 \rangle_b + \langle x^2 \rangle_a \right).$$

(Naturally, $\langle x_2^2 \rangle = \langle x_1^2 \rangle$, since you can't tell them apart.) But

IDENTICAL PARTICLES

Exchange Forces:

Case 2: Identical particles.

$$\begin{aligned}\langle x_1 x_2 \rangle &= \frac{1}{2} \left[\int x_1 |\psi_a(x_1)|^2 dx_1 \int x_2 |\psi_b(x_2)|^2 dx_2 \right. \\ &\quad + \int x_1 |\psi_b(x_1)|^2 dx_1 \int x_2 |\psi_a(x_2)|^2 dx_2 \\ &\quad \pm \int x_1 \psi_a(x_1)^* \psi_b(x_1) dx_1 \int x_2 \psi_b(x_2)^* \psi_a(x_2) dx_2 \\ &\quad \left. \pm \int x_1 \psi_b(x_1)^* \psi_a(x_1) dx_1 \int x_2 \psi_a(x_2)^* \psi_b(x_2) dx_2 \right] \\ &= \frac{1}{2} (\langle x \rangle_a \langle x \rangle_b + \langle x \rangle_b \langle x \rangle_a \pm \langle x \rangle_{ab} \langle x \rangle_{ba} \pm \langle x \rangle_{ba} \langle x \rangle_{ab}) \\ &= \langle x \rangle_a \langle x \rangle_b \pm |\langle x \rangle_{ab}|^2,\end{aligned}$$

where

$$\langle x \rangle_{ab} \equiv \int x \psi_a(x)^* \psi_b(x) dx.$$

Thus

$$\left\langle (x_1 - x_2)^2 \right\rangle_{\pm} = \langle x^2 \rangle_a + \langle x^2 \rangle_b - 2\langle x \rangle_a \langle x \rangle_b \mp 2|\langle x \rangle_{ab}|^2.$$

IDENTICAL PARTICLES

Exchange Forces:

Case 2: Identical particles.

Distinguishable particles:

$$\left\langle (x_1 - x_2)^2 \right\rangle_d = \langle x^2 \rangle_a + \langle x^2 \rangle_b - 2 \langle x \rangle_a \langle x \rangle_b.$$

Identical particles.:

$$\left\langle (x_1 - x_2)^2 \right\rangle_{\pm} = \langle x^2 \rangle_a + \langle x^2 \rangle_b - 2 \langle x \rangle_a \langle x \rangle_b \mp 2 |\langle x \rangle_{ab}|^2.$$

Difference:

$$\left\langle (\Delta x)^2 \right\rangle_{\pm} = \left\langle (\Delta x)^2 \right\rangle_d \mp 2 |\langle x \rangle_{ab}|^2;$$

Identical bosons (the upper signs) tend to be somewhat closer together, and

Identical fermions (the lower signs) somewhat farther apart,

than distinguishable particles in the same two states.

$\langle x \rangle_{ab}$ *vanishes* unless the two wave functions actually *overlap*.

$$\langle x \rangle_{ab} \equiv \int x \psi_a(x)^* \psi_b(x) dx.$$

IDENTICAL PARTICLES

Exchange Forces:

Case 2: Identical particles.

The *interesting* case is when the overlap integral is *not* zero.

The system behaves as though there were:

a “**force of attraction**” between identical bosons, **pulling them closer together**, and
a “**force of repulsion**” between identical fermions, **pushing them apart**.

We call it an **exchange force**, although it’s not really a force at all—no physical agency is pushing on the particles. **What is it then?**

It is a purely *geometrical* consequence of the symmetrisation requirement. It is also a strictly quantum mechanical phenomenon, with no classical counterpart.

IDENTICAL PARTICLES

Spin:

The *complete* state of an electron (say) includes not only its position wave function, but also a **spinor**, describing the orientation of its **spin**:

$$\psi(\mathbf{r})\chi.$$

In the absence of coupling between spin and position, we are free to assume that the state is *separable* in its spin and spatial coordinates.

The probability of getting spin up is independent of the *location* of the particle.

In the presence of coupling, the general state would take the form of a linear combination:

$$\psi_+(\mathbf{r})\chi_+ + \psi_-(\mathbf{r})\chi_-.$$

The two-particle state is:

$$\psi(\mathbf{r}_1, \mathbf{r}_2)\chi(1, 2)$$

Where $\chi(1,2)$ stand for the combined spin state. in Dirac notation it is some linear combination of the states $|s_1 s_2 m_1 m_2\rangle$. We assume that the state is again a simple product of a position state and a spin state.

IDENTICAL PARTICLES

Spin:

The two-particle state is:

$$\psi(\mathbf{r}_1, \mathbf{r}_2)\chi(1, 2)$$

And it has to be antisymmetric with respect to exchange:

$$\psi(\mathbf{r}_1, \mathbf{r}_2)\chi(1, 2) = -\psi(\mathbf{r}_2, \mathbf{r}_1)\chi(2, 1).$$

Thus, the Pauli principle actually allows *two* electrons in a given position state, as long as their spins are in the singlet configuration (but they could not be in the same position state *and* in the same spin state—say, both spin up).

$$\left\{ |0\ 0\rangle = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} (|\uparrow\downarrow\rangle - |\downarrow\uparrow\rangle) \right\} \quad s = 0 \text{ (singlet)}$$

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} |1\ 1\rangle = |\uparrow\uparrow\rangle \\ |1\ 0\rangle = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} (|\uparrow\downarrow\rangle + |\downarrow\uparrow\rangle) \\ |1\ -1\rangle = |\downarrow\downarrow\rangle \end{array} \right\} \quad s = 1 \text{ (triplet)}$$

IDENTICAL PARTICLES

Generalised Symmetrisation Principle

For the sake of simplicity, we have assumed that:

- the particles are noninteracting,
- the spin and position are decoupled (with the combined state a product of position and spin factors), and
- the potential is time-independent.

But the fundamental symmetrisation/antisymmetrisation requirement for identical bosons/fermions is much more general.

Let us define the **exchange operator**, \hat{P} , which interchanges the two particles:

$$\hat{P} |(1, 2)\rangle = |(2, 1)\rangle.$$

\hat{P} switches the particles ($1 \leftrightarrow 2$), exchanging their positions, their spins, and any other properties they might possess.

Here, $\hat{P}^2 = 1$, and the eigenvalues of \hat{P} are ± 1 . If the two particles are identical, the Hamiltonian must treat them the same:

$$m_1 = m_2 \text{ and } V(\mathbf{r}_1, \mathbf{r}_2, t) = V(\mathbf{r}_2, \mathbf{r}_1, t).$$

IDENTICAL PARTICLES

Generalised Symmetrisation Principle

It follows that \hat{P} and \hat{H} are compatible observables, $[\hat{P}, \hat{H}] = 0$,

and hence: $\frac{d\langle\hat{P}\rangle}{dt} = 0$.

If the system starts out in an eigenstate of \hat{P} , **symmetric** $\langle\hat{P}\rangle = 1$ or **antisymmetric** $\langle\hat{P}\rangle = -1$, it will stay that way forever.

The **symmetrisation axiom** says that for identical particles the state is not merely *allowed*, but *required* to satisfy:

$$|(1, 2)\rangle = \pm |(2, 1)\rangle,$$

with the **plus** sign for **bosons**, and the **minus** sign for **fermions**.

IDENTICAL PARTICLES

Generalised Symmetrisation Principle

If you have n identical particles, of course, the state must be symmetric or antisymmetric under the interchange of *any two*:

$$|(1, 2, \dots, i, \dots, j, \dots, n)\rangle = \pm |(1, 2, \dots, j, \dots, i, \dots, n)\rangle,$$

This is the **generalised symmetrisation principle**, of which the following equation is a special case.

$$\psi_{\pm}(\mathbf{r}_1, \mathbf{r}_2) = A [\psi_a(\mathbf{r}_1)\psi_b(\mathbf{r}_2) \pm \psi_b(\mathbf{r}_1)\psi_a(\mathbf{r}_2)]$$

It is perfectly possible to imagine a system of two **distinguishable particles** (say, an electron and a positron) for which the Hamiltonian is symmetric, and yet there is no requirement that the state be symmetric (or antisymmetric).

Identical particles have to occupy symmetric or antisymmetric states, and this is a *new fundamental law*—on a par, logically, with Schrödinger's equation and the statistical interpretation.

Quantum mechanics allows for the *possibility* of identical particles.

IDENTICAL PARTICLES

Atoms:

A neutral atom, of atomic number Z , consists of a heavy (assumed stationary) nucleus, with electric charge Ze , surrounded by Z electrons (mass m and charge $-e$).

The Hamiltonian for this system is:

$$\hat{H} = \sum_{j=1}^Z \left\{ -\frac{\hbar^2}{2m} \nabla_j^2 - \left(\frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \right) \frac{Ze^2}{r_j} \right\} + \frac{1}{2} \left(\frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \right) \sum_{j \neq k}^Z \frac{e^2}{|\mathbf{r}_j - \mathbf{r}_k|}$$

The term in curly brackets represents the kinetic plus potential energy of the j th electron, in the electric field of the nucleus.

The second sum (which runs over all values of j and k except $j = k$) is the potential energy associated with the mutual repulsion of the electrons (the factor of $1/2$ in front corrects for the fact that the summation counts each pair twice).

The problem is to solve Schrödinger's equation for the wave function $\psi(\mathbf{r}_1, \mathbf{r}_2, \dots, \mathbf{r}_Z)$:

$$\hat{H}\psi = E\psi,$$

This cannot be solved exactly, except for the very simplest case, $Z = 1$ (hydrogen). We must resort to elaborate approximation methods (you will study them in QM II).

IDENTICAL PARTICLES

Helium:

After hydrogen, the simplest atom is helium ($Z = 2$).

The Hamiltonian consists of two hydrogenic Hamiltonians (with nuclear charge $2e$), one for electron 1 and one for electron 2, together with a final term describing the repulsion of the two electrons.

$$\hat{H} = \left\{ -\frac{\hbar^2}{2m} \nabla_1^2 - \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \frac{2e^2}{r_1} \right\} + \left\{ -\frac{\hbar^2}{2m} \nabla_2^2 - \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \frac{2e^2}{r_2} \right\} + \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \frac{e^2}{|\mathbf{r}_1 - \mathbf{r}_2|},$$

It is this last term that causes all the trouble.

If we simply *ignore* it, the Schrödinger equation separates, and the solutions can be written as products of *hydrogen* wave functions:

$$\psi(\mathbf{r}_1, \mathbf{r}_2) = \psi_{n\ell m}(\mathbf{r}_1) \psi_{n'\ell' m'}(\mathbf{r}_2),$$

only with half the Bohr radius and four times the Bohr energies.

The total energy would be:

$$E = 4(E_n + E_{n'}),$$

where: $E_n = -13.6/n^2$ eV.

IDENTICAL PARTICLES

Helium:

The ground state would be:

$$\psi_0(\mathbf{r}_1, \mathbf{r}_2) = \psi_{100}(\mathbf{r}_1)\psi_{100}(\mathbf{r}_2) = \frac{8}{\pi a^3} e^{-2(r_1+r_2)/a},$$

and its energy would be:

$$E_0 = 8 (-13.6 \text{ eV}) = -109 \text{ eV}.$$

Because ψ_0 is a symmetric function, the spin state has to be *antisymmetric*, so the ground state of helium should be a *singlet* configuration, with the spins “oppositely aligned.”

The *actual* ground state of helium is indeed a singlet, but the experimentally determined energy is -78.975 eV , so the agreement is not very good as we ignored electron–electron repulsion, which is certainly *not* a small contribution.

The excited states of helium consist of one electron in the hydrogenic ground state, and the other in an excited state:

$$\psi_{n\ell m} \psi_{100}$$

IDENTICAL PARTICLES

Helium:

If we try to put *both* electrons in excited states, one immediately drops to the ground state, releasing enough energy to knock the other one into the continuum ($E > 0$), leaving you with a helium *ion* (He^+) and a free electron.

We can construct both symmetric and antisymmetric combinations. The former go with the *antisymmetric* spin configuration (the singlet)—they are called **parahelium**—while the latter require a *symmetric* spin configuration (the triplet)—they are known as **orthohelium**.

The ground state is necessarily parahelium; the excited states come in both forms.

Because the symmetric spatial state brings the electrons closer together, we expect a higher interaction energy in parahelium, and indeed, it is experimentally confirmed that the parahelium states have somewhat higher energy than their orthohelium counterparts.

IDENTICAL PARTICLES

Helium:

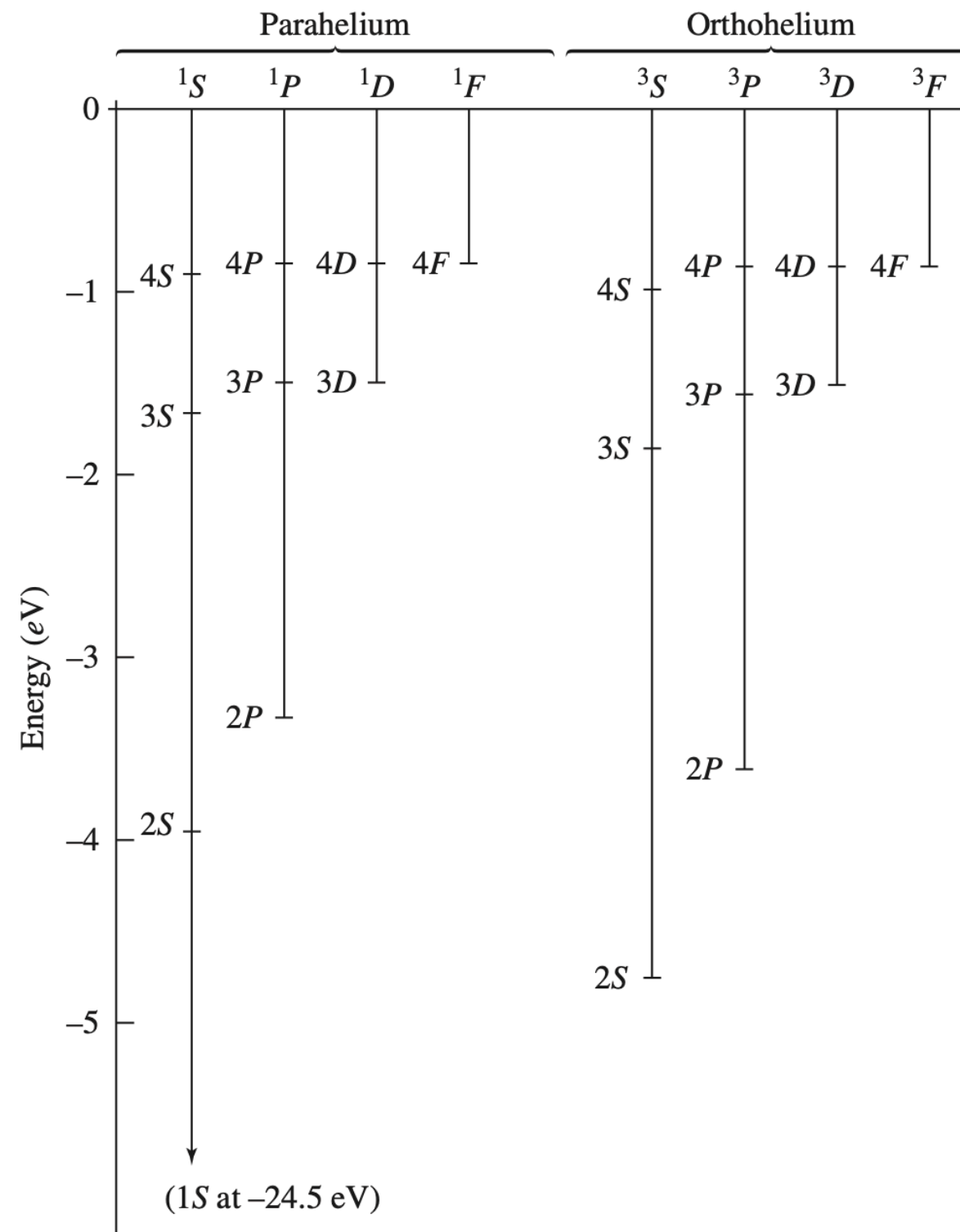


Figure 5.1: Energy level diagram for helium (the notation is explained in Section 5.2.2). Note that parahelium energies are uniformly higher than their orthohelium counterparts. The numerical values on the vertical scale are relative to the ground state of ionized helium (He^+): $4 \times (-13.6) \text{ eV} = -54.4 \text{ eV}$; to get the *total* energy of the state, subtract 54.4 eV.

IDENTICAL PARTICLES

The Periodic Table:

The ground state electron configurations for heavier atoms can be pieced together in much the same way.

To first approximation (ignoring their mutual repulsion altogether) the individual electrons occupy one-particle hydrogenic states (n, l, m) , called **orbitals**, in the Coulomb potential of a nucleus with charge Ze .

If electrons were bosons (or distinguishable particles) they would all shake down to the ground state $(1, 0, 0)$, but electrons are in fact identical fermions, subject to the Pauli exclusion principle, so only *two* can occupy any given orbital (one with spin up, and one with spin down—or, more precisely, in the singlet configuration).

There are n^2 hydrogenic wave functions (all with the same energy E_n) for a given value of n , so the $n = 1$ **shell** has room for two electrons, the $n = 2$ shell holds eight, $n = 3$ takes 18, and in general the n th shell can accommodate $2n^2$ electrons.

IDENTICAL PARTICLES

The Periodic Table:

Qualitatively, the horizontal rows on the **Periodic Table** correspond to filling out each shell (if this were the whole story, they would have lengths 2, 8, 18, 32, 50, etc., instead of 2, 8, 8, 18, 18, etc.; we'll see in a moment how the electron–electron repulsion throws the counting off).

Group Period	→ 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1	1 H																	2 He
2	3 Li	4 Be											5 B	6 C	7 N	8 O	9 F	10 Ne
3	11 Na	12 Mg											13 Al	14 Si	15 P	16 S	17 Cl	18 Ar
4	19 K	20 Ca	21 Sc	22 Ti	23 V	24 Cr	25 Mn	26 Fe	27 Co	28 Ni	29 Cu	30 Zn	31 Ga	32 Ge	33 As	34 Se	35 Br	36 Kr
5	37 Rb	38 Sr	39 Y	40 Zr	41 Nb	42 Mo	43 Tc	44 Ru	45 Rh	46 Pd	47 Ag	48 Cd	49 In	50 Sn	51 Sb	52 Te	53 I	54 Xe
6	55 Cs	56 Ba	* 71 Lu	72 Hf	73 Ta	74 W	75 Re	76 Os	77 Ir	78 Pt	79 Au	80 Hg	81 Tl	82 Pb	83 Bi	84 Po	85 At	86 Rn
7	87 Fr	88 Ra	* 103 Lr	104 Rf	105 Db	106 Sg	107 Bh	108 Hs	109 Mt	110 Ds	111 Rg	112 Cn	113 Nh	114 Fl	115 Mc	116 Lv	117 Ts	118 Og
			* 57 La	58 Ce	59 Pr	60 Nd	61 Pm	62 Sm	63 Eu	64 Gd	65 Tb	66 Dy	67 Ho	68 Er	69 Tm	70 Yb		
			* 89 Ac	90 Th	91 Pa	92 U	93 Np	94 Pu	95 Am	96 Cm	97 Bk	98 Cf	99 Es	100 Fm	101 Md	102 No		

IDENTICAL PARTICLES

The Periodic Table:

With helium, the $n = 1$ shell is filled, so the next atom, lithium ($Z = 3$), has to put one electron into the $n = 2$ shell. Now, for $n = 2$ we can have $\ell = 0$ or $\ell = 1$; which of these will the third electron choose?

In the absence of electron–electron interactions, they have the same energy (the Bohr energies depend on n , remember, but not on ℓ). But the effect of electron repulsion is to favor the lowest value of ℓ , for the following reason.

Angular momentum tends to throw the electron outward, and the farther out it gets, the more effectively the inner electrons **screen** the nucleus (roughly speaking, the innermost electron “sees” the full nuclear charge Ze , but the outermost electron sees an effective charge hardly greater than e).

Within a given shell, therefore, the state with lowest energy (which is to say, the most tightly bound electron) is $\ell = 0$, and the energy increases with increasing ℓ . Thus the third electron in lithium occupies the orbital (2,0,0). The next atom (beryllium, with $Z = 4$) also fits into this state (only with “opposite spin”), but boron ($Z = 5$) has to make use of $\ell = 1$.

IDENTICAL PARTICLES

The Periodic Table:

For reasons known best to nineteenth-century spectroscopists:

$\ell = 0$ is called *s* (for “sharp”)

$\ell = 1$ is *p* (for “principal”),

$\ell = 2$ is *d* (“diffuse”),

$\ell = 3$ is *f* (“fundamental”).

It continues alphabetically (*g*, *h*, *i*, skip *j*, *k*, *l*, etc.)

The state of a particular electron is represented by the pair $n\ell$, with n (the number) giving the shell, and ℓ (the letter) specifying the orbital angular momentum.

The magnetic quantum number m is not listed, but an exponent is used to indicate the number of electrons that occupy the state in question. Thus the configuration:

$$(1s)^2 (2s)^2 (2p)^2$$

There are two electrons in the orbital (1,0,0), two in the orbital (2,0,0), and two in some combination of the orbitals (2,1,1), (2,1,0), and (2,1,-1). This happens to be the ground state of carbon.

IDENTICAL PARTICLES

The Periodic Table:

The carbon configuration: $(1s)^2 (2s)^2 (2p)^2$

There are two electrons in the orbital (1,0,0), two in the orbital (2,0,0), and two in some combination of the orbitals (2,1,1), (2,1,0), and (2,1,-1). This happens to be the ground state of carbon.

There exist rituals, known as **Hund's Rules** for figuring out what *total* orbital angular momentum quantum number, L , the *total* spin quantum number S , and the *grand* total (orbital plus spin), J , will be, for a particular atom.

The result is recorded as the following:

$$^{2S+1}L_J,$$

The ground state of carbon happens to be 3P_0 : the total spin is 1 (hence the 3), the total orbital angular momentum is 1 (hence the P), and the *grand* total angular momentum is zero (hence the 0).

IDENTICAL PARTICLES

The Periodic Table:

- (a) Hund's first rule** says that, consistent with the Pauli principle, the state with the highest total spin (S) will have the lowest energy.
- (b) Hund's second rule** says that, for a given spin, the state with the highest total orbital angular momentum (L), consistent with overall antisymmetrization, will have the lowest energy.
- (c) Hund's third rule** says that if a subshell (n, ℓ) is no more than half filled, then the lowest energy level has $J = |L - S|$; if it is more than half filled, then $J = L + S$ has the lowest energy.

Example for Carbon:

https://quantummechanics.ucsd.edu/ph130a/130_notes/node392.html

IDENTICAL PARTICLES

Solids:

In the solid state, a few of the loosely-bound outermost **valence** electrons in each atom become detached, and roam around throughout the material, no longer subject only to the Coulomb field of a specific “parent” nucleus, but rather to the combined potential of the entire crystal lattice.

We will examine 2 models of an “electron gas”:

- **Sommerfeld theory**, which ignores *all* forces (except the confining boundaries), treating the wandering electrons as free particles in a box (the three-dimensional analog to an infinite square well).
- **Bloch’s theory**, which introduces a periodic potential representing the electrical attraction of the regularly spaced, positively charged, nuclei (but still ignores electron–electron repulsion).

These models are no more than the first halting steps toward a quantum theory of solids, but already they reveal the critical role of the Pauli exclusion principle in accounting for “solidity,” and provide illuminating insight into the remarkable electrical properties of conductors, semi-conductors, and insulators.

IDENTICAL PARTICLES

Free electron gas:

Let us assume we have a rectangular solid with dimensions l_x, l_y, l_z and an electron inside experiences no forces at all, except at the impenetrable walls:

$$V(x, y, z) = \begin{cases} 0, & 0 < x < l_x, 0 < y < l_y, 0 < z < l_z; \\ \infty, & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

The Schrödinger equation:

$$-\frac{\hbar^2}{2m} \nabla^2 \psi = E \psi,$$

Separates in Cartesian coordinates:

$$\psi(x, y, z) = X(x)Y(y)Z(z),$$

with:

$$-\frac{\hbar^2}{2m} \frac{d^2 X}{dx^2} = E_x X, \quad -\frac{\hbar^2}{2m} \frac{d^2 Y}{dy^2} = E_y Y, \quad -\frac{\hbar^2}{2m} \frac{d^2 Z}{dz^2} = E_z Z,$$

and: $E = E_x + E_y + E_z$.

IDENTICAL PARTICLES

Free electron gas:

Letting:

$$k_x \equiv \frac{\sqrt{2mE_x}}{\hbar}, \quad k_y \equiv \frac{\sqrt{2mE_y}}{\hbar}, \quad k_z \equiv \frac{\sqrt{2mE_z}}{\hbar},$$

We obtain:

$$X(x) = A_x \sin(k_x x) + B_x \cos(k_x x),$$

$$Y(y) = A_y \sin(k_y y) + B_y \cos(k_y y),$$

$$Z(z) = A_z \sin(k_z z) + B_z \cos(k_z z).$$

The boundary conditions require that $X(0) = Y(0) = Z(0) = 0$, so $B_x = B_y = B_z = 0$, and $X(l_x) = Y(l_y) = Z(l_z) = 0$, so

$$k_x l_x = n_x \pi, \quad k_y l_y = n_y \pi, \quad k_z l_z = n_z \pi, \quad (5.47)$$

where each n is a positive integer:

$$n_x = 1, 2, 3, \dots, \quad n_y = 1, 2, 3, \dots, \quad n_z = 1, 2, 3, \dots$$

IDENTICAL PARTICLES

Free electron gas:

The (normalized) wave functions are

$$\psi_{n_x n_y n_z} = \sqrt{\frac{8}{l_x l_y l_z}} \sin\left(\frac{n_x \pi}{l_x} x\right) \sin\left(\frac{n_y \pi}{l_y} y\right) \sin\left(\frac{n_z \pi}{l_z} z\right),$$

and the allowed energies are

$$E_{n_x n_y n_z} = \frac{\hbar^2 \pi^2}{2m} \left(\frac{n_x^2}{l_x^2} + \frac{n_y^2}{l_y^2} + \frac{n_z^2}{l_z^2} \right) = \frac{\hbar^2 k^2}{2m},$$

where k is the magnitude of the **wave vector**, $\mathbf{k} \equiv (k_x, k_y, k_z)$.

If you imagine a three-dimensional space, with axes k_x, k_y, k_z , and planes drawn in at $k_x = (\pi/l_x), (2\pi/l_x), (3\pi/l_x), \dots$, at $k_y = (\pi/l_y), (2\pi/l_y), (3\pi/l_y), \dots$, and at $k_z = (\pi/l_z), (2\pi/l_z), (3\pi/l_z), \dots$, each intersection point represents a distinct (one-particle) stationary state (Figure 5.2). Each block in this grid, and hence also each state, occupies a volume

$$\frac{\pi^3}{l_x l_y l_z} = \frac{\pi^3}{V} \tag{5.51}$$

of “ k -space,” where $V \equiv l_x l_y l_z$ is the volume of the object itself.

IDENTICAL PARTICLES

Free electron gas:

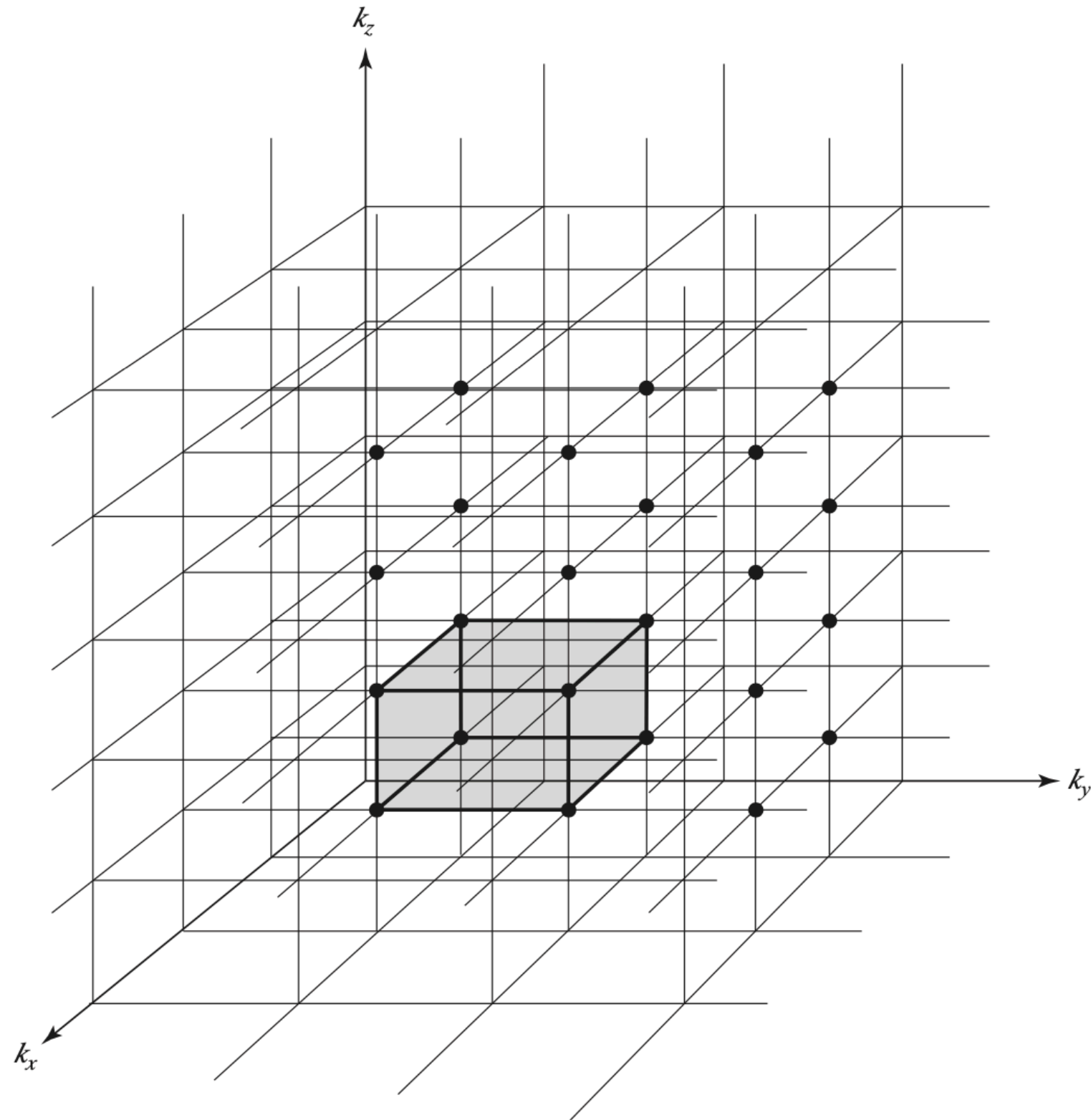


Figure 5.2: Free electron gas. Each intersection on the grid represents a stationary state. The shaded volume is one “block,” and there is one state (potentially two electrons) for every block.

IDENTICAL PARTICLES

Free electron gas:

Suppose our sample contains

N atoms, and each atom contributes d free electrons. (In practice, N will be enormous—on the order of Avogadro's number, for an object of macroscopic size—whereas d is a small number—1, 2, or 3, typically.) If electrons were bosons (or distinguishable particles), they would all settle down to the ground state, ψ_{111} .²¹ But electrons are in fact identical *fermions*, subject to the Pauli exclusion principle, so only two of them can occupy any given state. They will fill up one octant of a *sphere* in k -space,²² whose radius, k_F , is determined by the fact that each pair of electrons requires a volume π^3 / V (Equation 5.51):

$$\frac{1}{8} \left(\frac{4}{3} \pi k_F^3 \right) = \frac{Nd}{2} \left(\frac{\pi^3}{V} \right).$$

Thus

$$k_F = \left(3\rho\pi^2 \right)^{1/3}, \quad (5.52)$$

where

$$\rho \equiv \frac{Nd}{V} \quad (5.53)$$

is the *free electron density* (the number of free electrons per unit volume).

IDENTICAL PARTICLES

Free electron gas:

The boundary separating occupied and unoccupied states, in k -space, is called the **Fermi surface** (hence the subscript F). The corresponding energy is the **Fermi energy**, E_F ; for a free electron gas,

$$E_F = \frac{\hbar^2}{2m} \left(3\rho\pi^2 \right)^{2/3}. \quad (5.54)$$

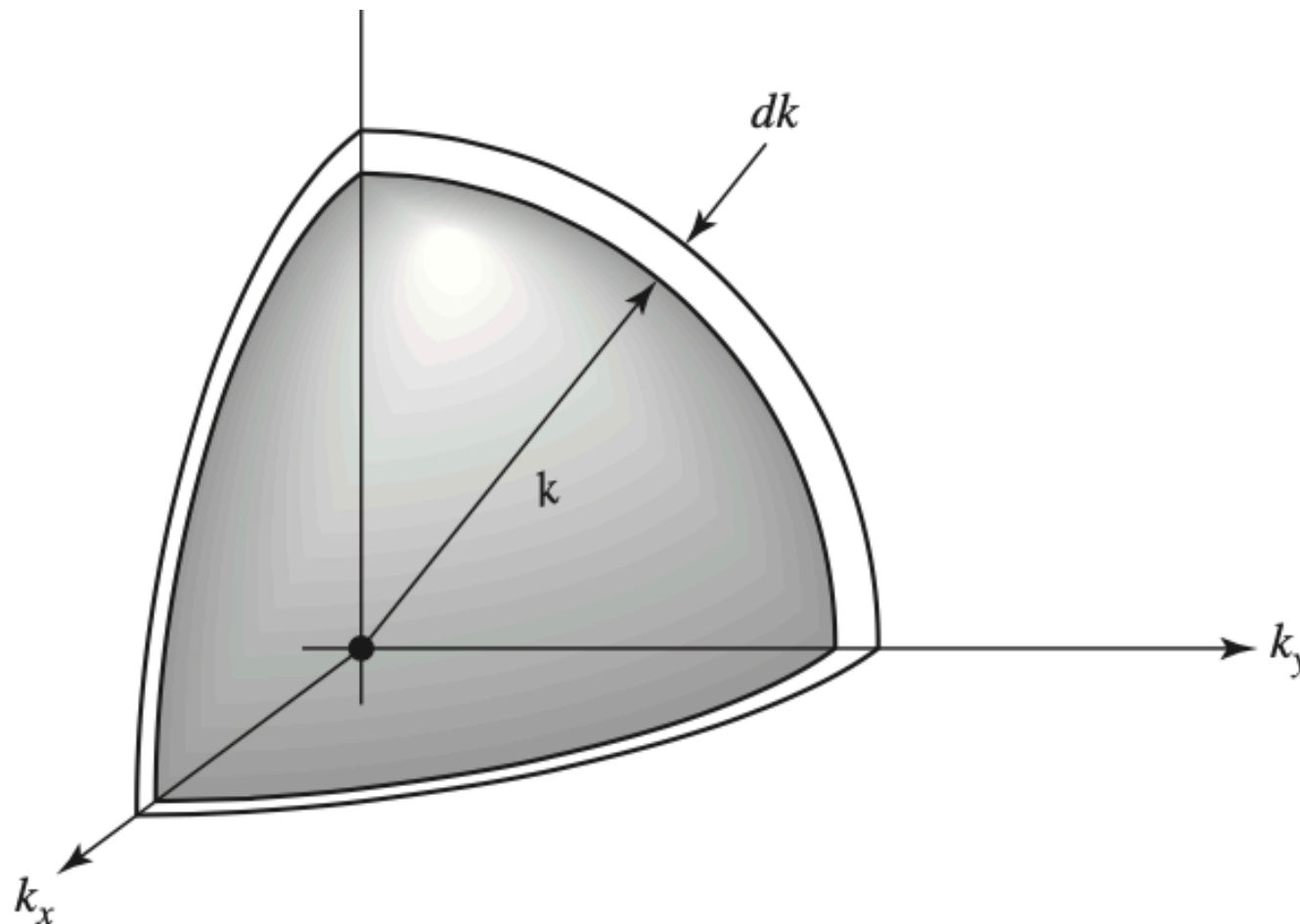


Figure 5.3: One octant of a spherical shell in k -space.

IDENTICAL PARTICLES

Free electron gas:

The *total* energy of the electron gas can be calculated as follows: A shell of thickness dk (Figure 5.3) contains a volume

$$\frac{1}{8} (4\pi k^2) dk,$$

so the number of electron states in the shell is

$$\frac{2 [(1/2) \pi k^2 dk]}{(\pi^3 / V)} = \frac{V}{\pi^2} k^2 dk.$$

Each of these states carries an energy $\hbar^2 k^2 / 2m$ (Equation 5.50), so the energy of the electrons in the shell is

$$dE = \frac{\hbar^2 k^2}{2m} \frac{V}{\pi^2} k^2 dk, \quad (5.55)$$

and hence the total energy of all the filled states is

$$E_{\text{tot}} = \frac{\hbar^2 V}{2\pi^2 m} \int_0^{k_F} k^4 dk = \frac{\hbar^2 k_F^5 V}{10\pi^2 m} = \frac{\hbar^2 (3\pi^2 N)^{5/3}}{10\pi^2 m} V^{-2/3}. \quad (5.56)$$

IDENTICAL PARTICLES

Free electron gas:

This quantum mechanical energy plays a role rather analogous to the internal *thermal* energy (U) of an ordinary gas. In particular, it exerts a *pressure* on the walls, for if the box expands by an amount dV , the total energy decreases:

$$dE_{\text{tot}} = -\frac{2}{3} \frac{\hbar^2 (3\pi^2 N)^{5/3}}{10\pi^2 m} V^{-5/3} dV = -\frac{2}{3} E_{\text{tot}} \frac{dV}{V},$$

and this shows up as work done on the outside ($dW = P dV$) by the quantum pressure P . Evidently

$$P = \frac{2}{3} \frac{E_{\text{tot}}}{V} = \frac{2}{3} \frac{\hbar^2 k_F^5}{10\pi^2 m} = \frac{(3\pi^2)^{2/3} \hbar^2}{5m} \rho^{5/3}. \quad (5.57)$$

Here, then, is a partial answer to the question of why a cold solid object doesn't simply *collapse*: There is a stabilizing internal pressure, having nothing to do with electron–electron repulsion (which we have ignored) or thermal motion (which we have excluded), but is strictly quantum mechanical, and derives ultimately from the antisymmetrization requirement for the wave functions of identical fermions. It is sometimes called **degeneracy pressure**, though “exclusion pressure” might be a better term.²³

IDENTICAL PARTICLES

Band structure:

We're now going to improve on the free electron model, by including the forces exerted on the electrons by the regularly spaced, positively charged, essentially stationary nuclei. The qualitative behavior of solids is dictated to a remarkable degree by the mere fact that this potential is *periodic*—its actual *shape* is relevant only to the finer details. To show you how it goes, I'm going to develop the simplest possible model: a one-dimensional **Dirac comb**, consisting of evenly spaced delta-function spikes (Figure 5.4).²⁴ But first I need to introduce a powerful theorem that vastly simplifies the analysis of periodic potentials.

A periodic potential is one that repeats itself after some fixed distance a :

$$V(x + a) = V(x). \quad (5.58)$$

Bloch's theorem tells us that for such a potential the solutions to the Schrödinger equation,

$$-\frac{\hbar^2}{2m} \frac{d^2\psi}{dx^2} + V(x)\psi = E\psi, \quad (5.59)$$

can be taken to satisfy the condition

$$\psi(x + a) = e^{iqa} \psi(x), \quad (5.60)$$

IDENTICAL PARTICLES

Band structure:

for some constant q (by “constant” I mean that it is independent of x ; it may well depend on E).²⁵ In a moment we will discover that q is in fact *real*, so although $\psi(x)$ itself is not periodic, $|\psi(x)|^2$ is:

$$|\psi(x + a)|^2 = |\psi(x)|^2, \quad (5.61)$$

as one would certainly expect.²⁶

Of course, no *real* solid goes on forever, and the edges are going to spoil the periodicity of $V(x)$, and render Bloch’s theorem inapplicable. However, for any macroscopic crystal, containing something on the order of Avogadro’s number of atoms, it is hardly imaginable that edge effects can significantly influence the behavior of electrons deep inside. This suggests the following device to salvage Bloch’s theorem: We wrap the x axis around in a circle, and connect it onto its tail, after a large number $N \approx 10^{23}$ of periods; formally, we impose the boundary condition

$$\psi(x + Na) = \psi(x). \quad (5.62)$$

It follows (from Equation 5.60) that

$$e^{iNqa} \psi(x) = \psi(x),$$

so $e^{iNqa} = 1$, or $Nqa = 2\pi n$, and hence

$$q = \frac{2\pi n}{Na}, \quad (n = 0, \pm 1, \pm 2, \dots). \quad (5.63)$$

IDENTICAL PARTICLES

Band structure:

In particular, q is necessarily real. The virtue of Bloch's theorem is that we need only solve the Schrödinger equation *within a single cell* (say, on the interval $0 \leq x < a$); recursive application of Equation 5.60 generates the solution everywhere else.

Now, suppose the potential consists of a long string of delta-function spikes (the Dirac comb):

$$V(x) = \alpha \sum_{j=0}^{N-1} \delta(x - ja). \quad (5.64)$$

(In Figure 5.4 you must imagine that the x axis has been “wrapped around”, so the N th spike actually appears at $x = -a$.) No one would pretend that this is a *realistic* model, but remember, it is only the effect of *periodicity* that concerns us here; the classic **Kronig–Penney model**²⁷

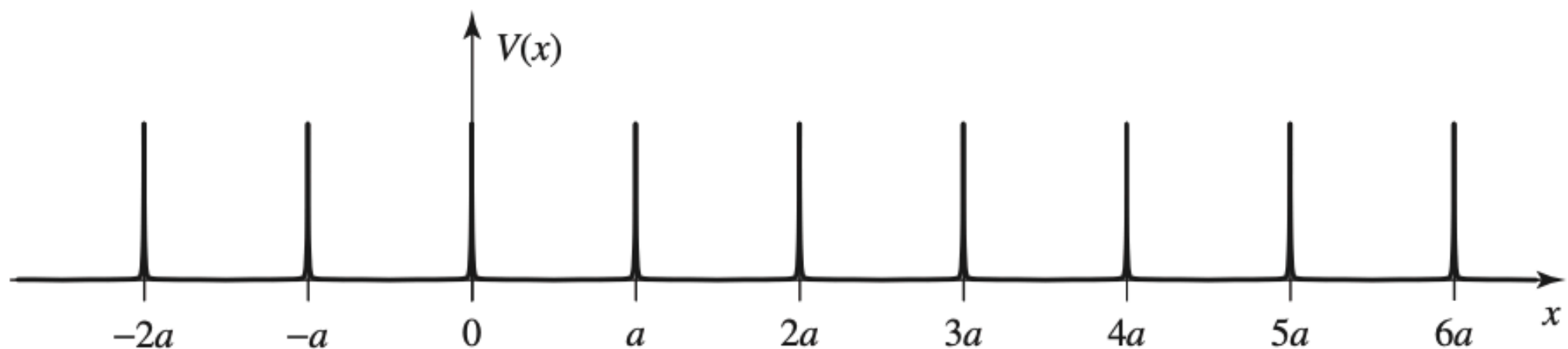


Figure 5.4: The Dirac comb, Equation 5.64.

IDENTICAL PARTICLES

Band structure:

used a repeating *rectangular* pattern, and many authors still prefer that one.²⁸ In the region $0 < x < a$ the potential is zero, so

$$-\frac{\hbar^2}{2m} \frac{d^2\psi}{dx^2} = E\psi,$$

or

$$\frac{d^2\psi}{dx^2} = -k^2\psi,$$

where

$$k \equiv \frac{\sqrt{2mE}}{\hbar}, \quad (5.65)$$

as usual.

The general solution is

$$\psi(x) = A \sin(kx) + B \cos(kx), \quad (0 < x < a). \quad (5.66)$$

According to Bloch's theorem, the wave function in the cell immediately to the *left* of the origin is

$$\psi(x) = e^{-iqa} \{A \sin[k(x+a)] + B \cos[k(x+a)]\}, \quad (-a < x < 0). \quad (5.67)$$

IDENTICAL PARTICLES

Band structure:

At $x = 0$, ψ must be continuous, so

$$B = e^{-iqa} [A \sin(ka) + B \cos(ka)]; \quad (5.68)$$

its derivative suffers a discontinuity proportional to the strength of the delta function (Equation 2.128, with the sign of α switched, since these are spikes instead of wells):

$$kA - e^{-iqa} k [A \cos(ka) - B \sin(ka)] = \frac{2m\alpha}{\hbar^2} B. \quad (5.69)$$

Solving Equation 5.68 for $A \sin(ka)$ yields

$$A \sin(ka) = [e^{iqa} - \cos(ka)] B. \quad (5.70)$$

Substituting this into Equation 5.69, and cancelling kB , we find

$$[e^{iqa} - \cos(ka)] [1 - e^{-iqa} \cos(ka)] + e^{-iqa} \sin^2(ka) = \frac{2m\alpha}{\hbar^2 k} \sin(ka),$$

which simplifies to

$$\cos(qa) = \cos(ka) + \frac{m\alpha}{\hbar^2 k} \sin(ka). \quad (5.71)$$

This is the fundamental result, from which all else follows.²⁹

IDENTICAL PARTICLES

Band structure:

Equation 5.71 determines the possible values of k , and hence the allowed energies. To simplify the notation, let

$$z \equiv ka, \quad \text{and} \quad \beta \equiv \frac{m\alpha a}{\hbar^2}, \quad (5.72)$$

so the right side of Equation 5.71 can be written as

$$f(z) \equiv \cos(z) + \beta \frac{\sin(z)}{z}. \quad (5.73)$$

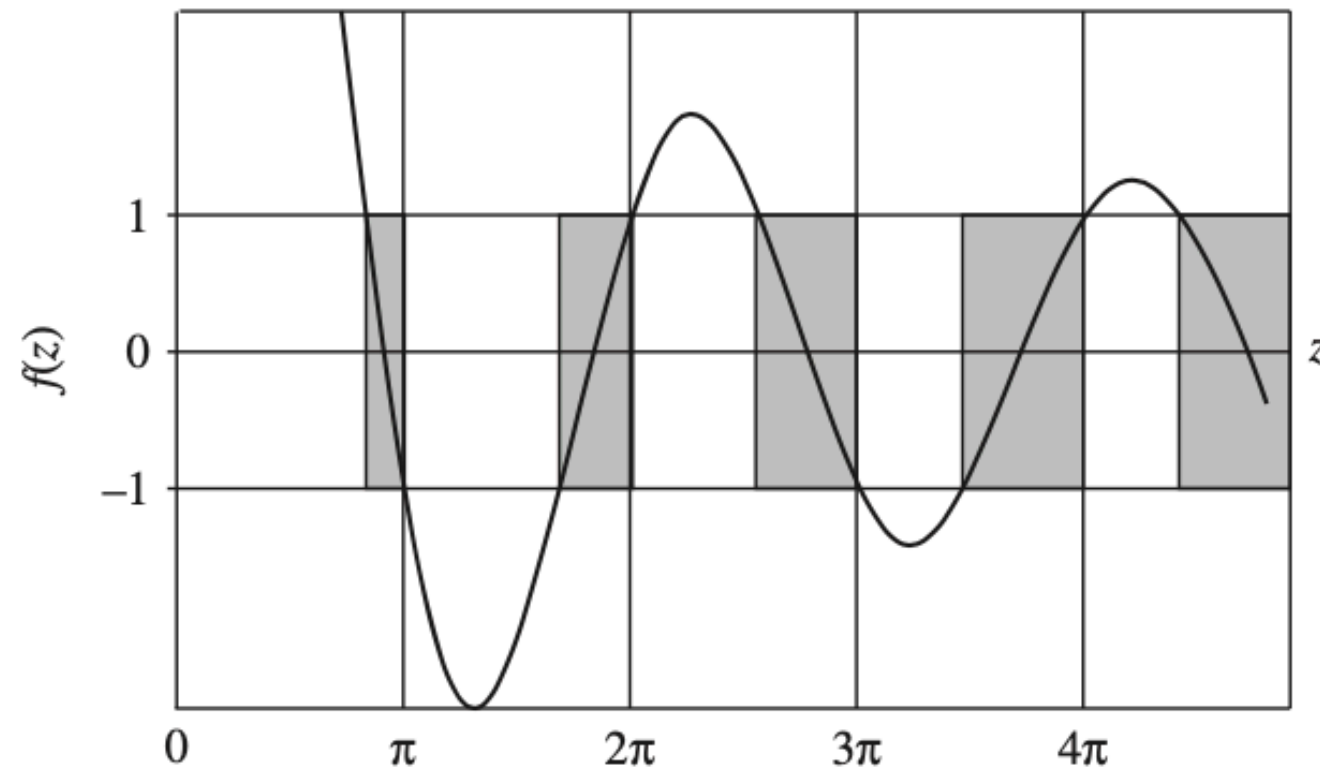


Figure 5.5: Graph of $f(z)$ (Equation 5.73) for $\beta = 10$, showing allowed bands separated by forbidden gaps.

IDENTICAL PARTICLES

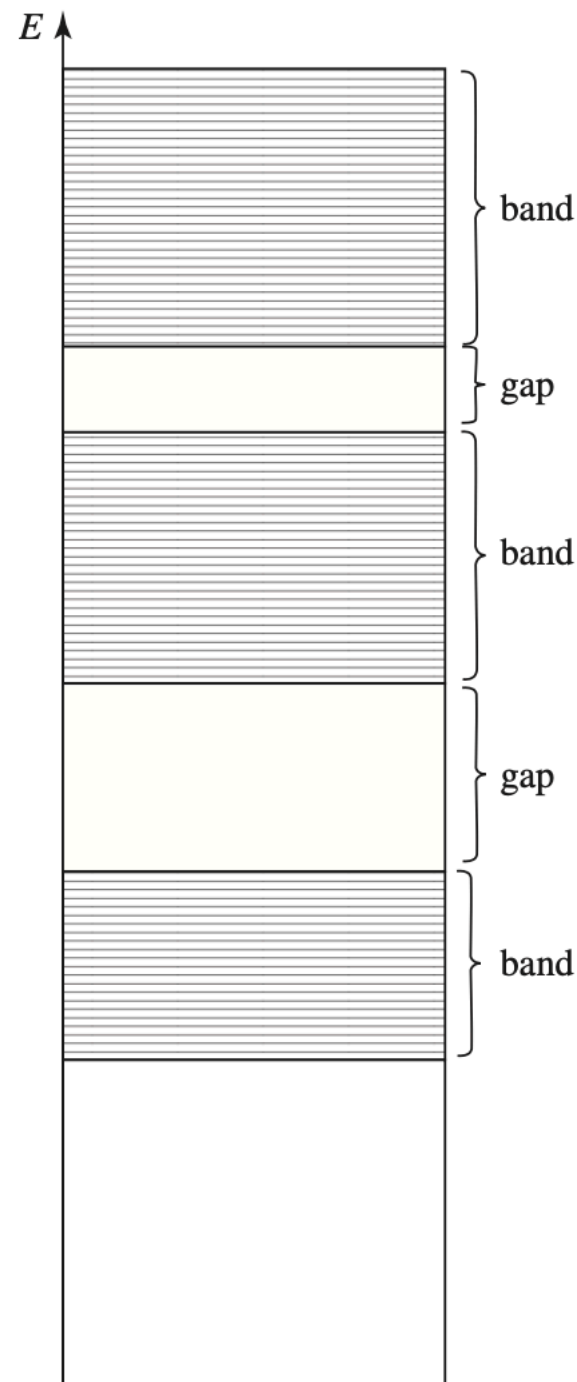
Band structure:

The constant β is a dimensionless measure of the “strength” of the delta function. In Figure 5.5 I have plotted $f(z)$, for the case $\beta = 10$. The important thing to notice is that $f(z)$ strays outside the range $(-1, +1)$, and in such regions there is no hope of solving Equation 5.71, since $|\cos(qa)|$, of course, cannot be greater than 1.

These **gaps** represent *forbidden* energies; they are separated by **bands** of *allowed* energies. Within a given band, virtually any energy is allowed, since according to Equation 5.63, $qa = 2\pi n/N$, where N is a huge number, and n can be any integer. You might imagine drawing N horizontal lines on Figure 5.5, at values of $\cos(2\pi n/N)$ ranging from $+1$ ($n = 0$) down to -1 ($n = N/2$), and back almost to $+1$ ($n = N - 1$)—at this point the Bloch factor e^{iqa} recycles, so no new solutions are generated by further increasing n . The intersection of each of these lines with $f(z)$ yields an allowed energy. Evidently there are N states in each band, so closely spaced that for most purposes we can regard them as forming a continuum (Figure 5.6).

IDENTICAL PARTICLES

Band structure:



So far, we've only put *one* electron in our potential. In practice there will be Nd of them, where d is again the number of “free” electrons per atom.

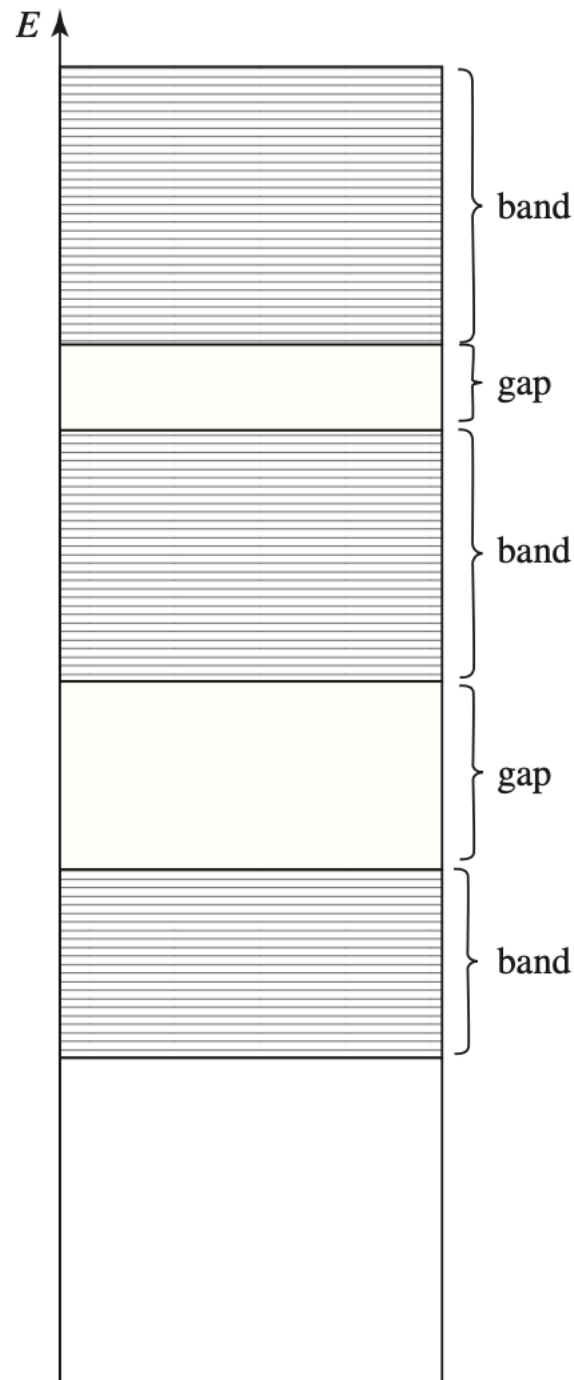
Because of the Pauli exclusion principle, only two electrons can occupy a given spatial state, so if $d = 1$, they will half fill the first band, if $d = 2$ they will completely fill the first band, if $d = 3$ they half fill the second band, and so on.

(In three dimensions, and with more realistic potentials, the band structure may be more complicated, but the *existence* of allowed bands, separated by forbidden gaps, persists—band structure is the *signature* of a periodic potential.)

Figure 5.6: The allowed energies for a periodic potential form essentially continuous bands.

IDENTICAL PARTICLES

Band structure:



Now, if the topmost band is only *partly* filled, it takes very little energy to excite an electron to the next allowed level, and such a material will be a **conductor** (a **metal**).

On the other hand, if the top band is *completely* filled, it takes a relatively large energy to excite an electron, since it has to jump across the forbidden zone. Such materials are typically **insulators**.

Though if the gap is rather narrow, and the temperature sufficiently high, then random thermal energy can knock an electron over the hump, and the material is a **semiconductor** (silicon and germanium are examples).

In the free electron model *all* solids should be metals, since there are no large gaps in the spectrum of allowed energies. It takes the band theory to account for the extraordinary range of electrical conductivities exhibited by the solids in nature.

Figure 5.6: The allowed energies for a periodic potential form essentially continuous bands.

ELECTROMAGNETIC INTERACTIONS

Minimal Coupling

In classical electrodynamics the force on a particle of charge q moving with velocity \mathbf{v} through electric and magnetic fields \mathbf{E} and \mathbf{B} is given by the **Lorentz force law**:

$$\mathbf{F} = q (\mathbf{E} + \mathbf{v} \times \mathbf{B})$$

This force cannot be expressed as the gradient of a scalar potential energy function, and therefore the Schrödinger equation in its original form cannot accommodate it. But in the more sophisticated form there is no problem:

$$i\hbar \frac{\partial \Psi}{\partial t} = \hat{H} \Psi$$

The classical Hamiltonian for a particle of charge q and momentum \mathbf{p} , in the presence of electromagnetic fields is

$$H = \frac{1}{2m} (\mathbf{p} - q\mathbf{A})^2 + q\varphi,$$

where \mathbf{A} is the vector potential and φ is the scalar potential:

$$\mathbf{E} = -\nabla\varphi - \partial\mathbf{A}/\partial t, \quad \mathbf{B} = \nabla \times \mathbf{A}.$$

ELECTROMAGNETIC INTERACTIONS

Minimal Coupling

Making the standard substitution $\mathbf{p} \rightarrow -i\hbar\nabla$, we obtain the Hamiltonian operator

$$\hat{H} = \frac{1}{2m} (-i\hbar\nabla - q\mathbf{A})^2 + q\varphi,$$

and the Schrödinger equation becomes:

$$i\hbar \frac{\partial \Psi}{\partial t} = \left[\frac{1}{2m} (-i\hbar\nabla - q\mathbf{A})^2 + q\varphi \right] \Psi.$$

This is the quantum implementation of the Lorentz force law; it is sometimes called the **minimal coupling rule**.

ELECTROMAGNETIC INTERACTIONS

The Aharonov–Bohm Effect

In classical electrodynamics the potentials \mathbf{A} and ϕ are not uniquely determined; the *physical* quantities are the *fields*, \mathbf{E} and \mathbf{B} . Specifically, the potentials

$$\phi' \equiv \phi - \frac{\partial \Lambda}{\partial t}, \quad \mathbf{A}' \equiv \mathbf{A} + \nabla \Lambda$$

yield the same fields as ϕ and \mathbf{A} . Here, Λ is an arbitrary real function of position and time) This equation is called a **gauge transformation**, and the theory **gauge invariant**.

In quantum mechanics the potentials play a more direct role as they appear in:

$$i\hbar \frac{\partial \Psi}{\partial t} = \left[\frac{1}{2m} (-i\hbar \nabla - q\mathbf{A})^2 + q\phi \right] \Psi.$$

They only by a *phase factor*, so they represent the same physical state, and in this sense the theory *is* gauge invariant.

$$\Psi' \equiv e^{iq\Lambda/\hbar} \Psi$$

ELECTROMAGNETIC INTERACTIONS

The Aharonov–Bohm Effect

It was believed that there could be no electromagnetic influences in regions where **E** and **B** are zero.

In 1959 **Aharonov and Bohm** showed that the vector potential *can* affect the quantum behaviour of a charged particle, ***even when the particle is confined to a region where the field itself is zero.***

Suppose a particle is moving through a region where **B** is zero (so $\nabla \times \mathbf{A} = \mathbf{0}$), but **A** itself is *not*. Below, \mathcal{O} is some (arbitrarily chosen) reference point.

$$\left[\frac{1}{2m} (-i\hbar\nabla - q\mathbf{A})^2 \right] \Psi = i\hbar \frac{\partial \Psi}{\partial t}, \quad \Psi = e^{ig} \Psi', \quad \text{where} \quad g(\mathbf{r}) \equiv \frac{q}{\hbar} \int_{\mathcal{O}}^{\mathbf{r}} \mathbf{A}(\mathbf{r}') \cdot d\mathbf{r}',$$

$$\nabla \times \mathbf{A} = \mathbf{0}$$

The gradient of Ψ is:

$$\nabla \Psi = e^{ig} (i\nabla g) \Psi' + e^{ig} (\nabla \Psi'); \quad \nabla g = (q/\hbar) \mathbf{A},$$

ELECTROMAGNETIC INTERACTIONS

The Aharonov–Bohm Effect

The gradient of Ψ is:

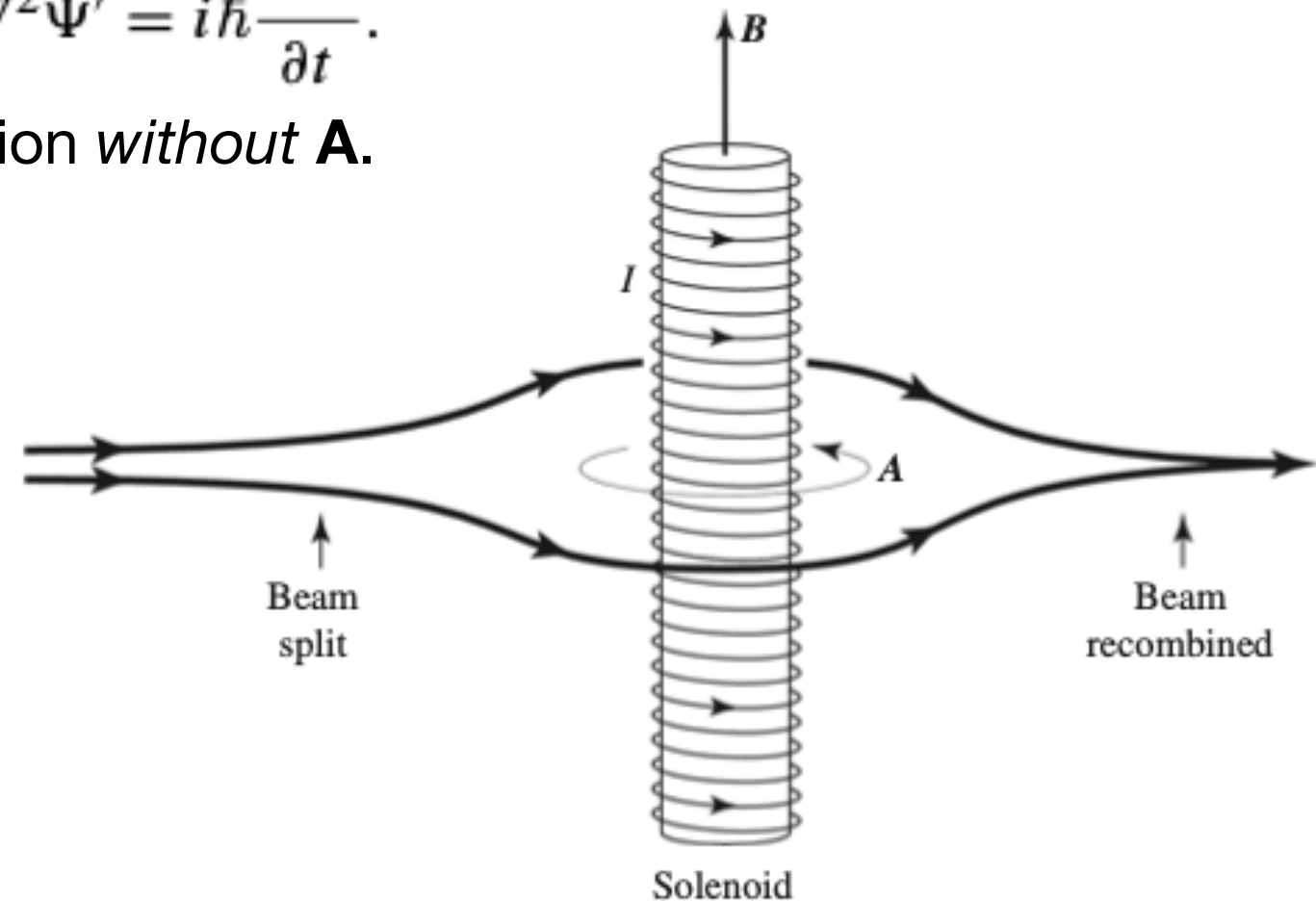
$$\nabla \Psi = e^{ig} (i \nabla g) \Psi' + e^{ig} (\nabla \Psi') ; \quad \nabla g = (q/\hbar) \mathbf{A},$$

$$(-i\hbar\nabla - q\mathbf{A}) \Psi = -i\hbar e^{ig} \nabla \Psi',$$

$$(-i\hbar\nabla - q\mathbf{A})^2 \Psi = -\hbar^2 e^{ig} \nabla^2 \Psi'$$

➡
$$-\frac{\hbar^2}{2m} \nabla^2 \Psi' = i\hbar \frac{\partial \Psi'}{\partial t}.$$

Evidently Ψ' satisfies the Schrödinger equation *without* \mathbf{A} .



The Aharonov–Bohm Effect

Aharonov and Bohm proposed an experiment in which a beam of electrons is split in two, and they pass either side of a long solenoid before recombining.

The beams are kept well away from the solenoid itself, so they encounter only regions where $\mathbf{B} = \mathbf{0}$. But \mathbf{A} is *not* zero, and the two beams arrive with *different phases*:

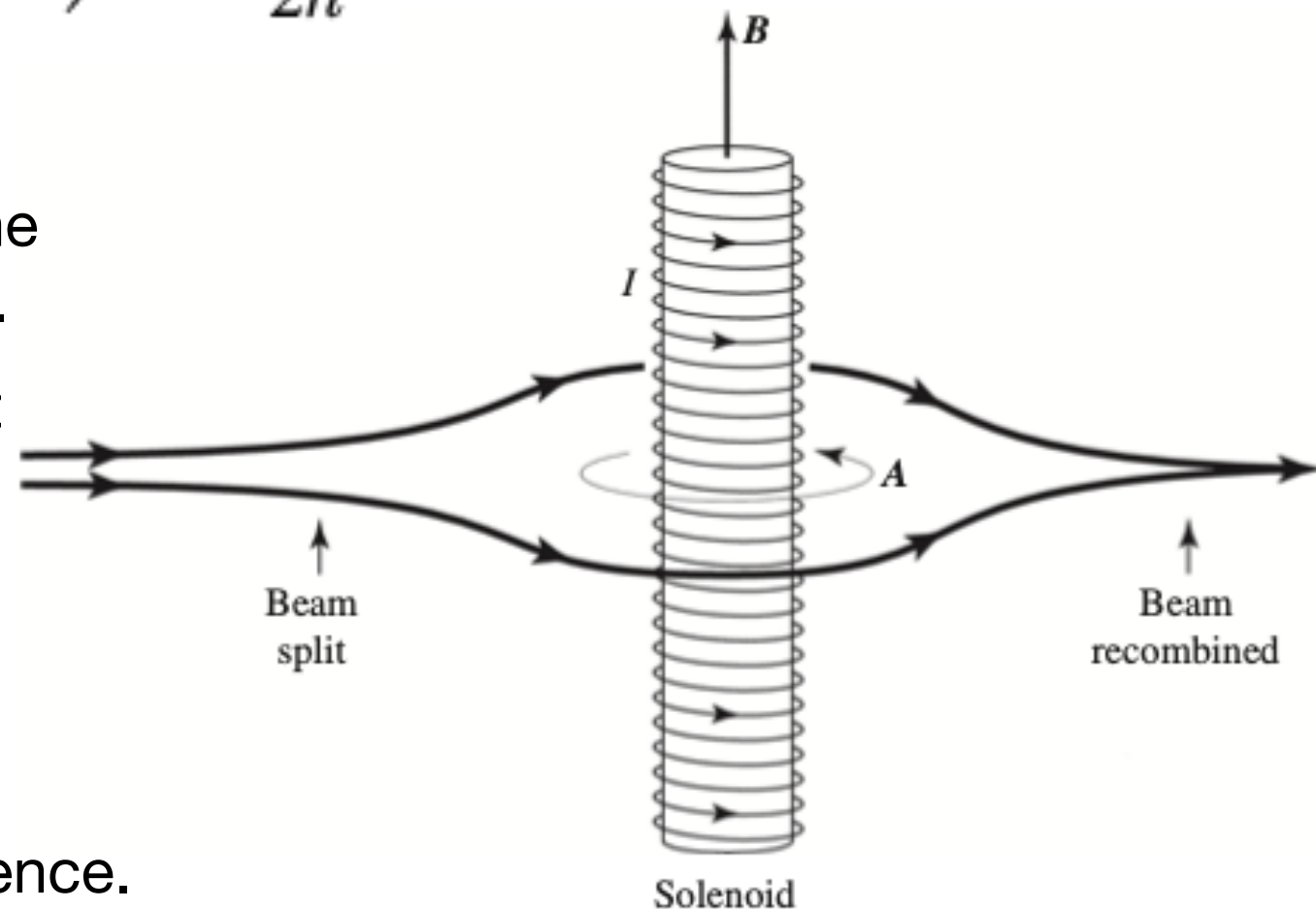
$$g = \frac{q}{\hbar} \int \mathbf{A} \cdot d\mathbf{r} = \frac{q\Phi}{2\pi\hbar} \int \left(\frac{1}{r} \hat{\phi} \right) \cdot (r \hat{\phi} d\phi) = \pm \frac{q\Phi}{2\hbar}.$$

The plus sign applies to the electrons traveling in the same direction as \mathbf{A} , i.e., in the same direction as the current in the solenoid.

The beams arrive out of phase by an amount proportional to the magnetic flux their paths encircle:

$$\text{phase difference} = \frac{q\Phi}{\hbar}.$$

This phase shift leads to measurable interference.



There *can* be electromagnetic effects in regions where the fields are zero.